

Village Studies: As a Dimension of Anthropological Tradition in India

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Abstract

In India, Village occupies an essential place in the social as well as cultural landscape. Indian village had a substantial unit of diversity. In the history of Indian social sciences, village continuously treated as the basic unit of Indian society. Village studies were for long more or less the stock-in trade of social anthropologists of India. After reviewing number of literatures, it has drawn that the idea of village studies in India started in post-colonial period. Therefore, the present paper aims to illustrate the tradition of village studies in Anthropology from pre-independent phase to post-independent phase.

Keywords: Cultural Landscape; Indian Society; Village Studies; Social Anthropologists; Post-Colonial Period and Post-Independent Phase.

INTRODUCTION

So far, we have learned that anthropology as a subject and/or discipline emerged in India in the 1920s at the University of Calcutta, but in the mid-nineties, the development and growth of anthropological research in India on some significant issues and themes, especially in village studies, rural studies, caste system, and so. However, during the

mid-nineties, village studies in India were a crucial point in Anthropological research, and at that time, various monographs and research papers were published. However, carrying out the village studies during the 50s to 70s was very essential. Because of the changing nature of rural society, anthropologists considered them to substantiate details of the constant societal regulation before it was too late. Emphasizing this necessity, in 1955 Srinivas⁴⁰⁻⁴² wrote, 'We have, at the most, another ten years in which to record facts about a type of society that is changing fundamentally and with great rapidity'. Despite this, village studies in India became admired in Anthropological studies through theoretical perspectives as well as applied or field perspectives.

During the post-war period, with the rise of the intellectual and political environment, anthropologists played an essential role in presenting a dependable and systematic explanation of the "traditional social order," and the alteration of Indian village societies had become a universal

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concern. During that time, sociologists and social anthropologists published several monographs on village studies, which directly emerged from some development projects. These studies were incorporated by Dube (1955)¹¹⁻¹², Majumdar (1958)²⁵, and Lewis (1958)³⁴.

In 1958³⁴, Lewis (who studied in a village near Delhi) wrote:

Our work was problem oriented from the start. Among the problems we studied intensively were what the villagers felt they needed in housing, education, and health; the land consolidation programme; and the newly created government sponsored panchayats (Lewis, 1958:ix)³⁴.

In contemporary India, the village occupies an essential place in the cultural as well as the social land scape. Not with considerable industrialization over the last five to eight decades in India, and along with a substantial urban population also increasing. A vast majority of Indians continue to live in more than five lakh villages.

The village has been seen as the succeeding form of "dependable native life", and has provided an understanding way for the residents to unify their social relations and belief system. Andre Beteille (1980)⁵ wrote, 'The village was not only a place where people lived; it had a design in which were reproduced the elementary values of Indian civilization'. The institutional outline of the Indian village communities and cultural principles were invented to be an illustration of what, in the twentieth century, came to be known as "traditional society". The present article tries to give an outline of the tradition of village studies among social scientists, especially among sociologists and social anthropologists in India.

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Historical Background

During the British colonial period, an image of the Indian village gave detailed references to village life, which was constructed by the colonial administrators, and the village life enlightened ideologically as well as politically the way of Indian society.

Sir Henry Main (1861)²³ published Ancient Law, where his primary argument was on the land system in India, and he exposed that land as formerly held by ordinary people who lived in groups. In his book, he also illustrated the traditional law in Indian villages, especially the land system. After two decades, a complete study of Indian villages was done by Baden Powel (1892), who described the land system in India (The Land System of British India) and Henry Maine criticised the views. Four years later, with a more specific criticism of the Maine account entitled 'The Indian Village Community (1896)², Maine and Powel were both dedicated to the study of the land tenure system of India, but their work primarily promoted further studies in India.

Table 1: The table shows the village studies in India on pre-independent time

Name of the Scholar	Institution Name	Studied Year	Studied on
Henry Main	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta	1870s	Village communities in India
Lai Bihari Dey	Bengal Judicial Department	1874	Village Kanhanpera in West Bengal
Baden Powel	English Civil Servant in Bengal	1896	Land in a village community like Raiyatwari village
Gilbert Slater	Prof. in Economics, University of Madras	1918	Twelve South Indian Villages
Edmund De Long Lucas	Academic dean of a Presbyterian college in India	1919	Kabirpur village in Punjab Village
H.H. Mann	Director of Agriculture, Bombay Presidency	1921	Land and Labour in a Deccan Village

table cont....

George Abraham Grierson	Superintend of Linguistic Survey of India	1926	Village life in Bihar
Mahadev Govind Ranade	Justice of the Bombay High Court	1926	Konkan Village of the then Bombay Presidency
S. Subbaram Aiyar	Madras University	1925	Malabar Village, Kerala
Frank Lugard Brayn	Administrator in Indian Civil Services	1927	His study attempts to improve the life of villagers in the Punjab Province in India
Radhakamal Mukherjee	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow	1929	The economic life of the village of the Indian Rural Society
H.A. Ali, T.K. Basu, and J. Talukdar		1931-1934	Villages nearby Santiniketan

While, in India, Rev. Lai Bihari Dey was the first Indian who wrote *Bengal Peasant Life* (1874)¹⁰, describing Indian village life in the village Kanhanpera in West Bengal, and L.P. Vidyarthi (1978)⁴³ quoted, "Taken together, this book is a refreshing and primary work in the village study, even though the data may be some what doubtful".

Therefore, the above table shows the interest in village studies in the pre-independence phase of India. After that, the post-independence period in India was critical because, at that time, Indian society was changing and developing. That's why, during the 1950s to 1970s, most of the scholars in the social sciences discipline studied Indian villages. More especially, the scholar Anthropologist or

Sociologist gave a systematic explanation of the "traditional Indian Village" and gave a glance at the village studies in India approaches to the vibrant village life and importance of it theoretically and scientifically.

Therefore, W.H. Wiser (1958)⁴⁴, an American missionary who lived in a U.P. village, Karimpur, situated near Lucknow, and did field work for five consecutive years, was the first person to carry out anthropologically oriented village studies in India. Therefore, during the post-independent phase of village studies done by different famous scholars who came to India from different institutes across the world, their names and studied villages are given below:

Name of the Scholar	Institution Name	Studied Year	Village Name	Village Under State
G. Morris Carstairs	British Anthropologist	1952	Deoli	Rajasthan
Alan R. Beals	Professor at the University of California	1952	Namhali	Karnataka
Morris Opler	American Anthropologist & who worked in Several Universities in America	1952	Senapur	Uttar Pradesh
Kathleen Gough	British Anthropologist & Feminist	1953	Thanjavur	Tamil Nadu
Henry Orenstein	Tulane University	1954	Gaon	Maharashtra
H.S. Dhillon	Indian Sociologist	1954	Haripura	Karnataka
Edward B. Harper	Brqn Maw and Haverford Colleges	1954	Totagadal	Karnataka
Scarlett Epstein	University of Sussex	1954	Wangala & Donela	Karnataka
Mckim Marriott	University of Chicago	1955	Kishangarhi	Uttar Pradesh
Kathleen Gough	British Anthropologist & Feminist	1955	Kummabapetti and Malabar	Kerala
Jyotirmoyee Sharma & Lalit Kumar Sen	Indian Sociologist	1955	Four villages in Burdwan	West Bengal
Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas	Indian Sociologist & Social Anthropologist	1955	Rampura	Karnataka
Shyama Charan Dubey	Indian Anthropologist & Sociologist	1955	Shamirpet	Andhra Pradesh
K.S. Mathur	Lucknow University	1955	Malwa	Kerala
W. Mc Cormack	University of Chicago	1956	Morsvalli & Huillipanhalli	Karnataka

table cont....

John Hitchcock	American Anthropologist & Yale Institute of Human Relations	1956	Khalapur	Uttar Pradesh
Joan P. Mencher	City University of New York	1956	South Malabar	Kerala
Frederic George Baily	British Social Anthropologist	1957	Bisipara	Orissa
Oscar Lewis	American Anthropologist	1958	Rampur	Uttar Pradesh
D.N. Majumdar	Indian Anthropologist	1958	Mohana	Uttar Pradesh
Govind Sadashiv Ghurye	Indian Sociologist	1958	Haweli Taluka	Maharashtra
Adolph Christian Mayer	London School of Economics	1960	Ramkhedi	Uttar Pradesh
Gouranga Chattopadhyay	Faculty in Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (India)	1960	Ranjana	West Bengal
Alan R. Beals	Professor at the University of California	1960	Gopalpur	Karnataka
Geital P. Steed	Columbia University	1960s	Kasandra	Ahmedabad
Robbins Burling	American Anthropologist and Sociolinguistics	1961	Rishangangi	Meghalaya
Alan Beals	University of California	1962	Gopalpur	Karnataka
William Weiser	American Anthropologist	1963	Karimpur	Uttar Pradesh
Lalita Prasad Vidyarthi	Indian Anthropologist, Ranchi University	1967	Ghaghra	The then Bihar
Brij Raj Chauhan	Indian Sociologist	1967	Sadri	Rajasthan
K Ishwaran	York University, Canada	1968	Shivapura	Karnataka
Edward Jay	Tulane University	1970	Orchha	Madhya Pradesh
Paul Gordon Herbert	American Missiologist	1971	Konduru	Andhra Pradesh

The above table shows that all the eminent scholars did their work on Indian villages, and most of them came from different nations, but they all studied the Indian village. Maybe the aspects of their studies were different, but all of them showed interest in exploring the Indian village, and at that time, the whole period of the fifties to seventies in Indian Anthropology may be aptly called the decade of village studies. While the noticeable fact is that very few scholars were Indian among them. An appraisal of the village studies reflects the vast and varied field covered by the anthropological, sociological, and economic studies, and these significant studies illustrated both the methodological and theoretical points of Indian villages over the period.

Therefore, the anthropologically oriented village studies gained in India after national independence became academically fashionable in the post-independence period through the academic works of American anthropologists like Morris Opler³³, David Mandelbaum²⁶, McKim Marriott²⁷, and Oscar Lewis³⁴, and Indian anthropologists like M.N. Srinivas³⁹⁻⁴², S.C. Dube^{11,12}, and D.N. Majumdar^{24,25}. However, the 1950s were the most important turning point in the history of village studies in

India. Indian Village by S.C. Dube, Village India (ed.) by McKim Marriott²⁷, and India's Villages (ed.) by M.N. Srinivas⁴⁰⁻⁴² were published this year, and these publications created a great sensation among Indian as well as foreign anthropologists who had evinced keen interest in village study.

While Marriott's²⁷ emphasis on little communities and great communities was brought out in Village India, defining small communities was not about land but through other social institutions such as kinship, religion, and the social organization of caste. On the other hand, S.C. Dube¹³ stated that the traditional village is an essential and central unit of Indian social life. Rather, rural development, solutions to rural problems, and A.R. Desai's⁹ study of the rural organization's structure, function, and evolution have become not only necessary but also urgent after the advent of independence. With the growing influences of industrialization and urbanization, the village is the basic unit of study. The scientific research of village communities in India required democratic decentralization. In modern India, the needs of rural society are urgent, and it is progressive for social science to gain importance.

However, the images of village India as perceived by Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar have to be analyzed. The views of Gandhi on the Indian village have been traced since his substantive and better known writings date from after his return to India from South Africa²². However, Gandhi¹⁵ considered the Indian village a site of dependability, of the "real" or "pure" India, uncorrupted by Western influence. In the view of the freedom movement, the image of a free India replicating colonial city life was bitter upside down. The majority of the people lived in Indian villages, and Gandhi's perception of the new nation was founded on them. However, after post-independence, real Swaraj engrossed the autonomy and self-sufficiency of villages and village communities by getting rid of the changes brought about by colonial rule in village life.

Although, in contrast to Nehru, he never identified the village as the site of future transformation, the "village republics" of the concept considered by Nehru were characterized by different problems. Reviving the traditional social order and caste hierarchies was the unbelieving image of the Indian village, which became economically self-sufficient.

Village Studies in Late Twenty Century

In the mid-nineties, anthropological and sociological research in India primarily focused on the study of villages as the basic unit of analysis of rural India. An understanding of every village is a specific socio-economic system, the organization of which influences socio-economic relationships within the village (Dasgupta 1978; Connell and Lipton 1977).^{6,8} Jayaraman and Lanjouw (1999)²¹ illustrated that village studies not only provide a more "contextualized and grounded perspective on the life of rural households, highlighting relationships between households and their surrounding community, and illustrating the role of village institutions," but also help evaluate the reliability of information from large scale surveys, document diverse experiences of heterogeneous villages, emphasize difference, and inspire further research on specific issues of village life in India. In village studies, socio-cultural environments and production conditions are essential factors in determining the living and working conditions of people in villages. For instance, village studies can study the inter connectedness of class, caste, and diverse processes of social change to determine gender contradictions at the village level and how these determine each other in turn.

However, village studies in India are not limited to specific issues concerning village societies. In

terms of methodology, at least for a long time, they incorporated social anthropological and political economic approaches. Several relevant studies, such as Breman (1974)⁴, Harriss (1982)¹⁷, and Ramachandran (1990)³⁵, suggest that village studies should be multidisciplinary and examine different aspects of material and non-material lives in local, regional, national, and global contexts (Dasgupta 1975; Nagaraj 2008).⁷⁻¹³ Hoben and Timberger (1980)²⁰ pointed to the complementarity between village studies and macro data and the depth and validity of village studies as a methodology. Harriss (2008)¹⁸ argues that village studies must focus on the "analysis of the inter relations of different dimensions of social life kinship, religion and ritual, politics, as well as caste and class." In this understanding, the village remains "a conjuncture of much wider processes and relationships" (Harriss 1982).¹⁷

The very nature of village studies ensures that (as is not the case with other survey methods), "unconventional" opinions and views in respect of social, political, and ecological factors from respondents can be recorded (Omvedt 1979).³² In a society such as India with limited capitalist transformation, the agrarian question needs to be analyzed within a methodological framework where political economy concerns documenting historical changes in agrarian relations, supplemented by an understanding of the contextual processes involved in the transition. Here, this means at the local village level, macroeconomic changes (or issues of class and caste) form the components of the "mutual determination of part and whole" in a dialectical unity (Harriss 1982).¹⁷ The framework of village studies also allows us to move beyond the analytical dualities of ideology and action, class and caste, and meanings and reality by integrating social reality with political action (Herring and Agarwala 2006; Harriss 1982).¹⁷⁻¹⁹ This framework is based on an inductive approach where diversity in the form and modes of agrarian relations is expected and is part of the research design (Byres 1986).³

However, up until the advent of the British in India, as professor Ramakrishna Mukherjee²⁹⁻³⁰ wrote, her social organization was predominantly characterized by the village community system. India still lives in the village. The village is one of the three essential institutions of society in India; the other two are, respectively, caste and joint family. They have survived not only the onslaught of foreign invasion but also absorbed new forces of social and cultural change and adapted themselves

to the demands and challenges posed to them.

A village is usually a transparent social and territorial entity, not only in the records and accounts of the government's administration but also in the eyes of its inhabitants. But the people who take part in the community activities of a village are not so clearly bound.

The central social locale is the village, the heart of the inhabitants. The groups involved are primarily the families and caste groups of the same village and its vicinity for certain essential goods and services, rather than the whole castes of a region. "To a villager", Mandelbaum writes,²⁶ "His village is more than just a collection of houses, lanes, and fields; it is a prime social reality". Precisely because of this reason, M.N. Srinivas³⁹ has considered the "Indian village community" as a vital component, along with caste and joint family, of the Indian social structure. The famous French sociologist Louis Dumont¹⁴ and some others have doubted the significance of the village as a corporate group. These doubts have come up, in part, because of the exaggerated notion of village autonomy that was once prevalent.

Characteristic Features of Indian Village

Following Mandelbaum,²⁶ M.N. Srinivas,³⁹ D.N. Mazumdar,²⁵ and S.C. Dude,¹³ we may indicate several distinctive socio-cultural features of the Indian village community. These are:

1. *Relative Self-sufficiency*

A traditional village in India is self-sufficient in several respects. A village is a unit of production as well as consumption. Most of the social interaction takes place between people belonging to the same village. Politically, there is less interference from the outside world. Conflicts arising from inter-caste or intra-caste rivalries are resolved through panchayats. The panchayat also acts to reinforce the respective rights and duties of each caste group in the village.

Possibly, these relatives and the casually observed self-sufficiency of the village prompted Sir Charles Metcalfe, one of the founding administrations of British rule in India, to regard the founding village as a monolithic, atomistic, and unchanged entity. Metcalfe wrote: "The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves and independent of foreign relations". He further wrote that wars passed over it, regimes came and went, but the village as a society always emerged "unchanged, unspoken, and self-sufficient." This view of Metcalfe got reasserted in

the writings of many notable thinkers like Henry Maine, Karl Marx, and Mahatma Gandhi.

Modern anthropological studies, however, have produced a different picture. The Indian village was not static but had changed from time to time, and it was not self-sufficient. The whole nature of traditional society militated against the independent isolation of a village. In earlier days, there was a good deal of coming and going among communities in a village. There were several reasons.

- A village is usually multicasht, but the number of castes in each village is not sufficient to carry out the multifunctional roles a village requires, of necessity. This compels a village to enter into some arrangements with the specialized caste groups of another village.
- Marriage affiliation takes place within the caste group. A village, more often than not, is inhabited by a particular sub-caste of the endogamous caste group. This necessitates a villager seeking alliances from other villages.
- Markets are a primary reason for traveling within a locality. People from adjoining areas come to attend weekly markets and interact with one another.
- Village folks, especially the old ones, go on pilgrimages to visit places like Varanasi, Prayag, Dwarka, Rameswaram, and so on. This brings the villagers into contact with the town's people as well as the people of other places.
- There is also religious attraction of another kind. A village ceremony may bring visitors from hundreds of other villages. In every region, there are holy places to which people go on fixed days or at any time when impelled by pressing needs.

Thus, the village was never entirely a closed or self-sufficient unit. Links of various kinds radiated from it, connecting its members to other individuals outside. Villagers have maintained significant ties with people in urban centers since the beginning of civilization. Improved communication and economic development have enhanced such relations with the country towns, which provide villages with their closest substantial link to the broader Indian society. Indian villages today are much less self-sufficient and autonomous than they were in the past.

2. *The microcosm of Caste Society*

A village is usually multi-caste. The pattern of interactions among the various caste groups

is governed by ritual hierarchy, which in turn manifests in rules governing commensality, population, occupation, and marriage. Observant attention was invariably drawn to the internal cleavage in the village community the very settlement pattern, the daily avoidances, the division of labour and power.¹ Such fractures tend to over shadow village solidarity.

3. *Hierarchy of Settlement Pattern*

The geography of a village follows a fixed pattern. Each caste usually has a separate settlement ward. In Gujrat, such areas are called aliya." In Karnataka, these are referred to as Keri, and in Maharashtra, Wada. This type of segregation is also found in other parts of India. Sometimes this principle of aggregation and discrimination based on caste leads to a "village" formed of a few discrete hamlets. Everywhere, the so called "untouchables", the Dalits, live separately from the caste Hindus. A quarter at some distance from other village neighbourhoods is often marked off for families of untouchable castes. The members of a ward show a strong sense of unity. This is partly territorial and partly due to the existence of other ties, such as those of caste and lineage. Inter-ward disputes occasionally occur, like inter-village disputes. However, the very division into wards enforces interdependence because of the caste wise division of labour. The weaving of stratified castes into unity based on the division of labour and common loyalty to the village may be called "vertical solidarity," as distinguished from "horizontal solidarity," i.e., the solidarity of a caste.

4. *Jajmani as a System of Exchange*

The castes living in a village, or a group of villages, are bound together by economic as well as some social and cultural ties. Under the jajmani system, some castes are patrons, and others are service castes (Kamin). The service castes offer their services to the landowning caste and, in turn, are paid in cash and kind. These castes are generally under an obligation to serve the patron castes and their families. Sometimes, particularly on festivals and auspicious occasions, they also get "gifts" from their jajmans. The system, though much weakened due to the influence of market forces, contacts with towns, and migration, is found all over India and is called by different names. In Jajman in the north, Bara Balute in Maharashtra, Mirasi in Chennai, and Adade in Karnataka, the relationship between a Jajman and his kamin is unequal since the latter is regarded as inferior. Though primarily an economic or ritual tie, it tends to spread to other

fields. It reflects the differential rights of every caste in the land.

5. *Village Solidarity*

The residents of the village live in close proximity. Meeting each other and interacting more frequently than they do with people from different villages. The village is usually an administrative and revenue unit; the villagers have some shared experience in the school, in the post office, and in revenue collection. The villager's closest economic associates are within his village. The villagers have, in the words of Mandelbaum,²⁶ "separate hearths and a common home". Their very life experiences develop a sense of unity and identity. This sense of solidarity is reflected in various contexts.

- People speak of their family village as home when they are away from home, and villagers identify themselves and those whom they meet as belonging to their villages.
- Villages have histories and mythologies. They have a reputation, both general and specific to groups, and families partake of their villages' first or wrong names.
- Village solidarity is also commonly expressed in village ceremonies. These ceremonies include both calendrical festivals and festivals of village deities. The participation of the whole village in the latter is axiomatic, while in the former it may cut across caste lines. Ritual occasions, e.g., life-cycle ceremonies, require the cooperation of several castes. Certain rituals, which are typical for all the castes, occur at birth, a girl's puberty, marriage, and death.
- The temple organization itself requires the coming together of several castes: a priest, a sweeper, a gardener, and devotees. Naturally, all castes in a village are participants in one way or another.
- In many parts of India, villagers believe that Kali, Shitala, and Mari goddesses preside over epidemic diseases like smallpox, cholera, and plague. An outbreak of these diseases was attributed to the goddesses, and their propitiation followed. The priest is usually a member of the non-brahmin caste and occasionally even a Dalit. Members of all castes, including Brahmins, send their contributions in cash as well as in kind to the ritual propitiation.
- The functioning of the village as a political and social entity brings together members of all castes. There is the traditional village

panchayat, which, though run by locally dominant castes, usually includes a few representatives from the other caste. This was in addition to the caste panchayat. Every village has a headman, generally belonging to the dominant caste. Besides, every village has a watchman and a messenger. Thus, the village looks like it is acting as a social unit.

6. *Factionalism*

Village solidarity aside, every village witnesses elements of factionalism in its daily round of activities. There are many bases for factionalism, such as economics, kinship ties, caste affiliation, new political consciousness, etc. With the breakdown of Jajmani relations, many Kamin castes have shifted their allegiance to new groups, usually outside the village, namely urban businessmen. Modern politics has led to the strengthening of what sociologists call "horizontal solidarity", that is, the solidarity of caste. Now castes belonging to different villages come together to act as a "pressure group", and this has a unique bearing on the traditional power structure. Improved means of transportation and mass India have further consolidated this trend towards factionalism.

But even a fractious village has absolute unity simply because it is "a node" for the activities of its inhabitants. Typically, the village is where a man grew up, where his close kin live, where his work patterns and helpers are, where his friends are found, where he worships, and where he is known and placed.

Importance of Village Studies

Village studies have their influence. These have enriched the knowledge of Indian Society in general and rural India in particular. These have given great encouragement to the growth of rural society. After independence, planners in India realized that unless Indian villages were adequately studied, no real progress could be made. Scholars now began to pay more and more attention to village studies.

1. *Village studies Assist Rural Planning:* According to M.N. Srinivas,^{40,41} village studies provide detailed information regarding various aspects of rural life. In these studies, either the holistic nature of the village communities discussed or certain specific aspects of rural life are emphasized. The planning commission gave maximum attention to solving the social problems of rural India with the help of village studies

as well. From village studies, various aspects of rural life, for example, the extent of subdivision and fragmentation of holdings, the nature of rural credit, the conditions of landless labourers etc., are derived. It helps in planning rural reconstruction.

2. *Village studies provide valuable Information:* The sociologists and social anthropologists collect data to study different villages their several aspects, their problems, etc. The collected data are more accurate, reliable, and unbiased. Hence, these are highly useful for other social scientists. Economists, political scientists, and others raise these. Village studies also provide historians with a lot of information about rural social life.
3. *Village studies provide Social Reality:* The significance of village studies is such that sometimes their value may extend beyond national boundaries. But, indeed, an understanding of different aspects of social reality is highly influenced by Indo-European literature. Village studies have assumed sociological and socio-anthropological Importance.

Drawbacks of Village Studies in India

According to S.C. Dube,¹³ one should be very critical about their validity and be aware of their limitations. He speaks of a few limitations of such studies.

- a. Village studies are not often represented in nature.
- b. Village studies exaggerate the unity and self-sufficiency of the village. Here, unity and solidarity in the village are over emphasized. It ignores the connecting links with other units of society.
- c. Village studies are influenced by alien concepts. Those who under take village studies blindly imitate western methods, western styles, and Western models.

CONCLUSION

The studies of Indian villages carried out by social anthropologists during the 1950s and 1960s were undoubtedly an essential landmark in the history of Indian social sciences. Even though the primary focus of these studies was on the social and ritual lives of the village people, there are enough references that can be useful pointers towards

an understanding of the political and economic growth in the rural society of India during the first two decades of independent India.

However, Village studies in India lead to several points of methodological, theoretical, and scientific exploration. While the pre-independent phase of village studies in India was factual with the least awareness of the methodological complexity, in the post-independent period of village studies in India, aspects of unity were discovered with increasing interest among social anthropologists and sociologists. The village has a political role, and the religious interactions of the village are essential features, which are also reflected in several village studies. They also pointed to the regional differences in the way social village life was organized in different parts of the country.

To conclude, village studies in India, which had a crude beginning in the socio-economic survey, have progressed during the last one and a half decades, and these village studies illustrated how the macro survey was replaced by microcosmic studies of those selected villages, which led to the development of the analytical phase of rural studies. These several studies reflected the anthropological point of view, and such a turning point could be possible due to familial contact with the American anthropologist and their interest in village studies in India. During the mid-nineties, village studies in India were a fascination among anthropologists and Sociologists. Rather, anthropologists during the decades of the fifties and sixties generally focused on structures rather than changes. This pre-occupation made them look for the sources that reproduced social order in the village and ignore conflict and the possible causes of social transformation.

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