

Rural Sociology' in India: An assessment on the occasion of hundred years of sociology in India

Rahul A Hajare

Associate Professor and Head
Dept of Sociology (UG and PG)
NKSPT'S Arts, Science and Commerce
College Badnapur. Dist Jalna (India)

Abstract— Rural sociology was emerged in west for study of rural population and their issues, later on introduced in India which is predominantly a 'Rural' nation. Rural character of India is not just identity but it's a principal feature of Indian society. In the beginning various village studies were conducted as a part of understanding the dynamics of Rural India. Gradually due to flow of development, due to various reforms many issues emerged as crisis in rural society eventually Rural Sociology took lead in those issues for analyzing and better understanding. In early stage Dr M N Shrinivas, S C Dube, D N Majumdar and others contributed to village studies in their way. Meantime increasing agrarian crisis compelled sociologist to conduct more serious studies and research towards rural issues. In this series A R Desai has played major role to point out the need of Rural Sociology for better understanding of rural India in scientific way. Over the years rural sociology has shifted its focus to many contemporary issues of rural society however it is time to assess what are new challenges and prospects for rural sociology on the occasion of hundred years of sociology in India

Keywords: *Rural Sociology, Rural Studies, Agrarian issues, Rural Development, Rural –Urban sphere.*

INTRODUCTION:

Rural Sociology originated in USA and gradually introduced in academic field of universities is the major branch of Sociology. American president Roosevelt initiated commission to study of rural social problems in ninetieth century, the report of commission suggested urgent need to take care issues of rural life. The commission pointed out the problems of rural institution and rural economy. This was the first kind of document which was related to rural issues in fact the first ever document related to rural sociology. Ferdinand Tönnies is probably the first sociologist who wrote on 'Rural sociology'. He categorically divided the rural and urban issues with his two concepts in German i.e. 'Community' and 'Association'. Further he discussed the impact of industrialization on the rural area and changing scenario of rural population. Followed by similar kind of analysis on rural studies were done by George Simmel, Newby and Albeit whilst. Later on Emil Durkheims concepts of 'Mechanical' and 'Organic solidarity' was the distinctive discussion regarding division of two societies based on their structure. The two type of society described by Durkheim can easily indicate distinct features of between rural and urban societies. Gradually agriculture studies along with other rural studies were conducted continuously. It was specifically a different study area which later on called 'Rural Sociology', yet by the time rural study conducted was very specific, region to region. Primarily this space was occupied by the anthropologists.

In India various rural studies was real start of rural sociology especially contributions made by Dr. Dube, Dr Shrinivas, Dr.Majumdar and Dr Bose. Mean time various reports of governments on rural reconstruction, rural poverty and rural development highlighted the need of distinct branch of sociology i.e. rural sociology. India which is predominantly a 'Rural' nation and rural character of India is not just identity but it's a principal feature of Indian society. In the beginning various village studies were conducted as a part of understanding the dynamics of Rural India. Gradually due to flow of development, due to various reforms many issues emerged as crisis in rural society, eventually Rural Sociology took lead in those issues for analyzing and better understanding. Over the time increasing agrarian crisis compelled sociologist to conduct more serious studies and research towards rural issues.

In this series A R Desai has played major role to point out the need of Rural Sociology for better understanding of rural India in scientific way. Today Rural Sociology is playing significant role in understanding the social relations among rural society, Rural Institutions, Rural Culture, Rural Problems, Rural Change, Rural Development and so on. This distinct branch of sociology deals and suggests major aspects of rural development which helps rural development planning. Above all, this branch of sociology is emphasized to study the changing nature of rural society and its relation with urban society which is complex issue to study and describe. Over the years rural sociology has shifted its focus to many contemporary issues of rural society however it is time to assess what are new challenges and prospects for rural sociology on the occasion of hundred years of sociology in India.

In the west for long time of period agriculture issues and research related to agriculture development was prime focus of rural studies. The development in agriculture sector had created some serious issues in rural sphere. New means of production, increasing production cost, changing structure of crop pattern, changing market strategy had a deep impact on agriculture. Eventually this was new era for rural sector all world over. This was a period when the emergence of urbanism left serious impact for rural society. These were the some issues which were covered by agricultural studies gradually becomes the part of subject matter of Rural Sociology. The change in agriculture sector was recorded by sociologists under the stream of Rural Sociology. In late sixties technological change took the attention of social scientists. Sociologists started to record the impact of technological change in all

respect. However most of the western studies were focused upon the rural-urban reference likewise rural urban typology, Redfield's folk urban continuum, etc.

Rural sociology is far distinct from the general sociology. As sociology studies and review the society in general where the rural sociology is focused upon the structure and change of rural life and functioning. It deals with the standard of living of rural people, rural change, and features of rural population, rural social problems, rural institutions, and dynamics of rural people. Rural institutions and change rural transformation is more meaningful area of study to be undertaken under rural sociology. Rural sociology and agricultural economics related studies are hard to present differently that why rural sociology researcher has to take distinct approaches to ensure the uniqueness of Rural Sociology. It must cover the area of rural institutions, rural religion, rural values and ethics, rural education and rural administration. Only keeping part in curriculum in colleges and universities is not sufficient to develop Rural Sociology as a discipline.

The dynamics of rural transformation has to be taken in consideration. In the field of social research there is huge scope to attend and compiled data with the observation and experiences. However for long period of time in India major focus was on the describing rural social institutions especially culture and caste. Now days rural sociology needs to connect with the rapid social change and to indulge above theoretical development. It requires working with other major social sciences including the policy makers, major project works and governments to accolade the rapid change and transformation. The technological transformation has left major impact on rural society which changed characteristics of rural community. Due to modernization process rural institutions have large impact so institutional changes are must be prime focus of rural studies. Apart from this population changes occurred in recent times is major issue of rural sector. Large amount of migration and increasing urban sphere had created changing population dynamics. For the advance studies in rural sociology it is difficult to differentiate the qualities of rural population and semi urban population as they exhibit the common modern features today. This aspect is more important today large number of population is in search of employability shifting in urban sector creating serious concern for rural economy. Agriculture sector is facing serious crisis as it needs manpower to increase production to match global demand as well as competition. Sociology in general currently taking notes of community development and progress, however rural studies are lagging behind to analyze and discuss this issue.

Along with the rural institutions there are number of new institutions playing major role in rural transformation. New sectors like cooperatives, modern education, technology installation and training, banking these are new elements which had deep impact on rural population. That why rural studies has to change their focus from traditional ways to these modern changes. New research in rural studies can help to formulate and construct new policies and administrative reforms. There is large possibilities in research areas related to rural studies, rural development and social structure. Interdisciplinary and across the subjects sub fields can be explored to study rural change.

Major possibilities:

- Agricultural studies can open new trust area for research in Rural Sociology. Largely agricultural issues left impact on rural life inform of indebtedness, farmer suicide, labor issues etc. Rural sociology can work on these issues with the collaboration of Agricultural economy.
- "Applied research" will be the new form of research quest. Extensive rural studies can emerge as a solution to many rural problems if the rural studies wire carried away with this objective.
- New topics like Culture, technology capitalism, change in social institution, education can be studied in rural aspect
- Process of development has brought substantial change in rural community. Change in rural living, culture, food, economy and social change can be seen in recent years. All development is not in favor of the rural population or rural community. Development induced displacement is one of the major social issue of today's rural community. Development have triggered massive wave of migration especially the rural youth has migrated towards urban sphere. This change has left many implications like lack of man power in rural industries, Disintegration of joint family, etc. Another important topic is rural urban differences, rural urban continuum, rural urban migration etc can be part of rural sociology subject matter. The extended boundaries of urban sphere grabbing the rural area day by day which have left many issues as part of rapid change. The changing economy of rural sector has created serious issues like farmer suicide; increasing indebtedness etc these are some topics which can be essentially part of rural studies and rural sociology.
- In the era of information and technology information flows and brings prominent changes in the sector of education, infrastructure and banking. Development is happening in four fold in all sector. This change is also visible in rural sector especially in agriculture. Farmers are getting benefited with modern knowledge and use of technology. In this aspect rural studies can focus on the ongoing change.

When sociology in India is celebrated for its presence over hundred years, it is necessary to pip in the progress of rural sociology which is perhaps core topic of sociology as far as Indian sociology is concern. The changes occurred due to the drastic change in rural sphere, it is obligatory for sociologists to take note of it. Agrarian crisis, rural education, agriculture reforms, cultural transformation and digital development are some issues where rural studies have to play major role scientific analysis to understand the society for better policy draft and implementation. Apart from that it is time to assess the contribution as school, use of rural studies and possibilities, teaching rural sociology and realities.

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