CHAPTER VII

SOCIETY, CHANGE AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

Section - 1

RURAL STUDIES

The British rulers fully realized that the villages constitute the major areas of operation for them in India. They understood that they should study India 'bottom up' since the socio-economic life in the country was more village centric than otherwise. They had, of course, at the back of their mind, the very mundane problem of revenue collection for administering the country. As such, they took a keen interest in the system of land tenure and the nature of community power structure of the traditional Indian villages. The various Acts passed by the British Government from time to time, starting from the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793, bear evidence of this interest of British rulers in India. The communal nature of land ownership pattern in pre-British India, as emphasized by Henry Maine and Karl Marx, generated interest of academicians in village studies. 1 Dumont has rightly said, "although Marx and Maine are poles apart in other respects, they come together retrospectively as the two foremost writers who have drawn the Indian village community into the circle of world history." 2

The imperative of analyzing the changing gamut of social relationships was, however, recognized by the sociological and anthropological studies made in the post-independent era. Factors, more than one, were responsible for this increased interest of anthropologists on Indian villages. On the one hand, there was a demand of the structural-functionalists that understanding of a total structure depends on the analysis of the nature of interrelationship among the parts; and in the Indian context village study was an essential precondition of such problematic. The case for studying villages, as perceptively observed by McKim Marriott, largely rests on its being close to people, their life, livelihood and culture. Hopefully, villages came to be regarded as sociological units for study. In consequence, the mild stir that was created by Dumont and Pocock, disputing the sociological reality of village, was set at rest. The development oriented programmes of the Government of India, had also been very much village centred. The new Five Year Plans, the

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3 Ramkrishna Mukherjee - *The Sociologist and Social Change in India Today* (1965), pp. 175-76.
5 See, F.C. Bailey - 'For a Sociology of India?' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, July 1959, pp. 94-77. Also, R. Mukherjee - 'A Note on village as Unit or Variable for Studies of Rural Society' in *Eastern Anthropologist*, vol. XIV, No. 1, pp. 3-29.
land tenure programmes and, above all, the Community Development Project initiated by the government opened up a new horizon before the Sociologists to analyse 'how' these are affecting the villages. There was also a
in evidence, at this time, the interest taken by foreigners, particularly the American Sociologists, in the study of Indian Society primarily through villages. The end-result of all these was a series of publications on village studies in the 50's. The year 1955 marks a watershed in the study of rural communities in India. Indian Village, Mokim Marriott's Village India, S.C. Dube's Indian Village and D.N. Majumdar's Rural Profiles, were all published in this year. Other books which were published subsequently also indicated the continued interest on village studies. Notable among them are F.G. Bailey - Caste and the Economic Frontier (1958), A. Beteille - Caste, Class and Power (1966) , S.C.Dube - India's Changing Villages (1958), R.K.Mukherjee - Six Villages of Bengal (1957), Adrian Mayer - Caste and Kinship in Central India (1960) etc. etc.

What is interesting of these studies is that they are mostly single village studies concerned with the detailed analysis at a micro-level of a single institution or a network of institutions in a village.

6 For a discussion of the other side of the picture, see Ramkrishna Mukherjee - Sociology of Indian Sociology (1979), pp. 45-54.
7 For an account of the attempts by the Americans to involve Ghurye and the Dept. of Sociology, Bombay University, at this time, see, G.S.Ghurye - I and Other Explorations, pp. 160-64. Ghurye here laments the 'Ford Foundation Occupation of New Delhi' (p.164).
Ghurye was also drawn into this mainstream of village studies but the villages studies made by him are of a different genre and this necessitates that one should make a deep probe into his village studies.

Ghurye's *Anatomy of a Rururban Community* (Popular, 1963) is an impressive survey of 124 villages of Haveli Taluka in Maharashtra. No one before him attempted to study villages in India on such a wide canvas. The perspective of study is also a new one. Ghurye, here, develops the concept of folk-urban continuum as a first approximation. He starts from a small village to a metropolis and tries to analyse the structural features associated with each of these types. Commenting on this book, L.P. Vidyarthi says, "Ghurye makes a successful attempt in conducting such a large scale anthropologically-oriented survey of a type which was so rare in India at that time. This book is, to some extent, comparable to Redfield's book, *Folk Culture of Yucatan*.10 As Redfield has drawn a continuum between a tribal village, a peasant village, a town and a city, Ghurye has made a typology of different villages and has compared their features.11

*Anatomy of a Rururban Community* was preceded by another survey where Ghurye, assisted by two of his research-scholars, L.K. Chapekar and M.G. Kulkarni, conducted field-work in Lonikand, a village within Haveli Taluka. This village had the advantage that it was

studied in 1819 by Major Coates. Ghurye could thus give an account of
the changes which occurred in the intervening period. There is
another important aspect of this work of Ghurye; in it there is an
excellent account of the evolution of village community in traditional
India. It studies not only a village at two different points of time
but also the growth and traditional organization of village settlements,
as available from etymological, inscriptive and textual sources.

Regarding the importance of the village in human civilization,
Ghurye notes that villages have constituted the most important form of
social organization since the earliest time. In India, ancient
literary sources also give credence to the importance of villages. They
had not been faceless, amorphous entities. On the contrary, from the
very ancient period, villages in India were classified and categorized
according to the number of people living in a village and other topogra-
phical and organizational patterns. Thus Patanjali divided villages
into four types, viz, Grama, Grasha, Nagara, and Samvaha. The typology
of villages made by Ghurye reminds one of the influence of these classical
sources. Kautilya's ideas regarding the ideal size of the village also
influenced him.

Ghurye says that there has not been much change in the
number of villages despite considerable increase in the number of popu-
lation in these villages. This applies to village Lonikand also.

12 Ghurye - After a Century and a Quarter: Lonikand, Then and Now
(Popular, 1960).
14 Ghurye - After a Century and a Quarter, p. xi.
15 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. xv-xviii.
The reason lies, probably, in the fact that a village carries with it a strong sense of attachment and also a sense of cohesion.16

In connection with the internal structure of villages in traditional India, Ghurye discusses the role of the Headman, the Panchayat and the Jajmani system. The office of the Headman in Indian villages is a very old one and he has been variously known as Gramini, Patil, Mokadam, Kuladhipati etc.17 Again, Ghurye mentions the Sanchi Inscription of C 412 A.D. to show the antiquity of the institution of Panchayat. He gives an authoritative account of the ancient form of Balutdari system. The Balutcas provided technical and special services to the village community on the caste lines. But in spite of its association with caste, Ghurye notes its occurrence even in the Muslim localities. The system is to be found also among the Hinduized Tribals.18

Termed as the Jajmani system by Wiser, this has been stated to be a part of an exploitative social order by some.19 Others have viewed it as a mechanism of cooperation providing an indispensable basis of our caste-based economy.20 But Ghurye has done a valuable job by giving an authoritative account of this system in traditional India. Though

18 Ghurye - The Mahalev Kolis (Popular, 1963), pp. 59-64.
19 T. Beidelman - 'A Comparative Analysis of the Jajmani System' in Monograph of the Association for Asian Studies, No. 8 (1959).
he finds the prevalence of the system in his field-study, Ghurye notes that the general trend is that the *ja^mani* system is on the decline.\(^{21}\)

Let us now discuss some other conclusions which Ghurye has made from his field study in the Haveli Taluka. Ghurye notes that two physical factors, viz, the number of population and the physical distance of an area from a city, determine the character and the type of social structure of a village. Accordingly, Ghurye has divided the villages under study into five classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Physical situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3000 &amp; above</td>
<td><em>Krishipuras</em> or Agricultural Towns</td>
<td>Great communication Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 - 3000</td>
<td><em>Gramarajas</em> or Super-villages</td>
<td>Lie nearer to the <em>Krishipuras</em> and have some communication facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 - 2000</td>
<td><em>Mahagramas</em> or Big Villages</td>
<td>Lie at the centre of a number of small villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 1000</td>
<td><em>Gramas</em> or Village proper</td>
<td>Detached regions or hilly sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 &amp; Below</td>
<td><em>Khetekas</em> or Small villages</td>
<td>Small hamlets and dependent on other villages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{21}\) Ghurye - *After a Century and a Quarter*, pp. xxxix - xi. For other studies of the system in Maharashtra, see, H. Orenstein - 'Excolitation or Function in the Interpretation of *Ja^mani* in South-Western Journal of Anthropology (1962), pp. 305-16 ; Karve and Damle - *op.cit.*, pp. 150-52.
It is interesting to recall here, that the same demographic approach has been used by Ghurye in his classification of cities. In his classification, there are below-one-lakh cities, one lakh cities or great cities, three lakhs cities or super-cities and million mark cities or metropolises. Ghurye discusses the culturally integrative role of these different types of cities. Taken together, the discussion presents a very interesting morphology of an entire society.

In making this classification, Ghurye says, he had been influenced by the Geographical and the Demographic schools and he mentioned the names of Huntington, Semple and Geddes in this respect. But these writers have discussed the relation between climate and civilization patterns about which there is nothing in Ghurye’s writings. In any case it is very difficult to assess how and in what ways these two are related with each other. But Ghurye has a point when he says that the pattern of social relationship is influenced by the size of community. Durkheim was an important advocate of this theory. And as Guy Rocher has shown, this view has its echo in some contemporary sociological theories.

Ghurye is of the opinion that the impetus of change and development has been felt largely in the case of big and super-villages while the smaller ones are stagnant and deteriorating. He shows that

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23 Interview with the present author on 12-1-79.
most of the Khetakas are not only poor, their condition is gradually deteriorating too. It may be noted here that, according to the laws of growth, this differential pattern of growth is true not only of villages but also of cities. This trend is to be found in other countries as well. Halpern, for example, gives data regarding the rate of population growth and the rate of growth of different types of communities in various countries. He concludes that "... smaller settlements, predominantly villages, are almost everywhere growing at a slower rate, especially when compared to large cities." Ghurye himself has noted this phenomenon in his different writings.

From the methodological standpoint, Ghurye makes a very important contribution when he isolates certain indicators or traits with the help of which the rural or rururban character of a community may be identified. A primarily rural area has its typical pattern of life, certain particular types of institutions and beliefs which sustain itself. On the other hand, a community, while in the process of change, must develop certain corresponding institutions and traits. The folk-urban continuum approach of Ghurye is evident from this point that as a community gradually passes over from a pure rural to a pure urban area, more and more of these characteristics become apparent.

For example, Ghurye discusses the effects of the establishment of the

28 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. 172-74.
tea-shops in a locality. A large number of tea-shops register the growing character of that community. "The tea-shop ... has a social bearing, being typical of urban pattern of living ... for the fact of its being a centre for gossip, rarely purely local, and often regional or national.\(^{32}\)

Apart from that, a developing or a changing community has a tendency to have certain structural features. These may be divided into three aspects, viz, physical, social and economic.

So far as the physical side is concerned, the very location of an area and its proximity or distance from a city, are important factors determining the character of a community. As Ghurye shows, the agricultural towns are located on all sides around the city of Poona at convenient places. Such nearness facilitates economic relationship and helps in the development of modern ideas and knowledge. The point has also been established in another survey conducted in the same area by Y.B. Damle. But Damle makes an additionally important point that communication of ideas and knowledge is dependent not merely on distance, but also "it is the nature of (village) structure which determines the qualitative and quantitative content of communication".\(^{33}\)

Also, from the physical side, Ghurye says, indications of the developing character of a community can be found from its housing pattern, temple, architecture and ethnic composition. From the ethnic standpoint, a

\(^{32}\) Ghurye - 'Anatomy', pp. 85-86.

developing community tends to be more heterogeneous. People in such areas develop a tendency to reside in self-contained segregated blocks. Of course, this tendency is far more pronounced in metropolitan areas, as N.K. Bose has shown in his study of Calcutta City.\textsuperscript{34}

From the Social Side, the development of formal and role-specific institutions always tend to emerge in a rururban community as distinguished from the informal and role-diffused institutions operating in rural areas. The earlier type of the panchayat decays gradually. Ghurye speaks particularly of the existence of three institutions in rural Maharashtra, (1) the Talim or the gymnasium, 2) the Tamasha or the troupe for entertainment and the Bhajan-Mandal or the devotional group. As the character of a community changes, in place of these groups, more formal and role-defined institutions emerge.\textsuperscript{35}

Ghurye notes that indicators of the developing character of a community can be found from the nature and status of educational institutions in the locality.\textsuperscript{36} Ghurye has applied this test in his study of the village Lonikani.\textsuperscript{37} The multiplicity of educational institutions in a locality widens the social horizon of its members, makes them amenable to new ideas and institutions and makes room for upward occupational mobility.\textsuperscript{38} Also, Ghurye says, libraries, reading-rooms, newspaper consumption pattern and the like, are effective instruments for communication of ideas between the village and the wider nation.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{34} N.K. Bose - Calcutta : A Social Survey (Bombay, 1968), pp. 79-85.
\textsuperscript{35} Ghurye - op.cit., p. 87.
\textsuperscript{36} Ghurye - op.cit., pp. 111, 128, 140, 164.
\textsuperscript{37} Ghurye - After a Century and a Quarter, pp. 82-106.
\textsuperscript{38} J. Halpern has also emphasised upon the importance of schools from this standpoint. See his The Changing Village Community (1969), p. 128.
\textsuperscript{39} Ghurye - Anatomy, p. 122.
But in changing the life of a community, the economic factor is the most important one. With increasing economic relationship with the outside world, there is a change in the production or consumption pattern. Ghurye notes that in the Krishipuras or agricultural towns, while the agricultural sector is modernised and cash crops and green vegetables grow, new types of non-agricultural establishments and shops are not wanting. As it has happened in Haveli, sugar-cane crushing mills and other types of ancillary industries may grow. Indeed, in Haveli Taluka, some of the rural urban areas have grown so much that they themselves have become the centres of communication and have helped the formation of what is known as ribbon development in urban sociology. Ghurye suggests that this pattern of change should be noted by our planners because if the industries are located in rural areas, the best of both the worlds may be combined.

While discussing the village religious structure, Ghurye puts emphasis upon the functional aspects of it. The village religious beliefs and rites are occasions for strengthening the cultural homogeneity and consequent community feeling and they are socially integrating. He also discusses the socializing and recreational functions of the village jatras and fairs. The functions and continued relevance of these institutions explain why tradition still persists. The point

40 Ghurye - op. cit., p. 80.
41 On the nature of economic changes in such areas, see, M.S.A. Rao - 'Urbanization and Social Change', in Rao (ed.) - Urban Sociology in India (Delhi, 1974), pp. 509-518. Also, A.R. Beals - 'Change in the Leadership of a Mysore Village' in M.N. Srinivas (ed.) - India's Villages (1960), pp. 147-60.
42 Ghurye - 'Anatomy', p. 91.
43 Ghurye - After a Century and a Quarter, pp. 47-48.
44 Ghurye - 'Anatomy', p. 189.
Ghurye also discusses the combination of elite and folk elements of culture at a local level. In the Haveli Taluka, there are deities of the standard Hindu pantheon as also there are deities which are products of the folk-culture, local beliefs and conditions of living. The manner of worship of these elite and non-elite shrines is different. The folk and the elite elements have been combined at various levels and they have been made a part of village culture. It may be noted here that the dynamics of this culture-contact have been developed in a full-fledged theoretical form in the works of Milton Singer. We think that this aspect of Ghurye's work should be noted by those who are of the opinion that structural aspects of society have always eluded Ghurye's attention.

In the two works under discussion, Ghurye has also noted the phenomenon of the dispute between the ritual and secular aspects of authority. From the data presented by Ghurye it appears that, in Lonikand, the Marathas and the Brahmins operate as close allies whereas the Malis are economically powerful. The Malis constitute an aspiring caste, though their ritual status is not very high. There are enough evidences in Ghurye's book to show the conflict between the Malis and the Marathas.

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47 Also, 'Anatomy', pp. 185-84
48 Ghurye - *After a Century and a Quarter*, p. 122.
for dominance over the village.\textsuperscript{49} Indications are also available from
the materials presented about the rising strength and organization of the
Mahars,\textsuperscript{50} which has become a powerful caste in rural Maharashtra today.\textsuperscript{51}
But unfortunately, Ghurye has not developed the point to its logical
extent.

Again, it appears that Ghurye has failed to analyse systematically the factors operating behind change and the broad directions of change in village society. Particularly, regarding the economic changes occurring in the Lonikand village, in view of Coat's earlier data in the field, there was an excellent opportunity to analyse the nature and direction of changes in the economic sphere and their effects on other fields. But Ghurye does not give any such over-all account and just discusses the individual families - number of family members, age and sex composition, number of oxen and cows they own, amount of owned land etc.\textsuperscript{52}

Though he says that there has been a general impoverishment of the peasantry, he fails to identify the factors responsible for it.

The present writer is of the opinion that in another article, written jointly by Ghurye and Deshpande, there is a more meaningful and coherent analysis of the changing economic situation in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49} Ghurye - \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 31-32, 41, 52, 124.
\item \textsuperscript{50} Ghurye - \textit{Ibid.}, p. 40, 65-66.
\item \textsuperscript{51} Ghurye - 'Anatomy', pp. 202-4.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Ghurye - \textit{After a Century and a Quarter}, pp. 82-106.
\end{itemize}
villages.\textsuperscript{53} Ghurye has said about this article 'we called in question in it one of the Engels' so called laws about family-budgets.\textsuperscript{54}

For the purpose of this survey four villages in Kolaba district were selected and the family budget pattern of the villagers was analysed. On the basis of the analysis of data, the authors made conclusions regarding the income and expenditure pattern of the families, pattern of rural indebtedness, nature of land ownership, health condition of the people etc. 'The abject poverty of the villagers and their helplessness in the face of exploitation became apparent from this study. Several facts would bear it out. First, though income from land constituted the principal source of the agriculturists, \textsuperscript{65} \% of the families had to supplement this income by casual labour. Second, most of the families sent their young children to work in the field. The source of child labour, the authors comment, lies in poverty and no amount of law can do away with it unless the villagers' economic condition is improved.\textsuperscript{55}

Third, the expenditure on food and non-food items show that the villagers spend more than three-fourth of the total expenditure on food items only. It shows that the lower income groups live below the subsistence level.

Fourth, rural indebtedness is so extensive that \textsuperscript{82} \% of the people were

\textsuperscript{53} Ghurye and Deshpande - 'Some Village Studies' in \textit{Indian Journal of Economics}, vol. 7 (1926-27), pp. 467-90. Incidentally, it may be mentioned here that this is the only article which Ghurye has written in collaboration with another author. In interview with the present author, Ghurye proudly mentioned this fact that he has written nothing jointly with his students. This shows the strong individualist temperament of Ghurye.

\textsuperscript{54} Ghurye - \textit{I and Other Explorations} (1973), p. 79.

\textsuperscript{55} Ghurye and Deshpande - 'Some Village Studies' in \textit{op.cit.}, p. 474.
found to be in debt and in two-thirds of these cases, the debt was for unproductive purposes.

The conclusions which the authors make are remarkable for their simplicity and effectiveness. As it is said, "not infrequently does one hear in the public press and on the political platform of the many-sided glories of life in an Indian village. Among these are included not only the simplicity and grandeur of the peasants' life but also his great bodily vigour and magnificent general health ... A close observation of the villages under study shows that the inhabitants of villages, instead of being pictures of health and vigour, often are emaciated, disease-striken, worn-out and altogether very depressing specimens of humanity." 56

56 Ghurye and Deshpande - Ibid., p. 484.
Section - 2

URBAN STUDIES

In addition to the rural studies so far analyzed, Ghurye has also to his credit a number of writings on urban structure and pattern of urban development in modern India. Ghurye's interest in cities dates back from his association with Geddes, the well-known city-planner and architect. In fact, Ghurye wrote an article entitled 'Bombay as an Urban Centre' at that time which earned an 'unreserved appreciation' of Geddes and on the basis of which he was granted university scholarship for studying abroad in 1919.57 Ghurye's interest in urban studies was retained and developed subsequently. In fact, a number of important urban sociologists of today did their urban studies under his guidance. As far as Ghurye's own urban studies are concerned, they are of different types. Firstly, a major part of his writings was concerned with the elaboration of his central thesis that cities uphold and retain the finest aspects of culture in any civilization. A city is the mirror of civilization and every major civilization has developed its own city. Secondly, Ghurye analyses the relationship between urbanization and the process of social change. Certain definite economic and social

institutions accompany the urbanisation process and their effects spill over the urban boundaries. Ghurye has analysed in detail the operation of this process in the Haveli Taluka. We consider this work of Ghurye to be a major breakthrough in urban study. Thirdly, there are some diffused writings of Ghurye where he has studied the problem of social and communal tensions in urban areas. Fourthly, and this is what concerns us in this section, there are those writings which analyse the problems connected with urban development and planning.

Ghurye's writings in this respect are all concerned with his own city, i.e., the city of Bombay. As a major city, Bombay's development attracted the attention of sociologists at a very early period. As early as in 1915, Geddes published his 'Reports on Replanning of Six Towns in Bombay Presidency. Urban planning can be of various kinds such as redevelopment of existing city, building a totally new city and planning for the development of a whole region. Ghurye's interest was in the sphere of development planning. His major concern is to show how Bombay has developed as an 'unofficial cultural metropolis' of India.

Ghurye analyses in particular the master plan for Greater Bombay suggested by Modak and Mayer in 1948. He makes a suggestion for the creation of a 'Bombay region', "comprising a total area of about

58 Ghurye - Social Tensions in India, pp. 485-536.
2500 square miles and intended to accommodate a population of between 70 to 80 lakhs organically with Greater Bombay*. He also analyses the recommendations made by the Barve Study Group in 1958 and gives his own suggestions. He suggests the creation of garden-cities around the metropolis to contain the unlimited expansion of metropolitan cities. It is a world-wide movement and should be followed in India as well. He suggests that the planners should make provisions for the creation of green-belts around cities. While meeting Ghurye in 1979 the present author found Ghurye's interest being continued in the sphere of city planning.

Ghurye also analyses the condition of life and working of the 'Bombay Suburbanites'. This work of Ghurye is sociologically relevant for two reasons. Firstly, it gives an idea of the occupational, educational, linguistic and religious life of the Bombay suburbanites. Secondly, it makes a very valuable comparison between two parts of the suburb of Bombay, namely, Mulund on the Central Railway lines and the 'Western Areas' on the Western Railway lines. Mulund is an old suburb established at the beginning of the century whereas the Western areas grew up at the time of the second World War. Comparison between these

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62 Ibid., pp. 252-264.
two areas gives us an interesting insight into the characteristic features
of the two different phases of urban growth. As Mulund was created at an
erlier stage, it reflects, to some extent at least, the characteristics
of an earlier stage of urbanization whereas the Western areas reflect the
latter stage. Ghurye shows that in the Western areas people are more
cosmopolitan, more educated, professionally more diversified and less
religious minded. 65

Ghurye mentions that the really cosmopolitan nature of the
Bombay city can be shown with reference to its linguistic composition.
The Marathi-speaking population among the respondents constitute only
38.1 p.c. whereas the other linguistic groups are, Gujarati (21.5 p.c.),
Kacchi (43.3 p.c.), Hindi (4.3 p.c.), Malayalam (6.8 p.c.),
Tamil (4.1 p.c.), Konkani (3.6 p.c.) and Kannada (2.7 p.c.).66
This ethno-linguistic composition of Bombay makes it a representative
of "true cross-section of India as a whole, a representative of the
country's multilingual population." It strengthens Bombay's claim
to be regarded as the cultural metropolis of India. 67 We can here
mention another work on Bombay by M.S. Gore where Gore shows that the
Marathis constitute only 45 P.C. of the total population. Gore concludes

The article was meant to be continued, but no further
publication in this respect has been found.
67 Ghurye - Cities and Civilization, p. 274.
In this way, it may be conveniently proved that Ghurye was very much a sociologist who lived amidst his time, who was sensitive to its problems and tried to solve it with the insights of a sociologist.

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68 M.S. Gore - Immigrants and Neighbourhood: Two Aspects of Life in a Metropolitan City (Bombay, n.d.). Quoted by L.F. Vidyarthi - Rise of Anthropology in India (New Delhi: 1978), p. 120.
Section - 3

ON COSTUMES, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

One thing about Ghurye which has struck the Indian sociologists, is the enormous diversity of his writings. The 'many-splendoured' India, with its history and tradition, with its panorama of culture fascinated Ghurye very much. He, therefore, found it worth his while to think, ponder and write on as many aspects of Indian life as may be possible. The non-material culture of a people is expressed not merely through its social institutions and practices, but also through its costume, art and architecture. Ghurye's works on costumes and architecture and his collection and organization of the relevant plates from archaeological, architectural, painting and literary sources, is simply astounding. So, in his miscellaneous writings, Ghurye soared very high and at the same time he roamed too.

Ghurye was never a dilettante or an amateur when he wrote on Indian costumes. His was not an interest of a curio-collector. On the contrary, he believed that dresses and costumes have their own stories to tell. And these stories are not society-neutral. They are indicative of the changing habits, customs and tastes of the people. A nation's history is very much reflected in the sartorial habits of the people. They indicate the relationship between climatic and social factors. The nature of social stratification in a society also can be analysed with reference to the sartorial habits of its different classes. Where stratification is rigid, the costumes of each class will be strictly
different from others. Where classes tend to be loose or fluid, dress etiquette begins to be ignored. Considering this close relationship between costumes and society, it has been rightly said, "Men and Women dress themselves in accordance with the dictates of that great unknown, the spirit of the time." 69

In the West, the literature on costumes is indeed very rich drawing people from art-history, literature, sociology, psychology etc. And Ghurye is very much aware of the existence of this literature. He reviews the development of the subject in the West as it is evident from the writings of Carlyle, Spencer, Muller-Lyer, Webb, Laver, Cunnington etc. 71

The costumes of India, in their endless variety and richness, constitute a fascinating subject of study. The climatic, social, religious, political and regional factors have all produced a type of unity in diversity in Indian Society and this can be testified with reference to the sartorial habits of the people. And Ghurye's work is a pioneering one in the field. 72 Ghurye himself says, "This work is intended to be a contribution which should fill a niche in the comprehensive sociology of

69 Ghurye - Indian Costumes (Popular ; 1951 ), p. 3.
72 The earlier literature in the field are
  1) B. Solvyns - Costumes of Hindostan (1807) ;
  2) J. F. Watson - The Textile Manufactures and the Costumes of the People (1866) ;
clothes .... and to add a chapter to the history of costume which the
labours of scholars during the last sixty years have been unravelling."

Ghurye covers, in this work, a vast historical span starting
from 2000 B.C. to the modern period and has encompassed all the linguistic
and regional variations in the field with the help of a mass of
historical, religious, iconographical and archaeological data. This
vast span of the work has affected adversely the analytical character
of the work. It has become a descriptive account of changing dresses,
without any sustained and meaningful explanation of why they change.
But one must consider the immense difficulty of a pioneer work of this
type, a difficulty which Ghurye has admitted. The data on Indian
costumes have been collected from a historical-cultural perspective and
this has made it a valuable source book widely used in many parts of the
world. Dr. Mandelbaum, in a letter to Ghurye wrote, "you may be
interested to know that your book on Indian costumes has been having
good use among our graduate students. And several of the students in
the history of Decorative Art, who are interested in textiles, have
been studying your book intensively." It is really a pity that
in spite of this pioneering effort, no other Indian Sociologist has been
interested in any further research on the subject. Subsequent works on
the field are very inadequate, e.g. Brij Bhushan, The Costumes and Textiles

74 D. Narain - 'G.S. Ghurye' in Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences
    (Biographical Supplement) (1979), vol. 18, p. 237.
75 Ghurye - I and Other Explorations, p. 215.
76 D. Pillai (ed.) - Aspects of Changing India, p. 35.
77 The original letter has been retained by Prof. Ghurye and
    seen by the present author.
of India (Bombay, 1958); C. Fabri - *A History of Indian Dress* (Longmans, 1971); Moti Chandra - *Prachin Bharatiya Besh-Bhuse,* (1955, in Hindi); S.H. Dar - *Costumes of India and Pakistan* (1969); and Dorris Flynn - *Costumes of India* (Oxford, 1971). Also in 1961, the Anthropological Survey of India conducted an All-India Survey of Dress, Footwear and Ornament. The data collected thereby have been published in N.K. Bose's *Peasant Life in India* (1961).

Of course, the Indian Costume is not the only work of Ghurye in this field. In his *Bharatnatya and Its Costumes* (1958), he has discussed the costume of the Bharatnatyam, the famous south Indian classical dance. Here again Ghurye emphasizes the relevance of culture in determining the type of dance costume.\(^78\) Ghurye says, dance costume "has a functional side, a cultural aspect and an aesthetic one. In all these three aspects, the culture of a particular society, the current aesthetic notions ..... will condition the danseuse in the choice of her costume."\(^79\) We get here a synchronisation of the analysis of Bharatnatyam dress with Ghurye's general theme of culture.

In *The Indian Costume*, Ghurye says that human costume may be broadly divided into two classes, viz, 1) gravitational, that which is allowed to have a natural fall and 2) anatomic, that which follows the body line. There are five parts of human body which are important from the standpoint of costumes, viz, the head, the chest, above the navel, the


above the knees and the lower legs. The source of the rich variety of Indian costumes lies in the fact that there has been innovations in each of these parts in various ages. But there is one general trend which has been noticeable. This is that Indian Costume has been gravitational in orientation, concealing as much of the physical specialities and sexual charms as possible. In this sense, it is opposed to the 'anatomic' type of costume found in the West.

Costumes are a part of the culture of a society. The broad process of culture-growth is influenced by social and political forces. For example, in discussing the evolution of Indian costumes, one must consider the fact that different groups of foreigners conquered and settled in different parts of India and they made their impact on the dressing pattern of the people. Ghurye divides the whole course of Indian history into five such periods and discusses the evolution of Indian costumes with reference to the peculiarities of each age. Incidentally, it may be noted that Ghurye does not consider the pro-Aryan Indian Civilization to be very much important from this standpoint. However, let us now discuss several important aspects which come out of Ghurye's analysis.

First, Ghurye has dwelt elaborately on the concept of national dress, which has evolved out of a long process of cultural history of the nation. In the case of male attire, two types of dresses have been in

80 Ghurye - Indian Costumes, pp. 11-14.
81 Ghurye - Ibid., p. 17.
82 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. 34-60.
83 For a discussion on this, see, J. Brij Bhushan - The Costumes and Textiles of India (Bombay, 1958), ch. 1.
common use. The dhoti has been accepted for long as the common man's
dress. And the trend became clear as early as in the 5th or 6th century
A.D. But for official purposes, the Chudidara Pyjama and achkan have been
in use for a long time. Ghurye does not like it and comments that it
"reminds me of Charlyle's description of man as 'forked radish'." But
the interesting information which Ghurye supplies is that, in the
Ajanta Frescoes, Prince Sidhartha appears in this dress which reminds
one of Jawaharlal Nehru. The Head-cap of another man in the same picture
appears like the later 'Gandhi Cap'. Thus the official dress prescribed
in independent India has a long cultural history.

With regard to female dress, though the costumes of Indian
women may broadly be divided into four heads, viz, the Sari, the Ghagra,
the Salwar and the Sarong, the Sari has been accepted as the national
dress for Indian women. Regarding the origin of Sari, it is said that
though the word 'Sari' has been used in ancient literature, it was not the
same as its modern counterpart because that did not cover the entire body.
Modern Sari, is the lengthening of dupatta or orhni. Ghurye holds the
same view. Two pieces of apparel, trouser or lungi for the lower part and
a scarf for the upper part gave the effect of a Sari costume.

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84 Ghurye - I and Other Explorations, p. 144.
85 Ghurye - Indian Costume, p. 213. Also, p. 80, 109.
86 Doris Flynn - Costumes of India (1971) - Introduction.
where Ghurye shows its existence among the Vedic people and its
emergence in a modified form in Eastern India in the 10th century.
For an account of changes in Sari Designs in Bengal, see,
K.P. Chattopadhyay - 'Sari Border Charges' in K.P.Chattopadhyay (ed.) -
But beginning from the Tenth or Eleventh century, the length of the lower garment began to increase so as to eventually cover the whole body (pp. 220-21). The Blouse was later adopted as a result of British contact (p. 179, 223). Tribal women are also increasingly adopting Sari (pp. 182-83). So, this is the evolving pattern of national dress for females. 89

Secondly, starting from the Seventh or Eighth century, a distinct tendency of regionalization in dress also became noticeable. Ghurye thinks that the 'political and cultural centrifugality' of the period contributed to the process. 90 At this time different groups of foreigners began to settle in different parts and this resulted in the regional diversification of costumes. The process gathered momentum when it was combined with linguistic regionalism - a process which was initiated by Asoka as early as in the Third century B.C. 91 As Ghurye shows, this happened in the case of dance costumes also. 92

Thirdly, Ghurye does not admit that 'Indian' costumes have been very significantly influenced by Muslim rule. To that extent, he differs substantially from other writers in the field. 93 The Muslim dressing pattern, according to him, failed to influence the Hindus. He refuses Al-Biruni's suggestion that the Hindu nobilities followed the Muslim dresses (pp. 118-23). Later on, in spite of concerted efforts by Akbar, Hindu and Muslim sartorial habits remained separate. This further proves, according to Ghurye, that dress is a matter of culture.

89 of. D. Flynn - op.cit. - Introduction.
90 Ghurye - op.cit., pp. 93-94.
91 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. 43, 45, 136, 146, 176, 220.
and that the two cultures remained separate although (pp. 167, 221).

It is very much doubtful whether Ghurye’s arguments in this respect can be accepted in toto.

Fourthly, there is another recurrent theme in Ghurye’s writings which can be put to good use for sociological analysis. The proverbial 'pomp and grandeur' of Indian costume, as he shows, is a class phenomenon in the sense that the rich and the nobility have introduced these varieties. But so far as the common people are concerned, they had to be satisfied with the barest minimum clothes. Although in this also, regional peculiarities could be observed, there was an element of commonness in the sense that there was nothing which was superfluous and non-functional. Thus, whereas the Bhadraloks of Bengal wore dhoti-cadaras, the agricultural and the labouring classes were dhoti of a much shorter length and used gamcha instead of cadara. One could easily recognize the class origin of a person by his dress. In the case of women of the labouring class also, this absence of superfluity was noticeable. We can certainly say that the picture of Indian costumes as ‘colourful and thrilling in their endless variety’ does not hold good in respect of the vast majority of the common people.

94 Ghurye - op. cit., p. 177.
95 Ghurye - Ibid., p. 139.
96 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. 157-58.
97 See the 'Introduction' by A.K. Bhattacharyya in D. Flynn - op. cit.
ARCHITECTURE

As we are concerned with the sociologically relevant elements of Ghurye's writings, his discussion on civil and sacred architectural pattern does not directly concern us here, though Ghurye has proved his eminence in this field also. But Ghurye's discussion on the nature of architectural pattern in India has a theoretical presumption. This is related in important ways with his view of the nature of cultural unity in India. Ghurye is of the opinion that in medieval India the two major trends of architectural pattern, Hindu and Muslim, ran in a parallel way. The main current of the two communities were separate and distinct. This was evidenced in the field of architecture. "The Hindu temple steadfastly kept to its form and the Hindu house and palace, monumental and mortuary structures set up new patterns showing no influence of Muslim parallel structures".

In order to substantiate this position, Ghurye makes a detailed analysis of the Rajput architectural pattern in medieval India. In this period, the north Indian Rajasthani culture had its excellence in the spheres of sacred architecture and sculpture, music, dance and civil architecture. To support his view, Ghurye quotes profusely from such authorities as Tod (Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan), Cunningham (Archaeological Survey Reports), Ferguson (History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, 1899), Percy Brown (Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu Periods, 1942) etc. He does not agree with E.B. E.

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99 Ghurye - Social Tensions in India, p. viii.
100 Ghurye - Rajput Architecture (Popular, 1968).
Havell (Indian Architecture, 1913), Tara Chand (Influence of Islam on Indian Culture) etc. who hold that there was a Hindu-Muslim fusion of styles in Architecture. ¹⁰¹

Ghurye shows that the Rajput style of architecture spreaded over a wide part of north India covering Jodhpur and Chitod, Khajuraho and Gwalior, Malwa and again Rajasthan after a lapse of several centuries. And everywhere a strong political authority had sustained and sponsored the architecture of that region. Thus the Gurjara-Pratiharas inspired the Jodhpur-Chitod complex and the temples at Khajuraho and Gwalior were sponsored by the Chandela Rajputs of the region. ¹⁰² However, it was in the Malwa region in the Eleventh century, that the aesthetic genius of the Rajputs had their culmination. ¹⁰³ Among the Rajputs, even those who established their alliance with the Mughuls, did not totally imitate the Muslim style. The Gwalior Fort and the Palace of Man Singh are the best examples of that. Ghurye concludes, "Almost three centuries of Muslim rule and Islamic architectural practice had proved incapable of affecting the original ideas of the Hindus on art and architecture." ¹⁰⁴ So this is how, according to Ghurye, Hindu culture withstood all temptation and pressures in one of its most critical period, i.e., during the Muslim rule.


¹⁰³ Ghurye - Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁰⁴ Ghurye - Social Tensions in India, pp. 247-48.
Man always lives a communal life, life of one among the many. The collective life or group life shapes the personality of man and influences his thought and action. Man needs an environment to sustain and develop his potentialities. The totality of this environment, according to Ghurye, is what constitutes culture. Society, according to Ghurye, is nothing but a process. This social process has two aspects, the intellectual and the structural. The first consists in the trend of thought about man and the second is the process by which an individual is assimilated into the cultural flow of the times. The intellectual aspect is as much important as the institutional aspect and it has influenced the social life of man in important ways.

But this trend of thought about man has not always been on rational and scientific lines. This is true as much of India as of all other ancient civilizations. Ghurye says that Indian thought in the Vedic period was primarily obstructive and metaphysical in nature. "Philosophy it is perhaps of first rate quality. But philosophy and science are not coterminous."106 It was only with the beginning of the modern age that science began to be systematically developed. That signalled the emergence

106 Ghurye - Ibid., p. 6.
of sociology as a scientific discipline. Ghurye says that objectivity and freedom are the two guiding principles of a sociologist. Among the scientists, it is the sociologist who needs freedom most.107

Ghurye says that it was in the writings of Montesquieu, "the Descartes of modern Sociology" that we find a systematic explanation of social phenomenon. And it was Comte, who gave a distinctive shape to this rational outlook. To Comte, the essence about the nature of a society is to be found in its thought form. To him, social evolution is nothing but evolution of knowledge, the gradual unfolding of the capacities of human mind.108 The basic condition of social reform is intellectual reform. Comte thought that "it is not by the accidents of revolution nor by violence that a society in crisis will be reorganized, but through the synthesis and by the creation of positive politics."109

It is because Comte thinks that knowledge or intellect is the principal ingredient for understanding society and that social evolution is nothing but the evolution of knowledge, that Ghurye regards, rightly or wrongly, Comte as the founder of sociology of knowledge. Ghurye says that there are three aspects in Comte's writings which are relevant from this standpoint. First his view that the three types

107 Ghurye - Ibid., p. 10.
109 R. Aron - op.cit., p. 64.
of knowledge, theoretical, metaphysical and scientific, provide the key to the evolution of human society, gives crucial importance on the knowledge factor. Second, in his classification of sciences and in the hierarchy of knowledge system culminating in positivism and sociology, Comte demonstrates the importance of knowledge. And, third, he gives a crucial role to science and positivism in reconstructing and remodelling the existing society. This is how Comte built his entire system on the basis of this inseparable connection between knowledge and society.

As a 'Homage' to Comte and in appreciation of his endeavours in the field of sociology of knowledge, Ghurye undertakes a study of evolution of knowledge in various stages of Indian Civilization. Here Ghurye analyses the dominant trends of thought in India in every age starting from the Vedic period to Twelveth or Thirteenth Century A.D. He also makes a content-analysis of the various disciplines which have emerged during this entire period. This work is an eloquent testimony of Ghurye's knowledge of India's literary and social history.

But it ought to be pointed out here that Ghurye does not make any attempt to establish any connection between the knowledge-system of an age and the contemporary social structure. Ghurye's analysis is not in line with the Comtean system. He says that Indian Civilization has

110 Ghurye - 'Vidyas - A Homage to Comte and a Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge (1957), pp. 20-28. This book was published on the occasion of the death centenary of Comte. D. Nain comments that the very fact that an Indian Sociologist was mindful of this event, is itself remarkable, D. Nain - op.cit., p. 238.

111 Ghurye - Ibid., pp. 29-70.
passed through regular vicissitudes as there has been a rise and decline of scientific knowledge in different periods. But he does not explain why this is so. So it is difficult to treat this work of Ghurye as an application of Comtean methodology in the analysis of Indian society.

In another article, published in the Sociological Bulletin, Ghurye follows the same approach while analysing the course of social change in Maharashtra. He is of the opinion that social change is ideologically propelled and that because it is ideologically conditioned, one can analyse it in a fairly accurate manner by scanning the literature of the era. This is quite a novel approach in the literature on social change but is consistent with Ghurye's general orientation. The culture of an age is reflected in its literature and one gets an idea of the changing culture by making a content analysis of literature over a period of time. Ghurye also makes a very significant statement that the literati in our society belong to certain castes and classes and they are class-biased in making their observations and suggestions.

Let us now assess the validity of Ghurye's opinion about the nature of 'sociology of knowledge'. It seems that Ghurye has an imperfect realization regarding the nature of sociology of knowledge.

In modern times, it was Karl Mannheim, and not Comte, who systematically

112 Ghurye - op. cit., pp. 41-43, 63.
114 Ghurye - Ibid., p. 72.
developed this discipline. The central theme of Mannheim's work is that man's knowledge, his political, legal, philosophical, religious and other ideas are intimately related with the society and the class to which he belongs. Mannheim says, "The greater art of the sociologist consists in his attempt always to relate changes in mental attitudes to changes in social situations. The human mind does not operate in vacuo." Social, more particularly, class, conditioning of knowledge was also emphasized by Karl Marx. Mannheim was profoundly influenced by him. It may also be mentioned here that the growth of the Phenomenological school in Sociology in recent times is an off shoot of this sociology of knowledge. Stated briefly, it is a plea for phenomenological penetration 'beyond appearances' to 'the roots' of social phenomena. While interpreting social phenomena, a sociologist assumes many things as given - but these may not correspond with the concrete reality. This results in sociological distortions and to check this, phenomenological sociology advocates a direct analysis of every day life.

So the raison d'être of Sociology of knowledge is that it analyses the micro-level situation and shows how man perceives reality in a given social situation. This was not Comte's scheme. Comte was primarily interested in constructing a grand course of social evolution,

applicable to all societies and ages. Besides, though Comte spoke in the name of science and objectivity, his observations are biased by his own values and sentiments. Comte’s grand scheme of the evolution of the human mind or knowledge, we are afraid, will not stand critical scrutiny.

Yet it may be stated that in spite of Ghurye’s wrong understanding of Comte on this count, this section helps us to understand Ghurye’s own notions about the nature of social process and about the factors which are to be considered for analysing social change.

119. I. M. Zeitlin – op. cit., p. 78.