

APPROACHES TO INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Indological /textual perspective

- Understanding Indian society through the study of ancient texts
- Indologists use ancient history, epics, religious manuscripts and texts in the study of indian institutions.

G.S. Ghurye

Background

- Educated in Sanskrit and sociology
- Academic career in Mumbai
- Interests in indian civilisation and culture,national movement

Aims

- Ethnographic study of castes, tribes, rural-urbanisation, religious phenomena, social tensions and indian art.

Assumption

- Analysis of evolution and growth of indian social institutions

Methodology

- Indological and textual
- Inductive-empirical method
- Historical- comparative method

Theoretical perspective

- Functional approach

Typology

- Classical textual categories
- Literary data

Issues

- Different aspects of indian society – indian culture and civilisation
- Race
- Religion
- Caste/kinship
- Tribal studies
- Rural-urbanisation
- Sociology of conflict and integration.

M.N.Srinivas

Structural- functional approach

Borrows from biological sciences

interdependence of various structures

Relies more on field work tradition for understanding social reality

Background

- Educated and training in sociology
- Academic career in Bombay, delhi, Bangalore and oxford
- Interest in understanding rural social life

Aim

- Dynamics of caste system in rural settings

Assumption

- Structure and change
- The tradition of basing macro-sociological generalisations on micro-anthropological insights
- Understanding indian society through field experience.

Approach

- Structural functional approach
- Macro-micro perspective

Methodology

- Anthropological investigation of small scale communities
- Functional unity
- Field investigations
- Descriptive study

Typology

- Dominant caste
- Sanskritisation
- Westernisation
- Secularisation

Issues

- Indian society and culture
- Religion and society
- Village study
- Inter-caste relations
- Social change

D P Mukerji

Background

Education and training in economics

Studied in Calcutta and Lucknow

Interest in understanding nature and meaning of Indian social reality rooted in the Indian tradition

Aim

The role of tradition to understand social change.

Assumption

Development of man is conditioned by social environment

Marxism as a method of analysis rather than political ideology.

Approach

He made an attempt to analyze Indian history from the dialectical perspective of Karl Marx, to understand the relationship and conflict between Indian tradition and modernity. For him dialectics and the historically situated human agent were the source of the dynamics of human history. Though he was a Brahmin he had a Marxist view of religion; but he also criticized Marxists for not analyzing why religion was a major social force in India.

Methodology

Marxian perspective of dialectical materialism

Issues

Indian tradition

Tradition and modernity

Personality

Role of new middle class

Subaltern approach

Views from below

View or understanding from the bottom of the society or flow of knowledge from below.

B R AMBEDKAR

Background

- Educated in Satara and Bombay in Maharashtra ; Columbia (USA); London and training in economics and law
- Interest in the study of the depressed classes

Aim

Dalit liberation

Assumption

Felt that depressed classes has no honour in the hindu religion which reflects in his writings and teachings.

Methodology

Subaltern approach

Issues

Untouchables

State and minority

Annihilation of caste system

Phule

Approach:

Phule's subaltern and anti-caste approach condemned the [chaturvarna](#) system (the caste system) and opposed [idol](#) worship. He advocated the spread of rational thinking and rejected the need for a Brahman priestly class as educational and religious leaders.

Phule attacked blind faith and what is given in religious books and the so-called god's words.

He criticized patriarchy in shudra and Brahmin families

Phule believed in overthrowing the social system in which man has been deliberately made dependent on others, illiterate, ignorant and poor, with a view to exploiting him. Mere advice, education and alternative ways of living are not enough, unless the economic framework of exploitation comes to an end.

