

## **Chapter I**

### **Concept and Theory**

Objective of this very beginning chapter is to deal with concept and theory of community at both micro and macro level. Conceptualisation and contextualisation of community and identity are differently carved out. This formative chapter also takes cognisance of three important theories to understand relevance of community and identity in profundity in ascending order.

#### **Concept of Community Text and Context**

At the outset and from genesis community is simple, soberness and steward. Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2009) defines community a group of people living together in one place especially one practicing common ownership and a place considered together with its inhabitants: a rural community<sup>1</sup>. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) mentions community is the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group or nationality.<sup>2</sup> To Ferdinand Toennies (1974) *gemeinschaft* and

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<sup>1</sup>. Concise Oxford English Dictionary (2009) (11<sup>th</sup> Edition) p.289

<sup>2</sup>. Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) (3rd Edition) p. 279

*gesellschaft* uncovers community and association as distinct and inseparable to each other. MacIver and Page (2006) defines community in similar manner. T.B Bottomore (1975) focuses upon community and its necessity at every moment of human life<sup>3</sup>. Community has been among ‘the most fundamental and far-reaching of sociology unit idea’<sup>4</sup>. Gusfield (1975) visualises difference between community and society is most instrumental framework following that scholars from sociology take interest to focus upon man-society interaction and change<sup>5</sup>. For P Bourdieu (1987) social class and group often overlap as power of knowledge dominates and creates further problem<sup>6</sup>.

Further, the term community does not imply simpleness and homogeneousness as it appears<sup>7</sup>. Unlike classical orientation and normative understanding, community in present-contemporary society is complex, perplex, problematic and loaded with value biasness. Community study is also heuristic as it is often tagged with identity, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, culture and political

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<sup>3</sup>. Please see work of Toennies (1974), MacIver and Page (2006) and T.B Bottomore (1975) for detail

<sup>4</sup>. R Nisbet, *Sociological Tradition* (1967), London: Heinemann, P-10

<sup>5</sup>. J.R Gusfield, *Community: A Critical Reader* (1975), Oxford, Basil, pp-1-5

<sup>6</sup>. Pierre Bourdieu, What makes a social class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups, *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, 1978, pp-8-9.

<sup>7</sup>. See articles of SS Jodhka, Carol Upadhya, Sasheej Hegde and Ravinder Kaur in *Community and Identity: Contemporary Discourses on Culture and Politics in India* (2001), edited by SS Jodhka, Sage, New Delhi

economy<sup>8</sup>. Community study is more interdependent than mere independent: complementarity and contradiction augment its value association. Existence of community life at micro-regional level having macro significance is static and stake. More study of community also now does not endear scholars especially sociologists and social anthropologists, because present society is bent upon value-fluidity in other related area of study<sup>9</sup>. Rapid penetration and prevalence of LPG and subsequent inconsistency in human value possibly neglected most important institution community to rare study. Present-contemporary-capitalist society and its governing value are indeed loathe with stigma and stereotype of not mere counter-production but lot more avenues for upcoming tomorrow's young generation<sup>10</sup>.

In Indian context, notable community study is always related to village, because from beginning mainstay of humankind relied upon village only. Study of Munro, C.T Metcalfe, S H. Maine, Karl Marx and Boden-Powell is always regarded as crucial reference whenever one wants to undertake any study of village community in India. Because Indian village and community study initially started late eighteen century with general focus on land holding and tenure pattern equipped with ancient and medieval

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<sup>8</sup>. Ibid, pp.13-31

<sup>9</sup>.Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1995), Verso, London, pp-9-36.

<sup>10</sup>. Ibid, p-47

India<sup>11</sup>. As yet India is a citadel of village and possibly book-view and field-view, though often polar opposite, sometimes help synchronisation vis-à-vis diachronisation in community study in India. M.N. Srinivas's India's villages (1955), McKim Marriott's village India (1955), D.N. Majumdar's rural profile (1955) and S. C. Dube's Indian village (1955) works are noteworthy account of village community in India<sup>12</sup>. Communities in post-British or postcolonial societies especially in India are considered as some very effective agents obtaining political practice<sup>13</sup>.

Village community study of late attained a neo-sanctity and shape particularly in twentieth century around 1960 and afterward. In view of earlier kinds of studies, Yogendra Singh (1967), Andre Beteille (1965, 1974), A. R. Desai (1969), K.L. Sharma (1980), Oscar Lewis (1965), B.S. Cohn (1968), Milton Singer (1972), David G. Mandelbaum (1972), Louis Dumont (1972) and others developed different pattern of understanding about complex village community<sup>14</sup>. Notwithstanding community and identity study centring on poverty, illiteracy, lack of health, bereft of civic amenity and other burning issues becomes rather unavoidable vis-a-vis

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<sup>11</sup>. K L Sharma, Indian Society (1990) pp-60-61

<sup>12</sup>. Please see these comprehensive account of study of village and community in work of these scholars.

<sup>13</sup>. Partha Chatterjee 'Community in the East', Economic and Political Weekly, 33(6), pp-281-282.

<sup>14</sup>. These studies reflect vivacity of village community in India.

indispensable because its revisit may end people living in isolation, exclusion and marginalisation<sup>15</sup>.

In accordance of great variation in conceptualisation as well as contextualisation and with due importance of Gandhian methodology, Nehruvian socialist economy and modern-post-modern theories, community study presently but invariably becomes actual and potentially vibrant to deal with, understand and address deep rooted problem and inherent contradiction in perplex-difficult social structure. 'Community structuralism' pervades everywhere and chains of reciprocal-relationship does not cease to any extent at all. Indeed community is a mirror to reflect overt and covert aspect of social structure. Therefore, the present study intends to adopt a lesser-known but very important Dheyant-Rajbanshi community in a region-specificity to understand its inter-relationship with wider social structure and social organisation in holistic perspective. To develop more and adequate understanding about the community, in this study major three theories viz. (1) Evolutionary (2) Structuration and (3) Marxist are selected, which may unravel history and unknown facets of Dheyant-Rajbanshi community in present-contemporary-capitalist society *per se*.

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<sup>15</sup>. Nirakar Mallick and Suranjan Das 'Community in Flux: Study of Patni in Cachar District of Assam' in International Research Journal of Social Sciences (2012), 1:3, Pp. 41-44

## **Evolutionary Theory A Community in Entirety**

This theory is vast as well as very intriguing too. What constitutes exact facet of evolution is difficult to ascertain not today alone, but much earlier era of successive growth or development of society. Evolution is often used in wider or vague sense according to convenience. Because scholars pioneering the theory hailed from divergent background and applied different kinds of idea, ideology and matter to subsequently, develop the theory surprisingly in their own method. Main architects of the theory Auguste Comte, E.B Tylor, Max Muller, L.H Morgan and to certain extent Herbert Spencer specified the theory in specificity of context or situation only. Unilineal order, multilinear change and programmatic progress ally with religion, culture and sacred text were normally used by them to vouch upon evolution of society<sup>16</sup>.

Comtean evolution is simple yet juxtaposition in itself. His scientific positivism conjoins with evolution as his method is based on observation, experimentation, comparison and historical antecedence. He said social evolution acquires concreteness with drift of time as such society undergoes three successive stage—theological, metaphysical and positive—each stage often and regularly gets subsumed by higher stage of development. So fundamental binding of every society is to pass and

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<sup>16</sup>.A New Dictionary of Sociology, ed. by G. Duncan Mitchell (1987), London, Routledge, P-74

progress through universal three stages of development i.e. from low to middle to high to finally reach at scientific-industrial society<sup>17</sup>.

E. B Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* (1871) gives a broad convergence of evolution especially originating with culture. For him, culture is everything and all-powerful and is acquired by man as a member of society. He says doctrine of growth, development and survival are continuous and relics of mighty cultural past. Animism forms basis of development and origin of primitive religion as it has a large advantage in present societal formation. Indeed, working on diversity of aspects of culture, for Tylor, principal criteria of culture growth are development of industrial arts, scientific input, religion type, size of social and political organisation and other allied artifacts<sup>18</sup>.

Max Muller, who studied classical Sanskrit and done extensive as well as intensive study of Rig-Veda to popularly coin the word naturism, was of the view that language development is always in relation to cultural development<sup>19</sup>. Study of language is unequivocally linked with study of culture and development of language is tie up with belief. To him gods

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<sup>17</sup>. Auguste Comte, 'The process of civilisation in thee stages' in A. Etzioni and E. E Halevy (eds.), *Social Change*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, pp-18-19

<sup>18</sup>. E. B Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (Vol. I and II), 1871, Pp. 6-7

<sup>19</sup>. en. wikipedia.org and assessed in [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) on April 1, 2015

and Rig-Veda are active forces of nature and invention of gods originated as words constructed to express abstract ideas, but transformed into imagined personalities<sup>20</sup>. So according to Max Muller, naturism is personification of Veda, Sanskrit text, language, religion and culture, and all these evolve to a transform society from one stage to another on regular basis.

Lewis Henry Morgan discussed evolution of society in unilinear process starting from savagery to barbarism to civilisation<sup>21</sup>. In his account early savagery stage of society passed through middle barbarism stage to the final civilised development of society were characterised by gradual drift and development in value, institution and other allied human activities, which helped to establish new avenue to strengthen evolution process. Hence, Morgan's evolution is exemplification of incessant and indisputable five different sequences of change in life, religion and family from the oldest primordial consanguine (promiscuity), intermarriage between several sisters and brother (polyandry and polygyny overlapping), pairing (between parties), polygyny and to the latest monogamy<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup>. Ibid

<sup>21</sup>. L. H. Morgan, Ancient Society, KP Bagchi and Company, Calcutta, 1996, Pp. 9-12

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid, Pp. 393-394



To Herbert Spencer, all universal phenomena like inorganic, organic and supra-organic are subject to successive growth and natural law of evolution<sup>23</sup>. To him, evolution of all phenomena lie with analogy of organism and society wherein dual stage of evolution is seen viz. homogeneity to heterogeneity, uniform to multiform and simple to compound<sup>24</sup>. In views of Spencer, therefore evolution is immutable, structural and universal and remains uncontrolled by any stringent force of human control.

### **Marxist Theory Vital and Burning**

The theory remains most vital vis-à-vis vibrant, as it compares past and present history and suffering of humankind universally. It is not a mere theory which talks and deals with normative phenomena of society in stereotypicality, rather a social fact and more than that a scientific treatise, which only rigorously searches and goes deeper level to investigate genesis of problem of humankind and society in totality<sup>25</sup>. Marxist theory is universal-structural because according to it, fundamental problem of every society remains same not even similar from ancient, feudal to capitalist society. Mode of production and

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<sup>23</sup>. Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology*, 1961, Univ. of Michigan press, Pp. 8-12

<sup>24</sup>. Herbert Spencer, *The Evolution of Societies*, in Etzioni, et all, *ibid*, Pp.10-12

<sup>25</sup>. Shibdas Ghosh, *Selected Works (vol.II)*, SUCI Publication, 1992, p. 1

relation of production is dialectically related as thesis, antithesis and synthesis is law of nature<sup>26</sup>. Fundamental difference between Marxist philosophy and other theory or ideology is Marxism only accepts truth on the basis of experiment, objectivity, history and scientific validity unlike other theories per se<sup>27</sup>. Hence, Marxism is a science and believes in sedulous experiment and verification of observed fact. Marxism is only philosophy correctly trying to constellation of human being and society, free from little man-made and machine-made hierarchy across territorial boundary in direct and explicit framework. The theory further though appears to be most vague for some is the only alternative hope for teeming millions of people, who always are objects of all kinds of exploitation, marginalisation and exclusion<sup>28</sup>. Original tenet of Karl Marx as of now is elaborated and interpreted by many scholars, both Marxist and non-Marxist, at different levels, but Marxism is always standing and striving to notch up with every human activity and society at large. Karl Marx propounded Dialectical-Historical theory with an objective to candidly delineate continuity of contradiction in human suffering structurally over successive age even one stage of society supersedes earlier one. Such a trend is regular and keeps happening form primitive, ancient society, feudal society to

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<sup>26</sup>. Ibid, p.96

<sup>27</sup>. Ibid, Pp.96-98

<sup>28</sup>. Ibid, Pp. 100-105

bourgeoisie, capitalist society. According to Marx, with time elasticity and necessary movement of ancient to feudal to capitalist society one structural phenomenon always remains present that is, all stages of society is always class divided having persistent class antagonism<sup>29</sup>. Shift from one age or stage of society to another higher form does not end inherent class polarisation. Rather over time new class, new condition of oppression and exploitation get manifested. For example from ancient, feudal to capitalist age, every stage is mainly divided on two classes and witnessed a hierarchical-class society having free man and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journey man, oppressor and oppressed and bourgeoisie and proletariat<sup>30</sup>. Ownership of private property, surplus value and state altogether act to stratify society to various class categories. These factors dominate over all societies except stage of socialism and communism. Emergence of private property polarises society and monopolises modern industry – ‘private property as activity for itself says Karl Marx<sup>31</sup>. Further, Marx says that surplus value acts to proliferate interests of capitalist and bourgeoisie, which directly estrange triumphant with deliberate protection of ruling machinery and

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<sup>29</sup>. Karl Marx and Engels, Selected works (vol.I), Foreign Languages Publishing Company, Moscow, 1950, P.33

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid, p.34

<sup>31</sup>. Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844, Foreign Languages Publishing Company, Moscow, 1967, p.93

capitalist who use state and other governing machinery as tool of exploitation, marginalisation, exclusion and poverty triggered alienation<sup>32</sup>.

Again, according to Karl Marx as time passes, rate of exploitation, marginalisation and alienation continue to expand further with active participation of bourgeoisie. In his view:

“Pre-modern industry, under which industrial production was monopolised by close guilds now no longer sufficed for growing want of new, competitive market. Manufacturing system took its place. Guild masters were pushed on one side by manufacturing middle classes; division of labour between different corporate guilds vanished in face of division of labour in each single workshop. Meanwhile, market system kept ever growing and demand ever rising. Even manufacturing no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionised industrial production. Place of manufacture was taken over by giant, ‘Modern industry’, place of industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, leaders of whole industrial armies, modern bourgeois. Because of fast competition and expansion, modern industry has established world market, for that America paved way. Modern industrial market has given an immense development to commerce, navigation; communication by land, on same proportion bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital and encouraged class division down from middle age. So, modern bourgeoisie is itself product of a long course of development after a series of revolution in modes of production and exchange<sup>33</sup>.”

But ironically next development in arena of Marxist thought and discourse is not same, not even similar to certain extent. Owing to fast erosion in scientific value, verified knowledge and over pouring of many-sided theories, concept of a Marxist theory now does not refer to

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<sup>32</sup>. Ibid. p.95

<sup>33</sup>. Op cited

a closely unified and defined approach for social research any more. Indeed, it is employed so widely that it started to lose its total meaning. Ambiguity of term stems from multiplicity of interpretations of work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels by several Marxists<sup>34</sup>. Now many schools of Marxism are in force and they are in competition with each other to spread popularity, establish adaptability and regard usefulness. All scholars invariably acknowledge contextual relevance of Marxism and they put Marx's paradigm and methodology in their individual/collective framework to articulate, modify or alter his original ideas. To establish their ideas profoundly several approaches of Marxism viz., structural-Marxist (orthodox), neo-Marxist, analytical Marxist, post-structural Marxist and cultural Marxist are formed to reckon with modernism and change<sup>35</sup>.

Since there is no dearth of theories to be developed by any individual scholar or a group of followers, original idea of Karl Marx got many denominations. Potential influence of Frankfurt School, Dependency Theory and Orientalist Theory, added further dimension to present society, which is undergoing tremendous/structural change. Various theories/schools of thought now become more essential or functionally

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<sup>34</sup>. Encyclopaedia of Sociology (vol. III), Macmillan, 1992, p.1199

<sup>35</sup>. Please refer work of M. Godelier, PualBaran, Paul Sweezy, Tom Bottomore, C. wright Mills, A.W. Gouldner, Antonio Gramsci, Ralf Dahrendorf, B.Ollman, Louis Althusser, Perry Anderson, C. Meillassoux, G. Arrighietc

imperative because, as scholars feel, they are sensitive to current trend of present society. Their arrival at present moment of society certainly changed situation, as they like to introduce and encourage all processes of development and change. Crisis is further deepened because they seriously amend broader significance of Dialectical-Historical interpretation of society and further flexibly put it in framework of positive (empirical) science of capitalist society<sup>36</sup>. For example, structural Marxist (orthodox) says base-superstructure relation is more complex, involving functional relation that ensures relative autonomy of cultural factor, even if economy is determined in last instance (Godelier, Gramsci and Althusser) and does not always hold importance<sup>37</sup>.

Maurice Godelier in his book 'Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology' (1977) criticises universal acceptance of Marxism. To his account, Marxism turned to be vulgar materialism because Marx's sole emphasis upon infrastructure and superstructure did nothing but help to form a hierarchy of functional distinction and structural causality without overwhelming nature of structure. In his view, 'In adopting Marx's materialism as epistemological horizon of critical work in

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<sup>36</sup>. Op cited

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid, p. 1201

social sciences, we must discover and examine by ways it to be found, visible network cause linking together form, function, mode of articulation and hierarchy, and moreover, appearance and disappearance of a particular social structure<sup>38</sup>”.

Further to him, Karl Marx’s theory of infrastructure and superstructure does not have same applicability in every setup. Marx does not propose and invariable form, content or place where relation of production might function. To understand Marxism properly and to put that in everyday schedule phantasmic nature of social relation, question of religion and symbolic practice and dominant ideology in general should be given prime importance as they cause hierarchy in societies, create caste and class societies unlike primitive societies. Therefore, for Godelier relation of production and not base bifurcate society and disturb systematic and appropriate change<sup>39</sup>.

Antonio Gramsci emphasises ‘hegemonic ideology’ of ruling class, which makes cleavages in society – both ruler and ruled – to be separated. For him ‘everything starts from ideological plane that widens disparity’<sup>40</sup>. Louis Althusser emphasises Marxism is a developing theory and it is a cloistered knowledge within a complete

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<sup>38</sup>. Maurice Godelier, *Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup>. *Ibid*, p.7

<sup>40</sup>. Tom Bottomore (ed.), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Blackwell, 1983, pp.193-195

circular, self-validating conceptual realm<sup>41</sup>. Neo-Marxists Samir Amin, A.G. Frank, C.Wright Mills, etc. discuss centre-periphery approach to expand horizon of Marxism<sup>42</sup>.

**Analytical Marxism** defines methodological stance of Marxism than its substantive context. It thus, differentiates itself from traditional Marxism in its commitment to abstract theorising and a search for rethinking foundation by asking heretical questions and using state-of-art method of analytical philosophy and positive social science. They are John Roemer, D. Sayer etc.

**Post-structuralist** strategy is evident in work of some former Marxists, who retreated from orthodox class concept of Marxism, arguing that a post-Marxism is required that involves eliminating notion of working as a 'universal class' and resurrecting a new concept of socialist democracy. The scholars especially Laclu and Mouffe provoked an important debate about role of new social movement and bureaucratic process.

**Cultural Marxism** acts again upon structural Marxism and establishes functionalist temporary temperament. 'Contemporary postmodern

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<sup>41</sup>. Ibid, pp. 15-17.

<sup>42</sup>. Please see Samir Amin's Unequal Development, 1976, A.G Franks Capitalist Underdevelopment, 1979 and C. wright Mills, Marxist, 1963.



society' seems to favour cultural Marxism tradition. It is actively engaged to develop a wide variety of non-Marxist approach suitable to proximate cultural specificity of value.

Further, many of recent works carry out in name of 'cultural Marxism' increasingly blend with post-structuralist and critical theory of cultural reflecting circumstance that Marxism is no longer a single, coherent, discursive and political doctrine. Scholars who favour emergence of cultural Marxism are C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, Meilassoueixetc<sup>43</sup>.

Along with such a mega theoretical framework developed to study Marxism in general, in India sociological study covers village, caste, community, religion, industry etc. However, Marxist sociologist expresses inadequacy of structural functional framework to understand change. Change occurs with conflict and resistance hence Marxist framework would be useful explaining contradiction<sup>44</sup>.

Another area of research in Indian society is inequality or inequity. Changing relation between caste, class and power draw attention of sociologists to these external force of change. Emphasis is on class and material interest rather than on caste and historical status. Caste and class

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<sup>43</sup>. Op cited, pp. 1204-5

<sup>44</sup>. Selected work of D.P Mukerji, R. K Mukerji and Radhakamal Mukherjee be seen.

are studied at different levels and contribution of sociologist and social anthropologist is by studying it in these contexts of agrarian relation at these local levels. Some sociologists used Marxian theory in these analysis and interpretation<sup>45</sup>.

Caste and class are after studied together not only in study of stratification but also politics. Studies on caste politics have been attempted by sociologists, which may not have any distinctive theoretical approach but trend to be descriptive and analytical. Marxist, sociologists are now paying more attention to caste in their political analysis<sup>46</sup>.

Marxists sociology of change grow in India is not based on earlier pessimistic picture of staticness of Indian society which Marx tempted to draw because of partiality of social and historical account available to him. Studies conducted with help of Marxist covered many areas of Indian social life, e.g. caste and social policy, stage of social evolution corresponding to mode of production, nationalism (Desai 1966), historical development (Kosambi 1949), social stratification and social intuition (Pavlov 1964, Mukherji 1957 and 1958)<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup>. A. R Desai, India's Path of Development, 1985, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, P.5

<sup>46</sup>. Op cited

<sup>47</sup>. Ibid

A.R. Desai analyses process of change in Indian history of nationalism is Marxian perspective. To him, nationalism emerged due to special condition created by British colonialism in India. Nationalism did not exist in pre-British India. British rule led to collapse Indian economic and simultaneously nationalistic consciousness rise. D.P. Mukherji focuses upon emergence of a new class, especially middle class under British colonialism. To him, structural force of class differentiation led to growth of nationalist awakening in India, was governed by Indian tradition<sup>48</sup>.

### **Theory of Structuration Agency-Structure Redefined**

Anthony Giddens is the chief architect of the theory. To him, it is not mere individual and society, which often and regularly are in social harmony and make sense for integration rather the two are integrally inseparable to each other. Distinction lies between agency and structure and both are also insignificant on other hand depending upon exigency<sup>49</sup>. 'Duality of structure' represents people make society, but at same time are constrained by it. Action and structure cannot be analysed separately as structures are created, maintained and changed through actions, while

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<sup>48</sup>. Ibid

<sup>49</sup>. Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (second edition), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993, P.1

actions are given meaningful form only through background of structure: line of causality runs in both directions making it impossible to determine what is changing what<sup>50</sup>. So, neither agency nor action can ask for full autonomy and be omnipotent likewise. Each functions within one's jurisdiction having own boundary and significance as needed by society.

Giddens in his own words put the entire matter further as follows: 'Social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time are very medium of this constitution'<sup>51</sup>

In this regard, he defines structures as consisting of rules and resources involving human action: rules constrain actions, resources make it possible. He also differentiates between system and structure. System displays structural property but is not structure themselves. He notes in his contribution Functionalism: *après la lutte* (1976) that:

'To examine structuration of a social system is to examine modes whereby that system, through application of generative rules and resources is produced and reproduced in social interaction.'<sup>52</sup>

This process of structure (re)producing system is called structuration. System here means to Giddens 'situated activities of human agents' and

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<sup>50</sup>. Ibid, P.3

<sup>51</sup> Anthony Giddens, Central Problems in Social Theory, Macmillan, 1979, pp.42-43.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony Giddens (ed), Studies in Social and Political Theory, London, Hutchinson, 1977, pp.96-134

‘patterning of social relations across space-time’<sup>53</sup>. Structures are then “...sets of rules and resources that individual actors draw upon in practices that reproduce social systems<sup>54</sup>’ and ‘systems of generative rules and sets, implicated in articulation of social systems’<sup>55</sup> existing virtually ‘out of time and out of space’. Structuration therefore means that relations that took shape in structure can exist ‘out of time and place’: in words, independent of context in which they are created. An example is relationship between a teacher and a student: when they come across each other in another context, say on street, hierarchy between them is still preserved<sup>56</sup>.

Structure can act as a constraint on action, but it also enables action by providing common frame of meaning. For example, language as structure of language is represented by rule of syntax , which may rule out certain combination of words. But structure provides rule that may allow new action to occur, enabling human being to create new meaningful sentence. Structure should not be conceived as ‘simply placing constraints upon human agency, but as enabling.’<sup>57</sup> Hence, Giddens views structure (tradition, institution, moral code and other sets of expectation — established way of doing thing) are generally stable, but

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<sup>53</sup>. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, 1984, Cambridge, Polity, p.377.

<sup>54</sup>. Anthony Giddens, *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity, 1987, p. 33-34.

<sup>55</sup>. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge, Polity, 1984, p. 379

<sup>56</sup>. Op cited

<sup>57</sup>. Op cited

can be changed, especially through unintended consequence of action, when people start to ignore them, replace them, or reproduce them differently<sup>58</sup>.

Thus, actor (agent) employs social rule appropriate to their culture, one that they learned through socialisation and experience. Such kind of rule together with resource at their disposal is used in social interaction. Rule and resource employed in such manner are not deterministic, but are applied reflexively by knowledgeable actor, albeit that actors' awareness may be limited to specific of their activity at any given time. Thus, outcome of action is not fully or totally predictable at any point of time<sup>59</sup>.

Social mobility as a process becomes more active in recent time. It is resulted from endogenous and exogenous factor, which loosened summation of status on tradition of caste. Similarity in ritual, economic and power status is withering away under impact of social legislation, education, democratisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. These processes created much alternative resource to supplement one's social status and to break exclusiveness of tradition of social status determination. Most studies bring out that social change process even

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<sup>58</sup>. John Parker, *Structuration*, Viva Books Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 52-65.

<sup>59</sup>. Op cited

through structurally similar, being generated by universal force, such as population growth, diversification of occupation structure, industrialisation and growth of technology and science; assume historically different shapes and proposition and ideology. An important historical element in traditional Indian social structure was that of inter-sub-structural autonomy, such as, autonomy between polity and stratification, stratification culture and polity<sup>60</sup>. Hence, according to Giddens structuration is not just an exercise or a mere idea of upheaval, rather opens up entire process for comprehensive development in different frame of accountability and reference in society.

### **Dheyani-Rajbanshi Community and Theory Juxtaposition and Agglomeration**

Three dominant theory i.e. evolutionary, Marxist and structuration, selected here for the purpose of study and reference, essentially dealt with macro dimension of a micro community Dheyani-Rajbanshi, living in a relatively backward region Barak valley of south Assam. Every theory is distinct to each other as they carved out or reflected entire phenomena of Dheyani-Rajbanshi in its own way and method. Evolutionary theory's major strength is focus upon basic value of the community pertaining to culture, religion and development process from olden day to recent time.

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<sup>60</sup>. Anthony, Giddens, *Modernity and Self-identity*, Cambridge, Polity, 1991, pp. 125-127.

Because, the community experienced all such phenomena in its life process in a new place, where they reside presently for more than three hundred year after living their traditional abode. Evolutionary theory highlights gradual development of Dheyani-Rajbanshi from time antiquity till date.

Marxist theory does directly harp upon continuity of inherent problem of the community as it is finding great difficulty to live itself peacefully having its minimum distinct value and institution allied with other important aspects. Dheyani-Rajbanshi's present location of inhabitation to social ecology covering both material and non-material aspects are in flux or undergoing immense ramification. The community is also experiencing social exclusion, marginalisation, impoverishment and exploitation. Overt and covert factors of conflict keep the community at bay and beyond their imagination level. Community infrastructure interface with political economy and superstructure with social structure are dichotomous to alienate the Dheyani-Rajbanshi from totality of its life, career and habitation. Fact is Dheyani-Rajbanshi struggled and struggles now at every moment for everything it wants to have. Structuration theory becomes relevant as the community is presently not only in flux and having great dilemma what to do and where to go but also stands hapless to identify itself before the so-called globalised social order?



Dominant-hegemonic state apparatus probably does not consider the community and its people to live like other with basic fundamental right, duty and adherence. It is facing insurmountable task and challenge to uphold its identity having unconceivable difficulty in its accommodation and integration with macro social structure around its habitation. In process, the community and its people are neither have a strong agency nor structure to upkeep its identity alive like other communities living in and around the Barak valley. Persistent ambiguity and duality in life vis-à-vis other ordain institutions possibly do not help the community to live like other. The community therefore is in continuous dilemma, drift and diatribe in every aspect of its governing life per se.

### **Conclusion**

Concept of community, though appears to be very nascent and simple, is undoubtedly loaded with enormous value conflict as well as vigorously complex. Community also trying to uphold its originality to certain extent even today. As discussion or orientation of community is endless, ever growing and full of challenge, it is seen in the previous pages of elaboration that institution of community is yet to die or become extinct. Man and machine made effort may try to undermine community significance in one hand and modernised society as well as globalised

order may not reproach and sideline community's structural-universal existence. Theories adopted in the very chapter also pinpoint so. May be due to constant inconsistency in political economy and value fluidity social structure, community study may emerge in rejuvenated alignment in close proximity with other institutions of development of research viz. class, caste, religion and ethnicity. Other important components of community study may also take momentum in view of emerging social problems like inclusion-exclusion and accommodation-isolation framework. In the upcoming chapter, major focus is going to be laid upon framework of study to know and divulge community related strength and weakness already undertaken and going to be adopted in this study.