

**Swami Vivekananda Advanced Journal for Research and Studies**Online Copy of Document Available on: www.svajrs.com

ISSN:2584-105X

Pg. 129-131



CASTE, CLASS AND AGRARIAN SOCIAL RELATIONS IN A VILLAGE

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*Accepted: 06/09/2025**Published: 12/09/2025**DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17130177>*

Abstract

The nature of agrarian social relations is changing in India. In the 21st century agrarian change coupled with livelihood issues have stirred significant debates in India's rural economy. Crop pattern or changing crop pattern in particular geographical area also plays an important role in agrarian social relations. The agrarian relations are largely determined by land tenure means ownership, tenancy and labourer relations. The agrarian relations existing at a point of time reflect the influence of historical, political, social and economic factors. The present study found that the social and economic status is increasing; the political participation is also increasing due to the change in agrarian relations.

Keywords: *Rural economy, Mentha Crop, Agrarian relation, caste and class.*

Introduction

The nature of agrarian change in India has been a subject of much debate. In the 21st century agrarian change coupled with livelihood issues have stirred significant debates in India's rural economy, while there has been a transformation in the agrarian economy of the country. There has not been much change in terms of the nature of its relationships (Das, 2017:219-232). Rural sociology studies human relationships, but these relationships pertain only to rural social environment within the boundaries of rural society. The social relationships which take place in what we call rural society are manifested in family, caste, class, economy and agriculture etc. Rural sociology has been powerfully influenced by anti-urbanism, producing a stereotypical view of rural society as stable and harmonious. Robert Redfield adopted a very simple method to view that rural societies were inherently characterized by traditional family social network, consensus rather than conflict, and ascribed not achieved statuses (Marshall: 1997).

Emergence of mentha crop providing new dimensions to agriculture in rural areas. It is new in agriculture, which affects different dimensions of social life in rural areas. Such activities are yet to catch the attention of sociologists in India. Their turning interest to this area of work would be a useful contribution to societal development. Therefore systematic documentation and research on the adoption and impact of introduction of mentha crop are required.

S.C. Dube (1960) presented the traditional ranking of castes in rural Telangana, and followed it by an examination of some of the principles that govern this ranking. Dube considered only three villages in the present study and give some idea of the social, economic, and ritual structure of the village communities in this area. The nature of prescribed daily ritual and its observance also materially contribute to the ritual status of a caste. Hierarchy of foods and occupations also materially contributes to the social ranking of castes. The main criteria used for the ranking of castes in the country-side are ritual and not economic. Some of the considerations help us to understand the principles underlying the ranking of castes in Hindu society, but it must be added that they do not illuminate all aspects of it.

Redfield described farmers on the basis of agriculturists' attitudes towards cultivation. These are reinvestment, land as a capital and commodity and business looking (Robert Redfield, 1951:18-19). The pace of social and economic changes in rural India has been rapid during the past two or three decades. Among others, this is generally attributed to such factors as the implementation of land reforms, introduction of a packaged of high-yielding technology, and several socio-economic welfare and development measures. More recently, it has been

explained in terms of globalisation and economic reforms (karanth, 2002:217). Agrarian structure means all mutual relations among the landlords, tenant and agricultural labourers (Joshi quotes in Caubey, 1988).

M.N. Srinivas (1955) has given the concept of dominant caste in Rampura village of Mysore. He defined dominant caste that a caste which has a numerical strength in the village; it owns major portion of village land and takes major decisions which maintain the village system. It is the dominant caste which rules over the village. The concept of dominant caste very clearly shows that there are few castes which exercise their hold on the village.

The agrarian social structure varies from one region to another. The relations among classes and social composition of groups that occupy specific class positions in relation to land-control and land use in India are so diverse and complex that it is difficult to incorporate them all in a general scheme (Nagla:2019). Andre Beteille (1969) observed the caste structure, class structure and distribution of power in South India. Trivedi (2017) chiefly attempts to explore agrarian relations in Senapur, which is a village located in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Objective: The present study mainly focused on the agrarian relation in a village Palanpur in Baniakhara block of Moradabad district in Uttar Pradesh. Thus, the present study focuses upon the following specific questions:

1. To assess the impact of mentha crop on jajmani system?
2. To analyse the impact of introduction of mentha crop on emerging caste class nexus?

Area of Study:

The present study was conducted in village Palanpur of Baniakhara block in Moradabad district (Uttar Pradesh). The historical-comparative method has been used in this sociological study. We started first hand observation of the village and select it as area of study by purposive sampling for our study. After it we started pilot survey of the village and its surroundings. Primary data was collected from observation and interview schedule. Secondary data was collected from Govt. census and records, books, article etc.

Technique of Data Collection: There are three categories in the village Palanpur in Baniakhara block of Moradabad district in Uttar Pradesh is General, Other Backward Class and Scheduled Caste. Thakur, Murao, and Jatav castes are numerically much larger than the other castes in these three categories. The respondents in these three castes separately through purposive sampling. One exceptional respondent is also selected from Teli (Muslim) caste through purposive sampling and this respondent takes under scheduled caste category. Observation and interview

methods have been used as the main techniques of data collection.

Findings:

- 1- Due to the introduction of mentha crop the agrarian relations are changing from traditional to contractual in the village.
- 2- Most of the service caste leaving their traditional occupation because of cash payment and high demand of labour in mentha crop which demolishing jajmani system in the village.
- 3- The reason for demolishing jajmani system in the village is that Thakurs are lost their land and they are also losing their identity in terms of economically and politically.
- 4- In the light of economic development a new form of caste class nexus is emerging. Caste restrictions are decreasing and a new class system owner and labourer is emerging.

Conclusion:

On the basis of above facts, we may conclude that the above mentioned changes happened not only due to the introduction of mentha crop but also education, technology, government policies etc. But introduction of mentha is the most important factor to bring these changes. The agrarian relation is changing from traditional to contractual. Jajmani system is demolishing because Thakurs are losing their identity and service caste is getting cash payment rather than kind. Economic development bringing a social change for example caste limitations are decreasing and a new form of caste class nexus is emerging in the form of owner and labourer. It is found that there is a great need to study the developments or changes in agricultural system with relation to social aspects of human life. It may provide a new dimension to the sociological research in the present context.

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