PREFACE

I had been a student at the Department of Sociology, M. S. University of Baroda at the B. A. level from 1964 to 1968. I therefore knew Professor I. P. Desai at some distance. After doing my M. A. and M. Mlitt. at the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi, I taught sociology for a short time at Sardar Patel University. I then returned to the M. S. University of Baroda in 1989 as a lecturer. There was frequent discussion here about the two great personalities associated with this Department and their contribution to its development. One of them was Professor M. N. Srinivas and the other Professor I. P. Desai. I often discussed with Professor Pravin J. Patel the contributions of these two eminent personalities. In this process I learnt about the various fields of publications of I. P. Desai and became interested in his contributions to Sociology. I. P. Desai’s contribution to sociology has both depth and span of coverage ranging from education and family to caste, untouchability, reservation, migration, mobility and social change. To understand his whole gamut of contributions in a single study is really challenging and it took me quite some time to decide to undertake the present study on I. P. Desai’s contribution to Sociology.

Professor I. P. Desai was a teacher in Baroda University for a long time, first as Reader and then as Professor of Sociology. He also performed many administrative duties, as Head of the Department of Sociology, as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and as a member of the Syndicate of Baroda University. He left Baroda and founded the Centre for Social Studies at Surat, a research centre well known in India and abroad for many of its eminent scholars and path-breaking researches carried out by them. He was the President of the Indian Sociological Society during 1976-78. He belonged to the second generation of sociologists in India after G. S. Ghurye, Radha Kamal Mukherjee and D. P. Mukerjee. He played a major role in shaping the teaching and research in sociology in contemporary India.
I. P. Desai wrote extensively on diverse topics. He was mainly concerned with exploring the structural and processual aspects of the contemporary Indian society by conducting empirical investigations on education, family, caste, untouchability, migration, occupational mobility, social change, etc. Some of his researches are considered as pioneering works. His works reflect originality of his viewpoint in selection and formulation of research problems as well as in his choice of research strategy and methodology. In this dissertation I have tried to examine his important publications and his theoretical and methodological contributions in Sociology.

This dissertation contains seven chapters along with Appendix and Bibliography. Several senior sociologists and particularly Professor Pravin J. Patel encouraged me to complete my research work. Once I got deeply involved in it, my interest in the research took different turns. I found I. P. Desai's work in various fields of sociology very stimulating. I have made an attempt to compile, dissect and consolidate the various works of this great sociologist of India. I hope that I have been able to do justice to him.

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