PROBLEM
AND
METHODOLOGY
SETTING THE PROBLEM

This chapter has been attempted to make as specific as possible. The main reason for the same is the constituent parts, herein, mainly the problem and methodology. The former part related to the problem is the central focus of the work. The problem has its bearings with almost all parts of the contents described and discussed in this work. Without the specification of the problem proper, the issue may turn unlimited and even fluid, thereby no meaningful purpose can be served. In view of the same, the problem has been posed here with the inclusion of its genesis - the total process through which the problem has emerged and the continuity through change.

In terms of background it may be mentioned that a good deal of theoretical exercise has been carried out for the purpose of understanding the differential role and relationship of individuals in a society. Even in the democratic setup all the members of a particular society are not exactly equal. Such equality is devoid of within a group or even in a community. Strictest form of equality is not found even in the case of the family among all its members. It may be asked why unequality prevails? In case of any individual he is provided with some basic characters. There is hardly a second individual who possess such characters exactly in the same form. In Indian situation, more specifically in West Bengal, population is increasing with great speed. In the city of Calcutta, a total
of 3305000 individuals are living at present. This figure is taken from the Census of 1981. If any individual is selected panetically on random basis without any prior intention, it is found that the same individual possesses a number of characters. This includes his age, gender, educational qualification, economic status, occupation type, etc. In same individual is also provided with a number of other characters in which his caste affiliation, political patronage, connection with bureaucracy, etc. are of some value. In addition to these, his attitude, function and position with power and status are neither static nor similar to one another. If all such characters are taken into consideration, it is difficult to identify another individual with the possession of exactly similar cluster of attributes. In fact, possession of specific weightage of total characters in the individual may be taken as the identifiable marker of the person. On the basis of the above characters the same individual occupies a position in the society with which his status position etc. are finalised. So also he fixes other members of his society in the scale of power, status and such other phenomena.

In such thought process of placement of an individual in the social frame both with his/her view points for himself/herself and also from others on him/her a kind of interacting network comes into being. It has been found that in the same frame of reference there are at least three major issues invol-
ved in such condition. These are power, status and caste. These three units have their own scheme of hierarchy and thereby the integration of the same fixes the concerned individual in terms of position. The aforementioned three issues are primarily independent in nature. But at the same time correlation between any two or among three characters may be made. This is possible due to the presence of secondary relationship which exists among these characters. Theory building on the proposed problem is not only too early at this initial stage, but it perhaps appear to be a sheer impossibility. Instead of "hypotheses" may be attempted to formulate. This way of approach has also been suggested by Young (1982).

ON CHARACTERS OF CONSIDERATION

In case of power, the treatment may be made as measuring the inputs of a kind of strength. With the help of power one can do many things which are not always possible for many other individuals who are devoid of power. Power is the final agglomerate product with the inclusion of large number of characters. In such case his affiliation to the upper level of class structure, education, economy, political bearing etc. are the main constituent characters.

In a way the concerned individual goes up along the ladder of power structure but the cumulative inputs which give rise to the final result comes from a great many individual of the same society who feel, understand and appreciate the power.
Above all, the latter issue of appreciation with variability is more important than the former because of recognition of power possession is made by the members of the society at large. Among the characters necessary for power, there is no hard and fast rule, in term of priority. In practical the priority depends on the situation which vary with respect to context, time and space. Even at the same space and time, the variation is also met with, depending on critical needs of the context and situation. Even in given time and space, a number of people with power may survive with differential characters. In each cases, interaction among these men of power may or may not be present. Afterall, power is endowed to the individuals or groups or institutions by the members of the society who are directly and even indirectly concerned with the power in operational form.

Second consideration is on status. This may be allied to power but both the issues are not same. In case of power there is the feeling of possession, confidence and strength on the one hand and scaredness, risk and fear on the other. With status there is the sense of respect and reverence. With regard to status there are also a number of characters on the basis of which status is identified. In such case the position of the individual in terms of family background, education, occupation, economic condition, and perhaps more important is political affiliation. The latter character is important at
times for formal recognition. In such cases the constituent characters do not always hold the set pattern of priority. Variation and difference are found in terms of norms and values of the society.

At times it is difficult to make clear-cut distinction between power and status. In cases overlapping is not unlikely. Despite this, it may be said that dependence of other members is more on power than status. An individual with power may have some form of status but an individual with high status may have some form of status. An individual with high status may not be powerful. Contribution of concerned individuals is needed in case of status and power. Difference is still laid between the two. In status, mostly the self endeavour as contribution elevates the status position. And others observe, feel and reorganize the same. In case of power the individual who comes for power must have his own contribution in terms of efforts which put the required characters. But the help is to be rendered by some members. Unlike status power is framed and placed on a number of persons, one possesses the same and others recognize his power.

The third issue is on caste, which is a special phenomenon in India and it is found to be prevailing among the Hindus of West Bengal. Unlike power and status which may be achieved,
Caste is always ascribed (Linton, 1936). It is practically the birth of the individual on the basis of which he/she turns to a member of the hereditary caste. Earlier, occupation was very much linked with caste which is not conspicuous at present. Besides these, there are common and generalised attributes of economy, education etc. connected with caste. Earlier caste hierarchy was very prominent, setting the castes at a distance which acted as check point in case of probability of major interactions. With caste, purity and pollution were involved. Similar situations are not very strong nowadays. The other aspect of caste system is its endogamy. Endogamy has been considered as "the basic attribute ... in which ultimately determines the survival of the caste, either as units or as a system" (Atal, 1968 : 228). Despite serious efforts, directly and indirectly, caste is still considered as an endogamous unit. For such system it acts as "de facto marriage circle" (Klass, 1980 : 96). In addition for this "separation of castes is achieved" (Srinivas, 1987 : 79). The exception from this norm of endogamy is so feeble that generalisation on deflection of the same could not be made.

In the background of the above mentioned discussion, the problem under consideration may perhaps be dealt in better form and with higher articulation. It is true that appreciable amount of work has already been carried out in different parts of the world, and India is not an exception. Inspite of the fact the
present problem has been undertaken, not with a view to following suit, not to make another repetition but to open a new vista. This work is provided with its own identity in terms of coverage of universe and the problem under consideration.

ELABORATION OF PROBLEM

Power, status and caste are very old phenomena in human society. In terms of concept and operation these were never static, rather always in the process of change. Diversities on these aspects were also there from one human group to another, placed with areal differences. These aspects did not escape the attention of social scientists. Observations, collection of data and analyses were made and on the basis of results interpretations were presented. As a matter of fact, a number of theories have been put forward. In examining the same, it was found that in Indian context very little work has been carried out in the concerned directions with focus on urban complex. Works on rural areas are considerably large with rich data and significant results.

In view of such circumstance, decision has been made to carry out the work on power, status and caste in an urban context, viz. on the city of Calcutta. For the purpose of specificity only Bengali Hindu population has been taken for the study. Otherwise, inclusion of other religious group, especially Muslims and even Christians may give rise to greater complications.
tion may be made about proportion in percentage of members
of major religious group. Hindus are 83.50%, Muslims are 10.70%
Christian are 2.4% and Sikhs are 1.8%, according to 1961
Census (Government of India 1968). No major change, perhaps,
has taken place in such proportional difference. This is
another fact to support the selection criterion of taking the
Hindus only. In the same way among the Hindus, Bengalees are
having the largest number. For power, status and caste, in
latter mentioned groups the respective total frameworks with
concept and activities are different. Besides religion, there
are further divisions on the basis of language, the mother
tongue, as Hindi with its dialectical variations, Urdu, Tamil,
Telegu, Kanarese, Malayalam etc. besides Bengali. On the
other hand even within Hindu Bengali population, the network
is so complex that the problem itself is already of great
dimensions. Again, there are economic, educational, profes-
sional and caste groups and among all these groups the inter-
action is present.

It is undeniable that in course of time concepts and
operational mechanics related to power, status and caste have
been undergoing thorough change. The contextual situation which
was present earlier, about two decades back, is not the same
during the presentday. This is primarily due to overall change
in all directions affecting the constituent members and the
society itself. One of the major aims of the present work is
to decipher the prime characters on the basis of which power,
status and caste operate, independently of one another. Secondly, the extent of involvement of these characters with all the three issues are not exactly equal with all the concerned sampled individuals of the present work. Rather, there is a good deal of variations in the selection priority of characters. It is not the individuals who are only responsible for such variations. On the contrary, the basic background of the individuals in terms of their own personal characters are the root causes of divergence. In connection with the people of great power, high status and upper caste, the factors related to economic condition, educational background, family set-up, social make-up, cultural values may be considered as the major characters.

The present work is primarily based on empirical data. In view of the same the background of the individual has been attempted to understand. In addition to this, individuals' or informants' own concept and attitude towards other individuals in the dimension of power, status and caste may be found out with proper estimation.

Another scope of this work is to find out the priority order among the three attributes - power, status and caste. For making the appropriate exercise in this direction necessary data have been put forward. The analytical result of the same will point out the scaling and position of these characters in the pattern of hierarchy.
In a way, power, status and caste may be viewed as individual and isolated characters. Any one of these issues can be perceived separately without the involvement of others. At the same time, these three characters may be taken together and to find out the interaction and interplay of influences among them. It may be hypothesised that the result may not be exactly equal in all circumstances.

In cases, power may be most prominent, while in others such prominence goes to status. In other cases, caste may be the criterion of highest order. Even on hypothetical premises, it is necessary to find out the reason for such difference, and to formulate a generalized pattern indicating the possible deviation. It is also proposed to make necessary comparisons with other works carried out in similar or allied lines. The achieved results of such comparisons will lead to understanding the nature of change on the one hand and to find out the emerging factors responsible for such shifts. Even if some more observations and results come out with the indication of any other issues within the problems, the same are be tackled and worked out with necessary justice in the appropriate context.

METHODOLOGY

In view of the importance of the methodological part, this has been elaborated in necessary detail. The significance of methodology is primarily laid on the problem under conside-
ration. In fact, in accordance with the total problem, the whole spectrum of methodology has been developed. In this case, dealing with methodology a brief introduction appears to be useful. Herein the problem is power, status and caste. Works on these specific issues have been carried out by many workers in varied contexts and so also in different times and spaces. In addition to the same works in conjoined form with the integration of these three issues are not completely absent. In short, the considered problem has been taken for the purpose of research with the application of appropriate methodology.

A good deal of methodology is already in existence. With a view to developing another set of methodology, all the earlier works, as far as practicable in the fold of limited availability, have been taken care of. In such exercise, it has been found that with regard to methodology, more specially in case of technique, there is an overall common pattern. Deviation or variation or even difference is met with in certain cases and it is dependent on the area of the problem. In other words, the relationship between problem and methodology is close to each other. The result of the work, obviously on the basis of problem, is expected to be more meaningful and significant with the use of appropriate methodology. Methodology as the tool is provided with higher efficiency value in case of proper functional application. In cases, methodology of one work is quite different from another, without any major change on the problem. Such differentiation may be explained in terms of modification and development of methodology.
In the background given earlier, the concrete methodology in the present case may be described in stage-wise manner. At the initial stage the problem was with selection of topic. In recent times, social science has been developed to a great extent as evident primarily with the coverage of research areas. The conventional monotony has almost completely been wiped out with the drive of social scientists in various areas. In the overall academic background of the problem under consideration, there is also a bearing of political science. It is remarkable from the angle of political science in which power and status have always been given emphasis and stress. The same topics, i.e. power and status are provided with marked position in social anthropology. For the purpose of applying greater stress on the proposed problem, a conventional issue, the caste, has been incorporated. For both power and status, the caste factor has a prominent role on which the quantum of power and gradation of status are very much linked. The role of caste in power structure (Beteille, 1971) and status orientation (Chauhan, 1960) has also been worked out by some scholars. For the purpose of a kind of integrative study in which the power, status and caste factors are closely linked with one another, the present topic has been selected. After the selection of broad topic, the feasibility factors have also been taken into account by carrying out an exercise in miniature form. This has helped to understand the appropriateness of the problem and so also the limitations. From such experience,
The area of study has been decided to the city of Calcutta, an urban complex with metropolitan identities. The area itself is so large, further extension outside the city limit had to be restricted.

There are various reasons for this reservation and some of them have been mentioned here. For a relatively larger area the sample size will be too big and management deficiency is sure to crop up. Within the city of Calcutta there are various categories of populations. With further stress outside the city, the compatibility of the sample may be lost and this will make hindrances for an in-depth study. Above all, with the enlargement of study area, there is involvement of more time, higher energy, larger expenses and greater inconveniences. In the context of the proper work, one of the methodology is on the exposition of methods utilised by earlier workers. In such case, a number of earlier methods have been consulted which point out the usefulness of the same within the scope of the present work. Similarly the rest of the earlier methods have been discarded for inappropriateness. Thorough reading of a number of earlier works, the problem has been understood in detail with the works already carried out. In this case the beginning has been made in such a way so that it opens a new dimension. For the exposure of the earlier works in allied lines, issues on agreement and disagreement have been identified and those materials have been used for the purpose of comparative study. This part is significant in the context of methodology.
Prior to the survey work casual discussions were made with a good number of people of representative nature for covering the range in terms of age, sex, occupation, economy, profession and even power, status and caste. This is a great experience in formulating the content part of the works and so also the questionnaire. Lynds (1927, 1937) in their works also made specially planned interviews with the people whom they knew well for receiving frank responses. The method is useful to drive out complications and for exposition into practical realities. This is also helpful for limiting the framework of schedule of questionnaire to be received, either in straight form by asking questions or the detailed versions of the same by indirect method. The final questionnaire was made on the basis of response information, experienced from two pilot survey works of intensive nature, with small samples, 50 and 100 respectively. These initial pilot surveys have also shown that division of the city of Calcutta into a number of geographical units does not make much relevance. The population is found to be distributed in wide heterogenous manner than close homogeniety. In fact there is the mingling of people of various economic, educational, professional and such other categories. Earlier the northern part of Calcutta was the concentration of local traditional people. This has also been broken down with the influx of people from former east Pakistan, immediately after partition in 1947. All these information are strictly related to Bengali population only.
The said experience in connection with informants' responses has also helped to formulate the questionnaire in structured pattern. However, opportunities for recording new information was made open. In course of formulating structured pattern of the questionnaire, coding device has also been made for the purpose of convenience in computation of quantitative analysis. During data collection, continuous recording and cross checking were made so that the samples may be uniform, standardized and representative.

In addition to questionnaire method, other methods like geneological, case history and participant observation have been undertaken for collecting qualitative data. In the body of quantitative analysis, such data have been put forward for qualitative assessment. This has yielded a generalised picture along with specific deviation of the area under study. Inclusion has been made of a number of special cases and those have properly been explained and accounted for. As mentioned earlier, the final form of questionnaire has been formulated in three successive stages, with trial and errors. Before the initiation of the fieldwork, an estimation has been made in such a way so that the pulled samples may be of representative nature. The representatives are to be included primarily males and females of different age groups with intervals of 10 years, starting from the age of 20 years and going up to 60+ years. In case of educated individuals at the age of 20 years, they turn
to be graduate or very near to the same. On the basis of biological consideration, consideration of age along with social exposure and psychological makeup, initiation from the age of 20 years may be taken as the stage of maturation, without much emotion. This is the lower limit. Later two major divisions have been made on the basis of age. One group includes up to 40 years of age, while the other comprises individuals above 40 years. This dividing factor at the age of 40 years is made from two main considerations. Independence of India and partition of Bengal took place simultaneously in 1947. This is very near to the year 1950 which coincides with the age of individuals being 40. Secondly the common consideration of 30 years for a generation has been extended further to 40 years.

After age marker, other criteria of consideration include economic condition, educational background, occupational pattern and if possible political affiliation. Instead of filling up the questionnaire in conventional form, discussions have mostly been made with the informants. In course of the same, questions or points have been given due consideration. With such a conjointed method with questionnaire and discussion, the present work has been carried out. In a number of cases, case history method has been applied and in course of the application of the same minimum deviation from the basic points has been restricted. In the present case historical pattern of change through time is difficult to justify due to paucity of proper
data. Age group is arranged sequentially, despite this all the individuals are mixed up in one period of time. In view of this constrain, only cares have been taken in understanding personality structure of the informant and the contextual situation.

SAMPLE

The city of Calcutta is a huge space, 104 sq.kms. with a total population of 3,305,000 individuals. A rough computation of the population on 80% basis puts forward the tentative number of 26,44,00 for Bengali Hindu population. On the basis of average number of family members, as 5, the total number of families comes to 52880. Out of these, due to various constraints, limitations and difficulties mentioned earlier, only 1.5% of the total number of families have been decided to take up for the purpose of this study. This percentage is more than 500 samples with 1% pull and less than 1000 with 2% pull. The relative target was 750, and the exact number of sample turned to 755.

The next phase is indeed difficult. To come to a minimum forms of solution, several categorizations have been made of the samples. Lynds (1927, 1937) found it convenient to divide the people of Middletown into two classes: the business class and the working class. Unlike United States, in case of Calcutta there are practically immuerable categories. In case
of business class the variation is from big heavy industry oriented to pavement living business. Similarly in the working class there are fat salaried high executives to low wage earning sweepers. In such a situation of multiple diversities, similar categorization is practically useless. In view of this, the basic economic condition has been evaluated on the basis of the items of possession, as house, car, two-wheeler auto, telephone, VCR/VOP, television - coloured or black-and-white, refrigerator, gas oven, cassette recorder and radio mainly. Possession of such items indicates the capability to afford the same, both in terms of financial sufficiency for purchase and maintenance. On the basis of the price and maintenance expenses, covering a period of ten years, scoring has been made. This indicates the economic position of the informant, rather more of the family to which he or she belongs. In addition, further scaling is made with educational qualification. Both the factors taken together give a total score or two scores of compatibility. This is the way by which the population has been categorized.

About pulling of the samples, tentative fixation was made with a total of 750 samples, neither 500 nor 1000, a point in between. A total of 750 samples, in absolute figure, have been divided within the forementioned categories, with an attempt to collect representative proportion. From the universe of the study, the city of Calcutta, random selection has been made from the electorate roll, covering 50% of the constituencies.
For identification of categories, spot studies have been carried out on the basis of above mentioned economic and educational categories.

TECHNIQUE OF ANALYSIS

In collecting data, a number of background information were pulled. Some of them are meant for identification of the individuals, some are for personal information of the individual and others for the overall background. It is necessary to supply the relevant informations with regard to the background data already collected.

Informants name does not serve any purpose besides specific identification of the individual. Biological age is one of the prime constituent which brings out generalised exposure and the maturity therefrom. In case of age the starting point is from 20 years when the total makeup is expected to reach the level of maturity. The extension from 20 years onwards has not been deleted. But in the results it has been found that with the increase of age the number of data is showing a trend of decrease. Attention has been drawn on the point so that variability does not turn to be conspicuous. At least some amount of uniformity of the considerations of the age of the informants required to be maintained. This has been further been balanced with age group, Instead of taking the conventional age group as between 21 and 30 years and 31-40 years, the classification has been made of 10 years interval, from 29 and
30 to 30 years etc. Between both above mentioned group the difference of 10 years is retained and no other practical difference is met with. In view of the same the scheme has been formulated with 0 to 9 groupings for the convenience of computations.

Sex differentiation, males and females, is a definite criterion of distinction. Gender is not a mere biological difference. But for such distinction there are many dissimilarities which are primarily based on overall social characters. These include position, status, attitude and so also independence vis-a-vis dependence.

With a view to understanding the geographical spread, a number of informations have been collected which include address, pin codes, ward nos., constituencies, both for Assembly and Parliamentary election. To begin with it was proposed that comparisons would be attempted on the geographical situation within the city of Calcutta as broad regions, north, south, east, west and central parts of Calcutta. In course of the work, experiences have been gathered that at present zonal consideration on the city of Calcutta does not have any relevance with the population. Fifty years ago, this was important and such importance was retained for the next three decades. The results on social, cultural and economic and occupational factors which were presented by Bose (1965, 1968), Sen (1960), Sinha and Bhattacharyya (1969) etc. are no longer tenable.
The changing aspects of social stratification were brought out by Bose (1965, 1968, 1973, 1978) in a study of Calcutta showing the relationship between ethnic origin, social stratification, and spatial segregation. Sen developed quite independently of industrialization, so much so that it has been labelled "a premature metropolis" by Bose (1965). According to him "The superstructure that coheres the castes under the old order seems instead to be re-establishing itself in a new form. Calcutta today is far from being a melting pot on the model of cities in the U.S." (Bose 1978: 495). Sen's study (1960) was based on a series of socio-economic surveys conducted in the mid-1960s. The study of Sen (1960) and Bose (1965, 1968) did not concentrate on the separate social areas of the city, as in ecological studies, but focussed on city-wide processes. Most of the urban studies in India "have made use of the available data rather than collect first hand material" and "that the treatment is mostly descriptive" (De Souza, 1974: 120). In fact, through time, instead of dissimilarities, similarities are found to be accentuated. It is thought of that the city of Calcutta is a single unit, of course, with variations in different areas. But this does not fit in with the simple geographical zonation.

The other criteria on background includes a number of characters. It is necessary to discuss them separately. The caste of the informant is indeed important because in the
present work, one of the major constituents is caste. To decipher and understand caste related traits, identification of the caste of the informant cannot be ignored. In the same way clans have been noted. About religion, inclusion of population of diverse regions could have been unmanagable and compatibility may be lost. Among the Muslims, the Christian, there is neither caste system nor intricacies of the caste system is known to them (Imtiaz Ahmed 1978). In view of the same, data on Hindus have been analysed from the initial stage of collected materials. Population of other religion have been intentionally excluded, for the purpose of restricting complications.

In connection with the place of birth, there are two major groups, for the people living in Calcutta. One is indigenous to West Bengal and the other belongs to immigrants from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. With the population of earlier generations some amount of distinction is found and in view of recent generation these differences have almost been wiped out. In continuation of the same the affiliation part of the informants have been attempted to deduce whether the individual belongs to West Bengal or Bangladesh or mixed form. The affiliation part has a great role in the socio-cultural makeup of the individual. Educational qualifications, have been arranged in structured manner with 8 stages. This has got a direct relationship on categorization and in understanding and involving in the dimension of power and status. Professional qualifications is practically related to occupational priorities.
Economic condition of informant is a crucial parameter and at the same it is difficult to assess. During collection of data, some difficulties were met with. In some families the income level is high but the level of expenditure vis-à-vis standard of living is not at par with the same. In other families the situation is different. Income being relatively less, expenses are quite high, while in some other families the general standard of living with food, clothing and other domestic appliances are exhorbitant. In such case, the exact economic condition is difficult to identify. In view of the same the worker on the basis of his thorough interview in some families quite known, the holo-type has been framed. In such case, there are 5 stages. These are upper, upper-middle, middle-middle, lower-middle, middle and the working or the lower level of economic condition. During collection of data difficulties are minimum with upper and lower levels. It is somewhat more in case of middle. Further problems cropped in designating the sub-levels of middle class. It may be stated that problems are acute in identifying the exact state between upper and upper-middle and lower-middle and lower, as also stated by Warner and Lunt in Yanki city (1941, 1942). Such difficulty is most acute in middle-middle sub-level. In view of the same a 3-tier system has been followed, without the involvement of sub-levels in the middle level. From the experience it may be stated that the identification of economic condition is a hard task. Despite this as the worker has collected the data himself, his observation has paved the way of a kind of standardization.
In most cases employment is related to economic condition even then expectations are not completely absent. The condition is also similar with occupation of the informant. For example, all physicians or engineers or lawyers or teachers or even the clerks do not belong to the level of same economic condition. Instead of the same, a wide variation is met with.

The family size has also been taken into consideration. This is another dimension of finding out the existing social network and the change thereof. Servants' presence is not only an indicator of economy but also a change concerned with both employer and employees. With regard to newspapers and periodicals, the way, form and quantum of exposures are understood. Despite all kinds of scientific and technological inputs, the faith and belief have not changed much. About other data which is completely concerned with power, status and caste, results will be supplied in the proper contexts, later in specific chapters.

Finally, in the context of methodology, the other aspects which are directly concerned with power, status and caste, the data have been displayed in quantitative manner. In cases, where ever possible, the qualitative assessment has been incorporated. These areas are highly susceptible because of personal involvement, private touches and above all not always for public or outsiders. In view of the same, instead of direct
questions, data have been collected with the aid of informal interviews. Problems were found with females and to compensate the same, the author took the help of women, who associated themselves in course of the work. A single woman did not serve the purpose for greater variation. In view of the same, female assistants were taken from different categories. In the analysis, the broad and representative results have been searched for which were further treated for finding out the variation or differences.