

DISINTEGRATION OF THE PEASANTRY IN INDIA

—Some Issues—

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I. "CLASSICAL THEORY" OF PEASANTRY DISINTEGRATION IN INDIA

THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE study of the process of formation and of types of agricultural laborers in India published so far may be Dr. J. Patel's *Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan* (Bombay: Current Book House, 1952). The main points of his argument can be summarized as follows:

(1) Indian rural society before British rule was composed of self-sufficient and independent village communities where agricultural products, domestic industrial products, and various services were directly exchanged between cultivators, artisans, and menials on the basis of an intra-community combination of agriculture and handicraft. There every cultivator tilled his land with his family members. A separate class of agricultural laborers did not exist at all.

(2) When India was brought under British rule and converted into a market for British industrial products, some village artisans lost their traditional occupations and became agricultural laborers.

(3) As a result of a series of causes; the establishment of private landownership by British land revenue settlement; imposition of high-rate land revenue; breaking of self-sufficiency of village communities by expansion of commodity-money relations; the consequent indebtedness of peasantry; the increase of surplus population in the agricultural sector due to a very slow development of capitalism outside agriculture; the equal division of property between male heirs according to the Hindu or Muslim succession law, there was a subdivision of landholdings and an increase of petty cultivators who could not make a living by agricultural means alone. They were forced to increment their income as "dwarf-holding" laborers.

(4) Some petty cultivators lost their land entirely and became landless laborers. But landless laborers were always in a condition of underemployment because the existence of a huge surplus population in the agricultural sector was favorable to the expansion of landlord-tenant relationships and prevented the development of capitalist farming.

(5) The lack of employment opportunities outside agriculture and the pressure of surplus population in the agricultural sector produced a class of semi-free laborers who sold their personal freedom and became bonded slaves. Many of them belonged to the depressed classes and tribal peoples.

(6) The employment of full-time free wage laborers in the agricultural sector was meager and limited only to a very small number of capitalist farms and plantations.

(7) The proportion of agricultural laborers to total agricultural working population widely varied from region to region. According to the 1931 census, the population was 58.8 per cent in south India (Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces, and Berar), 32.9 per cent in east India (Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, and Assam), and 19.9 per cent in north India (United Provinces, Punjab, and North-Western Frontier Provinces). This regional difference was caused chiefly by the difference in land revenue systems, e.g., landownership systems. The transfer of land was easy and the disintegration of peasantry proceeded to a great extent in south India where the *raiyatwari* land revenue system was prevalent and cultivators themselves were landowners.

(8) Lastly, Dr. Patel characterizes the process of the formation of agricultural laborers in India in the following words:

In India a large class of landless labourers has been formed without a simultaneous growth of widespread capitalist farming to employ them. The traditional form of Indian agrarian economy with some forms of assured holding of land to each cultivator has disintegrated under the influence of contact with other capitalist economies. Its place has not been taken by any widespread practice of cultivation on capitalist lines. It is dangerous, therefore, to characterise the transformation of the agrarian economy as that from a feudal to a capitalist economy. . . . In the Indian agrarian economy, a large class of agricultural labourers had developed (signifying the disintegration of pre-capitalist economy), but widespread capitalist agriculture has not yet emerged. The disparity in these processes vividly expresses the "arrested" nature of the Indian agrarian economy, which is nowadays called "underdeveloped." [18, pp. 144-45]

Dr. Patel's argument as summarized above can be called a "classical theory" of historical change in socioeconomic composition of rural population and disintegration of the peasantry. This theory has been accepted and followed by many later scholars though with some difference in points of emphasis.¹

One of them is Dr. Ramkrishna Mukherjee's *The Dynamics of a Rural Society: A Study of the Economic Structure in Bengal Villages* (Berlin, Akademie-Verlag 1957). In this book, Dr. Mukherjee pointed out the importance of the caste system which Dr. Patel did not mention.

Dr. Mukherjee tried to characterize the socioeconomic formation of India before British rule. Using K. S. Shelvankar's *The Problem of India* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1943), he defined the social formation of pre-British India as feudal based on village communities depicting its characteristics as follows. The grant of fief under Indian feudalism was the bestowal of a right

¹ For a few examples, see B. Sen, *Evolution of Agrarian Relations in India* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1962); S. C. Jha, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism in India* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963); P. Sanghvi, *Surplus Manpower in Agriculture and Economic Development with Special Reference to India* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969); and K. K. Ghose, *Agricultural Labourers in India* (Calcutta: Indian Publications, 1969).

to collect land revenue and fief-holders did not interfere in the internal matters of village communities. The feudal power (king, bureaucracy, aristocracy) ruled villages through agents who made contact with village councils and headmen. Indian feudalism was financial and military, it was not manorial.

Dr. Mukherjee divided the population of Indian feudal society, using the above characteristics, into the following three categories:

(1) Multitude of usurping castes of Brahmins (religious priests of various denominations, teachers, calendar Brahmins, astrologers, etc.), and of Kshatriyas (kings, nobles, state and revenue officials, village headmen, etc.).

(2) Large number of producing and distributing castes of artisans, traders, agriculturists, etc., in the levels of Vaishyas and Sudras, which specialized in particular forms and branches of production and distribution.

(3) Serving castes formed mainly of those who were described as Antyaja, Mlechha, etc., and who previously were probably in a tribal stage.

From the point of view of class structure, (1) were feudal rent-receivers, (2) and (3) had a serflike existence. Those in category (3) were placed in an especially miserable condition. But Dr. Mukherjee did not recognize the existence of those who live mainly by agricultural labor among serving castes. He maintained, like Dr. Patel, that the homogeneous self-working, self-possessing, and self-sufficient cultivators were the chief members of village communities.

One of the important points emphasized by Dr. Mukherjee is that the class structure of pre-British Indian society was inseparable from the caste (*jati*) system. Also it was fundamentally unchanged even by land revenue settlement and consequent establishment of private land ownership under British rule, and continued to be the basis of the status and class structure of Indian villages throughout the colonial period.

In the process of peasantry disintegration during British rule, Dr. Mukherjee's argument is almost the same as Dr. Patel's and his conclusion is as follows:

... while with the destruction of the village community system the basis of Indian feudalism disappeared, in rural areas feudalism was reimposed in another form; and therefore in the British period of her history the agrarian economy of rural Bengal remained as semi-feudal, although it was henceforth made suitable to the demands of commodity production of crops. [16, p. 53]

In discussing the disintegration of the peasantry, Dr. Patel, Dr. Mukherjee, and others start from the premise that Indian rural society before British rule was composed of self-sufficient village communities whose chief members were a homogeneous "self-cultivating" peasantry. This premise has been proved wrong by the historical findings of Indian rural society which have progressed remarkably in the last two decades. It is now common knowledge that the Indian peasantry on the eve of British conquest was not homogenous from the point of right to land, the size of landholding, and mode of farming. Similarly, the premise of self-sufficient village communities has also been found wrong not only in such social aspects as marriage and kin relationships, but in economic fields as well. Further, it has been shown that the disintegration of peasantry

during the colonial period was complex because of the existence of such heterogeneous groups of peasantry, that the conversion of village artisans and menials into agricultural laborers did not take place in the same way for all occupations, and that the extent of migration from rural to urban area was not equal for all segments of the rural population.

In the next section, we shall try to survey briefly the results of recent historical studies of the Indian socioeconomic structure and point out some pertinent issues for the study of historical change of the status and class composition of the Indian rural society.

II. SOME PERTINENT ISSUES FOR FURTHER ELABORATION

First, I shall discuss Dr. Patel's first premise that in pre-British times Indian peasantry was made up of homogeneous self-working cultivators and that there was no room for the existence of those whose chief source of livelihood was agricultural labor.

Dr. D. Kumar, in her *Land and Caste in South India: Agricultural Labour in the Madras Presidency during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1965) disclosed the inconsistency between the first and the fifth of Dr. Patel's chief point summarized previously.

Analyzing the structural characteristics of the Indian agricultural economy under early British rule, she shows the weakness of Dr. Patel's contention that the process of agricultural labor formation in India started only in the latter half of the nineteenth century when the country was transformed into a market for British industrial products.

Dr. Kumar asserts that in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, south Indian villages were not simple communities composed of peasant proprietors and artisans but were of a much more complex socioeconomic composition with various strata and groups of population. On the one hand there landlord-tenant relations had already developed, and on the other a considerable number of big cultivators existed, whose landholdings were too large to cultivate with only family members. Moreover, many Brahmans among landowners or landholders were banned by social taboo from doing some types of manual labor. On the other side, the members of lower castes were prohibited by strong social compulsion from owning land or leasing land. Taking such social structure into consideration, Dr. Kumar holds that there is no doubt that a "class of landless agricultural labourers" existed in south Indian rural society at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But here the question arises whether this "class of landless agricultural labourers" is of the same character as the agricultural laborers of the later period, the first two or three decades of the twentieth century.

Most of the "class of landless agricultural labourers" of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries belonged to such lower castes as Chandalas, Cherumans, Holeyas, Kusas, Malas, Muppans, Paidis, Pallans, Pallis, Paniyans, Paraiyans, Uralis, Vettavans and others. They used to be sold, granted, mortgaged, or leased with land or without it, and the officials of the East India

Company called them "allodial slaves," "agricultural serfs," "villeins," or "*ad-scriptus glebae*." Dr. Kumar contends that it is impossible to regard them simply as slaves or serfs because of the many varieties of dependence on their masters. She concludes that it is difficult to separate caste from economic status at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The reason why the East India Company's policy of abolition of servitude was not successful must, she maintains, be explained in social rather than economic terms, in terms of the caste system rather than market needs [12, p. 75].

Dr. Kumar estimated that the percentage of lower-castes agricultural laborers to the agricultural population in 1800 would have been 17-25 per cent. Comparing this to the proportion of the agricultural laborers to agricultural population in 1901 (around 27-29 per cent), she comes to the conclusion that this increase can hardly be regarded as a radical transformation of the agrarian economy. But she admits that towards the end of the nineteenth century the extension of cultivated area failed to keep pace with the growth of population and that, as a result, the proportion of agricultural laborers to agricultural population could increase more rapidly.

Dr. Kumar's important contribution to the study of Indian agrarian history is, we think, that she proved with abundant factual information Dr. Patel and others' first premise to be wrong. That is that agricultural laborers did not exist in Indian village communities before British rule and homogeneous self-cultivating peasantry was the chief component of these communities. In this way she traced the historical and social origins of "bonded or semi-free labourers" (according to Dr. Patel's classification) who belonged mostly to depressed classes and tribal people. But Dr. Kumar did not try to analyze, classify, or characterize these modes of agricultural production based on such dependent laborers.

Dr. Kumar's other thesis that structural change did not take place in the south Indian rural society until the end of the third quarter of the nineteenth century cannot be considered inconsistent with Dr. Patel's assertion that the process of the formation of agricultural labor began sometime in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It requires further elaboration for Dr. Kumar to contend that no change occurred in the lower-castes' dependency upon their masters. She maintains that part of the explanation for the persistence of serfdom even into the twentieth century must lie in the burden of indebtedness. But she holds that the durability of serfdom cannot be explained wholly in terms of indebtedness and says the ultimate reason is the caste system itself. But we think that the birth of bonded slaves was occasioned by the expansion and penetration of commodity-money relations and that some sort of change occurred in the character of traditional lower castes "agricultural labour." Even though no change can be seen in the appearances of relations between lower castes "agricultural labour" and their masters, can it be claimed that there is no change in the causal relations which gave birth to these appearances? On this point, Dr. Patel regarded, as stated above, such factors as the lack of employment opportunities outside the agricultural sector, and the pressure of surplus population in agriculture as basic factors producing servile working conditions for agricultural laborers.

In other words, Dr. Patel thinks that the caste hierarchy did not remain the same as in the precolonial period, but that it changed its fundamental character and was placed in entirely new causal relations with the structural changes in Indian economy as a whole. These were caused by the inclusion of India into the reproduction process of the British capitalist economy. Recent anthropological studies also have proved that the caste hierarchy system has not been stationary, but changing by various economic factors [22] [23].

According to Dr. S. C. Gupta's study [9] [10], in north India too on the eve of the British conquest, village communities were composed not of a homogeneous peasantry, but of various peasant groups with different rights to land, and, moreover, even in the same group it could be noticed that the considerable differentiation in landholding and wealth was already there. The peasantry in any village community was usually composed of the following groups, namely (1) village *zamindars*, (2) resident *ryots*, and (3) nonresident *ryots*. The village *zamindars* generally belonged to one or several castes and within one group or caste they would be usually related by blood ties through several generations. They had the right to hold and cultivate village land, and were divided into various divisions and subdivisions according to their ancestral shares in village land. The resident *ryots* were usually not related by blood to the village *zamindars*, but had long settled in the village. As long as they paid the revenue at the rates fixed according to custom, they would not be evicted from land they cultivated. They enjoyed a more or less perpetual right of occupancy of land without the right of transfer to any other person by sale. They were considered to be tenants of a particular village community as a whole or a particular division of it. The nonresident *ryots* were village *zamindars* or resident *ryots* who came to cultivate land from neighboring villages, or members of such castes as the Malis, Kachchis, Koiris, or Arains that specialized in the cultivation of vegetables and other crops. The latter came from other villages in search of the land specially fit for the cultivation of these particular crops. They too paid the revenue at rates fixed according to custom and were considered tenants of the village community as a whole or a particular division. Their right to cultivate village land was temporary. In addition to these peasant groups, there were other village residents such as artisans, village servants, village traders or moneylenders, and village *patwari*.

Moreover, Dr. Gupta says that "agricultural labourers" existed in north India in the precolonial period and most of them belonged to a caste of Chamars. They usually had hereditary service relations with particular peasant families especially those belonging to higher castes) and engaged mainly in plowing and other agricultural operations. In the slack agriculture season they could perform any work of their choice and could also engage in their traditional occupations as artisans (leather dressers, cobblers, and shoemakers). But Dr. Gupta did not try to define the exact socioeconomic character of hereditary service relations between Chamar laborers and their master cultivators. Regarding number, he presumes that they were not very numerous and they depended upon the number of Chamar families in particular village and on the number of resident families

belonging to high castes that did not like to cultivate their own fields. If so, according to the 1931 census we can assume that the percentage of "agricultural labourers" to agricultural population in early British rule was about 13 per cent and that, if we include in them members of other lower castes, this would be almost the same as in south India.²

Bagdis, Chamars, Doms, Muchis, and others in Bengal which were included by Dr. Mukherjee in the serving castes, and Mahars, Mangs, and others in western India—most of these lower castes can be considered to have been in more or less the same condition as the "agricultural labourers" in south and north India.

It is now fully shown that in other regions of India the peasantry before British rule was not homogeneous. By way of example, we can enumerate the works of Dr. N. K. Sinha on Bengal [20], of Dr. R. M. Sinha (Bihar) [21], Dr. B. Cohn (Benares region) [3], Dr. R. Kumar (western India) [13], Dr. N. Mukherjee [15], and Dr. T. C. Varghese (south India) [25].

Based on these works, we can conclude that the peasantry, the chief component of village communities, was not homogeneous from the point of rights to own and use land, but they can be clearly divided into those considered to be de facto landowners and those who were not. In western India de facto landowners used to be called *mirasdars*, and the tenants of individual *mirasdars* or of a village community whose chief members were *mirasdars*, or of stateland were called *upalis*. In south India too, de facto landowners were called *mirasdars*, and tenants with hereditary right to cultivate and tenants from other villages with temporary rights to land were called *oolcoodie* and *paracoodie* respectively. In the case of Bengal a group of resident cultivators with the permanent right to occupy and cultivate land (*khudkasht raiyats*), a group of nonresident cultivators with the temporary right to land (*paykasht raiyats*), and a group of sharecroppers (*adiars*) can be clearly identified.

Most of the de facto landowners generally belong to such military and cultivating castes as Rajputs, Jats, Brahmans in north India, Marathas in western India, Vellalas, Reddis, and others in south India.

With the socioeconomic processes in course of which these different groups of peasantry with different rights to land came into existence, we can assume the following three processes.

First, as the case may be noticed typically with Rajputs in north India, the hierarchy of multiple rights to land shared by various social groups from the king at the top down to sharecroppers at the bottom was created as a result of the growth and establishment of local warriors, or of the migration and settlement of tribes and clans which had some sorts of relations with the then ruling power, or of the colonization promoted by these powerful groups as a leader, separately or of all these processes combined.

Second, under the impact of the expansion and penetration of commodity-

² This was pointed out before by W. H. Moreland in his *The Agrarian System of Moslem India* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1929) and accepted by I. Habib in his *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963).

money relations during the Mughal period, the differentiation of wealth and stratification of peasantry proceeded considerably and landlord-tenant relations developed between the wealthy men who, accumulated land and those who lost it. In some regions the colonization and the large-scale cultivation with hired labor or sharecropping by merchants, moneylenders, or other wealthy men could be found sporadically.

Third, lease-out and lease-in of some family holdings, though short-time and cyclical, were necessitated by the scarcity or surplus of family labor force due to death and birth of family members or due to the equal division of a family holding according to Hindu or Muslim inheritance law.

If the existence of the above heterogeneous groups of peasantry and a class of "agricultural labourers" mentioned before is admitted, then, as its corollary, it can be expected that various modes of agricultural production existed in India before British rule. Based on the above-mentioned scholars' works, we can classify the following modes of agricultural production.

The first is the *corvée* type of production in which the labor force in the direct production process was dependent mainly upon members of lower castes and which was mostly prevalent among the landowners belonging to higher castes such as Rajputs, Brahmans, etc.

The second one is the colonizer-landlord type of production organized by wealthy men and based on various forms of sharecropping with or without advance of seeds, agricultural instruments, etc.

The third is the peasant mode of production based mainly on family members of various agricultural castes. In this type the differentiation and stratification among peasantry advanced considerably, and many varieties could be discerned such as the rich farmer who employed "agricultural labourers," the self-cultivating landowner who lent out a part of his holdings to the pauperized peasantry on a sharecropping basis, the small peasant with his family members as the chief labor force, and the very small peasant supplemented sharecropping or agricultural labor.

But the numerical strength of each mode of agricultural production, the concrete contents of each type of farming, and the regional difference in the development of each type are not yet fully clear.

In any way, the existence of a homogeneous peasantry, the basic premise of Dr. Patel, Dr. Mukherjee, and others has been now refuted with abundant historical fact. In order to understand what kind of structural change occurred in Indian rural society under British rule, we have first to define the changes in status and character of each group of peasantry brought about by the British land revenue settlement. From this point of view, the above-mentioned scholars who studied the process of land revenue settlement from the point of socio-economic history must be highly appreciated for until recently this problem has been studied only from the point of legislative or administrative history.

If the above problem is not properly solved and if the differentiation and stratification of peasantry under British rule is dealt with as a general problem of homogeneous peasantry, we could not understand the process in which the

complicated status and class composition of modern Indian peasantry has been formed and the direction this process has taken. Furthermore, in order to understand, in proper historical perspective, the various agrarian movements which took place during the British period, the character of land reforms after independence, and the way they were implemented, it is not sufficient to study the process of enactment of various land revenue and tenancy acts and the contents of many varieties of tenancy rights during the colonial period [17]. What we have to do is to show what effect these moves produced on the mode of agricultural production and on the way that agricultural labor was recruited.

As clearly seen from Table I, in post-independence India, most peasants belonging to higher castes are found among a group of farmers mainly dependent on hired labor and a group of cultivators with family labor and very rarely among groups of sharecroppers and agricultural laborers. On the contrary, about a half the members of middle and lower castes are cultivators, and a considerable portion of scheduled caste members work as agricultural laborers. Can it be understood that in the process of the differentiation and stratification of peasantry in India most members of higher castes have climbed to the status of farmers and that a part of the middle and lower castes, especially a considerable portion of the group of scheduled castes have been pauperized and forced to become agricultural laborers? What is the socioeconomic character of the mode of production performed by so-called farmers? As pointed out by Dr. D. Thorner [24], Indian agricultural laborers are not homogeneous, but are of various types. The problem to be solved is how to define the modes of agricultural production based on these various types of employer-laborer relationship. And again, what is the meaning of the anti-Brahman movements in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, the liberation movement of scheduled castes as the Mahars and Chamars, or the movement of tribal peoples like Santals, in the entire history of the peasant movement in India? In order to solve these and other related problems, we have first of all to define exactly the status and class composition of the Indian peasantry just before British rule and then trace the changes which have taken place under the British land revenue settlement, under the impact of British industry, and through the expansion of commodity-money relations and the conversion of labor power into commodity under developing, though slow and distorted, Indian capitalism. Dr. Mukherjee's work mentioned above may be very important as a pioneering contribution to this field of study, but it must be admitted that it is still of too generalized character.³

Next, we shall discuss the problem of isolation, self-sufficiency, and intra-

³ For excellent analysis of the problem after independence, see A. Bétteille, *Castes: Old and New* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969); A. Bétteille, *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Y. Singh, "Caste and Class: Some Aspects of Continuity and Change," *Sociological Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (September 1968). The importance of this problem in connection with economic development was pointed out by K. N. Raj in his "Regional and Caste Factors in India's Development," in *Tensions of Economic Development in South-East Asia*, ed. J. C. Daruvala (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1961).

TABLE I
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN HOUSEHOLD OCCUPATION GROUPS BY MAJOR RELIGION AND
 CASTE (FOR HINDUS) GROUPS, ALL-INDIA RURAL SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

Household Occupation	Religion		Hinduism (Caste)				Shikh-ism	Chris-tianity	Other Religions	All Religions	Number of Sample House-holds
	Upper	Middle	Lower	Scheduled	All Castes						
Farmer	24.38	7.57	6.95	1.54	7.51	6.32	15.91	7.87	5.17	7.56	626
Cultivator	43.91	53.30	41.79	27.10	41.45	29.06	37.11	33.81	31.03	40.28	3,336
Sharecropper	3.91	6.18	6.17	8.52	6.47	7.94	9.85	2.78	1.72	6.49	538
Agricultural labor	1.09	11.91	16.85	36.19	18.44	18.77	12.12	16.20	17.24	18.29	1,515
Forestry, fishery, livestock workers	0.62	1.39	3.31	2.31	2.42	2.71	3.03	3.70	—	2.46	204
All agricultural occupations	73.91	80.35	75.07	75.66	76.20	64.80	78.02	64.36	35.16	75.08	6,219
All nonagricultural occupations	26.09	19.65	24.93	24.34	23.71	35.20	21.98	35.6	44.84	24.92	2,065
All occupations	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	8,284

Source: *The National Sample Survey, Fourth Round, Report on Some Characteristics of the Economically Active Population*, No. 14 (Delhi, 1959).

community combination of agriculture and handicrafts which was another premise of Dr. Patel's argument. In this regard, the recent works of Soviet scholars like Dr. A. I. Chicherov [2], V. I. Pavlov [19], and others are worthy of note.

As they have shown with sufficient evidence, India of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries already had social divisions of labor developed to a considerable extent and a group of artisans existed as small-commodity producers independent of the demiurgie or *jajmani* system. It is also disclosed that local markets were formed beyond the boundaries of villages and that the putting out system by merchants and moneylenders was quite common in certain crafts. These findings are very important in studying the process of decline of handicrafts under British rule.

The fact that relations between particular families based on direct exchange of agricultural products, handicrafts products, and services, and rates of exchange are not permanently fixed, but changeable by various factors has been sufficiently proved by Dr. O. Lewis [14], Dr. T. O. Beidelman [1], Dr. J. W. Elder [6], Dr. A. Gould [8], and others. Let us cite some instances. The subdivision of landholdings due to the growth of population may make the employment of hereditary dependent agricultural laborers unnecessary. The expansion of commodity-money relations may induce the cultivator to sell more products and thereby reduce the rates of kind payment based on the *jajmani* system. The increase of employment opportunities outside villages may encourage the migration of some artisans and menials thus severing ties between them and cultivating families. And again, the changes in the mode of life may make some people spare such service as water-carrying, shaving, haircutting, etc. These and many other instances can be cited from village studies. The question is whether we can discern any general principle or trend in the process of *jajmani* system change.

We can easily imagine that the conversion of India into a market for British industrial products must have had a different impact on the artisans dependent on the demiurgie or *jajmani* system and those artisans free from it. The severest blow was given to such handicrafts as cotton weaving, dyeing, oil-milling, shoe-making, and others that were forced to compete with British industries. As against this, carpenters and blacksmiths were most stable. This is one of Dr. Gadgil's finding [7].

Taking up this point of argument, Dr. A. P. Kolontaev tries to more definitely study the process of decline in Indian handicrafts under the influence of British industries and of the conversion of artisans into tenants and agricultural laborers [11]. He has revealed the following facts that the decline of free artisans proceeded faster than the artisans dependent on the demiurgie or *jajmani* system, that among the latter the decline of those who were engaged in the production of consumer goods took place faster than carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, and others whose work was connected with the reproduction activities of cultivators, that the relations between cultivators and the artisans engaged in the production of agricultural implements were rather strengthened and dependence of the latter on the former increased due to the surplus population in rural areas.

From other studies mentioned above, we can draw the following general tendency: that the relations connected with the Hindu religious and life cycle rituals or the idea of purity and impurity such as of barbers, washermen, sweepers, etc. are more persistent and that the services connected with day to day life are easily affected by the introduction of new devices and instruments.

Lastly, we shall touch on the problem of surplus population forced to stay in the villages. According to Dr. E. J. Eames, it would be wrong to assume that the greatest amount of migration to urban centers was by members of those castes which had lost their function in village life and those in the weakest economic position in villages [4] [5]. Urban migration in search of outside employment was more frequent among higher caste members than lower castes. As shown by the National Sample Survey, the proportion of higher and middle castes population to population in cities is larger than their proportion to the rural population. Was it the same before British rule? If so, did it increase or not during British rule? These problems yet remain to be solved.

In the above section we have tried to point out some issues which require more elaboration in studying the problem of the disintegration of peasantry and the formation of agricultural workers in India while reviewing some recent trends of study and research related to this problem. In conclusion we would like to state briefly our methodological stand. The process of the change of status and class composition of Indian rural society must be studied not as a problem limited to the agricultural sector, but from the point of view of how (1) commodity exchange of agricultural products and producer and consumer goods, (2) migration and immigration of labor force, and (3) inflow and outflow of taxes and dues, savings, and credits between the agricultural sector and the non-agricultural sector have developed in each stage of Indian capitalism and how under these influences modes of agricultural production have changed.

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