

**Dogra Degree College
BA Sociology (NEP-2020)**

**Major Course
Self-Instructional Material**

**Course- Sociological Thought in India-II
Course Code-UMJSOCT-601**

**Semester-6th
Credits-4**

After completing the course, the students will be able to:

- Studies the perspectives of Indian Sociology
- Understand the contribution of Indian Sociological thinkers to Study Society
- Familiarize with the founders of Sociology in India

**Unit-3
Cultural Approach: Yogendra Singh**



Index

S. No	Topic/Sub Topics
1	Life Sketch of Yogendra Singh
2	Understanding Cultural Approach
3	Caste System and Social Stratification
4	<u>Modernization in India</u>
5	<u>Descriptive Questions</u>

Prepared by:

Course Coordinator
Mr. Balwant Singh
Head, Department of Arts

Approved by:

Dr. Bela Thakur
Principal, DDC

Life Sketch of Yogendra Singh:

Yogendra Singh was born on 2nd Nov 1932 in a village in the Basti district of Uttar Pradesh to a zamindar family. He passed away on 10 May 2020 at Delhi. He is one of the founders of the Centre for the Study of Social Systems and he is also a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in which he was a professor since 1971. He has obtained his Master's degree and PhD degree from Lucknow University. He too earned 'A Fulbright fellowship' through which he moved to Stanford University, USA in 1967-68. He was also the Professor and head of the Department of Sociology, at Jodhpur University.

He was lucky to be taught by prominent teachers like Radha Kamal Mukherjee, D.P. Mukerji, D.N. Majumdar, Baljit Singh, and A.K. Saran. Singh soon after finishing his Doctorate, taught for three years at the Institute of Social Science, Agra and later he joined Rajasthan University to start a new Department of Sociology along with T.K.N. Unnithan and Indra Deva. He too guided more than thirty students for doctoral research. Yogendra Singh is very simple, creative, and humanist in his real life, which is also reflected in his writings. He is also a distinguished scholar-theoretician; he taught at many universities in India and abroad. He conducted several fieldwork in South Asian countries.

He has been active in sociology and responsible for different positions in academic and government committees concerned with the formulation of social policies. He is also a member of the research advisory committee of the Planning Commission and ICSSR and the convener of the UGC National Panel of Sociology. His contributions to sociology and social anthropology have made him win many awards.

He is also the author of several books and his main works are:

- a. Modernization of Indian Tradition 1973
- b. Essays on Modernization 1977
- c. social stratification and social changes in India 1978
- d. Image of man: Ideology and Theory in Indian Sociology 1984
- e. Indian Sociology: Social Conditioning and Emerging Concerns 1987
- f. Social Changes in India: Crisis and Resilience 1993
- g. Culture change in India: Identity and Globalization 2000
- h. Ideology and Theory in Indian Sociology 2004
- i. Social Aspects of the Scientific and Technological Revolution 1978
- j. Sociology of Non-violence and peace 1968
- k. Traditions of Non-violence 1972
- l. The sociology of culture 1991
- m. Towards a sociology culture in India 1965
- n. For a sociology of India 1967

In his studies, Singh concentrated his focus on the following aspects of Indian society.

1. Social stratification
2. Social change
3. Modernization

4. Indian sociology
5. Culture change

3.1 Understanding Cultural Approach

Yogendra Singh (1932-2020) was an Indian sociologist who believed that cultural and structural aspects of Indian society could be studied through an integrated model. His work focused on the relationship between tradition and modernity in India, and he proposed a unique Indian path to modernity.

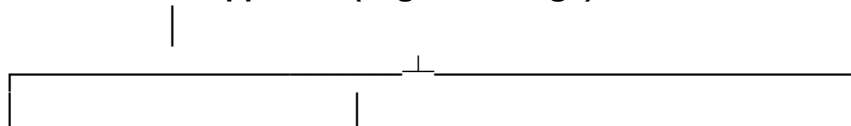
The cultural approach in sociology emphasizes the role of culture in shaping social structures, institutions, and individual behavior. It contrasts with structural-functional and Marxist approaches by focusing on the dynamic nature of cultural transformations and their impact on social change.

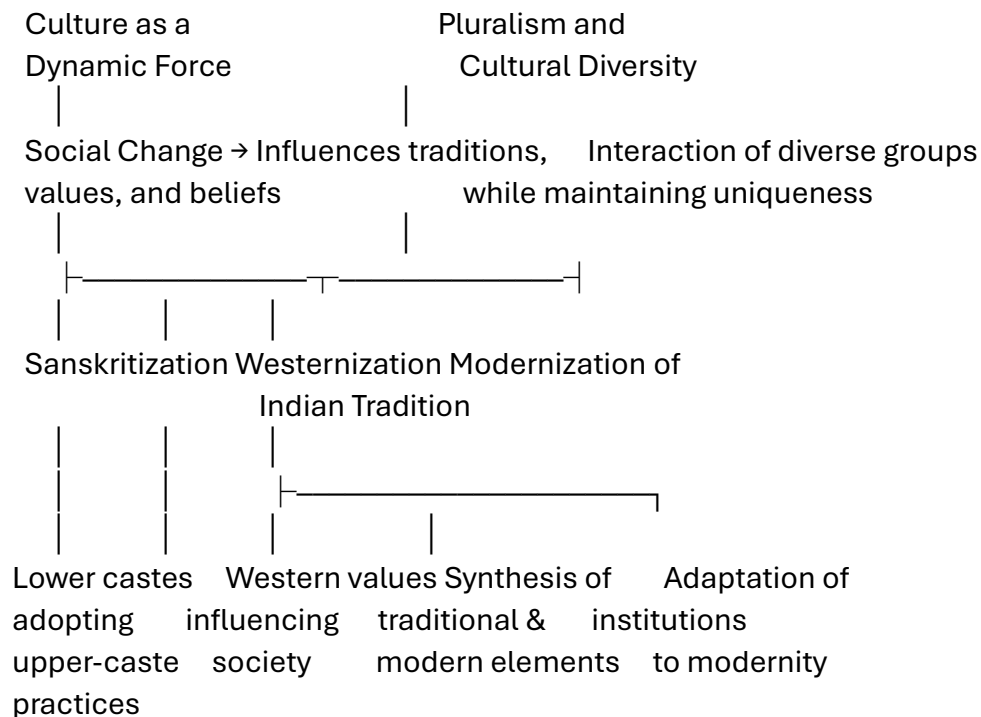
Yogendra Singh, a renowned Indian sociologist, extensively studied social change, modernization, and cultural transformations in India. His work integrates insights from classical sociological theories while emphasizing the importance of indigenous cultural patterns in shaping social structures.

Key Features of the Cultural Approach by Yogendra Singh

1. Culture as a Dynamic Force: Culture is not static; it evolves due to internal and external influences. Cultural elements such as traditions, values, and beliefs impact societal changes.
2. Sanskritization and Westernization: Singh extends M.N. Srinivas's concept of Sanskritization, where lower castes adopt upper-caste practices to improve social status. Westernization brings modern values but coexists with traditional Indian values, leading to a hybrid cultural identity.
3. Modernization of Indian Tradition: Singh argues that modernization in India is not merely Westernization but a synthesis of traditional and modern values. He highlights how traditional institutions adapt to modernization rather than being completely replaced.
4. Pluralism and Cultural Diversity: India's pluralistic society consists of diverse cultural groups with unique traditions. The cultural approach helps understand how different communities interact while maintaining their distinct identities.
5. Social Change and Cultural Factors: Cultural elements like religion, language, and customs play a crucial role in determining the pace and nature of social change. Modernity in India is characterized by a blend of tradition and contemporary global influences.

Cultural Approach (Yogendra Singh)





Conclusion

Yogendra Singh's cultural approach provides a nuanced understanding of Indian society by emphasizing cultural continuity alongside social transformation. His work highlights how modernization does not necessarily lead to the loss of tradition but results in a hybrid model of change, where tradition and modernity coexist.

3.2 Caste System and Social Stratification

Yogendra Singh, a prominent Indian sociologist, made significant contributions to the understanding of caste and social stratification in India. His works focus on the transition of Indian society from a traditional hierarchical structure to a more modern and fluid system.

The theoretical position of caste in the analysis of the Indian social system is highly complex. It constitutes both a structural unit of social stratification as well as a system. The distinction between the two would depend upon the level of analysis involved. Sociologists who look across the cultural view of caste have, right from the beginning, associated it with an autonomous principle of stratification.

Singh (1969) conducted a study of caste and power structure in rural society. His study of caste and its changing forms and functions refers to the implication of the system for Indian social stratification. It is not meant to be a review of caste studies as such.

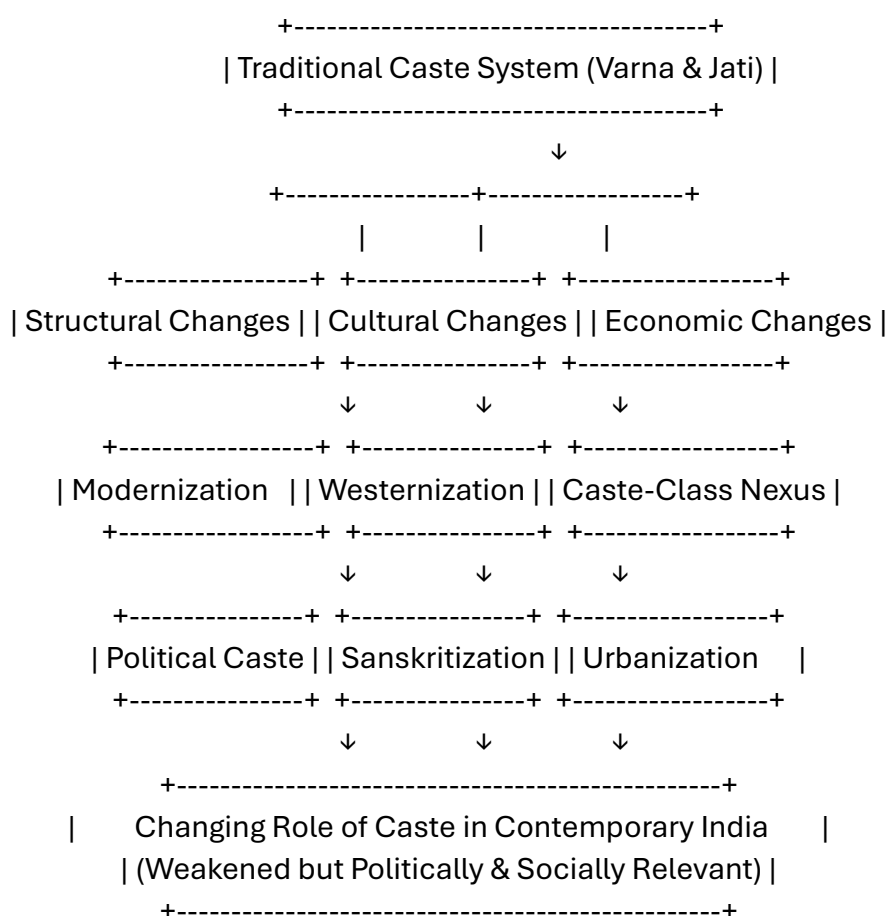
The caste system is seen here as a status principle of social stratification, for the sociology of social stratification in India, the treatment of caste becomes unavoidable as a standard to measure changes regarding other principles of stratification such as of

wealth (class) and power (elite). These new principles only sometimes operate autonomously; more often they operate contingently together with the caste principle of social stratification.

Yogendra Singh emphasized that caste is not a rigid, unchanging system but has been evolving due to social and cultural changes. He identified two major dimensions:

1. **Structural Changes:** Changes in the institutions of caste due to economic, political, and legal reforms.
2. **Cultural Changes:** Alteration in caste values and behaviors due to modern influences like education, urbanization, and Western thought.

Flow Chart



Yogendra Singh categorized the changes in social stratification into **structural** and **cultural** transformations:

Type of Change Characteristics

Structural Changes

- Industrialization and urbanization have created new classes. The rise of the middle class has blurred caste distinctions.
- Caste is no longer the sole determinant of occupation and status.

Cultural Changes

- Influence of Western values (equality, democracy, secularism).
- Breakdown of traditional caste-based social norms.

Type of Change Characteristics

- Increased **inter-caste interactions** in education, workplaces, and urban settings.

Singh's Observation: Caste identity is weakening in economic and social life, but remains politically relevant.

3.3 Modernization in India

Modernization is a composite concept It is also an ideological concept. The models of modernization covary with the choice of ideologies. The composite nature of this concept renders it pervasive in the vocabulary of social sciences and evokes its kinship with concepts like development, growth, evolution, and progress. In the book **Essays on Modernization in India(1977) Yogendra Singh** analyzed the varied and complex processes involved in modernization in India, the forces released by it, and their bearing on the stability, creativity, and development of India as a dynamic nation and composite civilization.

The emphasis on historicity in preference to universality defining the context of modernization the pre-eminence of structural changes in society to render the adaptive process of modernization successful in developing countries particularly India and the eclectic nature of the cultural and ideological response of India to the challenges of modernization represent some of the unifying principles. Singh portrays the challenges and contradictions that India encounters during its modernization.

Modernization is a process associated with the sweeping changes that took place in society, particularly social, economic, political, and cultural changes. It represents substantial breaks from traditional society. Modernization is an idea before it is a process. As it is an idea, there is no agreement among social scientists on its meaning and interpretation. The concept of modernization emerged as an explanation of how Western countries/ societies developed through capitalism.

According to this approach, **modernization depends primarily on the introduction of technology and the knowledge required to make use of it.** Besides, several social and political prerequisites have been identified to make modernization possible. Some of these prerequisites are:

1. Increased levels of education;
2. Development of mass media;
3. Accessible transport and communication;
4. Democratic political institutions;
5. More urban and mobile population;
6. Nuclear family in place of extended family;
7. Complex division of labour;
8. Declining public influence of religion, and;
9. Developed markets for exchange of goods and services in place of traditional ways of meeting such needs.

Modernization is, thus, supposed to be the result of the presence of these prerequisites in the social system. The term modernization has been used here in a very broad sense. We, therefore, find different views about the scope and area to be covered by the concept of modernization.

Prof. Yogendra Singh is a renowned Indian sociologist who has made significant contributions to the understanding and theorization of India's modernization. Born in 1932, he has held various prestigious positions, including being the founder and director of the Centre for the Study of Social Systems at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Prof. Singh has authored several books and articles on Indian society, culture, and modernization, with his most notable work being "Modernization of Indian Tradition" (1973).

The major contribution of Prof. Yogendra Singh in theorizing India's modernization can be discussed under the following themes:

1. Conceptualizing modernization in the Indian context: Prof. Singh was one of the first sociologists to systematically analyze the process of modernization in India. He argued that modernization is a multidimensional process that involves changes in various aspects of society, including social structure, culture, and personality. He emphasized that modernization in India is not just about adopting Western values and institutions, but also about the reinterpretation and transformation of traditional Indian values and institutions.
2. Role of tradition in India's modernization: Prof. Singh highlighted the importance of tradition in shaping India's modernization process. He argued that the modernization of Indian society is not a mere replication of Western modernity, but rather a unique blend of traditional and modern elements. He identified three main traditional structures in Indian society – the Hindu tradition, the Islamic tradition, and the tribal tradition – and analyzed how these traditions have interacted with modernizing forces to shape contemporary Indian society.
3. Structural and cultural dimensions of modernization: Prof. Singh emphasized the need to study both the structural and cultural dimensions of modernization in India. He argued that while structural changes (such as urbanization, industrialization, and political democratization) are important, they are not sufficient to understand the process of modernization in India. Cultural changes (such as changes in values, beliefs, and norms) are equally important, as they shape people's responses to structural changes and determine the nature and direction of modernization.
4. Indigenization of modernity: Prof. Singh's work on India's modernization highlights the importance of the indigenization of modernity. He argued that the process of modernization in India involves the selective adoption and adaptation of Western values and institutions, as well as the reinterpretation and transformation of traditional Indian values and institutions. This indigenization of modernity ensures that the process of modernization in India remains rooted in the country's unique historical and cultural context.

Questions

1. Who was Yogendra Singh, and what is the cultural approach in sociology?
2. Define the caste system. How did Yogendra Singh analyze the caste system in India through a sociological lens?
3. Discuss the relationship between caste and social stratification as explained by Yogendra Singh.
4. Define modernization. How did Yogendra Singh conceptualize modernization in the Indian context?