Chapter IV

PERSPECTIVES ON INDIAN POLITICS

The centrality of status and power in social hierarchy has remained a perennial phenomenon in Indian society. Despite relative stability of the Indian society, status and power have been changing on a faster scale than the overall change of the society. Ramifications of status and power call for a scrutiny of the perspectives in vogue particularly since India's independence in 1947. An attempt has been made in this chapter to enlist the comparative-functional, the Marxist and the neo-Marxist, and the Gandhian perspectives on Indian state and politics. A discussion on the role of caste in Indian politics, language or idioms of India's politics, politics and political development, caste, class and power linkages, rural elite, academic Marxism, Marxism and the Indian polity and the Indian state, and state-in-society and society-in-state has been incorporated in the chapter. A critical examination of all these major approaches to the study of Indian policy has also been undertaken.

India's independence in itself was not only a great historical event and a political phenomenon, it turned out to be a baseline for reshaping the political future of India. Independence not only became a baseline for forming
self-government based on the principles of democracy, adult franchise, secularism and egalitarianism, but its most important consequence was the democratization of Indian society and polity. Over a period of half-a-century since independence a plethora of studies with different perspectives concerning the nature of Indian State, political parties, social and political mobilizations, elections, nexus between change, development and politics, leadership, power elite, factionalism and power-blocs etc. have been produced, not only by political scientists but also by historians, sociologists, economists and anthropologists. It is humanly impossible to take up all the studies conducted in different parts of the country at different points of time and with different perspectives and methodologies. Hence, the present study of power elite in Sikar district of Rajasthan is eclectic, and it is concerned with perspectives such as comparative historical, functionalism, structuralism, dimensionalism, and with some very basic aspects of power-politics such as caste, class, change and development, nexus between caste, class and power, and power elite and social structure at different levels, namely, national, regional, district, and village. A glimpse into the dynamics of political parties, power blocs, factions etc. is also in tune with the above themes covered in the review of literature in this chapter.
Comparative-Functional Perspective on Politics in India

The most important writing more than two and a half decades ago on Indian politics was The Politics in India by Rajni Kothari.¹ Kothari incorporates in his perspective a semblance of modernization and politicisation. Modernization of polity implies political development as a long term process assuming relative openness of the political system. Modernization does not imply non-incorporation of the legacy of a long tradition, historical culture, and social and cultural solidarities. Kothari is of the opinion that the social system provided a key to social solidarity, hence transformation of social system must be in tune with new political institutions and opportunities, and legitimation of the new institutions must be sought in terms of the nature of the social system. Kothari very clearly explains that the context of political development in India is such that it seeks to incorporate into the womb the best elements of the culture of the modern world, without, at the same time, destroying its age-old traditions and diversities.²

According to Kothari politics in India is pre-eminently the politics of integration, balancing, development and nationhood, against potential disintegrative consequences in a long entrenched and highly diversified society. Such a process of political change and development would be no
doubt slow and somewhat vague. Kothari writes: "The key parameter is: What is precisely the mix between antecedent and enacted institutions that is developing in India? How long would it take before the traditional roots of Indian society succumb to the modernist onslaught? Will they endure till the spiral of economic take off really takes off? And what would be the distinctive Indian 'mix' between tradition and modernity that will survive in the future?" Kothari attempts to answer these questions within the framework of his comparative perspective. He analyses the performance of the Indian political system from this interpretation of social institutions, political power and economic reality.

Kothari writes: "We have in our study, drawn freely on the tools provided by the functional school of comparative analysis, have added themes of structural transformation, political culture, socialization and reinterpretation of tradition as correctives to the comparative myth, have employed the conceptual framework of centre and periphery in highlighting the issue of institutionalization and coalition making, and have introduced at some length criterion of performance and problem solving at various levels, and in different sub-systems, of the polity." Thus, Kothari employs in his comparative perspective both 'modernisation' and 'dependency' models for understanding society and polity.
in India.

According to Kothari tradition and modernity are not incompatible and discrete opposites vis-a-vis the reality of development, political behaviour and interest-group theory. There is a broad acceptance of behavioural approach combined with institutional approach and the role of elites. For Kothari political institutions are not some kind of a superstructure, nor are elites simple recipients of inputs from society. There is a process of constitutional and political superstructure which through the actions of elites penetrates into society at various levels and leads to new forms of power alignments. Kothari observes: "Elites and institutional forms can be seen here as creative actors in the process of integration and diversification, initiators of far reaching change in all spheres of life and as catalyst and mobilizers of a new vitality at varied levels. Politics is the great creative force in such a situation, not just a representative mechanism, which responds to outside pressures and aggregates outside interests."

Thus, Kothari's analysis of politics in India does not base itself on India's class structure, contradictions and class-based domination and subjugation. Role of new institutions and power elites and political parties is viewed performing systemic functions with regard to governmental and planning structure rather than competitions for politi-
Kothari elaborates on the need for a model relevant to the understanding of Indian polity. This model is not based on coercing individuals into new groups and directions. It is also not based on the transcendence of individual's self-interests. It is mainly based on reconciliation of the interests of individuals and groups with the national interest and common good as interpreted by a legitimised elite in an idiom of persuasion. The arena of power is not limited to a ruling oligarchy or an aristocracy of birth. Politics in India provides the larger setting within which decision-making regarding economic and social change takes place. The process of transformation is largely a political-bureaucratic one in India, and in such a process a political orientation of social interest is quite evident. The striving for status gets politically oriented in terms of new criteria of status and power.

By way of conclusion Kothari refers to the crystallisation of a dominant political centre in the midst of plural identities and segmental distances. The new elite became spokesmen of such a model of Indian polity. The various pluralities and segmentations are incorporated in the dominant political centre. Hence, one can visualize a sort of organic hierarchy of power elite from Centre to the village.
Ultimately Kothari advocates for an effective stable political centre for the system's performance.

a) Caste in Indian Politics

Another important contribution by Kothari is *Caste in Indian Politics*, wherein he brings together several studies of Indian polity concerning the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In fact, the studies incorporated in this volume explicate Kothari's perspective of comparative-functionalism to the study of Indian politics. Through these studies Kothari negates the dichotomy between tradition and modernity. He writes: "A modernizing society is neither modern nor traditional, it simply moves from one threshold of integration and performance to another, in the process transforming both the indigenous structures and attitudes and the newly introduced institutions and ideas." Kothari poses the question: "Is caste disappearing?" He answers that no social system disappears like that. A more relevant question would be: "What form is caste taking under the impact of modern politics, and what form is politics taking in a caste-oriented society?" A simple answer to these questions would be that if politics has a basis in society, then politics in India would have its basis in caste system.
Kothari does not find anything wrong with 'politicization of caste'. The forms of caste and the forms of politics cannot remain separate from each other. Politics is a competitive enterprise for the acquisition of power. Castes are identified and mobilized for the realization of power. Thus, caste structure provides a principal organisational support in politics. Kothari rightly observes: "Where caste itself becomes a political category it is futile to argue as to whether caste uses politics or politics uses caste."

Thus, Kothari negates a dichotomy between caste and politics. Factionalism and caste cleavages, patterns of alignments and realignments between the various strata and a continuous striving for social mobility have always been a prominent feature of the caste system. This is what Kothari calls the secular aspect of the caste system and it is highly relevant for secular development in India. There is also an integration aspect of the caste system; as the individual's social position is determined on the basis of the group to which he belongs by birth. There are also other aspects of the caste system, namely, the governmental, the organisational, the political, and the aspect of consciousness. Kothari takes an instrumental view of caste in relation to politics because of the secular, integrative and ideological aspect of the system particularly with regard to modern politics.
b) Idioms of Indian Politics

A couple of years before Kothari's these two volumes were published, W.H. Moris Jones in a comprehensive analysis of the government and politics of India covering up to the third general elections of 1962 observed that an all-India leadership had to be negotiated and created. The reconciliation of regional pressures is to be a large fact of public life, hence federalism is not obsolete in India. Though Morris Jones analyses forms of influence and power, creation of one political system and the working out of 'one language' of politics through the dominant party system, but at the same time he also talks of languages of politics.

By probing the nature of Indian politics three main languages in India's political life are discerned: (1) Modern; (2) Traditional; and (3) Saintly. All these languages and idioms of politics refer to manners, styles, fashions and a particular view of politics. Morris Jones's comparative-behaviouralist approach is evident as he insists on the understanding of behaviour and accounts of behaviour through these languages of politics. He refers to the meeting of traditional and modern languages of politics, in terms of interrelationship between political system and social structure. Traditional India is not non-political, only it contains a different kind of politics distinct from
that of the modern state. The language of politics preached and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi is described as language of saintly politics, and this is different from both traditional and modern politics.

The modern language of politics is the language of the Indian Constitution and the courts, of parliamentary debate, of the higher administration, of the upper levels of all main political parties and of the press. In the present study the main concern is also with the district political leaders who speak the modern language of politics, keeping the traditional language in the background, policies and interests, programmes and plans, arguments and representations, discussions and demonstrations, deliberations and decisions form the modern language of politics.

To understand the nature of power elite what Morris Jones analyses seems to be quite relevant. There are three levels of the language of politics: (1) it has an all-India meaning; (2) it has exclusive meanings concerning statuses, rights and duties of given men and women; and (3) language of politics is fragmented to the smallest possible group level. At all the levels influence and power are present and saintly politics is found at the margins. Corresponding to these operational level one can visualize the presence of national, regional, and local power elites.
c) Politics and Political Development

More or less at the same time another interesting study by Lloyd I. Rudolph and Sussane Hoeber Rudolph appeared. Rudolphs provide a comprehensive analysis of political development in India. This particular work also falls in line with the comparative-functional approach discussed above, and with the views expressed about the Indian society by scholars like Milton Singer, Edward Shils and many others. The question of dichotomy between tradition and modernity is taken up in depth by Rudolphs. Heuristic distinction between tradition and modernity is found useful by them despite their reservations concerning these models. "The opposition of modernity and tradition is also a natural consequence of the comparative method of analysis." The comparative analysis is found as a corrective of excessively narrow perspectives and the parochial judgments. Realizing the limitations of the comparative analysis, Rudolphs use it as a way of measuring the reified conceptions. Western nations and notions, idealization of caste and its practice, ideals of Indian political democracy and its practice in the context of tradition and modernity are discussed by Rudolphs in the present volume. The best way they find is to begin with the comparison of the ideal-typical categories suggested by western experience. Western academic sophistry and dominance witnessed crushing attacks in the 1960s and 1970s.
by Indian social science. A plea for indigenisation of concepts and categories, paradigms and frameworks was pleaded as a substitute for the western social science conceptualization to understand the social reality. The main substantive themes analysed by Rudolphs are: caste, caste associations, mobilization, politics of caste, stratification and equality, untouchability, Gandhian ideology and practice, and legal cultures and social change in terms of tradition and modernity. They conclude that tradition is in the background or even on the surface of all the modern idealizations and structures including politics, mobilization, equality, charisma, public affairs, justice and law.

d) Dimensional Studies of Caste, Class and Power

The 'caste model' dominated social science studies and analyses for a long time. Class and power under this model were considered reducible to the encompassing nature of the caste system. Inspired by the Weberian framework, namely, 'class, status and party', several Indian social scientists studied 'caste, class and power' as distinct phenomena without undermining their interconnections. The most known of these studies are Caste, Class and Power by Andre Beteille, Caste, Class and Politics by Anil Bhatt, and Caste, Religion and Power by Pratap C. Aggarwal. Caste, class and power are seen as interrelated phenomena in
different ways, and as aspects of social stratification overlapping to some extent but also cutting across from one another. Beteille refers to phenomena of class and power as "caste-free" to some extent. He writes: "Both class and power positions have today a greater measure of autonomy in relation to caste." However, Beteille considers castes as communities following Max Weber's notion of caste, but classes are categories rather than groups. Thus, it implies that the nature of interaction between different classes would be different from the nature of interaction between different caste groups, in terms of not only contents of interaction but also in regard to its visibility.

Similarly Beteille observes: "The extent to which the distribution of power has differentiated itself from the caste structure seems to be more striking than corresponding changes in the class system." Shifts in the political positions or the changes in the distribution of power can be seen in terms of increasing use of politics as an avenue of social mobility, considerably independent of caste. It may be pointed out here that even today more than thirty years after this study was published, there are no indications of caste being relegated to the background in the realm of politics. Weakening of caste in one sphere of social life does not automatically weaken it in another aspect of social life, hence different permutations and combinations of caste
and politics need to be carefully worked out.

Distribution of power in Beteille's study also revolves around the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins in the village community. However, Beteille's analysis of distribution of power in terms of institutions and group structures such as panchayats, parties and local elites and those who have power and those who do not - seem to be quite convincing. But power is not a zero-sum game, it is a relative phenomenon. Power blocs of an amorphous character exist in the village studied by Beteille. The present study also shows that power blocs though vague in nature are perceived by people at the village, bloc, and district levels. Such power blocs at the state and national levels are clearly identified by the local power blocs in terms of affinity and distantiation.

However P.C. Aggarwal discusses of power among the Meos as a phenomenon interconnected with other aspects of social life. In fact, Aggarwal is reporting about political organisation in terms of both caste and religion, and he restricts his analysis to the traditional and the statutory panchayats among the Meos. Though Aggarwal employs the trichotomy of caste, religion and power, he does not go into the finer conceptions and heuristic distinctions as Beteille does in his study of a village in Tamil Nadu.
More important is the study by Anil Bhatt - *Caste, Class and Politics*. Bhatt's study of caste, class and politics is remarkably distinct from both the case studies cited above. Bhatt's study provides for a diachronic comparison with its future development and for synchronic comparison with other societies. Bhatt examines the extent of the traditional model of stratification in India which is characterised by status-summation, limited mobility, and cumulative inequalities on the one hand, and by some aspects of democratic development such as mobility, equality, and secularity, on the other. Tradition-modernity is also central to Bhatt's analysis like those of Kothari and Morris Jones. The classical model of social stratification is defined as that of summation of statuses between caste, class and politics. The status-summation model envisages a congruence among various positions such as high, middle and low in regard to caste, class and politics. The traditional model lacks internal differentiation and it is marked by vertical arrangement of groups. It is non-antagonistic and non-competitive, it is, in fact, a 'caste model' of Indian society, characterised by closed, highly hierarchical, domineering and non-competitive elements. Bhatt accepts this model as a benchmark in contract to the democratically ordered society envisioned by the Constitution of India. Bhatt finds it useful in correcting the view of unchanging and unchangeable caste system.

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Bhatt seeks substantive support for accepting the traditional view based on various studies conducted by Beteille, Barth, Barbar, etc. It has been pointed out earlier that Rudolphs have criticised the traditional model of stratification because such a view of Indian society ignores the latent, deviant and minority elements as they do not fit into the model. A number of other studies by historians have also brought about the co-existence of sacred and secular statuses, stability and mobility, ascription and achievement, harmony and disharmony etc. in different epochs of Indian society.

However, the question posed by Bhatt demands a serious attention. He asks: "Can India realize this new order in such a deep rooted and pervasive traditional social structure?" The notions of 'new', 'modern' and 'democracy' as understood by Bhatt are constitutive of western experience. In Bhatt's analysis the language of comparative-functionalism is liberally employed like Kothari's Politics in India.

Bhatt's analysis places caste as a pivotal institution for understanding class and politics. In fact, class and politics are seen in relation to caste. But at the same time the processes of politicization and modernization have been instrumental in changing the ascriptive aspects of
status to achievable aspects of status. May be a change is intended in the caste hierarchy but at the same time social stratification is no more homogeneous, combinative and non-competitive. In modern India, there is increasing status incongruence, relative openness, mobility and competition among different social strata. But Bhatt does not explain the rationale for adopting the Weberian model of social stratification. The methodology adopted in most of the dimensionalistic studies, including the ones by Bhatt and Beteille, do not follow the methodological logic of Weber's frame of reference in the study of power nor do they explain the relevance of Weberian rationalist tradition for studying Indian society.45

c) Rural Elite: Land, Power and People

A recent study of rural elite signifying dimensional perspective highlights interconnections between land, power and people.46 This particular study, though resembles in certain respects with the earlier dimensionalistic studies, departs from them significantly in the understanding and analysis of the present situation in terms of the use of historical data. The notion of land resembles with the notion of class, and the notion of the people is very close to the notion of caste. Rajendra Singh observes that the hierarchical arrangement in the social structure corresponds
by and large to the relative size of the land people own and control in the countryside. Thus, the social hierarchy in the Indian countryside is generally reflected in the hierarchy of land. \textsuperscript{47} Perhaps Rajendra Singh's study is a good illustration of the caste-class nexus. He writes: "Indeed like rich and poor social classes, there exists rich and poor land." \textsuperscript{48} But land is not simply an economic phenomenon, it has a social significance because it is transhumanised. Land has a cultural value. Those who own and control the land, also use it as an instrument of power and domination over those who do not have it at all or those who have less of it. \textsuperscript{49}

Several studies have brought out the fact that rural elites have control over vast areas of land, but this may not be true about block and district level elites who have their social origins in small villages. \textsuperscript{50} They may be having large sums of money and assets in the form of houses, factories etc. They may be called more as a rentier and profiteering class than the elite having control over land. Income from such sources and from other contingent means places them comfortably in a situation which facilitates contest in elections.

Rajendra Singh accepts the Weberian definition of power and its distinction from the concept of authority. However, both land and power have foundations in cultural norms of
the agrarian social structure. The changes in the structure of land and power distribution have brought about significant changes in the cultural values and social structure of society. Thus, people for Rajendra Singh are the components of the agrarian population, namely, peasants, agricultural labourers, and petty traders of various castes and communities. The people could be understood by having a look at the traditional native dichotomous categories such as Raja vs Praja, Malik vs Naukar, Zamindar vs Kashtkar on the one hand, and the emergence of new elite after the abolition of the zamindari system, on the other. The rural elite even today have arisen from the agrarian social structure. Hence, the history of the landlords, the elite and power situation in the past, and the land, power and people relation today put together constitute the framework of Rajendra Singh's study of Basti district in Eastern U.P.51

The working definition of the rural elite formulated by Singh includes an enduring minority of rural population with relatively independent potential for power and domination, exercising control over people in an agrarian society.52 Thus, Singh lays more emphasis on the structural and institutional aspects of power rather than on its manifestations in positions and offices. The elite is not an abstracted nominal category but it is a concrete social entity embedded in the community power structure of an agrarian society.53
Singh covers a history of 170 years of relations between land, power and people (from 1801 to 1970) in the Basti district. Singh's study puts emphasis on qualitative and historico-ethnographic data and analysis to understand social structure and its cultural traditions. The rural elite in agrarian communities is linked with the tenurial systems of land, hence the mode of agrarian relations is instrumental in shaping community power structure.

Ownership and control over land and other resources generally correspond to hierarchical location of groups in segments and strata of social structure. Ownership and control over land and other resources generally correspond to a hierarchical location of groups. T.B. Bottomore, Richard Fox, Anthony Carter and Hamja Alavi have also analysed such overlaps and convergences between caste, kinship, lineage and elite.\(^{54}\) Shift in the control over land has brought about changes in the nature of rural elite. The nature of the rural elite and the mode of their domination indicate their adaptive capacity. The recent changes have differentiated rural elites, which Singh names as the established elites and the emerging elites.\(^{55}\)

f) Appraisal of the Comparative-Functional Perspective

Application of comparative-functional perspective in sociology and social anthropology emanates from classical
functionalism as advocated by Emile Durkheim, Rad-Cliffe Brown, B. Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard in particular.\textsuperscript{56} The application of comparative-functionalism is particularly found in the writings of M.N. Srinivas, Andre Beteille and some others.\textsuperscript{57} In a recent collection of essays Beteille\textsuperscript{58} admits that he derives his orientation from Durkheim who said: "Comparative sociology is not a special branch of sociology: It is sociology itself."\textsuperscript{59} Such a view is also held by well-known American functionalists such as Talcott Parsons, R.K. Merton, Kingsley Davis etc.\textsuperscript{60} Davis argues that if structural-functionalism is taken out from sociology and social anthropology, nothing remains in these disciplines.\textsuperscript{61}

Andre Beteille examines politics at the local level in Tamil Nadu in terms of linkages between processes at different levels of territorial organisation.\textsuperscript{62} Beteille finds collective identities important in understanding the problem of both distribution and processes, and the caste identities have not remained same from one political context to another or from one territorial level to another.\textsuperscript{63} Beteille also refers to the politics of non-antagonistic strata wherein he argues that caste is not on its way out due to economic development and democratic politics. Caste has been given a new lease of life by electoral politics, and it is undergoing important changes. Relations between castes were never
static as the traditional Indian society did not in principle exclude any competition or conflict between its basic morphological constituents.64

A major revision of the comparative-functional approach to the study of politics and society in India is reflected in L.I. Rudolph and S.H. Rudolph's study, *In Pursuit of Lakshmi: The Political Economy of the Indian State*.65 Rudolphs provide a comprehensive analysis of the state, politics, economy, and demand groups. In the very first sentence they write: "India is a political and economic paradox: a rich-poor nation with a weak-strong state."66 They claim to unravel this paradox by examining interconnections between polity and economy. Realizing the variety and complexity that generate contradictory forces in India, Rudolph and Rudolph confess their conclusions as "contingent". It may be pointed out here that a contingent explanation or conclusion is based on a crisis situation. History of Indian polity after independence has witnessed several crises including wars, movements, communal riots, political chaos and disorder, acute inflation and failures of political parties and their governments at the centre and in the states.

Rudolphs analyse and explain the political economy of the Indian state in terms of "command and demand politics", 124
the state as the third actor, state and involuted pluralism of demand groups. The decade of the 1980s is the decade of methodological individualism and rational choice. In such a situation there is 'marginality of class politics' because of the variety of social formations and identities that organise and represent society in India. Economy has also sectoral characteristics. Objective determinants become subjective ones and vice-a-versa. C. Wright Mills rightly refers to such a situation as private troubles and public issues and public troubles and private issues.

More or less on the pattern of analysis by Rudolphs, two volumes edited by Francine Frankel and M.S.A. Rao titled, Dominance and State Power in Modern India: Decline of a Social Order - present case studies about caste, class, dominance and politics in the states of U.P., Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala (Vol.I), and Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Punjab (Vol.II). With the exception of few mild critical references and interpretations these studies further focus on the relevance of comparative approach to the study of dominance and politics. But these too like the one by Rudolphs bring out contingent conclusions due to specific fluid situations in different states. The main structural entities for analysing dominance and politics include caste, class and ethnicity, and in concrete terms these entities imply par-
ticular castes, scheduled castes, tribes, minorities, etc. The role of ideology, consciousness and the process of social and political mobilization in particular finds special mention as analytical and empirical references.

Frankel notes that their approach can be distinguished from that of developmentalist and neo-Marxist approaches in basic ways. Frankel also finds modernization theory as an incomplete conceptual framework for analysing historical processes of change in modern India. The Indian social setting can be analysed in terms of the interpretation of the religious, ideological, and politico-economic structure. Structural-functionalism overlooks the material base of caste structures, and the material base of caste structure and the Marxist frame of reference underestimate the force of caste ideology and sentiments. Frankel argues that traditional caste, ethnic and religious identities can be dynamically understood as a process of social formation. These two volumes no doubt depart from the modernization model, but there is also an absence of the theory of history in the contributions incorporated in the volumes. However, these two volumes provide an empirical theory of the relationship between the introduction of social change in society and the transformation of that society.

The two processes are not the same. Caste has not disintegrated and caste has also not been replaced, hence
both the developmentalists and the Marxists are not correct. Basically, the approach in these two volumes is an interactional one, which treats caste, class and ethnicity as a process and social formation, and examines their linkages with state level power to explain changing patterns of dominance. In fact, in situational context multiple identities can be identified in the competition for social, economic, and political advantages. The modern state is treated as an agent of change in the internal structure of a society along with some other factors such as technology and communication. Some of these points have also been taken up in a general way in a recent study by Paul R. Brass.\textsuperscript{70}

\textbf{Marxist Approach to the Study of Politics in India}

M.N. Roy\textsuperscript{71} and R. Palm Dutt\textsuperscript{72} were the first Indian scholars who attempted a Marxist analysis of Indian politics. Both Roy and Dutt tried to relate the political structure and movements to the structures at the economic level. They considered political process as a part of dynamic totality. Politics was not considered by both Roy and Dutt a totally autonomous process involving merely political ideology and important political personalities. Sudipto Kaviraj while commenting on the contributions of Roy and Dutt writes: \"There was a richer sensitivity about the non-political layers of the milieu in which politics goes\"
on. Also there was a systemic understanding of history, looking at history not just as a random collection of unrelated and largely inexplicable events, but as a total sequence of socio-economic systems. Thus, both Dutt and Roy emphasise the intermingling of the economic and the political process.

Dutt observed that imperialism disturbed the normal process of transition from feudalism to capitalism in India. Imperialism retarded economic development and stalemated and complicated the process of transition. This process has also been referred to as de-industrialization by Daniel Thorner. Dutt was also alive to the contradictory character of the process of transition. In Kaviraj's opinion Dutt was a Marxist thinker of higher order than M.N. Roy. Roy was against the extremist whom he called 'reactionary' and he labeled the moderates as progressives. However, the application of the Marxist method by both Dutt and Roy was not free of a political mind-set. Both, however, prefaced the application of the Marxist method to Indian politics. Later on Nehru, J. Prakash Narain and Narendra Dev adopted a modified Marxist analysis to understand the course of Indian history and politics.

The Academic Marxist framework came much later. Kaviraj observes that political analysis from the Marxist point of view is clustered around three different paradigms.
These paradigms provide a radically different understanding of the class character of the Indian state, of the bourgeoisie and of the possibilities of politics. Also Marxist theory is highly differentiated both at the political and the academic levels as reflected in the various Marxist parties and groups on the one hand, and in the writings of the orthodox and the neo-Marxists in academics, on the other. Marxism in social science studies has been used both in terms of the Marxist frame in toto, and in parts, eclectically.  

The word 'Marxist' was unknown in Marx's own time. Once Marx said: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist". Marxism is a whole worldview, a comprehensive theory of evolution embracing both nature and human society. Marx himself conceived his theoretical work primarily as a critique of political economy from the standpoint of the revolutionary proletariat, and as a materialist conception of history. This conception was developed in conscious opposition to the subjective-idealist standpoint. As such Marx shows that the state and property are a reflection of real conditions. Some of these Marxist conceptions are being challenged and revised by non-dogmatic Marxists such as P. Sraffa, J. Robinson, Maurice Dobb and Paul Baran, who have provided a Marxist critique of political economy.
b) Marxism and the Study of Indian Polity

A macro-structural analysis of Indian society in general and of Indian politics in particular in the early years of post-independence period was taken up by Charles Bettelheim using the orthodox Marxist framework with the help of concepts such as bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, proletariat, economic base and superstructure, public and private sector, surplus value etc. With regard to relation between state power and people two main points are highlighted by Bettelheim. Firstly, the state is an instrument of repression and bureaucratic control, the form which the repression and control takes depends on class tensions, the level of development of productive forces, the standard of education, and the social conscience of different classes. The state bureaucracy and its employees also affect the functioning of the state. Since the Indian state inherited a colonial legacy, it essentially remained repressive, bureaucratic, and democratic. Secondly, after Independence the state organisations were not remodelled by the new government. Minor reforms could not negate the colonial legacy. Hence, a tendency to imitate traditional forms of self-government.

Bettelheim is also critical of the functioning of India's political parties as they adopted a more or less European system of party model. He considers the Congress
party as 'centre-left-wing-party', and further left are the socialist and communist parties, and further there are various conservative parties and personalities. However, such ideological cleavages and divides in relation to India's political parties are no clearly discernible. Such a political divide hides the peculiar character of Indian political life. It conceals many feudal and semi-feudal economic and social relationships. The political parties in India must tackle the problems of state, economic control, and the agrarian problems. Again it may be added that the political scene in India has changed a lot since the late 1960s. Many of the premises and conclusions given in Bettelheim's analysis need to be reformulated in the light of vastly varying regional politics and political permutations and combinations at the centre.

Recent changes in India's political economy negate Bettelheim's hypothesis about the state capitalism and centralization of economic power in the Indian State. Liberalization of the economy during the last five years in particular not only has changed the nature and meaning of India's five year plans, it has also changed considerably the character of Indian state and ideological basis of Indian politics. Public sector has become extremely weak and multinationals are substituting them. Trade unionism has become somewhat weak. Private sector is no more a polluting arena
of employment. A revivalistic politics has also prospered along with liberalization of economy and weakening of the state.

In a significant essay on politics, 'The Dialectics of Science and Revolution in Karl Marx', Randhir Singh observes that the Marxian explanation of politics requires to illuminate the character of the capitalist system as a whole in all its structured interconnections and movements - the whole through the parts, and the parts having the stamp of the whole. This is true about the study of any social formation. Thus, Marxian explanation seeks a search for dialectical knowledge about politics. Marx looks at politics or the realm of the political, within the objective conditions structurally constituted by the prevalent mode of production at particular junction in the history of a society. However, Marx's treatment of politics remained largely untheorized by him.

Thus, according to Marxian perspective, there is no relative autonomy of politics. However, there is a relative autonomy of the State in a particular historical situation. But the state is not autonomous from the socio-economic structure of a class-divided society which it essentially serves. Randhir Singh refers to Hall and Draper appreciatively, and mentions that state always remains the
organiser of society in the interest of the class structure as a whole. Randhir Singh outrightly rejects the non-economic or non-material or the liberal perspective about politics, because he considers politics as a phenomenon emanating from class structure and class struggle. But for Marx politics has primacy as Marx was a revolutionary. Marx knew very well that in the absence of revolutionary politics the structural base of society could not be changed, and he also professed that all politics will remain super-structural in its essential character and outcome. Randhir Singh writes: "This is the base of a determined and determining choice in politics within which other more or less choices occur." Such is the dialectics of the economy and politics in the social science of Karl Marx. Thus, in Marxism the centrality of politics is seen as revolution. The political as a whole is in the realm of the contingent, or historical conjunctures and in the changing balance of social forces. The 'political' is a realm of real choices and possibilities, and hence it is devoid of certainties and predictabilities.

c) Marxism and the Indian State

For an exposition of the Marxian perspective to the understanding of politics in India a number of studies of power-politics and political parties vis-a-vis the Indian state and class structure have surfaced in the post-inde-
pendsence period. Most of these studies show the bias of the Indian society. The nature of the state is such that its democratic institutions motivate the downtrodden to extend their support to a government which cannot bring about their emancipation from poverty and de-humanization. The bourgeoisie political parties are supported by the lowest sections of Indian society, and this is an irony and contradiction of the Indian political system. Contradictory coexistence of democracy and capitalism clearly comes out when one looks at the Indian political situation today.

In recently edited four volumes T.V. Satyamurthy analyses the political dynamics of contemporary Indian state, the Indian state's economic policies, India as a civil society with special reference to political and economic demands of the mass of the Indian people, and class formation and political transformation in India. The phenomenon of political transformation is analysed in the various essays included in these volumes in terms of the social and cultural divisions that have surfaced and the resilience of the Indian political system to overcome fragmentation and to achieve common political and economic goals. The main thrust of these volumes is to highlight the divergence between the political discourse of the ruling power elite and that of the mass of the population opposed to them. Several political movements have been discussed which are
against the increasing hegemony of the Indian state and the Congress Party. The coercive character of the Indian state in particular is the focal theme of the four volumes. Having implications for greater participation of the people is power-politics in India. Most of the studies highlight on the intensification of political contradictions and conflicts particularly in the post-emergency period.

It is argued that the so-called mainstream political science was concerned with the formal structures and the prescribed ways and traditional social categories. T.V. Satyamurthy observes that it ignored the dynamic ways in which castes were becoming transformed and the crucial role played by existing and rapidly emerging new classes. Satyamurthy notes that with the exception of Rajni Kothari the mainstream Indian political scientist practiced the conceptual and methodological straitjacket using western political science and comparative politics and development studies. By responding to the 1975-77 emergency, by radically altering his essentially structural-functional perspective, and recasting his approach to Indian politics, Rajni Kothari highlighted the relationship between the state and democratic civil society.

In support of the Marxian perspective Satyamurthy argues that in contrast to bourgeoisie, by mainstream politi-
cal theory Marxism offers analytical tools appropriate for an understanding of rates and degrees of change under the impact of dynamic forces. However, Satyamurthy criticises the Indian academic Marxist political scientists for suffering from vulgar reductionism and formalistic jargonism and for failure to generate new insights. Thus, according to Satyamurthy, the mainstream political science has failed to recognise the ongoing dialectics between contradictory social and economic forces underlying political phenomenon, and the academic Marxist political science suffers from its general unwillingness to disentangle the dialectical method from the rigid orthodoxies of the fractured Indian communist movement. Clearly Satyamurthy makes a fervent plea against the adoption of a positivistic functionalist paradigm. His emphasis is on the study of political processes, political actions and aims in everyday life relating them to institutional structures of the state and society. Such an analysis can be geared by having the semantic and symbiotic dimensions as the medium of political discourse. Through this one can understand the continuing relationship between changing terms of political discourse and the changing agenda of politics in the concrete. Equal emphasis is also laid in these four volumes on a balance between the political dimension of the object of study and the economic, social, cultural, ideological, and international underpinnings of politics.
Another important collection of essays edited by Upen-dra Baxi and Bikhu Pareph discussed models of Indian politics as constructed and practiced by Mahatma Gandhi, J.L. Nehru and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in particular. Specifically the essays by Rajni Kothari, Kaviraj, Rajeev Bhargava etc. bring out the neo-Marxian perspective to the study of state and politics in India. Kothari argues that the legitimacy of the state particularly after the imposition of emergency in 1975 has imperilled pursuing of genuine national goals regarding economic development, redistribution of resources and a federal structure sensitive to regional aspirations. After losing its autonomy and national commitment the Indian state fell into the hands of the sectional interests and the industrial bourgeoisie working in close collaboration with multinationals. An unholy alliance of the forces of the market and the bureaucratic-technological elite emerged at the centre-stage of decision-making.

Kothari thinks that grass-roots movement of marginal groups and committed activist groups have the power to revitalize and rejuvenate the Indian polity. A dialogical praxis can provide proper understanding and analysis of Indian polity. Baxi and Parekh observe: "Renewal of Indian poli-
tics is taking place along directions, which neither the liberal nor the radical activists, imaginative thought and praxis had anticipated. The power elite today would emerge from such a conditioning of Indian polity and cultural diversity. Baxi and Parekh also take a note of Pierre Bourdieu's perspective identifying 'symbolic power' or 'symbolic capital', and emphasise on the politics of language and the language of politics.

The Gandhian Perspective and Indian Politics

A succinct account of political theorizations on Indian society is made available in Thomas Pantham's survey of literature on Politics in India. Pantham reviews models of liberal democracy and modernization, Marxist and neo-Marxist theory of social transformation, Gandhian theorization, the ideology of Hindu nationalism, and theories of integral pluralism and alternative democracy. Pantham finds all the five different theorizations as relevant to understand and analyse the Indian state and polity. He pleads that the future theorization of Indian politics will have to be critically and creatively related to the Gandhian discourse. The capitalist modernization paradigm and the elite discourse are divorced from the Swaraj or freedom discourse.
Manoranjan Mohanty advocates for the Swaraj or freedom discourse which he considers as the representative of emancipatory-transformative struggles of the poor, the dalits, the tribals, the oppressed nationalities, etc. Endorsing Mohanty's perspective, Pantham claims that a critical creative relationship with the Swaraj-Sarvodya initiated by the Indian people in their historic struggle against imperialism (colonialism) would be a necessary constitutive part of any post-colonial and post-relativistic moral political theory. Pantham highlights the significance of the moral-political theory of decolonization or post-coloniality. It was initiated and experimented within the Indian freedom movement by Gandhi.

Another point worth consideration is to accord priority attention to the task of reconstructing democratic political institutions at both the domestic and the transnational levels of the Indian polity. The crisis of governability in India focuses on the growing disjuncture between the weakening institutions and the multiplying demands. Atul Kohli's study of politics in selected five districts and three states suggests four major factors that have influenced the nature of political change in India. These are: (1) the deinstitutionalizing role of national and regional leaders; (2) the impact of weak political parties; (3) the undisciplined political mobilization of various castes,
religious, ethnic and other types of groups; and (4) the increasing conflicts between the haves and the have-nots in civil society.\textsuperscript{109}

Long ago some of these problems were sensed by Selig Harrison when he cautioned about the dangerous consequences of the emergence of new regional elites, new caste lobbies, linguism, communalism and communism.\textsuperscript{110} The four factors suggested by Kohli are not independent of each other, in fact Kohli also warns about the crisis of the Indian political system reflected through the concentration of power, elite-dominated democracy, and an elite-led mobilization. As such the study of political disorder and crisis becomes more compelling due to the problem of governability.

Joel S. Mudgal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue suggest the state-in-society perspective for understanding of state and politics in the countries of the non-western world.\textsuperscript{111} This is proposed by them as an alternative to both modernization and dependency models. This perspective seeks to go beyond "bringing the state back in" by resituating the study of states in their social setting. It is considered as a more balanced perspective considering state both as an 'end in itself' and as a means, and to understand the dynamic nature of social forces and the mutually transforming quality of state-society relationship.\textsuperscript{112}
The main focus of the present perspective is the identification and understanding of the functioning of states and societies. It is important to disaggregate the state, with a view to recall that the boundaries between the state and the society are generally blurred, and there is a greater degree of self-consciousness of the mutually transformative nature of the state and society interactions. In fact, Atul Kohli and V. Shue focus on the relevance of the processual perspective incorporating the developmental capacities in terms of their nexus as an integral perspective. The mutuality of influence of the society on the state and that of the state on society is the quintessence of the state-in-society approach.

Concluding Remarks

Perspectives on Indian state and polity have undergone a sea-change vis-a-vis the changes in the Indian society. Comparative functionalism implanted from the Western social science sophistry in the 1950s and the 1960s became a sterile academic practice in the 1970s and the 1980s. Rajni Kothari, a well-known proponent of this perspective, disowned his own standpoint in the mid-seventies. However, the Marxist perspective, though not as a dominant paradigm, continued as a forceful way of thinking among selected academia and institutions. The neo-comparative-functional and the neo-Marxist perspectives were brought in as amended
forms of the comparative-functional and the Marxist perspectives. The dogmatism of the two was no doubt mellowed down considerably, interest in the Gandhian thinking in social sciences was also reviewed in the 1980s and the 1990s. The quintessence of all these views lies in the understanding of the state-in-society and the society-in-state. An attempt has thus been made to probe into the nature of the Indian polity and its roots in the Indian society.
Notes and References

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(2) Ibid., p.3.

(3) Ibid., p.4.

(4) Ibid., p.5.

(5) Ibid., p.6.

(6) Ibid., pp.8-9.

(7) Ibid., pp.10-1.


(9) Ibid., p.4.

(10) Ibid., p.5.

(11) Ibid., p.8.

(12) Ibid., p.10.

(13) Ibid.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Ibid.


(17) Ibid., p.207.

(18) Ibid., pp.52-61.


(20) Ibid.

(21) Ibid.


(32) Beteille, op. cit., p.4.

(33) Ibid., p.8.

(34) Ibid.


(38) Ibid., p.1.

(39) Ibid., p.2.

(40) Ibid., p.4.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Rudolphs, op. cit., pp.4-7.


(44) Bhatt, op. cit.

(45) Beteille, op. cit.; Bhatt, op. cit.; Aggarwal, op. cit. All these writers have used Weber's model without questioning its relevance.


(47) Ibid., p.12.

(48) Ibid., p.12.

(49) Ibid., pp.12-13.


(52) Ibid., p.37.

(53) Ibid., pp.22-42.

(55) Singh, R., op. cit.


(63) Ibid.

(64) Ibid.


(66) Ibid., p.1.

(67) Ibid., pp.393-401.

(68) Mills, op. cit.


(73) Kaviraj, Sudipto, *op. cit.*

(74) Dutt, R. Palme, *op. cit.*


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(80) Ibid.


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(86) Ibid., pp.27-28.

(87) Ibid., p.30.


(90) Singh, Randhir, *op. cit.*

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(95) Ibid., p.5.

(96) Ibid., p.5.

(97) Ibid., p.6.

(98) Ibid.

(99) Ibid.


(104) Ibid., p.191.


(106) Pantham, Thomas, op. cit.

(107) Kohli, Atul, op. cit.

(108) Ibid.

(109) Ibid.


(112) Ibid., pp.293-326.

(113) Ibid.

(114) Ibid.