

## A Note on Multidimensional Study of Social Integration on A Rural Society

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### ABSTRACT

Social integration is an inferential concept based on the interactions of human groups. In this paper an attempt has been made to quantify such quantitative data in order to measure the nature and degree of integration between and within the socio-economic groups in a particular area. Empirical research was done in 18 villages, selected through stratified random sampling method around a town Giridih in Bihar. One of the major findings was that, in spite of the concurring groups socio-economic divergences, an undercurrent of cultural uniformity, as reflected through invitation-participation process during societal events, could be noted.

Keywords:

(1)Integration (2)divergence (3)cultural uniformity

(4) invitation-participation process (5) societal events

### APPROACH

'Integration' is a commonly used term which carries a sense of unification of units or parts of a larger thing into a whole. In Social Sciences this term is generally defined as the mosaic of unity resulting from human interactions and interrelationships. This unity, or Integration, is rarely an observable phenomenon. It is usually a matter of inference drawn from the manifestation of certain action of people. However, as the nature of inference may vary from person to person for

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a particular event or for different events, we may find some difficulty in an objective analysis of integration. To overcome this difficulty, the researcher is required to observe and investigate the phenomenon repeatedly. Therefore, the pre-requisite of study integration is to select some such actions which have the probability of recurrence within the relevantly specified time-span.

Conceptually, the casual factors of integration in any society can be dechotomised into: (1) those which refer to external forces, like, an epidemic, draught, flood, fire etc., which force the people to unify and meet the catastrophe; and (2) those which are internal to the society and bind the people traditionally. Obviously, the first type integration is not permanent in nature. A set of catastrophic external forces may lead to the emergence of only a temporary manifestation of integration of the relevant societal elements. There will be a reversal status quo ante when the external forces are withdrawn. Contrariwise, the very existence of society proves beyond doubt that some internal forces of integration are in operation to hold together its different elements, viz., the social groups from falling apart. The first major concern of the study under reference is, therefore, to elicit that aspect of social integration which is always there, as embedded into the day to day living of the people accounted for. Pursuant to the above, the nature of social integration examined is based on the voluntary association of the people, which are ( a ) institutionalised ( b ) sanctioned by the society, and ( c ) repetitive in their operation. That is, for the present purpose, the concept of social integration has been brought to account by the socially sanctioned repetitive relationships based on voluntary participation of the societal groups concerned.

A social system is a relational entity, and not a substance one. Therefore, the unity we study within a social system is not something absolute or defined once and for all. It varies according to the social situation as well as the context which creates the situation. ( Chattopadhyay, 1970 ).

So in order to understand the nature of social integration which varies according to the situation and context, one has to examine not only the different societal groups and the situation but also the levels in which they operate. To illustrate, let us consider a situation created by the communal disturbance between two groups. Analytically, the situation denotes that the two groups are :

- (1) respectively well-integrated,
- (2) active against each other, and thus
- (3) operate as a disintegrative force at the level of national or territorial unity. Consequently, the second major concern of this study will be to identify the different levels of group-integration vis-à-vis particular societal events.

Pursuantly, in order to study the levels of integration in rural society, we tried to observe people's behaviour and interaction through :

- (1) socio-cultural events, and (2) when they are engaged in different occupations while extracting their livelihood from any particular sector of nation's economy. In addition to the above, societal statuses of the pattern of social integration within a multi-stratified social universe.

It is a fact that every society in the world is stratified in one sense or other.

While some are segregated by colours, languages, etc., others have differentiations based on religion, social and economic parameters. India is no exception. Over and above, India is possibly, the only country which has a unique system of caste organization. It is to be admitted that the caste system or for that matter, any social system that persists for a long span of time must have / had certain relevance and acceptability in the society

Per se. The question is what could, possibly, have been the social mechanism for its sustenance.

To our mind, it was probably a blue-print of social ecology, in the sense of, binding different socio-economic groups through the principle of Serve And Be Served. Every person born in the society was assured of his social status and economic function. For example, a 'Brahmin' was supposed to teach the village boys and offer worships and obeisances to the deities on behalf of the villagers. And in lieu of those services he was supplied his daily necessities/requirements by others like peasant castes, berber castes, washerman castes, etc.. The latter castes, again, in their turn, were also supposed to be served by each other accordingly. So in this way the caste system could probably maintain both the social distance and the integration simultaneously. Former was the result of stratification while the latter was the outcome of the function of the system.

Although the caste system has outlived its utility today, it was possibly a great effort and exercise in bringing closer different social groups inhabiting different parts of the country through such functional interrelations and interdependences, under a particular religious umbrella. It is generally believed that stratification / differentiation breeds hatred and disintegration. Then how the society which had/has a caste system based fundamentally on the socio-economic gradations could resist the expected and ever present tension and tendency of disintegration. Is there any in-built social mechanism that helps in fostering fusion and checking fission between the social groups of different strata ?

This paper intends to examine the above question through combined qualitative and quantitative approach.

### SAMPLE

The empirical data were collected from 18 villages around a town, Giridih in Bihar. These villages were selected through the stratified random sampling method from the universe of 261 villages. This universe was stratified into three (3) distance and three (3) village size categories. And from these 9 cells, two villages were selected randomly, ( chart. A ).

### INDICATORS

One of the major information collected and analysed in the present paper was the invitation-participation process of the guests of the households involved in celebrating societal events connected with the life-cycles or rites-de-passage. As mentioned elsewhere, such events have certain integrative function as media of group cohesion. ( Chattopadhyay- 1979 ).

Not only that, these events are universal as those are being celebrated in every society in one form or other.

Hence, one of the interesting approach of this particular researches that the pattern obtained and inferences drawn through statistical testing can be verified and / or compared by any scientist in any society. In other words, this area of research tries to transgress the three dimensions of place, time and persons by offering scope for future verification ( which, incidentally, a rare phenomenon in social science ) by different researchers in different places and among different peoples or cultures.

### DATA

Information utilised for this paper were the proportions of host-households receiving guests while celebrating life-cycle events like birth, marriage, death, etc.. These guests can be categorised by various bonds of identification like kinship, locality, friendship, etc.. Similarly, the concerned households may be categorised into several socio-economic groups as per the local system of hierarchy and their proportions noted. These proportions or ratios ( as the case may be ) were then statistically tested against the null hypothesis of great differentiation between groups in a stratified system. Alternatively, since the codes of custom and behaviour usually permeate between the different groups bounded within a limited social space, we may expect a more cultural uniformity among such groups, irrespective of their societal identities.

Contextually, answer to the following questions were sort :

- ( i ) whether the societal groups showed significant variation in the degree of receiving guests by virtue of their affiliation to different industries. (Industry was identified as sectors of Nations economy like agriculture, mica, coal, etc., wherefrom the referent household was earning its livelihood ) ;
- ( ii ) whether the jobs or nature of occupation of the concerned household played any role in such variation ;

( iii) how far the locality of the guests, in terms of their presence in the natal village of the host-household or elsewhere, have influenced such process of variation and

( iv) whether the degrees of variation have a correlation with the hierarchical positions of the societal groups in the given caste/group matrix.

Following from above , the households were classified into 5 societal groups, 4 industrial categories, 4 occupational gradations and 3 localities.

( chart B ).

So, in order to measure the social distance and thereby the integration ,

Variables chosen were ( a ) the participation of guests as kins and non-kins or friends during the celebrations of events and ( b ) their localities from where they came.

Furthermore, these friends were classified by their religion and/or caste affiliation in order to probe the effect of intra and inter religious cohesion.

As stated earlier the unit for such measurement was the proportion of host-households receiving guests at particular occasion.

#### STATISTICAL TESTS

These data, subsequently, were then analysed in successive orders of complexity to measure the social integration of the referent households. However, here we propose to take up only the event 'marriage' as illustration. The celebration of marriage, as we know, is perhaps the most important social event in the society. Consequently, our pooled data of 18 villages, on the process of invitation-participation during the celebration of marriage, were noted and and quantified.

Test of ANOVA was then applied to such data. But the test does not indicate any significant variation either between communities ( Hindu castes/

Muslim groups / Tribals, etc. ) or between industries ( Agriculture/Mica/Coal, etc.) or even between different types of occupations ( Non-manual/ Manual ) of the host-households at the time of receiving guests by them. In order words, irrespective of their socio-economic positions, the concerned societal groups acted homogeneously in terms of receiving guests on the occasion of marriage. And that too being independent of the localities from which the guests came.

However, these data when subjected to the statistical test of equality of proportions (1) shows certain variations that may be symbolically presented as

$$K_{SV} > NK_{SV} = K_{DV} > K_T = NK_{DC} = NK_{DV} > NK_{DR} > NK_T$$

( K= Kins ; NK= Nonkins ; SV= Same Village ; DV = Different Village ;

T= Town ; DC= Different Caste ; DR= Different Religion ).

Above findings expressed doubt on the assumption, usually made, about the

Overwhelming influence of kinship ties in the rural society. There is no denying of the importance of kinship organisation in rural society. Our analysed data, at the same time, however, also point towards the significant role played by the same/natal village of the host-households. Furthermore, and with respect to the non-kins or friendship ties, the above analysis of the data showed that friends of the town, inspite of the fact that such friends might have been of the same caste and/or religion of the hosts.

Identical statistical test was carried out by considering other variables like industry and occupation of the host-households to probe whether their affiliation to particular sector of economy influence the pattern of social integration.

Following circogrammes ( Fig. 1) are drawn on the basis of such probing. They indicate homogeneity-heterogeneity within and between the societal groups in terms of whether the groups are within the same circle or not. The idea behind constructing such circogrammes was to enquire the following :

(i) Whether the trend of social integration was influenced by the host's social and economic affiliation ; (ii) Whether such trend was correlated with the special ( same/natal village / different village/town ) distribution of the guests.

Accepting the statistically significant variation at 1% level, examination of these circogrammes indicate that :

( 1 ) irrespective of the host-households affiliations to different castes/groups, industries and occupations, they appeared as homogeneous class when kins and guests participated from the same/natal villages of the hosts ;

( 2 ) similar pattern of social integration was observed when the nonkins/friends participated from the identical locations as of the kins ;

( 3 ) variation only by occupational grades of the host-households was noted when the kins as guests came from different villages and town ;

( 4 ) variations, at the caste/group and at the industrial levels of the host-households, were noticed when the participation of the non-kins or friends came from different villages and town;

( 5 ) further characterization of these non-kins or friends against their ascribed societal status indicated variations when the host-households received friends belonging to different castes and/or religion. These circogrammes were constructed on the result of the 'τ' test based on the measurement between individual pairs. These circogrammes, in fact are visual presentation of the homogeneous or heterogeneous characteristics of the concerned communities.

Next, in order to find out how far the combined roles of all the variables play in the sphere of social integration, we computed  $D^2$  Statistic.

In the original formula of Mahalanobis Generalised Distance (  $D^2$  ) the calculation was based on the mean values of the comparing groups.

We, on the other hand, tried to calculate  $D^2$  from 'ratios' as mean value was not obtainable in our data. However, to make our data compatible with the original notion of  $D^2$  , the correction factor used was the total number of households, as multiplier, in our case. It is hoped that the measurements thus

computed reflect actual pattern of variation or otherwise of integration in our sample within the identified universe.

The idea of computing the above statistic was to locate the relative positions of the social groups. Consequently, for understanding critically the role of stratification,  $D^2$  values for different categories were calculated. However, as an example, we have considered here the broad groupings of labour and non-labour together with their social statuses. It is expected that these two distinct economic classes along with their differential social ranks will offer the scope of maximum divergence.

## RESULTS

Our findings from the  $D^2$  analysis ( FIG. 2 ), in the above context, showed :

- (i) non-labour groups of Hindu ( irrespective of caste statuses ) and Muslim form one cluster from which the Tribals were separated ;
- (ii) labourers of Hindu low caste and Muslim form one cluster while the labourers of the upper and middle caste Hindus and the Tribals had separate and respective locations ;
- (iii) consideration of both the non-labour and labour groups together resulted into formation of one cluster. The cluster is formed by the non-labourers of Hindu high, middle, low castes and Muslims, as also the labourers of Muslims and Hindu low caste. The three groups of labourers of Hindu high, middle and Tribals and Tribal non-labourers are isolated.

So, the interpretation that can be forwarded, contextually, on the basis of our analysis is that, in this type of social integration ( as measured through the invitation-participation process ) the nature of stratification, both social and economic does not play very crucial roles. In other words, formation of clusters having groups of divergent socio-economic statuses points to an underlying current of cultural homogeneity as against the broader heterogeneity by the caste –class affiliations of the societal groups concerned.

Further to above, an ordering of the clusters were made to locate the degree of homogeneity between the clusters. This was achieved through the computation of 'complete subgraphs' ( FIG. 3 ). As a first step the diameter of a cluster was assessed. This diameter was the distance between the distant pair. This was followed by computing the minimum of these maximum distances of different clusters. Now, we have a set of clusters which can be arranged, in order of importance, representing as quantified manifestation of social integration. Each subgraph cluster, therefore, indicates its relative position in a social /integrational space.

Subsequently, we tried to identify, within a cluster the degree of inter-group 'closeness'. Such closeness being defined as inversely proportional to the distance between the groups of a cluster. In other words, the lesser the distance the greater is the closeness. For measuring such closeness, particular mathematical formula ( 2 & 3 ) was utilised. And we selected the non-labour and labour groups from three Hindu castes (  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$  ) for this purpose as illustration.

By solving the mathematical equation we found the Hindu low caste non-labourers were nearer to the identical group of Hindu high caste as against the normal expectation of closeness between the low and middle castes. Labourers class, on the other hand, fulfilled the normal expectancy of social hierarchy.

It appears from the foregoing analysis that :

( 1 ) the rural integration, as measured through the invitation-participation process during the celebration of marriage as one of the social events, showed a pattern of cultural uniformity in variety and

(2) the natal village of the hosts emerged as the most important spatial level of social integration.

APPENDIX

Chart A : Sampling Frame

Village Size by Total No. of Households in the Village	Distance ( in miles ) from Giridih Town			
	0-5	6-10		
		Distance (in miles ) from the Nearest Busroute		
		0-5	6 +	Total
( 1 )	( 2 )	( 3 )	( 4 )	( 5 )
1-25	2	2	2	6
Total No. of Villages	17	22	46	85
26-100	2	2	2	6
Total No. of Villages	40	39	48	127
101+	2	2	2	6
Total No. of Villages	29	11	9	49
Total	86	72	103	261



Chart B : Societal Characteristics

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A : Societal Groups

- 
1. Hindu high castes ( H )
  2. Hindu middle castes ( H )
  3. Hindu low castes ( H )
  4. Muslims ( M )
  5. Tribals ( T )
  6. Identification of Guests

B : Industrial Categories

- 
1. Agriculture ( Ag )
  2. Mica ( Mc )
  3. Coal ( Co )
  4. Others ( Ot )

C : Occupational Gradings

- 
1. Non-manual ( NM )
  2. Manual skilled ( M<sub>1</sub> )
  3. Manual semiskilled ( M<sub>2</sub> )
  4. Manual Unskilled ( M<sub>3</sub> )

D : Locality

- 
1. Same village ( S )
  2. Different village ( D )
  3. Town ( T )
- 

( 1 ) Formula used for Constructing Circogrammes

$$\tau = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{[P(100-P) \{1/N_1 + 1/N_2\}]}} \quad \text{where } P = \frac{N_1P_1 + N_2P_2}{N_1 + N_2}$$

D<sup>2</sup> Statistic ( Discriminant Analysis ) for the Event Marriage

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Nonlabour : H & M formed one cluster and tribe was isolated.

Labour : H<sub>3</sub> & M formed one cluster and others were separated with each other.

NL + L : H<sub>3</sub> ( NL + L ) , M ( NL + L ) and ( H<sub>1</sub> + H<sub>2</sub> ) NL are Homogeneous.

Rest are isolated.

Table 1 : Table Showing the Computational Scheme for Finding Cluster Against the Combined Data Labour and Nonlabour

Group added To a cluster	D <sup>2</sup>	No. of turns	Increase in D <sup>2</sup> / Increase in n	Av D <sup>2</sup>	D <sup>2</sup>	Cluster
H <sub>1</sub> NL , H <sub>3</sub> NL	0.09	1	-	0.09	0.30	H <sub>1</sub> NL, H <sub>3</sub> NL, H <sub>2</sub> NL, ML, H <sub>3</sub> L, MNL
H <sub>2</sub> NL	1.51	3	0.71	0.50	0.71	
ML	3.00	6	0.50	0.50	0.71	
H <sub>3</sub> L	6.40	10	0.85	0.64	0.80	
MNL	12.71	15	1.26	0.84	0.92	
TNL	47.70			7.95	2.82	
TL	44.58			7.43	2.72	
H <sub>2</sub> L	51.87			8.64	2.94	
H <sub>1</sub> L	65.62			10.94	3.31	

By D<sup>2</sup> – Statistic we can also find that H<sub>3</sub>NL is more distant from H<sub>2</sub>NL than from H<sub>1</sub>NL by using

$$\tau = \frac{D^2_{H_2NL, H_3NL} - D^2_{H_2NL, H_1NL}}{2\sqrt{\{D^2_{H_2NL, H_3NL} / n_{H_1NL} + D^2_{H_1NL, H_3NL} / n_{H_2NL} + D^2_{H_2NL, H_1NL} / n_{H_3NL}\}}}$$

$$= 2.75 > \tau_{0.01} (2.576)$$

for the event Marriage considering ( NK + K ) as guests at all & kins from different village & town .

H<sub>3</sub>L is more distant from H<sub>1</sub>L by using

$$\tau = \frac{D^2_{H1L, H3L} - D^2_{H2L, H3L}}{2\sqrt{\{D^2_{H1L, H3L} / n_{H2L} + D^2_{H2L, H3L} / n_{H1L} + D^2_{H2L, H1L} / n_{H3L}\}}}$$

$$= 5.398 > \tau_{0.01} (2.576)$$

For detail findings we may go through Complete Subgroup which gives which one is first cluster then what cluster is the second .

Table 2 : Table Showing the D<sup>2</sup> - Matrix for Complete Sub graph

		NL					L				
		H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>3</sub>	M	T	H <sub>1</sub>	H <sub>2</sub>	H <sub>3</sub>	M	T
NL	H <sub>1</sub>	-	0.94	0.09	2.37	8.31	13.01	12.80	1.54	0.49	10.23
	H <sub>2</sub>		-	0.48	1.07	6.89	12.95	7.26	0.24	0.69	6.14
	H <sub>3</sub>			-	1.65	8.16	12.49	10.72	0.89	0.31	9.05
	M				-	8.79	7.38	5.52	0.37	0.85	5.70
	T					-	16.74	18.21	8.15	7.40	3.26
L	H <sub>1</sub>						-	18.16	10.87	8.92	13.06
	H <sub>2</sub>							-	5.55	10.02	7.97
	H <sub>3</sub>								-	0.73	5.90
	M									-	7.56
	T										-

H<sub>1</sub>NL , H<sub>2</sub>NL , H<sub>3</sub>(NL + L) , ML formed first cluster.

H<sub>2</sub>NL , H<sub>3</sub>(NL + L) , M (NL + L) formed second cluster.

H<sub>1</sub>L , H<sub>2</sub>L , TNL, TL are isolated.

Within a cluster, we first find the diameter which is the distance of maximum distant pair and finally find the minimum of these maximum distances of several clusters to get the first cluster .

First cluster is more homogeneous than second one.

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Fig. 1 : Figure Showing Circogrammes for Community, Industry and Occupation of Host-households on the basis of Participation of Guests as Kins / Nonkins from Same Village , Different Village and Town and Identity of Guests as Different Caste and Religion during the Event Marriage

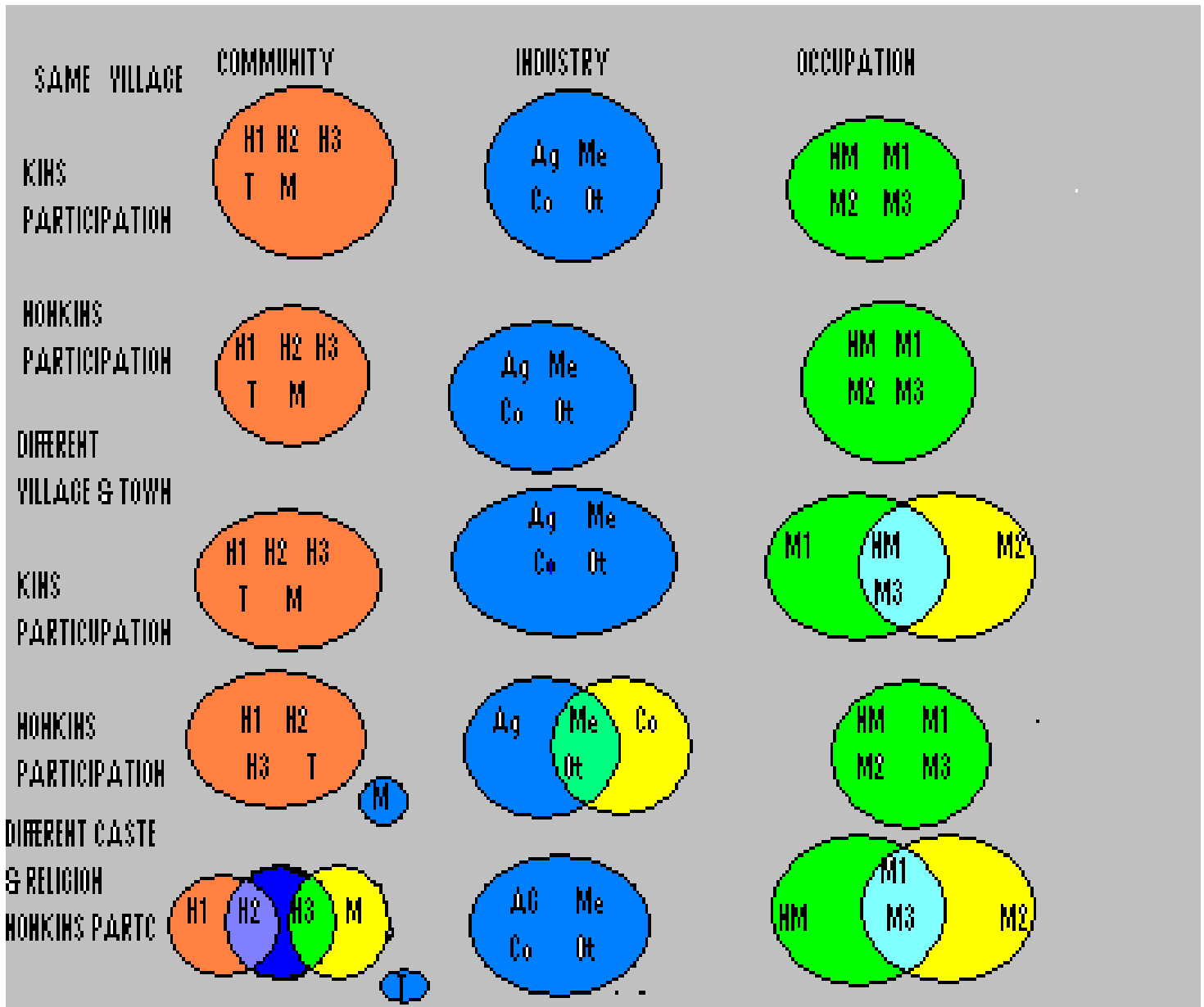


Fig. 2 : Diagram Showing Formation of Clusters by using  $D^2$  Statistic on The Occasion of Marriage

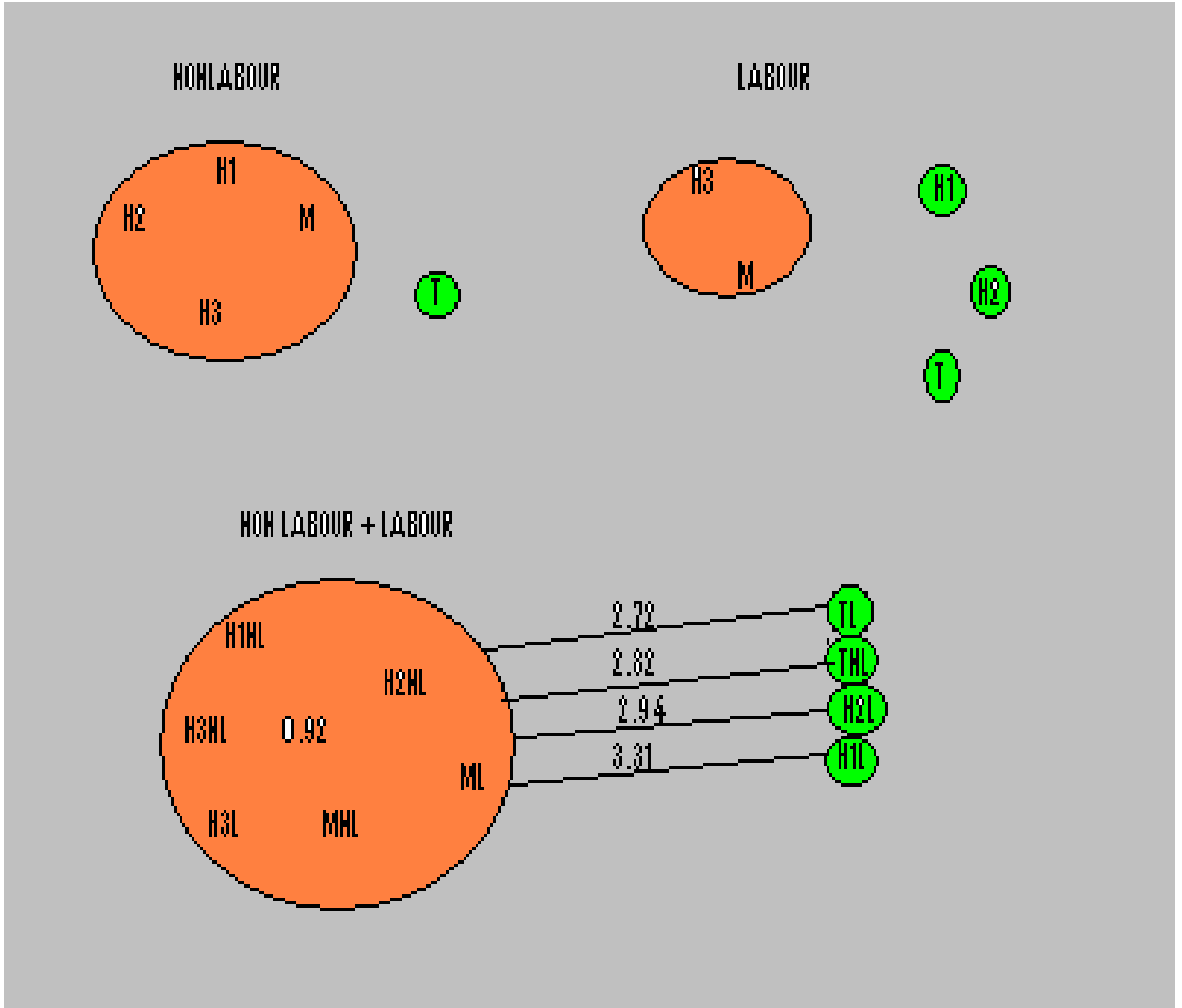


Fig. 3: Figure Showing the Two Intersectional Clusters by using Complete Subgraph on the Event Marriage

$$D^2 \leq 2$$

