INTRODUCTION
PREAMBLE

Human species is provided with a number of distinctive characters on the basis of which he is differentiated from all other animals. In case of such characterics the biological features, at least some of them, are practically developed through the process of evolution. In such context expansion add evolution of brain, increase in brain size through different stages gave rise to "ever more diversified and complicated behaviour responses" which "resulted in progressively amplifi- ed and enhanced cultural manifestation" (Tobias, 1971). With such addition, it may logically be concluded that the development of social norms, values etc. took place.

In various biological components man has made a good deal of progress. On the other hand, there are many more areas in which some amount of similarity is found between man and a few other animals, close to him in phylogenetic position. Besides the characters in the domain of biology, the discrete cultural attributes are practically devoid of in case of all other members in the animal kingdom. Without going into the intrinsic part of culture (Krober and Kluckhohn, 1952), it may be said that it is primarily an adaptive mechanism to cope with the total environment. The cultural variations may be explained in terms of situational diversities of the total
culture complex. There are two major facets of the same. One is concerned with the material part related to basic sustenance. This includes economy with central focus on food added with shelter and clothings. The secondary extension is found in the areas of personal adornment, conveyance, communication and many such aspects. The other facet includes the society, primarily dealing with structure and function (Radcliffe-Brown, 1964). This aspect is both complex and complicated. In the realm of the society there are different interconnected components. These comprise individual, family, group, community and society at large. In all cases, man, as the member, works as the central pivot.

Social organisation is an operational system in which besides structure and function, responsibility and relationship are found to occur in a state of interplay. Olsen (1968:6) stated "... organizations are always the products or outcomes of the ongoing process of social organization". With an individual, his role and relationship with other individuals are not the same. There is variation between the two, especially when the distance does not follow uniformity. In case of high or appreciable distance discrete difference between the two sets is met with. It is found in both the componential parts. In cases, a member or an individual is connected with other specific individuals from a different plain. This interruption in level gives rise to the emergence of position in many ways, in the form of ranking, hierarchy etc. Very little information are available on the social aspects of early hominids, compared to their cultural activities. For the latter, there are ample
evidences on the basis of which logical reconstruction can be made. On the other hand, about society with all its components, the data are practically lacking. Thereby behaviour pattern of an individual with other members or the interaction among members is seldom known. So also rites or privileges of chief, if there was any, is also unknown.

To compensate the dearth of knowledge on social evolution, examples may be set forth from the primitive human groups to modern times. The comparison may be placed in terms of economic development, covering the spectrum from hunting-gathering to food-producing stages. An analysis of such observation, coupled with concrete data, brings out the genesis of socio-cultural matrix of the smaller community. In such case it is found that the complexities are making enhancement through time, resulting in shifts through economic stages. As a matter of fact, the situation with role, responsibility and relationship gradually turns to be more and more complex. In the ongoing process "a system of normatively sanctioned power" arises in human society" (David, 1981 : 48).

Among the hunter-gatherers, there is more individualistic role with independent form and comparatively lesser amount of group relations in many actions. At times group activities are present in the form of band organisation. This is true to both prehistoric population (Washburn, 1962) and primitive population
At a later stage with the emergence of food production economy, the pattern of interaction changes, and group activity increases with greater complexities. Group efforts with culmination of complex structure is found to appear. Even in such cases variation is noticed from one area to another and changes are observed through time. It is apt to quote "whatever ... political organisation prehistoric man created it did suffice for his survival" (Starr, 1974: 35).

The above observation may be continued further in which the urban setup turns to be a point of drastic change. In this case both individual and group circumstances are found in the form of separate entities, with or without any link between the two. A kind of classification within a group starts from very emergence of society, irrespective of the dimension of the same. In the formation of such structure, there are a number of factors like age and gender, which start playing to begin with. Later, the role of occupational activities is found to be engrossed. Much later, other factors as of rites and rituals come into existence. Gradually through stages the structure turns to be more and more composite. Later some other characters come into being. These include level of affluency in economic sector, education, polity etc. All these characters work in its own way, both independently and in association. The cumulative result is the product of total integrated interactions.
The present work is on three-dimensional aspects in urban situation, the city of Calcutta in the present case. All the dimensions have their own individual and specific identities. At the same time, these three dimensions coalesce with one another giving rise to a conjunctive dimension. In fact, these attributes are different from one another, and again they are related to one another. Moreso, in such relationship, monitoring effect is found to be present on any of these characters by two other characters. As the work is based on caste, power and status, a brief introduction of the same has been included here with a view to unveiling the backdrop.

CASTE GROUP

The modern society, with special reference to parts of eastern India, and specially in an urban centre like Calcutta, has taken its shapes undergoing through a continuous process of change. As a result, the total form has turned highly complex. With this, new norms, values and attitudes have come into existence and mixed up with the older vestiges. As a result changes are observed in very conspicuous form. Among the Hindus, there is a hierarchical system of social structure, primarily on the basis of occupation with which economy is linked. The groups are known as castes and the arrangement is termed as caste system. This aspect has been dealt with in great details by many scholars (Kroeber, 1930; Gunnar, 1944; Cox, 1948; Hocart, 1950; Leach, 1960;
In most of the populations there are two major groups, one numerically recessive, but in terms of power it is dominant. This has attributed to special position of this group which possesses the mechanism of control, especially on economic, social and political sectors. Again, both caste and power in combination brings out the position of the individual or even a group, in the form of ordering. This may at times give rise to a kind of ranking, with privileges and the position is taken in the fold of status. With regard to caste and power it has been observed "... people can be graded in terms of the power they enjoy, and this gradation is significantly associated with other types of social gradation, notably the gradation of caste" (Sanwal, 1976: 20).

In terms of conception, caste, power and status are different from one another. After all, all these organisations are concerned with man, mostly on individual basis but in the milieu of group, community and society. In such condition, some amount of similarity can seldom be avoided. Moreover in all the above mentioned criteria, though appear to be discretely different, the linkage is found to exist among them. In other words, the characters related to caste, power and status are connected to one another both in bivariate and multivariate terms. A simple example may be set forth here for the purpose of illustration. Caste though is based primarily on occupational
activities, the hierarchy of different castes in the total system can not be ruled out. In cases position of an individual in a higher caste brings him power. Placement of an individual in the appropriate level of both caste and power enables him to achieve status.

In the light of caste category, Brahmins always hold the highest position among all castes. A child achieves the higher position in caste order if he is born in a Brahmin family. On the contrary, another child born in a chammar (leather worker) family always stays in the lowest level of caste system. In fact, simply by birth the attainment of position in caste hierarchy is finalised. Under any circumstance, no one can come out from the fixed location of caste-based boundary. Earlier, specially in the preceding century, the caste system was very rigorous. During the same period other characters like education, economic condition etc. were neither implemented forcefully nor reformative activities were conspicuous.

Even today, almost similar condition is found to prevail in rural situation. Such presence is obvious because of maintenance of traditional system on the one hand, and lesser amount of academic upheaval on the other. "The caste structure is hierarchised on the basis of differential distribution of social 'power' or prestige" (Sengupta, 1979 : 64). His observation has truth in many other rural communities, as in Kotaigarh. But he
has not endeavoured to account for the equation of power and prestige. Without going into the greater details on such kind of hasty correlation, it may be said that caste played a significant role in traditional Hindu society. It is somewhat true that in the present case, tradition is somewhat synonymous with conservatism. The term non-traditional can seldom be taken as a proper form. In case of less conservatism or in other words in modern social condition, the impact of caste is not very acute, especially in urban complex. This does not mean that the concept of caste in the fold of structure and function has completely been wiped out. There may be some objections on such observation. If the caste system is taken to be outdated, how the caste endogamy can be explained? The attitude towards acceptability of inter-caste marriage has increased to a great extent. At the same time, the actual implementation is hardly found. This is one of the most important criteria to uphold the explanation of the presence of caste system, not in naive but in less expressive form.

POWER IN POSITION

In connection with power, the situation is somewhat different from that of caste. Caste is a level to which a large number of members belong; it is an ascribed form. In case of power, the holding of the same belong to least number of persons. Unlike caste, power is to be accumulated, it can only be achieved. Despite this ambivalence position of both characters, one of the
main constituents in the dimension of power is caste. Other constituents of power are also noteworthy and at times more forceful. To begin with, in most of the cases an individual is gradually elevated in power dynamics. Such escalation is made primarily by his own inputs in terms of economic condition, political affiliation and educational background. In addition to the same, there are a few secondary considerations as social class, cultural milieu, family background, level of modernity etc. Outstanding work on power, both in structure and function, has almost been thoroughly covered on American people by Hunter (1953) and Dahl (1961). The same model has either been followed or transplanted in Indian condition by Beteille (1965), Lal (1974), Akinson (1980). Moreover, power in nascent or derived form has been worked out by others (Mohsin, 1964).

In the power game factionalism and rivalry are almost present. These two components practically elevate or abase, as the case may be, power position. If a man thinks him to be powerful, it does not make sense unless the members of his group and followers consider him as a man of power. The Persons who put higher power to an individual, they also get the opportunity to be somewhat remarkable, obviously in a nascent form. Unlike caste hierarchy which is attained, the power position is acclaimed. It always holds good to consider that a man of power will go on in continuity of the same in almost all situations. Variation in having favour depends on a number of factors. In most of the cases he
involves himself with the situation where the probability to win over is greater. Thus the risk factor is eliminated to a great extent. It is true that type of power and the factors for achieving the same are changing through time. As a matter of fact, the factor responsible for achieving power is undergoing through a dynamic process. For such transformation, the change in the overall society is of prime importance.

As the power may be elevated, in exactly similar way but in different direction, power may be decreased. In general, power is scarcely hereditary. A powerful father may have non-powerful son and so also a weak father may have a powerful son. In recent times, the magnitude of power works in the dimension of politics. The dominant group is always having greater scope and this helps to intensify the power. Power is never static, both in terms of temporal and spatial sense. With chronological shift, the spatial alteration is met with in case of power and the resultant change thereof. The magnitude of power is never static, either it is being enhanced or lost.

With regard to power, the first is the individual with power. This is mainly based on the possession of characters which endowed the power base. The expression of his behaviour, and more specially the activity part, is the primary indicator for the estimation of power. It is true that power with individual does not enforce all the members of his society. Rather,
there are different sectors with which the man of power and so also the persons who uphold him are very much involved. In some sectors, the power is emerged and is concerned with large population. In other sectors the power may be more or less high but the members who are being influenced with such power may be minimum. In such differential condition a broad and generalized comparative estimation may be made. But this does not show the difference in specific powers, because of heterogenic nature of the character.

STATUS AS LEVEL

The other attribute or character of present consideration is status. The dividing line between power and status may not be feeble, but it is definitely fine and the overlapping between the two is not unlikely. A relationship also exists between status and power, and dominance of one character on the other depends on the specific situation. In this regard, caste can not be set aside. In traditional and rural context, caste has a bearing with status, although such influence is not marked in urban situation. Unlike caste which is ascribed in nature, status is an achieved part (Linton, 1936).

Status perhaps belongs to a higher grade of attainment in terms of the position of the individual within the group or community or in the society. In such condition status, of course in the social sense, is "a specific level ... on a stratification dimension ..." (Olsen, 1968 : 274). This may be the core society
in which the individual lives or a broad society with greater area and distant periphery. The components of status is not always different with those of power. In the same way status and roles are not the same, rather these are "two aspects of social position in group organization" (Anderson and Parker, 1966: 130). As mentioned earlier, the difference between the two, status and power, is more in qualitative terms, and variation is observed with the change of context, as from village to small town to city. In case of power, educational background may or may not be of any consideration. While with status, the same character, related to education, can not always be excluded. In the same way, the social position in trivial sense puts appreciable weightage for the attainment of status. The social position may not have much impact with role of power. In the other way round, political affiliation in case of status is not of essential importance as it is with power. Muscle power is also a form of power and it plays a great role in gaining power. The same form of muscle power is hardly of any relevance in case of status. Rather there may be a negative correlation between the two. To distinguish the character related to power and status, it may be said that the characters which are essential and dominant in the case of power, the same characters, at least some of them, act in nascent form with status. With other characters, the situation is vice-versa and interchangeable.
ON INTERRELATION AND EVALUATION

It is not really known how, in what form and to what extent all these characters conjointly interact on individual in a specific society. To the knowledge of the writer himself, of course with limitations, it is not known on the emergence, role of different factors responsible and change in caste, status and power. Such factors for making change do not act simultaneously, rather the force of different factors works in variable forms, either in positive or negative or even in neutral terms. On the question of status, there are number of works (Cohn, 1955; Bailey, 1963; Berreman, 1967; Bopagamage and Veera, 1967; Beteille, 1969; Sharma, 1974; Hiramani, 1977) which have favoured the process of understanding to a large extent. On the considered situation the system is completely different in the sectors connected with power and status. The overall social change, brought about by different agencies and varied factors, has given rise to variation in furtherance in social, cultural and economic dimensions of the individuals. This has resulted in further change in the group, consisting of individuals, and so also in the society.

The total factors and products have given rise to change in the areas of concept, connotation, factors, impacts and results to a great extent. The hypotheses on caste, power and status, with changes thereof, independently and conjointly, are
to be tested on the basis of existing ideas, formulated from results of previous scholars who have carried out works in the same areas vis-a-vis the results of the present worker which have emerged from his own study during the very present time in an urban context. This is practically an empirical work and the result of which is based on corroboration of data. Such data has been pulled from various sectors and segments of society. The total exercise has been programmed in such a way as to reveal the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the problem undertaken.

It is to be noted that caste, power and status are known facts. An appreciable amount of work has already been done on these three issues, covering different areas and encompassing a period of last few decades. In course of works on these factors, furtherance has been made to consider any two of such characters, as caste and power, caste and status, and power and status. In the same works, some workers have also put forward other points as factors, as class, elite, rank, prestige etc. In fact, these factors are gradually turning to be dominant in academic field and with the scholars of social science. Caste, power and status has also been dealt at length by Chauhan (1980) in the perspective of "social stratification in Assam". The present work differs with the work of Chauhan in a number of ways. First, in his case the areal coverage appears to be a state, Assam, but in reality his research universe is on rural
setting "consists of three villages ... in Assam. Two villages ... lie in the Dibrugarh district ... one village is situated in the Sibsagar district" (Chauhan 1980 : 16). On the contrary, the field of present work constitutes the city of Calcutta. This dichotomy in selection and work in rural and urban settings gives rise to spectacular difference of results. The prime reasons for the same are the heterogeneity of population and culture, contradiction between 300 years' old tradition and modernity, influence of other exotic culture, highest variability in economic pursuits etc. In other words the total urban character has a role and also influence in modulation and makeup of culture. In the same milieu the concerned factors, viz. caste, status and power, being continuously influenced by other characters, like economy, education, polity etc. Instead of following the sequence of "caste, power and status" which is apt in rural condition, a change of the sequence is made here in the form of "power, status and caste". This change has been observed from the preliminary observation made by the present author on this basis of the result of his initial sample. In urban complex, power is the most dominant factor and caste has the minimum involvement. Mention may be made on another work by Beteille (1966), conducted also "in a Tanjore village" setting. There too, caste being a dominant factor, in the ordering factor the same has been placed first as its apt position. It was followed by class and then by power. In the said work "status" has not been given any place. The position,
outlook and attitude towards class is a mystery in urban condition, especially among Calcuttans at large. Rather, class has been diffused here with status. Similar condition prevails in American setup (Lynd, 1929, 1987; Warner and Lunt, 1941).

The present work has given proper attention on the three basic factors, viz. power, status and caste. The concept of these factors has been attempted to understand for an independent factor and so also the role and influence of the same have been followed to the possible extent. Endeavours have also been made to find out the correlation among them and finally the result which these factors are giving rise to make change in the society.

THE FRAME OF WORK

The present work has been arranged into nine specific major units, in this case, chapters. Each unit is independent in nature on one hand, and on the other any one of these chapters has bearing with other chapters. Of course, the integration is not always exactly uniform. There are variations, depending on the nature and form of association and relationship. The linkage may either be conspicuous or nascent.

It may be mentioned that the problem under consideration has been taken as the focal point and greater deviation has always been restricted as far as practicable. The first unit
is on introduction. This deals with a comprehensive but brief background. Herein, the major components of the problem, viz. power, status and caste have been dealt with in necessary details. In fact, the total arena on this issue is so large that it is practically unmanageable. As a matter of fact, selection criteria have been taken into account for the purpose of making intense exercise, at times leaving extensive detailing. The author feels that the three forementioned components are provided with large magnitude. However, attempts have been made to cover those segments as far as practicable and necessity has not been curtailed.

In the second chapter the problem has been examined from all perspectives. In this case there is specific problem and the constituents of the total problem has been thoroughly investigated. This is practically the main area. The other part of this chapter is on methodology. This is also a very important aspect for which greater care has been paid. There are some methods which are universal in nature. At the same time, some distinct methods have been followed and applied in accordance with the problem-based need. In such cases the appropriate methods have been developed with a view to finding out the necessary data. It may be said that the problem and the method are related to each other. The former is the goal or aim and the latter is the way to reach the same. Appropriate methods and techniques are essential to cope with the problem including the sub-problems.
The universe of this study is the city of Calcutta including the vicinity areas which has been elaborated in third chapters. For such selection of space, exclusions have been made of other varied area types, specially urban and rural bases. In such space dimension there are distinct areas with discrete coverage of human population groups. It may be noted that along with this, the historical framework has also been taken into consideration. Power, status and caste, both in independent and in mixed forms are found in variable forms in different micro geo-cultural areas. For such circumstance, differences are found to occur. This is one of the reasons for which the universe has been selected in such a way that the variation may be found out and understood. Even if the variation is devoid of explanation of the same may be supplied.

Chapter four is devoted to population samples. These are the basic data and from the same responses and reactions, inclination and attitude have been attempted to understand. The author feels the content part of this chapter is important which makes the universe living. Background of the informants is necessary detail gives way to ascertain the total makeup of concerned population which brings an insight of the overall work. The population on which the work has been carried out is expected to be the representative sample of the universe. The samples may be divided into a number of categories, based on age, sex, caste, clan, educational background, occupation,
marital status, social condition etc. As a matter of fact any individual may possess all such characters. The same individual is different from other on the basis of variation in the level of characters. All these data are helpful to formulate the main type classes. It is expected that with regard to caste, status and power, the type classes will show different results. Individuals are only important as members of different type classes. In view of the same, the difference in the result part in terms of type classes will account for the factors responsible for such dissimilarities.

The next three chapters, five, six and seven are concerned with three basic items as power, status and caste. For each of them, the treatment has been made from two different perspectives. One is on the basic theoretical aspects and the other is on concrete data collected for this purpose. In such treatment other issues comprising similar or allied points within the area have been taken care of along with the emergent results. Under such circumstance, assessment has been attempted to find out the genesis and factors responsible for change. The change may be marked or inconspicuous, depending on the nature of character, situation and factors. In case of deviation from the median norm, factors responsible for such deflection have also been accounted for.
Chapter eight is the unit in which the correlation of the three major issues has been attempted. In such exercise, attention has been paid to identify the issues in terms of their importance. In such cases the interactions between and among the issues have also been examined. The result of the same identifies the level of correlation and the evaluation of the basic issues.

The final summary and conclusions have been developed to bring out a brief summarised version of the whole work. In addition to the same, scopes have been left to judge the basic issues in synthetic manners. Afterall, the present work is somewhat new in terms of the problem, treatment and the result, conducted in a new area, urban complex, where no such work was conducted prior to this work. The conclusion part indicates the synoptic profile of the total situation in at least parts of urban India and this is helpful to carry out future research, in the strictest sense of the term, by other prospecting and interested scholars.