

Course : B.A (Sociology)

Semester : VI

Course Code : SOCY3026

Course Title : Indian Sociological Traditions

Course Teacher : Sanjay Kumar

Assistant Professor,

Department of Sociology

Mahatma Gandhi Central University,

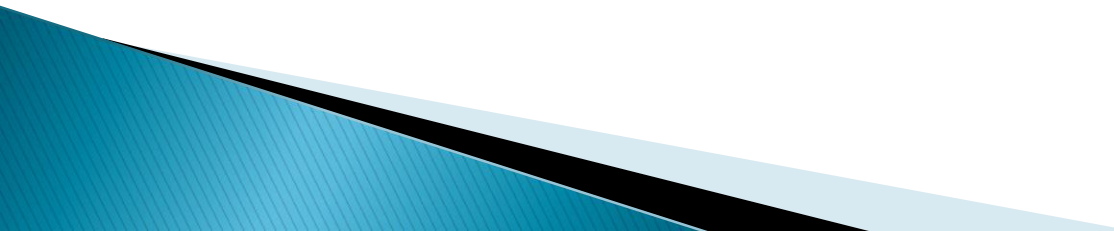
Motihari.



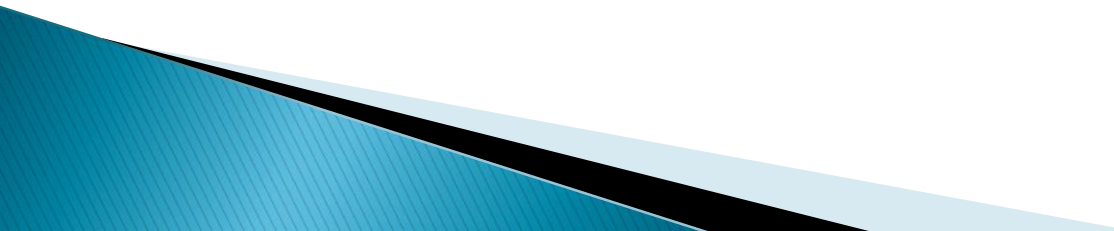
M.N Srinivas on the Study of Indian Culture

- ▶ Reading : Srinivas, M.N. 1996, Indian Anthropologists and the study of Indian Culture, EPW 31(11) 656–657.

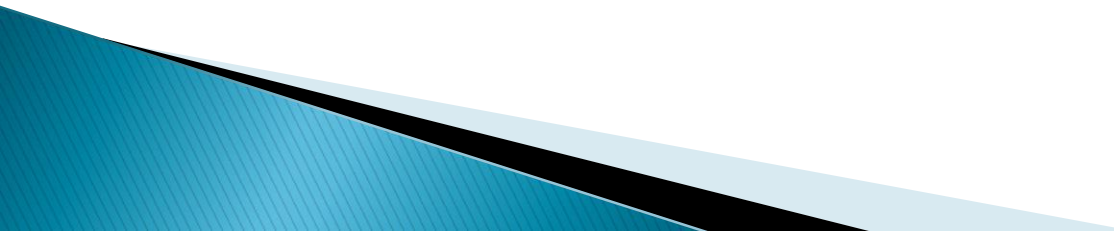
The Study of 'other culture'

- ▶ The classical imperialist viewed himself as the representative of the superior race which had brought law, justice and technology to the barbarian 'natives'. They legitimized their rule on the basis of the belief that it was 'the white man's burden' to civilize the nonwhite world.
 - ▶ The founder of the modern anthropology, Bronislaw Malinowski argued that that knowledge of the 'the other' helped one to understand one's own culture.
- 

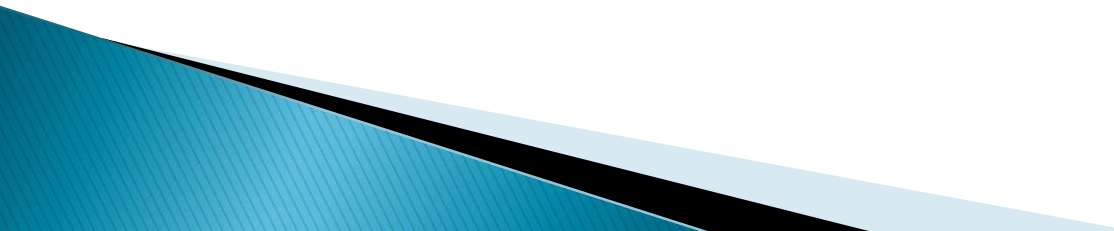
Cultural Diversity as an Advantage for Indian scholars-I

- ▶ Since there is enormous diversity of cultural practices in India, Indian scholars need not to search for the 'other culture' in order to understand one's own society.
 - ▶ That is why when Indians started to study the diversity of their own society, the distinction between the social anthropology and sociology had disappeared.
- 


Cultural Diversity as an Advantage for Indian Scholars –II

- ▶ M. N Srinivas gives an example of the difference and similarities between the cultural practices of Brahmins and the shepherds who resided in the same locality of Mysore city.
 - ▶ He finds that “the shepherds were 'the other' to the brahmins but not totally so”. Although, they inhabited the same cultural universe, but shared different segments of it.
- 

Cultural Diversity as an Advantage for Indian Scholars –III

- ▶ The situation can be described in terms of shepherds as the 'self-in-the-other' of the brahmins and vice versa.
 - ▶ This idea of the 'self in-the-other' may be true with other castes also. This is precisely because of the differences and similarity in the realm of cultural practices.
- 

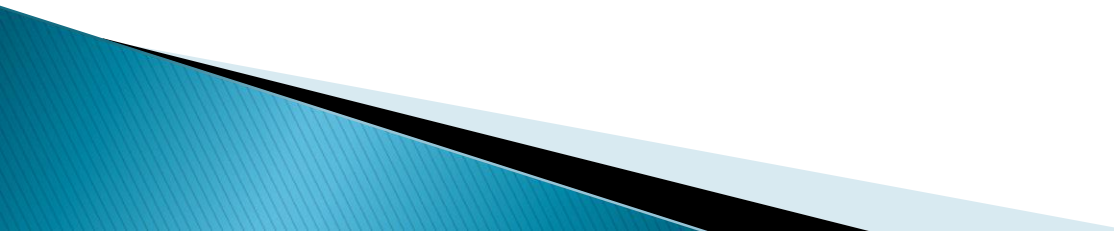
Can the Tribes be Regarded as self-in-the-other of the Caste Hindus ?

- ▶ M. N Srinivas gives some examples which can be regarded about the tribes as the 'self-in-the-other' of caste Hindus.
 - ▶ Soligas of the Bilgiri Hills in South Karnataka takes an active part in the festival of the local deity Ranagnatha, where the priests are the brahmins.
 - ▶ Todas visit the Shaivaite shrine, Sanskritisation movements among the Oraon and Mundas of Bihar.
 - ▶ Mizos have their own version of the Ramayana.
- 

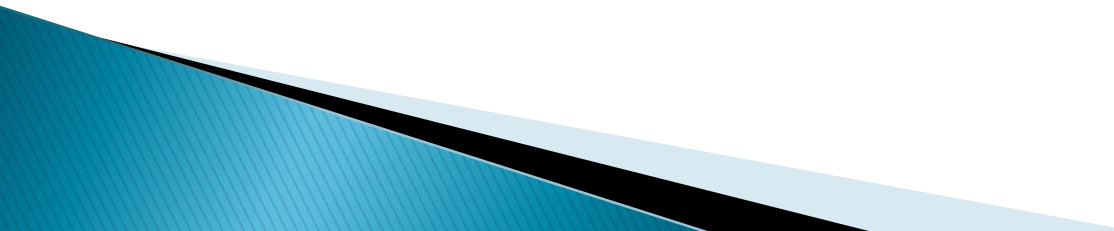
Dynamism Inherent in Indian society

- ▶ Historically, it has been found that status of Kshatriya was achieved by those groups which captured power. K. N Pannikar argued that there were no true Kshatriyas after the disappearance of the Nandas in the 5th Century BC.
- ▶ On the basis of the above argument one can assert that whether the Varna system is not an achieved status by different jatis in various parts of India.

Presence of 'grass roots syncretism'

- ▶ Ordinary Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Jains participate occasionally in each other's festivals, and worshipping each other's gods and saints.
 - ▶ This phenomenon has been referred by MN Srinivas as the existence of the 'grass roots syncreticism'.
 - ▶ Due to rise of the communalism in contemporary India, urban educated class don't perceive the existence of syncreticism.
- 

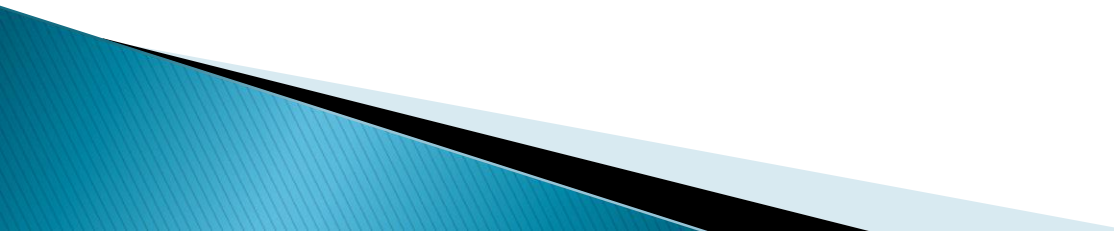
Problems of the Study of One's Own Society-I

- ▶ For the Western anthropologists, study of one's society is far more difficult than the study alien society, as being an 'insider' it is very difficult to have an impartial findings of any sociological study.
 - ▶ This is precisely because of the prejudices which may come from the private experiences in the course of the study of one's own society.
- 

Problems of the Study of One's Own Society-II

- ▶ This belief is stronger among the British anthropologists, as Edmund Leach argues that “fieldwork in a cultural context of which you already have intimate firsthand experience seems to be much more difficult than fieldwork which is approached from the native viewpoint of a total stranger”.

Concluding Remarks

- ▶ Since the Indian sociologists and anthropologists have got considerable experience from the study of one's own society and culture, there is a need to transcend the paradigm of 'self-in-the-other' to the study of 'self' itself.
 - ▶ For Srinivas, anthropologists can treat his own life as an ethnographic field as the life of every individual can be regarded as a 'case study'.
- 

References:

1. Srinivas, M.N. 1996, Indian Anthropologists and the study of Indian Culture, EPW 31(11) 656–657.
2. Leach, Edmund. 1982, Social Anthropology, Oxford University Press, New York, p 124.

Thank You !

