

## A Study in Social Dynamism of Village 'Arya Nagar' in District Hisar

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**KEYWORDS** Village morphology; ethnic pattern; caste; traditional social hierarchy; secular dominance model

**ABSTRACT** The present study has been framed to focus on the recent transformation of the village society, which is caste ridden, conservative and sluggish to adopt new innovations. The present work is mainly based on primary data collected through interview schedules from 100 families on stratified random basis. The study reveals that the village exhibits the secular dominance model in its morphology. The study also reveals that Mahajan, Bishnoi, Dhanak and Balmiki castes are among static communities while Arora, Jat, Khati, Kumhar, Nai, Harijan and Maniar and Chhimpi castes are progressive communities. Brahmin caste, on the other hand, is retrogressive.

### INTRODUCTION

A study of the social structure of a region requires a comprehensive understanding of not only demographic aspects but also the historical, cultural and economic aspects. The social dynamism reflects the capacity of any community to transform itself in response to the modern changes of the society (Srinivas, 1969). Discrimination on the basis of caste has been common in social, economic and political spheres as well as settlement for generations. Social restrictions and degree of discrimination on castes may be attributable, at least in part, to cultural and historical factors and hence could differ from one social group to another. Though, education has been valued as a vehicle of social change but only a few selected sections of the society generally pursued formal education. Some sections were explicitly prohibited from receiving education thereby preventing equality in education. This naturally led to wide variations in education, occupation and other economic conditions among population belonging to various social groups. These are most acute in between the 'caste Hindus' and the castes that were treated as 'untouchable' now grouped as scheduled castes (Kulkarni, 2002).

Conventionally, village morphology is assessed in terms of three zones i.e. core, mantle

and periphery. Core is the area of the settlements around the nucleus where primary settlers congregated. Mantle is the zone of secondary settlers who followed after the first group of settlers and the periphery is usually the area of scheduled caste settlements. The characteristic features of the core are compact settlements comprising of houses with high density of population with traditional architecture. Mantle exhibits a mixture of the old and modern settlements, relatively lower density of population and mixed caste social structure. Periphery has the old, poor houses, low concentration of houses, sparse density and is mainly inhabited by schedule caste population (Singh, 1975).

It is in this reference that the present study has been framed to focus on the recent transformation of the village society, which is caste ridden, conservative and sluggish to adopt new innovations. Indian villages, in general, have been insular and self-contained but the recent modernization and government incentives have brought in a radical change in village communities.

**Study Area:** Geographically, the village 'AryaNagar' is located at 29° 8' north latitude and 73° 43' east longitude. It is 9 km away from Hisar city, situated on State Highway No. 26, which is called Hisar- Balsmandh road. This village is distinct in character in terms of its genesis. It came into existence about 1700 A.D. Most of the families are immigrants from nearby districts of Rajasthan state such as Bikaner, Siker, Hanumangarh and Ganganagar etc. It has a concentration of many ethnic communities, caste and religion, although dominated by Hindus. At the time of the survey,

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the village had 1008 households constituted by eighteen castes in which 65 households lived in *Dhanis*' (Farm house).

**Objectives:** The main objectives of the study are;

- (1) To assess whether the traditional practices of caste segregation in households continue or modern inputs have broken the traditional taboos and a new phase of development has started.
- (2) To assess whether the socio-economic status of various castes has changed or not and whether they have retained their traditional social hierarchy or not.

**Hypotheses:** The village Arya Nagar is a fast changing rural center depicting changes in occupation, land use and settlements. The incentives given by government to lower strata of population have improved the economic standard of the schedule castes and backward classes. Therefore, following hypotheses have been formulated subject to factual verification:

- (1) The socio-religio model of village morphology in space occupation is giving way to secular dominance model.
- (2) The traditional hierarchy of social status is changing and giving place to economic hierarchy.

## DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources. Cadastral map of the village settlement has been obtained from village Patwari. Three tier zones have also been delineated in the village 'Arya Nagar'. The said zones are not concentric and compact but triangular because of the physical features and the transport lines present in the village. The available open space and settlements density are the main criteria for dividing the village into the zones of core, mantle, and the periphery. The major castes of the village (having five or more settlements in the village) have been arranged in Table 1 on the basis of the traditional social hierarchy prevailing in the region.

The information regarding different aspects of socio-economic development such as number of households, sex ratio, dependency ratio, literacy, worker ratio, per capita agricultural land, persons per room, per capita monthly income, income by source (primary, secondary and

**Table 1: Traditional castes hierarchy village: Arya Nagar**

Higher Castes	Intermediate Castes	Lower Castes
Brahmin	Mahajan	Khati
Rajput	Arora	Kumhar
	Jat	Nai
	Bishnoi	Maniar
	Sunar	Chhimpi
		Harijan
		Dhanak
		Balmiki
		Herri
		Jhimar
		Lohar

tertiary), per capita monthly expenditure, expenditure on food, clothing, fuel, lighting, intoxicants and smoking and others; L.P.G. as mode of energy and per capita monthly saving are collected through interview schedules of 100 households from each caste on the basis of stratified random sampling in March 2000.

'Z' score statistical technique has been employed to classify the value of various parameters of socio-economic development among major castes i.e.

$$'Z' \text{ score} = (x - \bar{x})/s$$

Where,  $\bar{x}$  = mean of different parameters,  $x$  = class value of parameters and  $s$  = Standard deviation of parameters.

The 'z' score obtained is classified into the following categories and the ranks are assigned in case of positive parameters as below (Table 4): +1 to +2 = 3, +1 to -1 = 2 and +1 to -2 = 1

But in case of negative parameters such as smoking and intoxicants etc., the given ranks are vice-versa. Further, composite score is achieved by summing up the individual score of all indicators of socio-economic development. Thus, The range of composite score (vary from 32 to 47) has been subdivided into three classes, which are the expression of the low developed castes (<35), average developed castes (35-43) and developed castes (>43).

## Ethnic Pattern

The entry point of the village is through 'Subhash Gate', which opens to 'gam-bich-wali-gali' running in SE to NW direction through the village. The said road (Balsmand-Bhadra road) is the major axial road, which is transversely crossed by N-S minor roads. The settlements are restricted in S-E and N-W by two water ponds. The boundary of the core is formed by the circum-

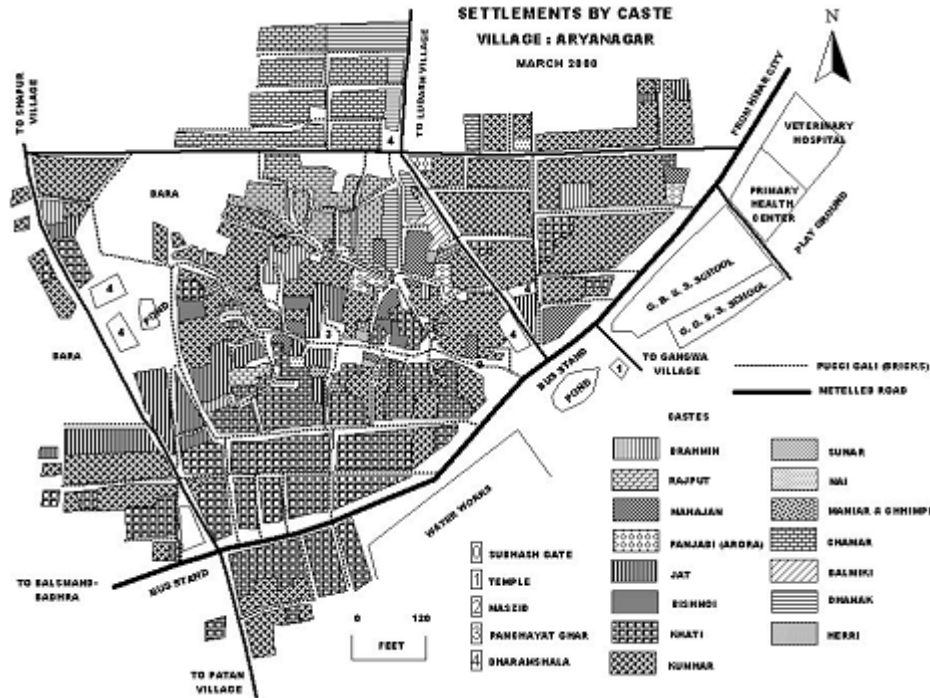


Fig. 1. Settlements by Caste (Village: Aryanagar)

bulatory passage called 'LAL DORA'. It is, then, followed by mantle zone, where the available open space is relatively more as compared to the core. Primarily Khatis' in the south and scheduled caste in the northeast occupy the Mantle. Kumhars' occupy the southeastern corner. The direction, therefore, has not played a significant role in the settlement of different castes according to their social hierarchy. All castes, irrespective of social hierarchy have clustered together in groups of their own kith and kin. Similar situation prevails in the periphery, where Kumhar, Khati and scheduled castes have their houses in rather equal proportions (Fig. 1).

According to surveyed information, the village has 872 settlements wherein 24.31 percent settlements are settled in the core, 32.57 percent in the mantle zone and 43.12 percent in the periphery zone (Fig. 2). The density of settlements decreases as we move from the core to the periphery. i.e., 15, 10, and 5 in core, mantle and periphery zones respectively, while the average density of the village is 7 houses per acre. Similarly, the proportion of open space in the three zones increases as we move from the core to the periphery i.e., 0.83 percent, 9.35 percent

and 38.44 percent of total area in core, mantle and periphery zones respectively. It is obvious that the mantle zone possesses a transitional character of moderate density and relatively more open space than the core. Periphery has few settlements and the highest percentage of open space. Core is highly dense with very little open space i. e. 0.83 percent (0.97 acre).

**Core Zone:** The core zone is dominated by two castes i.e. Kumhar and Khati, which account for 40.57 and 27.83 percent settlements respectively. These two castes were the first settlers of the village. Jat is also an important caste, having 10.38 percent settlements. Brahmin, Maniar and Chhimpi caste have equal share of settlements i.e. 4.24 percent each. Mahajan, Arora, Bishnoi and Nai castes have 2.83, 2.36, 3.30 and 1.42 percent settlements respectively. Others castes (Rajput and Sunar) constitute to 2.83 percent settlements (Fig 2). The study reveals that core zone of the village has highest concentration of lower caste people.

**Mantle Zone:** Harijan, Khati and Kumhar castes dominate in the mantle zone and comprise 33.10, 27.11 and 20.42 percent of total settlements respectively (Fig 2). Dhanak caste occupies 7.39

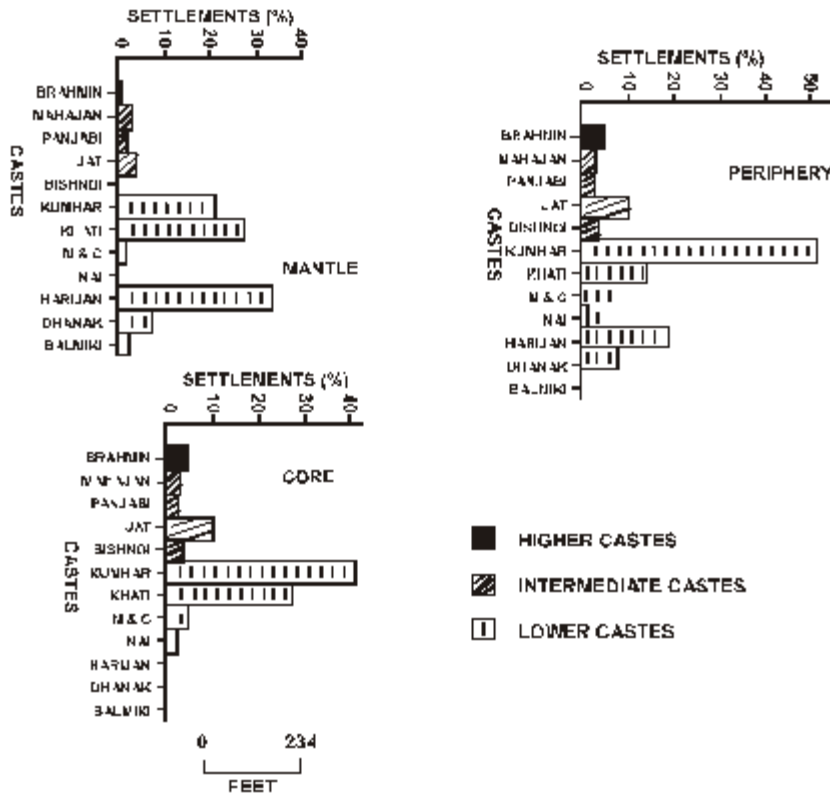


Fig. 2. Settlement concentration of different castes in morphological rings village: Arya Nagar March 2000

percent settlements. Remaining 11.98 percent settlements belong to Jat, Brahmin, Mahajan, Arora, Maniar and Chimpi, Balmiki and Herri castes. The Scheduled Castes show a higher concentration of settlement in the mantle zone. It is due to the fact that the present territory in the mantle zone was under periphery when the village was initially settled. Later the boundary of the village expanded and the periphery was rearranged into the mantle zone.

**Periphery Zone:** The majority of settlements belong to Kumhar caste i.e. 54.42 percent of the total settlement (Fig 2). Harijan, Khati and Dhanak castes also have an important share of settlements, and account for 18.58, 14.06 and 7.97 percent of the total settlements respectively. Remaining settlements are observed of Jat (5.05 percent), Brahmin (1.33 percent), Mahajan (0.53 percent), Arora (0.26 percent) and Nai (0.80 percent) castes.

It is also evident from the figure. 3 that Dhanaks' follow the rule of socio-religio model

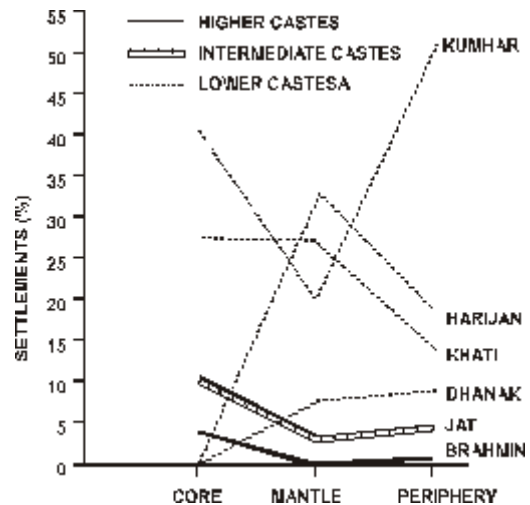


Fig. 3. Settlement concentration of different morphological zones by castes village: Arya Nagar March 2000

of space occupation. Rest of the castes has either opposite trend or they moderately confirm the assumption.

It is evident from above discussion that the village Arya Nagar doesn't belong to the traditional type, but it presents a rather modern mix up of situations. Both higher and lower castes have intermingled. The Khatis' and Kumhars' dominate in the core area, Harijan in the mantle and the higher castes have a mixed distribution. It could, therefore, be summarized that the village exhibits the secular dominance model in its morphology.

**Socio-Economic Status by Castes**

Castes play an important role to determine the level of Socio-Economic Status of Rural Households in India (Yadav et al., 2003). It is evident from Table 2 that Aroras and Jats belong to developed castes, Brahmins, Bishnois, Mahajans, Khatis, Kumhars, Nais, Harijans and Maniars and Chhimpis belong to average developed castes and Dhanaks and Balmikis belong to underdeveloped castes.

**Relative Change in the Hierarchy of Castes:**

As per one of the objectives of the study, the traditional social status has been compared with the modern socio-economic status and following three categories of castes have been observed during the investigation (Table 3).

**Retrospective Castes:** The socially high caste i.e. Brahmin has down its rank from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> or upper class to middle class in the village. It has, thus, shown a decline from its top status recognized by socio-religious parameters. Brahmins' are now changing their age-old priestly profession. However, in the process of transformation, they are not able to retain their top status but have slipped downwards, hence recognized as retrospective caste.

**Static Castes:** Mahajan, Bishnoi, Dhanak and Balmiki castes have maintained their traditional rank of hierarchy. Mahajan and Bishnoi castes belong to 2<sup>nd</sup> rank and Dhanak and Balmiki castes belong to 3<sup>rd</sup> rank, which corroborate their traditional social status.

**Progressive Castes:** Arora, Jat, Khati, Kumhar, Nai, Harijan and Maniar and Chhimpi castes have experienced significant improvement in their social status. Arora and Jat castes have changed their rank from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>. Khati, Kumhar, Harijan

**Table 2 composite socio-economic status of castes village : Arya Nagar,**

Castes	No. of house-holds	Sex ratio	Depen- dency ratio	Lite- racy	Work- ers	Per capita agricul- tural land	Per capita room	Monthly per capita in- come	Pri- mary in- come	Sec- ondary in- come	Ter- tiary in- come	Month- ly Per capita expen- diture	Food Cloth- ing	Fuel	Light- ing	Intoxi- cants & smo- king	Oth- ers	L.P.G. mode of energy savings	Mon- thly Per capita savings	Compo- site score
Arora	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	2	47
Jat	2	1	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3	44
Brahmin	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	43
Mahajan	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	42
Bishnoi	2	1	1	3	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	41
Khati	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	41
Kumhar	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	40
Harijan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	1	1	3	2	1	2	2	39
Nai	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	38
Maniar & Chhimpi	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	35
Balmiki	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	33
Dhanak	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	32

**Table 3: Relative change in status of castes village: Arya Nagar**

<i>Castes</i>	<i>Traditional Rank</i>	<i>Composite Rank</i>	<i>Status</i>
Brahmin	1	2	Retgressive
Mahajan	2	2	Static
Arora	2	1	Progressive
Jat	2	1	Progressive
Bishnoi	2	2	Static
Khati	3	2	Progressive
Kumhar	3	2	Progressive
Nai	3	2	Progressive
Maniar & Chhimpee	3	2	Progressive
Harijan	3	2	Progressive
Dhanak	3	3	Static
Balmiki	3	3	Static

and Maniar and Chhimpi castes have significantly improved their position. They have changed from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> rank of hierarchy.

Thus, it is evident from the preceding discussion that a noticeable change has been observed in the social status of various lower castes such as Khati, Kumhar, Nai, Harijan, etc. They have improved their standard of living so far. With the improvement in economy and spread of education, the lower castes have been adopting respectable in village society. The inhuman social behavior, which was a blot on

Indian society, has been partially weeded out in the village. Lower castes now live in harmony with upper castes. All the changes are reflected in the social system of village Arya Nagar that can be taken as the microcosm of the national level. In the village, untouchability is nearly abolished. Education, infrastructure, influence of nearby city 'Hisar' and political advancements in the village have been contributed to the change in the status of the lower castes. It seems that the efforts made by the state and the central government have brought fruits in ameliorating the condition of down trodden or the lowest strata of the society.

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