

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I

The most common remedy applied nowadays to promote rapid economic development is economic planning. Planning by the central government is introduced by several underdeveloped countries of the world. The centre not only frames the over-all plan, but also implements it. Thus, planned or induced economic development - as against autonomous development is a recent phenomenon.

Of the paramount importance is, then, the problem of the pattern of social change underlying the process of economic development. The two main questions which arise in this connection are: (i) To what extent do the traditional social institutions undergo a process of change as a result of the technological, industrial and other economic changes? and (ii) Are they traditional social institutions really disintegrating, or just adapting

themselves to the changing values and organisational needs of the modern industrial order ?

Adequate and definite answers to these questions can be given only after detailed reports are available on the pattern of social change in the underdeveloped societies undergoing the process of economic development.

II

At present India is also in the wake of rapid economic development. Looking to the economic history of India we find that cottage and small scale industries flourished and fairly well functioning commercial and financial enterprises also developed in the past. But there was complete absence of what may be called as modern industrial development. The development of modern industry and industrial society is comparatively a recent phenomenon. Although modern industrial development in India dates back to the period 1850-55, the pace of industrial development was very slow and irregular during the latter half of the last century. It was only at the turn of the twentieth century that industrial development got some fillip. First the Swadeshi movement and then the two World Wars acted as strong

forces of industrial development during the first half of this century. But it was only after Independence that India began to make rapid strides toward industrialization. The implementation of the two Five Year Plans has much accelerated the pace of industrial development in this country.

The other factor which has also worked hand-in-hand with industrialisation is the growth of large industrial centres. There were small and big towns in India in the past. But as has been pointed out by Gadgil,¹ those towns were either State capitals, pilgrimage centres, or commercial centres. Even though some of the handicrafts were patronised in these towns, they may not strictly be called as industrial centres. Thus, just as there was absence of modern industry, industrial centres were also absent in India. Therefore, both the development of modern industry and the growth of modern industrial centres are comparatively recent phenomena in the Indian history.

These two factors of modern economic development,

1 Gadgil, D.R. : Industrial Evolution of India, 1954,
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viz. industrialization and urbanization have generated a process of gradual change in the social and political institutions of the Indian society. It is argued generally that as a result of industrialization and urbanization the so-called self-sufficiency of the village is breaking up, that both the caste and the joint family are disintegrating, that the intercaste relationships are loosening, that the village unity is fading away and so forth. These arguments seem to have been based on the belief that the modern technological, industrial and other economic changes produce in this society more or less the same effects as those produced in the Western society during the Industrial Revolution. But the truth or otherwise of these arguments can be ascertained only after a fairly large number of intensive sociological studies of various Indian rural communities are made.

~~Some~~ Some economists have drawn their attention to village studies. They have published valuable accounts of Indian rural life². But these studies,

2 The following are some of them:

- (1) Land and Labour in a Deccan Village: Dr. Mann
- (2) A Social and Economic Survey of a Kokan Village: ~~Ranade~~ Ranade
- (3) Economic Life in a Malabar Village: Aiyyar
- (4) The Economic Life of a Punjab Village: Dr. Lucas
- (5) Life and Labour in a South Gujarat Village:
Mukhtyar

although comprehensive, depict only a partial picture of rural life. They give detailed accounts of agricultural and economic aspects leaving aside the social matrix of the rural life. In doing so they, however, fail to bring about its dynamism, which is possible by way of analysing the whole web of interrelationships - social, economic and political - which make up the village community as a single entity. It is encouraging to note that a beginning has been made in this direction. Some Indian, American and British Anthropologists have been busy making intensive village studies in India. Collections of reports on such village studies have been published in three important books: (1) India's Villages: Edited by M.N. Srinivas (1955); (2) Village India: Edited by McKim Marriott (1955); and (3) Rural Profiles: Edited by D.N. Majumdar (1955). Moreover, such studies are also being sponsored by UNESCO research centres in different parts of the world.

III

The present study is also a venture in the same direction. While making a study of the social structure, an attempt has been made here to analyse the social

effects of industrialization and urbanization on the life of a little village community in South Gujarat.

South Gujarat is the region lying between the rivers Narmada and Damanganga, and coincides mostly with the boundaries of Surat district of the State of Gujarat. The village studied is Haria in Bulsar taluka of Surat district. Haria has been exposed to the influences of economic development from the beginning of this century. The story of social change in Haria is connected with the ^{development of the} city of Bombay.

Prior to the development of Bombay, Surat enjoyed the status of a foremost trading centre in Western India. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the prosperity of Surat increased considerably. It rose to the position of not only a first class port but also an 'emporium', or 'prime-mart' of India. It developed trade relations with several distant places and attracted a number of traders from different parts of the world. The British trading company was one of them. In order to develop trade relations between England and India, it established a factory at Surat in 1612. Until 1684, Surat was retained as the chief

seat of the company's trade in India. But the importance of Surat gradually declined during the latter half of the seventeenth century, partly due to increasing disorders at Surat and partly because of growing importance of Bombay. Accordingly, the chief seat of the company's trade was transferred from Surat to Bombay in 1684. Later on Bombay became the main centre of both trade and administration of the company. This led to ~~to~~ a further settlement of European and Indian traders in Bombay. Moreover, its unique geographical position also helped a long way in the concentrated development of industry in the city during the last and the present century. Thus, Bombay developed into a foremost city of commerce and ~~textile~~ industry during a period of over two and a half centuries.

The development of Bombay as a foremost commercial-cum-industrial centre in Western India has considerably influenced South Gujarat. For a variety of reasons such as business, employment, education, etc., members of different communities have migrated from different parts of South Gujarat to Bombay. Such migration dates back as early as the first decade of last century.³ Until now

3 See The Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency, (1877):
Vol. II, pp. 57-58.

South Gujarat has retained its contacts with Bombay.

Haria also came under the influence of the developing city of Bombay, though, at first, indirectly through a changeover in its crop-pattern. Cultivation of a special variety of mangoes, viz. alphonso, popularly called as afus, was introduced in Haria sometime in the beginning of this century. The new cash crop gradually replaced nearly all crops previously produced in the village. The growing city of Bombay, however, served as flourishing market for Haria afus from the very beginning till today. Moreover, Bombay provided employment opportunities to some of the people of Haria who were thrown out of the village economy on account of their change in crop-pattern. Besides, some of the village Dheds were employed as buttlers, or domestic servants by Europeans at Bombay.

The story of change in Haria does not end here. The village community came under the impact of another more recent economic change. A big dyes and pharmaceuticals factory, named as the Atul Products Limited, was established in 1947 just in the neighbourhood of the village. It has employed a large number of workers from Haria and some other surrounding villages.

These two economic changes, viz. the changeover to a new cash crop and the establishment of a big factory near the village, have considerably influenced the social, political and economic institutions of the village community. The present study seeks to analyse the changes that have come about in the social, economic and political organisations of the village as a result of economic development in and around Haria. In other words, an attempt has been made to study how far (a) the family is affected, (b) the internal organisation of caste is influenced, (c) the intercaste relationships are strained and (d) the caste hierarchy and thereby the village unity is undermined.

IV

Chapter Plan:

The next chapter deals with the region of South Gujarat. It serves as an introductory. It gives a brief account of geographical factors, political history and land administration of South Gujarat. Some facts about the location of the village and its inhabitants are given in the last section of this chapter. The third and fourth chapters include a description of the

traditional village, that is, the village as it was before the introduction of afus - cultivation. This description covers such topics as caste hierarchy, family, intercaste relationships, economic and political institutions and the position of the village in the wider social setting of the whole region. While the fifth chapter deals with the analysis of the change in the village crop-pattern and its effects on the economic organisation of the village, the sixth chapter deals with the social effects on the village life. The seventh chapter centres around the Atul factory and the strains it has augmented in the intercaste relationships in the village. The eighth and the last chapter gives a summary of the main conclusions of this study.

SOUTH GUJARAT

SCALE : 1" = 22 MILES.

