**Development of Indian Sociology: Some Pragmatic Problems**

**Abstract**

The present paper constructs the structural framework for understanding how sociology advanced in India. The paper constructs a profile of historical and contemporary developments in sociology in India. Describing the historical background of the growth of sociology, the paper identifies the emerging trends in the development of sociology into three parts: colonial, nationalist, and now global or "post" nationalist. Sociology in India should become strong at the regional level and job-oriented with a horizon of intense professional interaction and new ideas and ways of doing sociology by deploying new information technology.

Keywords: Globalization, University, Education, Vernacular, Institutions

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**Introduction**

Sociology, called "social anthropology" at the time, was first taught in India in 1919 at the University of Bombay, now Mumbai. Before that, systematic empirical research was done to help the colonial British government classify, categorise, and record the lives of the people it ruled. Henry Maine, Alfred Lyell, and other Indologists have significantly contributed to the advancement of sociology in India. The British East India Corporation, which began as a trading company in India, consolidated its dominance after defeating the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies under the leadership of Robert Clive in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. This victory at Plassey made the Britishers from traders to rulers of India. Interestingly, this period also marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, with England as its epicentre. Owing to the resentment of British rule due to their invasive style of social reforms, harsh land taxes, and freedom from foreign rule, the First War of Independence, the Indian Mutiny, took place in 1857. It was a major uprising in India against the rule of the British India Company. The uprising presented a significant military challenge to British dominance in the area, and it was ultimately suppressed when the rebels were defeated at Gwalior on June 20, 1858(Brass,1997).

The 1857 uprising demonstrated that the British had little understanding of the folkways, regional customs, traditions, or institutional frameworks of the vast majority of the population. The 1857 rebellion would not have happened if they had known Indian society. As a result, new science has to be developed to comprehend the foundations of Indian culture. Ethnographic studies began to take off after 1857. As ethnography, anthropology, and sociology advanced, they started to offer empirical information about colonial rule. In India, Herbert Risley was a pioneer of ethnographic research. His book Caste and Tribes of Bengal (1891) discussed caste ethnography and how colonial rulers used caste to govern India. Throughout the 19th century, ethnographic studies, which examined caste, religion, rituals, and customs, laid a foundation for colonial control and establishing supremacy over India. The responses of Indian scholars and the intellectual inquiries and colonial concerns of Western scholars impacted the development of sociology and anthropology in India. Christian missionaries were interested in acquiring knowledge of the local languages, folklore, and culture to execute their operations effectively. British officials conducted extensive research on Indian people, ethnicities, and their customs. These intersecting interests led to numerous studies on the caste system, tribal communities, family, marriage, kinship, and rural and urban communities. Most of these investigations contributed to developing a body of knowledge in the form of census reports and gazetteers( Dube, 1990).

 The intellectual journey of sociology in India started in 1914 and continued until 1947, the period of its foundation. Post-independence years from 1947 to 1990 AD, where the Indian government's planned development approach, exposure of Indian scholars to their foreign colleagues' work, and the availability of funds promoted the growth of Sociology. Research in the sociology of planning and development, poverty, law, social change, organisations, and other concerns was promoted during globalisation (1990). The 1990s' significant political, economic, and societal changes in India broadened Indian sociology's scope and focus. Throughout history, sociology has evolved and embraced different perspectives, including Indological, civilisational, structural-functional, conflict, Marxist, phenomenological, subaltern, and post-modernism. It has also critically examined academic colonialism and the Western paradigm of analysis. There have been debates about the importance of indigenisation and the relevance of Indian Sociology (Oommen, 1983; Mukherji, 2006). The study has shifted from pre- and post-independence topics to contemporary issues such as development, poverty, nation-building, democratic polity, education, caste, kinship, family, reservation, social movements, Gandhian contribution, and rural and urban sociology. The study now includes gender studies, social justice and empowerment, Dalit and tribal assertions, ethnic identity, ecology and culture, diversity and pluralism, farmer's plight, media and communication technology, globalisation, environment, and climate change. 2020 and 2021 had a very destructive and sorrowful health crisis known as the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted several social investigations.

**Sociology in the Pre-Independence Period**

British colonial rule in India throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries significantly impacted the development of Indian nationalism. It contributed to the growth of sociology as a discipline in the country. This period produced the early leaders and contributors to the field of Sociology in India. The two distinct traditions that emerged were the Bombay School and Lucknow School around 1919-1921. These two schools laid the foundation of Sociology in India through various viewpoints and theoretical frameworks (Bottomore,1962).

These schools produced researchers, some of whom later founded sociology departments in various universities and institutions. Sociology was introduced as an academic discipline at the Universities of Bombay in 1914 and then at Mysore and Calcutta in 1917. The Department of Sociology and Civics was established at Bombay University in 1919. Patrick Geddes served as the professor and head of the department in 1919, followed by several other notable academics from the Bombay School (Jayaram, 2013). The teaching of sociology was also initiated at three additional universities: Mysore, Osmania, and Poona. Bombay was the epicentre of sociological activity. It aimed to combine Indological and ethnological trends. Many scholars and researchers have come from Bombay. Outstanding scholars who left their mark on the discipline's future were K.M. Kapadia, Irawati Karve, M.N. Srinivas, A.R. Desai, and M.S. Gore. Sociology, anthropology, and economics were all taught. Topics covered in the classes included social problems (crime, prostitution, and beggary), social psychology, and culture. It addressed tribal, ritual, and urban settings. Before independence, no solid scientific empirical traditions had evolved.

Lucknow School and its founder, Radhakamal Mukerjee, were critiques of the colonial theoretical frameworks. It was said that Western Sociology's theories, ideas and concepts were fundamentally distinct from the Indian concept of reality. Sociology was considered a jumbled bag lacking a distinct identity (Rao,1982). There was a need to incorporate indigenous concepts, techniques, and theories in Indian sociology, the indigenisation of sociology.

The two schools of thought formed unique traditions and left a significant impact. The Bombay School focused on fieldwork and integrating the sociological, Indological, and historical viewpoints. It was universally acknowledged that there should be no differentiation in utilising these views in research investigations undertaken at different times and locations (Shah, 1994). Ghurye employed these concepts in his research, including many domains and methodologies. Many of his students and research researchers explored various themes, employing distinct theoretical frameworks. For example, M. N. Srinivas adopted the structural-functional approach, whereas A. R. Desai leaned towards the Marxist framework. In contrast, the Lucknow School emphasised the philosophical foundations of social reality. It gained recognition for its exploration of post-colonial social and economic reconstruction, as well as its dedication to addressing grassroots issues and problems. Additionally, the school was known for its involvement in social policy and development planning.

**Sociology in the Post-independence Period**

The Post-Independence Period of Sociology saw several universities and colleges established in different states, and most of them also introduced the teaching of sociology. Sociology and social anthropology were taught at three universities in 1947: Bombay, Calcutta, and Lucknow. Sociology and social anthropology were also taught at smaller colleges in Poona, Mysore, and Hyderabad. Most sociology and social anthropology units were initially part of the Economics department. In 1952, social anthropology and sociology in India started to grow(Rao,1982)

It began to draw the most talented and ambitious professors and students nationwide. Thus, the trend of the establishment of sociology teaching and research centres began at the turn of the twentieth century and accelerated after independence. The federal government supported social science research through a specialised body. The organisations began operating to advance the profession. The Indian Sociological Society was founded in Bombay, and the Sociological Bulletin was published as the society's official publication. Large-scale doctoral research at the university advanced research efforts, increasing the significance of sociological thought and research in the planning process and the significance of social science research in the construction of research institutes( Lakshmana,1974). Sociology has become a popular subject at many universities and colleges in India. By distinguishing itself from psychology, anthropology, social philosophy, and social work, sociology gained academic recognition and created its own identity as a subject. The curriculum included specialities in rural and urban sociology, sociology of kinship, religion, stratification, education, political sociology, medical sociology, social demography, and sociology of economic growth.

The studies during the early 1950s and 1960s focussed on the issues of nation-building, community development, education, industrialisation, rural transformation and social institutions as the country grappled with forming a new sovereign nation-state. Sociology flourished at such elitist centres solely through the medium of English. As a result, sociology in these centres has generally been oriented toward American and European models to stay up with international trends in sociology. American sociological traditions have a significant impact on sociology education in India. This is obvious from syllabus themes such as Parsons and Merton's structural-functional theory and research methodology. Aside from American intellectual influences, French, German, and Marxian intellectual influences also had an impact. This elitist sociology is noticeably different from the sociology taught and learned in universities and colleges in areas remote from the said centres through local/regional languages. This type of sociology, known as vernacular sociology, is taught in most of the country's institutions and colleges.

The functional, structural, and Marxist approaches were applied to understand the Indian social reality. In the 1970s, the issues of national integration, marginalised communities, women, peasants and workers, modernisation, development, urbanisation, changing caste dynamics, social mobilisation, social movements and the status of women were debated and written about (Kattakayam, 2012), The research conducted on rural villages, as well as the examination of caste, family, and kinship, gained significance because over 80% of the Indian people resided in rural regions. It involved detailed fieldwork to gain a direct understanding of people's lives. This research led to the development of significant concepts in studying Indian society, such as 'Sanskritisation' and 'dominant caste', by M. N. Srinivas. Srinivas conducted field-based studies in the Coorg region of South India and later in Rampura village in Karnataka, as documented in his work published in 1996 and in his 1967 study of a town in Rajasthan, B. R. Chauhan revealed ties between members of a local community and others in the surrounding region. These associations were based on caste affiliations that extended across other villages. The study of tribal, peasant, or ethnic groups began to prioritise the "field view" above the "book view," with sociology and social anthropology appearing to have overlapping distinctions. For M.N. Srinivas, fieldwork was integral to sociology, and methods like participant observation should be used to study developmental problems( Oommen& Mukherjee 1986; Dhaanagree,1993)

Sociologists like Victor D’souza stated that the full use of the scientific method could observe Sociological knowledge. The sociological approach involves the development of theoretical models and the formulation and testing of hypotheses. This approach allows us to analyse and interpret various aspects of structure and ideology in small-scale and large-scale societies. On the other hand, anthropologists primarily focus on studying people from different cultures. They employ methods such as participant and non-participant observation and provide detailed descriptions of the individuals and communities they study (D'Souza, 1998)

The 1980s in India were a critical period marked by political upheaval following the killing of its Prime Minister. Social movements addressed issues such as unemployment, farmers' struggles, the challenges Dalits faced, and the need for reservations.
Several societal issues, such as the plight of backward classes, the occurrence of communal riots, and the rising incidence of crimes against women, garnered attention from social scientists and researchers. Areas like the sociology of deviance, sociology of knowledge, sociology of science and technology(Uberoi,1978) and historical sociology started gaining importance. The task of sociology in the eighties in India analysed the transformation of Indian society (Damle, 1982). New ideas and protest movements took on a new level of importance. I thought about promoting research in the 1990s in the sociology of planning and development, sociology of professions, sociology of organizations, social dimensions of poverty, law, social change, sociology of national integration, etc.

**Sociology in the Globalization Period**

In the 1990s, India saw significant political, economic, social and cultural transformations. Consequently, Indian sociology saw growth and increased in its diversity. Multiple subjects garnered attention. This decade prioritised the empowerment of individuals at the local level, shown by the implementation of the Panchayati Raj system and the promotion of gender equality and development. Since gaining independence, India has embraced a mixed economy approach and prioritised welfare values. However, it has also allowed the dominance of market-oriented policies. In 1991, the government initiated a series of economic reforms to enhance the economy's openness to the global community (Singh, 1997). The liberalisation policy granted foreign enterprises and capital more autonomy to participate in the Indian market. Sociological investigations of liberalisation, privatisation, and globalization characterise the last decade of the 20th century (LPG). Since its inception in 1991-1992, this process has led to the emergence of new communication technologies, increased trade and commerce across international boundaries, the establishment of organised retail marketplaces (mega-marts), and the growth of a new middle class in the private sector, particularly in metropolitan India. Sociological research studied rights, sociology of management, human resources, media and society, and action sociology due to the profound impact of globalisation on Indian cultural heritage and societal dynamics. Courses such as sociology of public order, peace and security, development, security management, and information technology gained significance not only in terms of teaching but also in researching societal development. These courses are also highly relevant for contemporary jobs and professions.
According to Yogendra Singh (2004), the impact of globalisation on society, culture, and economy resulted in many ideological complexities in its evaluation in theory and practice. Singh argues that globalisation is a consequence of advancements in science and technology. It has presented both novel prospects and novel challenges. Singh asserts that adopting a multidisciplinary perspective enables us to comprehend the complexities of the social realm, particularly in light of phenomena such as globalisation, which exhibit dualistic characteristics. The socioeconomic disparities in India have emerged as a significant challenge from globalisation. How can the gradual process of globalisation effectively address the difficulties posed by society? The issue of identity further complicates the concept of globalisation. Globalisation has given rise to a novel phenomenon known as "privatisation," resulting in various forms of economic and social disparity. The market, discretionary income, and the middle class have transformed, resulting in new disparities and distinctions. Globalisation has simultaneously generated societal demands and wants while giving rise to inequality and inequities. New areas like civic society (Gupta,1997), crisis and resilience in the process of social change (Singh,1993), secularism and national integration (Joshi,1997).

**Pragmatic Problems of Sociology in India**

Indian sociology has achieved a commendable level of excellence in teaching and research. The number of teaching departments and teachers in universities, colleges, and research institutions has increased exponentially. It is a valuable subject and offers work opportunities in government agencies and bureaucratic settings. It is a subject that is valuable and offers work opportunities in government agencies and bureaucratic settings, research institutes, social organisations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The subject is multidisciplinary. The subject includes several aspects of society, such as rural sociology, urban and industrial sociology, gender, and communication.

The Indian Sociological Society (ISS) has played a prominent role during its seven-decade history in attaining this accomplishment**.** At present, sociology in India is at a critical juncture. In the long term, several difficulties have emerged in the academic discipline of sociology. The persisting influence of India's colonial history continues to impact pedagogy and practice, while American academic dominance shapes our academic pursuits, including notions, frames of reference, and theoretical frameworks. Indian sociology has yet to significantly contribute to social theory and conceptual growth, Modi (2010). The elitist vs Vernacular debate( ) in the past highlights the dominance of the English language in the teaching and research of Sociology, posing a major obstacle to the development of Vernacular sociology taught in regional languages. The unavailability of textbooks in vernacular languages in social sciences limited their sustenance to become a part of mainstream research in terms of quality, quantity, and academic rigour. Teaching sociology in the Indian language to students with little English competence presents a challenge. The problem is exacerbated by the nominal presence or even complete absence of quantitative components in sociology courses, which has given the subject an incorrect qualitative focus by default. As a result, sociology courses do not have a quantitative component. Students from remote areas who are instructed in their native language are disadvantaged. The issue of teaching language in sociology goes beyond the availability of textbooks. It emphasises the need for concept translation. Numerous sociological ideas do not have an unambiguous analogue in Indian languages. As a result, the process of indigenising sociology must consider the linguistic issue

 However, Jodhka well highlighted the importance of the English language in academics as a medium of global interconnectivity and skill for getting jobs in today’s professional job market at the ISS midterm conference at the University of Lucknow(2023).

While sociology has grown in popularity in India in recent years, finding teaching and research positions in the discipline has become increasingly difficult. To secure a position, one must present and publish research articles, win research funding and awards, and have teaching experience. In most circumstances, these are the minimum requirements for non-tenure track employment. This layered and unequal process of 'becoming a sociologist' is complicated for those of marginalised caste, class, race, gender, location, and religion. The growth of neoliberal policies in recent years has resulted in a growing trend of academic labour privatisation and casualisation. While many private universities now offer Sociology departments, their pay scales remain significantly lower than those recommended by India's University Grants Commission (UGC). Along with teaching and research, many instructors are expected to conduct administrative and non-academic activities. The inequalities that exist at the national and international levels are becoming increasingly apparent to Indian sociologists. Nevertheless, the history of sociology has not been particularly reassuring. The persistence of feudalism and colonialism in princely states was partially attributable to sociology. In India, Sociology encounters many obstacles, including funding, faculty shortages, and student quality, which result from state government neglect and failure. The less academically talented student population frequently pursues sociology due to the structure of our postsecondary education. This is particularly accurate for graduate students. The students in this course possess a limited history of mathematics, need more exposure to quantitative methods, and have inadequate foundations in mathematics. Sociology is perceived as a "soft option" and an "easy" subject in which any subject can be passed, according to prevalent belief.

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