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METHODOLOGY AND IDEOLOGY

In sociological writings of the recent decades, methodology has grown into a distinct branch wherein the conceptual framework of an inquiry is examined. The writings of 19th century thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Simmel, Toqueville and Tonnies have provided a vast ground for the latter-day methodological discussions.

In the natural sciences, methodology has been a pronounced feature of modern studies and enquiries. At the highest level of abstraction, an epistemology or theory of the method of science has been well formulated. Since the objects of natural science are not susceptible to many variations, there is a greater uniformity in the assumptions of an epistemology of science. In the social sciences, the objects of study are the human beings, who have always been prone to change; hence an epistemology for social sciences has been tentatively formulated. The positivism of social sciences has made an attempt to construct an epistemology; within limits it has given a good account of itself, but it is genetically different from the theory of scientific knowledge.

In the methodology of social sciences, the methods of inquiry are also diverse: structural-functionalism, structuralism, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism are among the better known approaches to investigation.
There seems to be a very close link between ideology and methodology. Structural-functionalism is derived from positivism - experimentation, observation, etc. - but it is charged by its critics with upholding the *status quo*. The functional theory in general overemphasizes systemic integration, while at the same time it underplays the power and dominance exercised by certain strata. Likewise, neo-Romantic ideology of the recent decades is said to inform the schools of phenomenology, ideology, etc.¹ which are opposed to positivistic methodology. In regard to a means and ends relationship, we may note that ideology plays a specific role in social sciences. In the natural sciences, ideology comes into play usually with reference to the ends. Thus, a society may invest money on developmental science, another on defence-oriented science, and so on. But, relatively speaking, social science does not have even a limited autonomy, because both the subjects who investigate and the objects of their investigation are subject to variations. Indeed to separate value and fact here becomes difficult. Therefore we may say that the ideology is of primary relevance to social sciences, but of secondary importance to natural sciences.

Standardization or normative control in natural sciences is easy to arrive at and it is also maintainable. In the social sciences norms are culture-specific and there is no uniform control over its methods. But it has the advantage of flexibility.

The contemporary Western sociology has been dominated by positivistic methods and structural-functional goals. The major assumption of the structural-functional school is that the society is composed of interdependent parts which function together in order to contribute to a social balance. The school when it came to existence perfectly matched the social reality of the time. The structural-functionalism of social anthropology in Britain arose out of the colonial setting. The British had ruled vast colonies in Asia and Africa with minimum interference in the social customs and traditions of the natives. Indeed the British were proud of their ability to maintain native societies with a minimum social disorganization.

The structural-functionalism of American society has derived from the American ideology that it is a free society in which any ethnic group stands in equidistant relationship from the other (excepting, of course, the Blacks) and that there is a consensus on the social values in American society. The British did employ ruthless power in turbulent situations (as for instance the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857) and the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the mid-20th century but it is by and large true of peaceful times of colonialism that a social balance was maintained. Likewise the treatment of Blacks has been harsh in American society.

but by and large it is true that all its peoples - irrespective of
ethnicity or nationality-share a set of common values.3

The Marxist methodology fares no better. In the officially
sponsored methodology, there is no scope for "a priorism", "positivism"
and other "bourgeois" products. The "scientific" theory of East Europe
rests on a self-evident logic. It discontenances the formalistic view
of Western positivism which attempts to arrive at a nomothesis, ignoring
historic and cultural specifics. Stalin for one opposed the "bourgeois"
methodology.4

In India, sociology is of a more recent origin. By and large
the Indian social scientists have taken up a integral approach wherein
ethnography, indology, sociology are used to derive inferences. D.P.
Mukerjee, R.K. Mukerjee, G.S. Ghurye, N.K. Bose are among such individuals.
In general, in India there is a much less emphasis on methodology than
in the West. In the West also there is a growing awareness of the
futility of excessive refinements in methodology. It is also felt that
undecipherable jargon, mystification of social reality and commercialization
of research have detracted the social sciences from academic excellence.5

3. Ibid. (cf. Andreski's view that functionalism in American society
is a mask drawn on the glaring contradictions of that society by
the American academics, pp. 56-57).

4. See S. Ossowski, Class Structure in the Social Consciousness,

Such shortcomings do not perhaps affect the contributions of a virtuoso. But the ordinary practitioners of craft have lowered the academic standards.

An important reason for the inapplicability of a positivistic method in India is that it has an unusually complex society: values, beliefs, myth, symbol, ritual and economic and political dimensions mesh together. Positivism claims to be value-neutral, and according to Mannheim, concerns itself only with the theoretical reality.6 That is to say it accepts only those facets of social life which can be subjected to experimentation and control. Hence it rejects the other facets of culture which are not "measurable". This imparts a parochial quality to positivism. No aspect in Indian society, even a mundane occurrence like economic exchange, can be free from non-economic influences. Tribe, caste, class and faction are interlinked social phenomena which are riven with values.

As rightly noted by S.C. Dube7 in his address: "Indian sociology at the Turning Point", the metaphysical quest and empiricist inquiry have thrived side by side in Indian society. The epics, scriptures, myths (puranas) are not only repositories of metaphysical notions but also storehouses of folk, regional and national customs and behaviour. Dube notes:


"The assumptions and principles underlying even the concept of dharma related to kāla (time), deśa (place/country), and patra (person/social category). Several dimensions of the social reality, thus, were central even to the understanding and explication of dharma. To comprehend dharma it was not enough only to know its philosophy; its empirical referents were also crucial for its true understanding. It is often forgotten that the pattern of ancient social thought was wide; besides dharmaśastras, it also produced arthashastraś and kammaśastras. These works undeniably had metaphysical and ethical undertones, but at the same time they had an integral vision of life which did not discount social reality."^8

Thus, much of exegential work in India was also historical and empiricist. Among other accounts of the medieval period (approx. 7 to 17th century A.D.), Kalhana's history of Kashmir in 11th century, the court chronicles of Muslim kings, the reports of travellers like Marco Polo, Firishta, works of scholars like Al-baruni, described Indian society comprehensively. To be sure, these were not systematic investigations but they had made painstaking observations of the times in which they lived. During the colonial rule, the empiricist tradition was resumed by the British, although in a more secularized fashion.

^8. Ibid., p. 2.
A number of institutions sprang up in India in the latter half of 18th century and continued to multiply in the later periods. Dube\textsuperscript{9} refers to the founding of the Literary Society of Bombay (1820), the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1874), the Social Science Association of Bengal (1867-1878). Besides, a number of missionaries and British civil service officials collected valuable ethnographic data and even wrote treatises on them. A major deficiency in their works was the lack of an integrated plan. Yet the reports written by Abbe Dubois, Buchanan, Tod are referred to even to this day.

Many of these empirical excursions aimed at bringing about change in India. None of them advocated violent change. But by providing fairly accurate information to the rulers they were able to provide the safety valve to economic and political tensions. The modest reforms effected by the British were based on reports and observances of these enterprising associations and individuals. The felicitous phrase "administrative empiricism" is derived from this congruence between official policy and investigative endeavour.

It is interesting to note that these empirical surveys showed a deep-felt humanistic urge for the betterment of Indian society. But the British did not at all usher in structural reforms or total modernization of Indian society. The inequities of agrarian relations, the feudal privileges were not interfered with. Reforms were confined to

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., pp. 5-6.
areas of education, civic administration and limited industrialization.

The methodology of Ghurye and Mukerjee can be defined as the humanist empiricism. Ideologically, they have two foci of interest: one is Tradition, the other is Contemporaneity. They do not use the terms paradigmatically. It is my own inference. Their Tradition is rooted in the Indian/Hindu milieu and their Contemporaneity is rooted in colonial/liberal education. Lack of a paradigm in their writings undoubtedly gives rise to some ambiguity or an unintegrated stand. Yet if we view them from the epistemological angle, they do not suffer from a restrictive or parochial approach. The following examples refer to the interaction between Tradition and Contemporaneity.

The Ideology of Integration

Ghurye's early studies on the ethnicity of caste, kinship and family were inspired by diffusionism. An important element in his approach is the use of a continuum on which family, kinship and caste are placed. He has not treated tribes and castes separately either. Even in his later studies Gods and Men he uses the folk and caste values as interacting upon each other. Whether it is the joint family, exogamy or the fission into a sub-caste one persistent tendency in these sectors is towards integration, rather than disintegration. Here I would like to refer to three aspects: caste, tribe and language.

Two implications follow from his study of caste: (a) exigencies of society bring about some changes in society, but the emergent forms
tend to cling to their older anchors. This may be due to the hold of values on Indian society. (b) The political and regional forces cause a reintegration of the sub-castes, etc. For example, the backward castes' movement is making its voice heard in many parts of India today.

Even tribes which do not share the premises of caste (ritual purity, hierarchy, etc.) are engaged in an assimilative movement. Ghurye writes:

"We have amongst us a number of groups called tribal castes such as Bhils, Katkars, Waralis, Badagas, Todas, Mundas, Oraons. Their cultures are in varying stages of assimilation with the main culture pattern of Hindus round about them. Their problems are, therefore, special to them. Their assimilation or their preservation is a matter of larger policy. But, looking to the fact that a large element in the culture pattern of popular Hinduism is so akin to some of the ideas and practices of the people, it appears to me that their natural course of evolution lies in their progressive assimilation with the Hindu population surrounding them." 11

10. See I.P. Desai and Y.B. Damle: "A Note on the Change in Caste System" in Kapadia (ed.) Ghurye Felicitation Volume, Popular Depot, Bombay, 1954, pp. 266-276. The authors make the following statement: "The tolerance of intercaste marriages may not break the caste system. We come across a number of instances in which an intercaste couple lives with the family. In such cases the probability is that the children will belong to the father's caste and they will be brought up with that consciousness. If they are also married into the caste the probability of their becoming a caste becomes all the more slender. Thus intercaste marriages which are believed to break the caste system may not break it. How far they are an actual threat to the caste system can be said after studying intercaste marriages" (p. 273).

Ghurye has pleaded for not only speeding up the assimilation but also urged social rehabilitation of the deviant and denotified tribals within the framework of Hindu society. As an aside we may note that apart from his pro-Hindu stance, there is the problem of his confusion between two orders: Hindu and tribal. It is logically incorrect to think that if the tribals drink or indulge in sexual laxity it is deviance. It is simply a matter of perception by the Hindus. The tribals may never feel that way because such acts are part of their ritual life and have integrative purposes of their own. It is the puritanical Hindus who often turn a blind eye to deviance within their own society and castigate the tribals for being "immoral".

Ghurye thus upholds a Hindu model for the tribals especially those who inhabit eastern Central India. Even if it is applicable to Santals, Bhils, Mundas and the like, it may not be suitable to Christianized tribals of this region. The significant omission in Ghurye's studies of tribals is the reference to organized rebellion by the tribals against the Hindu landlords, throughout the 19th century. Although he refers in detail to the exploitation of tribals and their violent reactions, it does not amount to the treatment of social movements among the tribals.

The noted anthropologist N.K. Bose has spoken of the social movement among the Mundas for securing better land rights, etc. The

rise of Jharkhand movement in Bihar in the recent decades shows the strains in assimilation. So long as the gross forms of exploitation are not removed the assimilation is likely to remain partial. Even Christianization of some sections of tribals has remained incomplete, more or less for the same reason. This does not mean that a Marxist radicalism will solve the tribal problem. Radicalization tends to destroy the very gestalt of the folk culture by forcing it into a doctrinal mould. The tribal problem in this perspective becomes a part of the anti-imperialist international movement losing thereby its distinctiveness.

But I will now briefly refer to linguistic integration as proposed by Ghurye. For the tribals, he has recommended Hindi or any other regional language as the common language. This can be decided in accordance with their regional habitat. Provided the tribals dialects are protected, the adoption of the regional language is an acceptable proposition. His solution for the national linguistic problem is significantly related to his ideology. After underlining the need for a common language acceptable to all provincial cultures and languages, Ghurye writes:

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"A moment's thought for those, who have known the history of the formation and development of these languages and the scripts they use today, will convince them that the only language which answers to this description is Sanskrit. Many of the provincial languages have been derived from it and those that are not derived have incorporated in them such a large vocabulary from Sanskrit that the latter cannot but appear in the guise of a benefactor.... With such history the learning of Sanskrit ought to become fairly easy for the speakers of most of these provincial languages." ¹⁴

Ghurye is, of course, not anti-English or anti-Hindi, but he still pleads for Sanskrit as the satisfactory common language. If adopted, its inevitable "sacred" associations are bound to arouse the suspicious of most Hindu groups. Then there is the Devanagari script. Even the languages which are derived from it such as Bengali, Gujarati, Gurumukhi, not to speak of Urdu and Sindhi, have scripts of their own and are bound to resist the inroads made by the Devanagari script. It does not occur to an accomplished linguist like Ghurye that for decades to come both Hindi and English have to serve as common languages of

equal currency. His plea for Sanskrit reflects his ideological proneness rather than his rationality.

In sum, notwithstanding his meticulous empiricism and industrious application of his talents, Ghurye is trapped in his ideology. Of course, his very creativity has grown out of his ideological compulsions. Ideology as a motive for creative action often plays a commendable role. But if it becomes an end in itself, it leads to an empirical justification of inequity or the sanctity of status quo.

The Ideology of Reconstruction

Mukerjee's methodology is a composite one. It consists of diverse strands such as social reformism, economic betterment, bio-social analysis, sociological and philosophical perspectives.

It is interesting to note that Mukerjee has exhibited an unusual sensitivity to certain intellectual influences emanating from the West. For instance, his institutional economics bears the influence of Thorstein Veblen; his works on social ecology are influenced by the ecologists of the Chicago school (Quinn, Burgess and McKenzie); his theory of values is influenced by Talcott Parsons; and his theory of global reconstruction by Tycnbee, Mannheim and others. (For references see General Bibliography).
This responsiveness has some implications. It may affirm his alertness to learn from the West. It may show his eagerness to acquire models from research in his own country. At the same time this responsiveness may highlight his lack of confidence in his own methodology. All these elements, in my opinion, may be discerned in his works. To be sure, it has motivated him to observe, analyse and comment on social phenomena. But too much inclusiveness, whether it has resulted from an interdisciplinary approach or an attempt to keep abreast of the latest models, has played havoc with his logicality and internal consistency.

In his writings, Mukerjee has employed an interdisciplinary approach. Even his themes are interlinked. He has conducted extensive empirical investigations in such diverse fields as population, agricultural economics, regional balance, working class, urbanization, etc. But all through his writings he has displayed a consistent belief that Indian social institutions "ought" to be preserved. His numerous later excursions into values, symbols and global reconstruction are also based upon an essentially Indian valuation. 15

In his studies of region, he has emphasized the efficacy of joint family, caste and the village panchayat in preserving the balance and also in ensuring a collective attitude to life which resulted in the

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15. According to Mukerjee values are data, facts of social existence. It is the human need, desires that give rise to values at several levels: economic, political, religious, etc. They are not subjective fancies. The symbols are the medium for the expression of values. The symbols are also the vehicles for the myths, legends and cosmic experiences of mankind. For the theory of symbols, see his: "Sociology in a New Frame of Reference: Man, Symbol and Society" in Kapadia (ed.) Ghurye Felicitation Volume, pp.66-67.
exactions of colonial rule created a widespread poverty among the Indian peasantry, mass influx of people into urban-industrial centres, and political apathy. He has therefore pleaded for the restoration of traditional elements to preserve the integrity of the region and to ensure prosperity. The common control over irrigation, the craft guilds, the participatory democracy of the village panchayats which so well contributed to rural prosperity have relevance even for the present day India.

The tremendous disparities in the agrarian structure of the present India is the legacy of colonial taxation policy, which invidiously grouped the peasants in different categories. Absentee landlordism, rackrenting, fragmentation of land have flowed from the disintegration of the social structures of the region. Even his earnest plea for afforestation, conservation of soil, are extensions of his ideology of Gemeinschaft.

Mukerjee does not use "region" as a typical unit of a country but as a much wider category, which may be as inclusive as a whole nation. Therefore, his emphasis on the restoration of the region is nationalistic in implication.

His analyses of the urban disorganization (crime and deviance), urban congestion (slums), urban unemployment, industrial unrest are linked to his stand that the predominance of Gesellschaft social patterns
is undesirable. The reduction of rural-urban disparities, restoration of demographic balance between men and women, reduction of economic inequality are possible by the proper relocation of industries, the creation of social security measures for workers, and the raising of people's civic consciousness.

Baljit Singh writes as follows on Mukerjee's notion of a reintegrated region through the revival of cottage industries, etc.:

"According to Mukerjee such social aims and objectives are basic to the future of Indian culture and scheme of life. India cherishes the human and social values and virtues of intimate contact with the land and the family in economic toil, whether agriculture or the rural arts and crafts. In the modern planned endeavour to relate the new technology and science to her ancient rural and agricultural civilization... numerous small "rururban" centres with their small and medium scale industries, and cooperatives... will be the appropriate nuclei of reconstruction..."16

While all these suggestions of Mukerjee are sensible and desirable, the ideological base must be examined. He tends to idealise the past excessively. The "rural communalism" did not necessarily

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thrive in all parts of times. No doubt there were a number of integrated communities, but there were also instances of misrule, extortion and complete political anarchy. Therefore, he has reified the ideal past into a concrete past. Regarding India's past two extreme views have prevailed. One is that an Oriental despotism characterized India, and the other is that there was a Rama rajya. Neither of it being true, we can only say that there was a central tendency. Incidentally, most of the writers of colonial era, Max Muller, William Jones, William Cowell by delving into Sanskrit texts also idealized India's past. This was connected with the supposed Aryan past of India. In reality, there was often a divergence between theory and practice. For instance, after the death of Shivaji, the Maratha cavalry became a despotic force and invaded the neighbouring states to extort money and ransom. In this role, they were no longer defending the Hindu theocracy, because most of their victims were Hindus.

Even more intriguing than the above is Mukerjee's advocacy of a new world remodelled on Indian values. In his works on values and the new civilization such as Dynamics of Human Evolution, Destiny of Civilization and Society and Community, he has held fast to the idea that the Indian theory of immanence which links the Becoming and the

Being is applicable to a new world order. He is not the only Indian to do so. A large number of Indian monks or missionaries who visited abroad, Advaitains, Chaitanyites, pro-Vedic preachers have offered Indian solutions to Western crisis. But Mukerjee's idealism is naive because he has not adequately tackled the power equations which are so dominant in international politics.

Apart from this negligence of power structures, his integrative theory of the whole mankind is logically indefensible because the Eastern and Western perspectives develop from different cognitive bases. Toynbee assumes that a transfigured Christianity is the right solution for this war-torn world. Mukerjee assumes that an Oriental - more specifically Indian - transcendentalism holds the key to a peaceful future for mankind. Each ends up by imposing his own idealism on a recalcitrant world!

In sum, both Ghurye and Mukerjee have comprehensive views of social reality but they are unable to grapple with the disparities of power, privilege and economic position. There is an ideological slant here also because neither of them has taken full cognizance of radical tribal, agrarian and industrial movements of contemporary India. Thus, they are conservative-liberal in their approach to the study of Indian society.