CHAPTER VI

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

This Study examined the substantive nature of the problem, namely the relationship between rural elite and agrarian power structure in a historico-evolutionary setting. The task was pursued through an analysis of the linkage between institutional and social structural factors particularly that between land, power and people. It assumed that a sound understanding of elite structure in its various aspects, phases and ramifications could not possibly be achieved without first providing an understanding of the social milieu of which it is a part as well as a product. This Study, therefore, treated elite as an outcome of and its existence as determined by the interplay of various historical and contemporary forces of society and culture. Society itself is conceptualised as a system of relations generating inequalitarian social conditions conducive to the inevitable emergence of a minority - the elites, who, although basically the creation of the majority, rise irresistibly to exercise influence, power and domination over its own creators. By linking rural elite with agrarian power structure, our study attempted to trace the structure of the former by examining the nature of the latter,
as it empirically existed and underwent change through various historical phases. Given the procedure of our enquiry, structure and change of rural elite was unfolded as it emerged as social reality, being embedded in and isomorphic to the structure and change of peasantry in the countryside.

In its attempt to present a holistic construction of empirical realities in the process of their movement and change, this Study has employed the categories of space, time and social actors as variables. These variables do not exist in this study merely as abstract analytical tools. They are used as concrete empirical variables. They refer to a specific time span in relation to an empirically identifiable and specific spatial settlement, peopled by authentic collectivities, belonging to various, but specific villages, castes, classes, lineages, and families who had specific attributes.

The theoretic and methodological significance of this Study lies, therefore, in its attempt to examine the nature of its substantive problem in relation to the triangular matrix of time, space and men in terms of concrete empirical referents.

The empirical analysis undertaken through such a matrix enabled us to identify rural elite and agrarian
institutions in an evolutionary sequence so as to reflect the structure and movements of social reality in the context of time and space. Conventional studies on themes such as social mobility, changes in caste, status and power, land tenures, agrarian social structure, etc., have generally ignored the relationship and interlinkages between time, space and men.

This Study laid more emphasis on the institutional and social structural aspects of rural elite rather than on its manifestations in positions and offices of power. Rural elite has been defined as an enduring minority of rural population with relatively independent potentials of power and domination and exercise of control over their actual use over people in the setting of agrarian social structure. The distinguishing features of rural elite are its relative endurance in the social structure and in the relative autonomy of its power. The sources of power and domination are not occupancy of statutory elective positions or offices.

Studies on membership to such statutory elective positions as, Panchayat Samiti, Zila Parishad, City Corporation, etc., have conventionally been referred to either as leader or elite studies in India. The tendency to uncritically accept the apriori notion that elective position is a functional equivalent of power and that
holders of such positions are the holders of power has brought in a good deal of theoretic and inferential distortions in the studies of power structure in general and that of rural situation in particular.

As against this, the theoretic and empirical significance of this Study is reflected in its radical departure from existing orientations. The Study is significant in its holistic emphasis on the institutional and social structural aspects of elites and of their historical and contemporary social bases. The Study has also not been unsuccessful in tiding over such substantive and methodological hurdles as a priori abstraction of synchronic reality in terms of segmentalised aspects, dimensions of parts of an organic system of men and power. It has also refrained from treating existent facts as being bereft of antecedents or of reducing the substantive nature of social reality into events than processes. A singular attainment of this study lies in its circumventing a tendency to construct the social realities of space-time-men into surrealistic images inconsistent with the parameters of scientific inquiry.

Furthermore, a strategic methodological position was provided by the logical development of an institutional concept of rural elites and their examination as an encompassing set with the interplaying components of land, power
and people relationships in the historical order of their genesis and evolution. Such a position helped not only in setting concepts, such as rural leaders and elite in their proper theoretic perspectives but also in developing a typology of rural elites and in identifying the sources of their power and analysing the responses of the elite to the wider changes of Indian society. Let us recapitulate and reflect over some of the major revelations made by this Study.

USE OF HISTORY

Sociologists' interest in history and in the use of historical sources of social data is different from that of historians. Differences lie mainly in the disciplinary perspectives of sociology and history and in the process and purpose of utilisation of historical material. For the historians, historical data carry intrinsic value and form the raw material on which is constructed the history of social groups, institutions and practices. Exercise in the construction of past is the essential creed of the historians. This creed identifies his craft from that of sociology. Sociologists' concern is to construct the social formations and to portray the processes of the contemporary social setting. Historical sources of research material are used to gain an insight into the
persistence and change of institutions and practices within contemporary society. Social realities have antecedents and their roots generally lie in past. It is this extending nature of social facts which appear in present from the past, especially in India which has a contiguous tradition, that impelled this Study utilise historical sources of data in order to highlight the explanatory power of data collected from the contemporary field situation of Basti district.

Our extensive utilization of primary sources of such historical data as Letters, documents pertaining to the award of Titles, Sanads and Certificates, to the Darbar Lists of Gorakhpur Division, to various government Circulars etc. collected from the English Record Office (E.R.O.), locally known as Malkhana of Basti district were used to highlight not only the elite and the agrarian power structure of the colonial period alone, but also to yield clues to trace an outline of their forms, as they existed during the pre-colonial phase. Sociological use of historical information contained in District Gazetters, Settlement Reports, Chronicles Memoirs, Reports on Clans, Manuals of Title Holders, etc. compiled by British Officers of Districts of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, especially documents pertaining directly to Gorakhpur Division, of which Basti is a constituent District helped us in the ideal-typical construction of the structure of rural elite and the
structures of land, power and people, relationship as they existed in the pre-colonial and the colonial phases of history. They also helped in tracing and identifying elements and aspects of these structures that persist and those that have undergone change. A study of persistence and change of social structure could only be examined by bringing historical data to highlight the field data of contemporary setting of the field.

Addressing ourselves to the substantive nature of the problem in the contemporary setting and using history to supplement, buttress and to magnify the significance of the data of the present, we did not use the historical sources of data the way historians use, or would like us to use. Our exercise in history is not the exercise for the historians; our exercise is to give sociological treatment to historical data and to employ the wealth of historical data to highlight the relevance of contemporary information pertaining to the contemporary issue of sociological research and investigation. It is the contemporary social reality to which the sociologists address themselves to and it is the data about such reality that carries intrinsic value and meaning and not the past as is the case with the historians. Sociologists' conception of the historical data is rooted in the corpus of informations about the contemporary problem identified in a specific universe of study - such as Basti
district of the present study. Not only that all the grass-root historical information were collected from the Record Office of the Basti district but all the information related to one or another aspect of rural elite and the agrarian social structure of the district was also secured from the same source.

**Rural Leader and Elite**

The definition of rural elite presented in the preceding chapters and the insight provided by historical and contemporary data on rural influentials suggest that, conceptually, rural elites are an undifferentiated category of top people located at the apex of power hierarchy and in whom potential powers of various types are vested. Furthermore, the various types of power roles over-lap in the case of rural elites rendering the nature of power, diffused and generalised. The leaders on the other hand have specific and sharply differentiated positions and offices with statutorily defined power-roles. The relationship between the elite and the leader is conceptualised in terms of the former being essentially a stable and enduring collectivity in the social structure which determines, shapes and often function as a supply base of the leader.

As reflected in the quartile calculation of the reputational scale (see Chapter II), the location of elites being at the top of the influence hierarchy, signifies a
group which is relatively autonomous and independent in terms of resources of power which generally tends to transcend the immediate or local situations to the wider social milieu. In the exercise of power, the elite is not governed exclusively by native people. The leaders generally deriving their power from statutory elective positions, are dependent upon lay electors as well as on powerful local elites who mobilise those electors against or in favour of competing leaders at the time of periodic elections. Basti data reveal that those who scored lower on the reputational scale are precisely the people who occupy positions in such statutory bodies as Panchayat Samitis, Zila Parishad, etc., whereas people belonging to high score groups did not generally hold such positions. It may be emphasised here that conventional rural elite studies addressed themselves to people who are categorised as leaders in this Study and not on elites.

As a corollary to the above, rural elites tend to show deeper roots in the community and have a longer history of their pervasive power and domination. As opposed to the relative continuity of elites in the agrarian social structure, leaders rise to power positions is meteoric and their fall abrupt. Rural leaders reflect only the surface of rural power structure. Elites on the other hand, constitute the iron frame of that structure. And finally,
it can be said with confidence that whereas elites are more often potential leaders, leaders are rarely elites. At a higher level of abstraction, elite as a group functions as a promotional group for the leaders but similar function cannot be assigned to the leaders. Our notion of elite conforms to Mosca's concept of political class which provides bases for the emergence of leadership in the countryside. However, the line that separates elite from leaders is not inflexible. Some degree of interpenetration cannot be ruled out.

This Study has been concerned with the theme of rural leaders only peripherally. As and when it dealt with the theme, the object was to demonstrate the following: First, that there exists a hierarchy of rural influentials. Second, that rural leaders as a distinct conceptual category occupy lower stratum of power as compared to elites who top the hierarchy. Third, that in the study of rural elites, conventional social science methods and approaches, so far, have been tuned more towards identifying and studying rural leaders rather than elites. The differentiation between elites and leaders and the identification of their respective places in the social structure, therefore, has been treated in this Study only as a prelude to our main concern of classifying rural elites into types and to highlight their respective sources of power.
TYPES OF ELITES AND SOURCES OF POWER

In view of our conceptualisation that there exists a hierarchy among influentials in the countryside, elites could not be treated as a homogenous group. On the basis of quantitative and qualitative data, two types of elites, namely, the entrenched elites and the emerging elites, have been identified. The notion of entrenched elite refers to traditionally established rural influentials. It may be emphasised here that the primary sources of power and authority of the entrenched elite have been found to inhere in such ascriptive social and cultural foundations of the traditional Indian society as upper caste status, historicity of rulership, privileges and honour received from the British during the colonial period and exercise of control over land and related resources. But the crucial and most distinguishing feature of this type of elite is that it derives power from the post-feudal and colonial forces of which it is the product and which, in varying degrees, continue to persist in Uttar Pradesh. Empirically, this group of elites symbolise the traditional princely and priestly categories of influentials who used to receive Titles, Sanads and Rewards from the British during the colonial phase of Uttar Pradesh.

Emerging elites on the other hand, located on the power hierarchy immediately above the segments of rural
leaders, are generally new entrants into the elite sector rendered possible by various legal, political and administrative measures introduced after independence. The electoral process, open competition, emphasis on achievement rather than on ascription and the over-all political awakening constitute some of the mechanisms through which this category of elites surface on the contemporary power scene of Uttar Pradesh. An important sociological feature of this type of elite is that it tends to outcross the entrenched elite drawn from the upper caste, aristocratic family and priestly class. The interplay between the entrenched and the emerging elites, signifies the circulation and mobility of status holders, of shifts in the moorings of power, domination and influence and of the tensions and strains of the contemporary agrarian society. The conceptualization of these two categories of elites and their study in situations of interaction, conflict and competition, thus reveals and mirrors the dynamics of contemporary rural power structure.

But one of the "disturbing revelations" of this study is that traditional feudal colonial sources of power still persists in Uttar Pradesh. It continues to be a long-term, stable, enduring and secure source of influence and domination. Enrrenched elite being anchored to feudal and colonial sources of power are, therefore, more stable and
to a great extent, are a historically continuing category of rural elite. And, the emerging elite, this Study suggests, instead of attacking the ramparts of feudal-colonial power and favouring an equalitarian society, attempt to convert its power derived from modern sources into secure feudal-colonial form. These emerging elites who could initiate the erosion, displacement and the overthrow of the feudal-colonial bases of power are, in essence and in practice, reinforcing them. In this process Indian "modernity" is invigorating and energising the traditional power ethos of rural Uttar Pradesh.

Rural elite studies in India conventionally being synchronic in perspective and narrow in their coverage of data on social realities embedded in time, space and people, failed on different counts. Neither could these studies conceptualise the hierarchy and the internal divisions within the group of elites, evolve elite typologies nor could they identify the anchorages of rural power which vary by time and space and by the types of elites. The merit of the present Study lies in its attempt to trace and construct the broad outline and patterns of relationship between land, power and people in an evolutionary context. Its macro-time perspective not only helped in the ideal typical formulation of rural elites in the various phases of the political history of Uttar Pradesh but also helped in gaining an indepth
understanding of the genesis and evolution of agrarian practices, institutions and land tenures. These we have tried to present in a paradigmatic form on the following pages.

Rajput displacement from the western parts of India; their dispersal, eastward migration, their conquest and colonization of cis-Himalayan forest-clad tract with specific topographical features and of the semi-tribal and tribal native population who were transformed into the subject population explained not only the emergence of feudal power structure of lineage domains but also the genesis of the various types of land relations. The British, while eroding the autonomy of the Rajputs as a whole, nevertheless gave protective sanction to the Rajput feudal power by welding their interest with the interest of colonialism in India. This Study unfolded the consequences of the encounter between Rajput feudalism and British colonialism giving rise to various types of confusions pertaining to land relations. Alien notions of "ownership", "right", "private property", etc., introduced by the British distorted the traditional collective and corporate land relations based upon the custom of "shares", "part" and "portion" of people in land produce. We have demonstrated (see, Chapter III) some of the fallacies such as classification of superior land tenure in such categories as Pattidari, Bhaygab
### Paradigm for Genesis and Evolution of Rural Elite and Agrarian Power Structure in District Basti (Uttar Pradesh)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Phases</th>
<th>Wider Political Processes</th>
<th>Structure of Land, Power and People Relation</th>
<th>Structure of Elite Circulation of</th>
<th>Circulation of Elites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Pre-Colonial Phase</strong> (Pre-1801)</td>
<td>Conquest and Colonization of Cis-Himalayan terral tract and its indigenous people by Rajputs.</td>
<td>Emergence of lineage domains, corporate nature of land relations and collective share in land produce under Rajput feudal power.</td>
<td>Emergence of Rajput conquerors as princely elites.</td>
<td>Horizontal circulation of land between lineages through inter-lineage warfares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Phase of Company Raj (East India Company) (1801-1857)</td>
<td>Pro-peasant and anti-Rajput (feudal) land policy, genesis of caste peasant proprietors, birtyas upgraded as Zamindars, Rajput disaffection and the Mutiny of 1857</td>
<td>Decline of Corporate nature of land relations Emergence of the notion of land as private property. Alienation of peasantry from land.</td>
<td>Emergence of Rajput (princely) and Brahman (priestly) entrenched elites.</td>
<td>Land circulated between Rajput and Brahman. Circulation of elites generally confined to princely and priestly castes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Phase of British Crown Raj (1858-1947)</td>
<td>Restoration of feudalism and the overlap of colonial interests on feudal interests. Birth of Indian National Congress and struggles against British and Raja Zamindars.</td>
<td>Emergence of Raja-Zamindars as superior land tenure holders, of Darbaris and Title-Holders, further decline of peasantry.</td>
<td>Context created for the rise of emerging elite.</td>
<td>Feeble tendency Trend of entry noted of its into elite vertical sector from circulation other castes touching caste peasants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Phases</td>
<td>Wider Political Processes</td>
<td>Structure of Land, Power and People Relation</td>
<td>Structure of Elite and Circulation of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Circulation of entrenched and emerging elite.  
(b) Tendency among emerging elites to transform themselves into entrenched elites.
Zamindari, etc. which essentially referred to "shares" in the superior land tenure.

The British juridical system could not discern the 'meanings' of the agrarian practices of rural folk in North India. They privatised land, introduced the concept of 'ownership', 'rent', 'revenue', etc., and along with that chopped down the traditional 'shares' of the majority rural population in land in favour of the payers of the land revenue - the rajas, the lambardars, the zamindars and the talukdars. This was the last nail in the coffin of the British colonialism. Large numbers of peasantry who used to have customary 'share' in land produce were alienated from land. Land as 'property' was delinked from various segments of rural population in favour of a few revenue agents. Displacement of the peasantry from meaningful relation with land paved the way for the National Congress to gravitate the rural dispossessed and exploited masses to their anti-zamindar and anti-British freedom movement.

Independent India did introduce radical measures against the feudal-colonial interests and forces. Its massive legal measures, such as the Abolition of Zamindari System, Fixation of Ceiling, etc. were to act as weapons against the continuing existence of feudal-colonial enclaves and reservoirs of rural power. The gap between the conception of law at the level of Assembly and Parliament and its
actual delivery at the level of villages by way of implementation is generally wide. By the time law has to deal with an object, the object itself disappears. This makes law a 'hypocritical' exercise. In Basti, little land was available as 'surplus' since the landlords sold land or did 'benami-transfers' to escape the ceiling legislation. This process exposes the weaknesses of the law but also the susceptibilities of the legislation and possibly its legislators. The entrenched power structure is reflected in the political values and ideology of democracy and 'socialism' in India, where law supposedly an instrument of distributive justice serves only to mystify the existing vested interests and entrenched power structure.