

INFLUENCE OF HINDUISM UPON POLITICAL
MODERNIZATION IN INDIA

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Political Science
University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Padmakant B. Patel
August, 1971

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ABSTRACT

With the arrival of political independence for Asian states increasing attention has been focussed on analyzing problems of political modernization among these states. For this purpose various approaches have been used. But unfortunately most of the Western writers who concern themselves with the problems faced by developing countries in modernization process tend to equate institutionalization with political development. It is the hypothesis of this paper that mere adaptation of Western institutions in itself does not guarantee political modernization. With the change in institutions there must come a change in the attitudes and behavioral patterns of the great masses of people consistent with these new institutions. To test this hypothesis the author has taken India as an example, and tried to show how persistence of traditional behavioral patterns based on the philosophy of Hinduism in Indian society can hinder the political modernization process.

The conceptual framework was borrowed from Almond, Gabriel and Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach.

The conclusion derived from the study is that the persistence of traditional behavior patterns in Indian politics, originating from the philosophy of Hinduism is detrimental to the political modernization and what is needed today is reorientation of behavioral patterns through the program of mass education.

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Introduction:

Purpose

Religions have helped greatly in the development of humanity. They have laid down values and standards and have pointed out principles for the guidance of human life. But with all the good they have done, they have also tried to imprison truth in set forms and dogmas, and encourage ceremonial practices which soon lose all their original meaning and become mere routine.....Religion, though it has undoubtedly brought comfort to innumerable human beings and stabilized society by its values, has checked the tendency to change and progress inherent in human society.

- - - - -Jawaharlal Nehru¹

The end of the second world war, and the emergence of new nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America on the political horizon, created a new set of problems for these countries. Having won their independence from foreign domination, most of them started off with a high spirit and introduced a democratic form of government, deriving their inspiration from Western countries in the hope that this would help them to achieve political, economical, and social development. But, confronted with gigantic problems of development, many of them soon became victims of successful coups and gave way to authoritarian dictatorships. Those countries which have managed to keep their democratic governments intact like India, Japan, Phillipines, Malaya, are still struggling to manage the problems involved in modernization. All the newly emerged nations are faced with

¹Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (New York: The John Day Company, 1946) p. 522

difficult problems such as illiteracy, ethnic minorities, poverty, regionalism, instability, limited national integration and so on. One common problem, at least in the case of most Asian countries derives from the influence of religion on political processes, like Hinduism in India, Buddhism in Burma and Japan, and Islam in Pakistan. Modernizers in these countries have sometimes found themselves frustrated in their attempt to introduce certain progressive changes because the attitude of masses is still rooted in their religious traditions. Since India is one of the largest democratic countries in the developing areas, the religious problem must command the attention of observers of development.

It is the purpose of this study to examine and analyze in detail the influence of Hinduism on Indian politics; and to find out how, and to what extent, practice and interpretation of some of its important aspects constitute the major obstacle to the political modernization process in India. I propose to show that Hinduism, with the many dogmas and rituals, has become a major inhabiting force to change. This should not be interpreted to mean that I am condemning Hinduism as a religion in itself. Every religion has its own merits and Hinduism has illumined some of the greatest problems of life with the philosophical attitude. But, it is my contention that it has become largely dysfunctional in the modern context.

Surprisingly, not much research has been done on

this topic. Many books have been written on Indian politics and Indian religion, but to my knowledge no authentic work has been addressed to the influence of Hinduism on Indian politics. Perhaps the only exception is the work done by Donald E. Smith, especially his book, India as a Secular State. Most of the writers who deal with the problems of development in India tend to ignore the part Hinduism has played, with its taboistic and magic elements, in retarding progress. I submit that psychologically Indian people are not yet ready to accept the sometimes-radical changes demanded by modernization primarily because of their deep-rooted traditions based on religion.

It is an undeniable fact that religion has been the most powerful single factor in the development of Indian civilization. Indian society, the creator of one of the oldest civilizations in the world, since the very beginning has been dominated by Hinduism. Today, about eighty-five percent of the Indian people are Hindus, and the minority groups are too small to change the Hindu tone of society.² Hinduism has survived through thousands of years, under the stress of Muslim conquest and attempted conversion, the rise of Buddhism and also the introduction of Christian ideas under the British rule.³ Its traditions are so deeply

²Walter C. Neale, India: The Search for Unity, Democracy and Progress. (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1965) p. 10

³Vera Michales Dean, New Patterns of Democracy in India. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959) p.28

rooted in India that some writers believe that if the principle of religious separation and exclusiveness is introduced in the Indian polity, it would lead to a breakup of Indian nationhood as well as of Hindu society itself.⁴ Throughout the ages Hinduism has played a predominant role in the lives of Indian people, in their social as well as political relationship and remains, even today, a powerful force.

Hinduism played a very influential role in the Indian nationalist movement since the extremist leaders were greatly influenced by its philosophy. The emergence of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as the undisputed leader of Indian National Congress is an example. Religion was the key to his thought, to his social philosophy, as well as to his political practice. According to him the sphere of religion is essentially the sphere of morality and the latter includes the sphere of politics.⁵ He introduced the moral religious approach to politics.

The last years of the Indian nationalist movement saw the emergence of strong secularist leadership in the person of Jawaharlal Nehru. He and other leaders influenced by the socialist ideology gave their support to the ideal of

⁴Humayun Kabir, "Secularism in India." The Indo-Asian Culture. Vol. 13 (October, 1964) p. 96

⁵Frank Thakurda, "Gandhi on Religion and Politics." The Indian Political Science Review. Vol. IV (October, 1969 - March, 1970) p. 65

secular nationalism. Nehru insisted that India was a nation of Indians and not of Hindus, and that the principles of democracy required that the state leave religion to the conscience of each man.⁶ He opposed strongly, a feeling in some sections that being an Indian meant being a Hindu and that independence provided an opportunity to put some basic Hindu values into legislation. Nehru was a man thoroughly modern in his outlook, who believed in scientific and technological advancement. While he himself knew the value and importance of religion in any society, he also realized that religion with its rituals and taboos can also become a hindrance in the progress and modernization of India. And this was specially true for a politically and economically underdeveloped country such as India. And he did everything in his power to stop religion from getting involved in politics. When some states passed laws prohibiting the slaughter of cows, a prohibition which arises from a Hindu doctrine, Nehru prevented the Union Parliament from passing such a law by threatening to resign.⁷ Even a staunch opponent of Nehru, the Communist Leader E.M.S. Nabudripad, said that Nehru would be remembered above all as the first Indian leader to adopt a thoroughly modern and scientific approach to every aspect of Indian national

⁶Neale, India: The Search for Unity, Democracy and Progress. p. 58

⁷Ibid.

life - social, political and economic. He admitted that Nehru's modernism was one of the most important contributions to Indian politics.⁸

Independent India adopted its new constitution in January, 1950. As a result of the realization on the part of Nehru and many other Indian leaders that separation of state and religion was important for India to bring about the dynamic changes that were essential to achieve greater modernization and progress, they were motivated to declare India a secular state. Though the term 'secular state' does not appear in the constitution itself, there are various provisions in the chapter on Fundamental Rights, which make the intention of the constitution-makers very clear. In part Three of the constitution, which deals with fundamental rights, article 25(1) declares that subject to public order, morality, and health, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion. Article 23(2) states that nothing in article 25(1) shall effect the operation of any existing law or prevent the state from making law (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice, and (b) providing for social welfare and reform

⁸ Beatrice Pitney Lamb, India: A World in Transition. (rev. ed.; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966) p. 202

or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus. Article 26 says that every religious denomination or any section thereof shall have the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, to manage its own affairs in matters of religion, to own and acquire movable and immovable property and to administer such property in accordance with law. Article 27 provides that no person can be compelled to pay any taxes for promotion or maintenance of any particular religion. Article 28 provides that there can be no religious instruction in schools supported by the state. There are various other provisions in the constitution which provide for non-discrimination on grounds of religion, sex, caste, race, descent, place of birth and residence in regard to employment, admission to educational institutions, and in areas of voting and representation. It is evident that a thorough separation of state and religion does not exist in India, and that there are important areas in which state interference in religious matters is permitted by constitution, like the financial administration of temples, the practice of excommunication from religious communities, the modification of religious personal law etc. The main reason for this seems to be that Hinduism lacks the kind of ecclesiastical organization necessary to set its own house in order, and state action is required.⁹ But in its

⁹Donald Eugene Smith, India as a Secular State.

overall effect, the Indian constitution did provide firm foundations for the establishment of the secular state. The election of Dr. Zakir Hussain, a Muslim, as the President of India was a triumph of the principle of secularism.

But unfortunately, because the political and social behavior of Indians remains under the influence of the philosophy of Hinduism, what the constitution provides is not enough. While legally the separation of religion and politics has been achieved, in practice they are still inter-related and Hinduism still plays an important role in the people's attitude and behavior in politics. To repeat, this constitutes a major obstacle in India's political modernization. The traditional forces of politics, deriving their inspiration from the philosophy of Hinduism, have tried upon numerous occasions to bloc the progressive measures advanced by liberals and forward looking people. For instance, soon after independence, when a Hindu Code Bill was introduced in parliament, the purpose of which was to bring about many desired reforms in Hindu practices, the traditional orthodox forces did everything to block the bill. Swami Satyananda Sarswathi undertook a fast outside the parliament chamber to protest against the Hindu Code Bill. The bill failed to reach the final stage of enactment, and in September, 1951, was dropped by government. As a

result of this the Law Minister, B.R. Ambedkar resigned from the cabinet. The Hindu Code Bill which was originally a single comprehensive measure of social reform, was divided into various parts and was subsequently processed piecemeal through years of legislative discussion. This clearly illustrated the stress which the Indian community underwent when confronted with reform imposed by a secular state.¹⁰

Hinduism still affects the social policies. Prohibition has become a national policy in India because of the religious views of the Hindu middle class.¹¹ So it would be a mistake to think that religion has been relegated to the private life of man. To a great majority of Indians religion is still a reality which guides their public and private actions.¹² Traditional customs and behavior patterns exist side by side with modern machines and ways of living. The Indian people in the rural areas have no idea of the changes that lie ahead and the new concepts that will challenge them. The surge to reassert the values of Hinduism remains very strong. The majority of Hindus continue their religious devotions and observances in their various traditional ways in accordance with the teachings of Hinduism. Hinduism is

¹⁰W.H. Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India. (New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967) p. 96

¹¹Neale, India: The Search for Unity, Democracy and Progress. p. 58

¹²S.K. Das, "Secularism in Modern India." The Indo Asian Culture. Vol. 13. (July, 1964) p. 39

still very vigorous, many-sided and of great importance to the vast majority of people.¹³ The dominant influence of Hinduism on the lives of Indian people, who are deeply rooted in their religious tradition, makes introduction of new reforms and progressive changes very difficult, because not only are the people not receptive to it, but sometimes they openly resent the desired changes and consider it an encroachment upon their way of life which to them seems to be better than the new modern outlook on life brought about by modernization. The wide gap that exists between the urban centers of industrialization -- big cities like Bombay, Madras, Calcutta etc. -- and the thousands of villages, clearly proves the point. In comparing to the development and changes taking place in big cities, the slow, minor changes taking place in rural areas are sometimes not even visible. While the people in the cities having seen the benefits of modernization and are more receptive to new ideas, new techniques and new ways of organizing society, the people in rural areas do not like to change their traditional ways of living and doing things. And it is here that the influence of Hinduism becomes hindrance in the political modernization in India.

Indian leaders admit that the caste system is sanctioned by classical Hinduism. Though constitutionally

¹³Lamb, India: A World in Transition. p. 123

outlawed it still remains effective.¹⁴ According to the constitution 'untouchability' is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden (part three, article seventeen of the constitution), but it still remains effective. In the name of religion people commit the grossest of atrocities. The cry that "Religion is in danger" has brought about unrest amongst Indian students.¹⁵ Hinduism determines many of the broad cultural characteristics of India. Since the constitution makes India a secular state, some groups remain bitterly dissatisfied that traditional Hindu civilization is not more intimately integrated into the judicial and political life of the country.¹⁶ An issue of cow slaughter still stirs up the emotions of thousands of Hindus and Muslims to the point of readiness to cut each other's throat, a fact made worse by the politically motivated instigation by communal parties. The hostility between Hindus and Muslims is on the increase. The Hindus had lived for centuries under Muslim political as well as religious domination following the Muslim conquest of India; and with the achievement of freedom, the natural reaction of the

¹⁴John Cogley, Religion in a Secular Age: The Search for Final Meaning. (New York: The New American Library, 1968) p. 118

¹⁵Jawaharlal Nehru, D.S. Radhakrishnan and Humayun Kabir, "East and West." The Indo-Asian Culture. Vol. 10. (January, 1962) p. 349

¹⁶Cogley, Religion in a Secular Age. p. 42

Hindus has been to assert himself in an aggressive manner, and this finds expression in the political field, in the student world, in culture sphere - in almost every aspect of life.¹⁷ Communal parties like Jan Sangh have tried to exploit the sentiments of Hindus for their own gains. The leaders of the party are intense, redundant middle class people who are deeply rooted in the world of Hinduism, and are committed to the preservation of Hindu culture and the Hindu way of life. The party's emphasis is not on economic or political considerations, but on matters related to a national cultural resurgence along Hindu lines.

Hinduism influences Indian politics in many ways, but because of the limited nature of this study, major attention will be devoted to three aspects - the influence of Hinduism on Indian political culture, on the process of political socialization and on the role of caste in Indian politics.

The first chapter will be devoted to the discussion of religion and modernization, the relationship between religion and politics and how it affects the modernization process in a society. It will probe the question as to whether religion and modernization are contradictory to each other. In today's modern world in which science and technology have advanced so much, the conflict between

¹⁷Jayaprakash Narayan in Homer A. Jack, ed., World Religion and World Peace: The International Inter-Religious Symposium on Peace. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968) pp.23-24

religion and modernization has become significant.

The second chapter will examine the various aspects of the influence of Hinduism on the political culture of Indian people. It will probe the relationship between Hinduism and the Indian political culture. How Hinduism influences the individual's thinking and behavior in political sphere. How does an individual react to the political problem?

The third chapter will deal with the political socialization process. It will discuss how ideas, attitudes, values and beliefs regarding political system are acquired through family, school, associations, and political parties, and how Hinduism influences this process of political socialization. Special attention will be paid to the activities of Jan Sangh Party since it is a staunch communist party devoted to the preservation of Hindu culture and Hindu way of life.

The forth chapter will deal with the social infrastructure of the Indian society. Special attention will be devoted to the discussion of the role of caste in Indian society. Caste has played such an important role in Indian politics that a detail discussion of it will be justified. Caste has penetrated all aspects of political life in India.

In the last chapter, I will give my own conclusions derived from the study.

1. Background: The Relationship Between Religion And Modernization in the Indian Context.

Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's: and unto God the things that are God's: Luke 20:25¹

This according to Mr. Justice Douglas was the root of the doctrine of separation of church and the state, which found expression in the first amendment to the United States constitution.² Today, mainly in the Western world, the separation of church and the state has been achieved, and thus religion and politics have come to be separated from each other. In all the human societies that have existed on this earth, religion has always played a very important role in the lives of individuals. This was specially true in ancient period, as well as in the middle ages. This is true today also to a great extent, except perhaps in communist societies. The rise of Christianity in Europe produced a new set of relationships, and it led to the problem of conflict between an individual's loyalty to the state and an individual's loyalty to God through the church. The whole history of medieval Europe is characterized by the continual struggle for supremacy between the state and the church.³ Throughout the middle ages the

¹Quoted in S.K. Das, "Secularism in Modern India."

²Ibid.

³Leo Pfeffer, Church, State and Freedom. Rev.ed., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1953) p. 16

church and the state struggled for supremacy to dominate human conduct. The classic statement of the church's view of the relationship between the church and the state was made by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century in the following words:

The highest aim of mankind is eternal happiness. To this chief aim of mankind all earthly aims must be subordinated. This chief aim cannot be realized through human direction alone but must obtain divine assistance which is only to be obtained through the church. Therefore, the state through which earthly aims are obtained must be subordinated to the church.⁴

In the same way, in his letter to the Emperor,

Pope Galasius I wrote:

There are indeed most august Emperor, two powers by which this world is chiefly ruled: the sacred authority of the Popes and the royal power. Of these the priestly power is much more important, because it has to render account for the kings of men themselves at the divine tribunal.⁵

With the passage of time, as a result of the rise of new independent states, Europe was politically fragmented. These new states successfully challenged the Pope's authority. Under the leadership of Luther, Calvin and others, in the sixteenth century the Protestant Reformation, resulted in widespread acceptance of the principles of religious liberty. This ultimately led to the principle of separa-

⁴Searle M. Bates, Religious Liberty: An Inquiry. (New York: International Missionary Council, 1945) p. 140

⁵Sidney Z. Ehler and John B. Morrall, Church and State Through the Centuries: A Collection of Historic Documents with Commentaries. (Maryland: Newman Press, 1954). p. 11

tion of church and the state. The rising tide of nationalism in France, and the coming of the age of enlightenment helped increase the separation of the church and the state. Arnold Toynbee writes of the "the seventeenth century secularization of western life," by which science replaced religion as the paramount interest and pursuit of the leading spirits in the Western Society.⁶ With the advance in science and technology, religion came to be separated from politics and state.

Today with the increasing complexity of the modern world, religion and modernization have come to be considered as contradictory to each other. This is specially true in the society like India undergoing changes. As will become increasingly apparent in the ensuing discussion, the values of religion and modernization are frequently in conflict. At the same time it would be wrong to argue that all aspects of every religion are in conflict with modernization. Naturally, there are likely to be many exceptions in every case depending upon the philosophy of individual religions, and the problems confronted by different political systems at different periods of time. For example, many of the ideas and values expressed in Hindu scriptures in ancient times had their importance at that particular time, and served useful purpose, but today, have assumed shapes and forms that are in direct conflict with the changes

⁶Arnold Toynbee, An Historian's Approach to Religion. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) p. 184

demanded by modernization, e.g. cow issue, caste association and so on. In fact, one of the major conflicts between religion and modernization centers around the following point. Modernization by its very nature is dynamic, and changing. As a new problem arises, new ways of solving this problem have to be found. It involves constant review of the problem or situation, and with new changes, new methods are applied. But in a religion what happens is that once certain values are laid down, they are written down in the scriptures and become permanent values. So even though with passage of time those values and ideas are no longer functional, still they are followed because after hundreds of years of practice they become deeply rooted in tradition and customs. This becomes an important source of conflict between religion and modernization. Furthermore, there is no constant review of religious values and practices, so changes are difficult to bring about. This problem becomes all the more intense in the case of Hinduism since it lacks organizational apparatus as churches in Western society, to bring about required changes. So the necessary changes either have to come by religious reformist movement as was the case in 19th century India,⁷ or by state action as at present. From the very beginning, there has existed a tension between religion and

⁷For a detailed account of religious and social reform movement in 19th century India see Charles H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) and also K.P. Karunakaram, Religion and Political Awakening in India. (Delhi and Calcutta; Meenakshi Prakashan, 1965)

modernization. The revolutionary modernizers complained that religion is the opium of the people. Strong criticism of religion came from some of the intellectual giants of the age, like Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, who proclaimed that religion was unworthy of the continued loyalty of a mankind that had attained scientific maturity. In the same way Nehru saw religion associated with superstitious practices and dogmatic beliefs. According to him, behind it lay a method of approach to life's problems that was not of science.⁸

In today's modern world, the traditional forms in which Hinduism expresses itself have become unacceptable to the present generation where the rate of change due to the impact of modernization has increased tremendously. Hinduism because of elements of superstitious practices, dogmatic beliefs, emphasis on old and traditional values, and rituals, and ceremonial practices which have lost their values, is widely regarded as a socially retrogressive force by modernizers in India. When time demands changes, sometimes even radical, in all fields of human life, religion with its emphasis on tradition and ceremonial practices is looked upon as an obstacle in way of progress of a society. Religion and modernization have certain other inherent contradiction which create tension in a society undergoing change. While modernity or modernization concerns itself with impro-

⁸Nehru, Discovery of India. p. 14

ving this world rather than living for a world yet to come, some religions have been at best largely indifferent to secular progress. The doctrine of rebirth in Hinduism similarly puts emphasis on a world yet to come. It promises a better life in rebirth, if one performs his dharma well in this life.

Modernization brings about social and economic changes which disrupt the traditional political and social groupings, and undermine loyalty to traditional authorities. The traditional religious leaders are challenged by modern, secular, and Western educated elites.⁹ Modernization involves multiplication and diversification of social forces in a society. Hinduism on the other hand with its emphasis on traditional ways does not welcome these forces. Sometimes it is even antagonistic to new ways of doing things, or new ways of organizing societies. Religious leaders in India have constantly opposed the progressive measures of government.

Modernization puts high value on the scientific method and puts emphasis on induction in its approach to almost all problems. In contrast to this religious thinking tends to be deductive.¹⁰ While science deals with facts, religion does not deal with verifiable and measurable facts,

⁹Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968) pp. 36-37

¹⁰Cogley, Religion in a Secular Age. p. 114

and it concerns itself with the probable and speculative. Religion impresses upon man the awe and mystery of the unknown that surrounds him. It discourages man from trying to understand the unknown. Instead of encouraging curiosity, the religion preaches a philosophy of submission to nature, the church, and the existing social order.¹¹ This is very much true in the case of Hinduism. In contrast to this, as an impact of modernization, man is seeking to apply the findings of a rapidly developing science and technology to the age-old problems of life.¹² The tension between science and religion affects the layman. As a youth, he finds it difficult to reconcile what he learns in the classroom with what is taught by religion. Science is not concerned with the vague speculations of the unknown world of religion, and it forges ahead in various directions with its own precise way of observation and experimentation, widening its scope and changing human life in the process. Science refuses to accept anything without testing and trial. So while the scientific approach is more rational and systematic, religion since it is principally concerned with the world beyond the reach of objective inquiry generally relies on emotion and intuition.¹³

¹¹Nehru, The Discovery of India. p. 522

¹²C.E.Black, The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History. (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1967) p. 1

¹³Max Weber has argued that it is difficult to

Another tension or conflict that can be found between religion and modernization is that while religion tends to be authoritarian, modernity by and large is personalist. Modernization at least in the non-communist world puts a great deal of emphasis on personal freedom of thought, action and many other important area of life. Religion, on the other hand, exalts the role of authority and tradition.¹⁴ In Hinduism the authority of traditional taboos governs almost every aspect of life and, therefore, naturally comes in conflict with the rationalism and technological development involved in a process of modernization. Science radically modifies life intellectually and practically for all men, and it also modifies his understanding of its processes.¹⁵ Religion merges into mysticism which appears to be vague and flabby. Hinduism in its obsession with supernatural

generalize on what is rational and what is irrational, because what is rational from one point of view may well be irrational from another. He further argues that though the development of economic rationalism is partly dependent on rational technique and law, it is at the same time determined by the ability and disposition of men to adopt certain types of practical rational conduct. According to him around the 15th century in Western Europe the Protestant ethic with its emphasis on hard work, materialistic approach, and so on, developed in men a spirit of capitalism which helped them achieve prosperity. Thus he saw religion as a factor contributing to economic development, and rational economic conduct. See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958). Translated by Talcott Parsons.

¹⁴Cogley, Religion in a Secular Age. p. 116

¹⁵Wilfred Cantwell Smith, The Meaning and End of Religion (New York: New American Library, 1964) p. 8

and metaphysical speculations, rituals, ceremonies and mystical emotionalism, blocks the progress of human society.

Modernization has its impact on politics also. One aspect of it is that modernization involves social mobilization, a process by which major clusters of old social, economical and psychological commitments are broken, and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior. This involves changes in the attitudes, values and expectations of people associated with traditional behavior patterns.¹⁶ Modernization also involves structural differentiation and secularization of political culture.¹⁷ Religion with its appeal for traditional religious values, and way of life, does not welcome these changes brought about by modernization. Modernization thus increases the conflict among traditional religious groups and modern ones. The new modern elite of India based on Western or modern education comes into conflict with traditional religious elites whose authority rests on ascribed and inherited status. Modernization, on the other hand, demands acceptance by groups within the society of universalistic and achievement based norms.

As a result of this, it is not surprising to find

¹⁶Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies. p. 33

¹⁷Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966) p. 34

that except in certain areas in the west, religion itself does not appear to be a dynamic force for change. Even in the West, modernization has succeeded because religion, comparatively speaking, has been flexible and has adjusted itself to the changing circumstances. While in certain parts of the world religion and modernity have worked out a kind of uneasy co-existence, in country like India the custodians of religious tradition still look upon modern ideas as a mortal threat to spiritual values.¹⁸ For example, on the population problem, the modernist can be blocked by the rigidity and dogmatism of the religious-minded people. One of the reasons as to why family planning programs have not met with great success in the rural areas of India is mainly because of the dogmatism of the people who are deeply rooted in religious tradition and who are very antagonistic to the use of contraceptives, pills or sterilization to limit the population growth.

The problem of the relations between religious and political organizations has been of long standing in the field of comparative historical study.¹⁹ While in the West separation of religion and politics have taken place, in most of the countries of Asia, religion still plays a very

¹⁸Cogley, Religion in a Secular Age. p. 169

¹⁹S. N. Eisensandt, "Religious Organizations and Political Process in Centralized Empires." Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XXI (May, 1962) p. 271

predominant role in national politics. And it is important for the countries of Asia which are trying to modernize themselves that religion and politics be separated from each other.

In most of the Asian countries certain areas of politics remain subject to religious influence. Political parties with conservative and rural interest may seek support for leadership of religious leaders. Muslim and christian doctrinal parties in Lebanon, the Jan Sangh in India the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party in Malaysia, catholic oriented in Chile and Guatemala, are examples of this.²⁰ The role of Buddhism under U Nu's leadership in Burma, and the role of Buddhist monks in Vietnam is well-known. The Jan Sangh party in India is an example of the influence of religion on Indian politics. B.R. Ambedkar, leader of the untouchables remarked that India's prospect might be better if Hindus and Muslims could forget their past. But as he pointed out, "their past is embedded in their religion, and for each to give up its past is to give up its religion. To hope for this is to hope in vain."²¹ And he was quite right, because there are strong Hindu minded people who would never be able to give up their attitude of hostility for

²⁰Fred R. Van der Mehden, Politics of the Developing Nations. 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969) p. 75

²¹Quoted in Rupert Emerson, From Empire to Nation. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960) p. 161

anything that is not Hindu. As Sri Madhav Sadashiv Golwarkar, leader of a militant Hindu organization once wrote, "Hinduism is the land of the Hindus and is the terra firma for the Hindu nation alone to flourish upon....."22

In the following pages we will discuss the influence of Hinduism on Indian politics, mainly from three aspects - political culture, political socialization, and the role of caste, and try to find out in what respect certain major aspects of Hinduism has become one of the obstacles in the political modernization process in India.

²²Quoted in Ibid.

Chapter - 2

The Content: Political Culture

Most of the developing countries have special difficulties in modernizing because they are caught between two cultures, the old, traditional culture from which they are emerging and the new modern culture towards which they are moving.¹ The psychological dimension of the political system is known as political culture. It consists of attitudes, values, beliefs and skills which are present or current in an entire population.² At any particular period of time in a society, there are always likely to be certain ideas or values which a majority of people hold in common. And it is these ideas, attitudes, beliefs, or values that a majority of people have towards a political system which is called political culture.

Some special propensities and patterns which may be found within individual factions or groups of the population, might be referred to as subcultures.³ The notion of political culture assumes that the attitudes, sentiments and cognitions that inform and govern political behavior in any society represents coherent patterns which fit together; that in a community there is a distinct political culture

¹Allan Spitz, "An Examination of the Political Modernization Processes in Japan and India." The Indian Journal of Political Science. Vol. XXX (October-December, 1969) p. 318

²Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. p. 23

³Ibid.

which gives meaning, predictability and form to the political process.⁴ Thus political culture provides structure to political activities, and it also provides orientations toward politics among the members of a political system. This orientation can be of different kinds: like cognitive orientation which means knowledge, accurate or otherwise, of political objects and beliefs; affective orientation includes feeling of attachment, involvement, rejection and the like about political objects; while evaluative orientation means judgements and opinions about political objects which usually involve applying value standards to political objects and events.⁵ On the basis of these orientations, citizens can be classified into three categories.⁶ First, there are parochial people, who manifest little or no awareness of the national political system. The second class of people are known as subjects, who are oriented to the political system but they do not participate in the input structures. Participants are those individuals who not only are oriented towards a political system but also

⁴Lucian Pye, "Political Culture and Political Development" in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965) p. 7

⁵Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. p. 50

⁶Ibid. p. 53

engage in input processes by articulating demands or making decisions.⁷

Political culture forms an important link between the events of politics and behavior of individuals in reaction to those events. Fundamental political beliefs are particularly relevant to the study of change, because they play a major role in guiding the ways in which institutions develop and change. They may motivate the actors in a political system to resist change in the name of traditional beliefs or they may lead to fundamental modifications of innovative institutions in order to make them fit into the traditional culture.⁸ Political values must be shared and accepted by the people who are willing to support them. Confusion over political values can destroy the consensual basis for a viable nation. This raises the question as to the significance of the contention between old and new, between traditional values and modern practices for the stability and maintenance of the political order. To what extent is it possible to accelerate and direct political change and how can traditional societies be transformed into modern ones? This has become the direct concern of leaders in

⁷These terms were developed in Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) pp. 17-21

⁸Sidney Verba, "Comparative Political Culture" in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development. p. 519

developing countries. In countries like India, they have taken upon themselves the task of remaking the basic belief system as part of their overall task of nation building.

Political modernization is a process in which secularization of political culture takes place and people become more rational in their thinking and outlook. "Wherever the modernization process had had an impact, it has contributed to secularization, both social and political."⁹ The emergence of a pragmatic, empirical orientation is one component of the secularization process. Another attribute of the process of cultural secularization is a movement from diffuseness to specificity of orientation.¹⁰ In a traditional or primitive political culture the roles of the polity are not differentiated from other roles of society. It is through the secularization of political culture that the rigid, ascribed and diffuse customs of social interaction come to be overridden by a set of codified, specifically political and universalistic rules. Secularization involves a genuine liberation from the stuffy closets of theocratic traditionalism.¹¹ As the following pages will

⁹Gabriel, Almond and James Coleman, The politics of Developing Areas. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) p. 537

¹⁰Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. p. 58

¹¹David Apter, Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968) p. 201

show this secularization of political culture has not taken place in India, and one of the main factors responsible for this is the persistence of religious traditions in Indian society.

Political development strikes at the people's beliefs and sentiments about politics. So the process of development is profoundly affected by the character of the political culture of a society. And one of the major factor that shapes the character of the political culture is the religion. Religion cannot but relate itself to the other institutions of society since religious values must be worked out to have some relations to other values of a particular cultural complex.¹² The literature on India abounds with arguments concerning the degree and character of diversity in Indian life. Religious beliefs also appear to be infinitely diverse, but scholars of the "higher" traditions point to characteristic beliefs shared by the three-quarters of the population who are Hindus.¹³ Hinduism plays a very influential role in the formation of Indian political culture, but many of its concepts or basic ideas produce a type of political culture which is

¹²Thomas F. O'Dea, "Five Dilemmas in the Institutionalization of Religion." in Louis Schneider, ed., Religion, Culture and Society: A Reader in the Sociology of Religion. (New York and London: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964) p. 586

¹³Myron Weiner, "India Two Political Cultures" in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development. p. 200

not conducive to political development and, therefore, it becomes an obstacle to the political modernization.

The central concept of Hinduism is the concept of dharma. It is one of the vital concepts of Hindu culture. Broadly interpreted, it means duty. It is a law that governs man's relationship within his society and his relationship to divine power. It is a religion in the broadest sense.¹⁴ The term actually denotes a whole series of duties: personal, social, moral and religious. It is the way in which one is expected to behave in different situations. There is a special dharma for each individual, a dharma operating between the members of each sects and between all sects. The ideal of a complete life is summarized as the sanatana dharma by means of which a man has to be a member of society and discharge his duties as a citizen before he finally arrives at the stage of complete surrender.¹⁵ Dharma is a logic of behavior in a variety of settings, and it forms the basis of customary virtue. To offend it in any of its specific aspects is immoral and renders one liable to various sanctions like disapproval and social boycott. The concept of dharma is a philosophy

¹⁴Joan V. Bondurant and Margaret W. Fisher, "The Concept of Change in Hindu, Socialist and Neo-Gandhian Thought." in Donald E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966) p. 242

¹⁵C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, "Doctrine of Li and Dharma." Indo-Asian Culture. Vol. 15 (April, 1966) p. 130

of life, because the supreme dharma is the salvation of one's own soul. Since this is the highest virtue it must be valued above all social bonds and duties. Dharma consists in a faithful pursuit of duties endowed to one's role and station in life.¹⁶ The sources of dharma are the Vedas and the Smrtis (Hindu religious books), which derive their authority from the Veda. The Dharma Sastras are the practical codes which lay down religious and civil duties and regulate and systematize conduct in all departments of life.¹⁷ Hinduism furthermore divides an individual's life into four parts. The first part consists of growth and adolescence, the student period of life, acquiring knowledge, developing self-control and self-discipline. The second period is that of house-holder in which man performs his duties as householder and fulfills his obligations to family. The third period is that of an older person who has attained objectivity and should devote himself to public work without the selfish desire to profit by it. The last period is that of giving up worldly activities and engaging oneself in prayers. In all four periods of life, the individual is to perform his dharma, and fulfill his obligations.

¹⁶ Ronald Segal, The Anguish of India. (New York: Stein and Day, Publishers, 1965) p. 27

¹⁷ V. Raghavan, "Variety and Integration in the Pattern of Indian Culture." Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XV (August, 1956) p. 497

In what way this concept of dharma becomes an obstacle in political modernization? As we noticed in the concept of dharma, it is always the duties of the individuals and groups are emphasized, not their rights. The Smritis gives list of dharmas, functions and duties of various castes but none of them contain an inventory of rights.¹⁸ So it is a closed system, which allow for certain adaptability and change within its outer framework, but inevitably growing more and more rigid and exclusive. Since the principle emphasis is on "duties to" rather than "rights against" it is good to be satisfied with one's lot and not to desire or strive for that which does not belong to one. This results in the Hindu's emphasis on a limitation of wants and contentment with his lot, on tolerance of his own position rather than in trying to change and improve one's own position. Since the final state of union with God lies in absolute acceptance of one's condition and absolute obedience to the rules of conduct which that condition requires, poverty becomes a preparation and not a source of despair. This creates a feeling of fatalism and pessimism, which are reflected in the political culture of Indian people. What the poor and the underprivileged in the cities and villages display is not so much listlessness as indifference to one's own condition.¹⁹ This point is

¹⁸Nehru, The Discovery of India. p. 253

¹⁹Segal, The Anguish of India. p. 19

beautifully made by Kusum Nair, an Indian sociologist, who travelled through rural India for one year from August, 1958, visiting villages in different states to measure the impact of deliberate development on the individual men and women who make up India's millions. She writes that planning in India is framed on the assumption that the desire for higher levels of living is inherent and more or less universal among the masses being planned for, according to which every prevailing standard of life becomes minimal as a base for further progress, and which seems to be logical. But she concludes regarding Indian stagnation:

From what I have seen and experienced however, it would seem that a great majority of the rural communities do not share in this concept of an ever-rising standard of living. The upper level they are prepared to strive for is limited and it is the floor generally that is bottomless. This does not mean that the desired standard is always fixed at the subsistence level. It varies with different communities....
.....But whatever the level, it tends to be static with a ceiling rather than a floor, and it is socially determined. Generally, the lower the level, the more static the aspirations tend to be.²⁰

There is no reason to believe that the situation since then has changed radically. Such a society generates no mass revolution of rising expectations, and plans for sustained economic advance must stumble constantly against popular indifference.²¹ This kind of political culture

²⁰ Kusum Nair, Blossoms in the Dust. (London: Gerald Duckworth and Company, 1961) pp. 192-3.

²¹ Segal, The Anguish of India. p. 127

produces an attitude of resignation which is an obstacle to political development. As we have noted earlier the concept of dharma is concept of duty and it does not include anything like a concept of rights. The present restlessness among the younger generation and especially among youths can be traced to their having been brought up on ideas of democracy, in which the concept of right is so essential that the concept of dharma does not attract them; and they thus demand changes and their rights which manytimes the government is not able to satisfy or fulfill. But still the vast majority of Indians are influenced by the concept of dharma, in which one is only to perform his duty without expecting anything in return. As a result of this attitude, the individual's orientation in the political culture tends to be parochial, and affective, but certainly not of participant or evaluative. The vast majority of Indians in the rural areas have not yet realized the importance of individual rights that democracy has given them, or the consequent fact that they can demand and get what they want from the government. Closely related to weak civic orientation is a low scale of expectation from secular authority. By stressing permissiveness and adaptability, Indian culture paid little attention to the performance aspect of collective behavior. This results in a low scale of demands upon political authority which may be good for a developing country in a period of transition. However, at the same time it also produces a weak supportive

orientation in the political culture which cannot only prolong the period of transition but also brings instability; as a consequence of a low level of demands and supports the conflicts and cleavages in the periphery may keep mounting and lead to a state of chronic frustration while political mechanisms for aggregating and resolving these cleavages may fail to develop.²² For example the caste structure, as a result of which Hindu society lost its vitality, became rigid in its internal structure and turned fatalistic and pessimistic in its approach to the larger world.

Originally the concept of dharma, or duty was the final source of temporal power in India, and it influenced, the organization and legitimacy of political power, decision-making authority and law. By giving absolute legitimacy to ascribed parochial roles and by making personal achievement ego-alien, it reduced economic resources and the psychological range of occupational, social and political choices. This tendency to regulate society through the concept of dharma or fixed duty is the major obstacle in Hinduism to the integration of different ethnic, religious and occupational groups within the framework of a nation-state.²³ The dharma of a shoe maker is to make

²²Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970) p. 256

²³Ashis Nandy, "The Culture of Indian Politics: A Stock Taking." The Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XXX (November, 1970) p. 68

shoes, the dharma of a soldier is to fight. The Bhagvad-gita, one of the most respected sacred texts of Hinduism, makes this clear. When the warrior Arjuna is about to give final battle to his enemies, he is overcome by pity, and depressed in mind because many of his relatives were on the enemies side. But his chariot companion Krishna, God incarnate, persuades him to fight because Arjuna is a warrior and it is his dharma to fight. "It is better to die in (performing) one's dharma. The dharma of others is dangerous."²⁴ "Even if one's dharma seems mad, its performance brings blessings, rather than the assumption and pursuit of another's dharma."²⁵ Thus even an irrational action is permitted if it is done in performing one's own dharma. The great difference between the Greek and modern thought on the one hand and Hindu thought on the other is that a Hindu is satisfied with tracing the origin to rules of some text of scripture or authoritative tradition and does not try to question the rational basis of the rule.²⁶

The emphasis on dharma also seems to create a special individualism of socio-political isolation and alienation. Since individual salvation is possible, it

²⁴Segal, The Anguish of India. p. 35

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶P. S. Siraswami, Evolution of Hindu Moral Ideas.

indirectly holds each man responsible for his own worldly status, and he can make a new status for himself in another life. The salvation or enlightenment could not be a group affair. It was highly individualistic. But this individualism grants little importance to man's duty to society as a whole. For each person's life was divided and fixed up, with bundle of duties and responsibilities to family, caste, ethnic group, within the narrow sphere in the graded hierarchy. He had no duty to or conception of society as a whole.²⁷ At the present this is the obstacle in the development of national consciousness as will be discussed later in the chapter in more detail.

This primordial individualism, possibly what Spratt diagnoses as secondary narcissism,²⁸ dissociates community responsiveness from individual responsibility and equates individualism with withdrawal from secular group efforts of a political type.²⁹ The concept of dharma deepens the gap between achievement emphasizing, competitive, individual choice oriented politics and the collective identity and interests of the masses. Though to some extent personal achievement and initiative are gaining ground at certain

²⁷Nehru, The Discovery of India. p. 85

²⁸P. Spratt, Hindu Culture and Personality. (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966).

²⁹Nandy, "The Culture of Indian Politics: A Stock Taking." p. 67

levels, competition and achievement are now pejorative ideas and they have to be sanctified with reference to particularistic group goals. The idea of duty that all relationships are or should be hierarchially arranged and that power, responsibility, and the prerogatives to make decisions should only lie with ascribed leadership is still present today. This pattern was validated in the past by the monopoly of village elders and caste leaders in decision-making and conflict resolution. Today, this is expressed in the fear and unconditional acceptance of established authority, and the manner in which individuals wield political charisma on the basis of their nonpolitical authority.³⁰ This factor will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on caste.

Closely related to the concept of dharma in Hinduism is the concept of Karma (deeds: which logically comes to be interpreted as destiny). The law of Karma declares that every act has a cause and is in its turn the cause of an effect and this process is termed Samsara (the course of revolution to which all existence is subject).³¹ Vedanta distinguishes three types of Karma. First is known as Sancita-Karma in which the seeds of destiny already exists as a result of former acts. This refers to the past. Second is Agami-Karma - the seeds that would be stored if one were to continue in the path of ignorance, basic to

³⁰Ibid., p. 70

³¹Aiyar, "Doctrine of Li and Dharma." p. 130

the present life. It refers to the present. Third is Prarabdha-Karma - the seeds collected and stored in the past. It refers to the Karma bearing fruit in the shape of actual events in future.³² In broad terms to the majority of Hindus the theory of Karma means that all human beings are bound by Karma as a result of previous life, and that they will be born again after death according to different Karmas. According to the Upanishadic idea one who is ignorant of the true nature or law of Karma falls into the cycle of life (Samsara), and he must undergo successive rebirths. When his ignorance is removed, then he will return to unity, which is salvation. Bhagvadgita says

One should not give up the activity to which one is born, even though this should be attended by evil, for all undertakings are enveloped by evil, as is fire by smoke.³³

Karma proclaims that the Hindu is born into a particular caste because of his deeds in a previous life, and dharma demands that he should accept his condition without protest, performing as well as possible the functions appropriate to it.³⁴ This philosophy of Karma also produces a feeling or attitude of fatalism or indifference, which is in the political culture of Indian people. Some Indian

³²Genjun H. Saski, "Karma and Fate." Indo-Asian Culture. Vol. XV (October, 1966) p. 273

³³Quoted in Ibid., p. 272

³⁴Segal, The Anguish of India. p. 35

thinkers have argued that it is wrong to think of Karma in terms of what is understood by the word fatalism. Rajgopalachari argues that Karma or destiny as taught in Vedanta does not involve an unscientific attitude towards natural laws or a break down of faith in human effort which is fatalism. But as he himself says Karma is the unalterable law of effect following previous causes.³⁵ He fails to realize that this philosophy is bound to produce an attitude of fatalism, because since according to law of Karma, one's status is determined by past deeds and since dharma demands that one should accept his condition with absolute obedience, this naturally discourages an individual in his effort to change and improve his status. This results in an attitude of fatalism and indifference to one's own condition. Dr. Radhakrishnan, one of the foremost philosophers of India, has also tried to argue in the same vein. But again as he says the cards in the game of life are given to an individual. He does not select it, and they are traced back to his past Karma. The theory of Karma according to Radhakrishnan allows man the freedom to use the material in the light of his knowledge.³⁶ But this is an illusory freedom he is referring to. The mental attitude towards Karma is of a particular kind. The majority of

³⁵C. Rajgopalachari, Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life. (Bombay: Bhartiya Vidhya Bhavan, 1959) p. 78

³⁶S. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1926) p. 54

Hindu accept Karma and fate of life, however, ugly with indifference on non-attachment. One cannot deny the fact that a fatalistic implication of Karma is completely accepted by all.³⁷ For example, caste predestined by birth and Karma is tacitly accepted by all, including those who are opposed to caste discrimination, and it is still in India the unity of social activities. Evidence suggests that Hindus are the most empirically fatalistic, followed by the Muslims, and then the Christians, and Sikhs.³⁸ This attitude influences individual's behavior in politics also. And as we have noted earlier it produces feelings of indifference among people towards government in general. It is this feeling that leads many Hindus to conclude that "as it is written in destiny, so must it happen." One is amazed at the inactiveness or lack of initiative on the part of Indians even in those political matters that concerns them most. Even on those matters at local level that affect them, Indians very rarely take the initiative to make an organized effort to influence the policy making or demand certain changes from government. Here again one can see the lack of civic competence or participatory orientation in the political culture of Indian people. This is in contrast to the high degree of participatory culture to be found in the United

³⁷Saski, "Karma and Fate." p. 279

³⁸Joseph W. Elder, "Religious Beliefs and Political Attitudes." in Donald E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion. p. 256

States and Britain.³⁹ In a culture in which men's orientation toward nature is essentially one of fatalism and resignation their orientation toward government is also likely to be much the same. The transition from a political culture in which individuals have little or no expectation that the government will act to affect their lives, or where they are unaware of the existence of specialized set of political structures, to a political culture in which belief about governmental performance are prominent represents a significant stage in the development of a political culture.⁴⁰ And as we have noted above this transition has not yet fully taken place in India. Where demands have been made on government without success, violence has been resorted to. On some occasions, our acts of violence in the wake of democratic movements have been followed by concessions to demands, they have created the psychologically dangerous impression that the government understands the language of violence alone. This constitutes the vital part of the emerging pattern of political culture in West Bengal.⁴¹

³⁹ Almond and Verba, The Civic Culture. In this book both the authors have made a cross-cultural study of five nations - United States, Britain, Germany, Italy and Mexico. The above conclusion was derived from this study.

⁴⁰ Verba, Political Culture and Political Development. p. 538

⁴¹ Ashok Kumar Mukherji, "The Politics of Organized Pressure: A Study of the Emerging Patterns of Political Culture in West Bengal." The Indian Journal of Political Science. Vol.XXIX, (Oct.-December, 1968) p. 336

This again is not a participatory culture but rather an anomic type of culture.

The concept of renunciation in Hindu philosophy has greatly influenced the Indian political culture. The doctrine of four asramas or life stages (as discussed earlier, in which the life of an individual is divided into four parts) puts great emphasis on renunciation. The doctrine of renunciation means the giving up of the selfish desire for the fruits of action. He who renounces the reward resulting from action is called the renuncer.⁴² Though it does not demand renunciation of work or action itself, it demands renunciation of desire or hope of reward in work or action.

One of the verses in Ishopanishad says,

God the Ruler pervades all there is in this Universe. Therefore renounce and dictate all to him, and then enjoy or use the portion that may fall to thy lot. Never covet anybody's possession.⁴³

Lord Krishna in Bhagavadgita says,

Just as the ignorant man acts with hope of reward, the wise man acts for the good of the world without any personal motive.⁴⁴

When a person has performed the act of dedication or renunciation, he is told that he will win a reward in the shape of God taking care of his needs like food,

⁴²Rajgopalchari, Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life. p. 43

⁴³Quoted in M.K. Gandhi, My Religion. (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1955) Compiled and edited by Bhavatan Kumarappa. p. 129

⁴⁴Rajgopalachari, Hinduism: Doctrine and Way of Life. pp. 61-62

clothing or housing. Freedom can be obtained only through bonds of discipline and surrender of personal inclination.⁴⁵ Not until a person has performed the daily act of renunciation or dedication has he the right of touching anything or drinking even a cup of water. When he has performed the act of renunciation he derives from that act the right to eating, drinking, and so on to the extent necessary for his daily life.⁴⁶

This philosophy of renunciation influences individuals thinking in social and political spheres. First of all this philosophy creates an attitude of fatalism, pessimism and inactivism. Since a person is not expected to hope for reward for his work or action, and rather take what is given to him, it discourages a man from working more and improving his own position. Since he would get what he deserves why should he care to work more and create more? This is typically reflected in people's attitude specially in villages regarding birth control. The typical answer one is likely to get when explaining the benefits of birth control is, that God has given the children and he would take care of them, why should they or anybody else bother?

Another influence of this on political culture is that it has created a hypocrisy in public life. Many political leaders talk loudly about moral and ethical values

⁴⁵S. Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life. pp.57-58

⁴⁶Gandhi, My Religion. p. 130

but they, themselves, never put them into practice. They renounce power politics, and claim that their only aim is public service, but having once acquired position of power they use it for their own gains, which is reflected in the wide spread practice of corruption in government and administration as well as public life. Another aspect of the influence of the idea of renunciation on the political culture is what Morris Jones calls 'saintly' politics.⁴⁷ Its influence is on the standards habitually used by the people at large for judging the performance of politicians. In men's minds there is an ideal of disinterested selflessness, which contributes to several very prevalent attitudes to be found in Indian political life like withholding of full approval from even the most popular leaders, feeling of distrust and disgust with persons and institutions of authority and also a violent and desperate mood of frustration and cynicism⁴⁸ undermining efforts at political development. Some years ago, Jayaprakash Narayan, a one time Marxist, renouncing his political career in a dramatic gesture, left the socialist movement and became a jeevandani which means one who has made the gift of life to the service of others.⁴⁹ He advocates establishment of what he calls a

⁴⁷Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics in India. p. 48

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Myron Weiner, "India: Two Political Cultures."

"communitarian" society. His utopian philosophy calls for the establishment of partyless democracy, in which all partymen would renounce selfish interest based on party lines and instead would work in cooperation with each other for the welfare of the community. Gandhi's ideas about politics were also a reflection of the 'saintly' politics. His experiment during the nationalist struggle with ahimsa (non-violence) and satyagraha (insisting on truth) which proved to be successful, were based on a moral approach to politics. This tactic of moral pressure, today also tends to justify agitational strategies which leads to the under-evaluation of formal means of demand articulation and protest. Persistent assumptions about Indian passivity induces the government to disregard the demands until extra systematic pressure is applied, as has been the case in West Bengal. This heightens an individual's doubts about his capability to control and channelize hostility.⁵⁰

There is an expectation of the politician as a moral man. This sometimes results in pressure to make promises and assurances that cannot be fulfilled. Morality according to Indian religious thought has reference to individuals. The aim of duty is one's own self-realization, since the Supreme has manifested Himself in every soul.

in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development. p. 236

⁵⁰Ashis Nandy, "The Culture of Indian Politics. A Stock Taking." p. 72

Hindu documents emphasize three main ways of reaching God-Jnana (knowledge), Kama (action) and Bhakti (devotion).⁵¹ Thus morality is not principally "other regarding" but self-regarding. The stress is on one's own "deed" on the accumulation of credit or debit in accordance with what one has himself done, regulated by the law of Karma. Each individual is responsible to himself for his own self-realization, since salvation is not a collective affair but individualistic. This aspect of moral orientation is reflected in the extent to which individuals and groups trust each other in achieving common goals. One is surprised by the skepticism of Indians in regard to their relationship with others, mainly a basic suspicion of others and suspicion specially of authority and its intentions.⁵² While in court a man in India is innocent until he is proved guilty, in social and political life the position tends to be reversed. So the important feature of Indian social and political life is the caution and distrust in relations between people, which results in difficulty of establishing friendships except within "community groups."⁵³

⁵¹K. M. Sen, Hinduism. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961) pp. 19-20

⁵²Kothari, Politics in India. p. 267

⁵³Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India. p. 51

Another important doctrine of Hinduism is that of rebirth. According to the theory of rebirth an individual has to go through a series of rebirths, before he can achieve final salvation. There is a full cycle of births which each individual must pass through. One is born in the lowest form of life like an insect, and then he goes through other forms of life. Hinduism describes thousands of different forms of life one has to pass through. The highest form of life is of human being, in which he has the chance of achieving Moksa (salvation), by realization of his own self. On the attainment of perfection the historical existence terminates. With the attainment of moksa the liberated individual lapses into the stillness of the absolute.⁵⁴ Thus we find the Indian religion sanctifies the concept of cyclical life or time where the present, past and future blend into a static absolute. This sanction of the value of continuity, creates in Indian culture a tendency to ignore history and the process of time, and this becomes a great obstacle to change. It creates in individuals traits of resignation, submissiveness and passivity and the fatalistic acceptance of events and repetitious experiences.⁵⁵ This attitude is validated by the patience of India's underprivileged, by their unconcern with the

⁵⁴Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life. p. 46

⁵⁵Ashis Nandy, "The Culture of Indian Politics: A Stock Taking." p. 62.

process of history and the making of history, since it is the law of Karma which determines their fate and which they cannot change. ".....At its very best, the Hindu mind accepts the burden of guilt and directs the aggression inward, thereby displaying an unusual amount of patience and willingness to suffer."⁵⁶

Hindu society seems to have set no limit to the principle of tolerance. Indian society historically and culturally always absorbed people and cultures of different lands. Indian society tolerated and absorbed the philosophy of Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity without any difficulty. As a result of this principle of tolerance one finds in Indian society a great many differences, contradictions, uncertainty, and unpredictability. This has been rationalized in Hindu philosophy by a concept of unity. Indian philosophical thought always attempted to deal with opposite or binary values.⁵⁷ This is related to the Indian concept of reality and truth, which consists of reconciliation of seeming opposites and contradictory views towards an Ultimate where all positions meet and in which all specificities resolve. Since the Ultimate being (the Absolute, The Brahman) is impersonal, it needs to be experienced by individual persons. And since there are different paths to

⁵⁶Quoted in P. Spratt, Hindu Culture and Personality. p. 63

⁵⁷R.S. Khare, "A Case of Anomalous Values in Indian Civilization." The Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XXV

to reality, thus comes the notion of synthesis. This is expressed in the belief that India must work out a synthesis between tradition and modernity, which are not considered necessarily contradictory.⁵⁸ This created a combination of high tolerance of ambiguity and diversity in thought and value. But surprisingly institutionally Indian society became very rigid. This led to a kind of tolerance which in fact was intolerance like tolerance of injustice, disparity, humiliation and deprivation by superior individuals and groups.⁵⁹ And as has been noted, this is considered a part of the natural order of society, since one's station in life is determined by law of Karma and it is his dharma to accept his condition without questioning. This also produces a low morale in collective orientation, submissiveness, indirect rejection and withdrawal from the larger system.⁶⁰ The principle of tolerance has also resulted in many abuses. Under the name of tolerance most superstitious rites and customs are protected and practised.⁶¹

As we have noted above, while the principle of tolerance allowed for a high degree of flexibility in thought

(February, 1966) p. 229

⁵⁸Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. pp. 258-9

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 260

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life. p. 25

and value, institutionally, Indian society has been very rigid, working out a precise hierarchy and rules of conformity which were mandatory according to law of Karma and dharma. While Hinduism put great emphasize on individualism in matters of religious thought, since moksa or salvation is not a group affair but rather a personal affair (thus different paths of reacting God), in matters of social organization there is great emphasis on group as a basis of social unit. The conflict comes between the two approaches to social organization; the Hindu conception of group being the basic unit of organization and the excessive individualism of the West, emphasizing the individual above the group.⁶² The old Indian social structure was based on three concepts; the autonomous village community, caste and the joint family. In all three, it is the group that counts and the individual has a secondary place. With the passage of time, these social institutions became very rigid and today it is this rigidity of Hindu social structure that has become an obstacle in political modernization, because modernization at minimum requires that two conditions be present. First, a social system that can constantly innovate without following apart, including beliefs about the acceptability of change as well as a social structure so differentiated as not to be inflexible. Secondly, a social framework that can provide the skill and knowledge necessary for living in a technologically advanced world, including the

⁶²Nehru, The Discovery of India. p. 243

ability to communicate in terms of the technology.⁶³ The mode of communication in India is not printed books but rather cultural media like spoken languages and religious festivals which carry the content of belief and practice expressing the living outlook of a majority of population.⁶⁴ In a country like India the continuity with past is so great that even the acceptance of modernizing ideologies does not create new forms of social and cultural change, but rather results in the "traditionalizing" of apparently "modern" innovations.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the rigidity of social structures like caste and joint family also comes in the way of social mobilization, an aspect which we will examine in more detail later on. Some reformist like K.M. Pannikar have argued that Hindu social institutions have resulted from certain historical factors and are in no way concerned with religion.⁶⁶ While it may be true that many Hindu social practices were non-religious in origin but were absorbed into the religious complex, rationalized by religious

⁶³David Apter, Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization. p. 197

⁶⁴Milton Singer, "The Cultural Pattern of Indian Civilization." Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XIV, (November, 1955) p. 32. This is a field study of culture in Madras city and adjoining towns and six villages.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 24

⁶⁶K.M. Pannikar, Hindu Society at Cross Roads. 3rd ed. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961) p. 49

theories and enforced by religious sanctions, nevertheless, when a majority of Hindus regard certain practice as part of their religion, it is a part of their religion.⁶⁷ Furthermore, it is the ideas that shape the institutions in society. So it cannot be denied that Hindu social life had always been a melange of different customs held together by the bonds of religion.⁶⁸

This social structure with its emphasize on group creates another problem. The Unit of Hindu society is not the individual but the joint family, caste and village community. These are the widest social groups that the Hindus evolved, and is also, therefore, the limit of his allegiance, his social relations and of his loyalties and duties. Many Hindus talk about the virtues of joint family on the ground that it suppresses the selfishness of individualism. But the effect of this two-faced institution of joint family and caste is such that it has tended to sub-

⁶⁷ Donald E. Smith, "The Political Implications of Asian Religion." in Donald E. Smith, ed., South Asian Politics and Religion. pp. 9-10. The author points out that the question of origin of social institution is of academic significance only. Most scholars would hold that if for a thousand years Hindu have regarded a particular social practice as part of their religion, it is part of their religion. The author also rightly points out that Pannikar chose to deny the close relationship between religion and social institutions, because his concern is not with past but future. His deliberate attempt to separate the two aspects of Hindu life was intended to strengthen the cause of radical social reforms in India.

⁶⁸ Sudhakar, Chattopadhyaya, "Some Thoughts on Hindu Society." Indo-Asian Culture. Vol. XV (Oct. 1966) pp. 265-6.

divide the social organism in such a way as to make the units smaller and smaller, unrelated to the general society. Thus it denies the entire theory of community and bases the Hindu social organization on the principle of disintegration and division.⁶⁹

Universally, all political culture must deal with attitudes towards power. Indian society tended to emphasize and to provide moral justification for hierarchial relationship. Development demands effective leadership, but it also demands sentiments about equality and the absence of all distinction in status. India's great failure in the past was to create a coherent, political authority at the center. While Indian society provided a system of relationships between groups at different levels, its main failure was in evolving a unified political framework. The social structure of joint family, caste and village community created a strong sense of local solidarity, which was primarily based on group loyalty; loyalty to one's own family and kin group, loyalty to caste and at the largest level to the village community.⁷⁰ As a result of this, an individual always sees himself as a member of his caste, family village but not as member of the nation as a whole. The local interest is more important to him. And his primary loyalty is to his local units and not to a large unit of nation as a whole. This is why India today faces the biggest problem of creating individual

⁶⁹Pannikar, Hindu Society at Cross Roads. pp. 46-7

⁷⁰Kothari, Politics in India. p. 26

loyalties that transcend the more narrow and local ones of identification with family, caste or village, to that of loyalty to nation as a whole. It is important whether the political culture stresses particularism in the form of intense identification with smaller units or more generalizable identification with the nation. The process of political development involves a widening of horizons of people as they come out of their narrow parochial views and take on a concern for the entire political system.⁷¹ If identifications with narrow and parochial units are to be less significant, people must link themselves by a common interest in the wider political system through which their identity and beliefs are enlarged and strengthened.⁷² Unless those individuals who are physically and legally members of a political system, psychologically also feel themselves the members of that system, orderly patterns of change are not likely, because it is the sense of identity with the nation that legitimizes the activities of national leaders and makes it possible for them to mobilize the commitment and support of their followers.⁷³

⁷¹Pye, "Political Culture and Political Development" in Pye and Verba, eds., Political Culture and Political Development. p. 23

⁷²David Apter, Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization. p. 212

⁷³Verba, "Comparative Political Culture." in Pye and Verba, Political Culture and Political Development. p. 529

Many of the practices of Hinduism while looked at from the point of their origin have certain good points, but with the passage of time they became so ritualistic that they have lost all their original meaning and became taboos. For example, the idea of ceremonial purity was originally good but it has also created bad consequences. A daily bath has always been an essential feature of Hindu's life. This sense of cleanliness is not scientific, nor it is corporate. The individual keeps his own hut fairly clean but does not mind throwing all the rubbish in the village street in front of his neighbour's house. The cleanliness is not thought of as such, but as a consequence of some religious sanction. The evil consequence of ceremonial purity was a growth of exclusiveness, touch-me-notism, and of not eating and drinking with people of other caste or class. It was out of this that the evil practice of untouchability arose, and those people who had the misfortune of doing some kind of essential work, which was considered unclean, came to be regarded as untouchables.

In the same way cow protection is considered a sacred virtue of Hinduism. The idea, in fact, originated from the important role played by the cow in the agricultural state of existing society in India in ancient times. She also gave milk, which led to the identification with the mother image and consequent deification. But the extreme fanaticism that it has created in today's Indian politics is unbelievable. Many people have become victims of such

Hindu ritualism. Even Mahatma Gandhi was no exception to this. According to him "cow protection is the dearest possession of the Hindu heart. No one who does not believe in cow protection can possibly be a Hindu."⁷⁴ "Cow protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow."⁷⁵ This kind of extremism has resulted in the growth of communalism in Indian political life, which is manifested in Hindu-Muslim riots, in which people are ready to cut each other's throats in the name of religion. Traditional symbols still play a predominant role in individuals' thinking. The very fact that Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress Party selected the picture of a cow feeding her calf as party symbol in recent elections proves this. In the same way the group that split away from Congress party used the picture of an old women at a spinning wheel as their symbol. This shows how political parties depend on traditional symbols to attract votes of traditional minded people in rural areas.

Thus as we have seen, the Indian political culture is not secular in outlook, and as such some of the major aspects of Hinduism, produces a type of political culture which is not participatory but rather parochial, fatalistic, submissive, pessimistic, affective and diffuse in orienta-

⁷⁴Gandhi, My Religion. p. 147

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 147-8

tion rather than rational, pragmatic, specific and empirically oriented. And this kind of political culture is an obstacle to political modernization process in India, because it relies on traditional beliefs and resists change.

How does this political culture maintain itself or change? This is done through the process of political socialization, which is the concern of the next chapter.

Chapter - 3

The Process: Political Socialization

Political socialization is the process by which political culture is maintained or changed. It is a universal phenomenon. It refers to a process of transmission by society of certain relevant values, and beliefs to individuals aimed at securing social control and integration. It is a process of induction into a "political culture" to which an individual is exposed. Through the performance of this function individual's orientation towards political objects are formed. Changes in political culture come about through political socialization process.¹

The problem of political behavior can be studied by reference to three areas which psychologists have regarded as central in their discipline. These are the areas of learning, motivation and emotions, and perceptual or cognitive processes.² Thus the theory of socialization is an explanation in psycho-cultural terms of the political behavior of an individual. Its central assumption is that all political behavior is "learned" behavior, and that all learning is processed with a direction, as a result either of deliberate imparting or of unconscious yet inevitable growth of some deep-rooted psycho-cultural tendencies of

¹Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. p. 64

²Herbert Hyman, Political Socialization. (Ulencoe: Illi. The Free Press, 1959) p. 16

the individual.³

Political behavior is quite complex and many different aspects of it could be examined in the light of their being an outgrowth of socialization. Through learning processes individuals learn social patterns corresponding to societal positions as mediated through different agencies of society. Thus in every society, we see various agencies performing the task of political socialization intended either to preserve and maintain the existing political culture or to bring about new changes. In developing countries today one finds the ruling elite which is modernized and has been socialized in the specific, universalistic and pragmatic orientations while the vast majority remain tied to the rigid, diffuse and ascriptive patterns of tradition. Leaders in India today are confronted with the same problem and are trying to bring about changes in people's ideas and attitudes which would be more consistent with the democratic institutions of the country. Having in mind the general lack of enthusiasm among Indian people and the need to evoke it, Prime Minister Nehru on several occasions, had suggested that a massive transfer of emotion and allegiance should be made.⁴ But as I will attempt to demonstrate, other agencies

³Prasant Ray, "Political Socialization." The Indian Journal of Political Science. Vol. XXIX, No. 2 (April-June, 1960) p. 136

⁴Albert Mayer, "Social Analyses and National Economic Development in India." Pacific Affairs. Vol. XXXV, (Summer, 1962) p. 138

which are involved in political socialization process are not socializing individuals for new patterns but rather are concerned with maintaining the existing patterns, and they thus tend to create a political culture which is parochial, pessimistic, submissive, fatalistic and diffuse.

In modern societies, the family, the school, political parties and other socialization structures expose the child and youth to new and specifically political roles, and to an achievement oriented and universalistic style. To a greater degree citizens of such a society are socialized into a secularized political culture.⁵ For example, among Americans even family relationships are conducted with an astonishing amount of equality. The lack of strong parental domination, the tendency of parents to rely more on persuasion than severe punishment, and the free easy way of American children is evident to any observer. In 1830's both Tocqueville and Harriet Martineau concluded that the family in the United States was a kind of miniature training ground in "democratic" attitudes.⁶ The socialization structures in Indian society have failed to perform this task, the outcome being the lack of secular outlook in political culture of India.

/ In the following pages we will examine the political

⁵Almond and Verba, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach. p. 72

⁶Robert Dahl, Pluralist Democracy in United States: Conflict and Consent. (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company,

socialization function as performed by the socialization structures in India such as family, schools and political parties, and find out to what extent Hinduism influences this socialization process.

Family: The family is the first and most important socialization structure encountered by the individual. As has been noted earlier one of the institutions which traces its origin to ancient times is the Hindu joint family. In this institution one finds the nuclear family of the father and the mother, many times the grandfather or the grandmother, children and adult unmarried sisters and daughters living together, and closely associated with brothers of the same generation who setup households of their own. Joint family has long been the common form of family organization in India, sanctified in scriptures of Hindus.⁷ The eldest member is regarded as the chief of the household, and he usually dominates the scene. The system of joint family puts terrific pressure on the individual if in any way he breaks away from it, but for the most part he does not, or if he does, he keeps in close touch with his own family. And it would be a gross oversimplification to suggest that the Indian family system has changed or that

1967) p. 61

⁷David G. Mandelbaum, "Social Organization and Planned Cultural Change in India," in M.W. Srinivas, ed.; India's Villages (2nd revised ed., New York: Asia Publishing House, 1960) p. 15

it is changing from the joint to the nuclear type.⁸ This system of joint family is to a great extent responsible for the economic stagnation in Indian villages. For modernization implies social mobility. Since the joint family system is a very closely knit institution, there is not much social mobility and a member of a joint family is not encouraged to go out to other villages or cities where the prospect of jobs might be better. An individual satisfies himself with what he can find in his own local area. Furthermore, it is considered to be one's dharma to serve his own family and village community. A mobile society has to encourage the rationality by which people come to see the social forces as manipulatable rather than ordained by law of Karma and their personal prospects in terms of achievement rather than heritage. According to the Indian census in 1951 about 80 percent of India's population lived in rural areas, and 20 percent in urban areas.⁹ At present it is estimated that around 70 percent people live in villages.¹⁰ Even when there is a social mobility from rural areas to urban areas, the workers in factories carry over religious-magical attitudes to the technology they work with. Thus it

⁸M.N.Srinivas, Social Change in Modern India. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967) p. 138

⁹George Rosen, Democracy and Economic Change in India. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966) p. 15

¹⁰K. Ishwaram, ed., Change and Continuity in India's

is wrong to conclude that introduction of new technology is enough for development. The Government's Community Development Projects tries to induce the social changes that are essential to a transformation of village economic life with less success than planners expected, due to the inescapable circle of traditional social and family relationships and attitudes leading to economic stagnation.¹¹

The feeling about joint family colors the attitude toward children. The attitude of a child is shaped to a great extent by the way in which he is socialized and this latter on in his adult life has a great bearing on his behavior. Many psychological analyses of great personalities clearly reveals this.¹² The latent and manifest influences inculcated at the early stages in life have a powerful and lasting influence. Traits and characteristics which are formed in the early emotional development of the child in the family environment have great bearing latter on in the adult life. They include "tendencies to extroversion and introversion, dominance or submission, optimism or pessimism, emotional independence, self-confidence or lack of

Villages (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1970) p. 2

¹¹ Charles H. Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform. p. 351

¹² Alexander George and Juliette L. George; Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House; A Personality Study. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964)

self confidence, and ego-centrism or socio-centrism."¹³

Indian children still grow up in the large joint family. Children feel accepted by and at home with a large number of people. A baby is always with someone familiar. This constant togetherness and participation means that the small child is rarely exposed to new experiences without the support of the trusted person. The fact of growing up and living in a large family minimizes the egocentric attitude of the child. This is the very opposite of what happens in the highly individualistic civilization of the West, where personal ambition is encouraged. This social structure is based on the aim of social security and continuance of the group where individual interest is sacrificed. Continuance of society is the aim and thus progress must suffer.¹⁴

A Hindu child lives within a world of the family having few but not many primary contacts as it grows up. Furthermore, when a child is small every need of his is taken care of, he is never left alone and encouraged to do things by himself. This excessive dependence on elders does not permit a spirit of independence and initiative to develop within a child, and this feeling is carried on in adult life. This feeling of incompetence in doing things by himself is reflected in the political culture in a tendency to

¹³P. H. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization: A Study in Socio-Psychological and Ideological Foundations. (4th ed., Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1965).

¹⁴Nehru, Discovery of India. p. 252

look to government for action. The government is the fatherly figure. Such an orientation partly explains why in modern times there is frequent recourse to government and government leaders in the settlement of issues which in other societies would be considered not the business of the government. Indians find it natural both to take care of others and to be cared for. This is fostered at a deep level by a long period of infancy. This becomes deeply frustrating and probably confusing when problems are not taken care of by authorities, creating tension in society.¹⁵

Furthermore, the fact that a large number of adults are around in a joint family leads to a process of socialization that is impersonal. The child has a sense of security in that there are many adults around him with whom he can identify, but by the same token he cannot identify himself enough with any particular person. This attitude is carried over when the child grows and enters the stage of conscious learning. The minimal emphasis on conscious instruction and discipline keeps the salience of authority symbols low and less compelling.¹⁶ This, as we have seen, results in lack of sense of identification with various authorities at local levels like family, caste and village community.

Almost all students of Indian personality have been

¹⁵Murphy Gardner, In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Behavior and Social Tension in India. (New York: Basic Books, 1953) p. 56

¹⁶Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. p. 270

struck by the extreme indulgence of the Indian child.¹⁷ But after the childhood years of freedom the adolescent confronts an impenetrable wall which permits no choice, no way to use the freedom he had enjoyed and taken for granted. The situation radically changes after the child reaches the age of five or six years. Now the parents are very strong and start disciplining him.¹⁸ The frustration for many in this situation is intense and bitter and generates conflicts which are solved in some cases by resignation, in other cases by a struggle for independence. Since during the first few years the child enjoys every freedom and thus lacks the frustration of early deprivation, there is a deep development of inward aggression, a low compulsion to channelize aggressive energies with reference to symbols of authority. One can, many times, observe an Indian child when he is angry directing his aggression inward by hitting his own head on the floor or wall. Thus there is little or no evidence of the "resistance" temper and hitting back at the world common among American two-to-four year olds.¹⁹ By the same token, aggression does not have a chance to be patterned, shaped or channelized. So when aggression is aroused in Indian adults, it bursts out in primitive chaotic ways because of the lack

¹⁷Ibid., p. 268

¹⁸S.C. Dube, Indian Villages. (New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers, 1957) p. 149

¹⁹Gardner, In the Minds of Men. p. 51

of long slow experience of patterning. The outburst of anomic types of demonstrations and violence in Indian politics is a reflection of the same thing. Without the authority, the individual might easily be rudderless, lost, even disintegrated. When authorities fail it gives way to primitive violent aggressive feelings and impulses.

This brings us to the problem of authority. Hindu joint family is based on the patriarchal family system with authority and inheritance passing through the male line. The titular and actual head of the group is the oldest male.²⁰ In most present day India as in ancient times the norm requires that Hindus accept paternal authority so long as the father remains capable.²¹ The attitude of the children toward their parents is supposed to be one of respect and obedience. Very early in life the child has to learn to act on the traditional norms of showing respect to parents and elders. Usually father is feared by children. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, "Speak the truth, follow dharma,Do not miss your duties towards gods and ancestors. Regard your mother as your god, the father as your god, the teacher as god, the guest as god, and as such,

²⁰ Margaret Cormack, The Hindu Woman. (New York: Teacher's College Columbia University, 1955) p. 1

²¹ Henry Orenstein and Michael Nicklin, "The Hindu Joint Family: The Norms and Numbers." Pacific Affairs. Vol. XXIX (Fall and Winter, 1966-67) p. 320

pay their dues to them."²² Since self-reliance is not insisted upon, and a relationship of dependence on the mother and other is encouraged, in return obedience to the elders and formalized system of duties and obligations are expected. This brings about a high sense of conformity with formal rules and rituals and a keen sense of hierarchies of age and status. This also to a great extent creates submissiveness in individuals. This leads to an almost magical belief in the power of superior authority, and hence a weak socialization in dealing with others of equality.²³ Absolute obedience is required of children; since it is their dharma to do it.

Usually in a Hindu joint family, it is always the elders who make decisions on matters that concern the family. Even matters of importance such as marriages of sons and daughters are arranged by parents. Besides this, in most matters children do not have any voice in decision making. This results later on in lack of civic competence or an inability to arrive at independent decision. An early experience with participation in decision making increases the child's sense of political competence and provides him with skills for political interaction, thus increasing the probability of his active participation in the political system

²²Quoted in P. H. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization. pp. 142-3

²³Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. p. 272

when he becomes adult. Due to lack of such experience and training in family socialization, Indians usually have less sense of civic competence and find themselves helpless when it comes to arriving at a decision. This also is reflected in Indian politics by leaders in their tendency to postpone making important decision, and at lower levels, by tendency to pass on the responsibility to make decision to higher authorities.

In the entire social setting the comparative superiority of the male is evident. Traditional opinion regards a son as an asset, a daughter a liability, because while a son belongs to his parents, a daughter is bound eventually to go to some other family. A girl born into a family is like an ornament held in pawn to be surrendered to the rightful owner when he demands it. She has no rights in a Hindu joint family, though the Marriage Law and Inheritance Law have changed the situation to some extent. The ending of the seclusion of women is essential before India can have a progressive social life.²⁴ Gandhi urged that women should have the same liberty and opportunity for self-development as men.²⁵ While it is true that today women do play a much more active role in social and political life, the fact still remains that they are not given the opportunity allowed to men and that women tend to depend on men for economic and political views.

²⁴Nehru, Discovery of India. p. 239

²⁵Ibid.

Thus Indian society can be described as a set of close social units the family being the most important one. One's obligations are to one's family, and when he moves outside such groups into relations which depend on self-interest there is no public community, no sense of the universalism of law or morality which is not supported by personal relationships.²⁶ Suzanne Rudolph rightly pointed out that

Indian political culture then does little to legitimate in the context of democratic authority and adversary politics.....²⁷
their character and style are suspect.²⁷

Thus while changes are taking place, the love of home and loyalty to the family will always abide, because the family is the very heart of Indian living.²⁸

Educational System: The other socialization structure in a society is the school or educational system. It is well recognized that the outlook and methods of education prevalent in a society have a far reaching significance and influence upon other social and political institutions of society. Educational system seeks to socialize the individual to adjust himself to the ideas and ideals of the

²⁶ Joseph R. Gusfield, "Political Community and Group Interest in Modern India." Pacific Affairs. Vol. 38 (Summer, 1965) p. 137

²⁷ Ibid., p. 138

²⁸ Jean Bothwell, The Story of India. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1992) p. 146. Also see Ananda Coomaraswamy, The Dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian Essays. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1946) p. 121

society.²⁹ Along with imparting knowledge and skills, education transmits the particular system of moral, social and cultural values of the society and thus undertakes the indoctrination of both the rational and emotional elements which make up the adult individual.

Given the 70 percent illiteracy rate in India,³⁰ it is natural that the educational system cannot act as a powerful agency of socialization process. With such a weight of illiteracy it is impossible to achieve any appreciable progress in democracy or self-government which requires that the voter and taxpayer should atleast be able to read the daily newspaper and use his vote intelligently on current issues.³¹ In a democracy the average adult becomes an important factor in politics.

There is also the influence of the parent on the child. The obstacle to the spread of primary education in India is the parents' lack of appreciation of the values of education for their children. But suprisingly so far very little has been done to educate the adults which naturally is a very important factor.

From the days of the Upnishadic sages to the present the Hindu emphasis has been on teaching the explica-

²⁹P.H. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization. pp.101-2

³⁰N.B. Sen, ed., Progress of Education in Free India. (New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 1967) p. 155

³¹T.M. Siqueira, Modern Indian Education. (London: Oxford University Press, 1960) p. 112

tion of true religious doctrine. The first of the four ashramas of life is the Brahamacharyashram (student life) during which the student went to the guru, stayed with him, and the guru enlightened the understanding of his disciples by the patient exposition of certain scriptures. William Meston is right when he asserts that "The Indian mind finds it hard to think of an education worthy of the name which is dissociated from religion."³² Many Hindu scriptures like Artha Veda, Satanatha Bhrahmana, Erihadaranyakounishad describe in great details the rituals of student life. The Grihya-Sutras and the Smritis have also given elaborate description of various rites to be performed at the Upanayana ceremony (observation of certain rites and rituals when a student starts his educational career.)³³ A very high degree of reverence to the teacher was expected of the student. Manu-Smriti says that within the sight of his guru the student shall not sit carelessly or at ease.³⁴ Though many of these rituals are no longer in existence the value system is more or less still the same.

What should have been treated as "sound education" has become too much a Gandhian cult, with Gandhi's principle of functionality being misunderstood. Curriculum tends to freeze at the "hand-spinning level," staff proudly demon-

³²Smith, India As a Secular State. p. 335

³³P.K. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization. p.108-10

³⁴Ibid., pp. 121-2

strate their cooperative work system, but go home to let their mothers wait on them "as is our tradition."³⁵

The level of literacy rate in various states differs considerably. Six backward states which are lagging painfully behind are the States of Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. There are a number of physical, social, historical and cultural factors responsible for this. The traditional resistance to the education of girls is comparatively strong in these states. These states are comparatively rural areas. The level of literacy in these states in 1961 was respectively 18, 11, 17, 22, 15, 18 percent in comparison to states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and West Bengal. The respective literacy level in these states was 31, 31, 47 and 29 percent. The literacy rate for girls in six states respectively was 7, 4, 7, 9, 6, and 7 percents.³⁶

Secondary education, except for a few privately owned schools, is generally traditional in content and methods. Learning is "passive". most work is memorized for the examinations. After independence Indian leaders realized the importance of secondary education because it gives to students experience in democratic participation and trains

³⁵ Margaret C. Cormack, She Who Rides a Peacock: Indian Students and Social Change. (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1961) p. 35

³⁶ J.P. Naik, Elementary Education in India: The Unfinished Business. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1966) p. 155

them for intermediate leadership. These aims are scarcely visible today.³⁷ The lecture system makes students passive listeners rather than active participants in the discussion. The teacher occupies a place almost on a level with God according to one of the Upanishads and it is the dharma of the student to show him the highest respect and devotion. The words of a teacher are to be accepted as truth, and this does not encourage sense of creative inquiry in student. Not only this, but as the authors of the Report of the University Education Commission stated the present Indian Universities have failed to produce in adequate numbers "teachers commanding fame and respect, or investigators who have won international recognition."³⁸

Participation in decision making at school can do something to make up for a lack of it at home or can reinforce the previous pattern. As has been noticed earlier in Indian society, children do not have any voice in decision making regarding not only family matters but also in matters that concern them most. This pattern persists at the school and college level too. While students played an important role during the nationalist movement, after independence Congress leaders argued that achievement of independence removed any need for a national student political movement.

³⁷Ibid., 36

³⁸S.R. Dongerkery, University Education in India. (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967) p. 107

The outburst of student unrest on Indian campuses points to the reluctance of university authorities to meet with students to discuss problems, even those involving students; for to do so might involve a loss of authority in relation to students.³⁹ This has widened the gap between students and authorities but more seriously between politics and public policy in the minds of students. The former is thought of as futile but exciting outlet for personal protest and the latter as the actions and decisions coming from irresponsible government or university.⁴⁰

The schools and universities have also failed to provide for teaching of Indian History and Civics which is indispensable for the adults of today. Even among educated Indians there are not many who know the constitution of the Indian Republic or that of their own state assembly. Modernization of a country is not achieved by simply implanting modern institutions, but rather individuals need to be socialized into new patterns of thoughts and values which are consistent with the new institutions and technology. This can be done by a program of mass education or rather reeducation of people.⁴¹ And there is every reason to

³⁹Myron Weiner, The Politics of Scarcity: Public Pressure and Political Response in India. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) p. 132

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 135

⁴¹J.P. Naik, Elementary Education in India: The Unfinished Business. p. 19

believe that Indian schools and colleges have failed in this task.

Political Parties: Political parties have been recognized as powerful agents for political socialization. They can perform two kinds of political socialization functions. They can either work for the reinforcement of the existing political culture, or they can initiate significant changes in existing political culture patterns. Many parties with strong traditional and ethnic subculture seem to be reinforcing divisive particularism. This seems to be the trend among opposition parties in India.⁴² We will examine some of the Hindu communal groups which are involved in socialization process, especially the Jan Sangh.

The advent of independence had its impact on the position and role of Hindu communal parties in India like Hindu Mahasabha, The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and more recently Jan Sangh. The ideal of "Hindu Rashtra" (Hindu Nation) or the variation of this term has been central to the Hindu communal parties. Hindu Mahasabha laid emphasis on Hindu revivalism and hostility toward the Western impact in earlier years. These communal groups have their roots in the tradition of late 19th century Hindu nationalism. They idealize and exalt the ancient Hindu religion and culture and look to the past for the true values which are lacking in modern times. The Hindu Mahasabha holds that the "mic-

⁴²Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Deve-

conceived" notion of secular democracy can not inspire the masses and that only the ideals of Hindu Rashtra are capable of doing this.⁴³

Unlike other parties RSS has never functioned as a political party. It was founded in 1925 and has concentrated its efforts on the development of a tightly disciplined corps of well indoctrinated Hindu youths who represent the Sandhathan (Unity) ideals of Hindu society in miniature. RSS policies are propagated in various ways. Each member gives daily services in drills. By an intensive program of ideological discussion, Sangh rituals, the volunteers are prepared for their roles as Vanguard of the Hindu nation. Though it rejects political activities, it has in the past supported the political work of the Hindu Mahasabha and is now closely linked with the Jan Sangh. The students and lower middle class groups constitute the majority of its membership. In some cases they are drawn by the religious emphasis of the RSS, in others by the sincere conviction that the RSS alone can effectively protect Hindu customs and traditions.⁴⁴ The RSS is an association of fanatical and disciplined nationalists dedicated to the propagation

lopmental Approach. pp. 120-2

⁴³Smith, India As a Secular State. p. 461

⁴⁴Jean A. Curran, Jr., "The RSS: Militant Hinduism." Far Eastern Survey. Vol. XIX, No. 10 (May 17, 1950) p. 96

of a doctrine which to them contains the truest elements of Hindu ideology. Nehru once remarked that Hindu communalism was the Indian version of fascism, and in the case of the RSS it is true to a great extent.⁴⁵

Jan Sangh was founded at least with the tacit understanding that the RSS support would be forthcoming. Nehru described the Jan Sangh as the "illegitimate child of the RSS."⁴⁶ The Jan Sangh is a Hindu party. It is called conservative because it puts emphasis on traditional Hindu values. Thus socially it is a reactionary party. It stands for fundamentals, "one country, one culture, one nation and Dharma Raj, the Rule of Law."⁴⁷ The party claims that it is wedded to "Indianism." According to late Mr. Deendayal Upadhyaya, the party's General Secretary, Jan Sangh derives its inspiration from the eternal values of Bharatiya culture and life.⁴⁸ It is the unique claim of the Jan Sangh that it is the only party rooted in Bharatiya culture and thought. It stands for economic democracy but at the same time the changes, it argues, should be in keeping with Bharatiya

⁴⁵Smith, India As a Secular State. p. 463

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 470

⁴⁷K. Ramani Pillai, "Jan Sangh - A Rightist Opposition to the Congress Party." Indian Journal of Political Science. Vol. XXVII, (April-June, 1966) p. 69

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 78

values. The party is able to attract youths and middle class people in its fold. It is stronger in those areas which are backward and conservative and are still deeply rooted in the religious traditions. Through various techniques it socializes its followers more thoroughly in Hindu values. It has opposed many progressive measures of the government on the ground that they are not in keeping with the tradition of India, and has supported legislation banning cow slaughter, repeal of the Hindu Marriage Act and other anti-Hindu measures. It is strongly anti-Muslim and many times accused Nehru and the Congress of a policy of Muslim appeasement.

Jan Sangh believes that agriculture in India depends on the cow and bullocks, and other things apart, on this ground alone respect for cows should be universal. The party is pledged to get the slaughter of cows banned by law.⁴⁹ But strictly from the view point of agricultural economics it is impossible to justify a total ban on cow slaughter, because at least one-fourth of India's cows are uneconomic and many are diseased.⁵⁰

In matters of education also Jan Sangh advocates a conservative traditional approach. It propagates an ancient cultural system of education. The party deplores

⁴⁹ Motilal A. Jhangiani, Jan Sangh and Swatantra: Profile of the Rightist Parties in India. (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1967) p. 62

⁵⁰ Smith, India As a Secular State p. 485

the attitudes of the Indian Government in proceeding with the enactment of the Hindu Code, in different forms, through piecemeal legislation. According to the party such innovations are opposed to the basic concept of Hindu society, Dharma and culture.⁵¹ A party harping on ancient values and traditions naturally becomes an obstacle in a nation striving hard to wriggle out of traditionalism and steer its way clear along the path of modernization, and it is because of this that it has come to be indentified with reaction, revivalism and non-progressism.

In summary, the socialization structures like family and schools create a political culture which, as described in the second chapter, is diffuse and parochial instead of participatory, non-secular, pessimistic, and affective in orientation. The communal parties and groups influence socialization in a militant way; in particular the RSS and to some extent produce different sub-culture in the sense of being not passive or submissive. This is also an obstacle in political modernization process, because it is opposed to progressive policies, and its emphasis on traditional values, and customs is not rational and pragmatic. Nehru, while speaking in Constituent Assembly on April 3, 1948, declared that "the alliance of religion and politics in the shape of communalism is a most dangerous alliance, and it yields the most abnormal kind of illegitimate brood."⁵² The

⁵¹ Jhangiani, Jan Sanch and Swatantra. p. 97

task before the Indians today is to study the social traditions and change them by the internal and external pressures.⁵³

Mass Media: The role of mass media as a socializing agency in the society cannot be over-emphasized. Mass media like newspapers, movies, books, radios, televisions are the most important means of communications and perform a valuable task in formulating attitudes, ideas and belief systems of the population. The study of communication and control processes are also relevant to the problem of integration and disintegration of large political communities.⁵⁴ In the context of Indian society the role of mass media as socializing agency is not very predominant. Mass media such as newspapers cannot have much effect in peoples' attitudes and values when majority of the people are illiterate, and cannot read or write. In Indian society mass media as important means of communication is only a recent phenomena, and so far it has failed to penetrate the traditional infrastructure of society.

Radio is government controlled. Through this means, the government has tried to introduce new ideas and values in the rural areas, by various kinds of programs, of local

⁵²Quoted in Smith, India As a Secular State. p. 473

⁵³R.N. Saksena, "Sociology for India." Journal of Asian and African Studies. Vol. 1 (October, 1966) p. 297

⁵⁴See Karl W. Deutsch, The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control. (New York: The Free Press, 1966).

interest. But this again cannot be a one way traffic. There has to be interaction between two levels. If the majority of population is not receptive to it, the purpose of socializing them into new value system is not served. People in the villages are more concerned about their day to day needs, and having for a long time accepted the traditional role, they find it difficult to change their value orientation in regard to modern innovations. Here again the traditional religious beliefs and philosophy of life become an obstacle in the acceptance of new ideas and changes.

As far as the impact of Hinduism on instruments of mass media like press and radio is concerned it is almost negligible. The communal groups and political parties like Jan Sangh which have their own political news weeklies try to propagate the Hindu values.

Though in the future mass media might come to acquire a prominent role as a socializing agency, at present its influence is very narrow and limited, more or less confined to urban areas.

Chapter - 4

The Role of Caste in Indian Politics.

The institution of caste is a unique feature of Hindu society. Nothing exactly like it is to be found in any other part of the world.¹ As we have noted in last two chapters the Indian political culture and political socialization is greatly influenced by Hinduism. The purpose of this chapter is to briefly examine caste as a reflection of the political culture and the political socialization process in India, especially those aspects of caste which have direct bearing on the political modernization of India.

Origin: According to Hindu tradition the caste system owes its origin to the four varnas, which are respectively derived from the Brahman who sprang from the mouth of the deity, the Kshatriya who was created from his arm, the Vaishya who was formed from his thighs and the Sudra who was born from his feet.² Each were assigned different duties according to his caste. This division of society into four castes has in all probability always been theoretical.³ There are believed to be some 3,000 castes in India. Some

¹Jogendra Nath Ehattacharya, Hindu Castes and Sects. (Reprint, Calcutta: Editions Indians, 1966) p. 1

²J.H. Hutton, Caste in India: Its Nature, Function and Origins. (4th ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1963) p. 143

³K.M. Sen, Hinduism. p. 28

are derived from tribal or racial elements, some are occupational, some territorial, some religious and so forth. Thus caste appears to be of an institution of highly complex origin.

It would be almost impossible to define caste. The very fact that no common definition of caste exists clearly speaks for the problem. Different writers have given different definitions of caste as a unit.⁴ But there are certain basic characteristics which can be observed in regard to most of the castes. Some of the important characteristics are:

- (1) Heredity: A Hindu is born a member of the caste to which his parents belong and all his life remains a member of it.
- (2) Endogamy: Every member of a caste must marry a member of the same caste.
- (3) Restrictions on commensality: Every caste lays down with precision rules regarding the acceptance of food and drink by its members from other people.⁵

In family and religious matters Hindus were ruled by

⁴Hutton, Caste in India. pp. 47-49

⁵E.A.H. Llunt, The Caste System of Northern India. (New Delhi: S. Chand and Company, 1969) pp. 1-2; also see E.R. Leach, ed; Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan. "Introduction: What should we mean by caste?" (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962) pp. 2-3.

dharmaśāstra. During the British rule the courts maintained the four fold varna division and took into consideration the Hindu Law.⁶ Though the constitution of India contains commitment to replace the system of separate personal law with a "uniform civil code," to stop discrimination on the ground of religion, the constitution has been interpreted to permit the continuing application of their personal laws to Hindus and Muslims.⁷

Caste as a Reflection of Hindu Culture: The religious rights and duties of the Hindu vary to a considerable extent according to their castes. Caste cannot be properly understood in isolation from Hinduism, for it is Hinduism that provides caste with its sanctions and gives to the system its moral meaning. Caste is a world in which men have their stations and from these stations in the little society they derive exclusively their rights and duties, in fact their whole code of behavior and outlook of life. The law of Karma declares that the Hindu is born into a particular caste because of his deeds in a previous life, and that he should accept his condition without protest, performing as well as possible the functions appropriate to it. Each man is said to have his own specific nature (Svabhava) filling

⁶William C. McCormack, "Caste and the British Administration of Hindu Law." The Journal of Asian and African Studies. Vol. 1. (January, 1966). pp. 27-34

⁷Mark Galanter, "Law and Caste in Modern India." Asian Survey. Vol. III (November, 1963) pp. 544-559

him for his own specific function (Svadharmā) and changes of dharma or functions are not encouraged. The Bhagavadgita says that the divisions of caste are in accordance with each man's character and aptitude, and since we cannot determine in each individual case what the aptitudes of the individuals are, heredity and training are used to fix the calling.⁸ As Morris Carstairs, a Western psychologist with great deal of experience of Indian society has described,

Acceptance of one's place in the caste system was unquestioning. It was a part of the order of nature. As a consequence of this, there was little room for ambition.....The old system puts a premium on conformity at the expense of personal initiative: the individual achieves integration and stability in his life habits by adhering to the pattern of his enveloping society, rather than by asserting his own personality.⁹

This philosophy as we have noted earlier produces a feeling of fatalism, pessimism and submissiveness, and kills an individual's initiative to achieve higher status by achievement oriented universalistic criteria.

The structural basis of Hinduism is the caste system, and the idea of a hierarchy is inherent in it. The pervasiveness of the "theme of a hierarchy in Hinduism has been made clear by various village studies in recent years."¹⁰

⁸Radhakrishnan, The Hindu View of Life. p. 79

⁹G. Morris Carstairs, The Twice Born: A Study of a Community of High Caste Hindus. (London: Hogarth Press 1961) p. 146

¹⁰Ram P. Srivastava, "Tribe-Caste mobility in India and the Caste of Kumaon Ehotias." in Christoph Von

The castes in the village are high and low, each caste is separate and maintains social distance from other castes in grounds both of purity and pollution. In the caste-cultural configuration, entry into a social status is a function of heredity. Individual achievement, personal quality or wealth according to the strict traditional prescription, have no say in determining the social status.¹¹

Role of Caste in Political Process: The whole philosophy and the rigidity of caste structure produces an attitude of mind which is not conducive to modernization of the country. Deutsch has indicated that as modernization progresses, people become more mobile, physically and mentally. He also points out that social mobilization is something that happens to large number of people in areas which undergo changes, where advanced, non-traditional practices in culture, technology, and economic life are introduced and accepted on a large scale.¹² Caste has been one of the biggest obstacles in the mobilization process which hinders economic development.

One of the chief factors which originally produced

Furer-Haimendorf, ed; Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon. (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1966) p. 155

¹¹ D.N. Majumdar, Caste and Communication in An Indian Village. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1955) p.19

¹² Karl W. Deutsch, "Social Mobilization and Political Development," Vol. 55. American Political Science Review (September, 1961) pp. 495-514

the caste system was the economic principle of the differentiation of functions. At present day, it is still the caste system which regulates the nature of a Hindu's occupation, the methods of his manufacture, the limits of his clientele, and the price of his goods.¹³ The occupations and functions of the different castes are not wholly exclusive, but the economic system of rural India is founded mainly on their functional specialization and interdependence. Most of the castes have a major craft or occupation which is their traditional monopoly. And it is considered to be one's dharma to follow the occupation of one's own ancestor. Generally a caste or a group of allied castes considered some of the callings as its hereditary occupation, and to abandon it in pursuit of another though it might be more lucrative is thought not to be right.¹⁴ One can be and is thrown out of one's caste and subcaste if one's behavior flaunts custom, for custom has become ritual and is enforced ruthlessly by means of boycott, excommunication and outcasting. Thus the individual is cocooned in every direction. There are many jobs he cannot do because they would pollute him or bring him into contact with polluting people, so it is much simpler to follow in his father's footsteps and take up the family's traditional occupation. So long as the individual remains

¹³ M. L. M. Lunt, The Caste System of Northern India. p. 253

¹⁴ G. S. Ghurye, Caste, Class and Occupation. (3rd ed., Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1961) p. 13

subject to his particular sub-caste taboos he will not undertake a profession which would lower his status.¹⁵ Some of the customs affecting social status have an important economic bearing. Such customs as that high caste women must remain in seclusion, she can give no assistance in the fields, that Brahman and Rajput should not handle the plough has economic consequences. Firstly it increases the cost of cultivation, since the high caste man himself nor can his wife take any active part in agriculture work they are compelled to employ more labor, secondly, since the high caste man is generally content to leave his cultivation to his servants, with the result that it is rarely skillful or productive.¹⁶ In the study of caste in a Tanjore Village the author found that caste was a main limiting factor in village economy. Rituals rules of caste as well as economic expediency limit the choice of occupation.¹⁷ Thus caste works as an obstacle in economic development.

Another problem in relation to caste is that since it is the basic unit to which individual belongs, he considers his loyalty to the caste first rather than to the national system. Since each caste is further subdivided into various

¹⁵Taya Zinkin, Caste Today. (London: Oxford University Press, 1962) p. 27

¹⁶Blunt, The Caste System of Northern India. pp.263-4

¹⁷E. Kathleen Cough, "Caste in a Tanjore Village," in H.R. Leach, ed., Aspects of Caste in South India, Ceylon and North-West Pakistan. pp. 55-74

sub-caste, the Indian society is based on the notion of smaller units, which becomes an obstacle in the development of a sense of national unity or national integration. A caste is a group with a separate arrangement for meting out justice to its members apart from the community as a whole. Hence the members of a caste ceased to be members of the community as a whole, as far as that part of their morals which is regulated by law was concerned. Every caste has its own panchayat or biradari. It deals with cases of irregular union, family quarrels, disputes over land affairs and so on. The judgement of the caste panchayat is normally binding and great respect is paid to it. This means that in this caste-bound society the amount of community feeling must be restricted and that citizens owed moral allegiance to their caste first, rather than to the community as a whole.¹⁸ Professor D. R. Gadgil, one time Director of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics at Poona, complained, "The Indians have no sense of neighbourhood. The individuals think of himself as a member of a caste rather than as a member of a community....."¹⁹ Studies of Indian village life record the deep distrust felt by villager, the extraordinary abundance of quarrels between members of different castes and even members of the same

¹⁸ Ghurye, Caste, Class and Occupation. p. 4

¹⁹ Quoted in Ronald Segal, The Anguish of India.
p. 150

caste.²⁰ As we have noticed earlier, this sense of distrust regarding other's motives is reflected in the political culture. This weakness of a caste society makes it incapable of political unity over a large territory.²¹ There are critics, Indian as well as foreigners who regard caste as the root of all Hindu evils. Caste system is essentially aristocratic which is contrary to the modern democratic ideas.

The Indian polity presents a confrontation of modern political institutions with traditional cultural values and forms of social organization. This process can be analyzed and interpreted in terms of an evolving pattern of political behavior and operative norms of political conduct that continue to embody, traditional cultural values associated with old forms of social organization. The social anthropologists who have followed caste as a social institution, were led firmly into politics. The central discovery is that politics is more important to castes and castes are more important in politics than ever before. Recently many writers have tried to argue that in fact caste is playing a very useful purpose in Indian politics. That caste has adopted itself to a new situation and has provided channel for mobilization of people in political process which is an

²⁰ See D. N. Majumder, Caste and Communication in An Indian Village. pp. 27, 32-3, 61, 73-4, 77-8, 114-21, 214-18.

²¹ Davis Kingsley, The Population of India and Pakistan. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1901).

essential feature of advanced democratic countries. Rajni Kothari argues that the alleged casteism in politics is no more or no less than politicization of caste, and it has provided for broader participation of individuals in political system.²² Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph also argues that caste has become one of the chief channels of communication and bases of leadership and organization which enables those still submerged in the traditional society and culture to transcend the technical political illiteracy which would otherwise handicap their ability to participate in democratic politics.²³ The rise of the caste association and caste federation is seen as a welcome sign which provides for interest articulation,²⁴ and they are compared in many ways with those of the voluntary association or interest-group familiar to European and American politics.²⁵ While the validity of this argument cannot be denied totally, it must be said that there is overemphasis on the useful role played by caste

²²Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. pp. 225, 239.

²³Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Association." Pacific Affairs. Vol. XXIII (March, 1960) pp. 5-6

²⁴Rajni Kothari and Risikesh Maru, "Caste and Secularism in India: Case Study of a Caste Federation." The Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XXV (November, 1965) pp. 35-50

²⁵Rudolph and Rudolph, "The Political Role of India's Caste Association." p. 6

in Indian politics. In fact the persistence of traditional symbols and values of caste in Indian politics should be seen as an obstacle to political modernization of India. While it is true that wider participation of people in political process is important, what is more important is how much rational basis it has behind it. And there are enough evidence to show that in fact caste is an obstacle in the creation of a secular political culture in India. The national leaders may proclaim the goal of a casteless society, but the newly enfranchised rural masses know only the language of traditional politics which so largely relies on caste. Immigrants from rural areas keep very close economic and social ties with their villages of origin and often tend to settle in distinct caste "colonies" within the city. In the rural areas caste, despite many modifications, is persisting in its traditional form, as a system of hierarchially graded, locally integrated, occupationally and ritually specialized endogamous social strata.²⁶ Thus caste does not seem to have changed radically despite arguments of some writers. In a survey of about two hundred students of Patna University in Bihar province an attempt was made to explore the stereotypes of important castes. In view of the fact that India is passing through transition and is exposed to vital changes, it was expected that the traditional images of

²⁶Harold A. Gould, "The Adaptive Function of Caste in Contemporary Indian Society," Vol. III. Asian Survey. (September, 1962) p. 427

castes would undergo radical changes so as to recognize the emerging intercaste relations. On the contrary, it was found that student respondents carry images more or less similar to those existing for decades.²⁷

Until the introduction of adult franchise, the politically active sections of rural India were generally men of higher castes. The reservation of government posts for non-brahmins led to the opening of some places for backward castes, and untouchables who qualified in government jobs. In many states a great clamor arose, with all kinds of groupings insisting that they too should be classified as "backwards." The revolt against the Brahmins has gone far enough to make the Brahmins in many places the victims of counter-discrimination.²⁸ A supreme court decision in 1962 found that the Mysore government in reserving 66 percent of places in certain institution of higher education for backward classes, had gone so far beyond the fundamental rights provision as to have perpetrated "a fraud on the constitution."²⁹ This shows the irrationality of extreme caste consciousness.

Increasingly, despite the secular commitment of the

²⁷Gopal Charan Sinha and Ramesh Chandra Sinha, "Exploration in Caste Stereotypes." Social Forces. Vol. 46 (September, 1967) pp. 42-47

²⁸Harold R. Isaacs, India's Untouchables. (New York: The John Day Company, 1954) pp. 104-05

²⁹Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India. pp. 96-97

Indian republic, caste selects candidates and determines votes, no less in national elections. For Srinivas, the Indian sociologist, the very fact that recruitment and sentiments are based on caste lines is sufficient to define the system as a continuing caste order irrespective of the novel political and economic activities of the system. To him it means that these new activities are undertaken by organizations which in sentiment and recruitment are based on the traditional system.³⁰ The choice of party candidates at elections is determined by the predominant caste affiliations of each constituency. Election to parliament has become much or less the victory of a particular program at the polls than the successful manipulation of caste rivalries and allegiances. Thus the recruitment to political system is based not on the universalistic achievement based criteria but rather on ascriptive, and affective criteria. The political process is explained in terms of traditional ethos and value implications and behavioral norms of caste groupings and other institutions of traditional Indian society.³¹ In the most recent general election campaigns in India, the appeal and strategies of political parties has been based

³⁰ Richard G. Fox, "Resiliency and Change in the Indian Caste System: The Umar of U. P." The Journal of Asian Studies. Vol. XXVI (August, 1967) p. 276

³¹ Pradeep J. Shah, "Caste and Political Process." Asian Survey, Vol. II (September, 1966) pp. 516-522.

on caste loyalties.³² Secular democratic leaders like Mr. Nehru deplore the prevalence of "casteism" in Indian politics. Nehru rightly observed

As the elections have shown, we have been too much influenced by caste and sectarian considerations. Caste in the political working is the opposite of democracy and will weaken our democratic structure unless it is combatted in this field as in other fields.³³

³²Dilip Mukherjee, "Politics of Manipulation: Arithmetic of caste and community." The Times of India. Saturday, February 20, 1971. p. 3

³³Quoted in Harold A. Gould, "The Adaptive Function of Caste in Contemporary Indian Society." pp. 433-34

CONCLUSION

Many Western writers concerned with the problems of developing nations tend to equate institutionalization with political development. But as has been demonstrated in this research, this is not necessarily true. Mere adoption of Western democratic institutions after India's independence has not guaranteed the political modernization of the country. What India is confronted with today is the tension and conflict between the new modern democratic institutions and the persistence of traditional attitudes, behavior and value system among the majority of Indian people. To consider the problem of India's development as merely economic and political is a grave mistake. It is more of a socio-cultural and psychological problem. If new institutions are to "take hold" then there must also be changes in peoples' attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns which are consistent and relevant to the democratic processes.

Political modernization is a process in which secularization of political culture takes place and people become more rational in their outlook and behavior. As has been demonstrated, Indian political culture is not secular in outlook but rather diffuse, submissive, pessimistic, fatalistic and affective, which is due to the influence of Hinduism. It plays a predominant role in the peoples' attitudes and behavior in politics. This has become a major obstacle in India's political modernization. With the advancement in science and technology, the social system also has to adjust

itself to new conditions. If the social system is not flexible enough, the conflict between traditional forces and forces of change becomes inevitable creating tension in society. This is what is happening in India today. The various agencies performing the task of political socialization have failed to bring about changes in political culture. Rather they have tended to sustain the value system of traditional Indian society. The whole process of political socialization is influenced by the philosophy of Hinduism. To the great majority of Indians Hinduism is still a reality which guides their private and public behavior.

The Indian people in rural areas have no idea of the changes that lie ahead and the new concepts that will challenge them as the country modernizes. The dominant influence of Hinduism on the lives of Indian people makes introduction of new ideas and progressive changes very difficult. Not only are they not receptive to new ideas, but sometimes openly resent the new changes. Hinduism to Indians is not only a religion but whole outlook on life. Persistence of its predominant influence in Indian society limits the effectiveness of new ideas.

Thus it would be safe to conclude that influence of Hinduism is one of the major obstacles in India's political modernization. If India is to achieve political modernization she must lessen her religiosity. This would require a mass transformation of people's values and belief

systems. Here the educational system can play a very important and useful role. It is not only necessary that all children must be made to go to school, but it would also involve education of adults. The educational system itself would have to give up its traditional outlook, and prepare the younger generations into the democratic ideas and ideals of modernized society. It is surprising to find the contrast between the communist country and non-communist developing countries. According to Marxism, economics is the most important factor in process of development. Thus rapid industrialization is the top priority goal. In reality in a country like China when communists came to power, their top priority was given to program of mass education for people, to change the whole value-system to bring it in line with new system. In contrast to this, in a country like India which is socialist but a non-communist country, after independence, rapid industrialization aimed at economic development was given the top priority and education was and still is given a secondary place. A mass scale educational program aimed at changing the value-system of people, designed to erode the traditional Hindu behavior pattern is most essential if India is to achieve political modernization.

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