



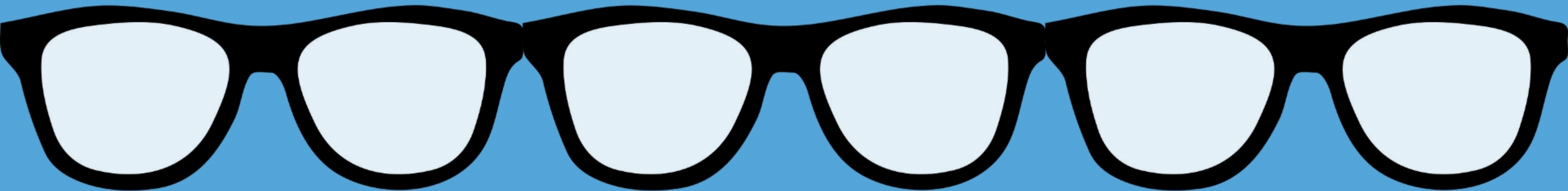
A. Introducing Indian Society
a. Perspectives on it's study
ii. Structural Functionalism(M N Srinivas)

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Little About me...

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Sanskritisation

- Defined as *the process by which a low caste or tribe takes over the customs , rituals,belief, ideology and style of life of a high and in particular, a twice born(dwija) caste.*
- It is endogenous source of social change
- Term was coined by him to describe process of cultural and social mobility in the traditional social structure of Indian Society - book *Religion and Society among Coorgs of South India* 1952.
- It introduced and validated field work as an essential component in developing an understanding of Indian society.
- Impact of Sanskritisation is manifold, its influence can be seen over language, literature, music, dance, drama, style of life and ritual.
- It existed before colonial arrival but gained momentum after British as means of communication hastened the process and changes reached remotest of corners.
- In his study of Coorgs he found that lower caste to raise their position in hierarchy adopted some Brahmanical customs (dressing, food, ritual etc) and gave up their own which were considered impure (meat eating, animal sacrifice etc) by higher castes. Within generations thus they could claim higher position in social order.

Sanskritisation is not Brahmanisation as in many cases higher castes are not Brahman but Kshatriya, Vaishya or higher Shudras

Features of sanskritisation

- It has the effect of improving position of group in local caste hierarchy i.e it does not change macro Varna framework thus termed endogenous and localised version of social change.
- It suggests a process whereby people want to improve their status through adoption of name and customs of culturally high placed groups. The *Reference Model* is usually financially better off as well.
- Primarily takes place within Hindu space, however studies show it operated differently in different parts of the country.
- In areas where highly Sanskritised caste was dominant, the culture of entire region underwent Sanskritisation. Also regions where non-Sanskritic castes were dominant, it was their influence that was stronger termed as de-Sanskritisation
- As it is local only thus it does not lead to structural change
- Manifold impact as it facilitated socio-cultural mobility in Indian Society generally viewed as closed and monolithic.
- It can be used to understand social change as a tool by sociologists.

Criticism Of Sanskritisation

- D N Majumdar - many signs of reverse process i.e de-Sanskritisation where upper caste are forsaking lifestyle like Kashmiri pandit and Brahmins in Haryana & Punjab
- Criticised for exaggerating social mobility or scope for lower caste to move up the social ladder as it is only positional not structural change. Inequality still persists.
- It accepts ways of upper castes superior and those of lower class inferior.
- It seems to justify model that rests on inequality and exclusion - pollution and purity, privileges of upper caste, degraded worth of labour of lower class etc.
- It led to seepage of evils of dominant class in lower castes like dowry.
- Ignore many non-Sanskritic traditions of Indian Society.
- Further Sanskritisation was not uniform and didn't explain all cultural changes. In North India especially Punjab it was Islamic tradition that provided basis for cultural imitation.
- Acc to Harold Gould, Sanskritisation is camouflage for latent inter caste and inter-class competition for economic and social power, and it is not culture but socio-economic deprivations that drive such imitations

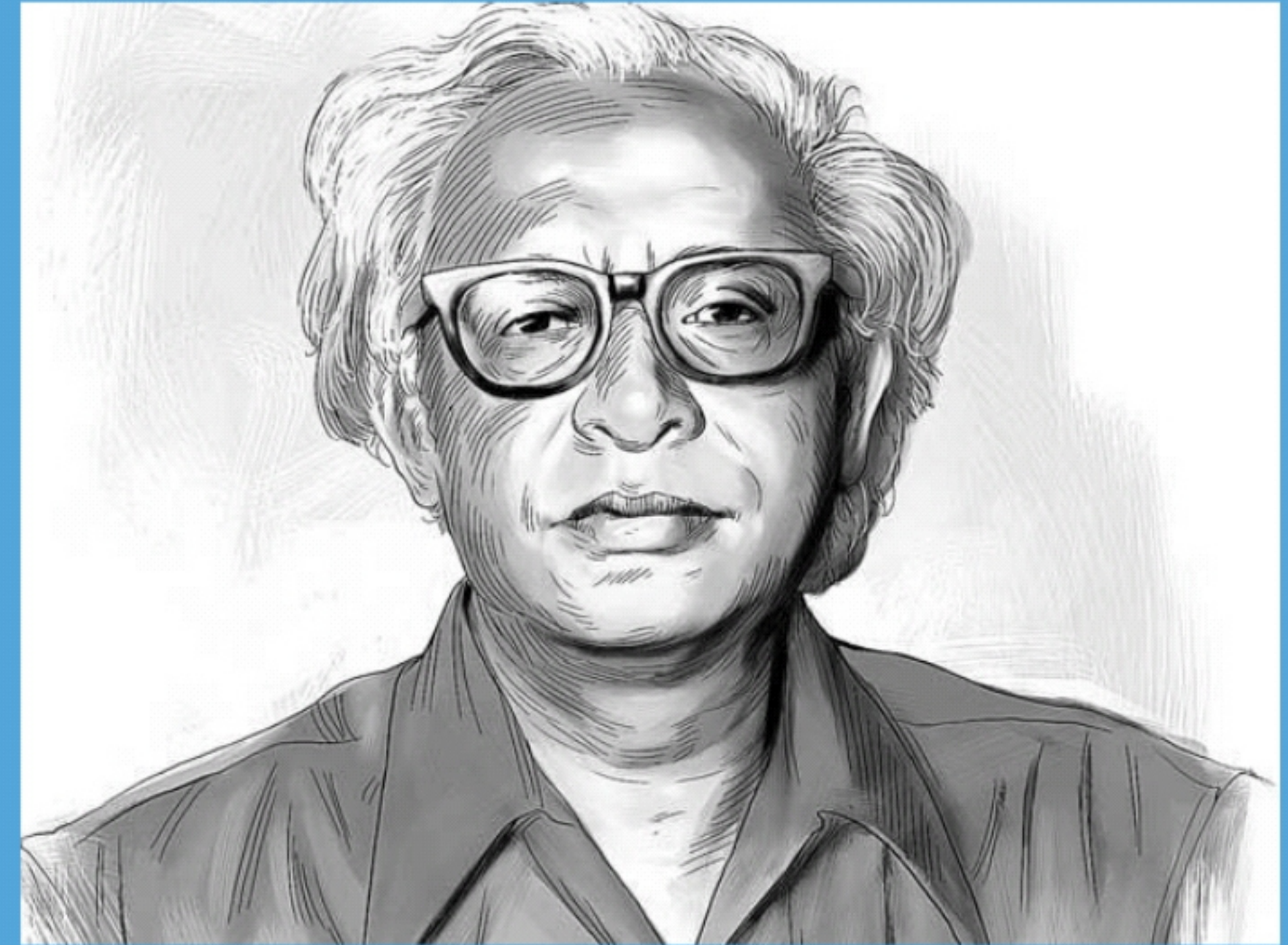
Srinivas took Sanskritisation to mean some kind of Brahminisation whereas other investigators showed it could be Kshatriya, Vaishya or Shudra model as well. Thus it is only illustration of universal *reference group* process.

As a process of social change it is losing relevance due to Reservation policy, rise of Dalit consciousness. Westernisation replacing Sanskritisation. With advent of democratic policy, Globalisation etc.

Depressed classes are now recognising their numeric strength and are using politics and socio-economic process to assert their own identity rather than imitating *Dwijas*.

Despite criticism this concept is still used for providing unconventional perspective of Indian society in general and caste system in particular.

It is born out of detailed field works and gave Indian Sociology a new approach.



Yogendra Singh on Sanskritization

- He considers it to be culturally specific case of universal motivation toward anticipatory socialisation of culture of higher group in hope of gaining status in future.
- Two levels of meaning that are implicit in Sanskritization are:
 - Historical Specific - it refers to an indigenous process in Indian History which led to changes in various castes and thus social change
 - Contextual Specific - It denotes process of cultural imitation of upper castes by lower caste or sub-castes in different parts of India, implying it is not a uniform phenomenon.

Westernisation

- M N Srinivas defined as the change brought about in Indian society and culture, as a result of over 150 years of British rule, the term subsuming changes occurring at different levels, technology, institutions, ideology and values.
- It depicts cultural change only and not structural change, however Yogendra Singh contends that it also led to structural change as many new phenomena/institutions like middle class and bureaucracy emerged during this process.
- Different kinds of Westernisation are:
 - Primary - Emergence of westernised sub-cultural pattern through a minority section of Indians, who first came in contact with western culture. They adopted many cognitive patterns, or ways of thinking, and styles of life and supported their expansion. Early 19th century social reforms by likes of Raja Ram Mohan Roy are an example of same.
 - Secondary - where section of people came in direct contact with Primary beneficiaries of Westernisation.
 - Tertiary - refers to general spread of Western cultural traits such as use of new technology, dress, food and changes in the habits and styles of people in general.

Though it is imitation of external forms of culture, it does not *necessarily* mean that people adopt modern values of democracy and equality. People may be western in clothes but not in values that are part of modern attitude. That is why Srinivas uses Westernisation over Modernisation.

Modernisation presupposes rationality of goals which in the ultimate analysis could not be taken for granted since human ends are based on value preferences and rationality could be predicated only of the means and not the ends of social action.

Thus Westernisation is more value loaded (local cultural values were branded inferior) than Modernisation and has positives & negatives as well

Acc to Yogendra Singh it started process of cultural Modernisation as Western as western impact brought a great tradition that led to growth of universalistic legal superstructure, expansion of education, industrialisation and urbanisation, increased communication, growth of nationalism and politicisation of society.

Emphasis on humanitarian and rationalism is part of westernisation that led to series of social reform in India.

Multiple impacts and effects are:

1. Rationalisation of Ritual Sphere : Many rituals were given up in favour of more rational ideas.
2. Change in belief system : the marriage patterns like finding a groom for girl before her puberty failing which was considered sin, Westernisation eroded such beliefs.
3. Social reforms : Widow remarriage a taboo earlier got acceptance.
4. Art and Architecture : Art forms, new paintings took elements of english as seen in work of Raja Ravi Verma, Novels, music and style of buildings all got impacted
5. Education : Gurukul system got replaced by modern school and colleges. Aims changed from value gain to securing clerical job in government.
6. Economic System : Traditional institutes like Jajmani System, Guilds were weakened by Market system. Domestic enterprise and cottage industry took a beating.
7. Communication system : Development of media, transport helped in dissemination of thoughts, ideas and happenings across the Nation. Spread of Literacy.
8. Rise of Nationalism : modern ideas led to launch of freedom movement, self-determination, demand for rule of law and ideals of Democracy
9. Social Mobility : Created scope for greater social mobility and social contact breaking many cultural notion that had strictly stratified society

It was this westernisation that helped Indians to launch resistance and freedom movement against British. The very values used by British were used to tide them down. The negative aspect being that it led to process of cultural and cognitive colonialism. Contemporary meaning refers to overall impact of Western Ideology and culture.

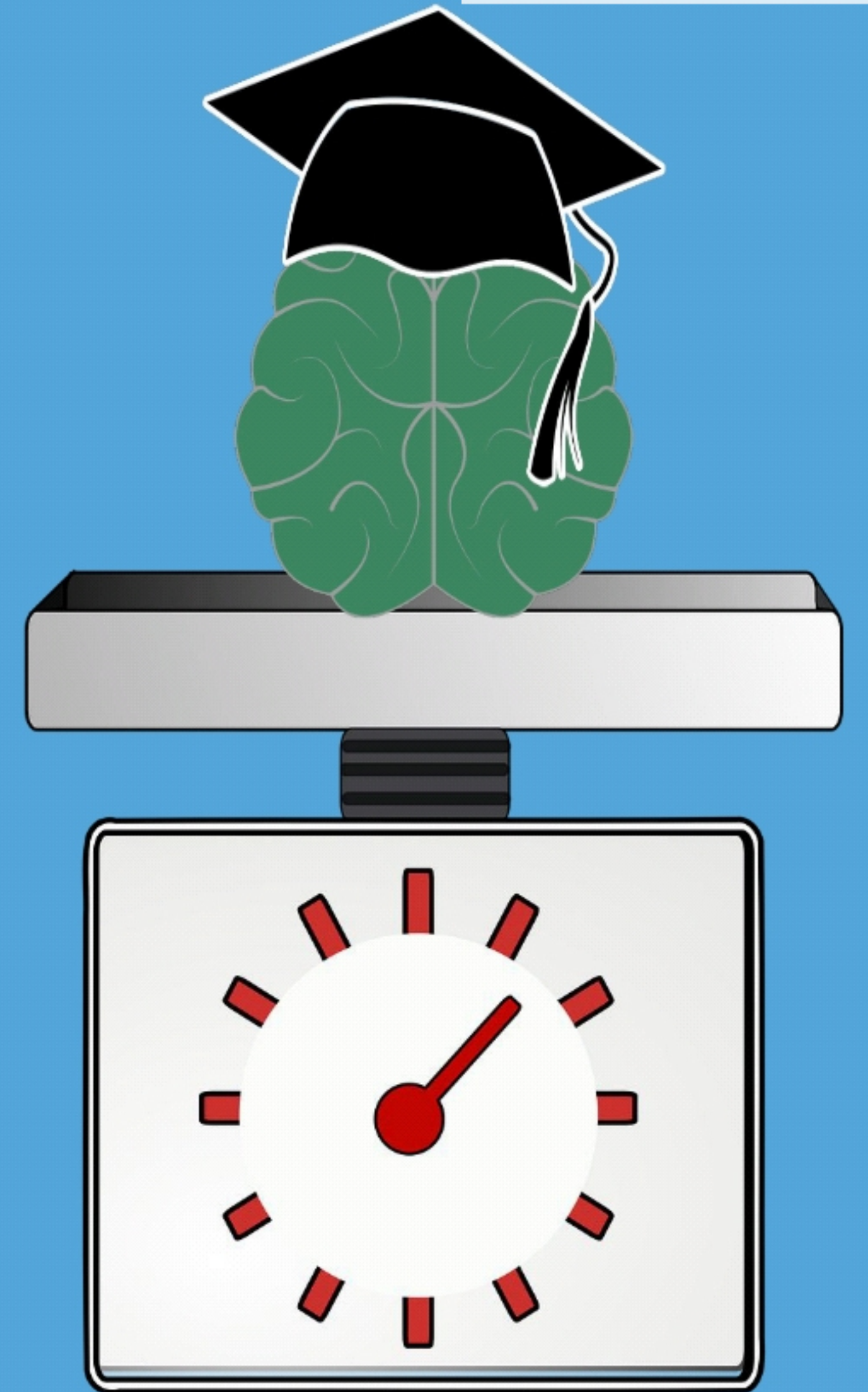
Comparison and Contrast between Westernisation and Sanskritisation

1. Westernisation as prelude to Sanskritisation - Brahmins and people of higher castes got into white collar jobs because of their Sanskritic tradition.
2. Westernisation as promoter of Sanskritisation - both go on simultaneously and to some extent and former accelerates latter. Eg post, railways, buses and newspaper media had promoted social mobility too. Also religious meetings, caste solidarities were rising like never before.
3. Opposing Sanskritisation - For instance food habits of Westerners was against Sanskritic ideals.

Srinivas suggested while lower caste sought to be *Sanskritised* upper caste sought to be *Westernised*. He uses these 2 concept to explain social change in Indian society.

Takeaways...

- **Structural Functionalism** in Indian Society
 - Premises and Limitations of Approach
 - M N Srinivas work and views
 - Concept of **Sanskritization**
 - Criticism and relevance today
 - Yogendra Singh's view
 - Concept of **Westernisation** and its Impact



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