

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We have now concluded our observations with regard to the changes that took place in Gujarati society during the 19th century under the impact of an external force. As indicated in our introduction, the primary object of this study is to make Gujarati society a case study to find out how, a traditional society when it comes in contact with a modern society undergoes transformation as a result of peculiar contact between two distinct types of social systems. We had undertaken this study with a view also to assess how far the types of changes observed by different scholars in Africa and other countries<sup>1</sup> which also were affected by the impact of modern western social system could be located even in a more complex feudal traditional social structure like that of Gujarat. Our object also was to find out whether the changes that took place under the impact of British rule - an external force - in Gujarat were exhibiting characteristics which are as pointed out by outstanding scholars, elements of modern secular and achieving social systems. Further our object was also to locate how certain unique features emerged both in the newly evolving social structure based on new principles and in the traditional social structure which was subjected to certain modifications as a result of the contact with the new social system.

During our study we observed how Gujarati society on the eve of the British rule exhibited all the characteristics of traditional ascriptive society. With a view to test our hypothesis formulated in the introduction, we then examined the characteristics of the Britishers. It was found that they possessed the features of a modern industrial social system. We then tried to locate the exact nature of the impact which the representatives of the modern system made on the various systems of social

relationships and interactions of traditional Gujarati society. In our examination of the changes brought about within the political, economic, educational, communicational, social and cultural sub-systems of Gujarat, we found that ~~resulted~~ in Gujarat being made politically a part of the Indian empire which itself was a part of the British Empire leading to the widening and deepening of political relationships among the Gujarati people. The above-mentioned changes further led to the emergence of the consciousness of Gujarati nationality and of Indian nation among a small sensitive section of the intelligentsia. Further it also led to changes in the fundamental principles underlying the administrative structure as revealed by the introduction of the 'legal rational' principle as a basis for the complex bureaucratic organization. It also altered the very philosophy underlying political authority by separating law from other regulative systems and establishing its supremacy over other regulative systems.

In the economic field, we observed how British rule introduced private property in land, payment of revenue in cash and a shift in the objective of production. We also noticed that a new status system based on wealth was created leading to the emergence of new classes such as absentee landlords, money-lenders, peasant proprietors, tenants and land labourers in the rural areas. In the urban economic system, we noticed how, the ruination of artisan industries took place, dislocating the traditional balance between handicrafts and trade. Further, we also observed the emergence of new forms of business organizations and forms of production, relying more on the use of money as a medium of exchange and contractual relationships. This change as we observed resulted in the emergence of a modern class system in the urban areas. These changes in rural and urban economy, as we have observed ushered in a new framework

of economic system based on modern economic principles.\*

The changes in the educational system, as observed by us, comprised of secularization of education, gradation of the courses of education and elaborate bureaucratic organization of the institutions imparting education based on the 'legal-rational' framework. We further noticed the emergence of a new category of educated intelligentsia nurtured in new values and pioneering numerous modern social, cultural and political movements.

One of the major developments in the 19th century Gujarat, as we observed, was the growth of new means of communication of ideas which manifested itself through journalism, serious publications and new creative literature.

In the field of social relationships, we observed how a complicated transformation in the traditional social institution like caste took place. We observed how the changes in the caste system took peculiar turns, e.g., shift in the influence of certain castes, utilization of some of the modern elements for strengthening themselves by certain castes, innovation developed by certain castes to internally reform themselves to suit the new requirements and further to bring about a peculiar linkage between the traditional status with the status arising out of modern traits.

In the social field, we also noticed the slow change that was taking place in the position of woman in Gujarati society. We further observed that in any other society just as 'modernization brings in its wake a proliferation of interest groups and associations',<sup>2</sup> in Gujarat also a new category of grouping in the form of voluntary associations emerged

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\*It may be mentioned here that Wilbert Moore, in his work on 'Social Change' enumerates nearly seventeen implications for social structure as a result of industrialization. (Social Change, pp. 102-105).

in the 19th century.

In the cultural field, we observed how the new values in the form of respect for individual, rationalism, secularism and the idea of development in the form of evolution and progress emerged in the 19th century Gujarat.

All these changes which occurred in the Gujarati society in the 19th century, reveal how the traditional Gujarati society was experiencing a qualitative transformation in its structural basis, demanding different types of functions from the institutional sub-systems of that structure. Our study clearly indicates how during the 19th century, a rival social system based on the criterion adopted by eminent scholars had emerged and entered into a keen contest with the traditional system.

Further as we have observed, this new social system did not emerge as a result of internal developments in the society but was a product of extraneous force. Our study showed that in complex societies not only have external sources have a limited application, but also because the new social system was inaugurated to suit the colonial needs of the British rulers and was worked out to the extent necessary to ensure their political rule over the country, this system exhibited numerous limitations as well as compromises with the traditional social structure. For example, the British rulers while introducing a modern political system continued to perpetuate the traditional feudal kings. Similarly while extending the rule of law, it gave certain concessions to certain traditional groups as well as permitted certain types of customs to persist. It also did not bring uniformity in laws connected with matters pertaining to certain personal aspects of life, like marriage, inheritance, etc. Similar distortions and modifications in other fields have also been introduced

as pointed<sup>out</sup> in our study. In short, the new social system having been created to suit the needs of foreign rulers, definitely created on the one side a new framework of modern society within Gujarat, but <sup>on the other</sup> suffered from numerous limitations. It also did not replace completely the old social systems, but remained as a rival system competing with the traditional social system. Boskoff while describing the transitional phase of a society mentions, "a precarious attachment to both the established and the innovative, with resultant a chaos of contradictory alternatives that soon leads to new tensions and recurrent social cleavages between generations and classes (in our case castes also.)"<sup>3</sup> This unique feature of the emergence of a new social system generated peculiar problems within Gujarati society. On the one hand it created problems of rectifying or breaking the limitations within the newly emerged modern system, e.g., it created the problems of the modern system based on foreign rule to be transformed into modern system based on self rule. Similarly it created the problems of extending and deepening the modern educational system which was introduced on a very limited scale by the British rule. Similarly the problem of breaking the chains on modern forms of production by extending these forms locally and which resulted into the movements for Swadeshi and protection was also an effort to break the limitations within the modern system introduced by British rule.

Along with the conflicts which were generated in the process of breaking the limitations on the modern system, we find that a number of problems emerged in Gujarati society to counteract the peculiar nature of interrelations which were built up between the old and the new social systems.

Thus we find that the new system which arose not out of internal developments but as a result of the impact of foreign conquest, perpetuated

co-existence (though constantly conflicting) of two types of social systems and further created a condition whereby some of the traditional institutions and mores dovetailed themselves into the modern system thereby almost becoming a semi-organic part of the new system. As observed earlier, the caste though loses some of its traditional features, evolves new traits whereby it functions as an agency in the form of voluntary association to look after the particular needs of caste members. As pointed out by R. Mukherjee, the caste system in its social aspect although lost its previous economic basis in society, it expected a simultaneous existence with the new economic structure which emerged under British rule by dovetailing itself into the latter.<sup>4</sup>

Further, as pointed out by Govardhanram Tripathi, this type of situation created a dual personality of the individual.<sup>5</sup>

Having evaluated the nature of the new social system which was germinating and taking shape in Gujarati society and further having pointed out how due to the peculiar nature in which it emerged in Gujarati society, as a super-imposed system on the traditional society, we should however note that in spite of its limitations, the new social system had penetrated the fabric of Gujarati life in such vital matters that the problem of it being thrown away by the old forces and reverting to past traditional basis, became an impossibility. The new social system though limited weak and surrounded by a thick fog of traditional values, customs and institutions, had dealt a decisive and mortal blow to the central core of the traditional society, and therefore the struggles which developed during the 20th century are the struggles of the values underlying the modern social system trying to work out an appropriate institutional and international framework for their appropriate expression. The developments

of movements which we find in the 20th century in political, economic, educational, social and cultural systems are basically the movements to destroy the prevalence of the traditional customs, and institutions as we-all well as to break the limitations which still persist in the new social system as a result of its emergence under the impact of a foreign rule which created these limitations.

We can now conclude our analysis of social change by stating that a new direction to social change was imparted to the Gujarati society during the 19th century and it~~s~~ experienced a qualitative transformation (however limited it may be), which lifted it to a new type of social structure founded on the basis of achievement, secularism and legal-rational <sup>norms</sup> ~~basis~~.

#### References

1. Becker & Boskoff, Modern Sociological Theory in Continuity and Change, pp. 280-81.
2. Wilbert Moore, Social Change, p. 104.
3. Becker & Boskoff, op. cit., p. 299.
4. Mukherjee, Ramkrishna, The Dynamics of a Rural Society, p.80.
5. Tripathi, Govardhanram, Gujarati Lekh Sangrah, p. 115.