
Reaction to Dr. Prahalad remarks

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I am truly grateful to Prof. Prahalad for the detailed considerations of my article.

I basically agree with him about the fact that the study is a construct. In fact, majority of them usually are. As a consequence they do offer a perspective which may be objectionable.

What I found interesting and truly worth being considered is the new trend of intellectuals committed in studying this aspect of Indian society. This can be a motivating factor to be kept in mind as it sends signals which are significant.

Prof. Prahalad's clarifications on *varna* and *jati*, and on *dalits* are appreciated as each carries a complex sociological and ideological content which can not be easily explained and fully grasped by outsiders. That is why his comments and clarifications are precious.

Likewise the distinction between *sanskritization* and *brahminzation* in M.N. Srinivas offers a good insight as the two terms can be easily misunderstood and confused. Still, I believe that, though M.N. Srinivas presents an excellent and systematic approach to the two categories, his view point is eminently sociological and the meaning of the first category, which he himself defined probably for the first time, focuses on processes of social mobility. The meaning of the term *brahminzation* carries a weight which is not only sociological, but also, if not above all, religious with heavy social implications.

On one point I would be cautious: drawing comparisons or parallels between phenomena, which happened within different societies, even of the same historical era, may be misleading. Processes may, in fact, carry certain similarities but they are usually characterized by sharp differences. This does not prevent from carrying out comparative studies, which, nevertheless, in order to be accurate, have to be based on common paradigms of reference and prepared by a clarification of concepts. When referred to different cultures and societies the same words often carry different meanings and concepts. Though sounding similar, they may hide aspects which, at a deeper level, can not be reconciled one to the other.

In the end I am grateful to Prof. Prahalad because his observation can give food for thought and

further clarifications.