

Welcome on board dear students. I am Miss Evelyn Savia Fernandes, assistant professor in sociology from Government College Quepem. In today's session we are going to look at the dominant caste, which is part of Unit 2 village social structure. A brief outline: introduction, we will then go on to look at the definition of dominant caste, the characteristics of dominant caste, a brief summary and the references. By the end of this e - module you will be able to understand the meaning, definition and the crux of the concept of dominant caste and also describe the characteristics of dominant caste in society. Now, the concept of dominant caste was propounded by an eminent Indian sociologist and Indian anthropologist by the name of Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas. A name which probably sounds familiar. M.N Srinivas is known for various concepts and works on caste and caste system. Westernization, Sanskritization, the concept of social stratification and dominant caste. The concept of dominant caste appeared for the first time in his essay social system of a Mysore Village which was written after his study of the village Rampura where he conducted in depth participant observation. He later went on to publish the concept of dominant cast in the book The Remembered Village in 1976. M.N Srinivas is believed to have unconsciously developed the concept of dominant caste by drawing influence from African studies on the dominant clan and dominant Lineage. However, M.N Srinivas had to face many criticisms from sociologists like Louis Dumont and Pocock who believed that he adopted the term from the study of African society, where the concepts of dominant clan and lineages were used. The definition of dominant caste, the concept of dominant caste is used to refer to a caste which yields economic or political power and occupies a fairly high position in the hierarchy. These castes are accorded high status and position in all the fields of social life. The people of other castes, usually the lower caste known as reference group, imitate the people of the higher caste. They emulate their behaviors, ritual patterns, customs, ideologies and lifestyles. M.N. Srinivas says that the existence of dominant caste is not particularly in the village of Rampura, where he conducted his field study. It is found in various other villages of the country. For instance in Mysore villages – Lingayat and Vokkaliga. In Andhra Pradesh - Reddy and Kamma. In Tamil Nadu – Gounder, Padayachi and Mudaliar. In Kerala – Nayar. In Maharashtra- Maratha. In Gujarat – Patidar. In Northern India – Rajput, Jat, Giar and Ahir are dominant castes.

Let us now take a look at the characteristics of a dominant caste M.N. Srinivas in the year 1962 specified. three important characteristics of a dominant caste 1) A caste is dominant when it wields economic and political power 2) when it has a fairly high rank status in the caste hierarchy and 3) when it is numerically strong. The earlier definition of a dominant caste in the year 1962 was reviewed by any number of sociologists and writers, and in the year 1966 M.N. Srinivas re-worked the definition of dominant caste and it is as follows: for a caste to be dominant. It should own a sizable amount of arable land, locally available, have strength of numbers and occupy a fairly high status in the local cost hierarchy. On the basis of this definition, he then went on to give about four different characteristics of dominant castes. Let us look at each one in detail. The first one is the economic and political power, the power of a particular caste lies in the ownership of land. The caste, which has a higher land holding or a higher land

ownership, definitely is great power and prestige in society. Now he gives us an example of the Vokkaligas, which control more than 80% of the land, so the superiority is basically because of ownership of land. High education or income generated in urban areas can also be various other reasons, which boosts economic power and therefore categorizes the caste group as dominant. The second characteristic is high rank in the caste hierarchy. Now the caste, which is traditionally higher in the caste hierarchy, enjoys the status of dominance. Now as we know, the Brahmins and Rajputs have traditionally been dominant in the fourfold Varna system. The Brahmins at the top of the caste hierarchy. While the Rajputs have always been feudal landlords in the village recently the criteria has changed. Now with the coming of the reservations, which all of us are aware of, this has given status to the Scheduled Castes. In the Scheduled Tribes and women as well have uplift their status in society. For example, some of the Scheduled Castes who are numerically strong also take advantage of the new educational and other opportunities available to them. They have also gained economic and political power which in turn make them dominant. In turn make them a dominant caste, therefore the traditional higher status in the hierarchy, no more remains an attribute of dominance. The third characteristic of the dominant caste is that of the number that is numerical strength, the cost which has a larger number of votes naturally determined the fate of a candidate by contesting elections. A caste dominant is not only in a single village, it extends to a cluster of villages, normally in Indian villages with a smaller number of big landowners. Occupy a larger portion of land. So in other words, the caste which has a larger portion of the village wields, economic power and in turn is dominant. The last characteristic is a sizable amount of the arable land, which determines a caste to be dominant. Now, as we know, in India we have vast acres of land and big land owners occupy large portions of land. Therefore in villages those castes which have large portions of the land enjoy power and prestige. M.N Srinivas says that land ownership is a crucial factor in establishing dominance in a village. To summarize, the concept of dominant castes was propounded by M.N. Srinivas who is an Indian sociologist and the main attributes for a caste to be dominant in society according to M.N. Srinivas economic and political power to high ranking caste hierarchy. Numerical strength and sizable amounts of the arable land. These are my references.

Thank You.