The term class connotes different meanings to various sociologists. After looking into these nuances the relevance of Marxian definition has been stressed in the first part of the chapter. In the second part an effort has been made to examine the relationship between peasantry and class. It has been examined how far peasantry can be treated as a class and how peasantry, in relation to the outside world depicts class phenomenon.

I

The concept of class and its Relevance for the Present study:

The concept of class and its analysis has been based mainly upon two different theoretical orientations namely Marxist and Weberian. Max Weber defines class as consisting of people having one common characteristic besides others in their "chances at the market". More

precisely Max Weber writes, "always this is the generic connotation of the concept of class: that the kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual's fate" 'Class situation' is in this sense is ultimately 'market situation' In this way Max Weber specified the content of class. But this specification of the content of class later resulted in the arbitrary delimitations of class by individual social scientists. While referring to the development of class structure in the U.S.A., Yogendra Singh has rightly pointed out that the studies on class-structure in the U.S.A. have followed a path of what he calls the attributional method. The study of W. Lloyd Warner could be one example where six fold classification of American Society has been offered. A question of methodological relevance may be raised here. If Max Weber's approach is considered relevant in various studies in the U.S.A., then the extra flexibility which it offers may lead towards arbitrary categorization of class by each individual social scientist. Max Weber himself once

2. Ibid. pp. 182


advocated the subjective interpretation of phenomenon (it may be class for the time being), but at the same time maintained that this forms only a part of long intellectual journey. Max Weber's idea might have been that the subjective interpretation (of class for the time being) of a social scientist might serve as objective point from where others could again start their accomplishments. It would then be known to a social scientist that a particular author had studied a particular phenomenon from a specific angle or approach and it could be subjective also. As far as logistics are concerned it seems a promising argument. But unfortunately this could not be accomplished so far and it could safely be said that the era of (true) comparative sociology in that sense has not begun as yet. The entire argument needs to be taken care of and carried forward. This argument may be left here with an optimistic note that the future of the history of sociology will take care of it.

There is yet another point to work upon in the definition and treatment of the concept of class by Max Weber. It refers to the early realization by Max Weber that both theoretically as well as empirically the concept of class does not operate in isolation but in association with certain others like those of status and power. Although it could be mentioned here that Karl Marx was also not unaware
of it, yet there is a need to look into it with a sufficient care. Moreover, Weber's overemphasis on "Chances at the market", as a determining factor of class brings it nearer the material conditions of life, and interpretations associated with it. But there are certain factors which prevent one to establish any organic linkages between Marx's definition of class and Weber's treatment of class. The differences should be made clear. An attempt has been made here to examine how as it first appears that Weber's notion of class advances towards that of Marx's treatment of class and later how does it differentiate itself from the latter.

Weber's treatment of class with the inherent characteristic "Chances at the market" at one stage suggests that it is ultimately the distribution system in society which determines classes. It also appears at first sight that Weber insists upon economic content of class-character which could be brought nearer to Marx's notion of class. If Weber's idea of distribution system could somehow be associated organically with that of Marx's notion on production-system, this production-distribution dilemma could be resolved. The ideas of Weber and Marx on the concept of class can generate a new synthesis. There seems to be yet another similarity between the two and i.e. both Weber and Marx adhere to the economic interpretation of class-structure of society. A little deeper thinking on the
notion of class suggests that Weber's concept has certain distinctive features of its own and if one tries to take it nearer Marx's concept of class, the former repells against the latter getting attracted towards it. The theoretical stand that one could take, before arriving at a working definition of class has to be specified.

Weber's concept of class could be discussed vis-a-vis that of Marx's concept of class to remove the misunderstanding at theoretical level.

Firstly, Max Weber's intellectual sharpness gets reflected in early identification of the point that the concept of class is associated with other concepts like status and power. Whereas Karl Marx would hold that once classes are identified, the questions like those of status and power or any other could be decided, along with it. The concept of class then shall be the determining factor for almost everything else. For Marx the identification of class rests upon its structural location in productive-system. Marx visualises class as structurally located and conditioned by materialist forces. This structural location of class is the prime factor for Marx which helps in understanding other concepts associated with it and virtually determining them. In this sense Marx's analysis of class seems to be mono casual whereas in Weber's
treatment of class there is much more scope to work upon due to its openness and width. In Weber's analysis it is possible that status or even power for that matter may change the course of class determination. In Weber's identification of class when status and power could be meaningfully associated with it, all of the three variables operate almost quite freely. This freedom of operation of each variable without being solely and primarily caused by the other variable shows Weber's ability to treat them scientifically and give a logical base to whatever has been said. Weber leaves a large area for logical exercise to follow when he says for example, "economically conditioned power is not identical with 'power' as such. On the contrary, the emergence of economic power may be the consequence of power existing on other grounds". Weber relates power with status like this: "Very frequently the striving for power is also conditioned by the social honour it entails". Max Weber's several examples like one which says that economically better off man may not have higher status, show that this analysis has left open sufficient logical as well as empirical possibilities. On this score

Weber's treatment of class encompasses wider areas than those covered by Marx's notion of class. In Weber's analysis of class there is much more ground for variables to exist as independent or interdependent variables whereas in Marx's analysis class has become a variable that is independent and decides almost everything else. Weber's analysis deals with three variables together at one time and it is quite compact. On the other hand, Marx's analysis has the merit of being more clear and can be handled precisely both theoretically and empirically.

Secondly, the starting point in Weber's analysis of class is the distribution system in general and chances at market in particular. In Marx's treatment of class the analysis begins with production-system in general and with the analysis of a factory in particular. It may appear at first sight that by combining the two the production-distribution dilemma could be solved. But this illusion gets removed by a deeper analysis. Here a reference could be made of the underlying principle which makes a sharp difference between these two approaches. In fact it is the principle of dialectics which is quite capable of keeping the two approaches quite distant from each other. It could safely be said that here Marx's analysis of class has been greatly enriched due to the inclusion of the principle of dialectics and its materialistic interpretation. Although Marx tried to
move away from Hegel, but there are examples which suggest that in fact for quite sometime, at least in his youthful period (and writings) he remained intellectually occupied with Hegel and his legacy. This may be labeled as a criticism of Marx, but on the other hand it could be argued with strength that Marx's concept of class is strongly supported by the principle of dialectics. In fact dialectics provides a strong base for Marx and Marx's notion of class. On the other hand Weber's class-analysis would include unequal distribution of resources but won't accept any dialectics. In this way as it appears first Weber's approach of class-analysis could be brought nearer to the one attempted by Marx, becomes difficult to follow at later stages. That is how Weber's analysis of class keeps a distance with Marx's treatment of class.

Thirdly, Max Weber's overemphasis on "Chances at the market" as main determinant of class leads towards certain problems related to class-identification. Even then, here Weber seems to have retreated back from his much celebrated historical comparative approach. According to Weber class could not be identified until and unless it enters in the market and behaves economically. Weber presents the discussion over class in this form too: "Those men whose fate is not determined by the chances of using
goods or services for themselves on the market, e.g. slaves, are not, however, a 'class' in the technical sense of the term. They are, rather a 'status-group'. Here although Weber refers to slaves but does not speak of their possible development in the form of class. Neither Weber seems to have remained concerned about slaves dialectical opposition to masters. At this juncture of analysis it could be said that as far as class-analysis is concerned Marx includes dialectical location of classes, historical advancement of society and the revolutionary potential of the dominated classes. Weber's analysis excludes all these points. At this stage of analysis Marx's notion of class and its operationalization seems to be full of promises. It helps in the objective identification of classes - their dialectical locations and historical movement. Whereas Weber's analysis of class has one great limitation and that is that it leaves a wide area open for identification and subjective interpretation of class.

Fourthly, Weber's class-analysis moves further away from that of Marx on yet another account. Weber has also commented on class-consciousness and his notion is quite different from that of Marx. Weber insists on

subjective interpretation of objective class-structure.

H.H. Gerth and C.Wright Mills have clarified this point, "He (Weber) is prepared to give full credit to Marx for his insight into the historical nature of the modern class structure. Only when subjective opinions can be attributed to men in an objective class situation does Weber speak of 'class-consciousness', and when he focuses upon problems of 'conventions', 'styles of life', of occupational attitudes, he prefers to speak of prestige or of 'Status groups'". On the other hand Marx does not seem to agree with this subjective interpretation of class-situation leading toward the understanding of class-consciousness. Marx would prefer to call it "false consciousness" which arises from misunderstanding of class situation where the dominant-class ideology prevents to realise the revolutionary potential of the working classes.

Marx's notion of class, on the other hand, requires a new perspective i.e. to look at the phenomenon from working class perspective. Marx once wrote, "As long as they


(intellectuals) are looking for a science and only create systems, as long as they are at the beginning of the struggle, they see in poverty only poverty, without noticing its revolutionary and subversive aspect, which will overthrow the old society". Commenting on the potentials of science Marx continues as saying, "But from this moment the science produced by the historical movement, and which consciously associates itself with this movement, has ceased to be doctrinaire and has become revolutionary". What could be argued here is that if one wishes to look at classes and class-consciousness, then one is required to do it with a particular perspective. And if one wishes to bring Weber's notion of class nearer to that of Marx the former repells. It could be argued here that to be on safer side, it would be proper to keep Weber's notion of class distinct from that of Marx.

Fifthly, there appears to be a fundamental difference between Weber's analysis of classes in contemporary society and Marx's notion of class that quite frequently ventures into future type of society. In this sense Weber has touched upon contemporary society and tried to locate classes and therefore his notion of

10. Ibid, pp. 81.
class has certain limitations of time. The canvas of Marx's notion of class is wider in terms of time and scope. Apart from history Marx ventures into future type of society like this: "The communist revolution however is directed against the former mode of activity, does away with labour, and abolishes all class rule along with the classes themselves, because it is effected by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, which is not recognised as a class, and which is the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities etc. within contemporary society". Marx says a lot on future type of society which was later on criticised, but as far a Weber's notion of class is concerned it does not go into future and remains confined to the analysis of contemporary society only. Marx has been criticised when he tried to venture in the area of future type of society. In short it could be noted here that Marx was criticised by Ralf Dahrendorf for the former's notion of class and class-struggle, polarization of society.


into two classes and dissolution of middle class, increasing intensity of class-struggle, increasing inequality and deterioration in the general conditions of the proletariat. Marx has been criticised like this and has not been killed by silence. But Marx's notion of class, as it ventures into future type of society, be better kept away from Weber's treatment of class.

II

The Nature of Peasantry as a Class: Some Issues and Questions

The peasant question has been attempted from a variety of angles in various disciplines. In a sense it could be said that now the status of research on peasant is multidisciplinary in nature. The richness of literature on peasant question on the one hand makes it a more lively question for discussion and research, on the other hand makes the question pretty harder to answer. Broadly speaking the literature on peasant studies originates from three broader areas. Firstly, the peasant question had its roots in the anthropological studies in U.S.A. and elsewhere in the early 1950s. Anthropologists - mainly cultural anthropologists who were trying to study "other Cultures" when noticed that their subject matter alongwith the concept of "little community" is disappearing fast - both in form as
well as in content, they shifted their attention towards the study of "peasant society". This shift could be easily located in the work of Robert Redfield. For cultural anthropologists this was a new area which they had discovered for their studies. Robert Redfield defined peasantry as having three characteristics like: (1) it is a part-society with part-culture, (2) peasantry is related to the outside world through elites and (3) peasants take agriculture as a way of life. Here the emphasis on the "cultural" component of Peasantry could be seen. The main question which they discussed was that the cultural whole which was clearly visible in "little community" is now replaced by "part culture" - the other half being located outside peasant society. A number of village studies on this pattern appeared in India too at the same time i.e. at the beginning of 1950s. Some of the important ones are:


Pradesh, his latter study of some villages concerned with Community Development Projects (C.D.P.), B.R. Chauhan's study of Ranawaton Ki Sadri in Rajasthan and the trend of a single village study continued although with some different questions and emphasis up to Andre Beteille's study of Sripuram village in Tamil Nadu. In between these studies two edited works on single village studies also appeared in which several scholars mainly anthropologists contributed on a village each. The first of these was a collection of village studies edited by McKim Marriot and the second was edited by M.N. Srinivas. M.N. Srinivas in that collection of village studies maintained that villages should be studied throughout the country, and this should be done before these villages undergo a change. The pace of change was expected to be much more faster after India got national independence. In short these and some other studies of


villages from anthropological perspective were sufficiently rich in material and their contents could be used as data for many more years to come.

Another important breakthrough in peasant studies came from yet another related discipline sociology, although in India the academic developments in anthropology and sociology went hand in hand. The emergence of rural sociology as a discipline in the U.S.A. and later in the Western Europe also tried to deal with peasant question. Alongwith these studies the writings of Marx and Engels also generated favourable conditions for the study of peasant question. The question of peasantry within Marxist framework was begun to be studied from the perspective of class. This generated a debate over whether peasantry could be treated as a class or not. Similarly the establishment of socialist societies in the U.S.S.R. and China led scholars like Barrington Moore Jr examine what was really wrong with Marxist scheme as such because societies referred above reached socialism without entering into the capitalist


phase. Barrington Moore Jr. started with the assumption that industrialization was not the cause of upsurge and revolutions in U.S.S.R. and China. Alongwith it one argument came from all quarters based upon demographic reasons. It was argued in almost every writing that peasants constituted a numerical majority and that must be represented in studies on peasants. There were attempts by scholars like Daniel Thorner who tried to study peasantry from the perspective of economic-history. In this way the peasant question has been attempted broadly from three different angles or say three different approaches namely (1) Anthropology and Sociology (2) Marxist studies and (3) Economic History. The task before the scholar of today is to arrive at a meaningful synthesis. A careful study of the three approaches however, suggests that this has not been done so far. For example if one reads Danial Thorner it becomes evident that he has not referred to any single village study conducted by anthropologists and sociologists. There is however a strong need to bring these very approaches nearer to each other and arrive at a meaningful synthesis and after that some effort has to be done to see the interaction between this theoretical construct and empirical findings. The same has been attempted in subsequent chapters.

23. Daniel Thorner, op. cit.
At the current status of research on peasantry it would be difficult to say in affirmative or in negation about peasantry being a class or not. But this question could be examined in a more meaningful way by attempting to understand the true nature and content as well as its potential for being a class. For this the concept of peasant or peasantry has to be defined clearly, and its potentialities as a class examined. As a matter of fact this could be done simultaneously i.e. while defining the contents of peasantry its class-potentialities may also be assessed alongwith it. For academic reasons the original question may be modified as: If peasantry is a class, then to what extent where and under what circumstances does it look like one? Then, there is a need to select appropriate methodology to discuss this question. At the moment it seems that the historical-comparative approach would provide the starting point and the contributions made in all relevant disciplines, chiefly anthropology - sociology combine, Marxist studies and economic history have been examined.

24 Nikolai I. Bukharin has made an important

24. Nikolai I. Bukharin, Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology (Translated from Third Russian Edition), New York: Russell, (1921), 1965. Nikolai I. Bukharin was a leading theoretician of the Russian Communist Party. Among politicians he was considered to be more concerned with sociological theory.
distinction between peasantry and other social categories which may exist along with it in society. From conceptual and analytical view this distinction is important. S.M. Lipset has made an attempt to put the class-analysis made by Bukharin in a tabular form. In this table it is shown how peasantry is different from other social categories like proletariat and lumpenproletariat and to what extent each one of these could be called a class. In other words the presence or absence of class elements as shown in the table No. 1 given below could become important in class-identification.

Table 1: Bukharin's analysis of class conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class properties</th>
<th>Peasantry</th>
<th>Lumpen-Proletariat</th>
<th>Proletariat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Economic exploitation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Political Oppression</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Poverty</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Productivity</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Freedom from Private Property</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Condition of Union in production and common labour</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A systematic interpretation of the above table could help in understanding the structural location of peasantry vis-a-vis other social categories, of course, at a given time period of a society. It is necessary to interpret this meaningfully for yet another reason. Bukharin's analysis of peasantry vis-avis other social categories is supposed to be an improvisation over Marx's treatment of peasantry as a class. S.M. Lipset agreeing with it writes, "His (Bukharin's) analysis based on the events of the early decades of the twentieth century was elaborated beyond that of Marx". Another reason for meaningful interpretation of this table is the data used by Bukharin might serve as a historical background on which further work is possible. Apart from this Bukharin's data on Russian peasantry, it might also serve as a basis on which it could later be attempted to seek the answer to the question, whether peasantry is a universalistic or particularistic category.

27. S.M. Lipset, op.cit. pp. 299

28. This question would be taken up as a challenge in the area of comparative studies on peasantry.
Bukharin's analysis of class-conditions includes three social categories namely peasantry, lumpenproletariat and proletariat and employees six criteria on the basis of which classes are to be identified. One significant departure in Bukharin's analysis might be noted here. Here an attempt has been made to make a distinction within what we may call the lower strata of society. From this analysis it appears at first that the lower strata of society does not operate as a single identifiable entity. Bukharin identifies proletariat as a class and for him the other two categories namely peasantry and lumpenproletariat do not form classes. A careful look at the table suggests that all the six properties of class are present in proletariat thus qualifying it to make itself a class. Peasantry lacks two characteristics of class i.e. (1) freedom from private property - which means that peasants have private property, and (2) condition of union in production and common labour, which means that neither peasants assemble at a common place or work nor they do collective labour in the process of production. Marx has frequently emphasized on the material conditions of factory where industrial proletariat is in an advantageous position vis-a-vis other exploited categories. Marx puts his position clearly like this: "With the development of industry the proletariat not only increases
in number it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows and it feels that strength more\textsuperscript{29}.

Bhukharin seems to be in agreement with Marx who saw low potentiality in peasantry to become a class. According to Marx, peasantry constitutes a class in itself as, "in so far millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class". But peasantry is not capable enough to free itself from its oppressors and therefore according to Marx peasantry is not a class for itself. Describing it Marx writes, "In so far there is merely a local interconnexion among these small holding peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not form a class".

Bukharin and Marx seem to agree on one point at least and i.e. that peasantry is not capable enough to


\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
organize itself into a class. It also implies that if peasants try to bring about a revolution it is likely to be defeated. Frederick Engels has made an analysis of peasant revolutions that failed to materialize. Another important characteristic of peasantry "freedom from private property" is absent from it. This means that however limited it might be but peasantry owns some land. According to Bukharin's analysis peasantry is tied up with land in such a way that it structurally separates peasants from one another, thus it is not possible for them to unite for their common cause whether it is their economic and political oppression, poverty or oppression of their productive labour.

In Bukharin's analysis of class conditions a reference to lumpen-proletariat has also been made. Of course they have freedom from private property (which means that they do not have private property) but they lack certain other characteristics of class like economic exploitation, productivity and condition of union in production and common labour and thus lumpenproletariats do not constitute a class. Bukharin's class -analysis scheme provides a break-through in the analysis of peasantry vis-a-

vis other social categories. It seems relevant to refer to Marx's notion of "false consciousness" here. In Marx's analysis the lower strata of society, proletariat in particular, might fall in the trap of what he calls it "false consciousness". Likewise, with the tide of economic development the peasantry might also fall in the same trap. The question of false consciousness still requires an examination in the case of peasantry especially in the wake of the introduction of new technology, fertilizers, irrigation facilities, provision of loan and subsidies and the like. Here its mere reference would serve the purpose, but the question of false consciousness could be dealt with a little later.

Marx has referred to yet another aspect of peasantry being a class. Marx's distinction between peasantry as a class in itself and not class for itself might have certain other repercussions. While analysing the historical evolution of bourgeoisie as a class in itself to class for itself, Marx said the former period was of a longer duration in comparison to that of the latter period. For bourgeoisie it required a lot of effort for a considerably longer period to establish and struggle when it

was class in itself (German ansich) than the period when it became class-conscious and capable of political action to throw away the feudal and monarchic orders. Similarly it could be argued that the struggle of the exploited might be of a longer duration till it becomes politically class-conscious.

Theoretically speaking till it becomes class for itself (German fursich) peasantry might have to struggle for a considerably longer time in its historical evolution.

Marx while accepting the incapability of peasantry becoming a class and carrying out its own, struggle, stated that it could get leadership (class leadership) of their urban industrial counterpart - the proletariat. Speaking on leadership question Lenin opined that the leadership might come from certain section other than the proletariat themselves. Lenin sought the leadership to be drawn from elite section of society or from what he called it the vanguard. Max Weber too opined that it was not possible even for industrial proletariat to reach a stage of consciousness through trade union efforts directed against

34. V.I. Lenin, "What is to be done?" Collected Works, Volume 5, pp. 347-529 (1902), Quoted by S.M. Lipset op.cit. pp. 301

35. Max Weber op.cit.
their employers for minimum wages and against working conditions. From this, it could be safely deduced here that when it was not possible for even urban-industrial proletariat to develop that level of class-consciousness without outside leadership, then peasantry - still a weaker force in itself could not expect any sort of a revolution without outside support and leadership. In other words it means that peasantry has to be led from outside.

In Bukharin's class analysis of peasantry economic exploitation, political oppression and poverty in general as important characteristics of peasantry could be clubbed together. Teodar Shanin's definition of peasantry includes its 'underdog' position. Apart from this, Shanin's definition of peasantry includes three other characteristics namely peasant family farm as the basic unit of social organization, land-husbandry as the main source of livelihood and specific traditional culture. What Bukharin calls the "productivity" of the peasantry, Shanin acknowledges it in the form of family farm being the main productive unit of social organization. But Bukharin and Shanin seem to differ on one significant count i.e. about

36. Teodar Shanin, op.cit. pp. 14-16
37. Ibid, pp. 14-16
chances of peasantry taking a revolutionary turn. Bukharin negates "condition of union in production and common labour among the peasants"; whereas Shanin looks at peasantry: "in some conditions they may turn into the revolutionary proletariat of our times". Both Bukharin as well as Shanin agree on yet another point, for the former peasants are put to "political oppression" and for the latter peasants are structurally located in what he calls it, "the under-dog position - the domination of peasantry by outsiders".

Teodar Shanin in yet another article tries to define peasantry along with its characteristics. According to Shanin "The peasantry consists of small agricultural producers who with the help of simple equipment and the labour of their families, produce mainly for their own consumption and for the fulfillment of obligations to the holders of political and economic power". According to Shanin there are five characteristics associated with peasantry and they have been discussed along with proper references. These characteristics as described by Shanin


39. Teodar Shanin, op.cit., pp.15


could be identified as essential components of the definition of peasantry and also its treatment as a class. These characteristics of peasantry are (i) its relationship to land, (ii) the family farm, (iii) its occupation as determinant of social status, (iv) village-structure (and its place in it) and (v) peasantry as pre-industrial social entity.

Shanin argues that peasants' relationship to land is important in the sense that it provides the necessary minimum for the peasant and his family to sustain and this saves peasants from other producers (where he could have worked as agricultural labour otherwise) and market forces. This gives rise to some sort of stability to peasant family vis-a-vis his other counterparts working on land. Shanin quotes one Polish scholar Galeski who states that land is "a necessary and generally sufficient condition to enter the occupation". Shanin has clarified this relationship (between peasantry and land) further: "In actual fact the legal ownership of peasant land, as seen by a townsman, may lie with the peasant himself, the commune, the landlord or the state; the land being correspondingly a private plot,

commune property or a customary lease holding". This way of explaining the relationship between peasant and land of course offers a much wider consideration, peasantry under almost every mode of production may have this sort of a relationship with land. This also brings out a point clearly and i.e. that the peasantry is a transnational as well as a universal — phenomenon. It reminds the statement of Redfield "Peasant society and culture has something generic about it. It is a kind of arrangement of humanity with some similarities all over the world". But Redfield immediately reminds, "Landlords are not needed to establish the fact of a peasantry". Peasants' relationship with land is although essential but before making any class - analysis of peasantry it would be appropriate to examine: (a) the mode of production or social formation (b) the system by which land has been acquired and (c) the existence of other classes vis-a-vis peasantry.

Teodar Shanin quotes Galeski on the question of family farm also. By acquiring/owning land the peasant along with his family establishes himself in a relatively stable

45. Ibid, pp. 28.
social structure. According to Galeski, "The identification of interest of family and farm-holding seems to be a typical characteristic of the traditional peasant family". Teodar Shanin then talks about the occupation of the peasant. Instead of discussing the specific occupation of the peasant, Shanin rather prefers to discuss the entire cluster of occupations. Shanin maintains that the technology that is employed by peasant comes generally from the village itself. Therefore, there seems to be an existence of the rural populace i.e. engaged in non-farming work. Shanin seems to have relied on those interconnections between the two, the peasant and the non-farming populace, both residing in rural areas.

Another point regarding the occupation of the peasant and its allies in rural areas has been outlined. Shanin observes that both of these oppose high level mechanization and industrialization, as this part of economic operating from outside the village might lead towards their destruction. At this particular moment of analysis, it appears that Shanin again returns to his earlier position which puts the


47. Teodar Shanin, op.cit., pp. 243-44

48. Please see Teodar Shanin, op.cit. pp. 243-44 for the following discussion as well as reference.
peasantry in opposition to its urban-industrial counterparts.

This discussion on the peasant economy once again highlights the rural v. urban question. In the entire approach it seems that not only people working on land are taken as one single category but entire rural populace is being treated as the oppressed entity. The relationship between the peasant and its rural counterpart seems to be "functional" in the analysis of Shanin. The possible follow up may lead to the rural urban divide type of questions. This again may block our way to make the class analysis of peasantry. Shanin's approach has this weakness as it seems that with that kind of analysis it is not easy to work out internal contradictions and to make a class analysis of peasantry.

Teodar Shanin makes one more characteristic clear and i.e. the village structure and its association with the peasantry. Again the village seems to have been taken as a single entity, neglecting the possibility of internal contradictions. Describing village-structure, Teodar Shanin writes, "In the setting of village community or peasant commune, the peasant reaches a level of nearly total

49. Ibid, pp. 244
self-sufficiency". This sort of a neglect of internal heterogeneity might lead towards a serious shortcoming while making class-analysis of peasantry. One last point made by Teodar Shanin about the definition of peasantry being the pre-industrial social entity needs reconsideration. Shanin criticises Marx and Engels for their treatment of peasantry as "relics of the way of production which already belongs to the past". Shanin also disagrees with the notion of "delayed development" of peasantry. Shanin in addition to all this wants to focus on the need to examine the question from the perspective of what he calls "specific features of development (of the peasantry)". Shanin on the other hand seems to have been quite aware of the difficulties that crop up on constructing a concept (here peasantry) and its empirical referents. Shanin clarifies, "No concept of a social stratum can be made exactly to coincide with any empirically defined group. Yet the importance and validity of attempting a conceptual definition of peasantry for research seems to us beyond question".

Shanin's approach to conceptualise peasantry has led towards the rural urban divide type of questions in his

50. Ibid, pp. 244-45.
51. Ibid, pp. 244-45.
52. Ibid, pp. 245.
final analysis. Not only this, Shanin has also referred to certain "parallel patterns" in urban areas vis-a-vis rural areas. This requires a brief discussion as Shanin puts this divide between rural and urban along three points, in which both areas are treated as contradicting each other. An analysis of this is as the following.

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(1) According to Shanin what he calls it, large-scale, capital intensive and mechanized agriculture, "gradually destroys the small farms". Shanin further states, "Agriculture fully taken over by industrial methods of production becomes merely a branch of industry". Shanin quotes Lenin here to support this argument. Shanin's emphasis on rural urban divide is clear, although in this analysis there are indication that industrial forces might destroy the peasant economy. The nature of contradictions in the analysis of Shanin now seems to be between urban-industrialised agriculture and rural peasantry. Shanin's analysis has so far not tried to examine the question of the division of peasantry from within and the possible use of the new technology by the upper stratum of the peasantry. An important point for discussion may be that, to examine the

53. Ibid, pp. 249.
54. Ibid, pp. 249.
relationship between the urban industrial-agricultural forces and rural based section to peasantry which is technologically superior to other peasants. This question needs further researches in both the areas at theoretical as well as at empirical level. According to Shanin's formulation the relationship between the two seems to be that of contradictions, as it goes along the argument of rural urban divide.

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(2) Teodar Shanin has given yet another count in the definition of peasantry from class perspective. Continuing with the earlier urban v. rural debate, Shanin argues that town-centred society creates conditions in favour of what he calls "professional stratum of farmers". It is further argued, "The poorer villagers are increasingly sucked in from the countryside by the expanding urban areas. The same happens to peasant entrepreneurs - and to part of the economic surplus in agriculture". Besides, it has been argued that the middle peasants' support rests on two grounds (a) family production unit and (b) an increasing co-operative movement, (to) fight successfully for a place in

57. Ibid, pp. 249.
Another category has been that of worker-peasant which supplements its income by hiring out its labour. From analytical point of view it seems that Teodor Shanin divides peasants into three categories: (a) professional stratum of farmers, (b) middle-peasants and (c) Worker-peasant.

Teodor Shanin quotes Gunnar Myrdal for the analysis of peasantry in the third world. The basic feature of these societies is the cumulative pauperization of the peasantry. This is followed by certain other typical characteristics like population explosion, developing market relations and industrial competition with traditional peasant handicrafts, under employment, agrarian over-population etc. Shanin has also discussed at length about the possibilities of peasantry becoming a class and argued, "how far a peasantry may be regarded as a class is not a clear-cut problem, but should be seen rather as a question of degree and historical period". A reference to peasantry's political capabilities

58. Teodor Shanin quotes Karl Marx and Otto Bauer here to support his point. These have been seen as the only way for peasantry to develop. Please see pp. 249-251.

59. Worker peasant sells out his labour and is able to maintain hardly a subsistence level.

60. Teodor Shanin, op.cit.pp. 250

has also been made; a distinction between independent class action and guided political action has also been made. The discussion by Shanin includes the following points about peasantry (a) Being capable of fully spontaneous, amorphous political action - local riots and peasant passivity, (b) a modern conscript army being a nationwide organization in which peasantry activity participates. Another sort of a peasant action namely guerrilla warfare has also been made.

It seems possible at this moment to argue about the general nature of peasantry as being a class. (i) The first important point is that the mode of production puts peasants in such a structural lock-up that it does not seem possible for the peasants to unite and take on a class action. The second point follows from the first and i.e. about peasant passivity. (ii) Peasants are not capable enough to lead a movement - a class movement, without the support of the outside forces. In other words the leadership of the peasantry comes from those areas that are not necessarily their own and leader may not be the one who comes from their own people. (iii) Apart from internal

62. This point does not need any elaboration as it is followed by some well known examples like peasant conditions of Russia and China and French Bonapartism along with Mao's people's army.

63. Teodar Shanin, op.cit. pp. 258-60.
contradictions, outside forces also keep on operating and they attempt to destroy the basic fabric of the peasantry. This inside v outside dilemma of contradictions and change may also be viewed along agriculture v. industry or better along rural v. urban contradictions. (iv) The peasantry could be divided into three main types, namely (a) professional stratum of farmers, (b) middle peasant and (c) worker-peasant. (v) The strength of the middle peasant lies on two grounds, (a) family production unit and (b) to build up a co-operative movement to seek a place in market economy. (vi) Peasants are structurally located in such a situation that works against their possibilities of becoming a class (for itself). However, barring a few exceptions peasant wars generally turned out to be a few separate isolated outbursts.

However, there is a need to examine and make an analysis of six major wars that were successfully fought mainly with the peasant support. These six peasant rebellions were (a) the Mexican revolution of 1910, (b) the Russian Revolutions of 1905-1917, (c) Chinese revolutions since 1921 onwards and upto 1949, (d) Vietnamese revolution

which had its roots in the World War II (e) the Algerian rebellion of 1954 and (f) the Cuban revolution of 1958. There is a need to make an analysis of Russian as well as Chinese revolutions specially to examine the role of peasantry in building up a class movement and, its political outcome, the dictatorship of the left forces.

Class-analysis of peasantry of the Soviet Union needs another look after the contributions of Leszek Kolakowski. He has attempted to locate the contradictions between peasantry and its counterpart the proletariat. The main question was what the state had to offer to the peasants in lieu of their produce. There was another related question how to tackle that situation if peasants refused to sell their produce as they might not get much out of the economy which was in the ruined state. Another sharp contradiction between the Bolshevik party and peasants was that the former was not ready to let the economy and hence power in the hands of the latter. Here the significance of the notion of peasant passivity becomes clear even in the


case of the socialist society. Proletarian dictatorship did not allow the peasantry to share the fruits of the revolution. Bukharin's approach of preferential treatment for peasants although supported by Stalin, was theoretically opposed by some scholars including Preobrazhensky who argued in favour of a strong centrally controlled industrial base. Socialist state, unlike colonial states, had to develop the industrial infrastructure from their own resources and for that they relied on peasants. L. Kolakowski writes "States industry, however, cannot of itself create a sufficient basis of accumulation but must draw upon the resources of small producers i.e. in practice of peasantry". Clarifying it further it has been stated that private holdings must be the object of internal colonization. Preobrazhensky admitted frankly "it was a matter of exploiting the peasant, extracting the maximum amount of surplus value from his labour to increase investment in industry". In Soviet Union there were numerous problems in the path to be followed towards socialism. Karl Kautsky did not agree with the position.

68. for a full length argument please see L. Kolakowski (volume 3), op.cit. pp. 30-40.
69. Ibid, pp. 30
70. Ibid, pp. 30.
taken by Bernstein that in spite of the concentration of capital (in the hands of the state) the number of middle class is not decreasing, meaning thereby a question mark began to appear on Marx's notion of polarization of the middle class along two camps. Karl Kautsky refuted this by arguing that the people belonging to middle class "were not petty bourgeois but men thrown out of work by the concentration of capital". Against this background L. Kolakowski writes about peasants, "He (Karl Kautsky) admitted that in agriculture the disappearance of small holdings was not proceeding so fast as had been predicted, but here too he thought it was bound to come in time". From this statement of Karl Kautsky it could be argued that it was not an easy job to do away with peasants - everything against their will, and to proceed smoothly towards large-scale collectivisation. Here the significance of peasant resistance against state intervention is clearly visible. But at least one point is very clear and i.e. that even socialist society had witnessed the contradiction between the proletariat (the Bolsheviks) and the peasantry, between urban and its rural counterpart, between state capital and

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71. L. Kolakowski, op.cit., (Volume 2) pp. 44
72. Karl Kautsky, quoted by L. Kolakoswki (Volume 2), op.cit., pp.44
73. Ibid, pp. 44.
the peasantry. L. Kolakowski at one point has tried to make this contradiction clear when said, "The contradiction does not lie in the doctrine, but in the interests of the possessing classes".

Class-analysis of peasantry has been a subject of long and lengthy debates in the Marxist polemics. Peasantry, was denied any share in the power by the Bolsheviks and had to suffer from various angles - theoretical point of view being the main part and the target was peasantry. One such theoretical opposition came from a Marxist theoretician K. Kelles-Krauz who argued against peasant interests and the argument he gave was that the collective agriculture was more revolutionary in nature rather than the earlier form of agriculture. K. Kelles-Krauz's mention has been precisely in this way: "He (K. Kelles-Krauz) combated the revisionism of Eduard David on the agricultural question, sharing the orthodox view that a collectivised economy was better for land as well as for industry".

74. Ibid, pp. 49.

75. For a detailed discussion on the contributions of K. Kelles Krauz, please see L. Kolakowski, volume 2, op.cit., pp. 94 and 213.

76. Ibid, pp. 213.
Quite a different and perhaps a more realistic stand on peasantry and peasant problems was taken by Lenin. Clarifying Lenin's position on peasant L. Kolakowski write, "Unlike the orthodox Marxist he (Lenin) perceived the huge revolutionary potential that lie in the peasants' unfulfilled demands, and he (Lenin) urged the party to exploit this even though from the traditional point of view, it might seem to involve a 'reactionary act'". Thus any attempt to support small folders was considered to be 'reactionary'. Lenin spoke in favour of peasantry perhaps after realising the class potentials of peasantry. Lenin presented his views thus:

"It is reactionary to support small property because such support is directed against large-scale capitalist economy, and consequently retards social development and obscures and glosses over the class-struggle. In this case, however, we want to support small property not against capitalism but against self-ownership... There are two sides of all things in the world. In the west, the peasant proprietor has already played his part in the democratic movement, and is now defending his

77. Ibid, pp. 405.
78. For a reference to this point please see Ibid, pp.406.
position of privilege as compared with the proletariat. In Russia, the peasant proprietor is as yet on the eve of a decisive and nation-wide democratic movement with which he cannot but sympathize... In a historic movement like the present, it is our direct duty to support the peasants. 79

In this way Lenin had realised the strength of peasantry and also the need to support it. Lenin also reflected on the other side of the coin, but that will be brought into discussion a little bit later. Lenin wanted to support peasants against what he called "self ownership". 80

Examining Lenin's point of view on peasants, L. Kolakowski writes like this: "At the outset of the Revolution Lenin hoped for support not only from the proletariat but from the working peasants as opposed to the Kulaks; but it soon became clear that while the whole of the peasantry supported the Revolution against the big landowners they were much less enthusiastic for the next phase". This clarifies that the working peasants were tried to be mobilised in the countryside, on the same ground on which their urban counterpart proletariat made the struggle a revolutionary success. This discussion brings out a point that needs some consideration. Theoretically speaking at

least-here agriculture (and classes within it) are taken as a (rural) equivalent to (urban) industry. Theoretically speaking, the common thread that binds working peasants and industrial proletariat together was perhaps located in the Marxist principle of exploitation, working peasants exploited by the Kulaks and industrial proletariat by bourgeoisie.

It was therefore thought that from a point of view of praxis as well as strategy working peasant should be natural ally of industrial proletariat. The question before us is whether it is correct to equate agriculture (and classes within it) with industry. To write this statement scientifically it could be said: To equate agriculture with industry would simply mean that, put together - they have been identified as a controlled group. Any analysis which begins with this point, is likely to identify a similar nature of classes working on the similar nature of underlying principle (e.g. here the underlying principle has been exploitation). And if it is done like this, it would mean that two types of class struggles are going on in a one single society - one in the urban areas and the other in the countryside. It seems significant because this sort of a situation raises two important questions at the theoretical plane. These are the following.
(A) If two class-struggles are going on simultaneously one in urban and the other in rural areas then, would it be appropriate to use the Marxist concept of social formation, especially if there is hardly any alignment between the exploited masses.

(B) If we recall Marx's statement "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is a room in it have been developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society", certain questions could be raised at theoretical level.

From the passage quoted above it could be deduced that one social order based on a particular mode of production is followed by another and the former never disappears before conditions for its destruction have been created by the latter. Once this transition has taken place, then it seems from Marx's statement that the change is fundamental as well as final, meaning thereby, there is no going back. This has been a theoretical stand taken by Marx,

but as far as his views on Praxis are concerned he continued, "Therefore, mankind always sets itself only such problems as it can solve; since on closer examination, it will always be found that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation". Unfortunately Marx did not talk of mode of production immediately after that. But Marx seems to be certain on one point at least and i.e. that after the next higher social order has been achieved there is no possibility of going back to the society based upon the preceding mode of production. At this state of argument this standpoint could be equated with the stand taken by Thomas S. Kuhn on paradigm analysis although Kuhn has been skeptical about paradigm - analysis being applied in social sciences as he treats them to be in a pre-paradigm stage. But once there is a break in the paradigm and it has been replaced by another, the change is complete. The difference does not seem to be in approaches to the problem but perhaps in the vocabulary. Kuhn calls it "anomalies", Marx calls it "dialectical materialism" and Engels call it "negation".

It seems proper at the movement to return back to the discussion made prior to raising these two points - about theoretical possibilities of the Marxist concept of "social formation" and about the change of society from one represented by one mode of production to the other and the problems of structural and fundamental nature of change of society. To continue the previous argument, the question before us was the nature of peasantry - exhibiting internal contradictions on the one hand and being exploited as a whole on the other. Lenin who wanted to make use of the internal contradictions of peasantry soon became aware of the nature of unity exhibited by the peasantry. Working peasants no longer opposed the Kulaks but worked unitedly with them. L. Kolakowski makes this point precise like this: "The Party (Bolshevik) placed its hopes from the beginning on kindling the class struggle in the countryside, and tried to rouse the poor peasants and farm-labourers against the richer peasants, inter alia, by the so-called' Committees of the Poor. The results were meagre, and it was clear that the common interest of the peasants as a class was generally stronger than the conflict between poor peasants and Kulaks".

In this way Lenin as well as Shanin seem to have accepted the unity of interest of the peasantry as a whole. From the point of view of strategy and praxis Lenin thought of "neutralising" peasantry as a whole. At the Tenth party Conference in May 1921 Lenin announced, "We tell the peasants frankly and honestly, without any deception: in order to hold the road to socialism, we are making a number of concession to you, comrade peasants, but only within the stated limits and to the stated extent; and, of course, we ourselves shall be the judge of the limits and the extent".

This tough posture of Lenin soon made it clear that the dictatorship of the proletariat (and that of needy peasants) was an illusion and a part of the propaganda tactics. It is another question however to examine Marx's view on a theoretical level. But Bolshevik party later admitted openly that it stands against peasantry as a whole. Kolakowski makes this point precisely, "The Party (Bolsheviks) in due course openly admitted that the dictatorship of the proletariat was exercised over the whole peasantry, which thus had no say in deciding the matters.

84. For a detailed discussion please see Ibid, pp. 502-527.
86. L. Kolakowski, op.cit. pp. 503.
that concerned it most, though it was still an obstacle that had to be taken into account. The situation was indeed obvious from the beginning: as the November elections showed, if the peasants had a share in power the country would have been governed by the S.R.s, with the Bolshevik minority in opposition.

This was how Lenin and the Bolshevik party accepted the unity of the interests of the peasantry as a whole. From the point of view of class analysis of peasantry it is an important point to recon with on the basis of the analysis of societies based upon capitalist mode of production made by Shanin and the analysis of a society based upon socialist mode of production made by Lenin, it becomes clear that the peasantry had been a loser in both the cases. But one striking feature has been brought out if we look at both the analysis carefully that there is a unity of interests within the peasantry. It means that although there are internal contradictions within peasantry but more important and relevant point is that it has been exploited by the outside world.

Peasantry as a class exists as an important category and its relationship with state has to be examined carefully. A reference has been made earlier of the thesis of Barrington More Jr. who has identified the important part
played by peasantry as a class in deciding the political outcome of various countries. A neo-Marxist scholar Nicos Poulantzas suggests that the state depends on petty-bourgeois and peasant classes and derives support from them. The impact of the outside world has been tremendous on peasantry. Traditional as well as new petty bourgeoisie have started playing their decisive role as classes and their relationship with state has found new dimensions of analysis. Along with it the advancement of capitalist society has pushed peasants quite back and in France they are reduced considerably in absolute number. Peasants' actual percentage in France has fallen down from around 19 percent in 1954 to around 11 percent in 1974. In fact the decline in the absolute number of peasants in France has attracted the attention of some anthropologists also, Henri Mendras representing one of them. But there have been certain important questions about peasantry as a class. First,


88. Ibid. pp. 283 and 328.

89. For a detailed discussion on this point please see Ibid, pp. 282-83.

90. For a detailed discussion on this point please see Henri Mendras The Vanishing Peasant: Innovation and change in French Agriculture, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1970.
peasantry needs to be studied cross-nationally, secondly, its potentialities as a class be examined in details and thirdly, peasantry represents a unified phenomenon and its dialectical or otherwise relationship with the outside world be examined.

The forgoing discussion on the nature of peasantry and its class-analysis provides the following vantage points for inquiry.

(1) The internal divisions within the peasantry are important and need to be identified.

(2) The conditions under which the divisions can be used for political mobilization by forces from outside, or alternately the peasantry presents a unified phenomenon working out its own dialectics with outside forces require deeper studies.

(3) Studies of the peasantry conducted along historically specific situations provide a starting point, yet sociological analysis stands to gain through comparative cross national studies leading to the analysis of peasantry as a class.