

Course Name- B.A.L.L.B.2nd sem

Subject- History

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Topic- Contemporary Social change in Indian Society

Introduction

- **Change is the Law of Nature.** Social change depends on many factors, and with the current pattern of time the cycle of human civilization moves. Modern India, too, is fast drifting to a new conception of civilization, which promises her many a new boon in the domain of economic and political achievements.
- If we assess the social change that have occurred in the Indian society from the middle of the 19th century, we notice the two directions in which such changes have proceeded.
- Certain changes in the traditional values and conventions have been wholly beneficial and are the result of the social reform movements which had or marginal influence on the society during the second half of the 19th century but gathered momentum since 1920's when the Indian National Movement became mass based.
- The second set of changes which have been increasing in intensity or coverage throughout the 20th century particularly after Independence, constitute the disturbing features of the present Indian society and have generally turned out to be serious problems. Such features are increasing (now explosive) population, increasing disorganization at all levels, crass materialism coupled with religiosity but without morality, increase in sophisticated crimes and socio-economic crimes, etc.

- Some of the major areas in which social change is significant in the post-Independent India are the cast system, status of women, the status and role of backward classes, family, etc.
- **Social change in India** may be considered as a process through which definite alterations in the structures and functions of a particular social system result. A particular social change may be good or bad, desirable or undesirable, sacred or profane, progressive or regressive depending upon the views and understanding of the observer. It is to be understood that when a particular social change occurs it will be evaluated in the light of the ideals, goals and theories of the observer.
- The change implies continuity. Only when certain existing conditions, situations or things are partially modified we use the term 'change'. So change and continuity coexist. Any social change may produce discernible and widespread changes in social structures, functions, behaviour, values, norms, and ways of life, attitudes, roles and status. Regarding social changes, sociologists have made detailed studies and have formulated various theories on the direction of change, factors of change and areas of change.

Salient Features of Social Change in India

- In the Indian context certain terms, Westernization, Sanskritization and Modernization are used to explain the direction of social change. The various factors of social changes in India are technology, Industrialization, urbanization, legislation, education, economic factors, planning, religion and mass media.
- **Modern India is passing through a transition.** The effect of English education and our contact with foreign peoples have considerably influenced our society. The educated class has not only adopted Western ideas but also their dress, manners, ways of living and culture. English is widely spoken in many states. It can still be called the only inter-State language.
- **Our customs and traditions are changing fast.** New beliefs are replacing old ones. The barriers of caste, color, province and religion are gradually breaking. Inter-caste marriages are coming to stay. We even hear of inter-religious marriages.

- **New cities are being planned on western lines.** The markets are flooded with Western articles. If we look into our daily routine, we shall find it more akin to West than to ancient India. The articles of our everyday life have been taken from the Western world though many of them are now made in India. Cloth is cut to suit the latest fashion of the West. The day is not far off when even our ladies will not hesitate to adopt Western customs. Our screen are also in tune with Hollywood. Contemporary fictions and stories are full of romanticism, realism and intellectualism, of the Western World. Our poetry is passing through a rapid change on Western lines. In art, we find impressionism as the latest trend.
- **Culture is the life blood of the nation.** It is the result of thousands of years of experience of the race living under particular geographical conditions. Hence we may conclude at the very outset that India has to maintain her cultural heritage through all the changes. What we have to change is the outer form of its expression. What we have to learn from the West is its science and industry.

Limitations

- Blind imitation is worse than orthodoxy. The means of perfection will change according to time and place.
- To achieve such perfection we need not always copy the West.
- It requires a deliberate thinking as to what should be selected or rejected in that process.
- English is good but Modern India must develop Hindi as its lingua franca.
- Western diet is unsuitable under our geographical conditions.
- Western manners are not suitable to our life.

Conclusion

- What is required is a dynamic and not reactionary approach to the problems. It is not the question of Indian or Western, ancient or modern, but the problem of value. And the solution is relative to particular circumstances. It requires a detached and scientific attitude. Truth should be taken from wherever it comes. Forms do not matter much, so long as the essence is kept alive. Above all, the contemporary Indians and have to maintain our individuality in the comity of nations. The spirit of India must be retained. The rest may change according to the needs of the time.