CHAPTER-III

Socio-Cultural Relations
The degree of ethnicity and "we" feeling of the group may be dormant until the group comes in contact with another group. In other words, a group reveals its identity as an ethnic group when it interacts with other group. Ladakh is a region with numerous cultures, languages and religions and may be called as an ethnological museum. The groups are located on the basis of differences of racial, cultural, linguistic and religious characteristics in it.

Although there is a vague feeling of geographical cum-cultural unity of the region, the ethnic stratification is very prominent. Due to the impact of modernization, the people who were living in simple village communities and tribes which had their own social, political, economic and religious organisation, forced them to move out of the village communities for education employment, trade and business; Not only people from rural areas move to nearby town Leh or Kargil but there was movement of people from one district to another. Away from home people made new friends and formed new relationships. Wider circles of ethnicity are becoming apparent from the Social groupings and the nature of intimate relationships in Urban areas because of this change.

An important criterion to separate ethnic groups, was revealed by asking the question. apart from his social class, with whom does or will a person away from his home and relatives develop primary and secondary group relationship or whom he consider his own people and identify himself with? 95.3 percent of the sample study revealed that persons belonging to his religion, his language, his sect, ethnic group and his region. One or a combination of more than one of these are models of ethnicity of a Ladakhie
In Ladakh, Ferdinand Tonnies Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft groups are very common. The Gemeinschaft groups are formed on the ethnic lines. The phenomenal rise in recent years, due to the influx of tourists, in number of hostels, Co-operative Societies, Charitable Institution formed on religious, regional and linguistic basis is an evidence of ethnic separation of the population on these lines.

It was found that in the village communities all the primary group relationships and most of the secondary group relationships are confined to the ethnic groups. Some individual characteristic of ethnic groups such as style of speech, style of dress, traditional ritual, besides certain attitudes and values, distinguishes the cultural behaviour of the members of that ethnic group.

44 percent of the respondents revealed that the marriage alliance, would be sought within the ‘ethclass’, to use Gordon’s terminology—that is social class within the ethnic group. In the remaining 55 percent interviewed expressed their desire and willingness to marry within their own endogamous group leaving no consideration whether higher or lower in status level and hardly one percent had no reservation about the ethnic group but that one percent would like to marry within their own religious and sect group.

Among the reasons given for conformity to endogamy the most frequent were those related to the maintenance and promotion of group solidarity. Second place was given to similarity of customs and ways of living because it secures easy adjustment in marital life. Inter-religious marriages were negligible and there is a strong control of religious associations on these marriages.
Even the inter-religious pre-marital relations are keenly observed in the Ladakhie society and if identified they are severely dealt. Particularly the fundamental organisation like Ladakh Buddhist Association is strongly against these relations. The President of the association Tsering Narboo Lampa says that basic motto of the association is to preserve the cultural and religious identity of Buddhists. He says if we allow these marriages, our culture and identity will get eroded. At the occurrence of such episodes, Mr. Narboo narrates, that we first approach to the religious organisation of involved person, if they could not help, the police is made to intervene and if they also could not solve the problem, we take law in our own hands. The President of Anjuman Miunal Islam Leh. (the religious associations of Sunni Muslims) and the President of Anjuman Imamia Leh. (the religious association of Shia Muslims) response to the question: what is the aim of these associations was as they quoted a verse from the Holy Book Quran.

(Join hands in the Good deeds and piety and don't compromise on sins and animosity)

Ladakhies have adopted western style of life in use of furniture, in men’s and children’s apparel, women’s dress has changed but not Westernised and the adoption of western sports etc. Westernization and modernization has brought about changes not only in material culture but also in ideologies and values, bringing about scientific outlook and emphasis on education. Nodoubt it has left tremendous impact on the life of Ladakhies but their social life continued to be more ethnocentric Modernization and
westerization of these groups, has not replaced the traditional ways which are evident in religious gatherings, entertainment and ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death etc. Each ethnic group celebrates these occasions in consonance to their age old tradition and culture. Giving of feasts is a common practice among Ladakhies. Birth, marriage and death are the principal occasions on which these feasts are held and chang (a kind of local beverage) is served among Buddhists. The chief social function is the celebration of New year. The birth feast is held with great pump and show and the invitation remains confined to one's own ethnic and religious group.

Language is one aspect of culture and language differences are symbols of cultural differences. The language is an important model of ethnicity. A feeling of oneness develops among persons speaking same language. Each ethnic group in Ladakh speaks its own language. These differences of language are accompanied by differences in social structure, political organisation, religious practices and way of life.

In the present study, 95 percent respondents gave nearness to their own people, as the sole reason for their choice of the locality. Questions were asked as to the predominance of any particular language group in the neighbourhood. In the selected sample 97 percent are staying in their own language neighbourhood.

As modern life has brought about a good deal of isolation even in homogeneous neighbourhoods. Due to urbanization isolation increases and people
hardly know their neighbours living in the same street. Peter H. Mann has
profounded a theory of neighbourliness which interprets the neighbourhood
relation. He considers neighbourliness as composed of two factors “manifest”
and “latent” neighbourliness. The former is characterised by overt forms of
social relationships such as mutual visiting and arranging programmes together,
the latter by favourable attitude to neighbours which result in positive actions,
when a need arises, especially in times of crises or emergency. On the basis of
these two factors, a continuum of neighbourliness running between positive
and negative poles is conceptualized. At one extreme lies a condition where
there is a complete lack of social relationship between neighbours, that is
absence of both manifest and latent factors. In Ladakhie Society even in the
case of heterogeneous neighbourhood both manifest as will as latent factors
are present 98.5 percent of the sample extended help to their neighbours at
the time of agricultural activities, plantation or the construction of houses. As
majority of the population live in homogenous neighbourhood, their relations
are very intimate. Frequency of visits to neighbours was expressed in terms of
often by 80.5 percent of sample and occasionally by 19.5 percent

Borrowing and lending among the neighbours has been often and more
reciprocal. Too much borrowing one sided, is resented by the neighbours.
95.6 percent of the sample households qualified their statement by saying
that they borrow only from their own people i.e. their own ethnic group. As
majority of the people have their own community people in the neighbour-
hood and therefore the respondents would like to inform their neighbours
of a happy event immediately. When the respondents were asked the ques-
tion to whom do you or would you go for help in an emergency, such as

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illness, accident, theft, quarrel or non-arrival of a member of family till late hours. 98.6 percent preferred to go to their own people, the remaining 1.4 percent entertained no special preference in such cases and would rush to anybody who is available or is useful in the particular emergency. There is no antagonism or even bad feeling about one another. The neighbourhood relations between the groups may be characterised as more latent than manifest. Willingness to help their neighbours, tolerance of neighbour habits, non-interference in the private lives of neighbours are some of the indication of latent neighbourliness.

In the sample households, the proportion of the interviewed having friendly relations with other Groups was very low. Each ethnic group inhabits a particular geographical area and has less interaction with other groups. Only a few villages and the two towns that is proper Leh and Kargil are heterogeneous. In these localities also the groups are Segregated. In Leh town the Arghuns, Baltis, Mons reside in their respective localities, and in Kargil the Shia Baltis and the Muslim Dards are well differentiated. The mixed (composite) villages also portray the same picture when asked whether the interviewees and other residents of their locality ever come together for a common cause, particularly to solve a common problem. The response was that the picture of cooperative effort is not discouraging. Dates for ploughing, sowing and harvesting are decided jointly by all groups. Watering the fields and deciding the turns to rear the cattle is a joint venture of the village elders of all the groups. So the F. Tonies Gesellschaft (Association) concept comes into practice. The interviewees preferred to be indifferent towards the personal life of even neighbours.
Continued residence in the same locality and among the same people strengthen the emotional ties between the men of same group and consequently leads to the group consciousness and solidarity. 99.5 percent of the sample have been occupying the houses as have been occupied by their forefathers and the remaining 0.5 percent who had residential mobility but are settled within their own group.

School is an important agency of socialization and therefore the intergroup and intragroup relations depend very much on the schooling of children. The lessons of teachers, the views of parents and whatever they hear elders talk or criticise, affect the children’s views as they grow up.

In rural Ladakh there is a uniform system of schooling. Every ethnic group admits their children to schools run by the state government. The situation in Leh town and Kargil proper is different. There is a lull towards segregated school system. In Leh Buddhists have established their own school and so the muslims. In Kargil which is populated only by muslims the intra-group variation is obvious. Sunni Muslims (Dards) have started "The pioneer (name of school) and the Shias (Baltis) the "Imamia public School. This creates a sense of separation among the children. The theory modernization Sharpens ethnic stratification (Eisentadth) and the Barth’s theory that intense Spatial-Geographical and Social contacts increases ethnic consciousness, is very much applicable. These are the only two places which are little bit urbanised and modernized and the segregation of ethnic groups exists at every social relation.
As town Leh is inhabited by both muslims and Buddhists the nature of relations is displayed even in religious practices. Muslim sample complained that at the time of Azan (Call for prayers), the Buddhists deliberately switch on loud speakers from Gompas. This matter is taken very serious by some secular section of Ladakhie society and they were trying to sort out any solution, at the time when this study was carried out. When the investigator inquired about this from the LBA President Mr. Narboo, he said that it is a matter of co-incidence of prayers and never a deliberate attempt, however, muslims were not accepting his version. Muslims of Leh further revealed that the highhandeness of LBA is apparent when they have banned the mutton selling six days a month with out any Government relevance and orders

References and Notes.

1. F. Tonnies developed the concepts of Gemeinschaft (Community) and Gesellschaft (associations) in 1887 to distinguish the nature of relationships between members of group. In community the relations are intimate, informal and aprivate and involve the individuals as complete persons. the group is characterised by exclusive living together. Associations on other hand are formed for the satisfaction of specific needs, such as economic, political or such other common interests of individuals and are sustained by rational agreements. Relationship in associations is deliberately and consciously entered into -Ferdinand Tonnies. Community