

UNIT – III

Perspectives on Indian society

Ghurye · Srinivas · Dumont · Ambedkar · Desai · Indigenisation

Explanatory Lecture Slides

Indian Society: Continuity and Change · Minor-II-2 · Semester II

INDIAN SOCIETY: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Topics covered in this unit

01

Explain Ghurye's Indology

02

Explain Srinivas's structural-functionalism

03

Place Dumont

04

Place Ambedkar's subaltern / anti-caste view

05

Place A.R. Desai's Marxism

06

Explain indigenisation and native categories

How this unit is organised

01	02	03	04	05	06
Ghurye	Srinivas	Dumont	Ambedkar	Desai / Mukherjee	Indigenisation

G.S. Ghurye — Indological

Caste as a civilisational institution; Brahminical model; tribes as backward Hindus (heavily criticised).

- PYQ: Indological perspective of Ghurye (2021, 2023, 2025).
- Keep: caste's ritual basis cannot be reduced to class; Indian sociology must read Indian categories.
- Drop: the absorption of tribes as a programme.
- Texts + ethnography: his method.

G.S. Ghurye — Indological

KEEP

- Civilisational reading.
- Caste as more than class.

DROP

- Tribe = backward Hindu.
- Brahmin as the only viewpoint.

M.N. Srinivas — structural functionalism in India

Village as a system; dominant caste; Sanskritisation; Westernisation; secularisation.

- PYQ: structural functionalism of Srinivas (2021).
- Sanskritisation: a low caste copies the ritual of a higher, seeking mobility — change inside caste, not of caste.
- Dominant caste: numerical + economic + political weight in a local area (not always Brahmin).
- These two words are the most-marked in the whole 5-year sociology stream.

M.N. Srinivas — structural functionalism in India

SANSKRITISATION

- Imitation upward.
- Mobility without equality.

DOMINANT CASTE

- Numbers + land + votes. Rampura study.

Louis Dumont — Homo Hierarchicus

PYQ: contribution of Louis Dumont (2022).

- Homo hierarchicus v homo aequalis. Caste as a whole of hierarchy based on purity/pollution, not a pile of groups.
- Criticism: too textual, underplays power, land, Adi-Dravida experience, change.
- Useful: forces the student to take hierarchy as a value, not only as a distortion of class.

Louis Dumont — Homo Hierarchicus

THESIS

- Hierarchy as the encompassing value.

ATTACK

- Field is messier than the text.
- Ambedkar's people are not a footnote.

Ambedkar — subaltern / anti-caste

PYQ: subaltern perspective of B.R. Ambedkar (2021).

- Caste as graded inequality, not a division of labour but a division of labourers.
- Annihilation, not Sanskritisation. Constitutional morality against village republics.
- A law student's native category: Art. 17, PoA Act, reservations as remedy not charity.
- If the paper allows one angry true sentence, this is where it belongs — then back to analysis.

Ambedkar — subaltern / anti-caste

AGAINST GHURYE/SRINIVAS AS ENOUGH

- Imitation of the higher is not emancipation.

LEGAL FACE

- Art. 17.
- Art. 15(4), 16(4).
- PoA Act.

Marxist readings — A.R. Desai, D.P. Mukerji

PYQ: Marxist perspective of A.R. Desai (2022); D.P. Mukherjee (2022).

- Desai: Indian State and bourgeoisie; social background of nationalism.
- Mukerji: a Marxian who still wanted Indian categories — a bridge to indigenisation.
- Keep: class and colonial mode. Drop: the idea that caste will automatically die as industry grows (it did not).

Marxist readings — A.R. Desai, D.P. Mukerji

DESAI

- Class.
- State.
- Nationalism's social base.

MUKERJI

- Marx + Indian tradition as a problem, not a museum.

Indigenisation, contextualisation, native categories

PYQ cluster (2021–24): indigenisation; native categories; contextualisation; McKim Marriott.

- Do not copy Western class/estate onto jati without remainder.
- Marriott: Hindu categories of mixing/unmixing (transactional).
- Indigenisation is not chauvinism; it is methodological honesty.
- A 10-mark: define, need, one example (jati, dharma, karma, not 'class' alone).

Indigenisation, contextualisation, native categories

NEED

- Western concepts miss jati, joint family, purity.

RISK

- Romantic nativism that cannot see gender or class.

Ambedkar — subaltern / anti-caste

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Cases a KSLU answer should name

CASE

Indra Sawhney v Union of India

(1992) Supp (3) SCC 217

Caste as a sociological fact the equality code must see — Mandal's court.

CASE

State of Kerala v N.M. Thomas

(1976) 2 SCC 310

Equality as classified — a functionalist-looking constitutional move.

CASE

Indian Medical Association v Union of India

use Indra Sawhney as the caste-case of this unit

Stay with Indra Sawhney; do not invent.

Provisions & materials to quote

Art. 15(4), 16(4), 16(

Reservation — the legal face of a sociological diagnosis.

Art. 17

Annihilation in a clause.

Art. 46

Weaker sections — DPSP.

PoA Act 1989

Atrocity as a structured fact.

Art. 340

Commissions for backward classes.

10 / 16-mark frames from this unit

Q1

Explain the Indological perspective of G.S. Ghurye.

Q2

Explain Sanskritisation and the dominant caste (Srinivas).

Q3

Critically examine Dumont / Ambedkar / A.R. Desai (any one as asked).

Q4

What is indigenisation? Why do Indian sociologists ask for native categories?

Unit recap

- 1 Ghurye: civilisation and caste-as-text.
- 2 Srinivas: Sanskritisation + dominant caste — the two words to spell right.
- 3 Dumont: hierarchy as value; then criticise.
- 4 Ambedkar: graded inequality; annihilation not imitation.
- 5 Indigenisation = use jati/dharma without drowning in them.