

Characteristics of Little Community

Little community has its own characteristic or features. Briefly speaking these are:

It is homogeneous and a unitary body as against heterogeneity and diversity. In other words in this community there is not much of diversity of any big community. The members of the little community actively participate in community activities and have great unifying links with each other. They personally know each other, and appreciate each other's view point.

There is neither any disunifying force nor indifference nor detachment among the members. The members show deep concern about each other's welfare. There are emotional bonds and community feelings among the members.

Each member is influenced by the other and almost all have similar likes and dislikes. All are equal participants in joys and sorrows. The whole community organization is quite well knit. There is cohesion in the organization. About it Red Field has said that, "The community is not a list of tools and customs, it is an integrated whole." There are strong community feelings in it.

Another characteristics of little community is its smallness. Though big and small is one relative terms, yet small is understood in traditional terms. This community is a small group of individuals having mutual inter-relationship. Though it is difficult to define precisely as to what is big of small but reference is to small population which can maintain direct contacts among the members. When that is not possible, it can be said that the population is large. It can be said that Indian villagers are small communities. In a little community all people have direct contacts with each other and they know each other personally. It becomes clear from the fact that in all community functions all the members almost directly participate. Not only this but in the community almost all know each other directly. They directly settle all their problems without involving any outside agency.

Next then comes the homogeneity. A little community is homogeneous group of people which means that the members of the community have similar way of life, culture, language and religious beliefs. They have same gods and goddesses and their mode and method of worship is the same. They have common culture and common folk ways. They also have common interests. This does not mean that the members have no differences on any issue at all, but what it means is that there is more of unanimity than differences on important issues. In Indian village the people have similarity not only in dress and food habits but also in religious and social customs and traditions. They have some cultural outlook and living 'Standard. Their attitude towards socio-economic problems is almost the same. Not only this but they also face almost same socio-economic problems and are also 'equally interested in solving those.

Still another feature of little village is self-sufficiency. It tries to satisfy all its needs by itself without depending on the outside world. It meets diverse need of all its members. Each little community believes in the idea of producing by itself what it need to consume. Though self-sufficiency anywhere is a self-defeating cry yet what it means is that it meets by itself most of its needs. It becomes possible because the members have limited needs and the community can meet these. The members do not try to increase their needs and remain satisfied with what they have got.

Village as a Little Community

If all these characteristics are critically viewed one finds that Indian villages are little community. They are self-sufficient and the members have limited needs.

In addition, the members have similar outlook and same living standard. Before the coming of the Britishers to India each village was a self-sufficient republic. As long as the village paid the revenue, no government bothered to interfere in village affairs. The village people personally know each other and share each other's joys and sorrows.

They participate directly in all community functions and all have close inter-relationship with each-other. They share each other's joys and sorrows and come to each other's help when need and necessity arises. They do not derive pleasure out of other's sorrows. Thus Indian villages can rightly be called small communities. The villages preserve and protect our culture as well as cultural heritage. One finds pure Indian culture in the villages alone. Though the villages which are located in the vicinity of town are being influenced by the urban culture, yet on the whole, these still continue to be a little community. In brief all the characteristics of little community exist in the village.

The study of little community is of great significance and importance. It is with the help of this study that it is possible to know about pure culture and civilization of the country. Again it is possible to conveniently study the customs, their origin and significance of their continuance in each community. As all know that each custom has its roots in the past and it is not easy to violate a well established custom. New ideas about the old customs develop with the help of this study. These also help in having more knowledge about larger socio-cultural systems. Study of little community also helps us to better understand sacred literature and also rituals and ceremonies connected with literature on the one hand and the customs on the other. It helps in getting some peep about the life style of the rural community. Thus study of little community is of great significance for understanding the whole rural life and thus its importance can in no way be underestimated.

Peasant Society

Like little community, peasant society too has its own features and characteristics. It is neither too much isolated nor too much dependent on other societies other many matters it has dependence on others. The term peasant is very vague and in fact it is very difficult to clearly and precisely define it. Several rural sociologists have tried to define the term in their own way. Moore has somewhat closely defined this term when he says that peasantry by history is somewhat subordination to landed upper class, recognized and enforced by law. It has sharp cultural distinctions as compared with the elite class and that has *de-facto* possession of land. In this way according to him peasantry has its own peculiar characteristics. It has considerable subordination to landed upper classes. These classes practically rule over it.

This subordination is not informal but is legally accepted and any violation is a punishable offense. Thus subordination can be got enforced.

It has separate culture as compared with the landed aristocracy. This culture is based on subordination and obedience. In this culture practically there is no scope for the self respect or disobedience. It is based on dependence on the landlord.

The peasant is in *de-facto* possession of the land. Though the land does not belong to him and this is not owned by him. He can be thrown out of the land being cultivated by him for long. Land is the main source of income of the peasant. That keeps him so busy that he practically cannot do any other work.

It has certain well established traditions which it wants to preserve and protect at all costs. Joint family system occupies a very important place and position in it. The whole family remains engaged in the task of cultivation. Politically it is in a very disadvantageous position and is ruled by the elite, who is landed aristocracy. It is this class which ensures that the peasantry does not get its legitimate rights. It is politically awakened and takes full advantage of its political contacts in crushing the peasantry. A peasant has strong sentiments towards land. Land for him is both a mother as well as a father. It gives him great pleasure when he purchases it but he feels pained when he is forced to sell.

Economically a peasant society has small-scale production and lives on that. It consumes what it produces. It has faith in small and simple technologies and cultivation of land is their main source of income. The whole family works both on the land as well as in the cottage industries to earn livelihood. It has nothing to do even with medium scale industries. In most of the cases raw material for his cottage industries is available in the market itself. Because of his too much dependence on land and cottage industries he is economically hard pressed and has low living standard.

Agriculture is their main source of their income. They do not essentially own the land which they cultivate. Their land possessions are very small. They work on the fields of others as labourers. They do not produce for marketing or for profit making purposes. They are never in favour of selling the land. Their economic status is low. They prefer to lead a very peaceful settled life. They do not believe in migratory character. They love their village above everything else. The elites of the village rule over them both socially and politically. They have learnt to live life of subordination. Financially they always remain dependent on them and look forwards them when faced with any financial problem. In turn the land owners take full advantage of this weakness of the peasantry.

They love traditions and do not wish to break these. They are very much influenced by these and pass on these from generation to generation. They believe in the philosophy of soul, karma and re-birth. They leave much to fate and God. They believe in purity and deep devotion. Religion plays an important role in their life. They have great regard for sacred books, have blind faith in religious practices and are by nature superstition ridden. On many religious matters they are not prepared to argue. They have blind faith in most of the religious practices. They show interest regard and respect to sufforn clad people, who leave no opportunity to exploit their blind faith and simplicity.

A peasant society is not as big as the little or the urban society and not as small as the community. It is in between the two. It is neither self-sufficient nor completely dependent on the outside community. It is not absolutely isolated and as such it maintains good relationship with the others.' A part of this society is rough whereas the other is intelligentsia. Both these try to maintain close relationship with each other in a hierarchal manner. On the one hand is personal relationship at kinship and neighborhood level whereas at the other end is informal relationship at landlord and political elite level.

But one important feature of the society is that a peasant does not leave his basic characteristics even if he leaves the village and begins to live in the town. Whether in the village or outside of it he loves religion and old religious practices. He has full faith in his past culture and wishes to preserve old custom and traditions. He remains soft at heart and hospitable. He avoid crookedness and is respectful to the elders and saints.

Sphere of Dependence. Peasant society, as said earlier, is neither completely isolated nor absolutely dependent on the others. But in several ways it is dependent on others and is absolutely not isolated. In the economic field this society depends on other societies because it is to sell its products in the outside market so that it can earn money both for paying the taxes as well as for purchasing commodities of day-to-day use. Since these days barter system is not possible, therefore, sale of produce to some extent is unavoidable. It may, however, be pointed out that this dependence is very limited because peasant society does not produce that much that must essentially be marketed outside the village. In many cases surplus is sold in the market itself.

This society has political dependence also. It must depend and accept social and political decisions taken by political bosses who are political elites and peasant society cannot completely ignore them. Being politically weak whatever the decisions these are to be accepted. In this connection it may, however, be pointed out that as the time is passing with that peasantry is becoming a powerful pressure group. It is also playing a very important role in every political party and as such it is becoming a participant in decision making processes and its dependence on elites in the field is being reduced.

In the administrative field too this society has dependence on the others. Earlier this society was only to obey the administrative decisions of bureaucracy and other dominant groups which imposed their decisions on them. The situation is, however, changing because the peasantry is now required to participate in Panchayati Raj institutions and activities. It also participates in other institution of democratic decentralization in a big way, thus, it is a participant in decision making process.

In the social field the dependence of this society on the others is unavoidable. It cannot have matrimonial alliances in one village alone. Similarly it cannot expect that all its relations must be concentrated in a particular village alone. In the words of Marriott, "Daughters of the village move out and wives of the village move in at marriage, moving too and from more than 300 other villages" Similarly each village is required to maintain social contacts with other villages, When sons of the village move to the cities in search of work and permanently settle down there. The peasantry does not leave them but continues to maintain contacts with them. Social contacts outside the village are increasing day-by-day.

Concept of Little Community

Little Community is one of the important features of rural society. It is different from rural community. It has considerably homogeneity and is very small in size. Its very important feature is that it believes in self sufficiency. Little Community plays an important role in understanding village social structure. There are urban communities which are large in size and are called large communities. A little community has all the features of a community but has less population, as compared with the population of a big community. A Little Community is small form of a big community.

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Homogeneity :- A little community is homogeneous group (all of the same type) of people which means that the members of the community have similar way of life, culture, language, and religious beliefs. They have same gods and goddesses and their mode and method of worship is the same. They have common culture and common folk ways. They also have common interests. In Indian village the people have similarity not only in dress and food habits but also in religious and social customs and traditions. They have some cultural outlook and living standard.

Still another feature of little community is self sufficiency. It tries to satisfy all its needs by itself without depending on the outside world.

Each little community believes in the idea of producing by itself what is ready to consume. The members do not try to increase their needs and remain satisfied with what they have got.

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They share each other's joys and sorrows and come to each other's help when need and necessity arises. They do not derive pleasure out of other's sorrow.

Thus Indian villages can rightly be called small communities. The villages preserve and protect our culture as well as cultural heritage. One finds pure Indian culture in the village alone. Though the villages which are located in the vicinity of town are being influenced by the urban culture yet on the whole, they still continue to be a little community.

With the help of the study of little community it is possible to know about pure culture and civilisation of the country. Again it is possible to conveniently study the customs their origin and significance of their continuance in each community. As all know that each customs has its roots in the past and it is not easy to violate a well established customs. New ideas about the old customs develop with the help of this study. There also help in having more knowledge about larger socio-cultural systems-study of little community also helps us to better understand sacred literature and also rituals and ceremonies connected with literature one the one hand and the customs on the other. It helps in getting some peep about the life style of the rural community.

TRADITION

- **This refers to the beliefs and practices handed down from past. Whereas traditionalism is the psychic attitudes that glorifies past beliefs and practices as immutable. Traditional society is characterized by the dominance of once traditions, organization based on kinship, ascriptive status and hierarchical social order.**

LITTLE GREAT TRADIN INDIA

The Concept of little tradition and great tradition is also known as the concept of Parochialisation and universalisation.

Robert Redfield studied the Maxican community to know about that what are the changes taking place in this community.

- Maccim Marriet and Milton Singer were influenced by him used his method to study the village in Kisangarh.
- This study is completely based on developmental aspect
- The forms of civilization on function in two ways

1. Among uneducated agriculturalist
2. Among Elite groups.

First one develops within the country , within the same culture.

Second one develops due to contact with other culture.

- Agriculturalists - little tradition.
- Elite group - great tradition.

- Between the two groups there is always the process of interaction takes place.
- These social process and cultural functions are the part of little tradition and great tradition and gradually it takes the shape of an institution.

Little tradition

- Developed within the village community
- Folk songs
- Folk artists
- Rural Doctors
- Phrases
- Folktales
- Folkdances
- Magic

- Great traditions are formed with the traditions when it becomes very wide and extended.
- When local, little traditions are being combined together then the great tradition takes birth.
- Change take place n little tradition and gradually this change proceeds to great tradition and then the whole cultural pattern changes.

- McKim Marriott joined Singer and tried to study civilization and tradition as a unifying factor of India's unity.
- The traditions, which consist of cultural performance, manifest various practices of the social institution,
- There is a constant interaction between little and great tradition.

- Explaining the social structure of these tradition Milton Singer (Traditional India : Structure and Tradition, 1975) writes:
- These cultural performance are institutionalized around the social structure of both little and great traditions.
- Those persisting and important arrangements of roles and status appearing in such corporate groups as castes, sects, or in teachers, reciters, ritual leaders of one kind or another,

- Which are concerned with the cultivation and inculcation of the great tradition, from the social structure of this tradition.
- The social structure of the little tradition consists of its own role-incumbents such as the folk artists, medicine men, tellers of riddles, proverbs and stories, poets and dancers, etc.

- These two traditions have regular interaction.
- The great tradition influences the little tradition and so little tradition influences great tradition. The interaction between the two affects one another and had led to social change in India.