

## **CHAPTER III**

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND STRATEGY OF ENQUIRY**

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## **Introduction**

The primary concern of this chapter is to present the various sociological theories by which social mobility and change could be studied. And from among these various theories the most appropriate theoretical approach/s used to analyze the present study would be discussed in detail. After the brief examination of the theoretical approaches, the various scientific research methods by which the data for the study have been collected are presented. So, in order to reach the aims of the present study, a detailed plan of work and sequential procedure, and operational definitions of the terms used in the study are also explained briefly. Besides this the tools and techniques and the strategy of enquiry used in the study to find answers to the research questions posed for the study are also presented here.

### **III. 1. Conceptual Framework**

#### **III. 1. a. Social Mobility**

Social mobility is the movement of individuals, families, and groups from one social position to another (International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences 1968: 429). The upward or downward movement of individuals or groups into different positions in a social hierarchy based on wealth, income, occupation, education, power, or any other scarce social resource. Social mobility can exist only in a society that distributes its reward unequally. Thus a society with a high rate of social mobility and good opportunities for upward social mobility is not egalitarian but does maximize opportunities for one individual or group to get more of the society's scarce resources than other individuals or groups can get (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 273).

Social mobility has been defined as movement through 'social space' from one status category (the origin) to another status category (the destination). In general,

vertical mobility refers to individual or group movement upward or downward in the social hierarchy, but the possibility of downward mobility is seldom considered. Horizontal mobility involves moving from one social status to another of about equal rank. Other non-vertical forms of mobility have been discussed, most often in terms of movement across social categories not typically defined as hierarchical, such as religion, political party affiliation, age, citizenship, and so forth (Schnore, 1961; Sorokin, 1927).

The theory of social mobility attempts to account for the frequencies with which these movements occur. The study of social mobility relates a present to a past social position. It thus forms part of the more general study of social selection, i.e., of how people get distributed into different social positions. Studies of intergenerational mobility compare the social positions of parent and offspring; studies of career mobility compare the social positions of the same individual at different times. Group mobility is concerned with changes in the social position of groups possessing a relatively homogeneous status (for example, castes, intellectuals, artisans) (International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences 1968: 1968: 429).

In the context of mobility studies, social position, or social status, signifies a certain rank with respect to the possession of goods (values) esteemed and desired by the most members of a society. The changes in social position that interest the theory of social mobility are primarily variations in occupation, prestige, income, wealth, power, and social class. A high or low in one of these values is often associated with a roughly corresponding rank in most of the other values; consequently, position with respect to one of these values, and the most especially a constellation of them, provides a measure of what in many societies is viewed as success in life (ibid: 429).

Most research on mobility has focused on intergenerational mobility, which refers to a change of social status from one generation to the next. The change is typically

measured by comparing the son's occupation to his father's. Intragenerational mobility, on the other hand, typically refers to the vertical mobility experienced by an individual within his or her own lifetime, as through job promotions and other career advancements. Although most work in the field has taken place in the post-World War II era, social mobility has been seen since Plato's time as providing efficiency and stability in state formation and maintenance (Encyclopedia of Theoretical Sociology 2005: 807).

Even Marx (1958) recognizes the stabilizing effects of upward mobility for the ruling class. He believed that the high rates of mobility that characterize the United States were partly responsible for the lack of organized labour. A class that is self-recruiting will more readily develop class consciousness. On the other hand, high rates of upward mobility between classes acts as a safety valve, keeping down the pressure of the discontented lower class.

Most sociological attention has focused on intergenerational mobility, in particular the role of educational achievement as compared to that of social background or of ascriptive characteristics such as race, in explaining patterns of occupational attainment. The study of social mobility has a long sociological pedigree, extending back to the mid-nineteenth century writings of Karl Marx and John Stuart Mill, with major contributions in the early twentieth century from Vilfredo Pareto (who proposed a theory of circulation of elites) and Piritim Sorokin. The now vast literature on the subject is inextricably entangled with wider discussions of (among other things) education, gender, culture, power, statistical techniques, and the role of theory in social research. In *Social Mobility* (1927) Sorokin wrote that 'channels of vertical circulation exist in any stratified society, and are as necessary as channels for blood circulation in the body'. In an argument that prefigures the later functionalist theory of stratification, he suggested that these 'staircase' or 'elevators' are necessary to the efficient allocation of talents to occupations, and that

failure to achieve this promotes inefficiency and disorder. Sorokin was particularly interested in the role of educational institutions in allocating people to the various occupational positions (Marshall 1994: 422).

Empirical studies on social mobility have focused almost entirely on occupational positions as the sole indicator of social status. And while occupations differ in terms of prestige, income, influence, access to value resources, and relationship to the mode of production, studies have overwhelmingly relied on occupational prestige scores to measure occupational achievement. Supporters of this method argue that in an industrial-urban society, occupational prestige is the best singular indicator of social status. In addition, several studies have shown a stable relationship between occupation and prestige that is attached to the position but is occupied by the individual (Treiman, 1977). Occupations have also been shown to be strongly related to a class concept (Wright et al., 1982).

Those who argue against such a unidimensional perspective of social status point out that respondents asked to rate occupations consider a variety of factors, such as the level of information, or lack thereof, concerning the occupation, the occupation's relation to their own position (Goldthorpe and Hope, 1974), the income of the occupation, and the typical sex of the occupation's incumbents (Bose, 1973).

On the one hand there are those investigators who view mobility on the context of a social hierarchy, within which individuals can be ranked according to income, educational attainment, or socio-economic prestige. On the other, there are those who set it within the context of the class structure, embracing social locations defined by relationships prevailing between labour- markets and production units. During 1950s and 1960s, the former hierarchical perspective was dominant, culminating in the so-called status attainment tradition of mobility studies emanating principally from the United

States. This was increasingly challenged, during the 1970s and 1980s, by researchers schooled within or influenced by the European tradition of class analysis (Marshall 1994: 423).

Since, Sorokin's work, little theoretical advancement has been made to accompany the major breakthroughs in data collection and analysis. The first general population study concerning intergenerational social mobility was carried out by David Glass in 1949 (*Social Mobility in Britain*). Glass began a new trend in social mobility studies: a focus on social inequalities rather than on societal stability, as was seen in Plato, Marx, and Sorokin (Heath 1981: 31).

Only a decade after Glass's study in Great Britain, Lipset and Bendix (1959) set out to better understand mobility pattern in industrial societies through a secondary analysis of data available from nine industrialized societies: Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. Additional work by Lipset (1960) was primarily concerned with the stability of the American society. While he acknowledged the perspective of prior theorists who viewed social mobility as contributing to stability, Lipset placed most of his emphasis on the destabilizing processes of too much mobility. The source of this destabilizing effect is the problem of "status inconsistency". Lipset viewed stratification as a multidimensional system containing a number of hierarchies based on status, class, and authority. From this perspective, one individual may be mobile on one dimension but not on another.

Perhaps the most influential and important work in the 1960s is Blau and Duncan's *The American Occupational Structure* (1967). In the tradition of Glass's *Social Mobility in Britain*, this work focused on the issue of status attainment and equality. Blau and Duncan recognized the basis of the American stratification system as determined by the individual's position in the occupational structure. This structure is also seen as the

connecting link between different social institutions and spheres of social life. The processes of intra-and inter-generational occupational mobility are reflected in the dynamics of the occupational structure. Blau and Duncan attempted to analyze social mobility by investigating the patterns of movement between occupations, the conditions that affect those movements, and their consequences. The results of this analysis found that upward mobility was primarily the result of an expansion of opportunity in occupational categories of higher status and a contraction of opportunity in lower-level categories.

The combination of these factors created a chain reaction 'pull' from the top and 'push' from the bottom, which has been termed structural mobility. Structural mobility is due to structural changes in the economic sphere that 'force' sons into alternative occupational categories from those of their fathers. The most commonly cited explanation of structural mobility is the shift from farm labour to urban labour resulting from an increase in industrialization (Lipset & Zetterberg, 1956).

It was noted that social mobility was defined as movement through social space. While this movement has been described as both vertical and horizontal, few researchers have systematically evaluated nonvertical forms of social mobility (Sorokin, 1927 for one example). In fact, the primary focus has been on vertical occupational changes from one generation to the next. While a small number of studies have recognized the influence on differential stratification structures and the influence of economic systems, few if any have acknowledged differential bases of stratification other than occupational or economic. There is a vast array of ways in which people organize and categorise themselves, from membership by virtue of birth (ascribed) to voluntary (achieved) (Encyclopedia of Theoretical Sociology 2005: 812).

Within these social categories, divisions and hierarchies emerge based on a variety of criteria. For example, societies have based their stratification regime on kinship structures, such as through rules of membership, including patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilineal systems. Other stratification regimes are based on religion, as is found in the Indian caste system. Here, social mobility theoretically occurs with reincarnation or, in rare cases, when an individual can 'pass' as a member of a higher strata. Occupational position is ascribed by religious doctrine, and typical social mobility studies would not tap into issues of inequality as culturally defined by these societies (ibid: 813).

Bernard Barber in his work, *Social Stratification* (1957: 81) has shown that rigid social inequality and finely graded distinctions of evaluation are the marks of the Indian stratification system throughout its whole structure. According to Barber societies differ in the processes by which mobility from one class to another occurs, in the amount of such movement, and in the different systems of institutional or internalized moral norms that influence the processes and amounts of mobility. We shall have to examine each of these three ways in which societies vary if we are to understand social mobility as fully as possible.

Institutional norms, however important, are only one of the social factors affecting social mobility in a society. Indeed, a great variety of other social structures and social conditions interact with institutional norms to produce the concrete processes of social mobility. This implies both that the processes of social mobility will be somewhat different in different societies and that they will be somewhat similar insofar as societies face similar functional problems and solve them with similar structural arrangements (ibid: 334-356).

In every society social mobility may result in discrepancies among the different positions one person may hold in each of these hierarchies. The phenomenon of



status discrepancies is commonly recognized. The terms “nouveaux riches”, “upstart”, “social climber”, “old family”, “poor but genteel”, all indicate awareness of the variation between positions in the economic and social hierarchies. There seems to be clear evidence that in caste societies such as that of India not only does mobility take place within castes, but the castes themselves are mobile, thus creating a series of status discrepancies (Lipset and Bendix 1959: 267).

Srinivas (1956: 483,492) points out, “not only do the various castes form a hierarchy, but the occupations practiced by them, the various items of their diet, and the customs they observe, all form separate hierarchies. In the main, as in Western society, economic mobility is easier and tends to occur first. Castes which improved their economic position “wanted to stake a claim for higher status”. “The three main axes of power in the caste system is the ritual, the economic, and the political ones, and the possession of power in any one sphere usually leads to the acquisition of power in the other two. Economic betterment, the acquisition of political power, education, leadership, and a desire to move up in the hierarchy, are all relevant factors in Sanskritization, (becoming like the Brahmins) and each case of Sanskritization may show all or some of these factors mixed up in different measures.”

Questions have often been raised about the relevance of applying certain approaches and methods for studying social stratification. The foreignness of theory and method in the study of Indian society has been a point of discussion. Even a cursory look at literature on social stratification shows that theories and concepts used by Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Sorokin, Pareto, Dahrendorf, Centres, Warner, Hollingshead, Mills, Dumont, etc., have been freely used by Indian scholars for studying social stratification and mobility without weighing their relevances. The concepts such as vertical and horizontal

mobility, reference group and sanskritization are partly useful and partly futile (Sharma 2006: 1-2).

Broadly speaking, there are three approaches to the study of social mobility, namely, (a) the structural-historical, (b) the Marxist, and (c) the modernization/culturological. A.R. Kamat, Arvind N. Das and Pradhan H. Prasad emphasize on the structural-historical perspective, whereas Bhadra focuses on the relevance of the Marxist approach. Culturological (Indological) approach to social mobility is evident in several studies of the caste system (Sharma 1997: 158).

Srinivas (1966) has emphasized the need for Sanskritization and Westernization as conceptual tools for understanding mobility in caste system. He holds that 'corporate mobility' still remains basic at the caste or jati level, as familial mobility does not obtain public recognition. On the contrary, Stein (1968) points out that the mobility of families and individuals was pronounced in medieval South India, and this should help to analyze and understand the present-day mobility in caste structure. Marriott (1968) thinks that caste could be understood within the frames of reference, such as the rural versus metropolitan and traditional varna versus modern national frames of reference for ranking.

Damle and Lynch study caste mobility by applying the reference group approach to broaden the theoretical levels of analysis. In order to make an analysis of the upwardly mobile Agra Jatavs, Lynch have relied heavily on the reference group theory as developed by Merton (1957). Reference group theory is used by Lynch for the purpose of defining the social situation of a group aspiring to be mobile. This theory is extremely useful to the social analyst because it enables them to identify the socially structured frame of reference in which a mobility aspiring group defines its situation (Lynch 1969: 7- 9). Similarly Patwardhan (1973: 14-15) in her study 'Change among India's Harijan' has

taken social change and mobility as two theoretical and integral aspects. The concept of reference theory as enunciated by Merton is applied to the study of reference groups and models which are being increasingly adopted by the different Harijan castes for enhancing their social status. Group mobility coexists alongside with individual mobility, traditional symbols of status overlap those of secular ones, elements of both continuities and discontinuities are seen. Social mobility expresses itself through sacred and secular symbols. The Bouddhas have their primary identity with the converted group viz., the "Nav-Bouddhas" or "neo-Buddhists". The former is the actual group of identity and the other is the ideal. For Scheduled Castes like Mangs and others, the scheduled caste as a status group has served as the primary group identity. And the larger identity is with the Hindus, and this has been achieved by some, like the Chambhars. Micro- and macro-identities exist and lead to the acceptance of a multiplicity of reference group models (ibid: 17-18).

The sociological aspects of reference group theory have been summarized by Merton (1957: 234) that men act in a frame of reference yielded by groups of which they are a part is a notion undoubtedly ancient and probably sound. Were this alone the concern of reference group theory, it would merely be a new term for an old focus in sociology which has always been centered on the group determination of behavior. There is however, the further fact that men frequently orient themselves to groups other than their own in shaping their behavior and evaluations, and it is the problems centered about this fact of orientation to non-membership groups that constitute the distinctive concern of reference group theory..... In general, then, reference group theory aims to systematize the determinants and consequences of those processes of evaluation and self-appraisal in which the individual takes the values and standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference.

The loci of reference group behavior is the non-membership group or other caste and sub-caste whom a caste individual or the caste group as a whole seek to imitate or identify with if its status is positively evaluated or towards which such individuals or groups develop negative attitude of hostility and disapproval if the same status is negatively evaluated. In both cases the mechanism that motivates individuals or groups to refer to or compare their existing membership position with the membership in other caste groups depend upon (a) the extent of closure or openness of the membership of groups to which reference is being made, and (b) the nature of deprivations and gratifications that individuals or groups derive from their existing membership group.

From this distinction two major types of reference groups are delineated; the positive reference group, membership to which is aspired for, and the negative reference group, membership to which is disliked. A comprehensive reference group approach to analyze mobility in the system of stratification focus upon three aspects: (i) the motivational structure, or the aspiration of the members to move upward; (ii) the opportunity structure or the eligibility or ineligibility of members to move in the desired direction; and finally (iii) the communication structure, or the extent of "viability" or "observability" of the degrees of relative deprivations in the systems of stratification which might influence people's motivation for social mobility (Singh 1977: 12-14).

Ideology, protest and social mobility are interrelated to the extent that one cannot sufficiently function without the other. Protest which is a collective action is adequately sustained by an ideology and an organization nurtured by an appropriate leadership. They, in turn, bring about social change in society. Mathew (1986: 7-8) in his aim to understand the various concepts applicable to scheduled caste movements proceeded his enquiry by comparing the interrelated concepts of ideology, protest and social mobility among Mahars of Maharashtra and Pulayas of Kerela. His main emphasis

to draw inferences concerning the relevant aspects of the movement is being discussed by employing comparative approach.

Culturological or indological dimensions have been predominant in the studies of caste and social mobility. Colonialism brought about social mobility affecting the caste system; this fact has remained unanalyzed to a large extent. In the wake of colonialism, economic and political domains were affected due to changes in land tenure systems, emergence of professional classes, migration, education, law and bureaucratic organizations, but the notion of class which has been akin to Indian society remained in the background. Western notion of class was propagated as a secular and democratic concept of social relations. Class mobility was viewed as the opposite of mobility in the caste system. Simple fact such as class-like distinction within a caste, class considerations in hypergamy and coexistence of caste and class remained peripheral issues, whereas corporateness, pollution-purity and Sanskritization were over-emphasized. So much so that caste mobility at the level of individual family and jati (group) has not been adequately analyzed as corporateness of caste has overshadowed all other dimensions. Once again, downward social mobility (proletarianization) has not received much needed attention due to overemphasis on upward social mobility. All these gaps could be filled up if theoretic orientations and methods of study could appropriately be suited for the study of Indian society. And this is possible only if theory and method could have their genesis in the ramifications of social inequality existent in Indian society (Sharma 2006: 12-13).

Dube (1968) and Gardner (1968) refers to 'levels' of caste dominance and highlight the role of the individual in caste mobility and refute the utility of the concepts of 'dominant caste' and 'sanskritization' as advocated by Srinivas. A number of studies on caste mobility have been reported by Majumdar (1958), Silverberg (1968), Lynch (196) and Singer (1968). Silverberg, Singer and Cohn have brought out several studies on caste

and mobility in their edited volumes with particular emphasis on the relevance of concepts of reference group and relative deprivation, etc. (ibid: 56).

Nandu Ram (1988:16) has analyzed social mobility among Scheduled Castes within the framework developed with the help of two sets of four inter-related theories: Lipset and Zetterberg's (1966) theory of social mobility; Homans' (1962) theory of status congruence; Merton's (Merton and Rossi 1968) theory of reference group behavior; and Paranjpe's (1970: 106-14) theory of ethnocentric and contra-identification. More specifically, social mobility in class structure has been measured through a multiple approach suggested in Lipset and Zetterberg's theory, with necessary modifications. A study of social mobility in India in general and among the scheduled caste in particular has to examine the mobility of status in caste structure besides that in class structure.

Nandu Ram has adopted the multi-dimensional approach and the conventional operational method of ascertaining mobility by comparing father's and son's positions suggested by Lipset and Zetterberg in their methodological approaches to the study of mobility.

For measuring social mobility among Scheduled Castes in relation to their status in both class and caste systems Nandu Ram has also included Homan's theory of status congruence, as stated earlier. According to this theory, if there are persons who have their status factors (variety of work, office responsibility, pay, seniority, and work autonomy) in an organization 'in line', they claim their status congruity, and those whose status factors are 'out of line', do not. In Homans' (1962) terminology, 'inlineness' may be a condition of relative and distributive justice for such individuals, whereas 'out-lineness' may lead to status anxiety. He has adopted this theory for measuring the congruence of achieved and ascribed statuses of mobile persons of Scheduled Castes who may be in-line

in their achieved status but out-of-line in the ascribed one. In such a case they might face a problem of status anxiety.

In the theory of reference group behavior (and attitudes) and relative deprivation, Merton and his associates (Merton and Rossi 1968) have suggested that certain individuals or groups tend to adopt the behavior (and attitudes) of other groups or individuals in order to achieve a similar social position. But if they fail in their achievement, they suffer from relative deprivation, because they find others belonging to their group achieving success in similar situations.

The theory of ethnocentrism was propounded initially by Sumner (1965: 13-15) and developed later by a number of social psychologists (Adorno et al. 1950; Allport 1955; Levine and Campbell 1971). According to this theory, an individual or a group identifies with an ethnic group and claims ethnic superiority in comparison to other ethnic groups. If in certain cases an individual or a group does not identify at the ethnocentric level, then identification may be at a level other than ethnocentric. Thus, adopting the theory of ethnocentrism in the Indian situation, Paranjpe (1970) has stated that individuals may identify either with their ethnic (caste) group, or contrary to it. This may be true also in the case of status identification of the mobile Scheduled Castes (Nandu Ram 1988: 19-20).

### **III. 1.b. Social Change**

Social change may be provisionally defined as any significant alteration in the structure of society. Historically, an adequate theory of change was slow to develop because neither component in the problem was well understood. Much of what is called social change is really cultural change, and the nature of culture in its current technical sense was not appreciated until the beginning of this century. Older conceptions of change were formulated in terms of divine will, individual reason, or, as in the nineteenth century,

cosmic evolutionary process that included race and geography as basic factors (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 266).

Social change is such a prevalent and often disturbing feature of contemporary life that both the specialist and the layman may be tempted to suppose that it is peculiarly modern. Certainly the extent and rate of change in the modern world are greater than in most past periods, but the static qualities of primitive cultures or archaic civilizations are easily and commonly overstated. Change, at some level and degree, is as characteristic of man's life in organized systems as is orderly persistence (International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences 1968: 365).

Social change is the significant alteration of the social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values, and cultural products and symbols (ibid: 366).

As Bourdieu (1990) and Giddens (1986) suggest, we need to see human social life as always structured but incompletely so. Structuration is as much a process of change as a reflection of stability. Indeed, the existence of stable social patterns over long periods of time requires at least as much explanation as does social change.

Human social history is given its shape by cumulative social changes. Many of these are quite basic, like the demographic transition or the creation of the modern state; other are more minor like, the invention of hand shake as a form of greeting; most, like the development of team sports, fast-food restaurants, and international academic conferences lie in the broad area in between. Significant changes tend to have widespread repercussions, however, and so it is rare that one part of social life changes dramatically without changes occurring in others (Encyclopedia of Theoretical Sociology: 755-756).



Sociologists have generally taken three approaches to studying cumulative social changes. The first is to look for generalisable patterns in how all sorts of changes occur. Sociologists may thus look for characteristic phases through which any social innovation must pass—for example, skepticism, experimentation, early diffusion among leaders, and later general acceptance. Contemporary sociologists tend to place much more emphasis on differences among various kinds of social changes and their settings. Their generalizations are accordingly more specific (ibid: 756).

The second major sociological approach to cumulative change has been to seek an explanation for the whole pattern of cumulation. The most important such efforts are based on evolutionary theories. The most important contemporary social evolutionist, Gerhard Lenski, (1990) has thus argued that increases in technological capacity account for most of the major changes in human social organization. There are number of other important versions of the evolutionary approach to cumulative social change. Some stress different material factors such as human adaptation to ecological constraints (Harris, 1979; White, 1949); other stress culture and other patterns of thought more than material conditions (Parsons, 1968; Habermass, 1978). Some version of Marxim has attempted a similar explanation of all historical social change in terms of a few key factors—notably improvement in the means of production and class struggling (Engels, 1972).

Adherents to the third major approach to cumulative social change argue that there can be no single evolutionary explanation for all the important transitions in human history. These historical sociologists place their emphasis on the importance of dealing adequately with particular changes by locating them in their historical and cultural context (Abrams, 1982; Calhoun, 1991). Weber was an especially important pioneer of this approach (Encyclopedia of Theoretical Sociology 2005: 757).

Sociologists have explored the question of change largely by the close analysis of particular change processes, and by refining definitions. Social change theories now encompass a very broad range of phenomena, including short- term and long-term, large-scale and small-scale changes, from the level of global society to the level of the family. Sociologists are also interested in changes that affect norms, values, behavior, cultural meanings, and social relationships. Smelser conceptualizes social change as a 'value-added' process, in which a number of condition or stages are sequentially combined, before eventually producing a particular social change. This approach minimizes, but does not wholly ignore, the more proximate causes of social change (Marshall 1994: 65).

The nineteenth-century predecessors of modern sociology were very preoccupied with the dynamics of social change. Although some scholars, such as Frederic Le Play, attempted to establish canons for systematic description of contemporary social types, the attempt to trace the paths of history was a far more prevalent concern (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences 1968: 367).

### **III.1.b.i.Evolutionary theories**

The directionality of change, and in particular the increasing complexity and structural differentiation of society, came to be a major tenet of evolutionary theories. Following the impact of Darwin's theory of biological evolution, Herbert Spencer, Lewis Henry Morgan, and others of lesser stature used such Darwinian notions as selective adaptation to account for both the cross-sectional diversity of societies and cultures and the supposedly sequential stage of social organization. By the end of the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory was a dominant factor in social thought, even in the work of writers who were not predominantly evolutionist in outlook (ibid: 367).

### **III.1.b.ii. Marxist theory**

Marx's theory of social change is much interlinked with his concept of social classes and class conflicts. Marx's focus on the process of social change is so central to his thinking that its shadow pervades in all his writings. The motor force of history for Marx is not to be found in any extra-human agency but in man himself. "Marx insisted that men make their own history. Human history is the process through which men change themselves..." (Coser, 1977).

The Marxists tried to show how social change came about by laying great stress on the interaction of technology with social organization. Indeed, Marxist thought in its crudest form shared with most evolutionary theory a belief that one stage of social organization succeeded another through the operation of forces that were as impersonal as they were inevitable (International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences 1974: 367).

### **III.1.b.iii. Functionalist theory**

Functionalism is the attempt to explain social phenomena by other social phenomena that are contemporary or quasi-simultaneous. In this respect, it rejects the "quest for origins". Some of its proponents (e.g., Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski), in eschewing explanation in generic terms also tended to suppress all queries about the actual dynamic of change. For them, the demonstration of interdependence between different elements of social structure came to mean the search for self-equilibrating mechanisms in society (ibid: 367).

### **III.1.b.iv. Cultural Approaches:**

This term has been applied to diverse attempts to conceptualize and understand the dynamics of culture. Historically these have involved arguments about the relationship between culture and nature, culture and society (including material social

processes), the split between high and low culture, and the interplay between cultural tradition and cultural difference and diversity (Marshall 1998: 135). The beginning of the second quarter of this century is marked with the first systematic attempt to define the processes of change taking place in Indian society, what Srinivas (1952) calls as Sanskritization and Westernization. After this came the concept of “great and little traditions” developed by Robert Redfield (1955). His concept has a diadic impact on the scholars of India engaged in the study of Indian civilization. Some scholars like S. C. Dube (1965) and Saraswati (1970, 1975) did not agree with Redfield in classifying the processes of Indian traditions into water-tight dichotomy. Thus, the dichotomization of traditions as formulated by Redfield and supported by Vidyarthi and others were criticized. Dube holds the view that analysis of cultural changes with the help of “little and great traditions” framework would be insufficient as Indian traditions will be organized not in a bipolar but in a multi-polar system. Dube alternatively postulates a five-fold classification of traditions for better analysis. They are – (i) the classical tradition, (ii) the emergent national tradition, (iii) the regional tradition, (iv) the western tradition, (v) the local sub-cultural traditions of social groups.

This classification does not eliminate the basic limitations of the traditional approach to the study of change and is mainly useful in analyzing cultural and structural changes in Indian society. And Saraswati’s three fold classifications of Indian traditions, presently operating in Indian civilization are - the Shastric (textual) tradition, the Laukik (oral) tradition, and the Naivirtik (transcendental) tradition (Jha 2000: 162-163).

### **III.1.b.v. Constructed types**

Long ago the German sociologist Tonnies (1887) distinguished between the “organic” solidarities or the community (Gemeinschaft) and the looser contractual system of inter-relationship of the society (Gesellschaft). Historically, there has been a change in

society from this kind of solidarity to the more varied and less unified attachments of civilized life. We can say that in the traditional Indian village, the village people feel a sense of solidarity because they have intimate social relation with each other. When the village people move to cities they generally try to retain the same kind of solidarity by settling down in one part of the down.

Modern sociologists have developed more elaborate analyses in terms of group and secular types, (Becker, 1957) and folk urban types (Redfield, 1955) and so on. All these attempts tend to interpret social change in terms of typology of social structure and social organization.

#### **III.1.b.vi. Personality and change**

Due to cross fertilization among behavior sciences, namely, sociology, anthropology and psychology, there is a new approach which attempts to grasp the pattern of change as it reveals itself in the behavior of individuals composing the various groups. Attempts are being made to construct empirically-based personality types which are correlated with specific eras of socio-cultural variation. Some anthropologists used personality tests, like the Rorschach and TAT, to study personality changes associated with the process acculturation (Boskoff, 1957).

#### **III.1.b.vii. Dialectical-historical approach**

The use of the dialectical-historical model for the study of social change has not been done in large scale in India and, thus, it is not as common as other approaches. This approach refers to Marx views on the ancient-Indian form of common property as embodied in joint ownership and joint cultivation of land by the entire village, which he claims to be original form, from which all others have evolved as well as his analysis of the characteristic features of the ancient Indian villages, which provide the

basis for static, unchanging nature of Asiatic society. Marx as a matter of fact, tried to resolve these paradoxical interpretations in his writings and publications.

Influenced by the works of Marx, some Indian sociologists have attempted to study social change and transformation in India, among whom special mention may be made of D.P. Mukherjee (1958), A.R. Desai (1959), R.K. Mukherjee (1955,1969,1970) etc., who have applied the dialectical-historical concept for the study of social change in India (Jha 1983: 170).

Social change, as Moore (1964) says, is normal, not a peculiarly modern phenomenon. The tensions and strains of a developing society however make for far-reaching changes than hitherto. There are both exogenous and endogenous which brings temporary as well as long term changes. There are factors which are exogenous to the total society, like the impact of western science and technology, and those which are exogenous to the sub-system of the scheduled caste cluster, like political modernization and economic development. Patwardhan (1973: 15) says, to the Harijan, social planning with its measures for directing change is a significant exogenous factor for instituting the momentum of change. Some of the significant endogenous forces are socio-political mobilization on the part of the Harijans, effective leadership, and perception of education as an instrument of mobility.

The subject of social change in modern India is vast and complex and an adequate understanding of it will require the collaboration, for many years, of a number of scholars in such diverse fields as economic, social and cultural history, law, politics, education, religion, demography and sociology. Srinivas (1966: 1-6) systematically considers the two concepts- Sanskritization and Westernization to explain some features of religious, cultural and social change in India. Sanskritization is the process by which a "low" Hindu caste, or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology, and way

of life in the direction of a high, and frequently, "twice-born" caste. Westernization on the other hand, refers to changes introduced into Indian society during British rule and which continue, in some cases with added momentum, in independent India.

Sanskritization spread vertically to nondominant castes in the area and horizontally to members living everywhere. Such spreading has been greatly facilitated in recent years by a variety of forces, technological, institutional, and ideological. Sanskritization has been a major process of cultural change in Indian history, and it has occurred in every part of the Indian subcontinent. It may have been more active at some periods than others, and some parts of India are more Sanskritized than others; but there is no doubt that the process has been universal (ibid: 23).

A couple of studies on caste and class have taken "change" as the focal point of analysis. Stratification as a process is now a well conceived notion. Structural-historical perspective is being applied by those who lay emphasis on the study of differentiation, evolution and change in caste and class in India. Modes of production in agriculture and industry in relation to caste and class have been discussed both by economic historians and anthropologists (Frykenberg, 1969). Political activists like Dange (1949), Ranadive (1979) and Namboodiripad (1979) look at caste as a mechanism of exploitation in the hands of the upper castes. However, non-Marxists consider caste not as a superstructural entity, but mainly as a basic institution of division of labour and harmonic relations (Sharma 2006: 11).

T.S. Epstein's study also emphasizes on social change, but from a comparative perspective. Epstein follows by and large Bailey's line of research. The main argument of Epstein's study is that a structural innovation (irrigation) consolidates village economy, but it restricts social change, namely, migration, contacts, education and politicization, etc. Conversely, a lack of such an innovation results into widespread social

change without corresponding economic development. Epstein's study of two villages in Karnataka from this structural perspective provides us details about crops, houses, landholdings, livestock, family income and expenditures, market networks, etc. This study also like that of Bailey focuses on changes in the traditional social structure and hierarchy in the village community (ibid: 29).

These approaches to caste mobility are singularistic and do not encompass the totality of mobility taking place today in caste system. One would agree with Lynch's observation that there was no agreement about the conception of caste and the units that structure it (Sharma 2006: 196). According to Lynch (1968) mobility within the caste system is not really distinguished from change of the system. Change within or between castes does not necessarily constitute mobility within the caste system, unless one accepts mobility as the only significant kind of change in Indian society. A more meaningful form of mobility should entail changes in ritual hierarchy than the enhanced power position of a particular caste.

### **III.1.c. Theoretical Framework of the Study**

A theory is a statement held as an explanation of facts or phenomena. It is a logically interrelated and empirically verifiable set of propositions. A theory is defined as "a set of systematically related propositions specifying causal relationships among variables" (Black and Champion 1976: 56). Theory is also described as an abstraction from observed reality. It is the mental image of objects. This image is formed after learning about them from actual experience or from information. Thus, abstraction is a process of simplification and generalization which leaves out non-essential details in describing a phenomenon (Ahuja 2001: 359).

After discussing the various approaches employed by different scholars to analyze social mobility and change in general and of scheduled caste in particular,



structural theory and multi-dimensional approaches are considered to be the appropriate approaches to understand and analyze social mobility and change among the particular Scheduled Castes under study.

Structural theory is a social theory that stresses the structural characteristics of human groups in general and of societies in particular (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 288).

“The elements of social structure.... include, among others the patterns of kinship, descent and affiliation, the techno-economic system and the politico-legal system.” (Encyclopedia of Anthropology 1976).

Structuralism at the most general level is a term used loosely in sociology to refer to any approach which regards social structure (apparent or otherwise) as having priority over social action. Basic to this approach are the ideas that we can discern underlying structures behind the often fluctuating and changing appearances of social reality (Marshall 1998: 646). Louis Dumont’s *Homo-Heirarchicus* is the most well-known exposition of structuralist perspective on social stratification. The pivotal notions of Dumont’s structuralism as noted by Yogendra Singh (1981) are ideology, dialectics, and transformation. To think of structuralism independent of empirical reality is Dumont’s main concern. However, structuralism of such a variety in regard to the study of caste and its allied aspects has resulted into propagation of caste ideology and caste-based inequalities (Sharma 2006: 10).

Levi-Strauss’ structuralist principle of complimentary dualism or logical principle of opposition as a fundamental feature of human mind is applied by Louis Dumont in his study of hierarchy and marriage alliance. Graded statuses are entrenched into all spheres including kinship. Dumont sees intercaste, intracaste and interfamilial ranking as projections of the same intellectual and ideological principle. The structuralist

stance of Dumont is clearly seen in his assertion that it is hierarchy which is pervasive principle of Hindu society and the caste system is only one expression of it. His conception of social change or the principle of transformational relationship is moulded by his frame of reference. He observes that there has been change in the society and not of the society (ibid: 29-31).

A structural focus in the study of change does not only imply a variation in the dependent variables through which changes are being identified but also establishing relationship with independent causal variables.

Firstly, the units of observation in a structural study are not ideas, sentiments, and values but the order of roles and statuses which form the basis of social relationships and are schematized into groups or categories. A major principle which governs the form of ordering of social structure is asymmetry of power in relation to command over resources or values. Structural changes may primarily be located by identifying the emerging principles that lay down new rules about this asymmetry and consequent differentiation and transformation in the institutionalized forms of social relationships and their ordering in society.

The principles through which the transformation in the society is measured are abstractions over the raw social data or the actual social ethnographic portraits of social life. These abstractions forming a set of hypotheses that are logically interrelated constitute the explanatory systems of the process of social change. Structural approach thus, seeks to explain the causes of social change and not merely describe the phenomena of social change.

The second major characteristic of the structural study of social change is the observation of the magnitude and incidence of role differentiation in the social structure resulting from social pressures such as increase in population, diversification and

growth of industries, rise of new cities or urban centers and rise in the economic and technological bases of society, which necessitate creation of more complex organization and new role and status types (Singh 1977: 105-106). The structural approach to study the social change in India has been applied successfully by F.G. Bailey, which is evident in many of his publications. His "Caste and the Economic Frontier" (1957), "Politics and social Change in Orrissa" (1963) etc. are some of the important works wherein Bailey has applied the structural approach to depict the social change in India.

The multi-dimensional studies on social stratification do not consider caste as an all-inclusive basis of social stratification. Economic position, style of life, education, occupation and personality attributes are evaluated for assessing a person's rank in his community or caste (Sharma 2006: 21-22).

The study has relied on this approach because a comprehensive study of social mobility is possible through such an approach only and not through the single dimension approach, namely, the dimension of occupation (Nandu Ram 1988: 16). In the words of Heek (1956: 132), "The multiple approach... wants, as fully as possible, to take the fact into account that society is characterized by multiple, overlapping, and even contradictory criteria of status,".

The multi-faceted and multi-causal nature of social stratification calls for a multi-disciplinary treatment. A good number of economists, historians and political scientists besides sociologists and anthropologists are engaged today in analyzing the nexus between caste, class and power, both historically and contextually. Multi-dimensionality certainly implies multicausality of social inequality, and yet one can see a dominant causality by ascertaining the relative power of various factors and forces over a period of time and also at a given point of time. One can visualize a simultaneous coexistence of social, economic, political and cultural factors in status-determination, and

also any one of these can be found more effective than the remaining ones. What is important, therefore, is not the counting of factors as such, but the dominance of one or two factors over others and the nature of nexus between different factors and changes therein (Sharma 1997: 14-15).

Lipset and Zetterberg in their theory of social mobility have underlined the dimensions of occupational and consumption rankings, social class, and power rankings, in addition to providing a methodological note. They have also pointed out causes and consequences of social mobility. According to them, social mobility of a group of individual is determined by the shift and ranking of occupations, consumptions, social power, and social class, 'composed of individuals who accept each other as equals and qualified for intimate associations' (Lipset & Zetterberg 1966: 563). Accepting occupation as the most common indicator of stratification, they have viewed that "occupational class is one of the major factors which differentiate people's beliefs, values, norms, customs, and occasionally some of their emotional expressions."

It is however, not necessary that one's consumption position goes along with one's occupational and/or income position. "At the same occupational/income level, men will vary in the extent to which they are oriented towards acting out the behavior pattern common to different social classes" (Lipset and Zetterberg 1966: 563). One may change one's occupational class by changing one's job, but the real improvement in one's social class position is possible only if one is admitted to intimate relationships with members of the referred social classes. Therefore, the more qualified and accurate conclusions about mobility and stratification systems are possible only through a multi-dimensional approach in which one has to take all the possible dimensions together (Nandu Ram 1988: 17-18). A study of 'complete' social mobility in India should have to take into account, besides the achievement criteria like education, job, income, etc., the

major framework of caste and other primordial categories of social relations. Most of the studies on social mobility in India (except the one edited by Silverberg (1968) "... have undermined the importance of ascriptive ritual status as a criterion of mobility by emphasizing "achievable" aspects of status such as education and occupation..." (Bhatt 1971: 103). Thus, a comprehensive study of social mobility, especially among the Hindus in India, is possible only if we consider the effects of changes in social, economic, religious and political spheres on the caste system (Ibid:69).

### **III.2. Methodology**

Methodology is concerned with the study of research methods, with the nature and quality of the data produced by various methods and the logic and rationale behind the use to which those data are put in sociological research (Heralambos & Heald 1980: 492). It is the logic of scientific investigation. It translates the principles of a paradigm into research language and shows how the society can be explained and studied. Literally, 'methodology' means the science of methods. It contains the standards and principles employed to guide the choice, structure, process and use of methods. Methodology in sociology includes: (i) the analysis of the basic assumption of science in general and of sociology in particular, (ii) the process of theory construction, (iii) the interrelationship of theory and research, and (iv) the procedures of empirical investigation. Thus, methodology is not concerned with building knowledge but deals with the procedures- conceptual, logical and research by which knowledge is built (Ahuja 2001: 353).

In order to have an intense understanding of social mobility and change among the Scheduled Castes of Manipur, field study method is the most appropriate to collect the required data. This study depends on both the qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data which would mean applying them wherever they are necessary

for the purpose of the study. Direct and indirect observation, interviews, interview schedules, case-studies are some of the techniques which are used in order to collect data.

Field study method is a method whereby the researcher is interested in understanding a natural social situation and the people involved in it. Field work in other words, is research conducted in the settings where the behavior under study normally occurs (Smelser 1993: 410). For the purpose the researcher has visited the four districts covered under the study and it took almost eight months to complete the data collection. Collection of data started from the month of August 2004 from Sekmai in Imphal West district and the researcher has resided for a month in the residence of Shri. Chingtham Banikanta Singh. In Thoubal district the researcher have stayed in the residence of Shri. Nongmaithem Jhulon Singh for twenty days in Kakching and two weeks in Elangkhanpokpi in the residence of Huidrom ongbi Gunabati Devi, as this being the nearest village to Thongjao. As for Imphal East district the researcher stayed for forty days in Andro in the residence of Shri. Chingakham Palando Meitei, Andro being the centre of the whole district. Commuting to and fro daily was the only means for the other remaining areas. Though majority of the respondents have a dialect little different in tone and accent from the core Meitei but it was not a barrier as the basic is Meiteilon (native language of the Meitei) so, Manipuri was the medium of conversation.

With this method the advantage of acquiring various detail insights about the pattern of their daily activities, their mode of livelihood, mode of dressing, the overall living style of the people belonging to particular areas are captured in their natural environment. This helps in understanding the various situations in which the respondents are located. Staying in the places of the study areas give a very intensive knowledge of the people living there and also got the opportunity of learning more of their local life and activities which many a times lacks to observe simultaneously with interviewing.

Qualitative method is generally associated with interpretative epistemology which tends to be used to refer to forms of data collection and analysis which rely on understanding, with an emphasis on meanings (Marshall 1994: 543). Qualitative method is primarily employed for interpreting and extracting various meanings and reasons of the information collected. Their experience as a scheduled caste, the various changes in their socio-economic, educational and occupational sphere can be understood properly with this method.

Quantitative methodology is generally associated with positivist epistemology. It is usually regarded as referring to the collection and analysis of numerical data (Marshall 1994: 543). Some of the questions posed to the respondents are of close ended types which do not require any description. So, such data which can be easily quantified are numerically presented as per the requirement.

Interview is a face-to-face situation in which a respondent is asked a set of questions designed to obtain information central to the aims of the research scientist (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 144) Interview consists of the researcher asking the interviewee or respondent a series of questions. Interviews can be classified as 'structured' or 'unstructured' though many fall somewhere between these two extremes (Haralambos & Heald 1980: 507). Its objective is to exchange ideas, elicit information regarding a wide area in which the interviewee may wish to recollect the past, interpret the present and advocate his future course of action or plan (Rao 2005: 66). For the study an interview schedule has been prepared in order to collect the required data. This proves to be more helpful as the schedule can be applied to both the literate and illiterate respondents.

Interview schedule is the prime method employed for gathering the data as it is regarded as more reliable. Above that it can be administered to both illiterate and literate respondents unlike questionnaire which can be used only when the respondents are

educated. Data obtained from this method is more appropriate. Since the order and wording of questions are the same for all respondents, it is more likely that they will be responding to the same stimuli. Thus different answers to the same set of questions will indicate real differences in the way questioned are phrased. In order to conduct the interview the researcher visited the selected villages and the municipal areas. Out of the four hundred respondents interview schedule is used on three hundred and ninety seven respondents where the researcher asked and filled the schedule simultaneously. The three respondents who could not give time for the interview due to their personal reasons filled the schedule by themselves when they are free. Though it was returned back to the researcher but it was not completed by the appointed time.

A questionnaire consists of a list of preset questions to which respondents are asked to supply answers. Questionnaire may be administered by an interviewer in which case they take the form of structured interviews (Haralambos & Heald 1980: 511). It is a document containing all the questions, closed and open-ended, for a survey. Questionnaires from the postcard, with a few questions to be filled in by the respondents, to long documents to be filled in by trained interviewers (Marshall 1994: 545). To the three respondents who could not spare their time for the interview were given the schedule in the form of questionnaire. Among them two were educated middle aged men one an engineer and the other a teacher from Sekmai in Imphal West district. The third was an old aged retired school principal from Kakching in Thoubal district. All of them being educated had no problem in filling the schedule.

Observation is the procedure by which a scientist gathers his data. Whereas measurement is the assignment of numbers to the various outcomes one's variable can exhibit, observation is the way in which one undertakes to measure a phenomenon (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 199). Observation is also defined as "a planned



methodical watching that involves constraints to improve accuracy” (Ahuja 2001: 238). Lindzey Gardner (1975: 360) has defined it as “selection, provocation, recording and encoding of that set of behaviors and settings concerning organisms ‘in situ’ (natural settings or familiar surroundings) which are consistent with empirical aims”. The researcher observes the actual setting, their daily economic activities, their practices and the performances of ceremonies like marriage, child birth etc.

Participant observation is a technique by which an investigator attempts to verify his hypotheses through direct participation in an observation of the community, tribe, or other social grouping being studied. This approach is unstructured and direct, and often only a few of the members of the group under study serve as informants in interview, where as the others are simply observed (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 204). The investigator involves in the setting and group life of the research subjects. He shares the activities of the community observing what is going on around him, supplementing this by conversation and interview. In India, M.N. Srinivas had used this method in studying the process of ‘sanskritization’ in Mysore (Ahuja 2001: 245). The researcher has involved with the respondents community by involving in their activities of their household chores, interacting with the villagers which sometimes are not actual respondents in the marriage ceremony of one of the respondent’s sister.

Non-participant observation is a research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects or his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny (Marshall 1994: 452). In non-participant observation, the observer remains detached and does not participate or intervene in the activities of those who are being observed. He merely observes their behavior (Ahuja 2001: 246). By using this technique the researcher has observed the interrelation and interaction of the people under study. A brief insight of their daily routine, their gestures or way of

responding to certain questions, their mannerism, habits, and mode of dressing is also noted.

Structured observation is a procedure in which the scientist decides in advance the question he will ask the respondents and the categories into which observed behaviors will be coded, as well as when and where he will make the observation (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 288). Structured observation is organized and planned which employs formal procedure, has a set of well-defined observation categories, and is subjected to high levels of control and differentiation (Ahuja 2001: 246).

Unstructured observation is done without having predetermined what questions will be asked or into what categories behaviors will be coded. The researcher engaged in participant observations, taking notes on the behaviors of group members, uses an unstructured approach (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 300). Unstructured observation is loosely organized and the process is largely left to the observer to define (Ahuja 2001: 247).

Case study is the intensive observation of only one or, more typically a few, persons, instances, communities, or social organizations. The technique researcher uses may include detailed searching of record, unstructured interviews, or participant observation (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 34). Case study is not a method of data collection; rather it is a research strategy, or an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon by using multiple sources of evidence. Case study is an intensive study of a case which may be an individual, an institution, a system, a community, an organization, an event, or even the entire culture. It presents the holistic account that offers insights into the case under study (Ahuja 2001: 261). In spite of the fact that the case study makes it virtually impossible to make generalizations about the population, it has its uses. Because case studies allow an intense focus on social behavior,

they are the preferred research design for those who use an interactionist perspective and rely on participant observation as a research method (Johnson 2000: 30).

In order to get descriptive reports of particular related issues case studies have been conducted. Eight case studies of both urban and rural respondents i.e. one young Loi male and a middle aged Loi female respondents from Bishnupur; two Loi female of young and old aged subjects from urban area of Imphal East; one Loi middle aged and an old aged males both from rural area of Imphal West and an old aged Yaithibi male and a middle aged female from rural and urban areas respectively from the district of Thoubal are selected for the purpose of conducting case studies. The selection of the respondents for case study was done keeping in mind the differences in thoughts and experiences according to their age and sex. This was done keeping in mind the different related issues which will help in exploring more ideas of the case under study in particular and also to represent the Scheduled Castes population at large.

Other information obtained from secondary sources consist of reviewing of different books, research articles and various earlier studies conducted by different scholars of international, national and regional reputation. Some of the other sources of information include available written material, different articles, census data, various records, websites etc.

### **III. 3. Research Design**

Research design is a strategic plan of a research project or research programme, setting out the broad outline and key features of the work to be undertaken, including the methods of data collection and analysis to be employed, and showing how the research strategy addresses the specific aims and objectives of the study, and whether the research issues are theoretical or policy oriented. Hence, also the process of developing such a document, choosing between alternative types of study, their relative size, whether

triangulation will be employed, and adjusting plans to the available resources and timetable (Marshall 1994: 566). The term 'design' means 'drawing an outline' or planning or arranging details. It is a process of making decisions before the situation arises in which the decision has to be carried out (Ahuja 2001: 121). The present study intends to carry out the study as according to the research design presented.

### **III. 4. Operational definitions**

Operational definition is an explanation of the meaning of a word in terms of a set of actions or operations. For example the term 'intelligence' has been defined operationally as the score the individual makes on an intelligence test (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 201). Operational definitions are pragmatic and realistic indicators of more diffuse notions. It is the transformation of an abstract, theoretical concept into something concrete, observable and measurable in an empirical research project (Marshall 1994: 466).

#### **III.4. a. Social mobility**

The upward or downward movement of individuals or groups into different positions in a social hierarchy based on wealth, income, occupation, education, power, or any other scarce social resource (Encyclopedia of Sociology 1974: 273).

#### **III.4. b. Social change**

Social change is the significant alteration of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct), values and cultural products and symbols.

#### **III.4. c. Scheduled Caste**

The term 'Scheduled caste' is primarily an administrative category, used in the Constitution of India. They are the castes identified by the President of India under article 341, and put under a Schedule. The term was used for the first time by the British government in the Government of India Act, 1935 in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These castes suffered the stigma of untouchability and were considered *ati-sudras* or *avarna*, i.e., beyond the pale of the Hindu caste-structure (Shah, 2000: 30). According to Ambedkar (1948) in early India, they were known as 'broken men' or 'outcastes'. The British described them as 'depressed classes'. In 1931 census, they were classified as 'exterior castes.' Mahatma Gandhi (1954) designated these classes as 'Harijan', meaning the children of God.

#### **III.4. d. Lois**

The appellation 'Lois' was first applied to that category of people with reference to their dependent tributary status under the lordship of the Meitei Kings. The objects they paid as tributes were known in history as *loi-pot kaba* (tributes in the form of goods). It thus appeared in early history first with political connotation. It began to assume its social meaning as and when the *loi* villages became penal settlements of the criminals/offenders from the Panna Mieteis (Hinduized Meitei), whom the Kings used to deport on exile (locally expressed as *loi- thaba*). Thus, to be a *Loi* by birth or exile, suffered segregation from the social mainstream (Singh 1993: 41).

#### **III.4. e. Yaithibi**

Yaithibis, in all respects of cultural pattern, are the Meiteis. The Meitei (Hindu/Panna Meitei) also admit the fact that once the Yaithibi belonged to their community. They however do not call them Meitei anymore because, of their so called

“illicit origin” and “immoral habits”. They now consist of an exiled and socially outcast people on account of their grave offences such as marrying near relatives like sisters, step-mothers, and such other near kin for which they have been ex-communicated. Infact the literal meaning of the term ‘Yaithibi’ is ‘bad luck’ (yai meaning luck, thiba meaning bad). (Saha 1994: 63-64).

### **III. 5. Sample**

A sample is a portion of people drawn from a larger population. It will be representative of the population only if it has same basic characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. Thus our concern in sampling is not about what types of unites (persons) will be interviewed but with how many units of what particular description and by what method should be chosen (Singleton and Straits, 1999:134). Sampling allows surveys of the complete population of a country, or sub-sections of it, to be carried out far more cheaply and frequently, and with resources devoted to improving the depth and quality of the information collected, in contrast with the shallow information obtainable from censuses (Marshall 1994: 576).

A large population cannot be studied in its entirety for reasons of size, time, cost or inaccessibility. Limited time, lack of large amount of funds, and population scattered in a very wide geographical area often make sampling necessary (Ahuja 2001: 157) The main principle behind sampling is that we seek knowledge about the total units (called population) by observing a few units (called sample) and extend our inference about the sample to the entire population (ibid: 159).

There are basically two types of sampling: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is one in which every unit of the population has an equal probability of being selected for the sample. It offers a high degree of representativeness. Non-probability sampling makes no claim for representativeness, as

every unit does not get the chance of being selected. It is the researcher who decides which sample units should be chosen (Ahuja 2001: 166).

According to Black and Champion (1976: 266), the probability sampling requires the following conditions to be satisfied: (1) complete list of subjects to be studied is available; (2) size of the universe must be known; (3) desired sample size must be specified, and (4) each element must have an equal chance of being selected.

The six forms of probability samplings are, simple random, stratified random, systematic, cluster, multi-stage and multi-phase (Ahuja 2001: 166).

Simple Random Sampling technique is the sampling technique employed for collecting data for the present study. Simple Random Sampling provides all the elements covered for the study on an equal probability of being included for the study. This method which offers a high degree of representative- ness will be more beneficial in serving the purpose.

According to the 2001 census, the Scheduled Caste population of the Imphal west was 13,276 (3.0%); Imphal East was 10,409 (2.6%); Bishnupur district was 1,727 (0.8%); and Thoubal district was 33,969 (9.3%). These four districts have been selected for the present study keeping in view the predominant availability of Scheduled Caste settlements compared to the other districts of Manipur.

The research sample comprises of four hundred (400) respondents of both rural and urban population of Scheduled Castes, giving more or less equal emphasis to males and females of different age groups. Out of the four hundred, forty (40) belong to the Yaithibi community while the remaining three hundred and sixty (360) are Lois. The total sample is divided into forty nine (49) young males and forty five (45) young females, hundred and one (101) middle aged males and eighty four (84) middle aged females and

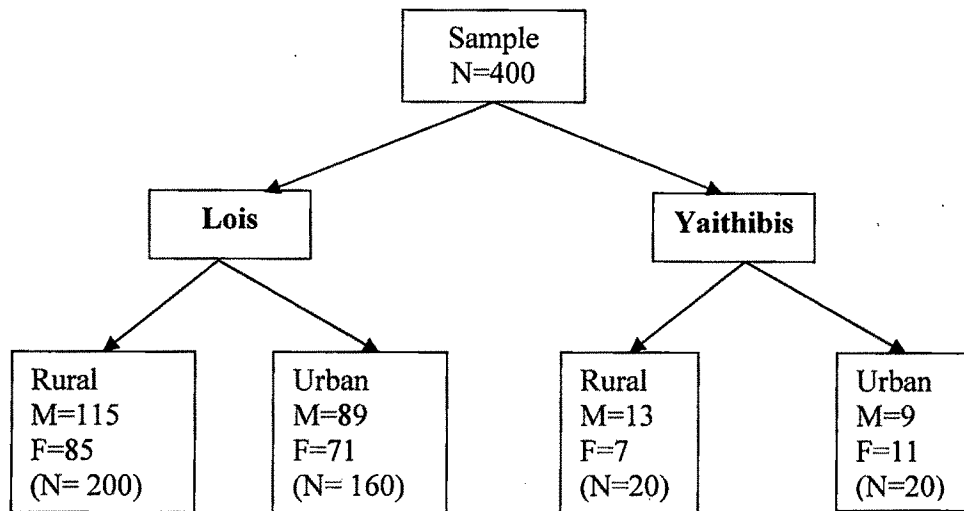
seventy six (76) old aged males and forty five (45) old aged females (Table. III.1) and (Fig III.1)

**Table III. 1**  
**Total Sample Profile**

DISTRICTS	Caste	Urban/Rural	Sex	Young	Middle	Old	Total
BISHNUPUR	Lois (100)	Urban (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
		Rural (100)	Male	13	28	15	56
			Female	11	22	11	44
	Yaithibi (0)	Urban (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
		Rural (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
IMPHAL EAST	Lois (90)	Urban (80)	Male	13	17	12	42
			Female	13	15	10	38
		Rural (10)	Male	1	1	2	4
			Female	2	2	2	6
	Yaithibi (10)	Urban (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
		Rural (10)	Male	2	3	3	8
			Female	0	2	0	2
IMPHAL WEST	Lois (100)	Urban (30)	Male	2	11	6	19
			Female	2	6	3	11
		Rural (70)	Male	8	23	13	44
			Female	4	16	6	26
	Yaithibi (0)	Urban (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
		Rural (0)	Male	0	0	0	0
			Female	0	0	0	0
THOUBAL	Lois (70)	Urban (50)	Male	4	12	12	28
			Female	7	10	5	22
		Rural (20)	Male	3	3	5	11
			Female	2	4	3	9
	Yaithibi (30)	Urban (20)	Male	2	2	5	9
			Female	3	5	3	11
		Rural (10)	Male	1	1	3	5
			Female	1	2	2	5



**Flow chart of the total sample Fig. III.1**



### **III.6. Selection of districts**

For the study, four districts have been selected where the predominant population is the scheduled caste as compared to the other districts. The four districts are Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West and Thoubal. From each district hundred (100) respondents are selected by employing simple random sampling. Bishnupur is a total rural district so all the respondents belong to rural category. Imphal East has twenty (20) rural and eighty (80) urban respondents; Imphal West consists of seventy (70) rural and thirty (30) urban respondents; and Thoubal has thirty (30) rural and seventy (70) urban respondents. The sample was categorized into three age-groups of young age group i.e. who were between the age group of 12-24, middle age group i.e. 25-59 years, and old age group i.e. 60 years and above of both males and females. The young age group consist of forty nine (49) males and forty five (45) females, the middle age group consist of hundred and one (101) males and eighty four (84) females, the old age group comprise of seventy six (76) males and forty five (45) females. The comparison in the responses of the rural and urban respondents can be carried out in all the three districts except for Bishnupur

district. The distribution of the different age groups will provide the opportunity of understanding the views, opinions and experiences of the respondents pertaining to different age groups. This way the study can also analyze the changes and the mobility achieved by the different generations (Tables III. 2,3,4,5,6,7)

**Table III. 2**  
**Bishnupur District Sample**

Bishnupur District	Name of the group				Total
	Lois		Yaithibis		
	M	F	M	F	
Rural					
Young Age	13	11	0	0	24
Middle age	28	22	0	0	50
Old Age	15	11	0	0	26
Total	56	44	0	0	100
Urban					
Young Age	0	0	0	0	0
Middle age	0	0	0	0	0
Old Age	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0

**Table III. 3**  
**Imphal East District Sample**

Imphal East District	Name of the group				Total
	Lois		Yaithibis		
	M	F	M	F	
Rural					
Young Age	1	2	2	0	5
Middle age	1	2	3	2	8
Old Age	2	2	3	0	7
Total	4	6	8	2	20
Urban					
Young Age	13	13	0	0	26
Middle age	17	15	0	0	32
Old Age	12	10	0	0	22
Total	42	38	0	0	80

**Table III. 4**  
**Imphal West District Sample**

Imphal West District	Name of the group				Total
	Lois		Yaithibis		
	M	F	M	F	
Rural					
Young Age	8	4	0	0	12
Middle age	23	16	0	0	39
Old Age	13	6	0	0	19
Total	44	26	0	0	70
Urban					
Young Age	2	2	0	0	4
Middle age	11	6	0	0	17
Old Age	6	3	0	0	9
Total	19	11	0	0	30

**Table III. 5**  
**Thoubal District Sample**

Thoubal District	Name of the group				Total
	Lois		Yaithibis		
	M	F	M	F	
Rural					
Young Age	3	2	1	1	7
Middle age	3	4	1	2	10
Old Age	5	3	3	2	13
Total	11	9	5	5	30
Urban					
Young Age	4	7	2	3	16
Middle age	12	10	2	5	29
Old Age	12	5	5	3	35
Total	28	22	9	11	70

**Table III. 6**  
**Age groups of the respondents**

Age groups		Districts								Total
		Bishnupur		Imphal East		Imphal West		Thoubal		
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Young (12-24)	Male	13	0	3	13	8	2	4	6	49
	Female	11	0	2	13	4	2	3	10	45
Middle (25-59)	Male	28	0	4	17	23	11	4	14	101
	Female	22	0	4	15	16	6	6	15	84
Old (60 & Above)	Male	15	0	5	12	13	6	8	17	76
	Female	11	0	2	10	6	3	5	8	45
Total		100	0	20	80	30	70	70	30	400

**Table III. 7**  
**Education profile of the respondents**

Education Profile		Districts								Total
		Bishnupur		Imphal East		Imphal West		Thoubal		
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
Illiterate	Male	14	0	06	09	07	0	03	03	42
	Female	17	0	07	14	11	0	07	07	63
Primary	Male	12	0	03	11	04	0	06	07	43
	Female	9	0	01	08	03	01	04	03	29
Secondary	Male	9	0	02	15	12	01	03	03	45
	Female	8	0	0	03	02	01	01	06	21
Higher Secondary	Male	4	0	0	03	02	0	0	0	9
	Female	0	0	0	03	01	0	02	03	9
College	Male	16	0	01	04	15	13	03	12	64
	Female	9	0	0	09	06	09	0	08	41
University	Male	1	0	0	0	04	05	01	12	23
	Female	1	0	0	01	03	0	0	06	11
Total		100	0	20	80	70	30	30	70	400

### **III. 7. Strategy of Enquiry and Analysis of data**

The forgoing portrait of the approaches of the scholars within the frame of social structure, stratification, mobility and change carries enormous insights into the subject matter and leads for further enquiry. As the Scheduled Castes of Manipur are to an extent different from the Scheduled Castes of the mainland states of India, there is no question of applying the established measures to understand their social (religious) status. It is important to locate the Scheduled Castes of Manipur from their own historical specificity rather than from the context of Indian society as a whole.

In order to reach a meaningful understanding of the research problem, it is necessary to employ more than one approach dealing with the various intricately interlinked issues related to the problem at question.

For this purpose we draw certain operative principles for our enquiry as the basic guidelines to study, analyse, interpret and finally coming to certain meaningful conclusions.

1. By looking for the structural features of social life, we consider first for the existence of social groups of all kinds and examine the inherent structural systems of these groups.
2. Since social stratification not only means differentiations but differentiation that is made socially visible, we not only understand the heirarchization and separation but also a host of phenomena such as ritual, dress, tonsorial style, marriage practices etc.
3. It is important to scrutinize the interdependence in groups and in society which may help in understanding the way in which the parts of society are related to each other and how each is related to the whole society.
4. Multiplicity of factors are considered to understand social mobility. For this purpose all forms of mobility, all levels of mobility and all purposes of mobility are accorded.

5. Since social change encompasses small-scale change as well as revolutionary change or short-term change as well as long-term change, it is required to look into all types of changes from very small insignificant to very large significant ones. For this purpose we look into various trends in contemporary social changes such as Sanskritization, Westernization etc.
6. It is also pivotal to enquire the role of Constitutional safeguards, welfare measures and socio-cultural movements in relation to social mobility.
7. All those forces that enhance or restrain mobility and change must be enquired along with the role of women in the daily practices, life style, dressing pattern as well as the role in socio-religious matters, agriculture, trade and commerce etc.
8. Accordingly our enquiry proceeds by a maximum space i.e. Part II and Part III. Further our analysis eschews 'sophisticated' interpretations. The main aim is to permit the subjects speak the facts with all their innertensions, conflicts, contradictions and discontinuities.

### **III. 8. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this study are categorized as;

#### **I. Nature of Social Structure and Social Stratification**

To study the social organization and social structure of Scheduled Castes of Manipur; to know the nature of stratification; to understand the various forms of disabilities they are facing; to understand the role of women and children among Scheduled Castes; to examine their economic, occupational, educational and political level; to study how the Scheduled Castes differ in their religious practices from caste Hindus; to examine the nature of reservation policy in various fields and its distribution; to know whether there are any forms of Dalit organizations.

## II. Nature of Social Mobility and Social Change

To understand the changing pattern of their socio-economic and cultural conditions; to examine the extent of geographical mobility among Scheduled Castes; to find out how far the constitutional provisions benefited the conditions of Scheduled Castes for upward mobility; to find out the percentage of Scheduled Castes in high profile jobs, bureaucracy and in politics; to understand how social mobility helped to improve the status of women and children.

## III. Forces Enhancing or Restraining Mobility and Change

To understand the constitutional provisions and policies which are beneficial to Scheduled Castes; to examine the ameliorative and welfare programmes provided by the government; to bring out the probable strategies and schemes for their improvement; to find out how far the caste structure is responsible for their low status; to find out if there are any forms of community conflicts among the depressed castes; to know the impact of Dalit movement on the upliftment of Scheduled Castes; to examine how far the Dalit art and literature help the Scheduled Castes in enhancing their 'Dalit identity'.

## IV. The Interrelationship between Scheduled Caste and Other Groups

To examine whether the conversion of Scheduled Castes to other religions helped them to enhance their status; to find out the social response of caste Hindus on Scheduled Castes for their change of status as well as the response among the Scheduled Castes themselves for that change; to understand the influence of caste Hindus on socio-cultural changes among the Scheduled Castes.

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