

'GAON-GADA'—A Review¹

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THE book under review was first published in 1915 and has been re-printed this year. The book is in Marathi, the language of about 30 million people living in a contiguous region in western India. 'Gaon-Gada', the title of the book, means literally, 'The Village Waggon' and the author, Atre T. N., also provides the following sub-title in English: "*Notes on Rural Sociology and Village Problems with Special References to Agriculture*". His use of the words 'rural sociology', in the sub-title, is very significant, particularly when we remember that he wrote the book in 1915, when the science of sociology, as a whole, had not attracted enough attention of the Indian intelligentsia.

In the year of publication of Atre's book, Galpin's first bulletin '*The Anatomy of an Agricultural Community*' was issued, which he expanded, in 1918, in Chapter IV of his book '*Rural Life*'. Brunner says of this "Here for the first time the mores, attitudes and cultural influences of a specific population were examined in detail and related to their social behaviour. For its time it was a real contribution to the understanding of rural society."² Atre's book can also be described in these very words and has been so evaluated by Prof. D. R. Gadgil in his introduction to the present edition. It is painfully true, however, that while rural sociology in the U.S.A. grew in its scope, methodical accuracy and in its popularity with the universities and administration, since these attempts of Galpin, Wilson, Kolb and others, there was no significant follow up of Atre's work till very recently. All this, in a way, enhances the importance of this pioneering work on Indian rural sociology, both for its contents and for its value to one who may want to study the development of social studies in India.

Author's Background

In the understanding of the content of the book and of the methodology and motivation of the author, some biographical details about the author will be of help. He was born in 1872 in a Brahmin family, in a town of about 5,000 population. After his graduation in Law, he joined government service as an officer dealing with the peasantry for revenue collection and also for settling civil disputes. His real orientation towards the survey and

¹ Atre Triyambak Narayan, '*Gaon-Gādā*', author's introduction pp. 1-16, Prof. D. R. Gadgil's introduction, pp. 17-23, text 1-216, Mote H. V. publisher, Bombay, 1959, 3rd Edition.

² Brunner Edmund de S., '*The Growth of a Science; a Half Century of Rural Sociological Research in the United States*', 1957, p. 6.