Ubiquity of Changes in Dynamic Societies

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Abstract: *Change is inevitably the only constant in society. With a dynamic influx of environmental, economic, political and educational impulses, the prevailing stability and consensus of members of the society tend to change. Introducing the change is invariably the result of individual moral development of those members of society who tend to embrace the new or the modern over the traditional or conventional usage. As the alteration sets in, it percolates down to every corner of the combined cohabitation, and it is then that the opposing or the consequential; effect emerges. It at times eases the process, at other times complicates it ever more. Although a primitive society by its nomenclature, it is a part of the nation and it is the duty of the Government to hold it together with the other corresponding societies and at the same time completely safeguarding their own self interests. The paper in its objective tries to analyse how such a balance is sustained and how changing tribal and modern societies are trying to relocate a new equilibrium.*
Keywords: *Equilibrium, Change,Relocation,Government, Balance and Ubiquity*

I. Introduction

Dynamism is the most essential aspect of any social order, irrespective of its legal complex or moral standards that form a consensus in it. Changes in the social institutions occur invariably as a function of changing needs and requirements of people reacting to the varying situations. While the factors initiating the change may be similar, the aims that are desired to be achieved differ along with the varied consequences it produces.In order to analyse the ubiquity in the diversified social structure, and the similarity embedded in the sociocultural differences, societies can be classified into two broad categories –
Tribal societies and
Modern societies.
These two distinct kinds of society with their unique ways of living, solidarity and set of socifacts, artifacts , mentifacts ,provide a viable ground of study elucidating on the changes that come in and the change that happens thereof.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study is to analyses the ubiquity of changes in dynamic societies with special reference to tribal communities.

RESEARCH QUESTION: How far is the social stability of societies being affected by changing trends in it ?

II. Methodology Of Research

In our present research work, the topic being of sociological importance in particular, we have combined both doctrinal and empirical means of research. While doctrinal research helped in the analysis of the concept and the background of the research work, empirical research related it with the practical scenario to make this research work relevant and viable.

For the purpose of doctrinal research, books, articles, journals and analytical tribal, demographic reports have been consulted.

For the purpose of empirical research, a survey has been conducted. Purposive sampling was done and the sample size of population was fixed at 20, there were two sets of data and two sets of sample - one being tribal and the other being non-tribal. A Questionnaire was prepared by brainstorming method and the same set of 5 questions was administered to the two sets of sample population. The respondents answered both objectively and subjectively to the questions, and it was supplemented by their individual interviews where they expressed their opinions.

Both quantitative analysis by means of bar graphs and qualitative analysis of the responses have been done and then the hypothesis tested accordingly to give a conclusion suitable to the findings.

III. Conceptualising Tribal Society And Their Changes

In dealing with tribal society as a topic of research, the most enigmatic aspect is to put labels or tags of generalisations on them, their beliefs andpractices. The diversity and the disparity of rituals, practices and customs have always posed a serious problem to anthropologists and indologists to classify and segregate them. Against this backdrop, the conceptualisation of primitive or tribal society has to be done in different aspects, some of which are:

Religious beliefs of the tribals cannot be obviously segregated into the mainstream religious beliefs of Hinduism, Islam or Christianity; they are rather products of development from their own sociocultural thought processes. The religious practices always highlight a dominant connexion between the individual human and the nature which has often been symbolically referred to as the Supernatural, attracting much awe and devotion. Subsequently we find the influence of this belief or ideology in the practices followed by the tribes. One notable example would be animism. It is the belief in soul- 'anima'.

The tribal communities believe in totemism- worshipping of certainplant and animal species and making tattoos or emblems of them on their bodies.Totemism exists in a tribe having a definite social organisation, and it is a means of social solidarity among them as well. Often there are different ceremonies concerning the totemic species.

Reference has also been made to Naturism – a theory primarily advocated by Max Mueller, which describes how forces of nature came to be associated with powers and began to be personifed giving rise to a system of worship surrounding them. In addition to this, many rituals have developed centring on uncertainties of occupational activities like fishing when states of tension and apprehension are mitigated by the comforting faithsystems. In this way a religious system develops and operates in the tribal society.

The social and economic life of primitive societies is linked with the education systems that are followed. One interesting aspect is the institution of Dormitories-youth houses that exist in preliterate societies from all around the world. They are both bisexual or monosexual and form a centre of attention while evaluating educational and social lives of tribals.In the absence of a formal education organisation; it is the function of these dormitories together with a cumulation of folkways, mores and customs that impart a pedagogical training to the younger generations. Training in dormitories even extends to sexual training imparted by older ones to the younger learners,along with ensuring the maintenance of the cultural peculiarities.

Equilibrium of a society gets affected when the established order undergoes a metamorphosis and when the new trends that creep in set up a conflict with the diminishing erstwhile patterns. In this sense, the interaction of primitive societies with wider, mainstream society and the colonial British power during pre-independent times have to be noted. In this sense, the processes of social mobility and the concept of social imitation form the core of analysis:

Social Imitation;

Different social groups cohabit in a society being interconnected and at the same time interrelated with one another. By virtue of such cohesion, often communities tend to develop motives of imitation – it may be powered by a greater social acceptance or attainment of such rituals which may be associated with a higher social prestige. Inimitation, a particular tribal group may tend to adopt such customs or practices as are generally followed by other social or religious groups. One example would be adopting of Hindu rites of worship and subsequent devotion towards the Hindu Gods by the tribals. Imitation has a wider social application in the sense that it affects the balance or the consensus both within and outside social groups and tends to create standards of reference groups.

Social Mobility;

It is the process of a movement in social status or relative position in society by climbing up the hierarchical ladder of social classification.M.N Srinivas in his sociological studies had coined such social mobility as – Sanskritisation; when lower castes moved towards upper twice born castes, or Westernisation; when indigenous communities accepted the western styles of life. These twin processes initiated the winds of change in the tribal societies, affected their socio-cultural individuality and extended the scope for a better assimilation in the wider society. It is of particular importance as regards to the fact that any change in the station at which a community or a person is situated implies an overall change in the balance of interconnected functioning system of the social organisation at large.

Acculturation;

The initiation of change in a tribal society is often largely attributed to the process of acculturation whereby the ethnic system of social mechanism undergoes a complete transformation under the influence of creeping modernity. This manifests itself in the attitude of the tribal ethnicity that adapts to the eventual changes in different ways. It is the process whereby the social values undergo a rapid change with the force of a

circumstantial factor operating ubiquitously. Whereas on one hand, acculturation is a way in which the dynamic social system induces a change in static customary observances, on the other hand any such change poses a threat to the indigenous value systems.

Government Initiatives

Ever since Independence, the Congress Government of Jawaharlal Nehru had aimed at socio economic policies for a better integration of the primitive societies. Being different from the mainstream society and considering the social distance that the primitive societies have maintained, integration approach was the most justified and at the same time difficult for a proper implementation. The degree of resistance that tribal groups had in accepting the dictates of the elected government, assimilating them into the electorate, and educating them with the new ways of life posed a serious challenge. However Jawaharlal Nehru's policy of *Panchsheel;* a set of legislations aimed at improving the tribal social life and standard of living as well.

Apart from legislations, there have been other initiatives by the Government as well – for example welfare schemes for women and children, special importance to the preservation of ethnic tribal arts and languages, showcase their rich cultural heritage.

CONCEPTUALISING MODERN INDIAN SOCIETY AND THEIR CHANGES

The modern Indian society has witnessed an influx of liberal ideas often inspired from western standards of thinking together with the relics of British moral principles that have taken a firm root in our legal system. In the present age of dynamic changes in society, while at one hand the relevance of legal provisions is being put to question time and again, on the other hand, the degree to which they must be retained has become too tough to be discerned. The society has witnessed magnanimous changes in almost every aspect of politics, economics and demographics. An inherently patriarchal and feudal society that was subjugated to colonial domination has evolved into an increasingly cosmopolitan, gender neutral, inclusive, liberal and politically democratised state. From macro level administration of the country adapting to its new found system of electing the leaders of their own choice,to micro level family institutions that started degenerating from joint to separate nuclear ones, society transformed itself. The acculturation that was brought about by Globalisation aimed at integrating the differences into a cooperative cultural matrix. However the biggest challenge with respect to Indian society had been the diversity of the social fabric. This land of diversity reacted differently to similar changes that were introduced – while literacy rate sparked off high in the southern states, there was large scale agricultural development in the north-western sector. Both in migration from neighbouring countries and out migration from India in search of better living conditions affected the demography of the country. Empowerment of women by ways of fostering legislative schemes, involving women in the politics, grassroot level elective bodies, had phenomenal impact in alleviating their status. However still there are regional imbalances- for example Haryana still has the lowest sex ratio with respect to women, and cruel practices of foeticide, infanticide, dowry deaths, domestic violence, sexual harassment and gender bias continues to this day.

Modern society is still plagued with growing concerns of communalism- the religious divide that had reached a zenith of dispute with the Partition of the country (1947).Subsequently communalism has been fuelled time and again to further the self interests of vote bank politics in the country. Favouring a section of people over the other, reserving privileges with a particular social group, following caste based prejudice, orthodox conceptions of misinterpreting religions of being antagonistic to one another and the wrong correlation drawn between religion and terrorism has impeded harmony in the country, thereby resulting in a segmental division of society. The biggest deadlock in the country being the historic Babri Masjid case, the communal divide has evaded some of the best efforts of reconciliation. It is this crucial juncture of prevailing discord that pose a threat to the national unity at large.

Another aspect of the society is the growing dissonance with prevailing legal order – either with the statutory provisions that are bound to be influenced by changing trends of social morality and group consensus. When changes are introduced, the prevailing equilibrium gets misbalanced, and the components of society try to relocate a new balance- eventually the dissonance clears out to bring an increasing consonance between the changes and the rebuilding of a new consensus around them. The acceptance of a legal amendment is proportional to the appeal which it makes to the welfare of people getting affected by it, and in it the diversity of communities and groups that this acceptance often gets debatable.

DRAWING THE PARALLELS: TRIBAL SOCIETY AND MODERN SOCIETY

Although tribal communities have been ecologically aloof from the mainstream societies, not incorporated into the caste fold of prevailing social structure for years, they have developed a unique sociocultural identity that is specific to individual tribal groups and less frequently shared by common groups together. Although it may seem that mainstream society is a complete contrast to the primitive societies, but the ubiquitous process of induction of change and consequential effects that follow are similar, as analysed by the

means of the different casestudies. Any reason of contention in society leads to a movement if it is fuelled by a drive to change an existing order or to re-establish order in a state of disorder. A movement is perpetuated by a growing consensus of opinion in society, together with coordination between those groups who seek to participate in it.

With reference to tribal societies, the movements ever since colonial times are significant to be taken into consideration. While social isolation, economic exploitation and financial impoverishment were chiefly the reasons that fuelled tribal societies to rebel, be it against the British or the Indian Government post Independence, there has always been a desire for a proper social identity- a recognition to their ways of life as a part of the assimilative wider society and not as an exception from the society. Christian missionaries had always adopted an educative approach in not only acculturating them with the modern western ways of life, but had also carried out large scale conversions to Christianity in what came to be known as Christianisation of the tribal societies. Many of these groups were also included in the caste fold of Hindus and by the process of Hinduisation; it has been observed how they modified their ways of life in the nature of Hindus. Despite such changes affecting the tribal societies, a complete integration with the mainstream society could not possibly take place. One notable example is of Santhal Rebellion that was organised against the British in which the guerrilla fighters voiced their anger out by way of launching attacks on the oppressive colonial government. Second important movement would be of tribes in Chhattisgarh region demanding recognition and better employment opportunities and living standards. Years of exploitation and neglect, combined with the repercussion of a cultural change in the way of acculturation gave them a new found strength and vigour to protest. Subsequently the movement turned towards a demand of separate statehood of Jharkhand.
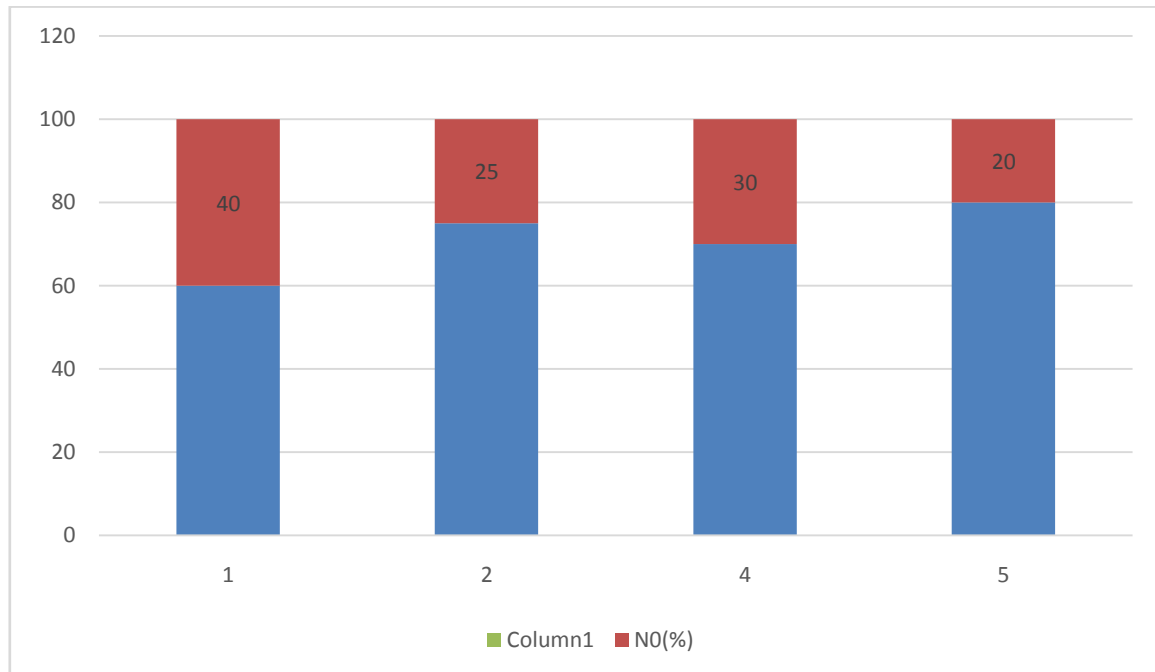
With respect to modern society movements obviously have a similar rationale- to generate a change in society or to alter the present state of affairs by way of inducing the factors of change. In this sense it is important to state that waves of liberalism keep challenging the customary dogmas prevalent in society, rational justification questions faith and modernity challenges traditionalism. In the case of the Movement towards Decriminalising Homosexuality- essential questions were put forward on the liberty of an individual to choose the way of expressing sexuality and that one's own gender orientation cannot be stigmatised by age old societal conventions. Hence the new idea appealed to the free spirited social change makers and eventually the demand gathered a larger consensus to ultimately develop into a constructive movement. If analysed, it is evident that before the sparking of the movement, a social consensus prevailed over accepting the stigmatised hatredtowards homosexualrelationships. The consonance of the wider society was somewhat destabilised with the growing alternative of a legal scope to change or combat such a stigma by way of decriminalising it. In this sense it is noteworthy how after the Supreme Court ruled in abolishing the section 377 criminality, society's standard of morals and mechanism of social control surrounding it evolved with abolishing the stigmas and taboos involved and subsequently the new balance was established.

Often movements stem from socio environmental issues- issues concerning environment, its preservation, sustainable growth all of which again invariably affect the social life of people. Hence modern society is not simply concerned about their own cultural identity but also on the environment that invariably holds the entire sociological phenomenon together. Once again a parallel connection can be drawn between both the tribal and the modern societies in the light of their situational influence and environmental fit. In case of the tribes, they are mostly dependent on the ecological conditions in shaping their livelihoods, economic activities and social functions. An example would be;

Trobriand Islanders have many rituals based on fishing expeditions, which is because they inhabit islands, utilise the abundance of water that shapes their economic activities for survival and as a result of this socio-environmental interlink, their rituals centre around fishing as well. Another example will be of Shifting Axe cultivation prevalent among the tribes in Northeast zone in which large tracts of forest lands are burned for harvesting. Government had banned this practice, will obviously resulted in an incompatibility of the tribal societies dependent on it to adapt to the changed way of their agricultural practices special reference needs to be given to the coal mining operations in Jharia coal belt that has not only resulted induced displacement of aboriginal households, but also degradation of the forestlands that form a apart of the natural habitation of the tribes. Movements and protests have arisen when the needed development colludes with the inherent need of preservation of the forests and nature.

In such a similar way, modern societies that have a sound degree of awareness about the degradation of environment being caused at the hands of irresponsible and uncontrolled exploitation of the ecological resources, have developed strategies of protest, aiming at sustainable development. Movements like Narmada Bachao Andolan by Medha Patekar, Chipko Movement of saving the trees from deforestation, have all demonstrated the depth to which an environmentalissues affect consensus of opinion in the society. People tend to disseminate their concerns among wider groups and percolate their opinions to almost all segments of society, who on agreeing at a common point which affects them all universally, begin protesting. It is during such a protest that a dissonance is created and it is solved when a social change gets initiated.

After conducting a survey among 20-20 people (daily wage earners) of tribal and non-tribal society we obtain following results on the basis of a questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

AGE: 25 TO 45

NATURE:TRIBAL & NON- TRIBAL COMMUNITY

OCCUPATION: DAILY WAGE EARNERS

MEANS: PERSONAL INTERVIEW

1. Do you feel that the society you live in is changing at a steady rate? Why do you feel so?

a)   YES   b) NO

REASON:

2. Do you think that the changes in the society affects you at a personal level? How is it so?

a)   YES   b) NO

REASON:

3. How do you relate modernisation with a change in your ethnic culture?

REASON:

4. Have you felt an imbalance in society that has led to any social movement?

a)   YES   b) NO

REASON

5. Do you feel the need to protest to bring about a social change?

a)   YES   b) NO

REASON

TABLE I: Answers of daily wage earners of tribal society

QUESTION NUMBER	YES (% of YES)	NO (% of NO)
1	12(60%)	08 (40%)
2	15(75%)	05 (25%)
4	14(70%)	06(30%)
5	16(80%)	04(20%)

Source: - Field Survey

The above table can be represented by the help of following chart.

Source: - Field Survey

Analysis of answers of tribal society on the basis of above questionnaire

Majority of the respondents (60%) have affirmatively confirmed with the fact that the state of society being dynamic and being constantly fuelled by changes. It shows that the people in tribal societies have felt the influence of change in their social ways of cohabitation. Negative response (40%) stems from the inability of certain groups of people or individuals to adapt with the changes and an inclination to rather resist change.

The overwhelming number of respondents (75%) acknowledging that their individual lives have been affected by social changes bears evidence to the fact that tribal people can relate to the changes in their society and that their individual lives are also getting affected by it . This is due to the fact that the winds of change percolate down to each unit of society and universally impact people. For those who did not feel the change, it is due to their inadaptability or due to the fact that they did not respond or accept the changes.

Respondents have defined modernisation mainly as the changes in the present state of living. They have identified different causes of change, and modernisation being the primary effect produced by such changes. The tribal respondents mentioned about the growing tendency of using English by their children being educated in English medium institutions and that they now seldom use their own dialects. They have also identified a change- adapting more mainstream festivals rather than glorifying their own ethnic and existing ones. It is interesting to note that they are comfortable with modernisation in so far as it brings about assimilation with the mainstream society.

The most relevantly answered question about social movement and social imbalance seemed to strike the right chord with the respondents. Seventy percent answered by citing examples of the Chhattisgarh movement and even some movements in the North-eastern region of the country. Imbalance as they stated stemmed from a discontent with the existing state of affairs. Many of them have mentioned about the neglect that Government has given to them at times and how they have felt the need to correct the situation by active means- protest or organising into movements. The respondents have correctly mentioned how any imbalance creates dissatisfaction in the minds of the people living together and how it evolves into a cohesive joint action. The negative response shows how some of the respondents are content with their state of existence.

With respect to movements and protests, 80% respondents have elaborately voiced their opinion by giving practical examples. While some cited IromSharmila and her movement, some others who had relations with tribes of the coal belt in Jharia, mentioned about how they had protested against their forcible relocation, loss of habitats and rehabilitation inefficiency of the Government. Respondents have stated in an overwhelming majority that they feel the need to protest, in order to make them heard and considered if they are neglected. They believe in actively protesting rather than passively accepting.

The minimal negative response (only 20%) stems from either incapability or lack of interest in protesting and a tendency to accept, get dominated and compromise.

TABLE II: Answers of daily wage earners of non-tribal society

Question No	YES (% of Yes)	No (% of No)
1	18(90%)	02(10%)
2	18((90%)	02(10%)
4	15(75%)	05(25%)
5	20(100%)	00(0%)

Source: Field Survey

The above table can be represented by the help of following chart.
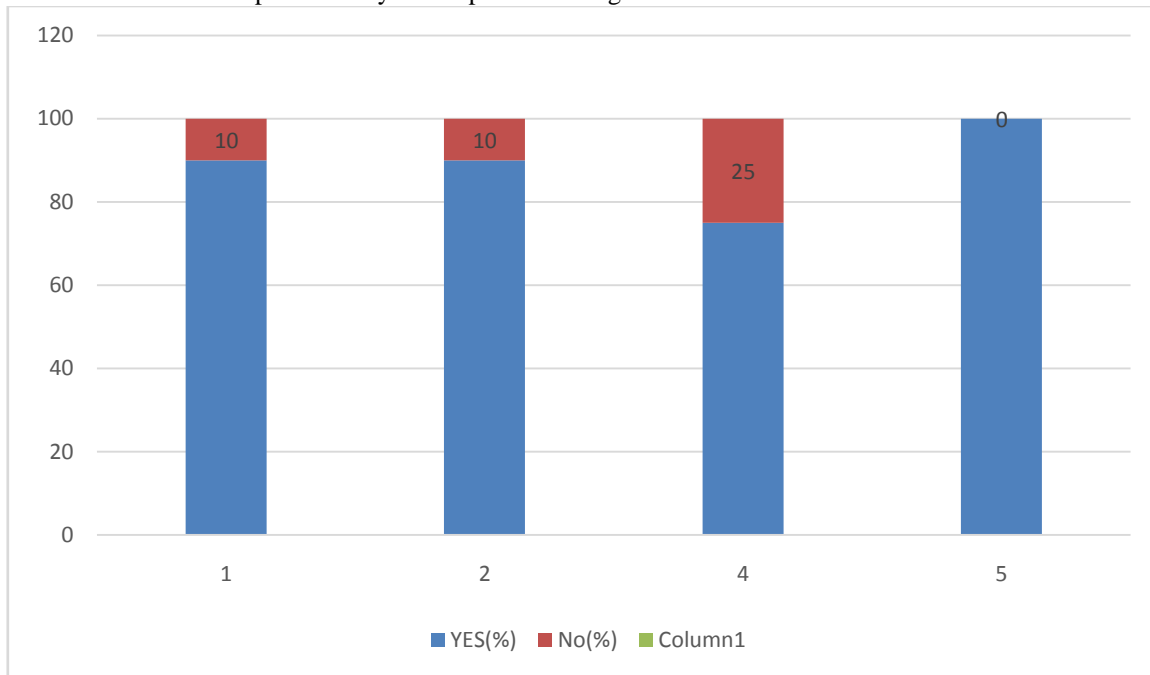
Source: Field Survey

Analysis of answers of non-tribal society on the basis of above questionnaire
        Almost all the respondents (90%) have agreed affirmatively that they have felt the change. This shows a greater degree of awareness on socio legal issues of contemporary times. They have felt so because they recognise the influence of globalisation in assimilating and integrating the differences of communities into one common identity. Meagre negative response (only 10%) is attributed to the fact that they are unaware of current issues or they do not feel the change.
        Almost all the respondents (90%) have agreed to it. It shows that as they acknowledge the changes in the society, they also appreciate the change it brings in their own lives. Being the products of social living, each individual is invariably affected by the dynamism in society and their own lives change as they keep on adapting. Meagre negative response reflects a resistance to change.
        Respondents of non-tribal society had entirely different set of answers although there was an inherent sense of similarity in the responses. They have defined modernisation partly as an influence of western culture and partly as an aspect of globalisation. The respondents did not feel a loss of ethnic identity but rather a fusion of tradition with modernity. In changing with globalisation, they try to keep their traditions intact. One of the most relevant responses was that traditions and ethnic identities have to adapt with changing situations, to survive and not get lost.
        Respondents have felt the imbalance in a majority(75%). They have identified a clash of majority – minority conflicting interests and a drive towards liberal ideology challenging conventional moral standards in society. They have also felt an influx of changes in socio-political set up that invariably affects the society. They have mentioned movements like the Sabarimala Temple Controversy, the movement for abolition of Section 377 of Indian Penal Code. Negative responses show that some people do not feel the imbalance and neither do they feel that it motivates social movements.
        This is the only unanimous affirmative response shared by the respondents. Everyone has agreed that when a change is deemed necessary, it has to be initiated and if not, it has to be brought about by means of protest. The respondents show themselves to be aware and active and appreciate peaceful means of protest which would not hamper the social order and public health in society, but they believe in putting forward the

demands and pressurising the government in satisfying them to preserve consonance in society. This issue also points out to the fact that people need change and in initiation of that change, society invariably changes as well.

IV. Comparative Analysis Of Data Collected

1. A greater consensus of affirmative responses was noted in case of the non-tribal respondents. This indicates greater social solidarity with respect to changing trends in society, and it also reflects how the non-tribal societies are more appreciative of the changes.

2. Similar trend of responses reflect that non-tribal societies' changes influences the individuals more than that of tribal societal changes do. At the individual level, non-tribal respondents have recognised changes more than the tribal respondents.

3. With respect to modernisation, although responses were different but there was parity in the way it was felt. Both the sets of data refer to a thought process that deems changes to be welcome, provided that the ethnic individualities and traditional morality is not lost in the process.

4. In the fourth issue, both the sets of data show that an imbalance is felt once it is created in society and that it takes the obvious course of developing into social movements. The movements may have different course and objectives, but always aim at generating a change to rectify the imbalance.

5. The fifth issue has distinguished a clear point between the two sets of data. While a overwhelming majority of tribal respondents wanted to protest and bring about a social change, unanimously affirmative response of non-tribal respondents shows their stronger solidarity and intentions about waging protests. This is a result of better exposure to education and greater self-confidence prevalent in the non-tribal society. However the fact stands out that both the societies would protest rather than accept.

V. Conclusion

It is evident from the quantitative and qualitative analysis of data that *our hypothesis for the present research is proved* –there is a reasonable degree of parity between the tribal and non-tribal societies, in not only generating the need changes but also adapting to the dynamism in the society and in the process maintaining the *Equilibrium* or the *consonance* in the social order.

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