CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a growing tendency towards change in all the spheres of society. In this ever-changing world there is nothing, which is static or not subject to any change. In India, villagers are subjected to change in many ways and in fact they have been undergoing changes since independence. These changes have touching and stressing impact on social, economic, political and cultural lives of the rural people. It cannot be denied that there is only a predominant cause or factor, i.e., education which is related to any change. Therefore, it may be noted that education plays a vital role in bringing about change in society from traditional to modern status. After Independence, the Constitution adopted by the Govt. of India has declared all citizens to be equal and the government also provided scope to the rural people to choose any form of education and professional training.

In the contemporary period, because of impact of industrialization and westernization, the society as a whole and consequently the pattern of education has largely been changed. As a consequence one can see this change
in the ways of living, in thinking and in the ideals and values of life of the people. The aim of education is to facilitate the people for adjustment of changing society. The aims of education are based upon a conception of human nature, and they aim at attaining certain permanent goals. Indeed, education socializes the individuals and this provides them with the ability to adjust in the society. It also develops individual’s personality so that he can challenge the evils of society and also suggest remedial measures. Thus education may give birth to leaders, reformers and revolutionary thinkers.

In the present study the term education has been used in this narrower but specific sense to denote the formal training imparted in school and colleges.

Weber (1946 : p-426) has emphasized on the educational system and points out that “the attempt rationally to transmit to the individual certain traits, to train him for specific skills by challenging him to think and act independently – which is generally characteristic of educational spheres of rational bureaucratic organizations”. Thus according no wiber the principal aim of modern education is to develop rational faculties of human beings so that they can have independent thinking and their actions are not governed by any stereotype norms and principles. This type of training helps the individual to challenge the dogmatic beliefs and to inculcate rational thinking. Education can be regarded as influencing both the thought and behaviour patterns of the individual, and when these are changes in the behavior patterns of individual
members of various social groups, social structural elements of a community are bound to have significant impact.

Myrdal (1968 : p-1541) in his book “Asian Drama : An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations” points out “…… the more elaborate models all reduce investment in man to one factor, education”.

Dube (1974) in his paper “Modernization and Education” pointed out that through modern education the motivation of the people may be changed. Dube emphasized on the psychological aspect of education. Further, education may help in the formulation of new set of values. Finally, education will help in the development of complex organization. To run the government, to recruit people etc. education is very essential.

After having come to know about the importance of education we now wise to know the role of education in social change and development.

As matters stand today though change finds its entry in rural India, yet even today a large number of villagers have remained backward and they are educationally also not well advanced. Still vast majority of the farmers is not using latest agricultural techniques in their agricultural operation, and as such the output on the whole is very meagre. Most of the villages located in isolated areas are deprived of road and facility of electricity, water supply and communication.
As regards to the changes of the villages Altekar (1956; P.124) has mentioned that “a village life to a great extent remains the same, people still till their lands and sow their crops in the old manner, but even here the changes are coming and coming fast enough. The theory, therefore, that the Indian village communities do not change, is completely disproved by the teaching of history”. It needs no explanation to highlight the fact that village is the unit of the rural society. It is the theatre wherein the quantum of rural life unfolds itself and functions. In this regards, like every social phenomenon the village is a historical category. The emergence of the village at a certain stage in the evolution of life of man, its further growth and development in subsequent periods of human history has now obtained the varied structural changes and experience during thousands of years of its existence. Since the Industrial Revolution the villages have undergone the rapid and basic transformation. All these phenomena constitute a very fascinating and challenging study.

Desai (1969 : P.14) remarks that “the student of rural society should study the village, the basic unit of rural society as it originated, and underwent a constant state of development and change due to the action of its own developing internal forces as also due to its interaction with other societies”. The increasing spread of modern education among the rural people because of the establishment of schools and other educational institutions is one of the very effective means to bring about change in the rural life and structure. Subsequently, the village people, started the practice of scientific knowledge of
life which in turn enables them to break with superstition. That is why, a systematic, co-ordinated and inter related study of the rural people, from various angles is an urgent need.

Karve (1969 : pp. 190 – 191) observed that in the ecological field “a village is that an ever-changing nucleus of habitation from which tiny clusters separate and remain attached or separate completely to form a new nucleus. The quality of being a ‘gastalt’ objectively and subjectively is thus a dynamic quality, which makes it difficult to give a definition of a village which would apply to all villages. This difficulty will be more apparent when we look closer into the internal structure of a village”.

In the social structure of village community some important factors are changing, which we have to find in the village both as an isolated entity, and as a link in the chain of wider inter-village organization. Moreover, a particular village derives some of the characteristic features of its organization from the great national tradition of India. The tradition of the region, or the cultural area in which it is located, also contribute substantially towards shaping its value-orientation, ethos and general pattern of life. The national and regional influences to the villages, their pattern of inter-group adjustment gives a certain degree of distinctiveness to the village.

Dube (1969 : p. 201) mentioned that “the Indian village is thus sufficiently isolable, but it is not an isolate, and has therefore to be viewed as a
community within larger community. The interplay of several different kinds of solidarities determines the structure and organization of Indian village communities. Kinship caste and territorial affinities are the major determinants that shape the social structure of these communities”. Moreover, the village as a unit of social structure cuts across the boundaries of kin and caste and unites a number of unrelated families within an integrated multi-caste community.

In this study an attempt has been made to examine the role of education in bringing about social change among the rural people after Post-Independence period. The reason of enquiring into the role of education in bringing about change in the villages is that India is a country where even today about 80% of the people reside in villages and whose primary occupation is agriculture. Because of this our society is called as peasant society. The study of the topic “Education and Social Change : A Sociological Study of Four Villages in Lakhimpur District of Assam” is undertaken with a view to find out the role of education in bringing about social change in the villages.

Education and social change are two different concepts. In India, the changes have been taking place in the rural areas due to the impact of various measures of the Union Government. So, Indian society has been experiencing one of its greatest traditions in history since the advent of the British rule. In fact, village economic structure and institutional frame-work are based on caste and the joint family systems. But its technological framework, economic system, social framework (caste, kinship and joint family system etc.), political
organization, ideological orientation and cultural value system have been undergoing a qualitative transformation.

The British rulers generated changes in Indian society basically to serve their own interests. These changes were not uniform or symmetrical, Therefore, they created specific type of contradictions and antagonisms within the Indian society. After the withdrawal of the British rule from India, the Indian people have entered a new phase of existence. Independence provides opportunities to the people to expose their creative energies. The Government as well as other Non-Government Agencies have been evolving and operating various schemes to bring about changes in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the people. The study of these changes is fascinating and instructive as it gives glimpses of social change affecting mankind. Among the various agencies, attempting to alter the social life in India at present ‘state’ has acquired single significance as a factor, ushering changes which have been effecting social changes.

The spread of education in Post Independent India has made room for modernization of her economy, health and hygiene, age old beliefs and practices of the people and political participation etc. It further makes the villagers aware of the development in different aspects of life. One of the latent function of education is to orient the people towards modernization. Education has tremendous potentiality to motivate the village people for change and modernization. Moreover, education is seen to play a vital role in eradicating
the evils of traditional society such as superstitious beliefs and practices, caste system and gender discrimination etc. It has not only provide a job opportunity to the people but also educated them in the field of economy, health and hygiene, political awareness etc. In short, education plays decisive role in drifting away the villagers from tradition to modernity. Thus, clearly the two terms ‘education’ and ‘social change’ are related to each other.

In fact, a person’s access to educational institution for most people becomes a great concern in the changing scenario. Several measures adopted by the Government of India as progressive measures, need to be inter-linked with access to education and social change of the rural people.

Education provides to the people an opportunity to receive something new to any society by replacing the traditional values of the society. It also brings to the society new ideas, fashion, dress, dietary system, housing pattern, new kind of recreation, political beliefs, saving habits, use of new agricultural method etc. The rural people who are educated is aware of modernity and it changes their traditional attitudes. So, change comes into a society with the spread of education.

The spread of education put an end to geographical isolation of the rural people and the thoughts and customs etc. of various places have influenced upon them. The progress of modern education also is demolishing proportionately the hold of customs, traditions and castes in the society.
Moreover, education has weakened the obduracy of the traditional social structure and entails change and modernity in the rural society. General awareness of the people, increase political participation, technological innovation in agriculture, adoption of modern medical practice, rising personal income and standard of life are some of the concomitant effects of spread of education in the society. The work of transformation of a traditional society or the building up of a modern society cannot be thought of unless education plays its legitimate role. The purpose of this study is to see how education acts as a functional agency in modernization of agriculture, in increasing political participation, in weakening the hold of caste and religions superstition, in enhancing the status of women and in motivating the villagers toward saving habit etc.

BASIC CONCEPTS

EDUCATION:

One of the key concept in the present study is education which is defined differently in different contexts by the educationists. Education is a major component of social change. Individuals, through their education in group activities gain-skill and resources that lead to personal development. As individual develops his skill, the group functions more effectively. In course of time, new goals are set by the group-members, new opportunities arise for personal development.
In the primitive communities the transmission of cultural heritage was mainly a function performed by the institution of family. It was within the family that the child was introduced to the world of social reality. On the other hand, in the present day society the formal educational institutions have taken up the responsibilities of socialization was importing formal education to the children. The schools and colleges are untested the task of providing of knowledge for the physical, mental and intellectual development of children and to train them for specialized trades and professions. In present time the term education, therefore, refers to formal schooling.

The term education is believed to be derived from a word “educare” which refers to the bringing up of children, both physically and mentally. In accordance with this usage, education is defined in a vary manner denoting a group process by which culture is transmitted from generation to generation.

(1972 : p.3) defines education “as a process whereby the socially approved part of the cultural heritage is transmitted from one generation to the following one and whereby newly acquired knowledge is diffused among the members of society.”

Dewey (1950 : p.49) stated that “education is a process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities. It is not a preparation for life, but life itself.”
According to Durkheim (1958) the purpose of education is the arouse and to develop in the by the adult generations a certain number of physical, intellectual and moral state which are demanded of him by both the political society as a while and special milieu for which he is specifically destined.

In the words of Cole and Cox (1968) education as a process may be defined as directed learning. As a product education is the outcome of directed learning. In education knowledge is imported or acquired and skill may be developed as may the ability to reason and to make judgments and discrimination.

The educationists have discussed the concept of education with varied approaches, viz narrower and wider perspectives, as this concept poses important challenges and opportunities to them for inter-disciplinary approaches.

In fact, education means a process of socialization. As a result of this process, the best is drawn out of the child. It guides the young boys and girls for life and also gives to their body and soul all the perfection of which they are susceptible. In this regards Gandhi (1992, p.192) says that by “education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man, body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education.” It may be stated that education is important for all, but it is more important for rural people. If village people are properly educated, the
majority of the people of this country shall be properly educated. They shall be able to know, what is expectable for them and in what way, they can be the useful members of the society. But, the Indian villages have been confronting with some serious problems like superstition, casteism etc. and the persistence of these problems are because of the lack of education. If villagers are to progress then education should play the major role for solving their problems.

According to Sharma (1992) “education is the means of evolving new values for the new generation for equipping the young people with the faculty of critical evaluation so that they can uplift the society around them and to improve it wherever it is necessary. Education enlightens the people to think of possible alternative to bring about some social changes. Hence, education is a means for continuity as well as for change and progress. In fact, it is influenced by social changes and it must keep a level ahead amid chaos and guide social emancipation”.

In India, 80% of the total population still depends on agriculture. But in other countries of the world, the case is not the same. If agriculture remains backward, it means the back sliding of the economy of this country. Through education, it would be possible to train these people who form the bulk of the population of this country. Therefore, education is very powerful weapon for rural life in regard to achieve change and development..

It may be stated here that the major sphere of Indian social life has changed a lot after Independence. These changes have not been confined to
social life only, but gone to economic, moral, political, religious beliefs and practices, customs, material and spiritual life of the people. The Indian Constitution, which was promulgated on 26 January, 1950 envisaged setting up of a welfare state in the country free from exploitation and based on equality, freedom and democracy. The Constitution has laid down that it is the obligation of the State to draw various programmes for the welfare of the people belonging to the weaker section of the society. The Directive Principles of the Constitution embody many of the things that are helpful in establishing an egalitarian society. The programmes for the betterment of the Indian society, particularly rural society, were launched in all respects in the light of the constitutional provisions. But the success of these programmes lies in the spread of education. The importance of education lies in the fact that there can be no true democracy, and development without equal spreading of education in all spheres of life and levels of decision making.

In fact, education is one of the changing factors in the world in which we live. Education is bringing new priorities and perspectives to the village life and organization of society.

SOCIAL CHANGE :

Another key concept in the present study is ‘social change’ which is defined differently in different contents. Social change is the change in established patterns of social relations, or change in social values, or change in
structures and sub-system operating in society. In this context, Indian sociologist Ahuja (1993 : P-394) remarks “Social change may be partial or total, though mostly it is partial. Just as change in the examination system is partial change in the educational system, similarly enacting a law which prescribes punishment for refusing entry to untouchables in Hindu temples, or a law which legally permits divorce in the society, or a law which does not permit marriage below the specific age, might be called partial changes in a society”.

In brief, social change is change in social relationship which includes social processes, social pattern and social interactions. These include the mutual activities and relations of the various parts of the society. Towards the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, sociologists and anthropologists were pre-occupied with the problem of how societies evolved from their original primitive state. The Indian sociologists are greatly interested in the problem of social change, since the Indian society has now taken up the task of changing itself from an agricultural society to an industrial society, from a colonial society with emperors and monarchs to republican society, from a society based on caste and class to a society which aims to be a casteless and classless society with equality of opportunity to every citizen. In other words, the urgent problem of contemporary social situation in India is the transformation of the individual from a member of a tribe or a village or a caste or a creed or a language group to a citizen of India.
For the clarification and understanding of the process of social change we may consider the definitions given by some of the scholars. Moore (1988 : Quoted from the book Social change and Social Research An Indian Perspective by R.S. Mann, p. 21 defines “social change as the significant alternate of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values, cultural products and symbols.”

Kuppuswamy (1972 : p.37) pointed out that “Social change may be defined as the process in which is discernible significant alternation in the structure and functioning of a particular social system. The term ‘change’ itself is wholly neutral. It only implies that there is some difference though time in the object under study. When we speak of social change we simply assert that there is some charge in social behavior, social structure and social and cultural values”.

MacIver (1950 : p.56) has mentioned that “human society is constituted of human beings. So, society is composed of a vast and complex network of patterned human relationships in which all men participate. When human behaviour is in the process of modification, this only another way of indicating that social change is occurring. Thus, whatever apparent alteration in the mutual behaviour between individuals takes place is a sign of social change. This fact of social change can be verified by glancing at the history of any society. Man is dynamic being, hence, society can never remain static. It
undergoes constant variations. Contemporary society appears to be unusually unstable, but history witnesses to the changefulness that besets all societies. Of all the objects we can study, none change so rapidly before our eyes as the works of man and particularly the social structures which he builds”.

Social change is a distinct thing from cultural or civilization change, entering in a different way into the time process. A social structure is a nexus maintained by the will of social beings in the present. It is upheld from moment to moment.

The changing ways in which human beings relate themselves to one another, the processes which institutions and organizations undergo, the transformation of social structure and the forces that bring them about fall in the purview of social change. MacIver and Page (1950) have mentioned that in every society numerous processes of change occur simultaneously. Man aspire to new goals, and they return to old ones. In all this change can we discover any movement of the whole, of society, conceived as a unity.

In the Post-Independence period in India, the new rulers set themselves the task of producing a Constitution committed to bringing about a change from a caste and feudal society to a casteless and classless society through parliamentary democracy based on adult franchise. Moreover, as a result of economic development since Independence the proportion of the population below poverty line has come down to about one third. But the country is far from abolishing poverty and from assuring the poorest that their
basic needs will be solved. Substantial improvement has occurred in the position of women but it is as yet confined largely to urban middle-class women.

It is indeed impressive that India has been able to practice democracy since 1947, except during the emergency years 1975-77. The elite, which came to power after Independence, wanted the Constitution to bring about fundamental changes in Indian economy, culture, science and technology, political participation and society. The Constitution provided not only a charter for ushering in a revolution but the instruments achieving it, such as, one of the important achievements is that India has increased its food production from about 52 million tones at the time of Independence to over 170 million tones today. It is also remarkable that India has not had a famine after Independence, whereas China has disastrous famines during the years of the Cultural Revolution (1954-56) when millions of people died.

Since, Independence, in India, there has been a visible change in the living standard of large number of people who eat better, dress better, invest sizeable portion of their income in the education for their children, live in better housing etc. The Government of India had a constitutional obligation (Article-45) to make education compulsory for all children in the age group 5-14. But this has not been met even after 82 years of the Independence.

In the context of the present study, social change refers to adoption of scientific methods of production in agriculture, changing pattern of social
institutions like caste, family, marriage and status of women, emancipation of
religion from dogmatism, psychic mobility of the people, political awareness
and development of the habit of saving of the villagers.

VILLAGE:

A village is a definite territory wherein a group of people live in
permanent dwellings. This group of people possess arable land, sometimes held
in common. Further characteristics of a village include predominance of
agriculturally vocational people, a close relationship of them to the natural
cohesion. In this context, eminent sociologist Gould (1959: pp. 298-99) remarks
: “No village community is ever able to meet all the immediate subsistence need
from its internal resources. Relation with other villages exist which fill gaps in
needed goods and services. Thus, a peasant village is ordinarily engaged in a
whole series of interactions with neighbouring village in an effort to provide for
things as varied as repairs for a plough, brides for unwed sons, pottery containers,
and winnowing fans, what and how much is involved in this latter form of
interaction is of course highly variable, it is dependent upon local, regional and
national conditions, as well as upon cultural variability”.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY:

Of late, the underdeveloped countries of the world have been
trying to transform their social, economic and political structures in order to
achieve development. Obviously, curiosity arises as to how far and how deep this transformation has actually gone. Transformation of the society in question is related to interactions among the people. Education can play an important role in orienting the people for interaction among themselves for the change. The question then is ‘to what extent education and social change are related? This is the issue the researcher tried to explore in four villages of Lakhimpur district in Assam.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The main objectives of the present study are –

1. To describe and analyse the socio-economic background of the villagers.
2. To investigate the role of education in bringing about social change in the social institutions, viz. caste, family, religious beliefs and practices, status of women and marriage.
3. To examine whether education succeeds in introducing scientific method of agriculture among the villagers.
4. To see the extent of political participation of the villagers.
5. To look into whether the villages have developed the habit of saving.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Many books and papers on social change were written by different scholars. Mention may be made here the works of Mathur, Borthakur, Damle, Desai, Cohn, Singh, Kapadia, Prasad, Gough and Bhatt etc. who empirically studied change in different aspects of rural life.

Education is universally viewed as an important vehicle of social transformation as well as indicator of social development and change. But there are sociologists, who have pointed out the education plays a role in social mobility of only middle and lower strata. It facilitates the upper strata to maintain their power, prestige and wealth.

In this context we may refer Mathur (1987) who had conducted a comparative study on the effect of education on the attitudes and behaviour of affluent and non-affluent farmers in Jhalawar and Kota in Rajasthan. This study finds that the farmers considered education to be an important determinant of social status. But the reality is that all the farmers were not equally able to raise the educational opportunities due to various economic, social and cultural constraints. The differential distribution of literacy among affluent and non-affluent farmers and also among males and females suggested the existence of social and economic disparities. The study revealed that the percentage of literacy among women was much lower than among men. Women of affluent category were in a better position than the women of non-affluent groups.
Overall prevalence of literacy was more among affluent than among the non-affluents.

This study further revealed that absence of higher educational facilities in the village was the cause of lower prevalence of higher education among the farmers. The attitude of indifference towards higher education among the farmers is also another cause of lower level of education among themselves. The non-affluent farmers of Kota village, on the other hand, were most keen to spend extra money on education of their children. Thus on the whole the extent of education among the males was higher among the non-affluents and they were more conscious about sending their boys to school than the affluent ones. In case of women the situation was entirely different. The affluent women were more educated than the non-affluent women.

Education and man’s attitude towards social life are inter-related. Education is considered to be a strong source of modifying and preserving cultural heritage, according to a desired design. The concept of progress encourages the idea that change and improvement are closely related. Expansion of education is believed to be synonym to progress and gives a hope for reaching the goals of equality and freedom from various kinds of human oppression, exploitation and suffering in the society, through a change in the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the masses and broadening of their outlook towards social phenomena. Education is a comparatively new phenomenon for rural people. It was thought to be relevant to find out the actual impact of the
spread of education in bringing about change in the attitude and opinion of rural people.

This study found that the association of education and the size of family is not significant. However, education had effected the opinions of family planning measures. The study revealed that attitude towards adoption of family planning was favourable among the higher educated than the lower educated villagers.

Education had influenced upon the attitude of the farmers towards the age at marriage. The higher educated farmers preferred a higher age at marriage and the farmers with lower levels of education had preferred early marriage. Similarly, views of farmers about widow marriage, dowry and other related problems had also been influenced by the levels of education. The farmers with higher level of education were found more liberal to these issues.

The study seeks to find out the effect of availability of infrastructural facilities in regard to availing of things by the farmers. Mathur in this study categorized the area having infrastructural facilities as command area and the other area where infrastructural facilities were absent as non-command area. It was observed that there was a difference in regard to spread of education among the farmers of Jhalawar and Kota. The prevalence of infrastructural facilities in Kota village had facilitated the process of modernization among the farmers. The absence of an appropriate infrastructural facilities in Jhalwar area stand as constraint in the way of pursuing education.
vis-à-vis modernization among the Jhalawar farmers. The study reveals that the farmers of Kota are more educated than Jhalawar. Illiteracy among the affluents of Jhalawar was more than the affluents as well as non-affluents of Kota. A similar difference was observed at other levels of education. The newly evolved infrastructure in Kota region had facilitated the process of modernization of Kota farmers. Absence of these phenomena in Jhalawar was responsible for their lower level of educational achievement vis-à-vis modernity.

Borthakur (1994) conducted a study on the role of communication in village development with reference to diffusion of innovations in agriculture, health, education and aspirations of villagers for betterment in future. The study was conducted in two villages in Assam. The study communication gradually awakens the mind of the villagers about the importance of education. In this study it was observed that the socially, economically and educationally backward castes/tribes felt the importance of education for a better living and higher status in society.

In this study gradual increase of literacy and education from the days of grand father to the generation of the "self" was noticed among the villagers. The study reveals that the villagers were influenced by communication in attaining literacy and educational development. It was further observed that the villagers who were more exposed to communication attained more educational development than those who were less exposed to communication. Therefore, it was found that the villagers who were more
exposed to communication attained educational development in all areas and issues including the most current events of the country. The villagers gathered knowledge on various issues and events depending upon their exposure to communication. Thus, it may be noted the communication has an important role to play on educational development among the villagers.

Damle (1969) conducted a study on diffusion of communication in the villages selected for study and found that the villages nearer to urban centers are more aware of modern communication mechanisms. Damle’s study is more interesting from a totally different angle. It reveals how the impact of the communication of ideas and information would be functionally dependent upon their utility to the villages located at different distances from town. The content of massive propaganda and educational campaigns, which are launched in rural areas through the medium of various agencies and techniques require to be examined in the light of its functional utility.

This study also finds that the problem of communication can be adequately tackled from the structural functional point of view. As revealed by the scalogram, it is not merely the distance from or nearness to the city which facilitates communication of ideas and knowledge. At the level of reception of ideas it has been found that whatever is visible, appeals to the people, e.g. the five year plans, community development projects etc. Then again it has been found that the structural constraints and inadequacies, whether natural or imposed by circumstance, e.g., by the impact of powerful neighbouring
structure, render certain ideas and knowledge dysfunctionally. This naturally leads to a process of change.

Desai (1955) made a study on the changes of social life in a village which included food habits, clothing, housing, sanitation and cleanliness and literacy of the rural people in India. He has made a comparative study in Gujarat villages on changes of social life. His study is mainly based upon the universe of mix-population, viz. Brahmans, Vaishyas, Patidars and Boria etc. In his study it has been revealed that formerly most of the milk of the village was exported outside the village and people consume milk and ghee in greater quantities than before. All types of changes are taking place due to spread of higher education in the state and also acquiring the same by the people.

Cohn (1955) has conducted a study on the Chamars in Uttar Pradesh which focuses on the family structure, political behaviour, attitudes towards castes, status and religious customs of people after Independence. He has observed that by the early part of the 20th century the seeds of social change had been extensively sown. Cohn’s attempt at the Chamars, to achieve a higher status must be understood in relation to changes both in the village and in the outside world as well as in relation to the Chamar’s own internal social and religious organizations. The Chamars, traditionally were leather workers and agricultural labourers, who have long stood near the bottom of the regional society of Uttar Pradesh in wealth, power and caste position.
This study also finds that there has been growing changes in traditional symbols of caste status. It is because modern secular education is playing a central role in Chamar’s efforts to improve their position. Moreover, Chamars have been constantly visualizing a desire for more education and many have attributed their land position to lack of education. It also revealed that the Chamars like many other people of Indian villages, are in the midst of processes of change. These processes of change are complex and even contradictory. Like the Chamars, other people are organizing and fighting for social, political, and economic equality with the higher castes. They are also trying to borrow and revive for themselves elements of a culture generally practice by the higher castes.

Singh (1958) made a case study of six villages in eastern Uttar Pradesh on the changing pattern of socio-economic relations in the countryside. His study revealed that all processes of social change, social crisis or equilibrium and disequilibrium of society can be interpreted and analyzed with reference to and within the matrix of changing structure of power. Moreover, from the statutory point of view the basis of the old pattern of rural group relations was rendered outmoded and the old power pattern was to be replaced with completely new one. The new power system, acknowledged not household but the individual as unit of participation; the objective was implicitly to infuse the values of individualism, secularism and liberalism. The new system of power was to democratize the base of power on the basis of people’s
acceptance. The selection of leaders under this system in principle has to be on the basis of individuals’ merit and not on the basis of class or caste. As a result each qualified member of the village community was supposed to gain a new status deriving it from the value system of democratic society.

Kapadia (1956) conducted a study on the changing structure of family in India, and analysed a comparative change of urban and rural families. He had studied one town Navsari and its fifteen surrounding villages in Surat district of Gujarat. In all, he studied 1345 families of which 18% were from Navsari town and 82% were from its surrounding villages. The family patterns in the rural community, the proportion of joint families is almost the same as that of nuclear families. The nature of the family pattern is viewed in relation to castes, higher castes e.g. Patidars, Brahmins and Borias have predominantly joint family. The joint family is predominantly not only among the agricultural castes (viz. Patidars and Anvils) but also among the functional castes (that is, carpenter, tailor, goldsmith black-smith, grocer, potter, oil-presser, bangle-seller etc.) which shows that it is doubtful whether the family is now necessarily a concomitant of the agricultural economy.

He has also revealed that in the urban community, there are more joint families than nuclear families. This is against the general presumption that people in cities and big towns live in nuclear families and that towns and cities have disintegrative influences on the structure of the family. In ‘impact’ villages, that is, villages within the radius of 7 to 8 kms from the town, the
family pattern closely resembles the rural pattern and has no correspondence with the town pattern. As far the pattern showing the caste variations is concerned unlike other villages, in ‘impact’ villages, the functional castes show a gradual increase of nuclear families and agricultural castes, that is Patidars, show gradual decrease of nuclear families. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the impact of the town or is nearly an expression of caste variations. The joint family structure is not being nuclearized, and the difference in the rural area and the urban family patterns is the result of modification of the caste pattern by economic factors. In this regard education has affected the family in more than one way. It has not only brought change in the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies of the people but also created and aroused the individualistic feelings.

Prasad (1956) has emphasized on study on changing structure of caste among the five castes in Bihar to find out the impact of urban-industrial forces on caste relations. He studied a village in Chhapridistrict on the one hand and Chhapra town – an urban industrial area on the other hand. The five castes were Brahmin, Rajput, Ahir, Dhobi and Chamar. He had selected twenty persons from each caste both from the rural and the urban industrial area. This study finds that in the village, each caste is a well knit homogeneous group, inter-dinning is tabooed. Jati Panchayat is all powerful, all castes co-operate in social and religious functions, castes continue to be endogamous and caste hierarchy exists. But, in the city, caste solidarity is absent, people of different
castes take food together in the common room, caste panchayat is casual and temporary and no caste co-operation exists in socio-religious functions.

In this study change in traditional occupations was also observed. There was complete deviations in the urban industrial area, while it was partial in the rural area. Comparing the attitudes of the respondents towards the inter-caste marriage both in the rural and the urban areas. The study released that majority of the people disliked it. All this shows the impact of urban situation on the caste system. Moreover, changes were taking place on both the levels of ritual and ideology. In spite of these changes, it also revealed that the caste system as such remains very much the same. Changes within the system do take place but not beyond the system.

In another study Prasad (1970) commented that educational institutions should serve as agents of social change and liberation from the structural constraints. The educational objectives should be intrregrally related to the social and economic goals of planning and the planning process itself. In order to be able to play its purposive role, the educational institution has to undergo a significant overhaul. It is accepted that education has two broad functions – socialization and preparation for adaptation to change.

Cormack (1961) did a research on Indian college and university students’ regarding consciousness and awareness of and attitude towards social change related to ‘traditional’ India becoming ‘modern’. On the basis of her
research she concluded that ‘social change is taking place more rapidly than most realize’.

Gough (1955) has conducted a study to look into the changes that have been taking place in different spheres of social life, viz in food habits, clothing style, housing designs etc.; in Tanjore village of Madras (at present known as Chennai). The study depicting the changes in the rural life provides a comparative picture of a village in 1915 and 1955 and it focuses on interesting findings of the changes in food habits, clothing styles, housing designs and general consumption pattern in the context of the caste and wealth matrix. Gaugh’s study made on Hindu population of Tanjore falls into three broad sets of castes, viz Brahmin, Non-Brahmin and Adi-Dravida. The village where the study was carried out is one of the main centers of the Saivite religion, an orthodox Brahminical culture. In considering the structure of social relations within Kumbaipettai village with reference to economic organization, local organizations Gough studied the ritual practices at the village level, inter-caste relations that exists in the village and some general relations of the village to the wider community. It was found that non-Brahmin men are economically dependent on Brahmin land owners within the village. Among the Adi-Dravidas, too revolutionary changes have been taken place. These economic changes within the village are accompanied by a great increase in economic transactions outside it. In traditional system, Brahmins have administrative rights over the lower castes. Recently, because of their economic power, they
have been able to prevent disputes within their village from passing into the hands of the local police or government authority.

Gough’s study also revealed that the social structure of the village is changing from a relatively closed, stationary system, with a feudal economy and co-operation between ranked castes in ways ordained by religious law, to relatively open and dynamic one. The changing system is governed by secular law, with an expanding capitalist economy and competition between castes which sometimes reinforced and sometimes obscured by the new struggle between economic classes.

Bhatt (1975) has made a study on various castes, viz high, middle and lower castes in four states – Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh for assessing the interest of castes in politics and awareness about political participation. These people had different background of income, education, occupation and residence (rural and urban) etc.

Bhatt’s study found that the high status castes have higher level of political interest as compared to low status castes with regard to the awareness on political changes and major political problems in the nation. This study revealed that low caste people have a low level of awareness and high caste people have a high level of awareness. As regards, identification with political parties, there is practically no relationship between caste status and membership in political parties. Persons of low status castes are almost as likely to support political parties as of the high status castes. Moreover, he has also found that since a large number of high, middle and low caste persons were strong
supporters of political parties, caste can be described as an important factor affecting party identification. High status castes are not necessarily influential castes in India’s villages. Middle and low castes also dominate in many villages. In fact, low castes are found to be influential in as many villages as the Brahmins or Rajputs or other high castes. Thus, high caste status is not necessarily the basis for influence in village affairs.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

It is notable that education brings about changes in the traditional socio-economic structure of the village society. This study tries to analyse the role of education in bringing about change. The significance of the present work can be attributed to the following:

Prior to this, many studies on the role of education in bringing about social change were carried out by various sociologists indifferent parts of the country. These studies were carried out in different geo-physical and socio-economic situations. The geo-physical and socio-economic situations of the rural area of Assam are different from those in other parts of India. The theoretical knowledge on education and social change could be enhanced by conducting empirical study in different societies of varied cultural setting. This type of study is necessary for understanding the causes of change or backwardness of a segment of a society with reference to availability of educational institutions. The findings of the study would
definitely help the planners, bureaucrats and policy framers to review the policies for village development and help them to formulate new policy of village development with greater emphasis on education.

Moreover, in India, the rural people have been playing a very active role in all the spheres of socio-economic life, before and after the Independence. The studies of village communities are currently being carried out in the different parts of the country which provide about the rural social life.

There is no denying the fact that unless the social structure of the traditional society is not modernized the different plans and programmes chalked out by the government for overall development of the rural people would not bring any desired result. It is contended that education can play a positive role in bringing about change among moralities. This study is undertaken with a view to examine the nexus between education and social change among the rural people. The study has paramount importance in the context of gauging the degree of changing attitudes among the villagers which is considered as a pre-requisite for facilitating the process of social change in rural India.
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