



INDIAN SCHOOL AL WADI AL KABIR TERM 2: Chapter 7- Indian Sociologists (GRADE XI) Question Bank & Answer Key

SUB TOPICS FROM THE CHAPTER:

- Introduction
- Accidental Anthropologists (L.K Ananthakrishna & Sarat Chandra Roy)
- G.S. Ghurye
- D.P Mukherjee
- A.R Desai
- M.N Srinivas

Q1. How did Ananthakrishna Iyer and Sarat Chandra Roy come to practice social anthropology? (4marks)

Answer: The pioneer of social anthropology in India was L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer (1861-1937).

- L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer was asked by the Dewan of Cochin to assist with an ethnographic survey of the state.
- The British government wanted similar surveys done in all the princely states as well as the presidency areas directly under its control, Ananthakrishna did this work on a purely voluntary basis.
- L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer was the first self-taught anthropologist to receive national and international recognition as a scholar and an academician.

Practice of Social Anthropology by Sarat Chandra Roy

- Sarat Chandra Roy was deeply interested in tribal society as a byproduct of his professional need to interpret tribal customs and laws to the court.
- Roy published more than one hundred articles in leading Indian and British academic journals in addition to his famous monographs on the Oraon, the Mundas and the Kharias.
- He founded the journal Man in India in 1922, the earliest journal of its kind in India.

G. S. GHURYE on Caste and Race

Caste and Race

- (i) Herbert Risley thought humans can be divided into separate races on the basis of physical characteristics (length of nose, size of skull etc.)
- (ii) He believed India was a 'Lab' for studying evolution of racial types because inter-caste marriage is prohibited.
- (iii) He argued caste originated in race because different caste groups seemed to belong to distinct racial types.
- (iv) He suggested that lower castes were original inhabitants and subjugated by Aryans.
- (v) Ghurye believed Risley's theory was true only for north India. In other parts of India, inter-group differences were not very large.
- (vi) Thus 'racial purity' was preserved only in north India and in rest of the country, endogamy was introduced into already racially varied groups.

Features of caste

- (i) Based on segmental division : Society divided into number of mutually exclusive segments decided by birth.
- (ii) Based on hierarchical division : Each caste strictly unequal to every other castes. No castes are ever equal.
- (iii) Involves restrictions on social interaction (especially food-sharing)
- (iv) Involves differential rights and duties.
- (v) Restricts the choice of occupation : It is also decided by birth and is hereditary.
- (vi) Involves strict restrictions on marriage : Only endogamy is allowed

Debate between protectionist and Nationalist in regard to tribal culture

PROTECTIONIST

- (a) British anthropologists were interested in studying the tribal culture of India.
- (b) They believe that assimilation of tribal culture with main stream Hinduism will lead to exploitation of tribal people by Hindus and thus their culture should be protected and preserved.

NATIONALIST

- (a) Believe in unity of India and the need for modernizing Indian society and culture.
- (b) They believe that attempt to preserve tribal culture were misguided and resulted in maintaining tribes in a backward state.

Question 2. What were the main arguments on either side of the debate about how to relate to tribal communities?

Answer:

Many British administrator – anthropologists were especially interested in the tribes of India and believed them to be primitive peoples with a distinctive culture far from mainstream of Hinduism.

- They believed that the innocent and simple tribal would suffer exploitation in the society.
- They felt that the state had a duty to protect the tribes and to help them sustain their way of life and culture, which were facing constant pressure to assimilate with mainstream of Hindu culture.
- They believed that attempts to preserve tribal cultures were misguided and resulted in maintaining tribals in backward regions.

G.S. Ghurye became the best-known exponent of the nationalist view. He insisted on characterizing the tribes of India as ‘backward Hindus’ rather than distinct cultural groups.

Main points of differences:

- The differences were how the impact of mainstream culture was evaluated. The protectionist’ believed that assimilation would result in the severe exploitation and cultural extinction of the tribals.
- Ghurye and the nationalists argued that these ill-effects were not specific to tribal cultures, but were common to all the backward and downtrodden sections of Indian society.

Question 3. Summarize the social anthropological definition of caste according to Ghurye.

Answer:

Social anthropological definition of caste is as follows:

- **Caste is based on segmental division:** Caste is an institution based on segmental division. This means that caste society is divided into a number of closed, mutually exclusive segments or compartments.
- **Caste is based on hierarchical division:** Caste society is based on hierarchical division. Each caste is strictly unequal to every other caste.
- **Caste imposes restriction on social interaction:** The institution of caste necessarily imposes restrictions on social interaction, especially the sharing of food.
- **Differential rights and duties for different castes:** Following the principles of hierarchy and restricted social interaction, caste also involves differential rights and duties of different castes.
- **Restriction on the choice of occupation:** Caste restricts the choice of occupation, which, like caste itself, is decided by birth and is hereditary.

- **It Imposes strict restrictions on marriage:** Caste involves strict restrictions on marriage. 'Caste endogamy', or marriage only within the caste, is often accompanied by rules about 'exogamy', or whom one may not marry.

D. P. MUKHERJEE on tradition and change

Tradition

- (i) According to D. P. Mukherjee, India was based on the centrality of society. Therefore he studied the social traditions of India.
- (ii) His study was not oriented only towards the past but included sensitivity to change.
- (iii) Living Tradition : Tradition not only maintaining its links with the past but also adapting to the present and thus evolving over time.
- (iv) Argued : Indian society was not individualistic, it is oriented towards group, sect or caste-action.
- (v) Root meaning of word Tradition' is to transmit. Traditions are rooted in past and kept alive through repeated recalling and retelling of stories and myths.

Change

- (i) Three principles of change — Shruti, Smriti and Anubhay. Anubhav (personal experience) is a revolutionary principle.
- (ii) However, in India, personal experience turns into collective experience.
- (iii) For, D. P. Mukherjee, the discursive reason (Buddhi-vichar) is not dominant force' of change but prem (love) and Anubhava — are superior agents of change.
- (iv) Collective experience leads to conflict and rebellion.
- (v) Resilience of tradition ensures that the pressure of conflict produces change in the tradition without breaking it.

Question 4. What does D.P. Mukerji mean by a 'living tradition'? Why did he insist that Indian sociologists must be rooted in this tradition?

Answer:

According to D.P. Mukherji, this is a tradition which maintains links with the past by retaining something from it, and at the same time incorporates new things.

A living tradition thus includes some old elements but also some new ones.

What D.P. Mukherji insisted Indian sociologists should be rooted in living tradition to get a better and more concrete sense of what this means.

First duty of an Indian sociologist is to study and to know the social traditions of India. For Mr. Mukherji, this study of tradition was not oriented only towards the past, but also included sensitivity to change. An Indian sociologist he insisted must be an Indian first, i.e., he is to share in the folk-ways to mores, customs and traditions, for the purpose of understanding his social system and what lies beneath it and beyond it.

- D.P. Mukerji argued that Indian culture and society are not individualistic in the western sense.
- Indian social system is basically oriented towards group, sect or caste-action, not voluntaristic individual action.

III. A. R. DESAI on state

A. Features of welfare state

- (i) Welfare state is a positive state.
 - It does not seek to do only the minimum necessary to maintain law and order.
 - It is interventionist state and uses its powers to implement policies of social welfare.
- (ii) It is a democratic state.
 - Democracy is essential for welfare state.
 - Formal democratic institutions especially multi-party elections are a defining feature.
- (iii) It involves a mixed economy.
 - Mixed economy is an economy in which both private and public enterprises exist.
 - Welfare state does not eliminate capitalist market and nor prevents public investments.

B. Criteria to measure the performance of welfare state

- (i) It ensures freedom from poverty, social discrimination and security for all its citizens.
- (ii) It removes inequalities of income through redistribution of wealth and preventing the concentration of wealth.
- (iii) It transforms economy in such a way that capital profit motive is made subservient to the needs of the community.
- (iv) It ensures stable development free from the cycle of economic booms and depressions.
- (v) It provides employment for all.

C. Claims of 'welfare state' are exaggerated

- (i) Most modern capitalist states, even in most developed countries, fail to provide minimum levels of economic and social security to all their citizens.
- (ii) They are unable to reduce economic inequality and often seem to encourage it.
- (iii) They have been unsuccessful at enabling stable development free from market fluctuations.
- (iv) There is a presence of excess economic capacity yet high levels of unemployment.

Question 5. What is a welfare state? (2 marks) Why is A.R. Desai critical of the claims made on its behalf? (4marks)

Answer:

- A welfare state is that which looks after the welfare of the people concerned with different aspects
 - i.e., political, economic, social, religious, cultural, developmental, etc. of the people.
 - The modern capitalist state was one of the significant themes that interested A.R. Desai.

Desai identifies the following unique features of the welfare state:

- **A welfare state is a positive state.** This means that unlike the ‘laissez faire’ of classical liberal political theory, the welfare state does not seek to do only the minimum necessary to maintain law and order.
- **A welfare state involves a mixed economy.** A ‘mixed economy’ means an economy where both private capitalist enterprises and state or public owned enterprises co-exist.
- **A welfare state does not seek to eliminate the capitalist market,** nor does it prevent public investment in industry and other fields. By and large, the state sector concentrates on basic goods and social infrastructure, while private industry dominates the consumer goods sector.

What are some criteria that A.R Desai has suggested to check the performance of a welfare state? (4marks)

A.R. Desai suggests some test criteria against which the performance of the welfare state can be measured. These are:

- **Freedom from poverty, discrimination and security for all:** The welfare state ensures freedom from poverty, social discrimination and security for all its citizens.
- **Equality of income:** The welfare state removes inequalities of income through measures to redistribute income from the rich to the poor, and by preventing the concentration of wealth.
- **Preference to real needs of community:** The welfare state transforms the economy in such a way that the capitalist profit motive is made subservient to the real needs of the community.
- **Stable development:** The welfare state ensures stable development free from the cycle of economic booms and depressions.
- **Employment:** It provides employment for all.

M. N. SRINIVAS on village

M. N. Srinivas's writings

His writings on the village were of two broad types.

- (a) First, there was ethnographic accounts of fieldwork done in villages.
- (b) A second kind of writing included historical and conceptual discussions about Indian villages.

Louis Dumont view of villages

- (i) He thought that social institution like caste were more important than villages, which was after all only a collection of people living in a particular place.
- (ii) He described Indian villages are unchanging, self-sufficient and 'little republics'.

Srinivas's views against Louis Dumont

- (i) Believed that village was a relevant social entity. History shows that villages have served as a unifying identity.
- (ii) He criticised Dumont's view of villages as unchanging, self-sufficient little republics. He showed that the village had, in fact, experienced considerable change.
- (iii) Villages were never self-sufficient and had been involved in various kinds of economic, social and political relationships at regional level.

Significance of villages

- (i) The village as a site of research offered many advantages to Indian sociology.
- (ii) It provided an opportunity to illustrate the importance of ethnographic research methods.
- (iii) It offered eye-witness accounts of the rapid social change that was taking place in the Indian countryside as newly independent nation began a programme of planned development.
- (iv) Because of these vivid descriptions, policy makers were able to form impressions of what was going on in the heartland of India,
- (v) Village studies thus provided a new role for a discipline like sociology in the context of an independent nation.

Question 6. What is the significance of village studies in the history of Indian sociology? What role did M.N. Srinivas play in promoting village studies?

- India is a country of villages.
- More than 65 percent people reside in rural area of India.
- Village studies are important if we want to challenge the incomplete and wrong factual and informative knowledge of western sociologists who had done their research work keeping in view the imperial interest, ideologies and policies of the British government.
- M.N. Srinivas produced a significant body of work on Indian society and certain issues related with rural life in India.
- The Indian village and village society remained a lifelong focus of interest for Srinivas.
- Srinivas helped, encouraged and coordinated a major collective effort at producing detailed ethnographic accounts of village society during the 1950s and 1960s.