

System of Production-

Distribution and consumption

Economic System

“Economic system is designed to satisfy material wants of the people to organic production, to control distribution and to determine the rights and claims ownership within the community.”(Ralph Piddington)

Economic organization is a type of social action. It involves the combination of various kinds of human services with one another and with non-human goods on such a way that they serve given ends. (Raymond firth)

“It consists of the ordering and organization of human relations and human comforts in order to procure as many of the necessities of day- to-day life as possible with the expenditure of minimum efforts. It is attempted to secure the maximum satisfaction possible through adapting limited measures to unlimited ends (needs) in an organized manner”.

(D.N.Majumdar and T.N. Madan, An introduction of Social Anthropology, Bombay, 1970, P.188). “All societies have structured arrangements to provide the material means of individual and community live. It is these structured rules that

we call an economic system.” (George Dalton, Economic Anthropology and Development, Basic Books, New York, 1971, p.89)

Economic system improves two things
The mode and structure of production and its relation and the process of distribution existing and operating in a given socio- political set up. The mode of production implies technique and organization of economic activities relating to production. The structure of production relation means social class relation in the performance of production activities and in the process of distribution between different social classes.

The concept and meaning of economic system relating to trials is defined in general economic theories in this manner: Economic System implies two things: the mode and structure of production and its relations, and the process of distribution existing and operating in a given socio – political set up. The mode of production implies technique and organization of economic activities relating to production. The structure of production relation means social class relations in the performance of production

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Hunting and gathering:

Humans were nomadic hunters and gatherers until 800BC and did not work as a separate sphere of life. Sustenance activity such as gathering food day-long and not distinguished from leisure time. Technology was very simple and included lodged poles, bone needles, stone cutters, and scrappers, skills were commonly shared and every individual could perform most of the task of the entire group. Division of labour was rudimentary where the young accompanied the elders and helped them in their work, in turn, receiving training, which is equivalent to modern day on the job training.

In the early days, division of labour was gender-based keeping in mind and biological differences. However the gathered food was equitably distributed among all. There were few 'true specialists' in these societies although some members assumed the roles of leaders. Hunger and social pressure to participate were

the motivation to work. In the Andaman Islanders, anthropologist A.Radcliffe Brown describes these societal norms as follows: “Should a man shrink these obligations, nothing would be said to him, unless he were a young unmarried man and he will be given food by others, but he would find himself occupying a position of inferiority in the camp, and would entirely lose the esteem of his fellows”.

The tribes who principally depend on food collecting and hunting come under this type. This mode of livelihood of the earliest times still continues in a few tribes who usually depend on the existence of some surpassing wild roots, fruits, and other palatable food, e.g. Sag and Kanda (leaves and fruits).

The forest hunting type tribes have mainly three resources of economy which vary according to the season, cycle and area.

- A. food gathering

- B. gathering and

- C. fishing

These tribes are distributed all over India, in different states and in small pockets.

The socio-economic structure in tribal communities is markedly different from that of the non-tribals or advanced groups. They have a very simple technology which forms well with their ecological surroundings and conservative outlook. Their economy can be said to be of subsistence type. They work only to sustain themselves and live on marginal economy. Their main occupation is food gathering to industrial labour which present their overlapping economic stage the broader frame work of the stage of economy. They are culturally a social unit at the same time enterpriser and worker as well as producer and consumer. The system of distribution is link to the barter system or the mutual exchange or the lease monetary system. The man who exerts to acquire the material means of existence by performing some duties to meet the basic needs of life, viz. food, shelter and clothes and social needs like material for rites – de- passage, religious performance and other aspects of community life is termed as 'economic man'. He works to get his lively hood through his economic performances. The individual operating as a member of society in terms of the culture of his group is the economic unit. In a marginal economy one group of people practices different types of occupations at one time for their livelihood. "the fact that the tribe

uses all kind of occupations eke out its subsistence and combines hunting with honey gathering lumbering with chase, shifting cultivation with domestication of animals shows the complexity of economic subsistence in the lower culture". (Majumdar, 1961: 139)

The main stages of economic development have been characterized as four,

- 1) Hunting
- 2) Food gathering
- 3) Pastoral
- 4) Agricultural, and Technological.

The first and foremost characteristic of the tribal economy is the close relationship between their economic life and the natural environment or habitat which is in general the forest, exception to this are the tribals inhabiting in islands. They depend on sea produce like fish. The coconut complex of Nicobarese as has been observed by Vidyarthi (1971) reflects the extent of their forest based economy. The tribals obtain their numerous requirement from the area they inhabit with the help of most simple implements And without any technological aid from outside. Nothing seems to escape them – edible roots, fruits, vegetables, flower and honey, insects, fish, pigeons, cock and other birds, monkeys, hares pigs etc. The Birhors of Bihar, the Chenchus of

Andhra Pradesh, the Juangs of Orissa, the Kadars of Kearla, the Paliyans and Panians of Tamilnadu etc depends on the forest, and in these areas the flora and fauna predominates as the primary source of food. For their livelihood the Birhors of Chotangapur depends to the extent of five-sixths and hill cultivator. Malers of Santhal Pargana to the extent of three- fifths on what is available in the forest. Even the agriculturist tribes like the Munda, Oraon and the Ho of Chotanagpur depend on the forest, to the extent of nearly half(46%) of their economy.(Ray, 1967 : 98).

The mode of production of the tribal people is styled “familial” or “domestic”.

The family, in the tribal economy, is a unit of production. It is directly engaged in the economic process and is largely in control of it. All the members of the family whether husband or wife, parents or children together form the production unit. The location of labour and produce and decisions are for the most part domestic stipulations and productions is geared to familial requirements ie; they produce what they need. Yet it never means that the familial group is self- sufficient. They get the co-operation of individuals of other households too. The family is constituted for production by age groups and is equipped to govern production by

possession of the necessary tools that are easily made and skills are that are common and uncomplicated. The children set out in jungle with their cattle herd. Some of them accompany them other or sister to help in digging out the roots or collection of firewoods or in picking up the mahua flowers or certain fruits in the nearby jungles. The youth form the axis of familial production. They take part in their agricultural operation. i.e., preparing the fields, sowing, harvesting or in some type of forest operation like collection of minor forest produce or in fishing or hunting, etc. In a Ho family of Kolhan, the children graze their life stock, the young men work in their fields and forest, the young females keep themselves busy in their daily domestic chores apart from transplanting paddy, harvesting the crop and repairing the Khalihan. The old men stay at home and at times was the Khalilhan. The whole family works for its livelihood. The Kurwa forest is cut down by the young men, cleared by men and women and then sown and watched by the whole family. The hunting and food gathering tribes like the Birhor also set out for materials like fibre, chop, etc., with their families. The artisan tribe Mahali is engaged in basket making. The skill is transmitted from the father to the son. Husband, wife and their children all

keep themselves attached to the work, big baskets are mainly made by the male. The Mahali female prepares winnowing fans and matlining. The children help their mothers in their domestic chores. Co-operation of kinsmen and neighbors, in fact, is there. When on male Mahali finds himself unfit to visit the weekly market his kinsmen comes and help him by taking his baskets and other commodities to the market for the sale.

The family is often unitary in its productive process so that the whole job from extraction of natural resources to procurement of the consumables goods is done by the family itself. The family is entitled and empowered to act as an autonomous unit. In the Birhors the husband and wife with their children enter the forest in a group. They procure fibers, finish them and then prepare a variety of ropes. All this is done on their own family level. They return in two or three days with finished goods and raw materials enough to work for the remaining days for the week.

The pattern of labour in the tribal family is based on a well organized division of labour according to sex and age. The sex wise division of labour is more prominent in them and the women are considered physically weak by the male folk. Both the male and female folk work

accordingly to their physical capacity. The boys and girls are allotted different jobs suited to their age.

Agrarian

Agriculture started with harvesting wild grains and grew with the development of techniques to increase the yield of these plants. Development of agriculture and domestication of animals brought several change in the organization of the societies. All members no longer played the same role as people performed specialized activities. If some were warriors, others became priests and eventually occupied other official positions. However, social life was almost same as during the hunting societies. The relative position of men and women also underwent change. (Narendar Singh, 2012 Industrial Sociology)

A.R. Desai (2013) Rural Sociology in India.
(P.23)

Rural society is based predominantly on agriculture. Land is the basic means of

production in the countryside. Land is a part of Nature, though made arable by human labour, From land , the rural people produce, by means of technique and their labour power, such a variety of agrarian products as food, cotton, jute, tea, coffee, tobacco and others.

The level of production and the way in which the product are distributed among the different strata of a society , determine the level of the material prosperity of the society as whole and of the various socioeconomic groups comprising it. In India the primitive nature of agriculture, the resultant low level of agricultural production and the specific types of land relations which determine the differing shares of agricultural products among the social groups composing the rural society, explain the general poverty of the rural people, their hierarchic gradation into a pyramidal system of socio economic groups and, further their distinct social institutions and cultural backwardness. In pre- British India village agriculture mainly produced for meeting the needs of the village population. This subsistence village agricultural economy was transformed into a market economy during the British period.

There is a third and a new conception of the objective of agricultural production. According to it, not only should agriculture produce to

meet the needs of the community but also it should be adapted to the consciously assessed needs of the total community.

The history of agriculture reveals that a variety of implements have been employed by rural communities.

- 1) Hoe culture : During this phase of man kind's existence, even the plough had not been invented. It was the early stage of agricultural when it was carried on only through the Hoe operated by the human hand.
- 2) Plough culture: During this historical phase man invented the plough. Being technically superior to the Hoe the plough enabled the agricultural community to produce more with the expenditure of the same of amount of human labour power.
- 3) The higher technical cultural phase of tractors and fertilizers; the invention of power- driven machinery in modern times resulted into the production of such amazing labour- saving agricultural machines as tractors and fertilizers. The productivity of the labour of the agriculturist and hence the volume of agricultural products have increased in production to the advance of agricultural technique. The technique of the

production also determines the division of labour among the members of a society actually engaged in the production process. This results in the emergence of various working groups, each of them attending to a particular function in production.

Where agriculture is based on the plough, the division of labour is limited. The whole process of agricultural production in various stages is carried on by a peasant family on the basis of the simple and restricted division of labour among the members. In contrast to this where agriculture is carried on by means of tractors and fertilizers, we have not only a larger physical unit of agriculture (land) but also a great technical division of labour.

The nature of land relations determines the share of various socio economic groups associated with agriculture in the total agricultural wealth. For instance, in the zamindari aria, the zamindar receives by far the larger share of agricultural income than the cultivating tenant. The staggering disparity between the colossal income of the former and the meager income of the later is basically due to the

zamindar type of land relations. Further, the agrarian economy is based up on a specific type of land relations has its own logic, its own law of development. Hence we find that the general tendency of agrarian economic development in the zaminadari zone is to accentuate economic contrast. The cultivating tenant, in spite of a series of reforms, is being increasingly impoverished. Where full-fledged capitalist agriculture exists a wage worker gets from the capitalist owner of land a wage determined by the state of the labour market. Thus land relations determine the mode of distribution of the agricultural wealth among the various sections of the rural population just as technique determines the volume that wealth.

Industrial

Industry means application or utilization of tools in order to achieve output. Hence, Industry can be said to be as old as mankind is industrious because he is intelligent. The earliest type of industry is the simple

transformative industry represented by early hunters and agriculturalist.

The tools used by the transformative industry were simple- bows, arrows and spears for hunting; plough and hoe for cultivating fields. Urban areas were small and people worked as artisans, tradesmen, common labourers, servants and domestics. Most of the workforce were dispersed, working as tenant farmers or peasants on small plots of land; spinning thread or weaving cloth at home, or in a small workshop with other craftsmen or even out on the streets, peddling goods.

Small local industry originated in the manorial system where payments to the estate sometimes included items like cloth, building materials, and ironware. The serf and the villager paid fixed dues but in addition to those, gave personal items as well for the use of lands and the lord's mill.

The Industrial Revolution made the country the wealthiest nation of the world. The revolution was the result of many fundamental, interrelated changes that transformed 'agricultural economic into industrial ones'. The most immediate changes were in the nature of production-what was produced, where and how. The Industrial revolution replaced manual labour by machines; goods that had

traditionally been made in the home or in small workshop began to be manufactured in the factory. Productivity and technical efficiency grew dramatically with a scientific and practical knowledge to the manufacturing process and efficiency was enhanced when large group of business enterprises were located within a limited area. The Industrial Revolution led to the growth of cities as people moved from rural areas into urban communities in search of work. Large portion of the population workers, particularly the women and children, were taken out of the familiar environment of the home and placed in the new impersonal factory, which imposed regularity, a routine, and monotony that was quite unlike the pre-industrial rhythms of work.

The overall amount of goods and services produced expanded dramatically, and the proportion of capital invested per worker grew. New groups of investors, businesspeople, and managers took financial risks and reaped great rewards. This unprecedented growth and profit was another social change that occurred during the Industrial revolution.