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THEME
CHALLENGES BEFORE SOCIAL
SCIENCES

DEDICATED TO MEMORY OF
PROFESSOR KAUSTUBHA NAND BHATT
FOUNDER & LIFE TRUSTEE
INDIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION - ISSA



GUEST EDITOR
SPECIAL VOLUME

N RAJARAM
Former Professor
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Central University of Gujarat

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**GUEST EDITOR
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Risk Culture and Angst Society

Editorial - Social Science Gazetteer

-Volume 2 Number 2 – July – December 2007-

Before the emergence of distinct disciplines of social science, the knowledge *per-se* was deposited in folklore, religious scriptures and philosophy of every hue in cultures and civilizations the world over. Social Philosophy in a way is the mother of modern social science(s). Social Sciences-its various disciplines that exist today, were not well entrenched in the world of knowledge, more particularly as 'distinct subjects of study' at the university level for a fairly long time. However, with the changing social context *knowledge* got trichotomized into science, social science and humanities, and social science disciplines acquired status and respectability of being included in the curriculum of universities after secularisation of university education.

The Industrial Revolution not only gave fillip to science and technology but also accelerated changes - economic, social and cultural – in society. It may be noted that the process of industrialisation was responsible for industrial - urbanisation and concomitant urbanism, individualism, family, community and social disorganisation, individuation, social conflicts of all sorts- caste, communal, ethnic, social, etc. The two World Wars, the Cold war, the regional conflicts in the Middle East did create such conditions which destabilised regional societies and created a platform for social sciences to not only study changing social conditions but also make effective interventions in individual and social circumstances.

Another factor needs adequate attention in this context. Science in comparatively lesser manner but technology in a big way gave substantial spurt to '*Economic Growth*' and later on to the so called '*Development*'. As already stated, the process of industrialisation, urbanisation, individualisation, economic growth and development did not only create new types of social problems but in this wake social sciences - Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Public

Administration, Psychology, Pedagogy etc. - also got primacy and there grew a number of '*social professions*' to deal with the new social problems. Scientific advances, technological innovations, economic growth and development have not only altered the mode of production but effected other changes too: the globe is epithetically called a '*global village*'; instead of production by the masses, mass production has taken over production process; individual identity and existence has put the group / communal living at the margins; cultural deprivation is more distinct even in traditional societies and consumerism is more pronounced; the polity is changed from the outmoded royalty and dictatorship to democracy, etc. There is, however, another face of social change also i.e. the increase in societal intolerance, religious fundamentalism, terrorism, etc. Thus, in the contemporary context whereas technology has completely changed the eco-industrial perspective globally, the other undercurrents have certainly changed the matrix of human relations, group interactions, ethnic and communal aspirations and national agenda. In this changing scenario the importance of social science cannot perhaps be minimised.

Technology, it may be well understood, is not neutral; it is now wielded by economically powerful groups in the developed and the developing societies; the socio-psychological and eco-political effects of hi-tech are unsurmountable particularly in the traditional societies. And now it may not be out of context to mention that '*technology has established its own empire, completely subjugating the branches of knowledge, leaving social sciences far behind*'. However, the social issues that have come to forefront e.g. the increasing inequalities, widening inequity, frightening social discrimination - caste, class, gender - do require deep study, analysis and interventions by the social scientists and other social professionals. It was in this context that the social scientists, rejecting the ideas of growth and economic development, dreamt of *social development*. The humane scientists, technologists, social scientists, social activists, theologians all aspired for a sustainable, equitable and balanced development- *Social Development*, which, it was once argued, will be ushered in by modern technology. It is, however, an *Uncertain Quest* due to the skewed functioning of technology and malfunctioning of social sciences.

Unbridled science and technology have created today a '*Risk Society*'. The hi-tech, bio-tech, nuke-tech without social purpose and direction have created a number of technology - induced hazards – water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, chemical pollution, atomic radiation, genetically modified organisms, which are proving detrimental to the very existence of humanity. These are creating a *Risk Culture* and an *Angst Society*. Social Sciences too are culprits in this context: there is very limited access of social sciences in the realm of science and technology; social sciences have dwelt negligibly in areas of policy formulation and action in this area; social scientists engaged in the study of science and technology do not go beyond the preliminary analysis and hardly make a pressure group so as to harness forces of science and technology for societal good. Therefore, there is lag and hiatus between *the ideal and outcome of science and technology and consequent neglect of social sciences globally*. There is perhaps an urgent need of a symbiotic relationship between science, technology and society; in building this relationship the positive role of social science is a prerequisite factor. And, it is in this context too that we need a *National Social Science Policy*.

We are presenting in this number the Presidential Address given by Professor D.N. Majumdar to the Second Conference of the All India Sociological Conference held at Patna University, Patna in 1956. This Address too posits a certain role for social science and the social scientists in India. Professor Majumdar who started his services in the Department of Economics, Lucknow University, Lucknow, was the first to break away from the department which used to have combined teaching of Economics, Sociology and Social Work, with courses on tribal studies. In 1956, only after four years of the establishment of the Department of Anthropology, Majumdar not only thanked the Indian Sociological Conference for electing an anthropologist as the President of the Conference but also spoke eloquently about the 'Kinship between Sociology and Social Anthropology'. This inter-relationship, he claimed, gave new leads to education. He succinctly observed that sociology in India grew under the foster care of Economics (Lucknow

University) and Political Science (Calcutta and Benaras Hindu University). Sociology, it may be noted has also grown under the patronage of Anthropology (Bombay, Baroda, and Delhi Universities) for a considerably long period in the country. This foster-care, patronage, comradeship has only enriched sociology.

In the Presidential Address, Professor Majumdar asserts that sociology is an instrument of social policy and the role of sociologist is that of an engineer who rebuilds the community (many 'classical sociologists' disagree with these prescriptions for sociology) but in the second breath he points to '*grave dangers from Social Work to Sociology*' which course was opened in different Universities/Institutes (for example, it was started by his 'parent' department at Lucknow University and at the Institute of Social Sciences, Agra). And if we survey the structures of Sociology Departments in the Universities today, in 2007 after fifty years when Professor Majumdar had pointed to this 'danger' we find that many sociology departments even in the premier Universities of the country have started courses in social work at the Master's level (Aligarh Muslim University; Benaras Hindu University; Barkatullah University of Bhopal; H.P. University at Simla; Rani Durgawati University, Jabalpur etc.). This has helped sociology more than social work. Professor Majumdar's concern for tribal rehabilitation and welfare, rural community welfare and development, slum clearance and urban community and development may be done more efficiently and professionally by the professionally trained social workers. Sociology, anthropology etc., have failed in this context because their basic concerns so far have been '*study and research*' only. Social Work as a social profession may certainly be helped by sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, psychology etc.

This was exactly being done at the Lucknow University's department from where Majumdar broke away in 1952 to establish a separate department of Anthropology. 'Lucknow School' to my mind, represented the unity of social sciences and the inter-disciplinary teaching and research there enriched the different disciplines and complimented each other in theory and practice.

Professor Manjumdar's pointed reference to 'social sciences' and 'competent social science personnel' in umpteen fields is welcome pointer for all of us. His intentions or commitment to 'social science' may be gauged from his own statements: *'The need for more competent social science personnel has been felt particularly acutely in the context of tribal rehabilitation and welfare; 'competent practitioners in social sciences are needed in the context of 'rural development, slum clearance, problems of human relations and cultural dynamics'; 'we can build for the future if we know what to avoid and what to lay our hands on. That is what the social scientists are expected to do'.* Thus, we may infer that specialised disciplines of sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, etc., may not deliver the goods, instead there is a need of *unitary social science* not only to comprehend the problems holistically and realistically but also to handle them practically. The threads of the contemporary *social science movement* may also be picked up from this Presidential Address of Professor D. N. Majumdar.

Rajeshwar Prasad

Chief Editor

- - - - **From the President's Desk**

Dear friends and respected authors,

It gives me immense academic pleasure to present before all of you the Special Volume of 'Social Science Gazetteer' on 'Challenges Before Social Sciences'. I am grateful to my friend and a renowned Social Scientist Professor N. Rajaram to act as 'Guest Editor' of this Special Volume. His critical remarks on articles and depth of understanding about Social Sciences in terms of theory, concepts, ideology and pedagogy can be accepted by me as 'sustainable Knowledge Capital'. Thanks, Dear Professor N. Rajaram for accepting the request to direct this Special Volume from the team of Indian Social Science Association.

Friends, before making comment on the world of Social Sciences I would like to inform you with pleasure that Special Issue (1,2,3) of Volume 19 (2) on 'Indian Sociological Thought - Continuity and Change' published by ISSA have appeared in the 'book-market' or 'Knowledge-market' in the form of a book "Re-Imagining Indian Sociology". The book is published by M/s Rawat Publications, Jaipur - a publisher of 'International Repute'. ISSA is grateful to the enlightened team of M/s. Rawat Publications headed by Shri Kailash Rawat. The set of three issues of Social Science Gazetteer on 'Indian Sociological Thought' have also been highly appreciated by the leadership of Indian Sociological Society. I am grateful to Professor Maitrayee Chaudhuri, the former President of Indian Sociological Society and her team for appreciating the efforts of ISSA. ISSA wish that this academic coordination between ISS and ISSA will continue in future also.

The present volume of special nature is associated with what is happening in the field of social sciences in the 'era of insecurity' institutionalised by neo-liberal order. My understanding about Social Sciences, by and large, is organically linked with those conversations