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S.C. Dube's contribution in Sociology by the study of Shamirpet Village

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Abstract:
Shyama Charan Dube (1922-1996) is a well-known anthropologist and sociologist in India. His application of the structural-functional approach for studying the Indian village community brought him in repute. Although he recognizes semi-autonomous character of the Indian village, he does not regard it as "static, timeless and changeless". He viewed that it is difficult to say any one village as representative of rural India as a whole; it cannot be representative in its cultural area. His study of Shamirpet provides description of social, economic and ritual structure, family level living etc.S.C. Dube was born on 25th July, 1922 at Narsinghpur in Madhya Pradesh and passed away on 4th February, 1996 at the age of 73 years. Dube took his Master's degree from Nagpur University in Political Science and then proceeded to undertake research among the Kamar – a tribe of shifting cultivators in Madhya Pradesh. Shyama Charan Dube, a distinguished Indian anthropologist and sociologist, made substantial contributions to the study of Indian society, particularly focusing on rural and tribal communities. His work is characterized by a blend of academic research and field studies, which offered in-depth insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of Indian villages. Born in Narsinghpur, Madhya Pradesh, Dube pursued his Master's degree in Political Science from Nagpur University, which included a special paper in Social Anthropology. This academic background led him to conduct a pivotal study on the Kamars of Raipur, shaping his doctoral dissertation in Sociology.

Key Words: Structural-functional approach, Anthropology, Socio-cultural dynamics

Introduction:
Shyama Charan Dube (1922-1996) is a well-known anthropologist and sociologist in India. His application of the structural-functional approach for studying the Indian village community brought him in repute. Although he recognizes semi-autonomous character of the Indian village, he does not regard it as "static, timeless and changeless". He viewed that it is difficult to say any one village as representative of rural India as a whole; it cannot be representative in its cultural area. His study of Shamirpet provides description of social, economic and ritual structure, family level living etc. S. C. Dube was born on 25th July, 1922 at Narsinghpur in Madhya Pradesh and passed away on 4th February, 1996 at the age of 73 years. Dube took his Master's degree from Nagpur University in Political Science and then proceeded to undertake research among the Kamara tribe of shifting cultivators in Madhya Pradesh.
He has taught social anthropology and sociology at universities in India and abroad. He started his professional career as a lecturer at Bishop College, Nagpur, and Maharashtra. Later, he joined the Department of Political Science in Lucknow University.While teaching there, he got the book on Kamar published, and improved upon his anthropological readings through interactions with D.N. Majumdar, whom he assisted in the early stages of the publication of the journal Eastern Anthropologist. Then, he moved to Osmania University, Hyderabad as a reader to take the place of Von Furer Haimen Dorf in the Department of Sociology.
He also went to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the London School of Economics. The interaction with academics including Raymond Firth who helped him in shaping the book on Indian Village. He was gifted speaker in English and Hindi. Dube quit the Osmania University to become Deputy Director in the Anthropological Survey of India at Nagpur and later Professor of Anthropology in the University of Sauger in Madhya Pradesh. He had been

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very active on different positions. In the beginning, he was an advisor for National Institute of (Rural) Community Development During 1972-1977, he was Director at Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla. In 1975-76, he was President of Indian Sociological Society. In 1978-80, he was also Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University. In 1980-93, he had been ICSSR National Fellow and also occupied important positions in UNESCO and UNO. He was also Chairman of Madhya Pradesh University Grants Commission.

Shyama Charan Dube, a distinguished Indian anthropologist and sociologist, made substantial contributions to the study of Indian society, particularly focusing on rural and tribal communities. His work is characterized by a blend of academic research and field studies, which offered in-depth insights into the socio-cultural dynamics of Indian villages. Born in Narsinghpur, Madhya Pradesh, Dube pursued his Master's degree in Political Science from Nagpur University, which included a special paper in Social Anthropology. This academic background led him to conduct a pivotal study on the Kamar's of Raipur, shaping his doctoral dissertation in Sociology.

Study of Shamirpet Village:

Dube's another book on Indian Village, first published in 1955, and was a milestone in the study of Indian society. In this book, he made a significant contribution in understanding the Indian society through structural-functional perspective. Writing in a lucid style, Dube brought out in this book the essence of life in an Indian village. While examining the village selected for his study, he says that one must examine the various units through which the village community is organized. The nature of study was interdisciplinary. It was sponsored and financed by the Social Service Extension Project of Osmania University in 1951-52 which Dube directed. The study was conducted at the village Shamir pet, located at a distance of nearly 25 miles from Hyderabad. The village had a population of 2,494 including 340 Muslims and 19 ethnic groups belonging to Hindus. The field data were collected from historical, geographical, political and sociological perspectives on different aspects of social, economic and religious practices of village in India, which reflect an integrated picture of the village.

Dube describes a Deccan village in India in 1955 on the same lines which Robert Redfield conducted his first village study in Mexico in 1930. Many of his conclusions could provide the first insight into the complex web of Indian village life. He observes: "No village in India is completely autonomous and independent, for it is always one unit in a wider social system and is a part of an organized political society. An individual is not the member of a village community alone, he also belongs to a caste, religious group or a tribe with a wider territorial spread and comprises several villages. These units have their own organization, authority and sanctions."

Structural functional perspective: Shyama Charan Dube took forward the tradition of field study and structural functional perspective introduced by M.N. Srinivas in studies of village. He provided descriptive exploratory account of village studies**.** He *provided interdisciplinary attitude* to village studies. He during *his study of Shamir pet village* collected data from geographical, historical, political perspectives alongside with sociological perspective. He advocated that to conduct village study one must examine various units through which village community is organized. He gave the idea of village being part of wider social network rather than being autonomous and independence. He added dimension of economic structure to village studies. He studied different occupations of people in village. He studied religion in village beyond the traditional Hindu angle and found major type of religious services and festivals in village like family ceremonies, village festivals and also focused on Hindu – Muslim interaction during festivals. Going beyond the myopic caste-based status differentiation in village.

S.C Dube identified six factors that contributed towards the status differentiation in the village community of Shamirpet –religion and caste, landownership, wealth, position in the government service and village organization, age and distinctive personality traits. Attempts to claim a higher ritual status was not a simple process. The group had to negotiate it at the local power structure. Dube pointed out the manner in which the caste panchayat of the lower or the menial castes worked as unions to secure their employment and strengthen their bargaining power with the land-owning dominant castes. To

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Srininvas the social world of the woman was synonymous with the household and kinship group while the men inhabited a more heterogeneous world. In the Telangana village Dube observed that women were secluded from the activities of the public space. It was considered a mark of respectability in women if they walked with their eyes downcast. The rules of patriarchy were clearly laid out. After caste gender was the most important factor that governed the division of labor in the village. Masculine and feminine pursuits were clearly distinguished. Srinivas pointed out that the two sets of occupations were not only separated but also seen as unequal. It was the man who exercised control over the domestic economy. He made the annual grain payments at harvest to the members of the artisan and servicing castes who had worked for him during the year. The dominant male view thought of women as being incapable of understanding what went on outside the domestic wall. Dube identified six factors that contributed to status-differentiation or inequality in the village community.

- Caste and religion
- Land-ownership
- Wealth
- Position in government service and village organisation
- Age
- Distinctive personality traits.
- He adds to concept of dominant caste by exploring the idea of leadership and dominant individual. He finds political power concentrated in few individuals rather than diffused in caste. In each village there are some dominant individuals who have decisive say in political participation of the members of village.He added wider dimension to gender aspects of village studies. He studies women in term of five actives.
- Domestic work
- Agriculture
- Festivals and ceremonies
- Birth ‘marriage and death
- Village administration and politics

"Indian Village" (1955): In "Indian Village," Dube presents a comprehensive study of Shamirpet, a village in Telangana. This work is an exemplar of applying the structural-functional approach to understand the intricacies of village life. Dube meticulously examines the social structure, which includes caste dynamics, inter-caste relationships, and the broader social organization within the village. He delves into the economic structure, discussing the occupational roles of different castes and the predominant agricultural activities. The ritual structure is also a significant focus, where Dube explores folklore, religious teachings, and the complex supernatural beliefs prevalent in the village. He also sheds light on family ties, detailing the structure of families and interpersonal relations. The level of living of the villagers is analyzed in terms of status differentiation, standard of living, and factors influencing these aspects.

S.C Dube on village studies in India, justifies for the change in focus of the Social Anthropologists from tribal studies to village studies by arguing that there is a need for a clear conceptual framework for studying both the structural matrix of the Village community and the change it is experiencing. For Dube, a systematic study of village communities will provide the requisite background data from which more purposeful planning can emerge. Dube argues that S.C Dube in his seminal work Indian Village 1955, by presenting the physical, demographic and historical details and linking it to the social, economic, caste, political, ritual structures to the ethos and ambience, is able to provide a vivid portrait of the village (Dube 2007: 497). For Yogesh Atal, the two questions that were his main concern, include one the issue of representativeness of a village- can a village represent the whole nation? And two, the challenges faced in developing a conceptual framework of a village. In situations where a village in the neighbourhood of Delhi is compared with a village in Tamil Nadu, the utility of such a comparision is uncertain and representativeness of the compared villages is very much open to question. Further one also needs to recognize that provinces are organized for administrative purposes and their boundaries are defined mainly geographically- but cultural boundaries do not necessarily coincide with the geographical (Atal 1993). Thus one has to work towards developing Indian Village as a conceptual category. Ramakrishna Mukherjee, had a very different approach to village studies. Mukherjee provides a historical evolution of village studies in India. He focuses on rural discontent over poverty and squalor– forced the British

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government to take into consideration the agrarian crisis- appointed the first Royal Commission on Agriculture 1926. According to him, 'Village studies' should be used to collect data to understand rural life for better administration purposes (Mukherjee, 1981).

Dube has performed his research on numerous Indian villages from a structural- functional point of view, and the results are fascinating. While conducting his research on these villages, he has come to the conclusion that the study of Indian villages can be approached from a variety of perspectives, depending on how the village society is constituted. 'No village in India is entirely autonomous and independent, according to Dube, because it is always a unit inside a larger social system and a member of an organised political society. Besides being a member of a village community, an individual can also be identified as a member of a caste, religious group, or tribe, which has a larger territorial spread and includes numerous village communities. Those units are organised, have authority, and are subject to their own sanctions."Dube has mostly concentrated on the operation of Indian villages in his research on Shamirpet hamlet, which is located in the city of Hyderabad. He came to the conclusion that the rural Indian economic structure is primarily based on caste. There is functional specialisation among castes, dependency among castes, and a lack of vocational mobility among castes. His research vielded.

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Rural social structure in India:Rural and urban centres share some common facets of life. They show interdependence especially in the spheres of economy, urban-ward migration, townsmen or city dwellers' dependence on villages for various products (e.g., food-grains, milk, vegetables and raw materials for industry) and increasing dependence of villagers on towns for manufactured goods and market Despite this interdependence between the two there are certain distinctive features which separate them from each other in terms of their size, demographic composition, cultural moorings and style of life, economy, employment and social relations. We find that the size of village population is small and density of population is low in comparison with towns and cities. India is rightly called a country of villages. Moreover, about 65 per cent of the total population lives in villages. Further, rural life is characterized by direct relationship of people to nature i.e. land, animal and plant life. Agriculture is their main occupation. For example, in India agriculture provides livelihood to about 60 per cent of the labour force.

Long enduring rural social institutions in India are Family, Kinship, Caste and Village. They have millennia old historical roots and structures. They encompass the entire field of life -social, economic, political and cultural – of the rural people. The complexity of social norms and values, statuses and roles, rights and obligations is reflected in them. VILLAGE occupies an important place in the social and cultural landscape of con temporary India. Notwithstanding India's significant industrialization over the last five or six decades, and a considerable increase in its urban population, a large majority of Indians continue to live in its more than five lakh villages and remain dependent on agriculture, directly or indirectly.Apart from it being an important demographic and structural reality characterizing contemporary India, village has also been an important ideological category, a category through which India has often been imagined and imaged in modern times. The village has been seen as the ultimate signifier of the "authentic native life", a place where one could see, observe and "realize" India and develop an understanding of the way local people organize their social relationships and belief systems. As Andre Beteille writes, 'the village was not merely a place where people lived; it had a design which reflected the

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Indian villages varied greatly in their internal structure organization:Dube argued that though Indian villages varied greatly in their internal structure organization, in their ethos and world-view, and in their life-ways and thought-ways, on account of variety of factors, village communities all over the Indian sub-continent had a number of common features. The village settlement, as a unit of social organization, represented a kind of solidarity which was different from that of the kin, the caste and the class. Each village was a distinct entity, had some individual mores and usages, and possessed a corporate unity. Different castes and communities inhabiting the village were integrated in its economic, social, and ritual pattern by ties of mutual and reciprocal obligations sanctioned and sustained by generally accepted conventions. Notwithstanding the existence of groups and factions inside the settlement, people of the village could and did face the outside world as an organized compact whole.

Social inequalities: Though the later studies were much more elaborate and contained long descriptions of different forms of social inequalities and differences in the rural society, many of them continued to use the framework of reciprocity particularly while conceptualizing 'unity' of the village the way Srinivas and Dube or earlier Wiser did Some of the anthropologists explicitly contested the unity thesis while others qualified their arguments by recognizing the conflicts within the village and the ties that villagers had with the outside world For instance, Paul Hilbert in his study of a south Indian village, although arguing that the caste system provided a source of stability to the village, also underlined the fact that 'deep seated cleavages underlie the apparent unity of the village and fragmented it into numerous social groups'. Similarly, Beteille had argued that his study of village 'Sripuram as a whole constituted a unit in a physical sense and to a much lesser extent, in the social sense'.

Method and Theory: Dube was a proponent of the structural-functionalist approach, through which he studied Indian villages and tribal societies. This approach allowed him to observe and analyze the interconnectedness of various social institutions and their roles in maintaining societal stability. His field studies in different regions, including Chhattisgarh, Telangana (Andhra Pradesh), and West Orissa, provided a comprehensive understanding of the social fabric of these communities.Scholars in India who have done commendable theorizations on Villages include M.N Srinivas, S C Dube, Yogesh Atal and Ramakrishna Mukerjee. These have highlighted the need for methodological, scientific and extensive study of Agrarian India, experiencing transformation under the impact of directed social change ushered in by the Government since Independence. As far as village studies are concerned the year 1955 was extremely important with immense significance for Indian anthropology and sociology, when seminal books on Indian villages were published. It included S.C Dube's Indian Village, D.N Majumdar (ed), Rural Profiles, M. Marriot's (ed) volume on Village India and M. N Srinivas (ed) India's Villages (Beteille 1974, Hockings 1999).

Theoretical and Methodological Approach: Dube has all through been an ardent advocate of interdisciplinary orientation and a promoter of research interest. Thus, he had vision of looking things from different perspectives, which reflects his multidimensional personality. Commenting on the personality of Dube, Yogesh Atal writes: "Dube has

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constantly been on the move both geographically and intellectually. Rather than harping on the same theme and concentrating on a narrow speciality, he chose the challenging task of exploring new territory and extending the frontier of knowledge."Dube (1965) proposed a more comprehensive frame of reference for the study of 'complex cultures' to understand Indian reality. He applied deductive-positivistic rather than inductive-inferential approach, based on null situation, like 'no change in modern India' or 'India's unchanging villages'. Dube's Indian Village (1955) was a significant work in the post-1950 period in the sense that it was the first full-length account of a village social structure. Dube depicted rural social structure and institutions in his characteristically lucid style, and the work served as a model for descriptive-exploratory account of several other macro-settings that came to be studied later. But he did not offer any analytical insights, nor did he propose any alternative conceptual framework for studying Indian rural society (Dhanagare, 1993: 53-54).

Importance of Village studies: To prepare a profile of village India, provide authentic and scientific account of traditional social order and there transformation: In the emerging intellectual and political environment during the postwar period, sociologists saw themselves playing an important role in providing authentic and scientific account of the "traditional social order", the transformation of which had become important concern. Many of the village monographs emerged directly from the projects carried-out by sociologists for development agencies.Evaluation of rural reconstruction programme : Lewis was appointed by the Ford Foundation in India to work with the Programme Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission to help in developing a scheme for the objective evaluation of the rural reconstruction porogramme. According to Lewis, who studied a village near Delhi, the main concern of there study were what the villagers felt about need of housing, education, health, land consolidation programme and newly created Panchayats.To assist economists in planning process: Majumdar has stated the importance of village studies in the following words, "sociologists, unlike his economist counterpart, saw the village 'in the context of the cultural life lived by the people' and the way 'rural life was inter-locked and interdependent' which 'baffled social engineers as it could not be geared to landed economy. It was here that the economists needed the assistance of sociologists and anthropologists"

According to M.N. Srinivas, the sociologists viewed their perspective as being "superior" because they alone studied village community as a whole. Their knowledge and approach provided an indispensable background for the proper interpretation of data on any single aspect of rural life. Their approach provided a much-needed corrective to the partial approach of the economist, political scientist and social worker.For qualitative analysis of economic growth : According to Epstein while economists used quantitative techniques and their method was "more scientific"; the sociological approach had its own advantages. Sociological studies provided qualitative analysis. The method of sociology required that its practitioners selected a small universe which could be studied intensively for a long period of time to analyze its intricate system of social reactions'.Study of historical continuity and stability of village : Hoebel has stated that the village and its hamlets represented "India in microcosm". For Srinivas, they 'were invaluable observation-centres where sociologist could study in detail social processes and problems to be found occurring in great parts of India'. Dasgupta has stated that 'Villages were supposedly close to people, their life, livelihood and culture' and they were 'a focal point of reference for individual prestige and identification'. As 'an important administrative and social unit, the village profoundly influenced the behaviour pattern of its inhabitants'. Villages were supposed to have been around for 'hundreds of years', having 'survived years of wars, making and breaking up of empires, famines, floods and other natural disasters'. This perceived 'historical continuity and stability of villages' strengthened the case for village studies.

Conclusion:

Dube highlighted the role of various social structures like social, economic, ritual and political to help in shaping the village. Further, the elements of various social structures are interlinked at the individual level as well as the higher order to bring about solidarity and consensus among the villagers.Attempt has been made to understand the factors which led to the changing scenario of village Shamirpeth (Hyderabad) in Andhra

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Pradesh. In his book, India's Changing Village (1958), Dube deals with the changes brought about in Indian villages by initiation of CDPs in India. The book discusses the human factors' responsibility in bringing changes in villages of India through CDP. The caste ranking in Shamirpet is also determined by traditions and myths since caste is based on an ascribed system of status. Dube establishes that the occupations allowed based on the daily practices such as rituals, hierarchy of food eaten, observance of rules connected with life cycle rituals etc. determined ranks. He puts great emphasis that the main criterion used for caste ranking in village is ritual and not economic. The main economic functions and activities of the major caste groups in the village are traditionally specified. However, agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers. They also keep cattle and domestic animals for their livelihood. For example, cows and she-buffaloes are kept for milk. Poultry is pursued by all sections of the village population except the Brahmins and the Komatis. Dube's work remains influential in understanding the complexities of Indian rural life, highlighting the intertwined social, economic, and cultural factors contributing to status differentiation in Indian villages. His insights continue to be relevant for comprehending rural dynamics in contemporary India. The Indian village, in the colonial discourse, was a self-sufficient community, with communal ownership of land and was marked by a functional integration of various occupational groups. Things as diverse as stagnation, simplicity and social harmony were attributed to the village which was taken to be the basic unit of Indian civilization. 'Each village was an inner world a traditional community, self-sufficient in its economy, patriarchal in its governance, surrounded by an outer one other hostile villages and despotic governments'.Recent historical anthropological and sociological studies have, however, shown that Indian village was hardly ever a republic. It was never self-sufficient. It has links with the wider society. Migration, village exogamy, movement, inter-village economy and caste links and religious pilgrimage were prevalent in the past, connecting the village with the neighbouring villages and the wider society. Moreover, new forces of modernization in the modern period augmented inter-village and rural-urban interaction.

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