Social Change through Transformation of Tribal People and its Impact on their Living

Rakesh Kumar and Kamal Manohar
Department of Political Sciences,
Himachal Pradesh University, Summer Hill, Shimla, (Himachal Pradesh), INDIA

(Corresponding author: Rakesh Kumar)

ABSTRACT: The transformation and social change which occurs as a result of modernization and development is in terms of cognitive orientation of masses and becomes meaningful with the simultaneous change in socio-economic and political structures. In this paper attempts have been made to study the various theories of transformation, and their impact, on the society in general and specially the tribal society, to bring the social change.

I. INTRODUCTION

Social change occurs because all societies are in a constant state of disequilibrium. The mass of men may wish for a more perfect social equilibrium, a few men may consciously act to attain it – usually by resisting all direct attempts to modify what has come down from the past. Men are the most complex of earth creatures. They want certain things and they want other things that seem at least logically contradictory. In the Western tradition and perhaps in all others, men strive – either simultaneously or alternately towards individual liberty and collective security. Men may be conservative beings, but they welcome some change in their outlook, tools and experience [1].

Social changes in any alteration in the cultural, structural, population are ecological characteristics of a social system such as a society. Sociological interest in explaining and predicting patterns of change began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the social upheaval that accompanied the industrial revolution that surrounded the development of democracy. Although these early efforts focused on identifying universal laws that would account for the complexity of social change. This has since been abandoned in favour of theories more narrowly focused on particular aspects of social life such as politics, religion, economy, technology and the family in the basic sense attention to social change is inherent in all sociological work simply because social system are always in the process of change [2].

Social change is a sociological concept which can refers to large scale or to small scale phenomena. Societies can over a long period of time or through sudden and successful revolution change their nature. This change led to and also expressed a whole complex of change in all kind of social relation from the market and the work place to the family [3].

Social change takes place in all societies at all times. But when a small primitive society comes into contacts with western civilization the changes are bound to be catastrophic. New techniques alter patterns of work and co-operations, the arrival of money greatly accelerate exchange, providing a universal measure of value and rendering wealth storable, new avenues of employment open up. Mission and many kind of government and other developmental agencies increasingly introduce new values and affect the institutional life of the native people [4].

To most sociologists social change means change in institutionalized values and norms. Though social structure is relatively stable, it is capable of evolution (a society may gradually change from polygamy to monogamy) or capable of revolution (France beginning in 1789, drastically altered its feudal ways) [5].

There are four important concept to understand social change as discussed in literature:

1. Consciousness: The element of consciousness plays a significant role in influencing the nature and character of social change. Marx visualized the emergence of class consciousness as the result of progressively increasing contradiction in the capitalist mode of production leading to class struggle and revolution.

2. Domination: Domination or power is the second important concept in the understanding of change. The concept of domination/power in Weberian sense is the realization of one's will even against the resistance of others. Domination is derived from the ownership of means of production. For example, the domination of clergy after bourgeois revolution in Europe underwent change to the extent of extinction.

3. Education: Education is one of the most intriguing and complex causalities in terms of its role in bringing change. Education is basically a means to an end. In many a way, the purpose of education is to get relevant knowledge and expertise for specific jobs which are essential for society. From the perspective of society the purpose of education is functional.

4. Liberalization: The policy decision taken on the liberalization of Indian economy in July 1991 has its roots deep in the large and persistent macro-economic imbalance created since 1980s. In the capitalist development of India, the last decade has a special significance because during this period savings, consumerism and affluence of middle classes had created conditions favourable for capital investment, as well as for a consumerist boom for domestic industrial production. Under the pressure of a consumer demand, new industrial entrants and the changing global trade regime, the Indian government inspired by some leaders then undertake a gradual liberalization of the industrial policy [6].

Social change is often examined at the aggregate level, at the level of the community, village or state. Many of the tribal studies give us a picture of tribal life at the community level, assuming the tribal are homogenous. Hence we come across concepts like 'tribal culture' and 'world view'. The direction of change in the tribal society is similar to that in the larger society; and the nature and direction of change in the larger society greatly influence the internal structure. The norms and life style of the tribal society change in contemporary India is in the direction defined by the capitalist system. A similar process of change is taking place among the tribal [7].

Social change is the significant alteration of social structure (that is of pattern of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values and cultural products and symbols [8].

The broad definition given above comprises both but what is commonly identified as social change which refers mainly to actual human behavior and cultural change. Cultural change, it is true, requires social actors as agents and social change is likely to have cultural counterparts. However changes in certain cultural sub-systems for example, language, the arts and perhaps theological or philosophical systems – may be viewed in virtual abstraction from concrete human behavior [9]. Similarly fluctuations in the fashions of dress may be viewed as "autonomous", although it is also proper to consider such fashions as patterns of appropriate conduct in one sphere of social behavior [10].

A. Basic theories of Social Change

Evolutionary theory is one of the important theory in the field of social change. According to evolutionary theory the directionality of change and in particular the increasing complexity and structural differentiation of society came to be a major tenet of evolutionary theories. Evolutionists used such as Darwinian notions as selective adaptation to account for both the cross-sectional diversity of societies and cultures and the supposedly sequential stages of social organization [11].

The Marxist Dialectical - historical model for the study of social change not been as common in India as the other approaches. Marx's own writing on India, though underlying the need for revolutionary change, focus more prominently upon the static and the primeval character of Indian society. Of course he constantly changes his opinion as new facts came to his knowledge [12].

Functionalist theory – Functionalism is the attempt to explain social phenomena by other social phenomena that are contemporary or quasi-simultaneous. Structural functional change may primarily be located by identifying the emerging principles that lay down new rules about this asymmetry and consequent differentiation and transformation in the institutionalization form of social relationship and their ordering in society. The second major characteristics of the magnitude an incidence of role differentiation in the social structure resulting from social pressures such as increase in population, diversification and growth of industries, rise of cities or urban centers and rise in the economic and technological basis of society. Social change studies focusing upon the process of structural differentiation have covered many areas. Family organization, caste and community structure, factory system, leadership and elite categories have been analyzed for their changing role implications to the social system as a whole [13].

According to Bock (1964) the basic assumption in the ideas of progress and evolution is that change is the characteristics feature of human society. The present observed condition of the society is presumed to be the result of change in the past. Another assumption was that change was inevitable "natural". As a result, it was assumed that change itself called for no explanation while it is the absence of change that called for special explanation in terms of obstacles, unusual condition etc. Finally it was assumed that all societies pass through the same stages and that

the societies existing at present in different part of the world from the African forests to cities like Paris and London represented the different stages in the history of social development. Thus underlying the theories of social progress and evolution is the belief of infinite improvement in social conditions and social relations [14].

The Ancient Yuga Theory: believed in the doctrine of yuga. They looked upon the whole process of cosmic and social change as being cyclical as well as endless, their conception of the cycle is very long, encompassing billions of years. They assumed that there is a perpetual succession of the four yugas, starting from Satyug and ending with Kal yuga [15].

Ibn Khaldun: The fourteenth century muslim thinker developed the notion of a life-cycle of civilizations. He believed that "dynasties" grow and decline like living organisms and indicated that the life span of a dynasty is about one hundred and twenty years or three generations of forty years each. The first generation is tough and has high degree group solidarity. The second generation becomes sedentary being used to a life of luxury and plenty. The third generation becomes inefficient, incompetent and decrepit, ready to be overthrown by a new group which tough and energetic [16].

Oswald Spengler [17] analysed eight historical civilizations, neglecting the 'history less' primitive societies and showed that the fate of each civilization had been to fulfill the life-cycle of an organism, from birth and death. He refers to the society in its rising phase as a "culture" and in its declining phase as "civilization".

Pitrim Sorokin [18] consider the course of history to be continuous though irregular fluctuating between two basic kinds of cultures, the "sensate" and the "ideational". A sensate culture is one in which all the various manifestations, such as art, literature, religion and ethics, appeal to the senses and satisfy sensual desires. On the other hand, the ideational culture is one in which these expressions appeal to the mind or the spirit. It is more abstract and symbolic than the sensate culture. It is obvious that Sorokin's categorical scheme appears to be a value scheme with two basic poles ideational being "good" and sensate being "bad". To assert that culture changes from sensate to ideational or vice versa because it is its "nature" to do so is not a satisfactory explanation. What precisely is the principle of "immanent change" unrelated to external influences or other identifiable events.

If one scans the literature of the post-independence period on social change in India one finds two main trends in the approach to the study of social change: (1) Sanskritisation, westernization, modernization and (2) The Dialectic Historically approach [19].

A comprehensive theory of social and cultural change assumes that the source of change lies both inside and outside the system. The concept of Sanskritisation and Westernization postulated by Srinivas define these two types of sources of social change [20]. Sanskritization represents the actual or aspired for cultural mobility within the framework of great tradition and stratification system of caste. Westernization implies change resulting from cultural contact with the West. Sanskritisation is an extremely complex and heterogeneous concept. The important thing to remember is that it is only a name for a widespread social and cultural process [21]. The concept of modernization, in its initial stage of development, created two contrasting ideal types – modern and traditional. The first was built round the social change in the last few centuries in the West European and North American countries, and the second lamping together situations in all countries of the third world. Modernization is then postulated as a movement from the latter to the former under the impact of and influenced by the former [22]. In contrast to the limited scope, the dialectical historical approach (the Marxist), is much more comprehensive and has greater explanatory power and better diagnostic insight. It not only consider the what but also the how and why social change [23].

By social change is meant the significant alteration of the social structures (that is patterns of social action and interaction) and functions including consequences and manifestations of such structures [24]. It may also mean the process of being different in any sense. It should be stated that when we refer to social change as a process, we introduce the idea of continuity [25]. It implies that there is a continuous change taking place in a definite manner because of the operation of the forces present in the situation. A series of transitions occur between one stage of being and another in social, economic and political spheres [26].

It is necessary in this connection to make a distinction among the concepts change, progress and development. In earlier sociological theories the notion of change, progress and development are sometimes confused or combined in a single concept, but the meaning of these three concepts are by no means the same. Change is a succession of differences in time in a persisting identity [27].

The term progress is commonly used to signify and movement in a desired direction. In the field of politics the ideas of progress is implies specific values. Thus, if one is to judge whether or not progress has occurred in society, one must not only appraise the period of time over which the movement is to take place but of the standard of value to be applied [28].

Social change is like the profound changes, physiological, psychological and social which take place in each individual. When the child is born, he is small and helpless. As he grows up he is highly egocentric. With the

further growth, profound changes take place in his body, mind and social behavior during adolescence. Further changes take place in adulthood when he takes up an occupation, marries and settle down to rear his own family. Finally, further profound changes take place when he retires from his occupation and also from his family life. But throughout he is the same individual having bodily mental and social identity. The ancient Indians recognized this and formulated that they called the dharma [29].

The ancient Indians, nearly three thousand years ago, were aware of the general problem of permanence vs. change and the specific problem of social change. But the general belief, throughout the millennia has been that the social system is something god-given and that it was the study of the political authority to preserve and enforce the sanatana varnasrama dharma, the permanent, underchangeable, social structure based on the four varnas (castes) and the four asramas (the stages of life) [30].

Cohen (1968) has discussed this problem of continuity. He asserts that it is obvious that one cannot conceive of a social structure or social system unless one assumes that social life has continuity. Even when one assumes that all societies are constantly undergoing change, it is important to recognize that what changes in the social structure. Discussing the problem of partial change and total change in social structure he points out that when the whole system changes, there is no way of identifying it as the same system. It is clear that even when there is total change as in a revolution, something persists, something has not changed so that it is possible to say that a change has taken place in the given social system [31].

There is no doubt that the Russian Revolution of 1917 was a great revolution in the total structure of the Russian society. But it is clear that the Russian society has endured in spite of the drastic change in the post Stalin era in 1964 did not "completely" alter the Russian government or the Russian people any more than the 1917 events. Many aspects of Russian culture and many aspects of Russian personality structure have endured inspite of the drastic changes in the Russian social structure. The same thing can be said of the Chinese Revolution of 1948 [32]. Continuous progress depends on two assumptions, namely continuous progress in man's knowledge of his environment and continuous progress in man's moral and social "perfectibility". While there has been considerable evidence regarding progress in knowledge. There has been hardly any evidence regarding the progress in the social and moral spheres [33].

II. CONCLUSION

Transformation through social change can be measured through the level of transformation of Bodh society of Lahaul and Spiti of Himachal Pradesh. The different theories that were put forward strongly argue that tribal population can do wonders if they can be transformed and their level of living can be enhanced by providing them basic facilities.

REFERENCES

[1]. Arnold W. Green, *Sociology: An Analysis of Life Modern Society,* McGraw Hill Book Company, INC Kogakusha Company Ltd., New York, 1964, p. 615.
[2]. *Great Soviet Encyclopedia,* Vol. **26**, Collier Macmillan Publisher, London, 1996, p. 137.
[3]. *Everyman's Encyclopedia,* Vol. **6**, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, Malborne, Toronto, 1978, p. 161.
[4]. *Encyclopedia Britannica,* Vol. **20**, William Benton Publishers, USA, 1965, p. 465.
[5]. *Modern Reference Encyclopedia,* Vol. 18, Gralier Incorporated, New York, 1970, pp. 16-17.
[6]. Paramjit Singh, *Strategies of Social Change in India,* M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996, pp. 14-26.
[7]. Ghanshyam Shah, *Economic Differences and Tribal Identity,* Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1984, p. 8.
[8]. *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* Vol. 14, The Macmillan Company of the Free Press, USA, 1971, p. 366.
[9]. Pitirim Sorokin A., *Social and Cultural Dynamics,* Vol. 1, Poster Sergent Press, Boston, 1957, p. 97.
[10]. A.L. Kroeber, *Style and Civilizations,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1957, p.26.
[11]. N. Jayapalan, *Sociological Theories,* Atlantic Publisher, New Delhi, 2000, p. 9.
[12]. Yogender Singh, *Social Stratification and Change in India,* Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 1997, p. 351.
[13]. Evert E. Hogen, *On the theory of Social Change,* MacMillan Publications, Oxford, 1962, p. 359.
[14]. K.E. Bock, *Theories of Progress and Evolution,* Free Press, New York, 1964, p.36.
[15]. P.C. Roy, *Mahabharta Santiparva,* Vol. VII and VIII, Datta Bose Press, Calcutta, 1928, pp. 165-166.
[16]. Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimal,* Trans. Frenz Resenthal, Pantheon Books, New York, 1958, p. 49.
[17]. Oswald Spengler, *Decline of the West,* English Press, London, 1918, pp. 31-50.
[18]. Pitrim Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics,* Vol. **I**, Poster Sergent Press, Boston, 1957, pp. 98-99.
[19]. A.K. Kamat, *Essay on Social Change in India,* Somaiya Publication Pvt. Ltd., Bombay, 1983, p. 3.
[20]. M.N. Srinivas, *Caste in Modern India and other Essays,* Meteropolitan Publishing Co., Bombay, 1962, p. 43.
[21]. *Ibid.,* p. 61.
[22]. A.R. Kamat, *op. cit.,* p. 6.
[23]. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
[24]. *International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* Vol. **14**, p. 366.

[25]. M. Chakrabarthy, *Judiciary and Social Change,* Vol. **8**, No. 4, `978, p. 20.

[26]. *Ibid.,* p. 20.

[27]. A. Robert Nisbet, *Social Change, Basic,* Blackwell Press, London, 1972, p. 16.

[28]. Julias Gould, et. al., *Dictionary of Social Change,* Unesco Press, New York, 1965, p. 544.

[29]. B. Kuppuswamy, *Social Change in India,* Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Ghaziabad (U.P.), India, 1965, p.13.

[30]. U.N. Ghosal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas,* Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1966, p. 23.

[31]. P.S. Cohen, *Modern Social Theory,* Heinemann Press, London, 1968, p. 10.

[32]. B. Kuppuswamy, *op. cit.,* p. 11.

[33]. *Ibid.,* p. 34.