

**A Review of Rural Sociology, its Origin, Scope and Controversies.**

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**Abstract :** In India, rural sociology is treated as a part of sociology. Like sociology it is also considered as a social science. It is precisely a specialized field of sociology. Its nature is scientific. Actually to say, by nature rural sociology is a science. Science in simple words refers to a systematic body of knowledge. In case of rural sociology the rural problems are systematically and logically studied.

As a result of which the study becomes universally applicable. Rural sociology fulfills the different criteria of science. But the whole controversy centers round some problems which denies the rural sociology the status of a science. Generally the term 'Nature' refers to essential qualities or characteristic features of a phenomenon.

**Key Words :** Sociology, Rural

**Origin and Development of Rural Sociology in India:**

Rural sociology is relatively novel branch of sociology. It is originated in the United States of America in the form of systematic science in the year 1820. It has taken more than half a century to become established as a distinct academic need or professional study.

In the year 1907, rural sociology seems to be started its growth. At that time, American President Roosevelt emphasized on the study of rural sociology and rural social problem.

In 1911, a Rural Sociology Department was established in American Sociological Society. In 1919, a Rural Sociology Department was established under the auspices of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics under the leadership of Dr. C.J. Golpin. The name was later changed to "Rural Population and Rural Life." A quarterly named "Rural Sociology" was published in 1936.

In India, only after the independence, literature on rural society has been on the increase. After independence, during the first five-year plan, strategies were made for the upliftment of the condition of rural people.

In the year 1955, prominent village studies by famous sociologists were brought out in India. It was suggested that there was a need of rural reconstruction and welfare. Therefore community development programmes came into the scene. Planning Commission has introduced several projects, land reforms, co-operative movement, five-year plans, Panchayat Raj etc.

These plans and programmes have contributed a lot towards the development of rural sociology in India. Different sociologists have made their original contributions in the field of rural sociology in India. Among them are Dr. D. N. Majumdar, Prof. N. K. Bose, Prof. M.N. Srinivas, S. C. Dube etc. are the pioneers.

Before independence, also, many studies were conducted about village life in India. In 1926, Royal Commission on Agriculture was set up. World war I saw agrarian crisis and began to draw the attention of the scholars towards rural India. George Keating's and Harold Mann in Bombay, Gilbert Slater in Madras and E.V. Lucas in Punjab initiated intensive studies of particular villages.

In the meanwhile, Viswa Bharati set up a Rural Reconstruction Board. In 1932 Scottish Church College, Calcutta published accounts of village life. But all these studies before independence remained isolated. Only after 1947, our nation decided to have planned development.

### **Scope of Rural Sociology:**

The scope of rural sociology refers to the boundary or subject matter of this discipline. Regarding the subject matter, A.R. Desai is of the opinion that it is a developing science, a young science at the stage of infancy and its subject matter is yet to be determined.

Prof. Nelson says about the scope of rural sociology that rural sociology is the description and analysis of progress of various groups as they exist in rural environment.

T.L. Smith also says that the field of rural sociology is the study of pattern of association, groupings and group behaviour of the people who mainly live on agriculture and agriculture is their means of livelihood.

It is concluded from the above opinion that the scope of rural sociology is the study of rural societies and complexities of rural social life. Indian rural community is a veritable mosaic of different communities.

In case of every social science, controversies have taken place.

## **Controversies.**

### **They are four main controversies:**

1. Rural sociology is a science or an art.
2. Whether rural sociology is a scientific subject matter or special subject matter or it is a synthesis of different social sciences.
3. Whether rural sociology deals with only village community or includes urban communities.
4. Whether rural sociology includes only the formulation of different laws or includes Follow-up action.

Rural sociology is the scientific, systematic, comprehensive study of rural social organisations, its structure, functions and objective tendencies of development. It deals with the systematic study of social relationship and various problems concerning the rural society and rural life.

## **Importance and Significance of Rural Sociology:**

After Independence it is very much necessary for our country to have a systematic study of the rural social organization, its structure, function and evolution.

Prof. A. R. Desai, while highlighting the importance of rural sociology, observes, "It is, however, urgently necessary to make a scientific and systematic study of rural society; of its economic foundations, social and cultural superstructure, of its institutions and functions, of the problems arising from the rapid process of disintegration which is undergoing and which even threatens its breakdown."

The practical value of the study of rural sociology is widely recognized today. Rural sociology which aims at providing systematic and scientific approach to rural problems and life is assuming great significance because in India rural society after independence has acquired new significance.

India is a classic land of agriculture; the economic foundation of village community centres around agriculture. It is with the help of rural sociology that it can be possible to find out what are the causes of break-up of the self-sufficiency of the village community.

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