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Social changes in rural community

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Received- 05.01. 2022, Revised- 10.01. 2022, Accepted - 14.01.2022 E-mail: chandrabhansinghbhu@gmail.com

Abstract: *Changes in rural community or spheres of change in rural community:- Rural community has changed a lot. Every day, the face of the rural community is changing. Various methods are being employed for changing the face of the rural community. This has been possible because of the use of the factors enumerated above. The changes that have taken place in the rural community may be studied under the following heads-*

Key Words: Changes, rural community, Various methods, employed, factors enumerated, discernable.

(1) Change in family structure- As a result of the application of various methods of rural change, the face of the Indian rural community has changed to a very great extent. The sphere where this change is most discernable is the family structure. Now joint family system is becoming rare even in the villages. Single families are replacing joint families. This is due to growth of individualism and economic considerations. Apart from it, the control of the family over the individual is becoming less. Many of the duties that were performed by the family in the villages have now been taken over by either the society or the individual himself. Education which was once upon a time the basic responsibility of the family has now been taken over by the society. In spite of all these, in rural community, joint family system is viewed with respect. This respect is more theoretical than practical. Women in the families even in the villages are now having a better economic and political status. As a result of education, consciousness has grown amongst women, and they are not at all prepared to be treated as dumb driven cattles. This has changed the face of the family structure in the villages.

(2) Change in Jajmani' and caste system- Jajmani system was a very typical feature of the Indian village life. In this system the so called 'Prajā' was at the service of Jajman'. This system, although aimed at making the work of the life in the rural community smooth had taken the form of exploitation of the Prajā' or Kamin' by the Jajmans'. The 'Jajmani' had the right to force the Kamin' do whatever he wanted and to any extent he wanted. This system has now more or less come to an end because of the equality of the citizenship guaranteed by the constitution of free India. Various programmes aimed at improving the status of the scheduled and backward classes have earned them respectable status, in old Jajmani system, those who worked as 'Prajā' or 'Kamin' were given certain commodities, not money in term as a method of paying for the labour and this system has been changed. With the industrialization and urbanization, many of the persons have moved to town and there they have money as well as better status. This has changed the very face of the relationship between various classes of people in the villages.

Like the 'Jajmani system', the caste system is also crumbling in the village. So-called untouchable or 'Harijans' are no more considered to be forced labour. Because of the education and other factors, the brahmins are no more considered to be superior-most class. Educated persons of other communities as well as better off persons have earned better social status. Similarly the system of having two classes i.e. the upper class and Harijans is also coming to an end. Economic conditions, industrialization have improved status of the so called untouchables. Laws framed by the Government to protect the interests of the Harijans and backward classes have disturbed the existing caste system. Caste Panchayats do exist, but they are now not so powerful as they were in the past. They do not solely control the behaviour and pattern of life of the individual member of a particular caste. In spite of these changes, many of the features of the caste system exist in the villages. People still marry within the cast and do not dine with the members of the other caste. Apart from it, in the recent years, because of the



elections, the caste system has improved. People have become caste conscious and in many places members of a particular caste got elected because of the pre-dominance of that caste in that area.

Thus we find that although, the remnants of the castes and the Jajmani system are still to be found in the village, but they are under going serious changes. Many of the features of the caste and Jajmani system have actually been disturbed and they are in the process of being changed further.

(3) Change in the system of marriages and other customs- In ancient times, the marriage in the villages was performed more or less in the same family circle. It means that people did not marry outside the complex of their status or the blood. Marriages were arranged by the brahmins or purohits and the young boys and girls were tied into wedlock. Now the situation has changed. Marriages continue to be performed within the same caste but purity of blood and such other considerations do not very much matter. Most of the marriages are arranged once but the arrangements are made by the parents, and sometimes even boys and the girls have a say in the matter. Inter-caste marriages are not unknown. Marriage is arranged on the basis of the ancestral pedigree, economic status of the family, social connection etc. All this goes to prove that the old system of marriage has also undergone change.

(4) Change in food, clothing and habits- Food habits are also being changed. In olden days people of certain classes cooked their own food but now there are no such restriction. Milk, vegetable etc. which generally did not form part of the food in the villages are now being consumed there. Vegetable oil has also reached villages and so has the tea and the new system of smoking. Similarly people in the villages have new taken to new type of dresses. Turban is not the traditional head gear and young boys are seen in slacks and girls put on frocks, salwar, kurta etc. Lahnga, dupatta are no more traditional dresses of the village women folk. These are now using saris and their attitude towards ornaments also have changed. Use of the things of the fashions, cosmetics, keeping head uncovered etc. are some of the new changes. Ornaments that the women of the villages used to wear in the past were very heavy, but now light and fine ornaments are being used. This is due to education and other economic factors. All these things go to prove that the face of the rural community has changed very much and is undergoing further change.

(5) Change in Housing- Indian villages have yet to become modern and up to date, so far as the housing is concerned, but in the recent years, the condition of the houses in villages have improved. These houses are not only better built but also scientifically planned and built. Many other modern amenities like electricity, electrical goods and appliances are also be found in the village houses. Formerly there were no sanitary facilities but now they are integral part of the houses in the villages. New types of kitchens and cooking methods are to be found in the houses. With the betterment of the economic condition now pucca houses are being built in the villages. Cement, brick, iron etc. are increasingly used in the houses that are built in the villages now. Thatches are becoming rare and rare. There is a tendency to decorate the houses externally and get them whitewashed at regular intervals. All these things indicate that the housing situation is improving in the villages.

(6) Change in the field of sanitation, diseases, rural health etc- In free India, the face of the rural scene has very much changed so far as sanitation, cleanliness and medical facilities are concerned. Medical and health services in rural areas have been improved. They are far from satisfactory even new but the improvement and a marked improvement is there. Because of these services, the diseases are easily checked. Due to education, people living in the villages have become enlightened and they do not believe that diseases are result of evil spirits or effect of evil stars. They now want to cure them through scientific methods.

Sanitation and cleanliness has improved. This has checked the spread of diseases, improve the rural health and added to longevity to the people living in the rural areas. Government have made it obligatory on the part of block and village panchayats and other institutions responsible for community development and other local



bodies working in rural areas, to keep the villages, its streets and other places clean. New methods for making manures have been taught and so all that dirt and garbage that was responsible for spreading diseases is placed in such a manner that it is neither spoiled nor does it cause spread of diseases.

(7) Change in the field of literacy- The face of the rural society is very much changed so far literacy is concerned. The percentage of literacy in the rural areas has very much gone up. There are now schools in the villages and children are sent to them so that they grow up as educated young boys. Even adults who are illiterate are being made literate through programme of social education or adult education. Thus an all out effort is being made to improve the literary and the education in these villages.

(8) Change in economic field- So far as economic field is concerned, a lot of changes have taken place in rural society. The economic condition has improved. Educated young boys and girls now want service. The agriculture production has improved and the prices of the food grains have also gone up. Because of all these factors, the economic condition of the people living in the rural area has improved. Cooperative societies, banks, and other institutions that provide economic help to the villages have started functioning in these villages. Because of these institutions, the condition of the villages has improved economically.

(9) Changes in political field- Lot of changes have taken place in the political set up of the villages. Now there is a democratic decentralization of administration. The district administration exercises its own control through its own agency and the village folk have their own panchayat to which they elect their own representatives. Due to education and the working of the democratic system in this country, people of the villages have become politically more conscience.

Apart from these good points, certain bad points have also emerged in the political life to these villages. Caste rid complex has created a new problem in these villages. As a result of this type of politics, the pre-dominant caste does not allow them inority to have any say in the administrative matters of the villages. Factionalism has also come up in the villages. Politics of violence is also becoming popular in the rural areas. All these factors have changed the political scene in the rural area.

In fact the rural scene of this country has been amenable to change since early times. After independence these changes have become very widespread and very vital. The very concept of life has changed and so has changed the pace of change. The village we find today is far different from the village community of the medieval ages. It is also different from the rural community of the British days. It is no more conservative society. It is a society which is hanging every day. Dr. Altekar has in this respect rightly remarked :

"The headman has lost his importance, the brahmin has ceased to be hereditary village council, the panchayat is never heard. The village fund also vanished. Village life to a great extent remains the same, people still till their lands and so their crops in the old manner, but even here changes are coming and coming fast enough. The theory, therefore, that the Indian village community do not change is completely disproved by teachings of history."

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