

RITUAL CASTE RANKING AND MODERNIZATION IN INDIA  
A STUDY OF PEASANTS IN SIX VILLAGES

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## ABSTRACT

### RITUAL CASTE RANKING AND MODERNIZATION IN INDIA A STUDY OF PEASANTS IN SIX VILLAGES

By

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Indian peasants, like their counterparts in other developing nations of the world, have been undergoing a process of modernization. Their traditional values, norms of conduct, beliefs and ways of thinking, habits and styles of living have been perceptibly changing, as a result of planned economic development initiated by the government, introduction of comprehensive programs of community development, growth of modern means of communication and transport, expansion of educational facilities, increasing contact with urban areas, and like factors. It can be said that they have begun to conceive alternatives to their specific ways of thinking, feeling and acting and have been moving from the traditional to what Lerner has called "participant lifeways."

While modernization, in spite of some neo-traditionalism termed "sanskritization" by M. N. Srinivas, has been affecting all segments of the population, there are

great variations. Not only have some regions shown greater acceptance of modernity. Within a single geographical area, different sections, occupational groups and classes are at varying stages on the modernization continuum. The pace of modernization has been conditioned by a variety of social, cultural, economic, political and educational factors present in the Indian social system.

A crucial factor that deserves to be studied in this context is the caste system. It not only governs "how one lives one's life, but also fixes his place in the society he lives in." Castes are ranked in the hierarchy, with Brahmins at the top and Harijans at the lowest rung of the ladder. The ranking of the caste is traditionally associated with certain specific occupations based largely on the character of material dealt with and functions performed in the religious ceremonies. The caste system determines the economic functions of the various caste groups within the village, where the traditional relationship is that of patron to client.

It has been suggested that ritual caste ranking is related to modernization process, in the sense that members of the higher castes show greater commitment to modern values and behavior than do members of the lower castes. In fact, some sociologists have argued that while the higher castes have been undergoing a process of

modernization, the lower castes continue to remain tradition-bound. This study was designed to test the above formulation of the relationship between ritual caste status and the individual's place on the modernization continuum.

The data in our study represent 559 peasants in six Indian villages. Four broad categories of ritual caste ranking have been evolved: the ascending order of caste ranking has been from 1 = low to 4 = high. Nine variables of modernization--education, cosmopolitaness, change agent contact, innovativeness, achievement motivation, educational aspirations, political knowledge, empathy and secular orientation--have been operationalized. Mean scores for each variable of the modernization process have been calculated for the four ritual caste categories. We have also used the coefficients of correlations between ritual caste ranking and each variable of modernization.

Our findings indicate that the relationship between ritual caste ranking and the place on the modernization continuum is positive and linear with respect to the six modernization variables, i.e., education, cosmopolitaness, educational aspirations, change agent contact, empathy, and political knowledgeability. In the case of innovativeness, the variable has been found to be positively and linearly related if the innovative behavior of the

highest caste category was excluded. However, the relationship between ritual caste ranking and achievement orientation and secular orientation was found to be curvilinear. In the case of achievement motivation, the peasants belonging to lower middle castes scored the highest, while in the case of secular orientation, the index has been highest for the lowest castes. Methodological limitations can partly explain our unexpected results concerning these two variables.

It has been concluded that the ritual caste ranking and modernization process are related in the sense that members of high castes display greater cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral commitment to modernity than those belonging to the lower castes. However, it may be pointed out here, that this study was not designed to treat ritual caste ranking as a causative factor in modernization. That is an altogether different issue: no such link is suggested on the basis of this study.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS . . . . .	ii
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iv
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
The Role of the Caste System in the Indian Rural System . . . . .	1
The Concept of Modernization: Its Variables . . . . .	7
Ritual Caste Ranking and Modernization . . . . .	16
The Objective and Scope of the Study . . . . .	19
II. HYPOTHESES, DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY . . . . .	21
Hypotheses . . . . .	21
Sources of Data . . . . .	22
Operationalization of the Variables . . . . .	23
Methodology . . . . .	30
III. FINDINGS, HYPOTHESES TESTING AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	31
Findings and Testing of Hypotheses . . . . .	31
Discussion . . . . .	34
IV. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH . . . . .	42
General Findings . . . . .	42
Limitations of the Study . . . . .	44
Implications for Future Research . . . . .	45
APPENDIX . . . . .	50
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES . . . . .	54

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Location and Size of Sample Villages . . . .	24
2. Coefficients of Correlations Between Modernization Variables in Six Indian Villages . . . . .	29
3. Mean Scores for Four Categories of Ritual Caste Ranking for Nine Modernization Variables in Six Indian Villages . . . .	32
4. Coefficients of Correlations Between Ritual Caste Ranking and Moderniza- tion Variables in Six Indian Villages . . . .	33

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Role of the Caste System in the Indian Rural System

Caste is a unique, complex system of stratification that divides Indian society into small groups, each of which lives in a different way from the other. Its membership is ascriptive and it serves as a prescriber and regulator of social behavior. Caste not only determines interpersonal relationships between the members of different castes but also one's personality and life style. One is born into a caste and dies in a caste and there is no escape, because in a traditional social system breaking caste rules means cutting oneself off from one's group. The caste system covers every facet of a man's life. As K. M. Panikar (1933) has put it: "Caste is a comprehensive system of life, a religion rather than a changing social order, and the rigidity with which its rules are enforced would put to shame even the great Inquisition (p. 9)." It has evolved such graded levels of social distance and relationships that the entire Indian society can be compared to a hierarchic pyramid, with harijans at the base and brahmins at the top.

The caste system, with its complexities and regional variations can hardly fit into the narrow confines of a neat, precise definition. Yet social scientists have made attempts at defining it. Risley (Taylor, 1966) observes that caste is "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same hereditary calling; and regarded by others who are competent to give opinion as forming a single homogenous community (p. 45)." Srinivas (1962) defines caste as

. . . a hereditary endogamous, usually localized group, having traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things, by the concept of pollution and purity. Generally, maximum commensability occurs within the caste (p. 3).

Ketkar (Taylor, 1966) says that a caste is a "social group having two characteristics: (1) membership is confined to those who are born of members and includes all persons so born; (2) the members are forbidden by inexorable social law to marry outside the group (p. 45)." All these definitions shed some light on the different aspects of the caste, but do not give us a total picture. It would be therefore useful to mention very briefly some of its salient characteristics at this stage.

First, the membership of the caste is ascriptive; "no change is possible because of personal qualities and

achievements." Weber has rightly called it a "closed status group."

Second, there exists a scheme of social precedence of one caste over another. At the local level, castes are always ranked in a hierarchy. Karve (1961) has mentioned two types of hierarchical orders:

One is an order in a small area (a village or a group of villages) where a given number of castes are arranged in an order which is recognized by the majority. . . . Secondly, there has been in existence for the last 2500 years an order which rests historically on a classification of society by ancient Hindu theoreticians. This order divides Hindus into four primary classes called varna. . . . Indian literature recognizes only two groupings. Single endogamous castes called jati and four ancient orders in which they are grouped, namely varna (p. 11).

The second order (varna model) is at best a theoretical construct, and has little, if any, practical relevance. It is next to impossible to categorize thousands of castes spread all over the country into four varnas.

The ritual caste status is related to the notion of pollution. The higher the caste, the more susceptible it is to pollution. The high caste members can be polluted by their proximity to members of castes lower than their own. In some parts of the country there are elaborate prescribed distances for each rung of the ladder. One standard measure of determining caste ranking in a region is the prevalent practice among different castes regarding the acceptance of cooked food or water from one another. The general rule is that a caste member can

accept cooked food or water from members of his own or a higher caste.

However, there is a difference between ritual caste hierarchy and the social and economic status of a caste in a region. While it is true that higher castes generally possess greater economic resources, and consequently greater social and political power in the country as a whole, it is not uncommon that a higher caste has a low social and economic status in a particular area. The dominance of a caste in a region depends on two variables--numerical strength and economic condition.

Third, every caste has a traditional hereditary occupation which its members are supposed to follow. Only brahmins can preside over ritual functions. Similarly, several castes like lohar (blacksmith) nai (barber) dhobi (washerman) khumhar (potter), etc., have almost no alternative but to adopt their hereditary occupations. In fact, castes are often known by their occupational status. "In the case of some castes there are injunctions against following occupations other than traditional ones. A particular type of occupation is, however, never co-extensive with a single caste. Typically, several castes follow a single occupation (Karve, 1961, p. 29)." Thus, castes define the occupations of their members.

Fourth, as Karve (1961) has emphasized, the caste is more or less

a cell-like structure which for many purposes is separated from other similar cells and lives a life

partly independent of them. Caste society is made up in such a way that a very large proportion of the activity of the individuals is confined to their own group. This is especially true of the social and cultural aspects of their lives (pp. 31-32).

Caste strictly regulates one's social milieu. Even habitation in villages is related to it; generally there are two areas, one belonging to the members of the upper castes, and the other belonging to the members of the lower castes. Different castes among touchables and untouchables live physically separated from one another in these two areas. Social intercourse is limited to the members of one's own caste. They are the only persons to participate in important family functions, social festivals and religious celebrations. Marriages are caste endogamous. Every caste has its own council, the panchayat, to regulate the conduct of its members. These panchayats can impose financial penalty or prescribe necessary atonement for a member who has violated caste rules and regulations.

These four characteristics of the caste system give us some idea of its nature and function. George Rosen' (1966) summarizes its role as follows:

The traditional caste system not only provides a horizontal stratification of the elements in the Indian rural society, for which it is best known, but also, and of equal importance, determines vertical relationships among the horizontal ranks. The caste system determines the economic functions of the various caste-groups within the village, where the traditional relationship is that of patron to client (Jajman-Kaman in North India--so

that in the economic sphere the functioning system is frequently called the Jajmani system); this system also determines the distribution of crops among the village members. In the ritual field, the caste system prescribes relationships among all the castes; and each caste, even the lowliest, has definite functions that only its members can perform in religious and social ceremonies (p. 17).

Even in local self-government, the caste loyalties play an important role.

One explanation is necessary at this stage. The above description of the caste system is an "ideal type"; the reality does not closely correspond to it. There has always been considerable mobility within the caste system; castes have acquired higher status as a result of "sanskritization." Since the beginning of this century rigid control and regulation by caste has declined considerably. With the advent of industrialization and the commercialization of agriculture occupations are no longer determined by heredity. Expansion of education has been responsible for the gradual breakdown of the traditional stereotypes about pollution and ritual purity; the old prejudices are gradually disappearing. Adult franchise and political democracy have generated a new consciousness among the so-called lower castes who now refuse to accept their lower status and role. Social reform movements have been successful in mobilizing considerable resistance to the caste system. The continual growth in the means of transport and communications have weakened the hold of traditions, customs and mores over the people. The cumulative effect of



all these factors has been the growing erosion of the customary role of the caste as a regulator of individual's status and role in the Indian social system.

The fact remains that in spite of its declining authority, the caste system continues to play an important role of the country's social and political life. It leaves its imprint on individual attitudes, behavior and life style. It conditions the nation's economic growth and its progress towards social and economic justice. The political processes and institutions, especially the general elections and the reality of local politics, do not remain unaffected by parochial caste-loyalties. In fact, it is a truism to say that the nature of social change in India cannot be understood without a meaningful reference to the caste system.

#### The Concept of Modernization: Its Variables

In contemporary analysis of social and political change the term modernization has assumed critical importance. With the emergence of developing nations and their desire to introduce rapid social and economic changes in their tradition-bound societies, modernization has become a preoccupation of both social and political scientists. The two models of modernity and tradition are often contrasted for analytical purposes to clarify the concept of modernization. Industrially advanced nations of Northern-Central Europe and Northern America are taken as an ideal type

for modernity, and the traditional societies of Asia, Africa and South America, which have not advanced industrially, as ideal types for tradition. Thus, modernity is supposed to imply that the status, social role and occupation of an individual are not ascriptive but are based on individual choice and ability, that the individual and not the group is the unit of social life, that an individual belongs to various groups, and not to one homogeneous group, that there is greater involvement and participation in political processes, that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to a cosmopolitan outlook and humanistic concerns, that rational and scientific attitudes take precedence over those of emotion and superstition, that fatalism is substituted by a shared concern for material progress, etc. Thus, modernization implies the process of transformation on an individual level from tradition to modernity.

The above analysis, though heuristically useful is not without its limitations. It suggests that modernization and westernization are identical concepts, that there is only one model of modernization through which all the developing nations pass, and that tradition and modernity are two extreme polarities: one accommodates the other. Such a view is unwarranted. As Rudolph and Rudolph (1967) have pointed out: "The assumption that modernity and tradition are radically contradictory rests

on a misdiagnosis of tradition as it is found in traditional societies, a misapprehension of the relationship between them (p. 3)." In fact, no society can be identified with extreme polarity. Even the most modern nations retain some characteristics of traditional systems. On the other hand, a minor current of modernity has passed through the philosophical, social and economic institutions of most traditional societies. Modernity and tradition should be regarded not as discrete polarities but as the two ends of a continuum: "As a traditional society moves along the continuum of modernization, its characteristics are modified to become closer to those of a modern society (Sen, 1968, p. 3)."

Several attempts have been made to define modernization. Smith and Inkeles (1966) suggest that modernization refers to two different objects:

As used to describe a society, 'modern' generally means a nation state characterized by a complex of traits including urbanization, high levels of education, industrialization, excessive mechanization, high rates of social mobility and the like. When applied to individuals, it refers to a set of attitudes, values, and ways of feeling and acting, presumably of the sort either generated by or required for effective participation in a modern society (p. 353).

Lerner (1966) regards it as "a secular trend unilateral in direction--from traditional to participant lifeways (p. 89)."

Rogers (1969) observes:

Modernization at the individual level corresponds to development at societal level. Modernization is the process by which individuals change from a

traditional way of life to a more complex, technologically advanced and rapidly changing styles of life (p. 14).

Thus the emphasis is on individual change process.

Social scientists have used a variety of variables both as indices and agents of modernization. In his classic study of the Middle East, Lerner (1966) regards empathy as the crucial variable intervening between mass media exposure and modernization effects. Other important variables he has used are: literacy, mass media exposure, urban contact and political participation (p. 50). Rogers (1969) employs nine variables in the study of modernization process among the Colombian peasants: literacy, mass media exposure, cosmopoliteness, empathy, achievement motivation, aspirations, fatalism, innovativeness and political knowledge (p. 49-56). Smith and Inkeles (1966) based on their interviews with 5,500 persons in six developing nations, identify thirty topics, themes, areas or issues relevant to the definition of modernity (p. 354). They have developed a "Minimum Scale of Individual Modernity" which contains fourteen questions relating education, educational aspiration, innovativeness, achievement motivation, empathy, fatalism, family planning, mass media credibility, political activism and secular orientation and other topics.

Following are some of the important variables of modernization:

Literacy refers to an individual's ability to encode and decode written messages. It is a crucial variable, as it exposes a person to a wider world. Lerner (Rogers, 1969) points out that

Literacy is indeed the basic personal skill that underlies the whole modernization sequence . . . The very fact of achieving distance and control over a formal language gives people access to the world of vicarious experience (p. 70).

Briones and Waisanen (1966) find a point of "modernization take off" after five years of schooling in such attitudinal variables as aspirations. In his study of Colombian peasants, Rogers (1969) discovered a significant relationship between functional literacy and the variables of modernization (p. 81-89). A study of Indian peasants (Rogers, 1969) reports the following correlation values between literacy and variables of modernization: empathy ( $r = +.35$ ), agricultural innovativeness ( $r = +.31$ ), achievement motivation ( $r = +.21$ ), social status ( $r = +.25$ ), cosmopolitaness ( $r = +.11$ ), political knowledge ( $r = +.34$ ) and opinion leadership ( $r = +.18$ ) (p. 91).

Cosmopolitaness refers to an individual's orientation outside his immediate social system. Contact with the urban setting generates new aspirations among peasants; a cosmopolite's reference groups tend towards urban areas. Lerner's parable of Grocer and Chief illustrates the importance of this variable in modernization process. Grocer's link with Ankara results in his yearning for good

dress, material riches and better life. Urban contact, in addition, provides an environment conducive to reflective, rational and critical behavior. Rogers (1969) found cosmopolitanism to be "quite highly correlated with other modernization variables chosen for the study (pp. 159-163)" among the Colombian peasants. In India (Rogers, 1969) cosmopolitanism positively correlated to modernization variables as follows: mass media exposure ( $r = +.39$ ), change agent contact ( $r = +.71$ ), political knowledgeability ( $r = +.72$ ), educational and vocational aspirations ( $r = +.63$ ), achievement motivation ( $r = +.55$ ), education ( $r = +.32$ ), literacy ( $r = +.28$ ), empathy ( $r = +.40$ ) and agricultural innovativeness ( $r = +.49$ ) (pp. 163-165).

Change Agent Contact refers to an individual's contact with the professional worker employed by a change agency for introducing change in a social system. Change agents are concerned with introducing desired innovations in the system. Therefore, an individual's contact with the change agent implies his exposure to the modernizing agent. There is ample evidence to show that "those clients who have more change agent contact are typified by a higher degree of modernization (Rogers, 1969, p. 178)."

Empathy has been defined by Lerner (1966) as the ability to relate oneself to a changing environment, or the ability to project oneself into different roles (p. 49). Thus, one's receptivity to new ideas depends on one's

ability to empathize. Lerner (1966) in Middle East, Eister (1962) in West Pakistan, Frey (1964) in Turkey, Rao (1963) in India, Whiting (1967) in Brazil and Rogers (1969) in Columbia have found it to be a significant variable in modernization process.

Peasants who live in isolated, closed social systems have low empathy. A person who cannot envision himself in the role of others is not likely to be a good receiver of ideas. On the other hand, an empathic person is likely to be more susceptible to mass media exposure. He easily adapts himself to new situations. As Lerner (Rogers, 1969) observes:

Rearrangement of the self-system is (empathy's) distinctive role. The mobile person is distinguished by a high capacity for identification with new aspects of his environment; he comes equipped with mechanisms needed to incorporate new identifications and demands that arise out of his habitual experience (p. 203).

Empathy is often the outcome of urban contact and exposure to mass media. Thus, empathy and modernization are closely related; empathy leads to greater modernization, which in turn results in more empathic behavior.

Innovativeness is defined (Rogers, 1969) as the degree to which an individual is ready to adopt new ideas, relative to others in his social system (p. 294). An innovator plays the most important role in developing societies by adopting alternative methods and techniques for achieving social goals, or by accepting new values in

place of traditional ones. Innovators are generally characterized by higher literacy, more mass media exposure, greater empathy, higher achievement motivation, higher aspirations, greater contact with change agent, greater cosmopolitaness and other modernization variables.

Achievement Motivation is defined by McClelland (1966) as "the desire to do well, not so much for the sake of social recognition or prestige, but to attain an inner feeling of accomplishment (p. 76)." Many scholars regard it as a crucial variable in economic development. Weber, Rostow, Hagen, McClelland and Lewis have all emphasized the importance of social values in economic growth and prosperity.

Achievement motivation, or n\_ach, has been measured for the whole culture by the content analysis of children's stories. It has been measured on the individual level by utilization of natural stimuli such TAT (McClelland, 1961, pp. 39-45), sentence completion (Morrison, 1964) or story telling (Pareek and Chattopadhyay, 1965). It is often postulated that peasants in traditional societies lack n\_ach because of structural blockages or other factors. Lewis (1960) has noted: "The majority of Tepoztecan (Mexican villagers) seem to lack strong drive or ambition for self-achievement. They tend to be satisfied if they have food and clothing from harvest to harvest (p. 90)." Rogers (1969) finds that achievement motivation is related



to modernization variables like mass media exposure, political knowledgeability, cosmopolitaness, education, greater empathy, and higher educational and vocational aspirations among the Colombian peasants (pp. 256-266).

Aspirations refer to the desired future state of being. The general level of aspiration--educational, vocational or economic--is low in traditional societies. There is a variety of reasons for this state of affairs. Perhaps the most important is the lack of opportunity to raise one's position in a highly stratified system. Aspirational level is measured for the areas of education and vocation. In the Indian rural system the measure of educational aspirations is important because it reflects an individual's acceptance of education as a significant method of improving one's conditions. Education to a peasant is a long term process that involves heavy investment: education not only deprives him of family labor but also demands considerable expenditure.

Political Knowledgeability is defined as "the degree to which an individual comprehends facts essential to his functioning as an active and effective citizen (Rogers, 1969, p. 56)." Modernization process is generally accompanied by expansion in government services, especially in developing countries such as India. As society becomes more and more complex, a citizen's participation and involvement in government is bound to increase. Political knowledge is generally taken as a rough measure of a citizen's participation

in political processes. In India the introduction of adult franchise and the three-tier system of democracy has accelerated political participation among the people.

The above is an incomplete list of the modernization variables. Several variables, such as fatalism and secular orientation have not been mentioned here, although they are important. Any reliable measure of modernization process should take into consideration the above mentioned variables.

#### Ritual Caste Ranking and Modernization

Modernization can be related to the caste system in several ways. One is the relationship between ritual caste ranking and the acceptance of modernity. We can question whether different ritual caste ranks display varying degrees of modernity in India. There is some evidence to suggest that they do; castes higher in ritual status show greater acceptance of modernity as compared to the lower one.

Srinivas (1962) has observed:

One of the many interesting contradictions of modern Hindu life is that while the brahmins are becoming more and more westernized, the other castes are becoming more and more 'sanskritized.' In the lower reaches of hierarchy, castes are taking up customs which the brahmins are busy discarding (pp. 54-55).

The lower castes show greater tolerance of religious rituals and practices. In other words, Srinivas has argued that while brahmins (the caste highest in the ritual purity)

are undergoing modernization, the lower castes are becoming more and more tradition-bound by adopting the behavior that was practiced by brahmins earlier. Harold Gould (1961) has pointed out that in Uttar Pradesh (a Northern state of India) only high castes were undergoing westernization (another name for modernization) while the lower castes lacked the means as well as motivation to move in the modern world. Some other studies have also noted similar phenomena (p. 947).

There are several explanations. Historically speaking, it was the upper castes that first came into contact with Western civilization and culture. In the early days of the British empire they alone availed of the educational opportunities provided by the foreign masters. The lower caste members in view of their social and economic backwardness were not able to send their children to schools. The result was that the higher castes were in a more advantageous position to exploit new opportunities.

Thus the members of the higher castes dominated the profession, the higher level post in the government--in fact all white-collar jobs--while the lower castes provided certain essential services and goods. A tradition-modern continuum did exist: brahmins, baidyas, kayastha, and Banias sought Western education and reaped its rewards, whereas members of low artisans, servicing and landless labor castes became launderers, barbers, domestic servants, peons, basket makers, oilmen, potters and sellers of vegetables, milk and fruits (Srinivas, 1966, p. 64).

There has been a coherence "between the ritual purity and the economic aspects of the caste hierarchy (Srinivas,

1962, p. 92)." The higher castes have been economically better off than the lower castes. The high castes own most rural land, while the low castes have either few holdings or serve as landless laborers. There has been some evidence to show that the main benefits of rural development programs have gone to the upper caste peasants. Despite the special benefits and opportunities provided by the government to the members of the untouchable castes, their social, economic and economic position has not changed much. In a way the modernization process among the upper caste peasants has been accelerated by their better economic conditions. High level of living has been both an antecedent and a consequence of modernization among the rich peasants of the upper castes.

The main leadership at all levels has been provided by the high castes. Practically all the stalwarts of the Indian cultural renaissance and freedom struggle, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Rabindra Nath Tagore, Vivekananda to Ranade, and Gandhi to Nehru, belonged to the upper castes. As a result of the leadership of the high caste intelligentsia, these castes have had better opportunities to undergo modernization than the rest of the population. Recent studies show that upper caste peasants control leadership of panchayats, cooperatives and other institutions (Desai, 1961, p. 176). It is contended they are responsible for greater acceptance of modernity among the higher castes.

There are several counter-acting forces in operation that are changing the existential relationship between the different caste members. The caste system, as suggested earlier, is losing its traditional role as the prescriber and regulator of individual and collective behavior. Secondly, as a result of the penetration of money-economy and the increase in agricultural production changes are taking place in the nature and distribution of work, patterns of social mobility and traditional power structure. A new system of social stratification based on achievement rather than ascription is emerging. The new elite does not necessarily come from the higher caste groups.

### The Objective and Scope of the Study

The above preliminary discussion provides the context in which this study should be viewed.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between ritual caste status and modernization process among the Indian peasants.

There are two reasons for the present focus on the peasant population. First, peasants constitute the bulk of the Indian population. Second, the caste system plays a more important role in rural areas than in urban centers. It is not as effective in towns and cities as it is in the small, tradition-bound villages. Therefore the peasantry in the Indian rural system is made the object of the present study.

This study is based on data collected in six Indian villages. The nine variables of modernization--education, cosmopolitaness, change agent contact, innovativeness, achievement motivation, political knowledge, educational aspirations, empathy and secular orientation--are herein operationalized to determine the relationship between ritual caste status and the place on modernization continuum.

The ritual caste status is classified into four discrete categories. These categories are not classified on the basis of the "varna model" but on the practice of accepting water or cooked food between the members of different castes in the six villages. Such categories, it is here suggested, facilitate a more accurate measurement of the intra-village ritual caste status.

The mean scores for each variable of modernization are calculated for the four broad categories of the ritual caste status to determine the place of different ritual caste ranking on the modernization continuum.

In the next chapter, the problem is operationalized.

## CHAPTER II

### HYPOTHESES, DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to operationalize the problem; we will formulate the hypotheses, state sources of data, operationalize relevant variables and finally explain the methodology.

#### Hypotheses

In the light of the discussion held in the previous chapter, the following nine hypotheses have been formulated regarding the relationship between ritual caste ranking and modernization variables:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>: The ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to education.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to cosmopoliteness.
- Ho<sub>3</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to change agent contact.
- Ho<sub>4</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to innovativeness.
- Ho<sub>5</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to achievement motivation.
- Ho<sub>6</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to educational aspirations.
- Ho<sub>7</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to political knowledge.

Ho<sub>8</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to empathy.

Ho<sub>9</sub>: Ritual caste ranking is positively and linearly related to secular orientation.

### Sources of Data

For the purposes of the present study, we utilize part of the data collected for a comprehensive research project on "Diffusion of Innovations in Rural Societies" under Dr. Everett M. Rogers. The data concerning the Indian peasant, his social and economic background, his attitudes, beliefs and the general outlook towards life, and his innovative behavior, was collected in eight Indian villages in three important states of India. The three states--Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal--represent political variability as well as different patterns of developmental administration.

Two criteria, i.e., the size of the farm operated and the age of the peasant respondent, were used in selecting the respondents. Only those peasants were interviewed who were farming at least one hectare (two and a half acres) of land at the time of the data gathering. The selection of the peasants was further restricted to those heads of farm households who were fifty years of age or younger at the time of the study. In each of the eight villages, every peasant who fitted the above criteria, was interviewed. In this study, we utilize the data for only six villages, as the two villages were predominantly Muslim,



and as such had no ritual caste ranking. Table 1 gives us details about the location and size of the sample villages.

### Operationalization of the Variables

#### Caste Ranking on the Ritual Scale

The ritual caste status refers to the ranking of the respondent in the village as regards the practice of acceptance of drinking water or the cooked food. This has been commonly accepted criterion of determining caste ranking. As Epstein (1959) puts it:

If two castes freely inter-dine, they demonstrate that they regard one another as having equal status; if the two castes have a mutual ban on inter-dining, this reflects that each of them questions the superiority of the other caste; if the inter-dining arrangements are not mutual, the caste which accepts the cooked food from another indicates that it accepts its own status as inferior (p. 156).

Thus, if a member of a caste A accepts cooked food from a person belonging to caste B, but not vice versa, then caste A is ritually higher in rank than caste B.

During the pretesting of the questionnaire a complete list of the castes in each village was made. Then a series of pictures of individuals were presented to the key informants. Each picture contained some clue to the ritual caste status of the person. The key informants were requested to arrange pictures in ascending order on the criteria as to who accepted cooked food or drinking water

TABLE 1.--Location and Size of Sample Villages.

State	District	Village	Village Population	Number of Respondents
Andhra Pradesh	West Godavari	Manchili	1,500	78
--	--	Kanchumaru	2,600	33
--	--	Polamaru	3,400	99
Maharashtra	Yeotmal	Pophali	1,149	100
--	--	Mulawa	3,348	146
West Bengal	Birbhum	Amdole	2,460	103
--	--	Harishpur*	1,709	79
--	--	Laxmindanga*	1,573	62

\*These villages have not been considered in the present study as they have no information on caste system which is the independent variable.

Source: Prodipto Roy, Frederick C. Fliegel, J. E. Kivlin and Lalit K. Sen,  
"Agricultural Innovation Among Indian Farmers."

from whom. Based on these rankings four broad categories of the ritual caste status were specified for the six villages. The ascending order of caste ranking was from 1 (low) to 4 (high). In the present study, we have abbreviated these four ritual caste categories as follows:

L. C. (low caste), L. M. C. (lower middle castes),  
U. M. C. (upper middle castes) and H. C. (high castes).  
The ritual caste ranking would also be known as R. C. R.

#### Education

This variable was measured by the number of years spent in school and by the formal degrees obtained.

#### Cosmopoliteness

Its index was constructed by summing up the number of visits made by the respondent to towns and cities during the past year.

#### Change Agent Contact

This variable was measured by noting the frequency with which a respondent talked with functionaries of extension agents, saw block films and agricultural demonstrations.

The index was constructed by adding the scores on the responses to the following questions:

Last year (1966) did you:

	Number of years talked/seen
Talk with block development officer?	
Talk with village level worker?	
See an agricultural demonstration?	
See a block film on agriculture?	

### Innovativeness

Ten improved agricultural practices were selected on the basis of Guttman scaling and factor analysis. Then the agricultural innovativeness was measured by asking the following question about each innovation:

Have you ever used . . .

1. Ammonium sulphate
2. Superphosphate
3. Mixtures
4. Insecticides for plant protection
5. Green manures
6. Improved cattle breeding
7. Animal inoculation
8. Rat Poison
9. High yielding variety of seeds
10. Steel plough.

The index was constructed by adding the positive responses.

### Achievement Motivation

This variable was operationalized with the help of a set of statements with which respondents were asked either to agree or disagree. The statements are:

1. Work should come first even if one does not get proper rest.
2. One should succeed in his occupation even if one has been neglectful of one's family.
3. One should have determination and driving ambition even if these qualities make one unpopular.

### Educational Aspiration for Children

This variable was operationalized by asking the following question:

How much schooling would you like your youngest sons to have?

### Political Knowledgeability

This variable was measured by asking the following questions and summing the scores of correct answers:

Who is the Prime Minister of India?

Who is the Chief Minister of your State?

Who is the member of the Legislative Assembly?

### Empathy

This variable was operationalized on the basis of the answers given to the following questions:

1. If you were the B.D.O. of this Block, what programs of agricultural development would you make or conduct?
2. If you were the president of the panchayat in your village, what would you do in the next year?
3. If you were a day laborer, what would you do to own some land?
4. If you were the District Collector, what would you do to solve some of the major problems of your area?

The index was constructed by giving one point to every positive answer.

### Secular Orientation

It was measured by a set of questions with only two alternative answers, one favoring traditionalism and the other modernity. Initially ten such questions were asked and the responses were subjected to scaling techniques.

The scale retained the following eight questions:

1. Should harijans (untouchables) be allowed to draw water from all common wells in the village?

2. Should harijans and other children take meals together in the School?
3. Can evil eye cause disease?
4. Do you think that the harijans be allowed to worship in all the temples of the village?
5. What do you do with the bullocks who are too old to work?
6. Should non-Hindu be allowed to eat beef?
7. If your son wanted to marry a lower caste girl, would you approve of it?
8. Is an illiterate brahmin superior to a lower caste graduate?

The responses that deviated from the traditional norms were scored as secular.

#### Coefficients of Correlations Between Modernization Variables

The inter-relationships between the various modernization variables, as operationalized above, was studied by computing their matrix of correlation coefficients. Table 2 presents the  $r$ 's of the modernization variables.

We find that, in general, the modernization variables show positive relationships with each other. Arranged on the basis of their average intercorrelations, the modernization variables rank as follows: political knowledge, education, change agent contact, innovativeness, cosmopolitaness, empathy, secular orientation, educational aspirations and achievement motivation.

On the whole, then, there is justification for assuming that the modernization variables which we have

TABLE 2.--Coefficients of Correlations Between Modernization Variables in Six Indian Villages.

	Pol. Know.	Education	Ch. Agent Con.	Innovat.	Cosmo.	Empathy	Sec. Orien.	Edu. Asp.	Ach. Mot.	$ X $
Pol. Knowledge										
Education										
Ch. Agent Contact										
Innovativeness										
Cosmopoliteness										
Empathy										
Secular Orien.										
Edu. Aspiration										
Ach. Motivation										
Total N = 559										

selected in this study are positively interrelated. However, secular orientation, educational aspiration and achievement motivation show some negative correlations with each other as well as with the other modernization variables and, in addition, these three variables show only negligible mean positive correlations with the others. Consequently, there is some basis for thinking that these three variables have somewhat marginal validity as indications of modernization.

#### Methodology

For testing the hypotheses, the mean scores for each variable of modernization for the four categories of the ritual caste ranking were calculated. In addition, Pearsonian  $r$  between ritual caste ranking and modernization variables were computed. The hypotheses would be rejected or accepted on the basis of the mean scores and coefficient of correlations.



## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS, HYPOTHESES TESTING AND DISCUSSION

In Chapter III, we present the processed data, and test and hypotheses formulated in Chapter II. The findings are compiled in two tables. Table 3 shows mean scores concerning the nine variables of modernization for the four categories of R. C. R. Table 4 provides the coefficients of correlations between R. C. R. and modernization variables.

#### Findings and Testing of Hypotheses

Table 3 shows that six out of nine hypotheses are supported by the data. In the case of education ( $Ho_1$ ), cosmopolitaness ( $Ho_2$ ), change agent contact ( $Ho_3$ ), educational aspirations ( $Ho_6$ ), political knowledge ( $Ho_7$ ), and empathy ( $Ho_8$ ) we find that their relationship with R. C. R. is both positive and linear. The higher the ritual caste status, the higher the mean score for each modernization variable. Thus, the mean scores for the four caste categories display the following pattern: L. C. < L. M. C. < U. M. C. < H. C.

TABLE 3.--Mean Scores for Four Categories of Ritual Caste Ranking for Nine Modernization Variables in Six Indian Villages.

Modernization Variable	1 L.C.	2 L.M.C.	3 U.M.C.	4 H.C.	Ho
1. Education	1.87	2.39	4.83	5.70	+
2. Cosmopoliteness	15.90	22.45	24.66	39.45	+
3. Change Agent Contact	1.78	2.27	2.91	4.79	+
4. Innovativeness	3.05	4.19	5.29	5.08	0
5. Achievement Motivation	1.68	1.90	1.84	1.64	0
6. Educational Aspiration	10.54	11.18	13.30	14.53	+
7. Political Knowledgeability	1.31	1.71	2.18	2.56	+
8. Empathy	1.80	1.85	1.96	2.29	+
9. Secular Orientation	5.23	3.67	4.47	3.85	0

Castes have been ranked on a four-point scale:

Low = 1,      High = 4    (N = 559)

TABLE 4.--Coefficients of Correlations Between Ritual Caste Ranking and Modernization Variables in Six Indian Villages.

Modernization Variable	Coefficient of Correlation
Education	+.40
Cosmopoliteness	+.27
Change Agent Contact	+.31
Innovativeness	+.25
Achievement Motivation	-.03
Educational Aspirations	+.13
Political Knowledge	+.37
Empathy	+.16
Secular Orientation	-.20

Total N = 559

The coefficients of correlations between R. C. R. and these six variables are positive and range from +.40 to +.13. It is important to note that these six variables are also related among themselves (Table 1).

The hypothesis ( $Ho_4$ ) concerning R. C. R. and innovative behavior has been partially supported. The highest innovativeness has been shown not by H. C. (as hypothesized) but by U. M. C., although the difference is not very striking. If the performance of H. C. is not considered, then the relationship becomes both positive and linear.

Our findings do not support the hypotheses regarding achievement motivation ( $Ho_5$ ) and secular orientation ( $Ho_9$ ). In the case of achievement motivation, the mean scores for the four categories of the castes are: 1.68, 1.90, 1.84 and 1.64. Thus the H. C. show the lowest achievement motivation, and the L. M. C. the highest. In the same way, the relationship between secular orientation and R. C. R. appears to be negative and curvilinear. The mean scores are 5.23, 3.67, 4.47 and 3.85. In other words, the L. C. show the highest secular orientation and the L. M. C. the lowest. The coefficients of correlations are negative for both these variables.

### Discussion

We should briefly discuss the three hypotheses which are not supported by our findings.

#### Hypothesis No. 4

Several interpretations can be put forward to explain the unexpected innovative behavior of the H. C. as shown by the findings.

In the first place, the high caste peasants, though endowed with greater resources and facilities, are not necessarily the best farmers. In fact, very high ritual caste status often interferes with their excelling as farmers, for they depend upon others to cultivate their lands. As Kusum Nair (1961) observes:

The best farmers are to be found not necessarily in communities most favorably endowed with natural resources, but in those that are traditionally agriculturists by caste. . . . It is so mainly because these castes have an inherited respect for agricultural work and they are not precluded by religion or tradition from working on the land. The result is that. . . members of these professionally agricultural communities . . . will be found superior in husbandry to the non-working castes of landowners, such as the brahmins, rajputs, banias, etc., though the latter may have more land, capital, education, and thus superior means to acquire modern techniques and tools of cultivation (pp. 190-191).

George Rosen (1966) supports this view:

. . . it appears reasonable that those castes and communities with greater tradition and experience in farming their own land will be better able to take advantage of incentives and knowledge (p. 197).

Almost opposite to this view is the assertion that the high H. C. peasants are the most efficient farmers and that they are therefore selective. Bose (1965) has pointed out that the best farmer need not necessarily be the most innovative in the short run, for he adopts an innovation after

Careful consideration of factors such as suitability of innovation, investment potential, risk involved and expected profits. He is not totally guided by the change agent, who is not always the best judge of the local situation. Therefore, the best farmers may be ranked even lower on the scale of innovativeness even though they might in general be more progressive and modern.

Lastly, the formulation of Cancian concerning the relationship between wealth and innovative behavior can also shed light on this phenomenon. Studies show that wealth and innovative behavior show some positive relationship; rich farmers adopt new innovations more easily than do the poor ones (Rogers, 1962, pp. 175-176). Frank Cancian (1967, pp. 912-927), while accepting the assumption of positive relationship, has challenged the implicit assumption that the relationship between the two variables is linear. Crudely stated, his reasoning runs as follows: Since those of higher rank based on wealth have more to lose than those of lower rank, they are less likely to be the early innovators, provided other things are equal. This he calls the "inhibiting effect" of social rank on innovativeness. In reality things are never the same. The agricultural innovations are not divisible so that every farmer can afford to adopt in proportion to his wealth. Neither is knowledge equally spread over all wealth ranks in any agricultural system; those possessing wealth have greater access to information

and assistance required for innovativeness. Cancian calls these two factors "facilitating effect." Thus, Cancian postulates that status based on wealth has both "inhibiting" as well as "facilitating" effects on innovative behavior. These effects are clearly observable in two middle ranks. "The dominance of the 'inhibiting effect' results in a lower than expected level of adoption for the high middle class and a higher than expected level of adoption for the low middle rank (Wilkening et al., 1969, p. 2)." He argues that members of the high rank show greatest innovativeness because they feel more or less secure and want to maintain their rank. Similarly, members of the lower rank do not innovate because they might lose the limited resources they possess. "The middle class get their distinction by standing still (Cancian, 1967, p. 915)." On the basis of data from seven studies, Cancian concludes that the relationship between status based on wealth and agricultural innovations is curvilinear, and the element of risk plays an important role in the decision to innovate.

There is some reason to believe that the above proposition can partly explain the innovative behavior of the H. C. The peasants belonging to H. C. are reluctant to take greater risks. One "facilitating factor" which Cancian has mentioned, i.e., the fear of losing status if they fail to maintain their high rank by showing greatest innovative behavior, is not operative in the Indian rural

system. The ritual caste status is ascriptive and not based on achievement. Even if a H. C. peasant does not show highest innovativeness he does not risk losing high status. This is a significant difference between the two systems of stratification. Therefore, we can postulate that the element of risk, as emphasized by Cancian, might exert an adverse effect on the innovative behavior of H. C. peasants in India.

There may be an element of truth in the explanations mentioned above. No single explanation can offer a satisfactory answer. The coefficient of correlation between R. C. R. and innovativeness is  $+0.25$ . Thus, we can say that though the relationship is not linear, it is positive and significant.

#### Hypothesis No. 5

It is suggested that our unexpected findings are due to methodological shortcomings. It may be recalled here that the concept was operationalized on the basis of three statements and the index was constructed by adding up the positive responses. The first statement related to one's preference to work instead of leisure. The other two statements were: "One should succeed in his occupation even though one has been neglectful of one's family" and "One should have determination and driving ambition even if these qualities make one unpopular."

First, in the Indian rural setting it is rather difficult to get truthful responses for the last two



statements. Family and community ties are so strong that even if one agrees with these statements, he might not regard it prudent to admit it openly. Only simple and illiterate individuals are likely to be more truthful; shrewd and educated ones would hide their feelings.

Second, family ties are generally stronger among H. C. and U. M. C. than among those who are placed low on the continuum of ritual purity. Sen (1965), for example, found that in Indian villages, the highest percentage of nuclear families was among laborers who had the least urban contacts and were mostly illiterates. It is reasonable to assume that M. C. peasants would be less prepared to sacrifice their family interests for the sake of occupational gains.

Third, it can be assumed that H. C. would be more sensitive about popularity and status than the lower castes. L. C. being at the lowest rung of the social ladder have no great stake in popularity and thus are willing to court unpopularity if it aids their economic advancement.

Fourth, the value of hard work is more obvious to L. C. people than to those of U. M. C. and H. C. To them, life is a grim struggle for survival. They are therefore more likely to respond positively to the first statement.

Last, there is reason to believe that any conceptualization of achievement motivation that takes into consideration

only its occupational expression, can hardly serve as a measure of the concept, especially in a social system where great emphasis is laid upon "giving" rather than "taking." A reliable index of achievement motivation should also take into consideration such factors as family, education, community service, etc., besides occupational achievement.

There is another reason to believe that the measuring instrument was not valid in this study. Table 2 shows that this variable is negatively correlated to education, cosmopolitaness, change agent contact, innovativeness, educational aspirations and secular orientation. It is theoretically inconceivable; achievement motivation should be positively related to some of these variables, conceptually speaking. Therefore, the methodological limitation is obvious.

#### Hypothesis No. 9

The findings can be attributed to the nature of the questions, on whose basis the index for secular orientation was constructed. Five out of the total of eight questions directly related to untouchability and caste system. The other two related to the cow and beef-eating. It is probable that the L. C. would score high on this scale. Few L. C. members would accept the legitimacy of the caste system and untouchability, while a few H. C. members would repudiate it totally. The high castes have not yet given up their traditional pride. Some castes at the lowest

rung of the ladder have little concern for the sanctity of the cow; a section of them abstains from beef-eating not out of religious scruples, but out of fear of offending the upper, dominant castes.

What seems to be most notable is the conservatism of the lower middle castes, a fact which is supported by our data. One of the reasons for this state of affairs is that while the castes at the lowest level are continually exposed to the tyranny and exploitation of the so-called higher castes, the lower middle castes generally do not face much social ostracism and exploitation. They identify more with U. M. C. and H. C. than with the L. C. Further, there has been a great awakening among the low castes as a result of social and political movements which have affected their thinking and outlook. The government is providing them with considerable material facilities, which are denied to the lower middle castes. The cumulative effect is the high conservatism of the L. M. C.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is neither possible nor desirable to recapitulate here the objective, hypotheses or the design of this study. Such an attempt would hardly serve any useful purpose. We include only the main findings, the general limitations and some implications of the study for further research.

#### General Findings

This study was designed to examine the relationship between ritual caste status and modernization among the Indian peasants. The peasants were categorized in four broad categories based on their ritual caste status. Nine variables of modernization were operationalized and indices were calculated for each category of the ritual caste status. It was hypothesized that the peasants belonging to upper castes would score higher on these indices as compared to those ritually ranked lower to them.

Out of the nine hypotheses we postulated, six are supported by our findings. Education, cosmopolitaness, change agent contact, educational aspirations, empathy

and political knowledgeability have been found to be positively and linearly related to the ritual caste ranking.

The hypothesis regarding innovativeness has been partially supported. This variable is positively related to the R. C. R. if the behavior of H. C. peasants is excluded. Some theories about the relationship between social stratification and innovativeness may shed light on this phenomenon.

Our findings did not support the hypotheses regarding achievement motivation and secular orientation. The relationship between the R. C. R. and these two variables appear to be curvilinear, and even negative. In the case of achievement motivation, the peasants belonging to L. M. C. scored highest, while in the case of secular orientation, the index is highest for L. C. Methodological limitations and shortcomings partly explain the unexpected results.

It can be therefore said that the findings give considerable support to the prevailing hypothesis that ritual caste status and modernization process are related: members of high castes display greater cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral commitment to modernity than those belonging to the lower castes.

It is necessary to stress here that this study was not designed to treat R. C. R. as a causative factor in modernization. That is an entirely different issue. No such causal relationship is implied here.

### Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study, though of considerable importance, cannot be treated as reliable with regard to the entire Indian social system. The temptation to make generalizations from micro-studies of this kind is indeed great, but it should be resisted in the interest of scientific accuracy. Attempts in the past to generalize from micro-studies have obscured the scientific perspective and generated more confusion than light on the operation of the caste system. Therefore, some limitations of the study are mentioned here. These limitations have been self-imposed in view of the non-availability of the data, the lack of resources and the demands of methodological precision.

The sample of six villages can be hardly regarded as representative of the total universe, i.e., some half a million villages of India, with a diversity of traditions, customs, language, economic development and other elements. There are great variations as regards the operation of the caste system and the pace of modernization in different parts of the country.

This study was confined to peasants, and it thus excludes a considerable segment of the rural population, who serve as farm wage earners or engage in occupations related to agriculture. If these occupational groups were given proper representation a different picture of the relationship between R. C. R. and modernization

process might emerge. For example, the contrast between H. C. and L. C. peasants might be more marked, for the landless laborers and village artisans generally belong to L. C. and are socially and economically backward.

A third major limitation of the study is that it has been confined to the male population. There are bound to be significant differences between the two sexes in the same caste group. The position of women is very backward in the Indian social life; it is probable that there would be only marginal differences, if any, among the women of different castes.

Lastly, the data related only to rural population, and not in any way to urban settings. There are significant differences between rural and urban areas. Urban population is exposed to greater modernization process and the caste distinctions are not so marked. In the anonymity of city life, caste hardly serves as a regulator of individual's life style.

In view of the above-mentioned limitations, it is advisable not to generalize from these findings for the whole social system. However, it can be safely postulated that more or less the same pattern of relationship is likely to be noted among the peasants all over India.

#### Implications for Future Research

The findings of this study have some interesting implications for future research. Some important themes,

areas and problems can be identified that call for intensive study and research. A few are mentioned below.

The findings concerning achievement motivation and its curvilinear relationship with the R. C. R., and negative correlations with some important variables of modernization indicate the need for its better conceptual and operational treatment.

It appears that the concept has been developed primarily in the context of Western social systems where vocational success is regarded as the most crucial goal. Achievement motivation can be measured in these systems with reference to one's concern about occupational success or in terms of one's priorities in life. But this measure of achievement motivation might not always be valid and reliable in social systems which lay greater emphasis on giving rather than taking. Perhaps it would be more fruitful to treat it as a multi-dimensional concept including occupational achievement, commercial achievement, religious achievement, familial achievement and community achievement. These areas should be regarded as the different dimensions of achievement motivation,

Some studies should be undertaken in a country like India, to develop and refine the concept of achievement motivation.

The finding concerning the innovative behavior of H. C. indicates the need for exploring the relationship between innovative behavior and social stratification.



We referred to the Cancian (1967, pp. 912-927) formulations in the preceding chapter. Cancian stressed that the relationship between innovative behavior and social status based on wealth is curvilinear and that the element of risk taking plays an important role in decision regarding innovativeness. In his view the upper middle class would show less innovativeness than would be predicted on the basis of linearity curve. Wilkening, Gartrell and Presser (1969) who attempted to re-examine Cancian hypothesis have come to the conclusion that

. . . all that can be said is that there does appear to be a curvilinear relationship between status and innovation and that this relationship results from a higher than expected adoption by the high status group resulting in exponential type of relationship rather than a more involved third or fourth order curve as implied by Cancian formulation of the theory.

Cancian has formulated his theory with reference to status based on wealth. Caste system, however, is an ascriptive system. One might lose his high status based on wealth, if he does not show highest innovativeness. This does not apply to the case of ritual caste ranking. A peasant belonging to the H. C. can show less innovativeness and yet maintain his high ritual status.

The findings indicate that H. C. did not show highest innovativeness as predicted by the hypothesis. However, there is reason to believe that the findings might be different if the status based on wealth, rather than ritual

caste status is taken into consideration. Perhaps H. C. might show greatest innovative behavior. In view of the green revolution sweeping all over the country, the initial apprehension about the risk involved might not serve as an important "inhibiting factor" in the case of high class. Therefore the relationship between the status and innovativeness might be both positive and linear. It is therefore suggested that the relationship between status and innovative behavior be explored with reference to both types of status, based on achievement as well as on ascription.

Lastly, it is suggested that the relationship between modernization and different dimensions of status should be further explored.

In this study, only one dimension of status, that of ritual caste ranking, has been analyzed; other dimensions have not been considered. There are two other important dimensions which can be meaningfully studied in the Indian social system. These are wealth and power.

Modernization can be studied in relation to these three dimensions of status in rural India. Such a study could shed some light or at least generate interesting hypotheses, in the following two areas:

1. The relationship between different dimensions of status and modernization variables, and
2. The inter-relationship between three dimensions of status. This aspect would be of

greater importance in the Indian context;  
it would also enable us to study how far  
ritual caste status is related to economic  
status and power hierarchy.

## APPENDIX

### DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGES STUDIED

## DESCRIPTION OF THE VILLAGES STUDIED

Andhra Pradesh: The names of the three villages are Manchili, Kanchumaru and Polumaru. Their respective populations are: 1,500, 2,600 and 3,600. These villages are located in the West Godavari District Delta and form part of the same administrative block. The nearest town market is within thirteen miles connected by an all-weather road (except for Kanchamaru village). The social structure of the village is characterized by a hierarchy of different castes which provide an ascriptive social status to its members. In Manchili and Pollamaru villages, the dominant castes engaged in farming are: Kshatrya, Kapu, Reddy, Telega, Settibaliya and Mala. Kshatrya is the dominant caste in Kanchamaru.

In these three villages an intensive agricultural program was launched in January 1961. The program was designed to ensure the resources needed: seeds, fertilizers, irrigation water, implements, credit and technical assistance, in a "package" so that agricultural development could proceed at the maximum pace.

A network of irrigation canals from Godavari river provides ample irrigation facilities to these villages.

There are some filter point wells, in addition. The peasants use modern agricultural implements such as iron ploughs, push-hoes, sprayers, and in some cases even tractors. Some farmers also use chemical fertilizers, pesticides, improved varieties of seeds, etc. Cooperative credit institutions make farm credit available in these three villages. There are two crop seasons: Sarawa (beginning from June-July) and Dalawa (beginning from December-January). Paddy, sugar-cane, banana, groundnut and chillies make up the main crops. Coconut plantations are frequent. Private traders as well as public corporations like the Food Corporation of India offer sufficient marketing services. All the three sample villages have shown prize-winning performance at the state or district level in the progressive adoption of high yielding varieties of seeds and plant protection measures.

Maharashtra: There are two sample villages, Pophali and Mulawa, in Maharashtra with populations of 1,149 and 3,348. These villages are located within ten miles of a town served by all-weather road and state-owned transport busses. However, the bullock carts remain the popular means of transporting agricultural produce. Maratha, Kasar, Dhanagar, Koshti and Chambar are the dominant castes in Pophali. In Mulawa village the dominant castes are Brahmin, Maratha and Dhangar. Jowar and cotton are the main crops, while wheat and pulses can be regarded as minor crops. Villagers use high-yielding variety of cotton seed.

A co-operative society and private money-lenders provide credit to peasants. While electricity is available in both villages, only a few landowners have electric pumps or oil engine sets to lift water from wells for irrigation purposes. In these two villages improved agricultural implements are not popular; peasants use indigenous harrow iron and wooden ploughs, hoes, sickles and local seed-drills. In the absence of assured irrigation facilities, fertilizers are not in wide use.

West Bengal: The three West Bengal villages are Amdole, Harishpur and Laxmidanga (the last two have not been included in our analysis). Their populations are: 2,460, 1,709 and 1,573. The villages are difficult to be reached in the rainy season, as the last two do not have all-weather roads. Paddy and sugar-cane are the main food and cash crops. Pulses are grown for domestic consumption. Improved paddy seeds, pesticides and sprayers are in use, but there is little interest in improved cattle. The dominant caste in Amdole village is Sadagopa. The other two villages have no caste system, as they are predominantly Moslem.

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