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Indigenizing Sociology in India:**A Need of the Hour****Arun Kumar Sharma**

The ideas presented in this paper are the outcome of my presentation in a National Conference organized in Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar Central University, Lucknow, 3-4 November 2023. The workshop was organized on New Education Policy. Reading of Radhakamal Mukerjee and the hiatus I have always felt between my life experiences as Hindu and what I learnt about Hinduism from schools/colleges and media paved the way for pondering on development of endogenous sociology in India, free from open and hidden external biases against Indian values and culture. In this paper, first, I attempt to say a few words about Mukerjee, then I come to problems that Orientalism, supported by Western centre of thought and alien religions in India, has caused in India, and suggest what can lead to resolution of the present crisis emerging from racialization of castes and religions: a need to write Indian sociology in the framework of Vedic universal values which are reflected in various forms in spiritual, religious, and literary works in different languages in India.

It is our common experience that Indian society is on the path of disintegration. It is one thing to say that India is a large and diverse country, and it is another to argue for solidifying divisions and making them basis of all state policies. In my

view it is the second approach that is leading to crisis and this crisis will be aggravated further as state interventions in all walks of life become deeper. It is going to stop at caste census as some political parties have demanded in the recent past. I think that we need an endogenous sociology, that may also be called Hindu sociology, inspired by the works of Binoy Kumar Sarkar who shaped the ideas of Radhakamal Mukerjee. Sarkar published a paper on Hindu theory of international relations in American Political Science Review in 1919. I am using the term Hindu in the same sense. The term Hindu has been in use for almost a thousand years and was not considered to be communal or divisive. In the beginning of the Twentieth Century all thought categories of India were considered to be Hindu. Prafulla Chandra Ray had the same meaning of the term Hindu when he wrote A History of Hindu Chemistry from the Earliest Times to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century in 1902 by Williams and Norgate from Oxford, London. The second volume of the book was published in 1909. But gradually political processes and government policies started creating divisions and separations on multiple bases and Hindus got identified with non-Muslim, non-tribals and non-Christians. Unlike today in those days the term Hindu stood for native thinking of India. Al Biruni, an Iranian traveller (973- post 1050 AD) used the term Hindu culture in Kitab Tarikh Al-Hind. In 1878 a Chennai based weekly was started with name, The Hindu, that became a daily newspaper in 1889. This not only included an integrationist perspective for India but a vision of the integrated world or international unity.

About Radhakamal Mukherjee and his sociological contributions

Most sociologists would agree that Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee, the founder of the Lucknow School of Economics and Sociology was a man of exceptional qualities. Looking at the nature of sociological practices in Indian universities and research organizations it is difficult

to imagine that such a sociologist ever lived in India and worked and died in Lucknow. He is one of the few sociologists of India who had the honour of publishing a paper in *American Journal of Sociology* in 1937 when sociology was not even an established discipline in Indian universities. The paper is entitled “Caste and Social Change in India” and, to me, it paved the way for all sociological writings on caste in India, although from my angle the subsequent writers did not fully concur with what he wanted to say. It was a paper based on census data collected in 1931. This was the time of transition. Castes were competing for a status of superiority with each other, particularly with castes with similar names in different regions in the country. Moreover, all castes were integrating into the larger nationality of Hindus. Even otherwise it must be stressed that caste is a complex social phenomenon that cannot be understood in a simple, single framework (D. P. Mukerji, 2023). Also, the number of castes is so high that it is challenging to develop an all-India classification of castes. To quote Yogesh Atal (2011): “The census commissioner of 1891 found as many as 2,300,000 castes in the country and found it hard to determine their eligibility and location in the varna system.” Hinduism is thus an architecture that has been built by innumerable castes, tribes, occupational groups and communities. All the ideas such as Sanskritization, Westernization, dominant caste and modernization that developed in sociology latter can hardly be delinked from the theory developed in this paper. Interestingly, the paper can also be used for critiquing the prevailing ideas on castes and tribes which developed after entry of caste in the national politics of protective discrimination, leading to a competition for lower and backward status.

His contributions were well recognized in his lifetime. Radhakamal Mukerjee, was a Padma Awardee of 1962. He was a prolific writer and professor who worked in Lucknow University till 1952 and wrote more than 50 books, the last one on Ashtavakragita was published after his death. He taught in Lucknow University till 1952 and served as vice-chancellor during 1955-57. He combined a freedom fighter,

economist, sociologist, historian of philosophy, Indian philosopher, and ecologist. His PhD was on “Socio-Economic Change in the Indian Rural Community”, 1920. He was associated with World Food Council and ILO, and he played a role in forming various government policies in India. He was concerned with evolving an institutional approach to planning. What interests me is to learn that while Sarkar, who was interacting with the best sociologist of the world, for example, Dewey, Parsons, Zimmerman and Buell, felt a need to study writings of Kautilya, Manu, and Shukra and Mahabharat, and his successor Radhakamal Mukerjee took to the study of Ashtavakragita. Why did they need to study Indian philosophy to write on Indian society? The answer is that Indology has to be developed on the basis of such philosophical writings. Long before the development of sociology in India this was to some extent done by Swamy Dayanand.

Radhakamal Mukerjee was a well-read economist and sociologist, and he was influenced by Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee, Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, and sociologists like Emile Durkheim, and August Comte. His contributions are transdisciplinary. He promoted studies of regional sociology, arts and crafts, morals, workers and slum dwellers, rural communities, comparative economics, and democracies, with a clear focus on the values and their social context. Despite being situated in economic and sociological thinking he believed that facts are to be explained in the light of values, as individual, society and values are intractably related to social facts. The long span of issues on which he pondered include holism, integrationism, universalism, moral values, and mysticism, caste and Indian society, urban-rural integration, industry workers, science, sociology, and morality, value, civilization, humanism, and spiritualism. In Lucknow he worked with D. P. Mukerji and had many similarities with him. Both wanted to look at social situation in India from a rather Indological, ecological and holistic perspective.

Prof. P. C. Joshi who another product of Lucknow School of Economics and Sociology was more of a Marxist. Yet he was not a conservative Marxist ignoring all realities other than class.

Commenting on Radhakamal Mukerjee and D. P. Mukherjee (the doyens of Lucknow school), he seems to favour the institutional approach of Radhakamal Mukerjee. He avers: “Institutional theory of Indian socialist planning which should explore what type of institutions are favourable to the growth and development of the socialist pattern and which are blocking change, innovation and investment and preventing the more dynamic, socialistic forces of the new age from asserting themselves. This means that we must move into the realm of social traditions, beliefs, valuations, and ideals.” (P. C. Joshi, 1986).

Before he produced his last writing on Shukraniti Radhakamal Mukerjee was familiar with sociology of all leading sociologists like Durkheim, Comte, Weber and Spencer, and the problem of decentering of knowledge, a concept given by Derrida (an early realization), and he chose to write on Indian philosophy. This to him was consistent with the institutional approach that linked social action with social values framework. Bengal renaissance was leading to two conflicting tendencies: Indian exceptionalism and socialism. To me he recognized the threats of both and was the first Occidentalizer (to use a term coined by Edward Said) in Indian social sciences. He delved deep on Segmentalism vs. integrationism. He was familiar with the communal question, and he focused on human interests rather than identities such as Hindu or Muslim. After all human interests are common to all identities. He believed that Indian sociology would need a combination of American social science, with social thoughts of Indian seers.

Sociology in India after Radhakamal Mukerjee

I have learnt about Prof. Mukerjee through lectures of my senior colleagues, Prof. K. N. Sharma who taught in IIT Kanpur and reading of some works of Prof. A. K. Saran, who also taught in Lucknow University. Prof. Sharma was an eminent sociologist whose work was referred in Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus*. Prof. Sharma knew Sanskrit from his father and he introduced us to Sankhya philosophy and wrote articles in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. Towards the

end of his career, he was attempting to develop a theory of action which is rooted in Sankhya philosophy. A. K. Saran was highly influenced by the Sri Lankan art writer Ananda Coomaraswamy. A. K. Saran admired Prof. Mukerjee for his holism but started thinking more in terms of tradition and modernity. To him tradition was a condition of stability and modern a condition of change. He could show the way to those who wanted to pursue Indian issues in Indian traditional framework. The problem with Saran was that he was too abstract and polemical; the philosophical route that he had taken made his lectures incomprehensible to students and colleagues. None of them, however, knew economics and scientific methodology.

In India sociology developed in universities followed the anthropological methodology of fieldwork. Social scientists who work in specialized research institutions, promoted by ICSSR or ministries, work with planners and international non-government organizations. They need to use the Western concepts and methodologies uncritically. They rely on empirical data collected through surveys. They were not to be bothered about ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations of their work. They accepted the commonsensical and politically promoted concepts for empirical exploration. This led to sociology of poverty and development, migration, population, gender, reproductive health, and environment in the framework of caste, class and gender as seen from Western and Indian state points of view.

Ironically, their works produced the solidification of concepts, developed in the new political context. For example, it has become common to relate any study phenomenon (wealth, morbidity, mortality, fertility, family planning, migration, employment, consumption etc.) to caste as a social category. Initially caste was divided into three categories: General, SCs and STs. The category of OBC was introduced later after implementation of Mandal Commission recommendations. Gradually some states added the category of more backward castes. In the General category a subcategory of economically backward castes (EWS) is added further. In some states there is a demand for dividing SCs into two hierarchical

categories. As one unintended consequence of this solidification of caste, these divisions at all India level have already created enormous problem for Indian society and they are going to haunt the Indian spirit for a long time. This strengthened the belief that caste and varna have always been based on birth and those who belong to any of these categories are the descendants of people belonging to the same category for thousands of years. The politicians, planners and even non-government organizations have created a new myth that the caste system was a rigid system and has perpetuated over centuries through domination, exploitation, and oppression. One must read the writings of Radhakamal Mukerjee, G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas, and P. C. Joshi and the reports produced by Anthropological Survey of India to learn that castes have never, been fixed, inherited and completely endogamous circles existing for time immemorial. As a matter of fact, they have changed in relation to their inner character, migration, environment, as well as intersubjectivity; and invention of solidification of caste has done the biggest harm that social scientists and politicians have done to Indian value of universalism. Another sin we have done is that after solidifying castes we have used the Western model of inequality and exploitation on them which was rooted in a different philosophy produced by industry (Gandhi called it Satanic civilization). It must be repeated that it is foolish, sinful and anti-national to think that if one belongs to a particular caste C he/she is linked with a caste of the same name, existing two thousand years ago or before. Everything has changed. Enormous changes occurred in fission and fusion of various groups in the last century itself. Caste names, characteristics, hierarchy, belief systems, occupations, everything has changed. It should be realized that simply adopting Western framework on society has only complicated our problems. Some serious-minded sociologists must learn Sanskrit, read Indian philosophies, and develop a new theory of society as Prof. K. N. Sharma, Prof. A. K. Saran and many others wanted to do but could not succeed due to their context or locational disadvantages. Today, to be heard is to be close to centres of power. In this context the following observations by Prof. Sondhi are of immense importance:

The study of castes has to be undertaken from a thoroughly new angle, viz., that of the influence of political disruption on social and economic transformation. When the caste system is thus studied as a branch of the socio-political history of the people of India, it would be found that the facts of the present day socio-economic and socio-religious system cannot be carried back beyond a certain age. The attempt to understand Vedic, post-Vedic, Buddhist, Maurya, Kushan, Gupta, and even Pala, and Chola societies according to the conventions of the Caste- system known to-day is thoroughly misleading. Under these circumstances both the orthodox metaphysical Doctrine of intellectual 'fitness' as the regulative principle of caste- distinction, as well as the doctrinaire Social- Reform -theory of Equality of Rights are equally irrelevant and un- historical.

Major problems with existing sociology

Sociology in India grew in different universities and institutions in different ways. The issues on which the sociology researchers and teachers wrote were caste, family and kinship, rural and urban societies, processes of change such as westernization, Sanskritization and modernization, development, and social problems. This shows a close link between the state policies and academic issues although thinking on these issues was divided along ideological lines. Social anthropologists, Marxists and positivist survey researchers produced different ideas but none of them could free their mind from what was available from the West. Both the Western schools and Marxists agree that India must start from zero and has nothing to fall back upon. Both denigrated the Indian, universal values model that in fact maintained a living civilization with diversity of groups, congeries, and beliefs for millennia. Both reformers and Westernizers did an immense harm to Indian *Chiti* (a term used by Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay for the continuous flow of Indian values and culture). I too, who worked on minorities, vulnerable populations and development remained a victim of this thought. My training was in statistics and demography, and I was not formally trained in Indian philosophy. Learning about

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya's concept of colonization of mind opened my eyes.

However, in the later part of my career, mostly after reading Gandhi, I started feeling that we are not thinking about ourselves correctly. Our mind is colonized and those who propagated reforms did an immense harm to Indian Chiti (A term coined by Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay in his lectures contained in Integral Humanism, by suggesting that everything was wrong in the India's past and the West is our saviour. With the best intentions for the country, they suffered from enslavement of mind, orientalism, and served the interests of Islamism, British administrators, Christian missionaries, anthropologists, Marxists, development economists and the Westernized scholars of India serving Indian universities. For example, reading on reforms attempted by Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj, particularly Raja Ram Mohan Roy I also believed that India practiced Sati, a heinous tradition in which when a man died his wife was burnt on his funeral pyre. After retirement I started reading Ramacharitmanas with Hindi translation. I found wife of none of those who died in the battle committed Sati. As a matter of fact, lord Rama gives them wisdom and encourages to live religiously in this world of chaos. There is one woman, wife of a demon named Jalandhar who was a living Sati. She was the power of the demon, and this protected him against all enemies. Later on, I found that in the Mahabharat or the Ramayana no woman committed Sati except Madri who burnt herself after learning that she was responsible for death of her husband (through temptation).

It appears that non-Hindus like Shamsuddin (2020), or those under the influence of Westernization, who either do not understand Hinduism or aim at denigrating Hindu religion present it as a coercive practice prevalent in India since the ancient times. Interestingly, there are sixteen Mahasatis among Jains. They are women of high knowledge and excellence. They taught fellow nuns and Sharavikas. Hindus remember and often worship five Satis: Sati, Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, and Arundhati. None of them is known for coercively thrown on the

funeral pyre of her husband. They are all known for the knowledge of truth and practice of it. The knowledge and practice made them so powerful that Savitri could give life to her husband after his death from an accident. Ansuya who is considered to be among the Mahasatis was so chaste, powerful and knowledgeable that when Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh came to test her power she converted them into infants and served them food. Most Hindus read such stories from religious literature and tell the next generation (these stories are part of oral tradition). Yes, it makes sense to equate Sati with Jauhar among Rajputs of Rajasthan where after the Rajput kings were killed by barbaric invaders their wives committed collective suicide to protect their virtuous character.

Ramacharitmanas was written centuries before the life of Raja Ram Mohan Roy then why there is no mention of any Sati as a wife of a man to be burnt on the funeral pyre. The practice to which Roy mentioned may have been a localized practice in some parts of India and existed in a historical context. Then the issue is: how did it arise and what was the internal response of Indian society and religion to it. This happened through synecdoche: attributing to whole India or Hindu religion when an inhuman practice was observed in any part of the country. I was attracted towards Ananda Coomaraswamy and found that modernizers induced a wrong meaning to Indian terms. This strengthened my belief that Sati means commitment to truth which is the most powerful achievement of a Sadhak and if widow burning was practiced in India as Roy suggested it may have been a local phenomenon, here and there, but was inconsistent with the ideas of Indian philosophical tradition and Indian religions (in brief Hindu religion). Is it not strange that Ramacharitmanas which is cited for caste inequality and discrimination against lower castes is a book based on preachings of Adi guru to his wife, i.e., man to woman, and a lower bird (that could metaphorically mean a man from a lower class (Kakbhushundi) to that from a more evolved bird (Garud). In the same book Muni Vashishtha says that priesthood (the occupation of a Brhmin) is the lowest occupation and he had accepted it only after

hearing that God has incarnated in Ayodhya in the form of Ram. The book also makes fun of recitation of religious books by the groups of reciters of Vedas. The book has a social message: “keeping Truth/God in mind live with passion, harmony, duties and happiness” – a message very similar to the message of the Gita. If Radhakamal Mukerjee proposed a reading of Ashtavakragita to understand the positivistic and normative aspects of Indian society I would propose a reading of Ramacharimanas (and similar constructions in other native languages). Dr. Ambedkar understood the distinction between religion and society most vividly and that is why he could pronounce that communism is superior to capitalism and Buddhism is superior to communism. To me Buddhism, Sanatan, Hindu (in our times) carry the same message at a deeper level. When the popular Ramaraksha Stot says that Ram is the garden of Kalpvrikshas (Kalpvriksha is a mythological tree in whose shade all desires are fulfilled) indirectly, it presents a Buddhist preaching of non-desire because a man of desires can never be happy if his desires are constantly fulfilled. The Gita, The Ramayana, and Buddhism all say the same thing in different words for different classes of people.

Many outsiders have said that Hindu religion promotes patriarchy. This is a belief, far from truth. Regarding women’s status Al Biruni (973 – after 1050), an Iranian traveller, says: “Men take advice of woman in all consultations and emergencies.” Swamy Dayanand shows convincingly that in India men and women respected each other. As Ulrich Beck argued in his book *The Risk*, women’s position falls with the advent of urbanization and industrialization. In stable agricultural society they had a place of equality. Explaining the relatively low fertility in India Gandhi had said that that was because in India women had greater autonomy than elsewhere. It may be noted that in early sociological writings Louis Dumont and David Pocock argued for building a sociology based on connection between Indology and sociology, but the idea was soon given up. Indian sociology took a reverse direction and can be summarized in the form of the argument of Pradip Kumar Bose (2023) that emergence of

Indian society must be seen in a historical perspective rather than Indological perspective. The right approach would be somewhere in the middle of the two positions.

An endogenous or Hindu sociology

In a paper on religions and ethnic groups, Mary Searle-Chatterjee (2000) says:

- 1) that a ‘Hindu’ identity is an encompassing one to which other identities of class, caste, gender, etc are subordinate;
- 2) that bearers of that identity share a distinct culture, despite variation, and have common interests;
- 3) that ‘Hinduism’ is a phenomenon which can be understood largely sui generis, and in isolation from political and economic processes and conflicts (see section 9);
- 4) that ‘Hinduism’ is primarily a culture, associated with a particular group of people, Indians, and with a particular country, India. This is a claim of great political import to be discussed further (see section 9). It implies that Muslims and Christians cannot be true Indians and cannot therefore deserve the protections of full Indian citizenship.

From my perspective this is based on a wrong understanding of Hindu culture. First of all, the sense in which I use the term Hindu is not the same as the dominant concepts of Hinduism in the present-day popular discourse. As a matter of fact, my concept of Hinduism can be used to provide a critique of the dominant concepts of Hinduism. My concept is similar to one that was used by Binoy Kumar Sarkar and Radhakamal Mukerjee. For me Hinduism is not a solidified and static concept which has a power relationship with class, caste, gender etc. or which refers to any homogenized culture. It interacts with socioeconomic processes and cannot be confined to geographic India. In the later part of nineteenth century and in the first part of the twentieth century, as available in the writings of Sarkar and Mukerjee, and later articulated by Gandhi it’s a dynamic and evolving dream of a perfect society, to be realized for the progress of mankind. It provides

a common and integral vision of society to which all social groups and classes contribute in the interest of the world. As best articulated by Sarkar it focuses on human interests. In 12th shloka of the second chapter, Manusmriti says that dharma has four characteristics: consistency with Vedas, Smritis, good conduct, and pleasant or acceptable to self. Tulsidas was only echoing this Shloka by saying that his work contains what is consistent with Vedas and Lok. Traditions like Arya Samaj and Gayatri Parivar accept the authority of Vedas and not of hierarchical thinking available elsewhere. There is an indication in Manusmriti itself that a Brahmin can degrade to Shudra and a Shudra can rise to Brahman. Finally, even if there is a doubt that implementation of Manusmriti may lead to inequality we can certainly abandon it and go to Ishopanishad that says that all are pervaded by God. This is the true meaning of Hindu as an evolutionary thought.

Manusmriti is most abused of all the writings on hierarchy which is not true. Even according to Ambedkar, given the state of communication technology and the nature of Indian polity, when Manu wrote the Smriti it was not possible to implement its codes in all parts of India. Even today Indian government finds it difficult to implement it when a new law, such as the law for fixing minimum age, is enacted, or when the Supreme Court says that same sex relationship is decriminalized. People continue to arrange for daughter's marriage below the age of 18 and society continues to see same sex relationship as a disease. He may have codified the practices that started developing under certain social and political conditions. In other parts of India there was no compulsion on the rulers to implement the codes of Manu. Accordingly, there were multiple Smritis. Moreover, it was said that to judge an action both Vedas and Smritis must be considered. There were many Smritis which differed in structure, language, and philosophy. What is against Vedas (in both spiritual and positivistic sense) cannot be accepted even if mentioned in Smritis. No wonder poets like Tulsidas ignore Smritis and support their works based on Vedas, other scriptures, the Ramayan, mythologies and what is

acceptable to self. Anyone source alone cannot be treated as authoritative. If anything is against the acceptability of self and morality it cannot be promoted simply because it is part of any text. The biggest fraud against Hinduism is to associate caste with it although the foreign writers and travellers said that the caste system of India was like what was found in other societies in those days.

The writing from Hindu perspective, should study what happened to caste with changes in the environmental and political conditions. Most, including Marxist writers agree that for a long time India practiced collective mode of production. They believed that all land belongs to God.

A quote from Ramkrishna Mukherjee:

“As later admitted by Lord Bentinck (1829), this unified strength of the Indian peasants, artisans, and traders under the village community system was shattered by introducing the 'zamindari' system. This system was first introduced in 1793 in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (the 'subah' of Bengal) as the 'Permanent Settlement of Land', and in due course spread all over India.”

It is not acceptable to common sense that the social hierarchy in the collectivistic mode of production was same as practiced after the implementation of zamindari system. As late as 1999, Ramkrishna Mukherjee, said that caste per se is not found anywhere.

Independence of social structure and religion

The mistake that most people writing or speaking on India made was to draw inferences about religion from social practices or to say that for the backwardness of India its culture (not the colonial past) was responsible. Can they answer: if India was always in a backward state why would outsiders invade India from different directions and why did Indian religions spread to far east and far west countries. We must understand that social practices have a historical, ecological, and political context. Influenced by Westernization, Christianity, and Islam if the purpose is to find fault in Indian religion(s) then this

approach is understandable, but one must understand that religions live longer than social practices. All countries practicing diverse religions are unequal and inequality is not an inevitable part of Hindu religion. It has become fashionable among the enemies of Hindus to say that according to Hindus Brahmins are equated to mouth, Kshatriyas to arms, Vaishyas to stomach and Shudras to legs of God, implying that Brahmins are given a superior status. The religious injunctions need a serious interpretation. Are legs dispensable? How will one feel if any of his leg is broken and he is given sweets to eat? Can one live on mouth alone, or arms alone? Neither Mund nor Rund has a living man's status. Which other societies lived without a class of workers, and with rulers and traders alone? Unfortunately, in the political noise the real meaning of the religious injunctions and messages is lost. It must be revived. The Upanishadic idea or the spiritual idea of Ashtravakragita or other spiritual works establishes unity and equality of all. Unlike Christianity and Islam God of Indians exist in the whole creation (and is not outside the creation. How can it justify inequality then. One must understand that there is a long tradition of religious gurus and movements which attacked all forms of social illnesses remaining within the fold of Sanatan/Vaidik religion. Inequality has existed not because of but despite of an egalitarian religion. Their works were deliberately downplayed and the works of those anthropologists, missionaries, development experts and administrators who asserted that India is backward, and its backwardness is due to culture were promoted.

It must be recognized that unlike in several other countries and their religions among Hindus ontology, epistemology and axiology are not derived from the same source. For example, in Islam, the Holy Quran is a book that discusses the nature of ultimate reality and how to comprehend that but also how to live (ethics). The Gita does not give a clear indication of how to live. It must be interpreted. Basically, it talks of three different perspectives, action frame and behaviour – Sat, Rajas and Tamas – leaving it to the learner to decide what course to follow. Of course, it talks about the different consequences of different

actions. If you eat Tamasik food, you develop Tamasik nature. Also, people with Tamasik nature like Tamasik food.

Core of Sanatan

Whether you read the Shakt literature, Upanishads, various Puranas or Smritis, one thing becomes very clear that for Hindus the reality is divided into Pratyaksh and Apratyaksh; the former is based on sense perceptions and the latter is beyond perceptions, but it cannot be known without control of sense perceptions and various organs of body. The aim of life is defined at two levels: happiness in the world and liberation. They require two different approaches: Avidya for the world and Vidya for liberation and mortality. Avidya helps in Bhukti (happily existing in the world) and Mukti (liberation from birth and death or falling into worldly trap again and again, i.e., cycles of pleasure and pain in this life itself). Interestingly, the karma theory that all outcomes have cause(s) is common to most traditions developed in India. This is undoubtedly a superior theory of what in modern sociological terms can be called agency. But the Gita must be put above all Smritis (there were variety of Smritis promoted by different authors). No doubt social rules need to be perfected but only an egalitarian religion like Hindu can achieve this.

Where should we go now?

Based on the above, I would say that we need to study philosophy and we need to understand the real nature of our religion. We need to raise new questions whose answers have potential to contribute to nationalism, integration, equality. and happiness, and as Gandhiji said pave the way for world peace. To him Indian spiritual development would pave the way for the spiritual development to the world.

To quote Thakur (2012):

In his search for an Indian alternative, Mukerjee frequently refers to the institutional framework of the Indian villages relating to (a) property structure in land and other village commons such as the irrigation channels, pastures, and cremation grounds, and (b) a

culture of mutual aid and reciprocity, and the attendant communitarian forms of labour organisation. These peculiarities of the Indian village community emphasising community maintenance of natural resources and assets and the incorporation of peasants, artisans, labourers, and servicing castes in a holistic framework, according to him, arose as a response to economic necessity under specific Asian geographical and ecological conditions. These contingent necessities were further strengthened by the moral and ethical climate of these societies.

This Hindu sociology is based on dharma, sangha, and transcendental values. To me our students need to answer:

1. Why is the condition of sociology departments so pathetic today? Why have our universities failed to produce more social scientists of the stature of Radha Kamal Mukerjee, D. P. Mukerjee. and G. S. Ghurye? Is this not even a goal to be achieved anymore?
2. Why do we feel shy of combining sociology with Indian spiritual tradition and values?
3. Why do Indianists remain politically silent when certain groups and communities are bent on destroying the framework of values and Indianism by adopting a fixed, Western concepts to solidify social reality?
4. Why haven't we evolved a framework of combining endogenous knowledge systems, identities, justice, integrationist perspective, and the national interests?
5. Why do we sociologists not show a new institutional framework based on Indian values, samata (equality and harmony) and growth to democratic reforms in place of working for implementation of government policies and using the conceptual and methodological frameworks set by outside agencies and state?

It is obvious that to be sensitive to above questions is to change ourselves. Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee changed himself and adopted Indian food, Indian dress, and Indian lifestyle. A Westernized scholar could not have written comments on Ashtavakragita – the song of self-supreme. We need to transform ourselves to transform sociology is the

message that we learn from Prof. Radhakamal Mukerjee. What shape would indigenous sociology take is not so vivid. Yet one would have to assert against binaries of:

- Science and sociology
- Empiricism and mysticism
- Experimental method and experiential, moral, and objective facts as emphasized by Gandhi. For Gandhi experiential truth was far superior to truth propagated by authorities and books. Buddha said the same. Same thing is found in the life of Swamy Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swamy Dayanand and many reformers. Time has come when sociologists should transform them, their methodologies, research questions and discourse.
- Introducing papers on indigenous knowledge systems, planning from the top and planning for the masses, Indian and Western mathematical modelling and computer simulation
- Nationalism, and internationalism
- A Vedantic perspective on the part and the whole. If we cannot read Sanskrit we should at lead read Ramacharitmanas with simple Hindi translation.

There is a need to reconstruct Hindu sociology on the lines suggested by Binoy Kumar Sarkar, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Radhakamal Mukerjee, K. N. Sharma and A. K. Saran. Sociology needs to be combined again with Indology and must be freed from Orientalist paradigm, state codification and sheer positivism. If we fail to do this and allow state and empirical sociologists to solidify codified categories used by state, India is finished. There are already tendencies that the caste, tribal and religious categories are being promoted as nationalities and as different ethnic groups which came to India (a no man's land) at different times and from different directions. They are encouraged to pursue their own political interests even at the cost of common framework of Indian culture and civilization. This tendency has to be arrested. In sum I wish to assert a need to write Indian sociology in the framework of Vedic universal values which are reflected in various forms in spiritual, religious, and literary works in

different languages of India. It must be realized that only Indian tradition provides a set of inclusive/universal values that no other tradition does.

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Dr. Arun Kumar Sharma is former Professor of Sociology, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Email: 4aksharma@gmail.com; arunk@iitk.ac.in
