

SOCIAL MILIEU IN INDIA AND DEVELOPMENT

Part II

2.24 The Paradox of change and no-change in Hindu Society

The gist of the argument so far is that the basic social ethos, structure and behaviour in Hindu society has not changed in essentials during centuries and even during British rule. Sociologically this would be considered an impossibility. "An open system in a changing environment either changes or perishes. In such a case the only avenue of survival is change. The capacity to persist through a change of structure and behaviour has been called "ultrastability." ¹⁵ How has it been possible for Hindu society to persist and survive without changing its structure in a changing environment? First, in the context of this sociological doctrine it might be doubted whether the Hindu system is a closed or an open one. In so far as it is a closed system-as I think it is-the doctrine obviously does not apply. But this is a debatable issue and we may for this discussion take the view that it is an open system. In that case how does the mechanism of change operate in this society?

The defence mechanism of the Hindu system to change in a changing environment and yet not to change in essentials or structurally is, the behaviour principle at the heart of the system, complete freedom of thought and ritual and no freedom of action, the code for which is laid down by the total social system. This enables the social fabric to absorb social change in a manner in which the change is effectively twisted to its own purposes. It seems to give way and yet does not in essentials. It is like a pool of water. One can strike it hard with a stick and the water seems to break. A moment later, however, it returns to its original place and the break disappears without any trace.

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This hints at the possible explanation of the frequently met phenomena in the history of Hindu society that social change is not cumulative. A change appears to take place and soon enough it is so well twisted and absorbed that when the next one comes along the situation is at it was before the first change. As a result social change never reaches even the first base. Every time it is always a fresh beginning.

It is interesting to see how this happens. Any religious or social movement going against the basic tenets of the Hindu social and ethos and organization is accommodated and reconciled to the overall social structure by the process of isolating its followers into a separate caste. Once this happens, as it inevitably does in a caste society, its momentum is contained within itself. It becomes as it were quarantined by all other castes and allowed, as it were to stew in its own juice. The other castes remain unaffected and the movement never spreads to the society as a whole to become generalised. The new caste is provided its niche in the total structure without any change in the structure itself. The history of the Lingayat movement and community is a good example³ of this phenomenon. Buddhism was almost eliminated from India and Buddhists merely became a small neglected caste in the total social arrangements. Brahmos is a more modern example. Within the new caste that comes into being in this way, the new thoughts and behaviour patterns going against the basic tenets of Hindu social organization are allowed to continue formamly, now of course robbed of their gneral radical potential to bring about, any sginificant change in the overall social structure. It is a slightly different cog, but nevertheless a cog that fits well to the old wheel. A new force by being allowed a larger play in the swings is prevnted from affecting the roundabout. This social mechanism of allowing greater play to the swings is the essence of the tolerance that characterises Hindu society. This tolerance is a price that caste society pays for keeping itself intact and essentially unchanged. It is the kiss of death for any structural social change arising in that society. The success of this mechanism has been amazing throughout the life of Hindu society.

Its success, as a matter of fact, extends even beyond the Hindu society. Under the impact of Islam and Christianity thousands of Hindus were converted to the new religions. But that did not mean

for them an emancipation from caste society because the converts carried their castes with them intact and these new religious dispensations had to accommodate them within their own struture, thus essentially becoming cast societies themselves. The Pope was made to issue a bull allowing the continuation of castes in the new converts to Christianity in South India ¹⁶. There was possibly no such formal recognition of caste in Islamic society but in fact the Islamic society in India developed into a caste society.

It is interesting to see how the mechanism of tolerance in Hindu society works to smother radical social reform even in independent India. The fact that the Indian Constitution defines the state in India as a secular state has been flaunted as a symbol of its modernity and progressiveness. The claim is hollow because by "secular" Indian laws mean something much more traditionally Hindu than anything that is understood in the modern idiom of the West as secular. Secularism as understood in the West is a competing system of ultimate convictions to religion. Secularism cannot be neutral among religions when it undertkes to confine them to their proper sphere. According to the secularist doctrine religious activities are free to the same extent as indentical behaviour proceeding from non-religious motives. Religious activities enjoy no special dispensation from general regulation, even where this impinges heavily on certain religious activities. This has been stoutly rejected by the Indian Supreme Court. The secularist notion that matters protected by Government apply primarily to the matters of faith, belief and worship, leaving matters of practice subject to state legislation is denied by the Indian Supreme Court. Their position is that the guarantees of religious freedom extend to whatever conduct is essential or integral to a particular religion. "What constitutes the essential part of a religion is primarily to be ascertained with reference to the doctrine of that religion itself" according of the Supreme Court. No wonder there is no common civil code that applies to all the citizens of India irrespective of caste and religion. In another guise it is the same doctrine of tolerance in the Hindu system, an effective drag on far reaching social refrom as ever before.

This discussion of change and yet no change in Hindu society cannot be complete or fruitful without a discussion of the response of Hindu society to forces of modernism or modernity that flow-

ed into India from the West through British rule and other channels. That was also the main orientation of the analyses of Hindu and other religions that Weber undertook. It is also in consonance with the main purpose of this analysis of the social dimension of Indian development.

To set the stage for discussion, however, it is necessary to begin by sketching the content of Weber's analysis of the Protestant ethic as the prime-mover of the development of capitalism as it has emerged out of the subsequent criticisms, analyses and modifications. The debate has been ably synthesized and summarised by Eisenstadt and we mainly follow him here. According to Eisenstadt the crux of the re-examination of Weber's argument lies in shifting the course of argument from an examination of the allegedly direct, causal relation between Protestantism and capitalism to that of the transformative capacities of Protestantism. The crucial impact of Protestantism in the direction of modernity came after the failure of its initial totalistic socio-religious orientations. The three questions that stand out in this connexion and the answers to them are as follows :

(1) What is it within any given religion (or ideology) that creates or may account for the existence of such transformative capacities? This potential or capacity does not seem to be connected with any single tenet of Protestant faith but rather in social aspects of its basic religious and value orientations. The most important of these are its strong combination of "this worldliness" and transcendentalism. Second, is the strong emphasis on individual activism and responsibility. Third, is the unmediated direct relation of the individual to the sacred and to the sacred tradition.

These religious orientations were not confined to the sacred but closely related to two social orientations: their social status images and orientations. First, was their 'openness' towards the wider social structure, rooted in their 'this-worldly' orientation. Second, they were characterised by a certain autonomy and self-sufficiency. They evinced little dependence for the crystallization of their own status symbols and identity on the existing political and religious centres.

(2) In what directions such transformative capacities may develop? By the very nature of the totalistic reformatory impulses of the Protestants the central political symbols, identities and institut-

ions constituted natural foci for their orientations and activities. On both the levels of forging new symbols of national identity and legitimation of the new patterns of authority, these developed, through the initial religious impact of the major Protestant groups and especially through their transformation, the possibilities of the reformation of the relation between rulers and ruled, of patterns of political participation and of the scope and nature of the political community.

These orientations also contained possibilities of the structuralization of the central legal-institutional institutions and of their basic premises centred round the idea of the covenant and contract and around the reformulation of many concepts of natural law which led to a much more differentiated view of the legal state and autonomy of voluntary and business co-operations, freeing them from the more restricted view inherent in traditional natural law. In Catholic countries, in contrast, the same diversifying orientations were stifled in their development among other thing by the maintenance of the older Catholic symbols of legitimation and the traditional relation between Church and State.

The transformative effects spread to other aspects of the institutional structure of modern societies, and especially to the development of new types of roles, role structure and role sets and to motivations to undertake and perform such roles. The latter happened in three ways: (a) In the definition of specific new roles with new type of goals defined in autonomous terms and not tied to existing frameworks. (b) The development of broader institutional organizational and legal normative setting which could both legitimise such roles and provide them with the necessary resources and frameworks to facilitate their continuous working. (c) The development of new types of motivation, of motivations for the understanding of such roles and for the identity of them.

(3) What are the conditions that develop in the society within such religious or ideological groups, which facilitate or impede the institutionalization of such transformative capacities or orientations? In broad terms it seems that the possibility of such institutionalization is greater the stronger the seeds of autonomy of the social, cultural and political orders are within any society. The specific transformation potentials of Protestantism can be seen in

the fact that it took the seeds of autonomy and pluralism in the European Christian Culture and helped in recrystallizing them on a higher plane of differentiation than in the Catholic countries. The transformative capacities of the Protestant groups were smallest in those cases where they attained full powers—when their more totalistic restrictive orientations could become dominant—or in situations where they were down-trodden minorities.¹⁷

The debate on the Weberian thesis emphasises that Protestantism was a catalyst that furthered the development of earlier seeds of autonomy and pluralism in European culture and that too where it succeeded just enough,¹⁸ not too much, not too little. In essence what it achieved was the orientation to 'this-worldliness, and the separation of religious from the social and the economic, what is today often described as secularization. What secularization amounts to has been discussed before when we examined the Indian conception of a secular state. The Protestant reformation achieved it because it did not succeed totally as a religious movement. No religious movement can be expected to practically reduce the role of religion to a private voluntary association. Two lessons emerge from this for a general consideration of social change (a) no religious movement can be relied upon to bring about secularization (b) secularization develops from seeds of autonomy and pluralism in the cultural tradition, if any, and not out of the blue.

In studying the impact of modernism or modernity—which is also described as Westernization or secularization many times though each term has its own nuances—in the light of Eisenstadt's formulation of the Weberian thesis, we must begin by noting with Srinivas that the totality of change involved is "inclusive, complex and many-layered". The range is wide from technology at one end to the experimental method of modern science and modern historiography at the other. It is complex because different aspects of the totality are seen to combine to strengthen certain processes, sometimes work at cross purposes and are sometimes discrete. Customary dietary restrictions have been considerably loosened in urban areas and among the elite which strengthens the process of secularization of life styles. On the other hand, the introduction of printing and education led to developments in political and cultural fields that have given rise not only to nationalism but also to revivalism, communalism, casteism, heightened linguistic

consciousness, and regionalism, an instance where the forces released have worked at crosspurposes. An instance of discrete development is the commonly observed fact that the manipulation of Western technology does not mean that the manipulators have accepted a rationalistic and scientific world view. ¹⁹

In studying this total complexity we have fortunately an analysis of India's response to modernity by Eisenstadt²⁰ himself. In analysing India's response to modernity he divides the Indian entity into two, the centre and the periphery. The centre represented the political entity or the British government ultimately replaced by the Government of independent India. The periphery consisted of the old traditional society of villagers' communities and village networks, of the traditional urban centres interwoven into the various local-political and religious—centres and into 'caste society'. Modernity impinged on Indian society through the centre as also through other ways not connected with the centre and independent of it through 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The two forces of modernity developed in separate and independent ways and evoked dispersed and different types of responses from the Indian society. The whole range of responses from the erosion of traditional culture resulting in disorganization and anomy through total resistance and strengthening of traditional structure and adaptive response to transformative response are all to be found in India both at the centre and at the periphery. But on the whole the traditional Indian periphery evinced a high degree of adaptability which is characterised by a great readiness by the members of the traditional setting to undertake new tasks outside their groups, by development of a much higher degree of internal-differentiation and diversification of roles and tasks, and by increasing incorporation of these new roles within them (P. 282).

The diversified response to modernity was in tune with the historical response of Indian society to all change and the source of this diversity lay in the great heterogeneity of India which went beyond merely local variability by affecting the central core of Indian tradition—the caste system—in its ideological and structural aspects alike. But paradoxically this core had shown much greater resilience or continuity than other great traditions in Asia. This paradox is explained by the important fact that Indian cultural entity was not tied to any political framework as also the fact

that the Brahmanic value system and structure of the caste system had not an organized homogeneous, unified, centre. The political centres were usually partial and relatively weak in terms of the major orientations of the cultural system. The continuous "cross-cutting" between the different structural and ideological tendencies could go with more structural "innovative" ones stressing both the permissiveness of Indian culture and its great propensity to segregated cultural innovation. (p. 295).

The response to the impingement of modernity in India was strongest in dispersed institution-building or development of new organizations in various institutional systems-whether agricultural industrial, administrative or cultural. " But in a sense all these developments were limited, each developing in its own sphere, through its own momentum and partial motivation; they were not fully connected with the overall motivational orientations focussed as they were on the cultural religious spheres. " (p. 305).

Whether the impact of modernity will ultimately evoke a transformative response from the Indian society cannot be decisively answered one way or the other. " Throughout the various spheres of Indian socio-political cultural order there exists the problem of the extent to which it will be able to generate not only permissiveness, which could facilitate the setting up of new institutional frameworks under external influence or the continuous recrystallization and adaptation of traditional groups to such new frameworks, but also how it could develop new innovative forces, new common integrative frameworks to support continuous institution-building. In the periphery this problem lies principally in the extent to which the recrystallization of caste and other traditional groups will indeed facilitate developments of new more flexible frameworks and crosscutting of different hierarchies of status within which new values, orientations, and activities may develop, or, conversely the extent to which they will reinforce the crystallization of neotraditional divisive symbols or groupings. " (p. 304).

Eisenstadt's assessment of the response of Indian society to modernity is comprehensive and insightful but curiously incomplete and ambivalent in its conclusions. It can be faulted in one or two respects but its most important shortcoming is its seeming anxiety to keep its options open and shy away from conclusions that would logically follow. If this is avoided it becomes quite clear that

India's response to modernity was not and cannot be of the transformative kind which is crucial for the process of modernization.

I believe that Eisenstadt's characterisation of the replacement of the British centre by a centre manned by Indian themselves on the attainment of political independence as "the basic ultimate breakthrough to modernity in the political and cultural spheres" (p. 298) as partly wrong and partly misconceived. He seems to have been prone to the same misconception of regarding that the character of the centre remained the same as of old when it came to be manned or managed by the Indians themselves and that this was the culmination of a process of political modernization. But he fails to see that as a result of this transfer the centre underwent a subtle qualitative change. The centre as it came to be managed by the Indians became increasingly subject to the pressures from the periphery and no longer remained a centre independent of and largely impervious to the influences from the periphery as the British centre was. With the establishment of parliamentary democracy and the passing away of the old leaders who could afford to ignore the periphery in some matters though not in all; the centre has come more and more under the pressures emanating from the periphery. The emergence of the "soft state" is a manifestation of this process. Consequently the ability of the centre to lead in the onward march of modernization has progressively dwindled. This is a serious setback to the process of modernization since independence and in years to come.

This would not have mattered much if the periphery were undergoing modernization and was ready to support and push it at the centre. But this was not so and Eisenstadt recognizes this. He also fails to penetrate the real character of the 'adaptability' that Indian society has displayed and displays today to the impulses of modernity. He notes that this has been the traditional way in which Indian society has responded to any change in the past. It is also the way in which Indian society has kept its ultra-static cultural mould through ages. As has been pointed out before this adaptability is the kiss of death that Indian society gives to all changes and moulds them to its own purpose of keeping itself intact in essentials. Eisenstadt insightfully notes that institution-building in response to the impingement of modernity on Indian society is dispersed and is not connected with overall motivational orienta-

tions. It may be recalled that Weber made a similar point in regard to the development of cultural rationalisation in Indian society. While there was development of special technologies appropriate to the *dharma* of each profession "from construction technique to logic as the technology of proof and disproof to the technology of eroticism", there could not develop levels of generalization above the technological because of the fragmentation involved in the notion of occupational *dharma*. The same tendency or the deep-rooted complex of the Indian society is at work in respect of the institution-building activity. This is the classical method of the Indian society to scatter the changes and adaptations it has to make widely, and to contain or quarantine them in separate groups so that they never really come together or cumulate. They always remain scattered, single and unrelated. That is the most efficient mechanism of the Indian social arrangements for smothering change.

The points that Eisenstadt makes regarding the absence of a developing general motivational or value structure favourable to modernization in Indian Society has often been made in a slightly different way. It has been said that under British tutelage Indian society did adopt many untraditional institutional structures and has continued with them even after the end of British rule. But these structures are managed and run not in the spirit in which their originals were conceived and run in the West but in the Indian way. Democracy, bureaucracy, modern business units, schools, newspapers, clubs, organizations, etc. have all the outward appearance of their compeers in the West but the essential internal spirit behind their working is totally different (or Indian). Citations on each of these from the critical writings of scholars, Indian and foreign, can be quoted in abundance to substantiate this observation. It is not necessary to do so because it is not likely to be seriously challenged or denied. But this perhaps draws attention to another facet of the response of Indian society to modernity. Indian society responds in a way in which such modern institutions when adopted always remain formal organizations and do not become properly internalized social institution. "Like an institution, an organization has stable and recurring patterns of behaviour. The added dimension of an institution is that these patterns and behaviour are *valued*." ²¹

It is the speciality of the Indian social milieu that inhibits the growth of value structures around anything that is untraditional, that is, not within the framework of the family, caste and village. The non-traditional institutions adopted are like the dummies in shop-windows that give the Indian Society a false appearance of modernization.

A critical examination of Eisenstadt's appraisal and the logical development of some of his important observations lead to the conclusion that Indian society's response to modernity is largely devoid of the transformative aspect and the other kinds of response are far too dissipated by the functioning of the Indian society, to serve as the basis of development of a real modernization-favouring social milieu.

That the mechanism and functioning of the Hindu social system produces a kind of human material and institution-building that is detrimental to the evolution and functioning of a modern society is a fact of far-reaching importance that has not received much attention. This has significance not only for the building up and functioning of a capitalist ethic and society—the context in which it was examined by Max Weber — but also for that of a socialist or communist society in India. All these, — capitalist, socialist or communist — are modern societies and a certain kind of value system, a certain type of human beings and a certain kind of institutions and their functioning is necessary and usually assumed for their successful building up and functioning. This is what is lacking in the Indian social system.

Can this be changed by a radical change in the present economic structure? That is the belief and conviction of intellectuals of the Marxist persuasion. In the Marxian analysis all social values and institutions belong to the social superstructure erected on the economic structure of society embodied in the ownership of the means of production and the class relations that they engender. Once the basic structure is changed the old superstructure cannot persist and a new one would take its place. Ethics, values, etc. therefore cannot be changed until the basic economic structure is changed. Once that is done, these will automatically follow.

This is stated in the broadest of terms and without the qualifications that Marxists say they usually make. But the message is clear. The main task is the change in the basic economic

structure. It seems, however, that the Chinese are experiencing something different. "The Communist Manifesto talks of the revolution as 'the most radical rupture with the traditional property relations' adding that it was 'no wonder that its development involves radical rupture with traditional ideas.'. This could mean that the rupture with 'traditional property relations' brings about in a good measure the other rupture as well. It could also mean that the concept of 'radical rupture with traditional property relations' is a larger concept including in it 'the radical rupture with the traditional ideas'. The Chinese are facing the situation in which, since there has been no radical rupture with traditional ideas, the radical rupture with traditional property relations has not proved as effective as one would have liked it to be. The Red Flag wrote in 1971: "We deeply realise that bringing about the 'first rupture' is a needed and important step, while bringing about the second rupture is also an important and indispensable step. Bringing about the first 'rupture' is only the first step in a 10,000 li-long march towards the fulfilment of the historical task of proletarian dictatorship".....Chau En lai warns that "our leading comrades must pay close attention to the socialist revolution in the realm of the superstructure".²² The rupture of property relations thus comes out to be not a sufficient condition for the dismantling of the superstructure. Whether it is a necessary condition is not as definite as one would like to believe.

2.3 The Hindu Social Milieu A Summary Statement

As the argument so far has covered a lot of ground, it would be useful to have a summary statement to put it in proper perspective. The bald and unpalatable thesis is that the cultural values, personality motivations and social structure inherent in the ethos and structure of Hindu society and religion are adverse to its economic and social progress in modern times and modern ways. The ethos and structure of Hindu society reinforce one another and are two sides of the same coin, more than in any other traditional society in the world. There is no escape by way of stressing the gap between ideological formulations at the philosophical level and the structural reality of life as it is ordinarily lived by the common people. All of them share the same system of values, though rituals and religious practices are free to vary from caste

to caste. The Hindu system evinces a great tolerance for thought but allows no freedom for action. Herein lies its secret of transforming tolerance into an effective instrument of smothering any far-going structural social change. It gives way but does not change in essentials. Any change is isolated and dissipated by the working of the caste system in a manner in which the change is twisted and adapted to maintain the existing structure. The mechanism of change and yet no change in essentials operates through the tolerance of the Hindu society.

There is no room for the individual in this hierarchical society whose birth in any caste gives him his place in society and his duties are prescribed by the caste of his birth (dharma). Sanctions against not doing his duty are divine (karma). Escape is only through salvation.. Consequently the individual develops an " other-worldly " attitude towards his work, his calling, his duty, etc. It is passive, noncommitted and almost indifferent. Self-love is quite common and general in such a society and the common type of personality to be found in Hindu society is that of the narcissistic type. Such a type of personality operates too much on, what Freud termed, the pleasure principle in which wish is equal to deed, letting things happen (passivity) favoured over attempts to master. It copes with helplessness by immersion in ideals, dreams and wishes as a replacement of what is. Narcissists have shallow loyalties beyond their immediate family and caste and have little or no sense of social obligations or duties to the society as a whole. Nationalism cannot grow vigorously in such a set up. Patriotism is weak and nationalism thin and largely negative. A society consisting predominantly of narcissists is not, however, an individualistic society but one of narrowly selfish persons who usually do not see beyond themselves. ²³ Naturally polities containing such populations are weak and an easy prey to foreign conquest.

A society which ensures the production of such human material is incapable of working or building institutions and organizations beyond the traditional ones of the caste and the family. All such institutions and organizations, which are the core of all modern societies, are formally adopted but adapted in their functioning to the maintenance of traditional values and goals. Such societies are unable to live and lead an institutional life beyond the tradit-

ional.²⁴ This is also why the response of Hindu society to modernity has not been or likely to be full of transformative possibilities. And that accounts for the fact that the basic social ethos, behaviour and structure of the Hindu society has not changed in essentials during or after British rule. It is a society that is wedded to poverty. Poverty is its product and also an essential condition of its survival.

3 1 Why the Japanese analogy is inappropriate

A question can be and has been raised whether all this matters in the case of a nation's modernization? Cannot modernization succeed inspite of this? Has this not happened in Japan? A respected sociologist like Srinivas has recently endorsed such a position. He quotes with approval the following from Chie Nakane: "In the course of modernization Japan imported many Western cultural elements, but these were and are always partial and segmentary and are never in the form of an operating system." It is a language with its basic indigenous structure or grammer which has accumulated a heavy overlay of borrowed vocabulary; while the outlook of Japanese soicity has suffered drastic changes over the past hundred years, the basic social grammer has hardly been affected. Here is an example of industrialization and the importation of western culture not effecting basic changes in the cultural structure." ²⁵

There is no reason to disagree with Nakane's contention with regard to Japanese development. And he puts his finger exactly on the point which make the Japanese analogy inapplicable and inappropriate to the Indian case. In the foregoing pages I have been trying to bring out the basic social grammer of the Hindu system, to use Nakane's telling phrase, and it can be shown that it is the very opposite of that of the Japanese society. I am arguing that the Japanese could bring about modernization in the economic sphere successfully, even spectacularly, without any structural cultural change because the latter shortcoming could be compensated by other strong points in its basic social grammer. The basic grammer of the Hindu society has not only not such virtues but has its own weaknesses to boot. To substantiate the argument I must begin by an attempt to briefly sketch the outline of eth basic social grammer of the Japanese society.²⁶

Japanese society throughout known history has been a closely controlled society both formally and informally. The minute legal regulations regarding the type of houses (including their length and breadth) and the number and kind of gifts that should be given at the time of marriage by farmers having different size holdings of land in the Tokugawa period are an example of the formal detailed controls. The Japanese have been conditioned to a world where the smallest details of conduct are mapped and status assigned. Informal controls equally meticulous consisted of the cultural indoctrination of the principles of social conduct like, *on* (a category of incurred obligations), *gin* (a category of Japanese obligation), *chu* (fealty to the Emperor), *ko* (filial piety), etc. There is a firmly established tradition of placing greater importance on the "family". The offsprings are trained not to make themselves ridiculous and not to put the family to shame. Inertia and deference to authority characterise the Japanese attitude to life and play a greater part in determining the conduct of the Japanese people than do conscience and rational judgement. They are trained to live in peaceful submission. Theirs is not an individualistic society.

So far as religion is concerned the Japanese are extremely uncomplicated. Transmigration of soul and nirvana are not in the Japanese pattern of thought. Japanese are uninterested in the fantasies of a world hereafter. Their mythology tells of gods but not of the life of the dead.

Even the idea of differential rewards and punishment after death is rejected for any man becomes a Buddha after he dies. A man who is "enlightened" (*satori*) is already in nirvana, which is here and now in the midst of time. Just as alien in Japan is the doctrine that flesh and spirit are irreconcilable. Yoga as a technique to eliminate desire which has its seat in the flesh is rejected by the Japanese. It is more understood as self-training whose rewards are here and now.

Japanese national character has been much debated and controversies have raged round it. Without entering into this we can note some features that stand out. Japanese children are foundly brought up and the father is not a super ego figure. The child gets its norms of conduct from the society. He will not be approved by his own group, unless he is approved by other groups. Japanese personality is not of the punitive western type. It may be slightly

narcissistic but not all the way. The great Western sanction for good behaviour is guilt that for the Japanese is shame (*haji*). For the Japanese aggression causes a guilt feeling because it is traduccing the good love of those against whom it is made. It is apologetic. This gives rise to a dual personality type which exhibits extremes of obedience and revolt.

The spectacular Japanese economic performance comes from a large and hardworking labour force backed by devotion to work, ingenuity in methods, and clever management. There is a built-in collectivism in the Japanese people. Like so many other things in Japan, work is ceremony. The Japanese workers are dedicated to their work and taken collectively, are perhaps the hardest workers in the world. That is why though Japanese workers are neither very efficient nor particularly energetic, as compared to their Western compeers, they are capable of generating extraordinary amount of energy and vitality.²⁷

The ruling class which took charge at the time of the Meiji Restoration (1868) concentrated on national prosperity through armaments in order to catch up with the more advanced nations, while at the same time challenging the "art" of the West with the "virtue" of the East. The formal and informal control system was utilized to promote above all else loyalty to the throne and filial piety. The devotion to the throne was nurtured by keeping people engrossed in good manners and customs and free from the danger of degenerating into masses over-conscious of themselves as citizenry.

The lesson from Japan is therefore exactly the opposite of what is usually and superficially drawn. The Japanese society was and is a closely controllable and controlled society in contrast with the Indian. Though both societies are not of the individualistic type the Japanese individual, in contrast with the Indian, is not other-worldly in outlook, is not preoccupied with individual salvation, is intensely nationalistic with a high sense of social obligation and duty, is hardworking and committed to his work. With such a cultural ethics or social grammar, the Japanese society is capable of making a success of whatever objective it sets for itself. There is of course the danger that it may work for wrong objectives.²⁸ But that is irrelevant for the immediate point at issue here. The fact is that the cultural ethics or the social grammar of Indian

society is the very opposite of the Japanese and though for argument's sake one may say that Japanese case illustrates that some societies can possibly achieve social and economic progress without any significant changes in the cultural ethics or social grammar, Indian society is not such a society.

Remedies and prospects : The argument developed so far attempts, a little iteratively perhaps, to identify and describe the social and cultural parameters of economic development and social change in India. These are : the social structure of the Indian society with its traditional and other institutions and organizations together with the prevalent personality pattern in the society on the one hand and, on the other, the cultural ethos that animates and conditions the interactions between them which manifest themselves in their functioning and behaviour. This complex as a whole effectively smotheres all impulses toward significant social change from arising from within the society and successfully subverts any exogenous impulses of the same kind to its own purpose of maintaining the *status quo*. These parameters are age old, closely woven into the social fabric and of historically-proved durability.

That they will not remove themselves or wither away because of political liberation or establishment and functioning of formal democratic institutions or planned efforts at economic development may be taken as well established by the experience and developments in India during the 30 years that have elapsed since independence. In all these years these social parameters have been either ignored or treated as easily manageable and removable in the calculations of Indian leaders. A great deal of the failure of the planning effort and the democratic processes in India are directly traceable to this cavalier attitude or negligence. It is necessary that in the future they should be specifically recognized as constraints on progress, should be thoroughly understood and energetically tackled with persistence and ingenuity. I believe that they are capable of being tackled over the long term.

The obvious next question is what needs to be done in this regard, who should do it, where should it be done and in what way? Though I have no cut and dried answers to laddle out on all these questions, I believe I can indicate the broadline along which answers to these questions would lie.

It is perhaps necessary to realise the peculiarly difficult nature

of the problem involved and its tackling. The core dilemma can be put in a nutshell : " we are inescapably committed to the mediation of human structures which are at once indispensable to our goals and at the same time stand between them and ourselves ".²⁹ It is a conflict between ends and means, the split between ' the motion and the act '. Plans and programmes reflect the freedom of technical or ideal choice, but organized action cannot escape involvement, a commitment to personnel or institutions or procedures which effectively qualifies the initial plan. In acting on these problems it is necessary to act not only on the ends but also simultaneously on the means and to see that the ' logic ' of action does not impel one to go from one undesirable position to another. In other words, an unceasing effort has to be made to master the instruments generated in the course of action. Though therefore the broad lines along which the answers to the questions posed above are sketched below in the usual format of objectives, instruments, etc. that should not be mistaken for their true or actual form. At best it is an overly simplified outline along the usual familiar lines to help initial understanding. But its true complications underlined above should never be lost sight of.

Let us begin with the agent of this change. The almost unanimous answer to this would be the Government of India manned by a devoted and dedicated leadership which will not only preach but practise. Such a leadership will have to be a moral leadership as well, a leadership derived from the people but not of them in the sense that will not hesitate to move against the popular beliefs and prejudices if they are harmful to progress at the cost of risking its own popularity.

It will have to be a strong leadership, though one hopes, not an authoritative one, which can make its decisions stick. We shall ignore the questions such as whether such a leadership can arise in the present social milieu, whether, when and if it arises, it will be able to get into the seats of power through the democratic process and whether it will be able to stay there for a sufficiently long period ? Admittedly these are relevant but difficult questions and I do not want to get sidetracked in answering them. I note them and pass on to other ones immediately more relevant to the theme under discussion.

The objectives of change can be spelled out in the light of the

preceding discussin. (a) To change the present social structure based on the caste and property heirarchy (b) To improve and modify the functioning of institutions and organizations by making them more secular (c) To change and secularise the present values and attitudes of the people to make them more efficient and active, economically and socially, and, in the long run, to change the common personality pattern to one more conducive to progress and activity.

All these objectives have to be tackled simultaneously and separately. According to some extreme Marxist formulations, (a) is the basic structure on which (b) and (c) stand in the nature of superstructures and that, provided (a) is tackled successfully the remaining will automatically change in the right direction. Such a simplistic view is not held by a majority of Marxist thinkers. The Chinese view in this regard, referred to earlier, testifies to the difficulties in the way of accepting such a simplistic view, even from the operational point of view. In a way the Chinese experience suggests not only that (b) and (c) have to be individually tackled even after tackling (a) successfully but that tackling them is far more difficult than the tackling of (a). Due note must be taken of this important experience.

There is also a view similar but of a much milder variety, which holds that economic development through planned effort can solve these problems in its stride. This view is also unrealistic and a-historical. Apart from the fact that these very factors prevent the pace of economic development from quickening in such societies the historical evidence regarding countries in the non-communist world which have experienced considerable spurts of economic development, does not lend much support to this view. The cases of Taiwan, S. Korea, Brazil, Venezuela come immediately to mind not to mention the oil producing countries of the Middle East. The older case of Japan emphasizes the same point. Economic development can possibly help the kind of social change required but it cannot by itself bring it about. It cannot be considered a necessary or a sufficient condition for such social change.

The changing of the social and economic structure is difficult enough but as compared to (b) and (c) which involves the changing of "man" in the broadest sense is far more difficult. This, however, is not something that is exotic or out of the blue. The

necessity of changing and building up of the human being as a separate task of development is recognized even by the communists. At the Twenty-First Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev announced that "To reach communism we must rear the man of the future right now." ³⁰ In stating therefore that a new man has to be reared in India to fit the prosperous and poverty free India of the future, nothing exotic or out of this world is being suggested.

The agenda set forth above is perhaps the tallest, one which is easier to state than to achieve. But who can solve his problems by ignoring or underestimating the difficulties of attaining a solution? I do not want to minimise the difficulties but all I want to say is that the problem is not insoluble if we have the will. Where there is the will there is always a way.

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NOTES

15. M. L. Chandawaller, in *Social Change Readings*.
16. G. S. Ghurye, *Cast and Class in India*, Bombay, Popular Book Depot, 1950.
17. S. N. Eisenstadt, 'The Protestant Ethic Thesis, in analytical and comparative context', *Diogenes*, No. 59 (1967). Also in: *Sociology of Religion*, Penguin Modern Sociology Readings, (Ed.) R. Roburson, 1969.
18. In the evolution of Hindu society, according to some sociologists like Dr. Ketkar, we have an exact parallel, though of the opposite sort. Dr. Ketkar argued that the Brahmins created the caste system as an instrument of the expansion of Hindu society in ancient times. Such a system could rapidly absorb into the Hindu fold innumerable tribes and communities, without disturbing their gods, rituals, etc. The society was bound together by the Brahmins acting as priests to all castes and the political power determining from time to time the hierarchy of different castes. In due course, it could be surmised, that the occupations would come to be chosen freely

- rather than by birth and in a sense all castes would have merged into the single caste, Brahmin. But this never happened. The caste system, once it came into being, proved too enduring and the social experiment remained unfinished. Hindu society is an unfinished experiment that has stagnated perhaps beyond repair. Cf. *Maharashtriya Dnyankosh*.
19. M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Allied, Bombay, 1966, pp. 55-56
 20. "India's Response to Modernity" in *Tradition, Change and Modernity*, S. N. Eisenstadt, John Wiley, New York, 1973, pp. 280-306.
 21. Edward Feit, "Pen Sword and People : Military Regimes in the Formation of Political Institution", *World Politics*, January 1973, p. 251.
 22. G. P. Deshpande, "Importance of the Superstructure," *Economic Weekly*, March 1, 1975.
 23. It may perhaps avoid unnecessary misunderstanding by directing attention to the fact that though a selfish person may be defined as one who is motivated strictly by self-interest, "Self-interest" is a complex motivation and cannot be considered to have the same content in all climes and times. The content of self-interest is determined by the social institutions of a given society. See *Social Factors in Economic Development - A Trend Report and Bibliography*, International Sociological Association, Vol. VII, No. 3, 1957.
 24. The noted historian of the Marathas, V. Khare, laid his finger exactly on this weakness in Maratha society and polity as leading to their defeat in their struggle against the English. He did not go deeper into the causes of this but his historian's insight was keen enough to grasp this crucial fact.
मराठ व इंग्रज, न. चिं. केळकर, १९१८ या पुस्तकाची प्रस्तावना.
 25. C. Nakane, *Japanese Society*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1970, quoted by M. N. Srinivas, "Social Environment and Management's Responsibilities", *Economic Weekly*, March 15, 1975, p. 488.
 26. For the following account I am drawing among others on : Ruth Benedict, *Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, 1946. Tadashi Fukutake *Man and Society in Japan*,

- I. Kawasaki, *Japan Unmasked*, 1969. D. G. Haring, " a - nese National Character, Cultural Anthropology, Psychoanalysis and History ", in *Japanese Character and Culture*, (ed.) B. S. Silberman, University of Arizona Press, 1962.
27. Ichiro Kawasaki, *Japan Unmasked*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, and Tokyo, 1969, pp. 36-40.
28. As has been observed " Where modernization means only an increased effectiveness in goal attainment, with no increase in the rationalization of goal-setting process, very serious pathologies can result". Bellah, *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia*, Epilogue, 1965, New York, Free Press, p. 195.
29. P. Selznic, " Foundations of the Theory of Organizations ", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 15 (1948), 25-35.
30. Quoted by Konenkov, in " Communism and Culture ", *Kommunist* No. 7, 1959. English translation in *Soviet Highlights*, No. 3, 1959.