



SOCIETY, CASTE AND FACTIONAL POLITICS

Conflict and Continuity in Rural India
Masaaki Fukunaga
A Book Review
By

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From the centuries ago, travelers like Huein Tsung visited India. They try to know about this country, the society, the government, the people, the culture, etc. They also wrote about this country. Masaaki Fukunaga the author of the book Society, Caste and Factional Politics. Conflict and continuity in Rural India – is also belong to continues the same lineage of the travelers from east who visited India. There may or may not be sociological importance to the writings of the ancient foreign travelers who visited India like Huein Tsung. Their writings about the India may be just like a Traveler's diary. But Fukunaga had made a typical sociological study of Rural India. Particularly village Politics and the factions, conflicts, casteism formed due to the politics.

The rural India which is visualized under the deceptive and surface appearance and harmony, infect has been bubbling with conflict and hostility. The researcher have been told that suspicion, jealousy, deceit and inter personal rancor are the common phenomena. In this book author done the study of northern Indian village namely 'Cakra' situated in eastern U.P. 40 K.M away from Varanasi. This study had been made in the 1980's. The work shows the political and social conditions of that period in the same village.

In India Faction is an impotent and universal feature of the local level politics. There are many village level research studies on socio-political life referring to faction and factionism as a wide spread phenomenon. The author has used the term 'Faction' instead of 'Parti' giving more importance to te academic terms common among the scholars. Author says about th faction that faction is formed by members with a common will and collective action and can be defined as a small group. Autor Fukunaga also noted some instances which shows the continuity among the people of Cakra. In such conditions the behavior of people was simply habitual, spontaneous and in conformity with a single established set of rules. Author observed the bonds which strengthened the collective survival of the people of Cakra. These bonds insured continuity in the village

It is essential to understand the interplay of social[economic and political forces at the grass root level to compared the contours and complexity of political life at the Indian national level the author has taken note of the sea change that has come about in the Indian village life since independence.

The author describes land as a symbol as well as a source of political power as evidenced by the **Panchayati Raj Elections** in the village in 1982 . Fukunaga's study reflects the scenario of factional dynamics in which ther is disunity among upper caste groups like **Thakurs** leading to consolidation among the middle caste groups like the **Ahirs** and the lower caste groups like the **Chamars'**.

The general outlook of the Indian village is cohesive and friendly for an outsider but there exists the real human life where people are involved in competition, struggle, up gradation and relationships to achieve political goals.

In the above purview this is the study of an Indian village where people have the typical life style representing northern India especially in reference to their political life.

The introduction highlights the major problems of the study which justification and theoretical framework of the study are discussed in chapter two. The approach methodology and evaluation of data are presented in chapter three.

For understanding the political activity **intra and inter-jati groups** of factions in the context of total village situation with emphasis on socio-economic structure are focused in chapter four.

In chapter five the institutional study of Panchayati Raj system has been made. To understand the present political situation in the village a historical resume of political affairs is presented in chapter six.

Lastly in chapter seven the main analytical observation of this study are recounted as conclusion and generalization.

The book characterized by sound theoretical frame work, collection of rich data and insightful analysis is and important contribution to rural sociology in India. It is further welcome s it brings in an **Eastern perspective** of the India scene instead of **Western** One as had generally been the case so far.

While making sociological study the method of study which is being used have its own importance. For making objective and real research scientific method should be used. Fukunaga had used various scientific social research methods including **participant's observation** which is very reliable and effervie one due to this the objectivity of this research is definitely increased.

This book has its own importance because of two reasons firstly, that this study is made by a foreign scholar who did not have any preferences and prejudices in his mind and secondly, the scholar is from Japan i.e from far east who did not have the western perspective, In this sense the book is not only the excellent one but it is the alone in itself. This study book its final form as doctoral dissertation in 1989 at Banaras Hindu University.

Prof.Sachchidananda former director of A.N. Shukla Institute of Social Studies, Patana rightly quoted about this book.

“Dr Masaaki Fukunaga has put Indian Sociologists in a deep debt by unraveling the comp exiting of village politics in an east Indian village. This debt can only be repaid when an Indian Scholar makes a similar study in Japan.”

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