

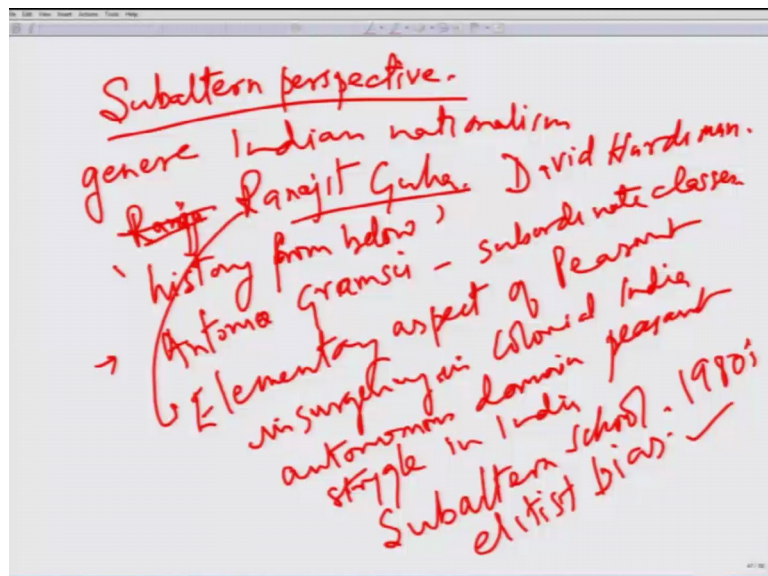
Development of Sociology in India
Prof. Ashish Saxena
Department of Sociology
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Lecture - 17

Friends, good afternoon today we have to have another understanding of the perspective from different viewpoint. And for that we have to have some understanding about the previous perspective that we try to discuss. I think if you can recall earlier we have spoken about, the indological perspective which we try to analyze in terms of interpretation of the ancient text and it was basically been seen book view. And, then we also try to speak about the (Refer Time: 00:54) perspective where of course, we try to see, that it was seen as a view from the book and meaning there by that is not the book rather, it is basically a field view.

And, we try to see that this field view was an understanding of the gross reality. But, I think these perspectives have to be seen in terms of the specific limitations and that is why we try to see, that Indian society has to be seen in terms of some of the perspective. And, keeping that particular frame in mind today we have to deal with the new perspective that is the subaltern perspective.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:38)



Subaltern perspective, I think if you try to see it in context of the wider learning. We try to see that this perspective got a new genre to the analysis of Indian nationalism. In the sense that, we try to speak about the understanding of Indian nationalism in a specific way but, how we can see that the perspective have it is own reflection in a specific categorization. And, that we try to see it through the subaltern perspective that trying to see as specific genre of understanding the Indian nationalism.

And, this particular discussion that we are trying to deliver upon is trying to understand at it is 3 broader context; that is first thing which we have to know and understand is the meaning of subaltern and, then how the discourse of subaltern has taken place through time, speaking about the pathways or the projectry of the subaltern. And finally, will try to speak about the contribution of significant scholars, who has written and documented the understanding of subaltern perspective. And, in that category we have at least the understanding of Ranjit Guha. And also we have the wider understanding of another important subaltern theories, that is David Hardeman.

So, I think we will try to understand these two people and beyond that we also will try to understand, the contribution of other people who try to understand the subaltern perspective in their own way. Now, as you seen earlier that we have to have a subaltern perspective in order to have an understanding of the Indian nationalism from a specific genre now, this school of thought adopted the history from below.

I think that of course, is the crux of the understanding of subaltern perspective that is the history from below. Because, the earlier prospective that we try to speak about either it is a field view or we try to see the indological perspective, somewhere the question that has raised is that who is writing it. And the answer sometimes appears to be that it is basically been written by or documented by the upper caste may be or it has been done by the elite in that sense as such.

So, now we have to see that understanding the society from the top cannot give us or depict the real picture about the Indian society. And another thing of course, is they are not the representative units of the Indian society. So, how we can understand the society from the views of a few people? And for that cause we have the subaltern perspective which tries to understand, the history from below. And, the history from below basically is we try to just further understand it, it is basically the view from the masses or we can

see that commoners how they try to understand or we can see it in some other form that the history of those peoples who were whose concern or is understanding has been ignored.

So, we can see, that it was basically having some starting linkage or we can see that these history from below are to be seen in terms of the European Master Scholars of who has tried to understand it in a specific fashion. And, if you try to just link it up we basically have a prominent scholars a social scientist who try to see that, how we can have an alternative view point? And to quote him Antonio Gramsci who was trying to speak about the famous notion of the hegemony in that sense as such, and who has used the term subaltern for the subordinate classes in a specific fashion. Sub subordinate classes in terms of the class, in terms of gender, in terms of ways, language and also in terms of the specific culture.

And, in that context if, we try to see the pioneer, definitely we have with us Professor Ranjit Guha. Who can be seen as the starter for the subaltern perspective in India and especially his initial work that is speaking about the elementary aspect of present insurgency. Elementary aspect of present insurgency in colonial India was a work, which tries to speak about different way of looking to the Indian society. And, it highlighted the autonomous domain of present struggle in India.

So, this autonomous domain is something which has to be seen independent of the elite. As, I said earlier also that can we think about the writing of history without elite and where this subaltern tries to see that, we can have an understanding about the history independent of the elite. According to Guha elites historiographies were unable to put the so, called presents into a specific conditions. And, they could not document their insurgency in the correct prospective.

Because, they try to understand the history in a specific fashion which does not put the present as the important character and, we have to go beyond this limitation, which have been sighted in the history of India. And, we have to have that can this elites history which has been documented earlier and can we just replace it with the subaltern perspective where the so, called colonial history has to be documented from the view point of the present way as such.

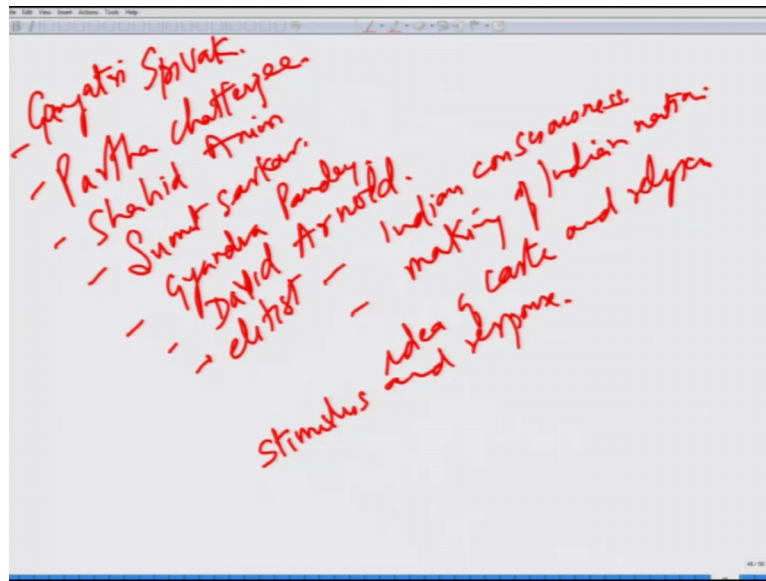
So, we can say that this subaltern debate which has immersed at definitely with the contribution of Ranjit Guha and with the what you can say the attempt and the concise of Antony Gramsci of subordinate classes. And virtually we try to see that this subaltern was to be seen in terms of a specific school of specific school of thought that is the subaltern school. Now, this subaltern school of historiography immersed basically in 1980's. If you try to see in terms of indexing, we try to see that it has immersed in the 1980's from its inception, it has involved and resulted into major transition which took place in the South Asian historiography.

Especially we trying to understand the Indian history and the South Asian history from the different view point. And, if you try to see that the nationalist and the (Refer Time: 10:05) schools become the focus of understanding the history because they try to present the critic of the existing history. Similarly, we have these master schools, who also because of the overdue pressure of the understanding of the history from the mode of production debate has to be seen more in terms of a different parameter.

So, I think the mix of all these things has motivated to form the subalterns school and the various scholars which has contributed or joined has tried to work on the history, that was existing earlier and tried to make it a different history which should be more composite, and also try to be more inclusive with the masses. The subaltern as at least one can say has been definitely documented in the Mercian frame work to some extent, but when we try to see it is basically the depiction of the history of those categories. Basically, the oppressed classes which have been submerged in the religious and the social customs and, how these peoples can be thought of in terms of understanding and contributing towards the making of the history.

Now, within that framework we have the subaltern studies group which was informed as I said earlier in 1980's and the principle aim of this school was to correct the elitist buyers. So, the elitist buyers, which has been lying has to be corrected in a specific fashion, which has to be used to found in the most academic works of the South Asian studies. And, I think this school was basically seen as a school critical school, which tries to just throw off the elitist understanding. And, in that category we have good number of scholars Ranjit Guha as I shared earlier, but beyond that we have people like Gayatri Spivak.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:04)



Also, we have Partha Chatterjee another prominent social scientist and then we try to speak about the contribution of Shahid Amin followed by people like Sumit Sarkar and also we have Gyandha Pandey as one of the leading figure in the field of subaltern school. And finally, we tried to see some alternatives names like I said earlier David Hardiman was there, we have David Arnold who also have understood or try to understand the Indian history in a different way. And apart from that we had certain school of thoughts which has tried to understand the subaltern in a specific fashion.

But, the subaltern which have thought of earlier in 1980's, but now if you try to see till 1993 onwards, I think there was a gradual shift gradual shift. In a sense that earlier the understanding was rested more in terms of understanding the society which was based on the specific understanding, but the basic idea in that sense of course, is that when we try to speak about the subaltern school in a specific framework, we try to find out that it meant basically that those histories which are to create a new intellectual environment has to be seen in terms of a cause of at relationship. Especially, the changes are to be occurred inside the subaltern projects, subaltern studies project, which tries to put the history in to the different front. And, we try to see the intellectual history of the subalternity has emerged outside and in opposition to the subaltern studies.

So, in that way I think subaltern studies itself has what you can say a critic within. And, basically we try to see that this intellectual crowd, which has been part of this subaltern

school of thought, that has created and reverberated upon various issues which we try to see. Speaking about contribution of Ranjit Guha; Guha has basically questioned the interpretation of the elitist historiography of the Indian nationalist on 2 counts. The first is that the elitist role in the construction of the Indian consciousness.

So, as I said earlier also that elitist understanding of the history has to be negated in that sense as such definitely we try to see that this elitist understanding, which has led to the construction of Indian consciousness has to be denied in that sense as such. That of course, is one significant thing which we can work about and apart from that we also try to see the making of India as nation. And, this making of India's nation also has to be seen been guided by the understanding of this elite elitist class.

So, the subaltern historiography also questions the marks school of thought for being the tendency for merging in to the various nationalistic ideology of the modernity and progress. And, can we see the understanding of the nationalistic ideology, without this modernity and the issue of progress. So, that also has to be worked out. Then, the subaltern believe that the master school of thought ignore the ideology of caste and religion; idea of caste and religion. Basically, we try to see that ideology of the caste and religion which has been ignored by the master school of thought and the subaltern basically try to focus upon that, that they can also be an important factor in the Indian history. And, according to this subaltern school by ignoring the ideology of the caste and religion, one cannot speak about the understanding of the society in totality.

Especially, when we try to see the subaltern historiography, it tries to establish the voice of the voiceless, it tries to understand the contribution of the marginalized categories especially in regard to the Indian society, we try to see that how the history from below has to be constructive where, the role of the marginalized or the role of the voiceless are to be heard.

Now, one important thing that we try to work upon is so, according to the Ranjit Guhas understanding about the 2 elitist historiography, which we tried to see as the stimulus and response are going to be an important issue, because Goha argues that rather than guided by the idealism or altruism the Indian nationalist try to get the reward from the share of the wealth power and the prestige. And, that has been created and associated with the

colonial rulers. For this there was an interplay of competition and collaboration between the colonial masters and the native elitists elites in that sense as such.

So, this tumorous and the response was seen as an important aspect, which has led to the combination between the elite and the masters the so, called British empire. Because, tumorous was there and there was a response, which has led to the competition and collaboration over this particular issue. And, Guha has basically tried to focus upon the fact that the Indian nationalism was guided by the idealism of the Indian elite. Because, they were the people who heard a knowledge about the Indian societies and what they write or what they put was basically that Indian elite led to the people from subjugation to freedom.

And, in other words one can say that when we try to speak about the history in terms of Borgia's we had the two categories of Borgia's. One of course, is the colonial Borgia's that is the British and on the other hand we have the native Borgia's who were behaving on behalf of the British Empire. So, we have the two categories of Borgia's and the Indian history was been restricted to the understanding from that Borgia view point, but what about the commoners? What about the people of their own? What they have done at their own end these things have not been documented and presented.

If, we try to see the understanding of subaltern from the oxford dictionary meaning, we try to see that it has an element of subordination which is expressed in terms of the expressive caste, class, gender or certain other things. And, you try to see that the population this scores primarily refers to the people or masses which have been thought about by (Refer Time: 19:31). And the significance of the ideologies need to be viewed rarely in terms of the dialectical tension between people and the classes where conflicting situation provides the specific meaning.

So, in that context we have to understand this whole debate. And this perspective seeks to restore the balance by highlighting the role of politics of the masses as against the elite politics. So, how this balance has been maintained by the so, called politics of the masses and the people the elite's politics what they were playing? So, what is the net balance is going to be the resulting history. And, the whole thrust of subaltern historiography is on reconstructing the other history. The other history, which has to be written by the history of the peoples politics and the movement and the attempt to make their own history.

And, that is how we can have the new understanding about the Indian society? And these perspective emphasize not to view the present and the tribal insurgency simply as an object of the history, but they should be treated as the subject of who can create the history? Who has the transformative skills? Who have the transformative consciousness of their own and which can lead to the transformation of the society?

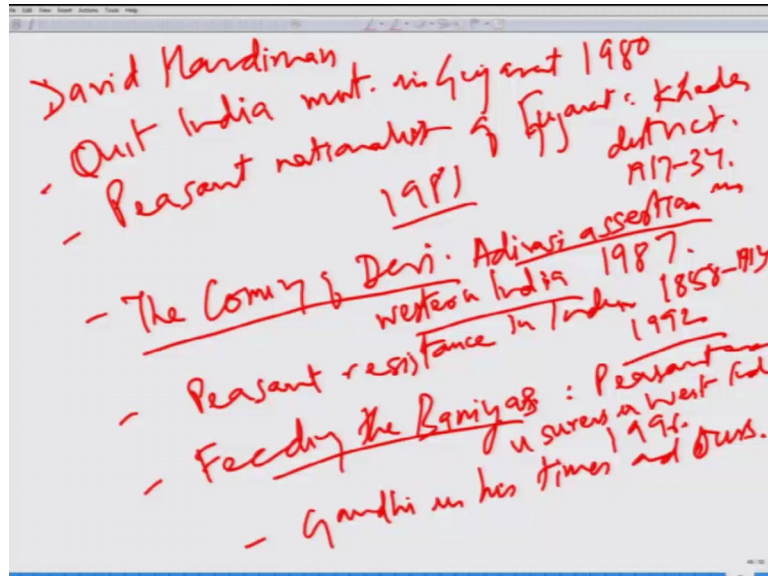
So, that way we can see that the wider masses the so, called the subjugated masses also has the capacity or the tendency to work upon and fight and to create and recreate the history. And, that has been talked about by people like David Hardiman, Ranjit Guha, B R Ambedkar definitely is one name in that sense as such Kapil Kumar and many others. And, these subalternist are they claimed to have an unfolding that incapacity of the nationalist and the elitist historiography. And to incorporate the voices of the week the subjugated into the project of the history rewriting, that how we can put into what you can say into the fore front the voices of the week of the subjugated.

And, how they have to be represented in order to write the real history of the Indian society? And these subaltern classes, if you try to speak about or tell about it can range from the categories of artisans to the poor present, to the landless labors, to the tribal population, to the presentry in general and to even inclusive of the women. So, in that way if you try to see the subaltern has a huge canvas, which can cover up the industrial workers, the agriculture workers, and even the tribals in that sense as such. And, it has that connect which can have the real essence of the Indian society, which has not been taken up by the historians when they were trying to write the history of either the independence struggle, or trying to have the understanding of then Indian civilization, or even trying to speak about the creation of the Indian society in terms of the future.

If, you try to speak about the contribution of the of Ranjit Guha in a broader sentence. I think his understanding about present insurgency in that sense revolves around the fact that, when we are creating the new history or when we are trying to understand the history in a new way, we have to see that this history has to an to cover up and also project upon the contribution of the presentry in terms of the insurgencies, which have been generated. So, it is not that the elites are required to project or to and make them visible rather the presentry by their own can fight up the issues and they can come to the surface, they can come in to the fore front, that is what we try to see is the contribution of

Ranjit Guha? Then, if you try to see the contribution of David Hardeman and David Hardeman if we try to just see his contribution.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:51)



David Hardeman was basically again seen as a person, who was from Pakistan Rawalpindi born in it 1947. He was thought that the university of (Refer Time: 24:05) the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. And, later on he is attached to the University of Warwick a United Kingdom. And finally, in 19 80s his presence was visible at the center fall Social Studies in Gujarat, in Surat. And in 1981, while he was at the Center Fall Studies in Surat, he had worked upon and also when he was in the visiting fellow in the sense Center Fall Studies in Social Science Calcutta; he was trying to have the writings on the subaltern.

And, basically he was seen as one of the founding members of the subaltern group; in fact, one some of his articles which happens to be related to many aspect of the Indian society. Especially the tribals is going to be significant. If we just try to see some of his important contributions, we try to see that the quit India movement in Gujarat has been talked about by him; Quit India movement in Gujarat. So, I think the regional essence that was in 1980's that was one important work, then we tried to see Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat, that was basically part of this Kheda district study that was in 1917 to 1934, which came in 1900 and 81.

So, that was another crucial work that we tried to see then, another celebrative work of course, is the coming of Devi. That is basically the Adivasi assertion in Western India Peasant resistance in India that was from 1858 to 1900 in 14 and this work came in 1900 and 92, then also we have another popular work by him, that is Feeding the Baniyas. That is the Peasant and asurers in Western India. That work came in 1900 and 96 and then Gandhi in his times and ours is another significant work. And, then you have the histories of for the subordinates and also we have certain other works on Christian missionaries of the tribal India.

So, these are certain works which David Hardiman has try to work upon. Especially when we try to see the salivated work which we may refer over here is the coming of the Devi that is basically the Adivasi assertion of the Western India. And to some extent we will try to focus upon a feeding the Baniyas, that is again a crucial work which try to have a sense of subaltern understanding.

Now, if you try to see Hardeman's contribution in terms of a sensitive historian who try to participate in the creation of the subaltern perspective and as the historians, he was having the specialty in the History of the Modern India. And in late 1960's he had studied and written on the South Asian History in a wider framework and the main focus of his work has been to have an understanding from the colonial period onwards in the South Asian History. And, he was basically trying to understand the role of rural society, in the creation of the Indian society in general. Especially the relationship of power that is existing in the rural India at the various level and going to an extent of even speaking about the Indian independence movement.

So, these are certain contributions which Hardeman has tried to focus upon and in that way he tried to contribute significantly to the understanding of the Indian history in a new way. And in 1970s he tried to see that as a popular scholar in the field of subaltern schools, he tried to work upon in the Gramscian Framework the subaltern understanding that is the meaning of the subordinate groups, which he has chosen as the centrality of relationship of domination. The subaltern that is the subordinate group and how that subordinate group can be seen as the centrality of the relationship of domination and subordination, in a specific society and this is the contribution which have been referred the coming of the Devi.

Now, if you try to see his another contribution. Especially his focus area was on the Gujarat and the neighboring states. Especially Gandhian leadership which is trying to see other than how Gandhi the presentry has been part of the Indian freedom struggle, especially this Kheda district where the present nationalistic fight has been raised in Gujarat. So, these are certain things which we try to see he has examined the power structure of the rural societies and how this hegemony control is in exercised by the asserts and the limits to that hegemony seen particularly in a specific revolts.

It has studied the movement of the assertion of the Adivasis that the tribal people, who has fight has in fight against the liuor dealers and who has been granted the monopoly right of supply to the Britishers. I think the study of coming of the Devi is a work which tries to have the connect between the so, called colonial rulers. Especially the British in that sense as such the British state and then you have the merchants that is basically which we try to see the Parsis in that sense as such, the merchants in that sense as such or they are and then you have the tribal people.

So, the 3 categories of the people; you have the two elites one of course, is the merchant elites the tradesman who have who are native, but have some alignment with the British. Then you have another elite that is the colonial elite in that sense as such and then you have the subjugation or the subjugated mass that is the tribal population. And, in that way we try to see that the contribution tries to have the connect between these aspects.

Especially he also tried to see that Gandhi and his legacy how it has to be seen in a different way. Especially Gandhi who is trying to have certain engagement with the issues with regard to assessment of the India's future and what is the role of the various categories basically the Adivasis and the presentries in the making of the new India. That of course, is one significant thing which we try to work upon.

Thank you.