

Self-Sustaining Development in Rural India

A Study of Technological, Geographic and Social Changes in Three Villages of Sawai Madhopur District of Eastern Rajasthan

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Introduction

The study the results of which are described in the following pages was done first in 1961, when Dr. Nath was the Collector of the district. Mrs. Nath participated in the study. Mrs. Nath and three researchers have done the repeat study in 2001. The two studies show changes in production techniques, increase in output of cereals and commercial crops; major increase in incomes and consumption of people of all castes, reduction in social disparities and increase in education, improvement in health and major changes in aspirations of the peoples of the area. It will be shown that the changes are the result of facilities provided by the state government and their intelligent use by the people themselves. Furthermore, the technological and economic changes have not been at the expense of the natural resources of soil, water, pasture and woodland. On the contrary, physical texture of the cropland is better and its productivity is higher as a result of the technological changes. The livestock, mainly milch buffaloes, kept in the villages are stall-fed and graze in the fields, which are fallow after the crop has been harvested. The grazing checks growth of weeds; the dung of the animals adds organic manure to the fields. Ploughing in of roots of sorghum, millets, mustard and groundnut further add to the fertility of the cropland.

The District

Sawai Madhopur district had an area of 5000 sq. kilometres and a population of 875,000 in 1991. These figures relate however to the bifurcated southern part of the district. The bifurcation was done in the 1980s for administrative convenience. Sawai Madhopur town and its suburb Maantown, in which the district offices are located in this half. The northern half was constituted into a separate district at that time.

Seventeen per cent of the population in 1991 was urban and the remaining 83 per cent was rural. More than 40 per cent of the population consists of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. In the villages studied, however, they form the majority of the population. The Meenas, who comprise most of the farmers, are classified as a scheduled tribe while the agricultural laborers or small cultivators-cum-laborers belong to the scheduled castes. The high castes –

** This article was written in 2001, since then Dr. V. Nath is no more and the article stands as he left it. Mrs. Kamla Nath has done some editorial changes only.*

Brahmins, Rajputs and Mahajans - and the non-scheduled tribe cultivators, Gujars and Jats, form about one-third of the population. The district has five community development blocks which are coterminous with panchayats samitis. There are 197 panchayats for almost 900 villages. Annual rainfall averages 62 cms and is quite dependable. Most of it is received in the three months July to September of the monsoon season. Diesel operated pumps are the principal means of irrigation in all the three villages studied. There are no factory industries. However, there are small industrial units, concerned with processing of crops, wheat and oil seeds. In some villages rolling of beedies and making glass bangles are traditional cottage industries.

Self Sustaining Development

Self sustaining development has two meanings in our view. First it should not make undue demands on the natural resources of soil, water, pastures or woodlands. Second while the state government should provide the catalyst for change-advice and inputs for use of improved agricultural techniques e.g. use of dwarf high yielding varieties of wheat, chemical fertilizers and pesticide, however, the cultivators themselves have, realizing their value, bought tractors for cultivation and diesel operated pumps for irrigating their cropland. Medium and long term loans for buying these have been given by the Land Mortgage Bank and the nationalized banks, branches of which are established in Maantown market and also in two villages – Maanpur and Raipur.

The crop rotation - sorghum, millets and groundnuts in the monsoon season and wheat, gram and mustard in the cool season - is such that the nutrients removed by sowing wheat are replaced by the organic matter left in the soil by the roots of sorghum, millets, gram and the foliage of groundnuts and mustard. Furthermore, the dung produced by buffaloes provides organic manure to the soil. Double cropping of the cropland means that the land has crops through the year and are not lying waste subject to wind and water erosion after the monsoon crops have been harvested.

Meena and other farmers and the scheduled castes did not send their daughters to schools. They were afraid that educated girls would not work on the farm or do unskilled labour. Now, they send their daughters to schools. They realize that educated girls make better housewives and mothers. They look after their children better and keep their homes clean. Furthermore, there is less work in the farm because of use of tractors and other machines such as mechanical harvesters – threshers, winnowers - for sorghum, millets and wheat. Because of cleaner homes and access to safe drinking water from tube wells and well-kept wells, the health of women and that of their children and men is much better. Furthermore, facilities for medical care are available from two hospitals, four vaidyas and a medical practitioner in Maanpur, all located within easy reach of the people of these villages.

Earlier the small Meena farmers and scheduled caste farmers-cum-labourers thanked their stars if they had enough cereals to eat through the year and avoid hunger during the lean season of July to September i.e. before the monsoon crop of sorghum or millets became available. Now they have enough cereals to eat and milk, vegetables and fruit, which they could not afford in 1961 are a regular part of their diet. Earlier, the worldview of the Meena and scheduled castes was linked to their immediate environment of a few villages. They did

not expect their children to do better than themselves. Now the better-off Meena and scheduled castes are hoping that their sons would become white-collar workers after education.

Increase in agricultural output has had the effect of major increases in income and consumption of most of the people of the area. Increase in education of boys and girls, and in literacy and awareness of the people along with improvement in health has resulted in remarkable change in their attitudes and aspirations.

Self sustaining development also means that rise in income and improvement in health, reduction in illiteracy or ignorance among males or females; increase in education of boys and girls should have been shared by people of all castes and not just confined to the high castes and/or the cultivators. In other words, disparities in income and consumption, health status and education should not have increased. From all available evidence, this would appear to be the case in these villages. Most of the people of the three high castes – Brahmins, Rajputs and Mahajans in Maanpur and Raipur the two multi-caste villages had higher income and levels of consumption in 2001 than they had in 1961. Their sons have got educated and have become white-collar workers - schoolteachers, secretaries of cooperative societies or panchayats, extension officers of various departments. Their daughters have been married to white collar workers; some have after education became school teachers themselves.

The landowners among them have higher income from farming thanks to greatly increased production of cereals and cash crops due to cultivation by tractors, irrigation of most of the cropland by diesel oil operated pumps; use of dwarf high yielding varieties of wheat, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, etc. has increased yields per hectare 2-3 times.

Most of the Meena, Mali and Gujar cultivators, all except those whose land holdings are too small for self cultivation also have higher income due to these improvements. The state has provided facilities for increasing agricultural output i.e. extension officers who advise on use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, cooperative societies provide short term credit for crop production, land mortgage and other banks provide loans for buying tractors, pump sets and other machines. The farmers have accepted the facilities and used them.

The people of all the three villages have contributed large sums amounting to 4 million rupees in each of the two large villages for construction of overhead tanks which supply piped water to a large number of houses. The state has assisted by providing the tube wells and the operators to pump water to the tanks. The people have not only invested in having piped water in their houses but paved the main streets and constructed side drains for drainage of waste water in areas in which the houses of the high castes and most of the Meena cultivators in Raipur are located.

The Meenas of Jenapur have constructed the overhead water tank, the tube well and piped water supply in their houses and concrete paved the main street, without assistance from the state government. These developments indicate the value these people attach to adequate and clean drinking water.

With increase in agricultural output and income, they have invested in improvement of their houses – a large percentage of them live in brick and mortar houses. They have contributed funds through the panchayats for construction of buildings for primary, middle and secondary schools for boys and girls, offices of panchayats and cooperative societies, resi-

dences of VLWs and stores for chemical fertilizers and pesticides. The state has provided the hospitals and their staff, Ayurvedic dispensaries and their staff; family planning advisers and other such facilities. The people are using these services in increasing numbers. There are private schools in the two large villages. The standard of teaching in them is higher than in the schools run by the Department of Education, so that they have a larger number of students (boys and girls) despite much higher fees. There is in Maanpur a qualified physician and two vaidyas in the villages who have remunerative practices. A trained auxiliary nurse mid-wife also has a remunerative private practice. A multi-facility hospital, with 40 beds is located within a kilometre of Raipur.

The small farmers-cum-agricultural laborers or non-agricultural laborers of Chamar and other scheduled castes have benefited as much as or even more from the social and economic changes of the last five decades as the high caste or the Meenas. By 1961, they had already given up their traditional obligations to the jagirdar and had become small farmers or small farmers-cum-agricultural or non-agricultural laborers. They had constructed a primary school in their own hamlet and were sending their sons to it. The Panchayat of Raipur had improved the drinking water well of the Chamars to provide them with adequate and safe drinking water. The primary school in the hamlet of Chamars of Maanpur has now become an 8-grade middle school; the school which was located in a temple then has its own building. The building has been constructed and is being maintained by the villagers themselves. A number of boys of both Maanpur and Raipur are attending the higher secondary school of Maantown. The Meenas of the hamlet of Maanpur have constructed 8-room building so that the primary school in their hamlet can be upgraded to a middle school.

Their aspirations have changed significantly. In 1961, the high castes especially the Brahmins and Mahajans whose land holdings were small, were satisfied if their sons could become Patwaris, VLWs, school teachers, secretaries of cooperative societies or panchayats or clerks in the cement factory or some office. Now they want that their sons should get better white-collar jobs after education. One or two sons of our informants in both Raipur and Maanpur are working in states other than Rajasthan. They occupy positions of a status that their grand parents could not even dream of for them. The Meenas and the Chamars are also keen that their sons should get white collar jobs – clerks, school teachers, secretaries of cooperatives or panchayats and others. These jobs are valued for security of service, fairly high wages and the ‘power’ that they confer on the incumbents.

Caste and Occupational Mobility: A Rajasthan Village

Caste played and continues to play a very important role in occupational change from the traditional village economy to a market economy in which the economic motive is at least as important as the traditional caste base. By 1961, a large number of Brahmin young men had become patwaris, VLWs, secretaries of panchayats and cooperative societies, teachers in primary schools, vaidyas (practitioners of ancient Ayurvedic system of medicine), clerks in offices of the Rajasthan government and the cement factory. After getting educated up to the middle school or higher secondary school examination, some of the Brahmin and Mahajan girls had also become teachers in primary schools. These jobs paid well and since the young men were posted within 30 kilometres of Rajpur, they could visit their families on weekends and could keep in touch with them through letters. However, no Brahmin had taken to trading

or become an artisan such as carpenter, mason, smith, driver of motor vehicles, etc. despite the high level of earnings from these activities. These occupations were literally closed to them.

The Mahajans of Raipur could become traders in the Maantown market or like the Brahmins white collar workers after passing the necessary examinations. However, they preferred to remain trader-moneylender-cum-non-cultivating owners of their land within their own villages. Besides, relatively high earnings, prestige was a major consideration in staying in the village.

The Rajputs of Maanpur were satisfied with remaining non-cultivating owners of their lands that they could retain for self-cultivation. They employed Chamaars, Meena and Malies as agricultural labourers or sharecroppers for managing cultivation of their lands. Their aspiration was that one or more of their sons should get educated and become white-collar workers. However, one son must remain to look after the land of the family. This gave prestige to the family and also provided sizeable income. They would marry their daughters to educated Rajput young men who were in the Army or were white-collar workers or were managing family farms.

The Meenas were satisfied with managing their farms better to increase agricultural production. Those with smallholdings supplemented their income with unskilled work such as repair of the railway tracks or the roads or work in the cement factory. They were interested primarily in producing field crops (sorghum, millet, wheat and oil seeds) but were not interested in producing vegetables, fruit or milk for sale. Producing fruit and vegetables for sale was the job of the Malies. In addition, they produced wheat, sorghum and oilseeds. The Gujars were helping to meet the demands for milk. Similarly, the large demand for meat was met by Hindu Khotiks and the Moslems.

The Chamars although interested in being recognized as a cultivating caste, the equal of the Meenas, had like the Meenas become unskilled workers in the railway and roads. Some of them had become carpenters, masons, smiths, and so on and found well paid jobs in Maantown market and building houses in Maantown. The teachers in schools and doctors in hospital could be Brahmins or Mahajans while nurses and mid-wives in hospitals could be mainly Chamaars or Moslems; that is, the women who performed these tasks by tradition. The great increase in demand for meat in Maantown was being met by Hindu Khotiks or Moslems. The high demand for meat had not led any Hindu caste except the Gujars to increase the size of herds. The meat sold in the Maantown market was all goat meat. Beef or meat of camels could not be sold because of the sensibilities of the people in this predominantly Hindu area. Cattle were reared in the woodlands to produce bullocks. Meat of sheep and goats was also sold by Gujars who grazed their herds on the stubble of the cultivated fields and in the forests. But this was done primarily to earn some cash and to keep size of their herds within the availability of the pasture. Thus, even in 2001, the economic motive had not become dominant. Caste considerations remained the important factor in the choice of new economic activities in the new market economy.

Change in values: People of all castes including the Meenas, Malies and Chamaars had accepted the fact that education of girls to the primary school level was a good thing. The Meenas, Malies or Gujars did not feel that girls educated to primary schools would not work

in the fields. Moreover, cultivation of land by tractors and use of other equipment such as mechanical shellers of sorghum and millets had reduced the women's work in the field. They could therefore, devote their time to their work as mothers and homemakers. The men realized also that educated women would get prompt treatment for themselves and their children in case of communicable or other diseases. Furthermore, clean homes and access to clean and adequate drinking water supply from wells located in the villages or piped water from overhead tanks meant less disease among their men, children and themselves.

Most of the Meenas still said that they did not accept any bride price, but gave dowry on marriage of their girls. However, the truth of this statement could not be verified. Child marriages had been reduced greatly. The Brahmins, Mahajans and Rajputs married their daughters only when they were 16 or 18 years of age and the young men were 22-25 years old. By this time, both were mature and would not fall victim to communicable diseases. Widows had always been a burden among the high castes who wanted to keep their number to the minimum. Even the Meena, Mali and other cultivators wanted that their daughters should be married when they were old enough to look after their homes and children. Although, widow remarriage was allowed among the Meenas, Malies, Chamars and all other castes, except the high castes the widows did not have a high social status. Even the Moslems did not accord a high status to their widows.

A few Moslem widows of Raipur had become tailors so that they could earn some money while sitting at home. A Delhi based NGO Dastkar, had opened a center in Raipur where Moslem women made quilted bed sheets for export to Europe and embroidered dresses for sale to the tourists. Women of no other caste had learnt this trade despite the high earnings. Brahmin widows carried milk from Raipur to the Maantown market on their heads to earn a little money to support themselves. They were looked down upon by the rest of the community for being so poor. But these supposedly enlightened people were so stupid that they would not allow their widows to learn a remunerative trade like tailoring. The Brahmin women just did not do this skilled work. On the other hand, Brahmin cooks who used to cook for marriages in the village and went to Mumbai to work as cooks in Marwari homes, some of them still cook for marriages in Raipur and have also opened food and sweet meat sellers' shops in Maantown market and were doing very well!

In 1961, almost all the district level officers were Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans or Kayasthas. All the clerks in the Collector's office belonged to these castes. Almost all the policemen were either Rajputs or Jats. The president of the Bar Association was a Brahmin lawyer who was also the chairman of the Sawai Madhopur municipal committee. These jobs preferences have changed only to the extent that many Meenas have become BDOs and Chamaars have become clerks or junior officers.

Thus, most of the jobs in the new economy had been taken by those for whom the change to these jobs was permitted.

Monetary Corruption: A certain amount of monetary corruption was also widespread in the 1960s. Its scale was limited however. The collector previous, to the author Mr. Mool Singh was reported to have used his position to enrich himself and his business in Makrana to which he belonged. He used his position to get favours done to him by the cement factory.

The clerks in the office and the junior officers talked about it. It was also known that the clerk in the Collector's office would take a bribe of Rs. 20/- or more from a cultivator to give a decision in his favour. There was no stigma against it. However, there were also a few officers or clerks who were scrupulously honest and very competent. One of them was an old Brahmin who was a superb draftsman in Hindi. I could trust him to interpret the cases of the cultivators (I could not understand their language – Haroti – well and after a few attempts to write my judgements in Hindi, gave it up because he could write them better than I could). The SDO, Sawai Madhopur a Brahmin was also scrupulously honest; but two SDOs of Gangapur and Karauli were not.

There was much greater corruption at the state level also. One leader of the Jats from western Rajasthan had about 300 people eating at his official residence in Jaipur every night. He was a wealthy farmer but his main source of income was his position as chairman of the Rajasthan Cooperative Federation which controlled distribution of improved seed, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and improved implements to the farmers through the cooperative societies.

We could not obtain any data on the scale of monetary corruption during our revisit but it was well known among the cultivators that in order to get any work done in the BDO's office one had to pay a bribe. The villagers recognized this as a routine official practice.

Could the Development be consider Sustainable: Could the improvement in the economic position of all the farmers, agricultural labourers and other rural people be considered sustainable or could it lead in one or more decades to a decline in income and consumption due to depletion of the available resources of land, water and forests.

We consider it sustainable in more than one way. Increase in agricultural production was due to better cultivation of land by tractors, larger area under irrigation by wells fitted with diesel pumps. The cultivated area had not increased; on the other hand the increase in agricultural output through use of dwarf high yielding wheat and fertilizers, pesticides other grains (sorghum, millets and oilseeds) in the fields in which there was more retained moisture was evident. The larger production of fruit and vegetables added further to the volume of agricultural output. This production was however in small areas by Malies who had this as a traditional highly specialized resource.

The forest resource was being preserved in order to provide a suitable habitat for wild life; its destruction would have greatly reduced the income of the state government from this remunerative activity.

The development was self-sustaining in another sense also. Women educated even up to primary school level could look after themselves, their men and their children better. This meant better health and better capacity to work than with the people, who used to fall victims to various communicable diseases. The female literacy rate has doubled during the last few decades. Its effect on growth rate of population will undoubtedly be visible. The increase in per capita income in Rajasthan by 83% during the last two decades is more than the national average. Steadily from a position of extreme backwardness due to the critical lack of social services, the state has seen remarkable improvement.

Leadership in Village and Panchayat Raj Institutions

In 1961, as well as in 2001, there are two conditions which are essential for leadership in the village and these institutions. First, the leaders should belong to a family with a large land holding or an established position of affluence or prestige in the village. In 1961, late Hari Singh a Rajput with large land holding and who had been the principal functionary of the former Jagirdar of the village was the sarpanch of Manpur panchayat. He had been sarpanch since the panchayat was established in 1952. His position was unquestioned for two reasons. First he had the qualities which kept the leaders of various communities (Rajputs, Mahajans, Meenas, Malies and the scheduled castes) satisfied and he had also established good relations with officials. In 2001, the sarpanch is a successful Mahajan businessman. But late Hari Singh's younger brother Mr. Suraj Bhan Singh an ex-sarpanch of the village himself, is consulted by leaders of various castes in matters relating to the welfare of all the villages.

The leaders of the hamlets of the Chamaar and the Meenas are also cultivators of more than average land holdings.

The second essential condition for leadership is that he should be convincingly vocal about the needs and problems of the village to the officials and at the same time convince the villagers that he can put forward the demands of all the villagers as well as or better than any one else. Late Hari Singh and Suraj Bhan Singh has these qualities.

In Raipur, the two most respected leaders in 1961 were (i) a middle aged Meena with a large land holding. He had been a member of the first Panchayat established in 1952. The second leader was a middle aged affluent Mahajan. The family owned a sizeable land holding and besides had money-lending as a principal economic activity. He too had been a member and for many years sarpanch of the panchayat established in 1952. The two leaders had mobilized funds, labour and material contributions from the villagers for constructing the buildings of a middle school for boys and a primary school for girls, repair of the approach road to the village, pavement of streets in the habitation area of the village and construction of buildings for the panchayat and the cooperative society cum-store for improved seed, fertilizers and other inputs. They had obtained grants or loans from the community development administration for construction of all these works and also for construction and repair of wells in the hamlets of the Chamaars and Gujjars, located on the outskirts of the village.

Mr. Sham Lal Sharma, the sarpanch of Raipur in 1961 was very critical of the regime of these leaders; he accused them of corruption a charge which they reciprocated. But he recognised that he could not mobilise the funds for the works mentioned above that the traditional leaders had done. The maximum that he could do was to maintain these works and at the same time ensure that the panchayat had enough funds for maintaining clean drains in the habitations of the high castes. The villagers did not allow him to raise taxes to undertake any new development works. Although he was a well paid clerk in the cement factory, he came from a poor family. Thus he lacked one essential condition for leadership. Thus in 1961, there were two essential conditions for position of leadership. First, the leader should be well off enough not to appear to utilize his leadership to enrich himself from the grants or loans that were available for development works in the village. Second, he should be convincingly vocal about the his demands and the difficulties of the villagers to the officials.

The pradhan (chairman) of the Sawai Madhopur panchayat samiti in 1961 was a middle aged Meena from the central part of the tehsil which was the stronghold of the Meenas. His family had a large landholding and the Meena community had chosen him to be a convincingly vocal representative of the Meena caste. Furthermore, he had such personal qualities that the decisions of the panchayat samiti were seldom overturned by the District Development Officer or the Collector.

In 1961, the MLA of the Sawai Madhopur (unreserved) constituency was a reasonably successful Moslem lawyer. His brother was also a successful lawyer in the Collector's office. Furthermore, he had the backing of the mostly Moslem forest contractors who mobilised men and money for his campaign in return for his ability to get permission to cut forest and other favours from the collector and the state government.

He was succeeded in the election of 1962 by a Rajput ex-jagirdar, a traditional leader from a reasonably affluent family. Furthermore, he had the ability to approach the Meena, Malies and the Chamaars and to convince them that he would further their interests with the state government.

These conditions have remained unchanged in 2001, no matter who occupies the various positions in the panchayat raj institutions. The sarpanch of Raipur in 2001 is a woman of washerman caste, the lowest caste in the caste hierarchy, in an extremely caste conscious village. She is completely ineffective however. She is accused also of corruption because her husband drinks. She was elected because the seat had been reserved for a member of the scheduled caste and the scheduled caste men could not decide on a better candidate.

However, the real leaders of the community remain a reasonably affluent Meena and two or more reasonably well off Mahajans.

In Manpur while the sarpanch is a Mahajan, Suraj Bhan Singh, the ex-sarpanch is consulted in various matters for his traditional position in the village. The leaders of the hamlets of the Chamaars and the Meenas are also farmers with relatively large landholdings who are convincingly vocal about the demands of their constituents.

Village Caste and Community

The community development programme, a programme of integrated rural development launched by the government of India in 1952 was based on the concept that the tightly nucleated rural settlement characteristic of north western and north central India including Punjab, Haryana, western U.P., Rajasthan, Gujarat and north west Madhya Pradesh was a community. The village is in fact a fairly large administrative unit. The revenue administration includes in it besides the main village one or more hamlets each of which had a particular caste as its main residents. Thus, Manpur and Raipur are with their two hamlets each, relatively largely multi-caste villages.

The community development administrator and later the Ministry of Community Development which gave loans and grants to these communities for construction of drinking water wells, renovation and improvement of other drinking water services, construction of approach roads, opening primary schools for boys and girls, higher primary (middle) or higher secondary schools in larger villages, provision of facilities for preventive and medical care within easy reach of villagers and providing the facilities to increase agricultural output by

giving loans to the farmers to buy improved seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides and improved implements in order to increase agricultural production regarded them as communities. The administrator and later the Ministry was very satisfied when the villagers provided through their panchayat or otherwise funds, labour and construction materials required to build approach roads, drinking water wells, particularly for the poor, clean and improve tanks or step-wells, and construct buildings for primary or secondary schools. The farmers response to increased output with use of improved seed and other inputs was also adequate or unexpectedly enthusiastic.

The only regret of the administration and later the Ministry was that funds were available for only a few villages and a large number of villages had to remain uncovered. The funds have been progressively increased over the years and an increasing number of villages have been provided these facilities. However, maintenance of the facilities is variable depending upon the urgency of the needs of the villagers or in case of drinking water wells, of the group that uses it.

Some of them like the school buildings, the drinking water wells and pavement of streets and drains in them inside the villages were well maintained. However, approach roads to the villages were not so well maintained unless the road formed part of a network road of the state PWD.

Are the villages communities?

The single caste Meena village is a community. It has in its sarpanch a leader who can speak for the whole village. However, the multi caste Raipur and Manpur are not communities, although they responded enthusiastically to the officials of the community development administration to obtain funds for construction of middle school for boys and girls, buildings for the panchayats, the cooperative society, the store for improved implements and a residence of the VLW with store for improved seed, fertilizers and pesticides.

Over the years, all the farm inputs are being sold by traders in the market also mobilise who funds for them.

These multi-caste villages are not community however and do not have one spokesman. In Manpur, there are two leaders one each for the hamlets of the Chamaars and the Meenas besides one or more spokesmen of the main village. The sarpanch of the Maanpur panchayat is a Meena because the seat has been reserved for a Meena but for any work requiring contributions from the villagers, the villagers will need to consult Suraj Bhan Singh and others whom they trust and recognise as their leaders.

Is each caste a community? Yes, for some purposes the Rajputs of Manpur have more kinship with Rajputs of adjoining villages of Sawai Madhopur taluk or even Janpur district than they have with the Brahmins or Mahajans of their own village. They would marry with other Rajputs and present a solid front to the elections for protection of their rights.

What Next

Economic development is a tumultuous process; its course is never standard. During the last four decades there have been major increases in income, consumption and level of living of these people due mainly to increase in agricultural output as a result of major technological

changes. The farmers are educated, are healthier and are much better informed thanks to the presence of radio and T.V. receivers in their homes which create a keen desire for living 'better' i.e. like the urban middle class. Would these improvements continue during the next two decades or would there be a retrogression. It is difficult to give a definitive answer to this question, just as it was difficult to imagine that the changes that have occurred would occur. Although there does not appear to be any new growth pole in the economy, agricultural output could continue to increase somewhat by still better utilization of improved seeds of wheat and mustard the principal cash crops. There are no minerals which could be processed to locate industries. Reopening of the cement factory would depend upon a steep increase in the demand for cement for which there is no immediate prospect. The only other industries would be wheat flour mills and oil mills and to process mustard. It would provide employment to a small number of workers. The income of farmers would increase further if supply of electricity is improved because using electricity to operate irrigation pumps would be much cheaper than use of diesel. Use of electric lights at night and fans during the day would reduce expenditure on kerosene oil and increase comfort.

Young men of the high castes would after graduation from higher school or college migrate to Jaipur, Kotah, Delhi or elsewhere to get white-collar jobs. The more affluent parents would finance education of their sons through degree and professional colleges so that they can become professionals and earn high incomes. This has happened in case of sons of our informants in both Raipur and Maanpur; they are professionals who are working at long distances from their homes.

Competition for white-collar jobs in offices of the district would increase greatly so much so that most of these jobs would have to be given to young men of Meenas and the scheduled caste. Most of the female school teachers could however continue to be young Brahmin or Mahajan women.

Although there is no visible new growth pole in the economy, it is unlikely that with the improvement in income, education, health and awareness of the people, there should be any decline in their income, education and health in the next two decades. But it is difficult to predict the ways in which further improvement will be achieved just as it was difficult to imagine in 1961 that incomes and level of living, education, health, awareness and aspirations of these people would increase during these four decades, as much as they have. In 1961, most of them were poor, ignorant and in poor health and were resigned to their fate. Now most of them can be classified as being in the lower middle income. They are better educated, and better informed; their health is better. They aspire to raise their economic status further to middle income. It is difficult to predict whether or how they will achieve their aspirations.

Recommendations

1. The supply of electricity by the Rajasthan State Electricity Board should be improved so that the farmers can use electrically operated pumps, instead of diesel-operated pumps for irrigation. This will reduce greatly the cost of irrigation because diesel is very expensive. The reduction in cost of irrigation will also mean significant increase in income of farmers. Furthermore, they can use fans and air coolers in their homes during the day and electric light

instead of kerosene oil or petromax light at night which would add to the comfort of the residents.

2. The road to Jaipur via Tonk should be kept in good repair so that tourists motoring the Delhi-Jaipur-Agra-Delhi route in three days can add a visit to this game sanctuary in one day. This will not only add to the income of the farmers but will give some employment to landless labourers in hotels taking care of the tourists.

3. Advantages of the reservation of posts for their sons in services of the district administration. In 1961, these posts were the exclusive preserve of the higher castes. Earlier, the small farmers and the scheduled castes had to pay a bride price to get married. By marrying the man acquired a valuable worker on the farm. Bride price has been replaced by dowry. The amounts of dowry are not small either. A Patwari, a schoolteacher in a primary school or a clerk in an office demand and get dowry ranging between Rs. 150,000 to Rs. 3000,000.

