

SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

# **SOCIOLOGY**

**COURSE : SOC – 102**

**M.A. Sociology - 1<sup>st</sup> Semester**

## **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION**

**Directorate of Open & Distance Learning  
DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY  
DIBRUGARH - 786004**

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# **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION**

***Contributor :***

**Dr. Jyoti P. Saikia**  
Department of Sociology  
Dibrugarh University

***Editor :***

**Dr. A. K. Borah**  
Department of Sociology  
Dibrugarh University

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# **CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGICAL TRADITION**

## **UNIT – I : AUGUSTE COMTE**

### **Structure**

#### **1.0 Objectives**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 The Socio-Economic Background of the Emergence of Sociology**

1.2.1 Industrial Revolution and  
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#### **1.5 Stages of Human Progress**

1.5.1 Theological stage

1.5.2 Metaphysical stage

1.5.3 Positive stage

#### **1.6 Let Us Sum Up**

**1.0 OBJECTIVES :**

After reading this unit you would be able to get inside of -

- (i) the socio-economic background of the emergence of Sociology
- (ii) the knowledge of enlightenment.
- (iii) the emergence of positivistic thought and
- (iv) the discussion about the stages of human progress.

**1.1 INTRODUCTION :**

As you know our concern in this unit is with Isidore Auguste Marie Francois Xavier Comte, who is commonly considered as the father of Sociology. He was a French philosopher. Like many of the other philosophers of his period, he was also started by the destructive efforts of the French Revolution, by the disorder created through the forcible destruction of social groups intermediate between the family and the state. So, he needed a theoretical science of society. Since this science was not available, he set about creating it. He sought to formulate a system of laws governing society so that he could postulate a cure for society on the basis of these laws.

Here we wish to discuss the enlightenment and socio-economic background of the emergence of this new social science. Comte has been given credit for the birth of this subject. Because he was the first social philosopher who coined the term 'Sociology' and established it as a separate branch of social science. He discussed positivism and three stages of human progress. In this connection, he gave us three important stages of progress in the history of mankind. We have to discuss his contribution like law of three stages and positivism.

**1.2 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY :**

You know, we live today - at the first of the twenty first century - in a world that is intensely worrying yet full of most extraordinary promise for the future. Yet we have possibilities of controlling our destiny and shaping our lives for the better that would have been

unimaginable to earlier generations. In this way to know human social life, sociology has been taking a very significant role as a branch of social science. Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies. It is a dazzling and compelling enterprise, as its subject matter is our own behaviour as social being. The scope of sociology is extremely wide. Today, sociology is a very popular subject. So, our learners should know the socio-economic background of the emergence of sociology. Sociology has a long past but its history is very short. Sociology is considered as one of the youngest as well as one of the oldest of the social sciences. Sociology is one of the youngest sciences because only recently it came to be established as a distinct branch of knowledge with its own distinct set of concepts and its own methods of inquiry. On the otherhand, since the dawn of civilization, society has been a subject for speculation and enquiry along with other phenomena which have agitated the restless and inquisitive mind of man. Even centuries ago men were thinking about society and how it should be organised, and held views on man and his destiny, the rise and fall of people and civilizations. Thus, it may be called that sociology has had a four fold origin: in political philosophy, the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and the movements for social and political reforms.

Though sociology came to be established as a separate discipline in the 19th century due to the efforts of the French philosopher Auguste Comte, it is also true that for thousands of years men have reflected upon societies of various epochs we find ideas that are sociological. For example, we find major attempts in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Manu, Kautilya, Confucious, Cicero and others to deal methodically with the nature of society, law, religion, philosophy etc. But sociology came to be established as an independent and a seperate social science in the middle of the 19th century. In case of its emergence, socioeconomic background of then societies were also responsible. Various factors paved the way for its emergence. Now, we have to discuss the three important factors that hastened the process of the establishment of sociology as a separate science. These are -

### **1.2.1 Industrial Revolution and Industrialisation :**

As you are aware, in the 18th century; Industrial revolution took place first in England. It brought about sweeping changes throughout Europe. Never before in history did social changes take place on such a massive scale. Factory system of production and the consequent mechanisation and industrialisation brought turmoils in society. New industries and technologies changed the face of the social and physical environment. The simple rural life and small scale home industries were replaced by complex urban life. Industrialisation changed the direction of civilization. It destroyed, or radically altered, the medieval customs, beliefs and ideals. Due to these changes, many social problems were also took place. As a result sociology was emerged. Sociology was born out of the attempt to understand the transformations that seemed to threaten the stability of European society. Social thinkers like Comte, Spencer and others argued that there was an urgent need to establish a separate science of society. They believed that such a science would be of great help in understanding the nature and problems of society and to find out solutions for the same. With the inspiration of Saint Simon, Auguste Comte introduced sociology for the first time as separate discipline. He defined sociology as the science of social phenomena. From this, it is clear that socio-economic condition of Europe was responsible for the emergence of sociology.

### **1.2.2 Inspiration from the Growth of Natural Science:**

Nineteenth century was a period in which natural sciences had made much progress. The success attained by the natural scientists inspired and even tempted good number of social thinkers to emulate their example. Social scientists also started to think that they can use scientific method successfully to understand social phenomena. During the 19th century Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber and others successfully demonstrated that these methods which are applied in physical science could be used to study the social world.

### **1.2.3 Inspiration provided by the radically diverse societies and cultures of the Colonial empires :**

Colonial powers of Europe were exposed to different types of societies and cultures in the colonial empires. Their exposure to such diversities in societies and cultures provided an intellectual challenge for the social scientists of the day. Information about the widely contrasting social practice of these distant people raised fresh questions about society. To give proper answer some social scientists started to study society scientifically as a separate discipline of social science and the new science of society called "sociology" had emerged.

Apart from these three factors, French revolution was also responsible for the emergence of sociology. Great French revolution took place in 1789. This revolution changed the socio-economic structure of French society. It breached the all traditions, sanctions and customs of France. Even its impact spread through out the world. After this revolution, French society was completely destructed. Economic, political and cultural systems in France was highly collapsed. People were in anomie situation. They made only disharmony. Due to some crises in different institutions people of France lost their moral values and fight for their own livelihood. So, during this period, a section of intellectuals in France thought for that restless society. They studied the relation between human being and society from different ways. At that time Saint Simon encouraged Auguste Comte to study the society scientifically. As a result; a subject like sociology was emerged as a separate branch of social science.

So, it is very clear that socio-economic background of France compelled the intellectuals to think for a new science of society, which is called sociology.

#### **Check your progress**

Who is considered as founding father of Sociology?

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(i) What is meaning of Sociology?

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(ii) Who is Saint Simon?

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### **1.3 THE ENLIGHTENMENT :**

Now we have to discuss about the enlightenment. As you know, more than the thinkers of any preceding age the men of the Enlightenment held firmly to the conviction that the mind could comprehend the universe and subordinate it to human needs. Reason became the god of these philosophers who were enormously inspired by the scientific achievements of the preceding centuries. This achievement led them to a new conception of the universe based on the universal applicability of natural laws; utilizing the concepts and techniques of the physical sciences, they set about the task of creating a new world based on reason and truth. Truth became the central goal of the intellectuals of this age but not truth founded on revelation, tradition, or authority; rather, it was reason and observation that were to be the twin pillars of truth.

If science revealed the workings of natural laws in the physical world, then perhaps similar laws could be discovered in the social and cultural world. Thus the philosophers investigated all aspects of social life, they studied and analyzed political, religious, social and moral institutions, subjected them to merciless criticism from the standpoint of reason, and demanded to change the unreasonable ones. More often than not, traditional values and institutions were found to be irrational. This

was another way of saying that the prevailing institutions were contrary to man's nature and thus inhibitive of his growth and development; unreasonable institutions prevented men from realizing potential. Therefore these thinkers waged constant war against the irrational and criticism became their major weapon.

They were very knowledgeable of the positive intellectual achievements up to their time, but they were also critical, skeptical and secular. Basically, it was their faith in reason and science which provided so strong an impetus to their work and led them to be humanitarian, optimistic, and confident.

If you observe, you will be aware that the enlightenment constitute a critical development in terms of later evolution of sociology. The enlightenment was a period of remarkable intellectual development and change in philosophical thought. A number of long standing ideas and beliefs- many of which related to social life were overthrown and replaced during the enlightenment. The most prominent thinkers associated with the enlightenment were the French philosophers Charles Montesquieu (1689-1755) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). The influence of the enlightenment on sociological theory, however, was more indirect and negative than it was direct and positive.

The thinkers associated with the Enlightenment were influenced by two intellectual currents- seventeenth century philosophy and science.

You know, seventeenth-century philosophy was associated with the work of thinkers such as Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. The emphasis was on producing grand, general, and very abstract systems of ideas that made rational sense. The later thinkers associated with the Enlightenment did not reject the idea that systems of ideas should be general and should make rational sense, but they did make greater efforts to derive their ideas from the real world and to test them there. In other words, they wanted to combine empirical research with reason. The model for this was science especially Newtonian physics. At this point, we see the emergence of the application of the scientific method to social issues. Not only did Enlightenment thinkers want their ideas to be, at least in part, derived from the real world, they also wanted these ideas to be useful to the social world, especially in the critical analysis of that world.

Overall, the Enlightenment was characterized by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research. The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely that the social world was, too. Thus it was up to the philosopher, using reason and research to discover these social laws, after they understood how the social world worked. The Enlightenment thinkers had a practical goal - the creation of a "better", more rational world.

With an emphasis on reason, the Enlightenment philosophers were inclined to reject beliefs in traditional authority. When these thinkers examined traditional values and institutions, they often found them to be irrational - that is, contrary to human nature and inhibitive of human growth and development. The mission of the practical and change-oriented philosophers of the Enlightenment was to overcome these irrational systems. The theorist who was most directly and positively influenced by Enlightenment thinking was Karl Marx, but he formed his early theoretical ideas in Germany.

For enlighten thinkers, all aspects of man's life and works were subject to critical examination the various sciences, religious revelation, metaphysics, aesthetic etc.

### **Check your progress**

(i) 'Reasons lead for enlightenment'. Is it correct?

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(ii) Mention the name of a eminent social scientist who was associated with the enlightenment in Seventeenth Century?

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#### **1.4 EMERGENCE OF POSITIVISTIC THOUGHT :**

You have already obtained the ideas about the socio-economic background of emergence of Sociology, and you know, Auguste Comte wanted to establish a scientific methodology in order to usher in new phase of intellectual development in the progression of human history. The dialogue between human intellect societal structure has been an on going process ever since the starting point of the theological stage of human progression. But this dialogue between human being as an individual and social structure is found to be scientific or positive only in the positive stage. By scientific or positive science or what is generally referred to as 'positivism', Comte meant the science of inquiry into the 'laws of phenomena', physical, biological or social. There are mainly two sets of laws - (a) Laws of co-existence; (b) Laws of succession. The former refers to the universally observable relationship between elements or facts of phenomena and the latter refers to historically observable changes or relationship between elements or facts. In another context Comte called these two laws 'statics' and 'dynamics' of a particular phenomenon respectively. To understand Comte's notion of positive science one must understand his positive philosophy. As a note of caution it must be stated that Comte's positivism should not be interpreted in the strict sense of the term 'positivism'. By the strict sense of the term we mean this as follows:

"Positivism . . . seeks to describe only what 'obviously' is, what one can really positive about, that is, sense data. A strict positivist, seeing a black sheep on a meadow could not say, 'there is a black sheep'. He could only say, 'I see a sheep, one side of which is black'".

This succinct statement is quoted only to suggest that Comte's positivism must not be interpreted in that light. Fletcher clearly explains Comte's positivism in a lucid manner to delineate the fact that the positive philosophy of Comte is based on the presupposition that whatever is 'knowable' is grounded on human limitations, To put it simply, knowledge is possible only within the limits of human existence. Here, by knowledge is meant scientific knowledge. On the basis of this basic contention of the relationship between knowledge and human beings, Comte gave his two laws of positive science viz., laws of co-existence and laws of succession. These two laws consequently provide contextual determination of knowledge which would

pave the way for limitations and relativity of positive Science.

The very definition of human being as a rationally endowed mortal being makes any knowledge 'context bound' or situational. This contextual nature inherently makes human knowledge relative and deprives it of 'final certainty'. With such human limitations Comte's positivism or positive science accepts human feeling and imagination as one of the primordial ingredients of scientific inquiry. According to Comte, imagination plays a major role in 'positive speculation' by formulating, modifying, and evaluating basic scientific tools for investigation, e.g. hypothesis. The use of imagination in scientific inquiry led Comte to broaden the parameters of his positivism.

In the strict sense of positivism the only method acceptable for any scientific inquiry is induction or pure empiricism. But in Comte's positivism, as it is stated, 'hypothetical method' played a major role which is based on human imagination, usually an unscientific element from the strict positivist sense. His hypothetical method placed his notion of positive science in a wider frame of reference rather than a mechanical examination or analysis of data. His notion of 'prevision' or prediction in scientific analysis testified his wider use of the term 'positivism'. Prevision is not just a historical analysis of facts with a projection. Rather prevision goes along with any scientific analysis. It is the very spirit of positive science. It does mean that: "... the true positive spirit consists above all in seeing for the sake of foreseeing; in studying what is, in order to infer what will be, in accordance with the general dogma that natural laws are invariable".

### **Check your progress**

(i) How Comte meant the science of inquiry?

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(ii) What is basic parameter of Comte's positivism?

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(iii) What prevision?

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### **1.5 STAGES OF HUMAN PROGRESS :**

Here you will be given a basic idea about law of three stages. Comte gave us three stages of development in the history of mankind and each of these stages the primordial element remains the same - an endeavour to relate individual aspect with a social order. These three stages of progress' or development are as below.

#### **1.5.1 Theological Stage :**

According to Comte in this state , "All theoretical conceptions, whether general or special bear a supernatural impress". This type of thinking is found among the primitive races and sometimes the thinking of children is also at this level. At this level of thinking It here is a marked lack of logical and orderly thinking. The primitive man and children do not have the scientific outlook. So, the logical thinking is characterized by non-scientific or unscientific outlook;. The main subject matter of theological thinking is natural events. The usual and unintelligible events of Nature tend men towards theological or fictitious interpretation of the events. Unable to discover the natural causes of the various happenings, the primitive man attributes them to imaginary or divine forces. The explanation of natural events in non-natural, divine or imaginary conditions is known as theological or fictitious thinking. Theological thinking implies only a belief in

divine and extra-terrestrial forces. Imagination plays the pivotal role in the formation of myths and legends to explain things and ideas that are non-explainable from the standpoint of commonsense. According to him three levels of mental development were available in this stage. These are mentioned below.

- **Fetishism :**

The first and primary level of theological thinking is that of fetishism. Fetishism refers to a living Nature. It is a belief that there is same living spirit in the non-living objects. This is also known as animism. As the very term animism signifies it means that the so-called inanimate objects are not dead and lifeless but are informed by a living spirit. The examples of fetishistic thinking can be seen from the widespread belief among rural people in India that same deity resides in trees. So, they are seen to engage in the worship of trees etc.

- **Polytheism :**

With the gradual development in human thinking there occurred a change in the form of thinking. The more evolved and developed a form other than that of fetishism known as polytheism. At this stage man had classified gods as well as natural and human forces. Each natural or human force had a presiding deity. Each god had some definite function and his scope and area of action was determined.

- **Monotheism :**

The last and most developed form of theological thinking is seen manifested in monotheism. As the very term monotheism implies, at this level of human thinking a belief in one God had replaced the earlier belief in many gods. The monotheistic thinking symbolized the victory of human intellect and reason over non-intellectual and irrational thinking. In monotheism it is believed that one God is supreme and that God is responsible for the maintenance of order and system in the world.

### **1.5.2 Metaphysical Stage :**

The metaphysical stage is the second stage of human progress, speculative thought dominates this stage. Imagination takes a back seat here. Abstraction, ideals, forms, essences, realities and similar concepts were allowed to explain the truth and meaning of life and

world. In this stage human being's cognitive level goes in for a critical or rational analysis of life and world. Here, human mind accepts a form of abstractions as an explanation for the existence of the physical elements. The philosophical debate started regarding the relationship between "appearance and reality", "matter and form", and "existence and essence". According to Auguste Comte this critical stage was only a transition period from the theological to the positive stage. Under metaphysical thinking, it is believed that an abstract power or force guides and determines the events in the world. Metaphysical thinking discards beliefs in concrete God.

### **1.5.3 Positive Stage :**

After metaphysical thinking comes the next stage known as scientific or positive stage. All metaphysical knowledge is based upon speculation and is at best inferential knowledge. There are no direct means to confirm the metaphysical knowledge. In the last analysis it is a matter of belief or temperament. The modern temper of man is such that it can not remain satisfied with mere guesswork; it craves for positive knowledge which can be scientifically confirmed. The positive and scientific knowledge is based upon facts, and these facts are gathered by observation and experience. The observation and classification of facts are the beginning of the scientific knowledge. This stage comes with the advent of science and the application of scientific principles as reflected in the industrial revolution.

According to Auguste Comte, above mentioned progression from theological to positive stage shows an interplay of three basic human psychological elements - emotion, action and cognition at individual levels and their concomitant societal level.

In the course of his lengthy discussion on the development of the vanguard of humanity, the most advanced societies, Auguste Comte's development of human material life; types of social units, types of social order and prevailing sentiments. These correlations appear as follows:



<b>Intellectual Phase</b>	<b>Material Phase</b>	<b>Types of Social Unit</b>	<b>Types of Order</b>	<b>Prevailing Sentiments</b>
Theological	Military	The Family	Domestic	Attachment
Metaphysical	Legalistic	The State	Collective	Veneration
Positive	Industrial	Race	Universal (Humanity)	Benevolence

Auguste Comte submitted the first stage, the theological, to a more detailed study than the other two, probably because the positive stage was just beginning. While the metaphysical stage had lasted for a much shorter period of time than the first.

From his discussion, it is clear that Comte gave us mental progression of mankind at two levels – Individual and societal.

#### **Check your progress**

(i) How many stages of development in the history of mankind are mentioned by Comte?

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(ii) What is the meaning of Fetishism?

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(iii) 'Metaphysical thinking discards beliefs in concrete God'. Is it correct?

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### 1.6 LET US SUM UP :

- \* Three important factors were for the emergence of Sociology as a separate branch of social science. These were socio-economic factors that hastened the process of the establishment of sociology. These were– Industrial Revolution and Industrialisation, Inspiration from the growth of Natural science and Inspiration provided by the radically diverse societies and cultures of the colonial empires. Apart from these Great French revolution changed the socio-economic structure of French society. It breached the all tradition and increased disorder as well as disharmony. So, a section of intellectuals stared the then French society from different way. This scientific study helped to know the problems of France. This effort inspired to emerge sociology as a social science.
- \* The enlightenment constitutes a critical development "in terms of later evolution of sociology. The enlightenment was a period of remarkable intellectual development and change in philosophical thought. Enlightenment philosophers used to reject beliefs in traditional authority and they emphasised on reasons. The enlightenment was characterized by the belief that people could comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research.
- \* According to "The Concise Oxford Dictionary", positivism means the philosophical system of Auguste Comte, recognising only positive facts in observable phenomena, and rejecting metaphysics and theism and religious system found on this. Comte argued in his Positive philosophy, "human or divine, no scientific provisions of them would be possible".
- \* Auguste Comte mentioned about three stages of development in the history of mankind and in each of these stages the primordial element remains the same-an endeavour to relate individual aspect with a social order. These three stages of progress or development are what Comte termed: (a) The Theological Stage, (b) The Metaphysical Stage and (c) The Positive Stage. Auguste Comte's stages of development are evolutionary in nature and one stage evolves from the preceding stage. Each

development stage has its unique individuality vis-à-vis society.

- \* Comte has tried to prove that these are various levels in human thinking and each of these is linked with a particular social organisation. According to him, social organisation in a particular society is correspondent to the stage of human thinking through which it happens to be passing.

### 1.7 KEY WORDS :

- \* **Empirical** : An empirical statement or theory is one which can be tested by some kind of evidence drawn from experience.
- \* **Positivism** : Refers to the philosophical position which holds that knowledge can be derived only from sensory experience.
- \* **Objectivism** : The term used for the philosophical view that the objects of knowledge have their own existence in reality.
- \* **Observation** : This term is used to refer to the examination of behaviour directly by an investigator or by persons who serve as observers.
- \* **Empathy** : The ability to assume or take on the social roles and attitudes of other social actors - appears in a variety of different contexts.

### 1.8 PROBABLE ANSWERS

**Check your progress**

- (i) Auguste Comte.
- (ii) Scientific study of human interactions.
- (iii) Saint Simon was a great Social Philosopher in 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Yes.
- (ii) Rene- Descartes

**Check your progress**

- (i) Laws of phenomenon.
- (ii) Scientific enquiry.
- (iii) The true positive spirit.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Three stages.
- (ii) The first level of theological thinking.
- (iii) Yes.

**1.9 ASSIGNMENT :**

- What is the contribution of Auguste Comte to Sociology ? Why is he called the father of Sociology?
- Give a critical estimate of Auguste Comte's positivistic sociology?
- Discuss enlightenment. How enlightenment philosophers rejected the traditional authority?
- Which socio-economic factors are mainly responsible for the emergence of sociology?
- Give a critical estimate of Comte's positivism?
- Critically discuss the law of three stages?
- How Comte discusses the three stages of development in the history of mankind?
- Discuss Comte's concept of Positivism and also describe his classification of sciences.

**1.10 FURTHER READINGS :**

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## **UNIT – 2 : EMILE DURKHEIM**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **1.0 Objectives**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 Sociology as Science**

1.2.1 Empiricism

1.2.2 Social Fact

#### **1.3 Solidarity**

1.2.3 Comparative Method

1.3.1 Mechanical Solidarity

1.3.2 Organic Solidarity

#### **1.4 Division of Labour**

#### **1.5 Religion : Sacred & Profane**

#### **1.6 Theory of Suicide**

#### **1.7 Let Us Sum UP**

### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this unit are –

- (i) to know the empiricism of Emile Durkheim in Sociology.
- (ii) to obtain the basic notion of social fact.
- (iii) to acquire the knowledge of comparative method.
- (iv) to achieve the concept of solidarity.
- (v) to discuss the notion of Division of Labour.
- (vi) to pursue the knowledge of religion and
- (vii) to analyse the theory of suicide.

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

As you know Emile Durkheim was the first French academic sociologist. In the evolutionary scale of societal progression, as Durkheim believed, society progresses along the line of complexity. The basic element of unity or social bond that binds the very simplest of all societies must be a sense of similarity among the members of that society. In this context, he developed the theory of solidarity. Durkheim believed that sociology is a study of social facts. He described two fundamental features of social facts, namely, exteriority and constraint.

Durkheim's two major contributions to sociology are "suicide" and "religious life" and he developed his own explanations for these phenomena with far reaching methodological and theoretical implications in sociology. He argued for the division of labours. According to him social life is derived from a double sources (i) from a similarity of minds and (ii) from the division of labours. In his view, the division of labour gives birth to regulations and laws which determine the nature and relations of the divided functions. Durkheim rejected extra factors in the causation of suicide. Suicide is a social fact. He classified suicide and strongly analysed its causes. His contribution to sociology is most important which gives a new trend to its way. Apart from his method, here you will be able to obtain for discussion about his five major contributions like social fact, solidarity, Division of Labour, religion and suicide, lets come to discuss one by one here.

## **1.2 SOCIOLOGY AS SCIENCE :**

### **1.2.1 Empiricism :**

You know, Empiricism is a philosophical tradition which maintain that all or most knowledge is based on experience and is ultimately derived from the senses; it is usually contrasted with rationalism and with theories which emphasize the importance of innate or a priori knowledge.

Empiricism such as Lock, Hume and Mill take the natural sciences as their paradigms of knowledge; rationalists take logic or mathematics. Durkheim advocated empiricism. We continued the traditions of positivism, in the sense that he systematically examined the rules of the gathering of initial empirical data, of examining the relations empirically established between them and the evidence for hypotheses put forward. He shared the naturalistic principles of positivists, striving to build sociology on the example of the natural sciences with the inductive methods and principles of objective observation characteristic of them.

Durkheim endeavoured to study how reliable knowledge of a cause could be obtained, and how a casual relation could be demonstrated.

### **1.2.2. Social Fact :**

You are probably aware of some facts which are available in social life, Durkheim finds, that are inexplicable in terms of physical or psychological analysis; there are ways of acting, thinking, and feeling external to the individual and endowed with a power of coercion over him or her. illustrations include maxims of public morality, family and religious observances, and rules of professional behaviour. These realities are Durkheim's social facts, and constitute the proper domain of sociological study. Social facts exists as social currents even in the absence of any clearly defined social organization as in the case of waves of enthusiasm and indignation that grip individuals in a crowd. Such currents are truly social, for they have objective reality and a constraining effect on the individual.



Social phenomena are rooted in the collective aspects of a group's beliefs and practices. Universality is not the distinguishing mark of social facts; a thought that is in every individual consciousness does not for that reason become social. An important distinction exists between the two orders of facts, individual and social certain modes of acting and thinking, performed repeatedly, become crystallized as patterns distinguishable from the particular events that reflect them. Durkheim notes that these patterns acquire a body, a tangible form, and constitute a reality in their own right, apart from their particular manifestations in individuals. The later represent social phenomena in only a very restricted sense of the term "social". Since individual manifestations, however, belong to both orders of fact, they are properly referred to as socio-psychological. Individual events, such as a specific case of suicide as contrasted with the rate of suicide in a group, interest the sociologist only indirectly.

For Durkheim, then, sociology is a study of social facts. The nature of that study is determined in part by its subject matter, for social facts are discoverable in two ways: first by their power of coercion over individual, often evident in the sanctions attached to various types of behaviour; and second, by their general diffusion within a group. Durkheim points out that imitation is not an actual social fact. Institutions, on the other hand, when understood as beliefs and modes of conduct established by the collective life of the group, are real social facts because they have an external existence apart from individuals and constrain them. Sociology, therefore, Durkheim concludes, can be defined as the science of institutions of their genesis and functioning.

Social facts should be treated as things, according to Durkheim. Previously sociology had dealt more or less exclusively with concepts, not with things. For Durkheim, a thing differs from an idea in the same way as that which we know from without differs from that which we know from within. According to Durkheim, "Things include all objects of knowledge that cannot be conceived by purely mental activity, those that require for their conception data from outside the mind, from observations and experiments, those which are built up from the more external and immediately accessible characteristics to the less visible and more profound".

Durkheim insists that the study of social facts cannot rely upon the questionable method of introspection. Durkheim stresses are shown by more penetrating analysis to be reflections of more fundamental social conditions. Thus, for example, suicide rates may reflect the degree of social solidarity in various types of groups.

Social facts are not a product of individual human wills and hence cannot be ascertained by psychological investigation. Social facts are external to the individual and, at the same time, inevitably and significantly mould human actions. The facts of individual and of collective life are therefore interrelated, but they are not conterminous. Durkheim draws a parallel situation: a living cell consists of chemical elements, but the life characteristic of the cell is distinct from and external to these elements. So, too, in every human society: each is marked by social facts distinct from and external to its individual members. Social facts, therefore, differ qualitatively from psychological facts, and their study represents a different level of analysis.

### **1.2.3 Comparative Method :**

Now we have to discuss about the comparative method. You know Durkheim's methodology consists of formulating rules to help single out social facts. First of all, in observing social facts preconceptions must be eradicated. The sociologist must emancipate himself from the fallacious ideas that dominate the thinking of the layman. As Durkheim says, "He must throw off, once and for all, the yoke of these empiric categories which from long-continued habit have become tyrannical". Second, the subject matter of every sociological investigation should be a group of phenomena defined in advance by certain common external characteristics. That is, the investigator should be concerned with social facts whose existence he or she can infer from external aspects. Third, investigators must consider social facts as independent of their individual manifestations. Going beyond individual acts and seeking the permanent basis of collective habits, the sociologist must study the norms as such for example, legal rules, moral regulations and social conventions in their own permanent existence.

Durkheim's main rule is derived from this independence of social facts. Since all explanations of social facts in psychological terms fail to account for the fundamental constraining effect that real social phenomena exert over human life, the explanation of social life must be sought in society itself. Society is not a mere sum of individuals, but a system formed by the association of individuals a specific reality that has its own characteristics. Consequently, Durkheim concludes, whenever a social phenomenon is explained as a direct product of psychological processes, the explanation is a false one. The source of all obligation - filial piety, love, religious devotion, marital royalties outside the individual. These and other sentiments arising from social living are too often taken as causes of social facts, whereas they actually result from the pressures of social facts upon individual consciousness. Since collective life is not derived from individual life. Durkheim believes that "the determining cause of a social fact should be sought among the social facts preceding it and not among the states of the individual consciousness".

In discussing rules for establishing sociological proofs, Durkheim says that indirect experiment is the only method suitable to sociology. Comte's notion of the historical method is of no use, for the mere sequence of progress in development gives no cue to causality. Causation is a necessary relation between a prior and a subsequent state of phenomena and can be determined only by comparing the two states. For Durkheim a given effect always has a single corresponding cause. If, for example, suicide is found to have more than one cause, then the evidence points to the existence of more than one type of suicide. To explain a more complex fact, such as the existence of an institution, in anyone social species, the investigator must compare its different forms not only among groups of that

For Durkheim, comparative sociology is not a branch of the discipline: insofar as it ceases to be merely descriptive and seeks to account for social phenomena, it is sociology. Valid procedure requires, however, that societies be compared at the same period in their evolutionary development. Here Durkheim notwithstanding his view of the insufficiency of their methodology, partly tests his own procedure on the assumption of progressive evolution of Comte and Spencer. But Durkheim was even more concerned to

argue the merits of studying what John Stuart Mill called concomitant variation. This method holds that if a change in one variable is accompanied by a comparable change in another, the two changes may be causally related directly or linked through some basic social fact. Much of Durkheim's own empirical work sought to demonstrate causal relationships with this refinement of the comparative method.

But causal relationship between social facts is but one kind of important sociological quest, as Durkheim realized. He also formulated a functional approach to the study of social phenomena, an approach of considerable interest to present day sociologists. Durkheim's functionalism was an alternative to Comte's and Spencer's teleological method, which assumed that social facts are sufficiently explained when their usefulness in terms of meeting human desires is brought out. But desires themselves change, a fact requiring sociological explanation. And social facts frequently persist after their original utility has been lost. Therefore Durkheim holds that, in addition to seeking the efficient cause of a social fact, sociology must look for the social function it fulfils. Here Durkheim borrows from biology by defining function as a relation of correspondence between the fact under consideration and an organism's needs. In social terms, the function of a social phenomenon is the correspondence between it and some general need of the society. For example, the division of labour functions to integrate modern society, though clearly it was not brought into being to perform this role nor does the integrating function of the division of labour necessarily benefit the individual. The task of functional analysis, then, is to clarify how institutions and other social phenomena contribute to maintaining the social whole. The fulfilment of this methodological task, according to Durkheim and to many modern functionalists as well, is an essential one for understanding the persistencies and alterations of the social order.

### Check your progress

(i) Who was the first French academic Sociologist?

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(ii) "Social facts are product of individual human wills".  
It is correct according to Durkheim.

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### 1.3 SOLIDARITY :

The concept of solidarity explains social differentiation or the division of labour in society. This concept of social solidarity was presented by Emile Durkheim in his Doctoral work "The Division of Labour in Society". It was published in 1893. Solidarity means the solidarity of the organisation. Social solidarity is the characteristic trait of a society. The book "The Division of Labour in Society" is concerned with the relationship between the individual and the collectivity. In the first part of this work social phenomena in general are treated as consequences of the division of labour in society, which is taken to be an independent variable. The study makes extensive use of material drawn from the law, which Durkheim considered the only readily observable and most organized form of social constraint.

Before we discuss the form of solidarity, a few concepts have to be explained. A crucial concept in Durkheim's theory of solidarity is the collective conscience which is the sum total of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of society and forming a system in its own right. This collective conscience, a distinct reality which persists through time and unities generation, is a product of human similarities. To quote Durkheim, "It is thus, an entirely different thing from particular consciences, although it

can be realized only through them. It is the psychical type of society, a type which has its properties, its conditions of existence, its mode of development, just as individual types, although in a different way". Collective conscience is the result of similarities among the individuals in societies. As similarities increase so increases the strength and independence of collective conscience. It is very much powerful in primitive societies due to which drastic reactions are taken against those who violate it. Repressive and restitutive punishments are given to breach of social laws. Crime is an offence against collective conscience. The restitutive law aims to restore things to order.

Durkheim has distinguished between two forms of solidarity i.e. mechanical and organic. According to Durkheim, different societies express either of these two types of solidarity. They correspond to extreme forms of social organization. For example, primitive societies have pre-dominantly mechanical solidarity whereas modern industrial societies have organic solidarity. This difference is due to the nature of social differentiation.

### **1.3.1 Mechanical Solidarity**

Mechanical solidarity is a solidarity of resemblance. In such a society the individuals differ from one another as little as possible. As a member of the same collectivity they resemble each other, feel the same emotion, cherish the same values and hold the same things sacred. Such is the primitive society. This society is coherent because social differentiation does not occur. In the work of Durkheim, the mechanical solidarity prevailed to the extent that "ideas and tendencies common to all members of the society are greater in number and intensity than those which pertain personally to each member". He explained that this solidarity grows only in inverse ratio to personality. He suggested that solidarity, which comes from likeness "is at its maximum when the collective conscience completely envelops our whole conscience and coincides in all points with it". Thus, a society having mechanical solidarity is characterised by strong collective conscience. In the order of history, society first has mechanical solidarity. In other words, the primitive societies had mechanical solidarity. According to

Durkheim, "It is a historical law that mechanical solidarity which first stands alone, or nearly so, progressively loses ground, and that organic solidarity becomes, little by little, preponderant. But when the way in which solidarity of men becomes modified, the structure of societies cannot but change. The form of a body is necessarily transformed when the molecular affinities are no longer the same".

### 1.3.2 Organic Solidarity

Organic solidarity is a more developed type of solidarity. It is based upon differentiation. The individuals are no longer similar. They may be differentiated on the basis of thinking, emotions and values. There is hardly much consciousness among them. They have no collective conscience. They are marked by division of labour. The organic solidarity is characterised by specialisation and individualism. The individuals become different with the increase of social differentiation. The population increases and with it increases urbanisation and industrialisation increasing the complexity of social facts. However, there is a corresponding increase in mental and moral aptitude and capabilities.

#### Check your progress

(i) Collective consciousness is the result of what?

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(ii) How many solidarities are mentioned by Durkheim?

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#### **1.4 DIVISION OF LABOUR :**

Now you will be given the idea of one more contribution, i.e. division of labour. In the famous work "The Division of Labour in Society" Emile Durkheim mentions that division of labour is not to be regarded as a mere luxury, desirable perhaps, but not indispensable to society. It is rather a condition of its very existence. It is that assures the solidarity of the groups. It determines the essential traits of their constitution. It follows that, if such is really the function of the division of labour, it may be expected to have a moral character because the needs of order, of harmony, of social solidarity generally are what one understands by moral needs.

Social life is derived from a double source, (a) from a similarity of minds (b) from the division of labour. The individual is socialised in the first case because, not having his own individuality, he is confused along with his fellows, in the bosom of the same collectivity. In this case, because, even though he possesses a physiognomy and a temperament which distinguishes him from others, he is dependent upon these in the same measure in which he is distinguished from the society which results from the union of the two.

The division of labour gives birth to regulations and laws which determine the nature and relations of the divided functions, but the violation of which entails only punitive measure and not of an explanatory character. Every function which one individual exercises is invariably dependent upon functions exercised by others and forms with them a system of interdependent parts.

It follows that corresponding duties result from the nature of the task he chooses. Because one fills this or that domestic or social function, one is imprisoned in a net of obligations from which one does not have the right to free himself. There is especially one organ forward which our state of dependence is ever increasing. It is the state. The points at which we are in contact with it are multiplying. So are the occasions in which it takes upon itself to recall us to a sense of common solidarity. Collectivism and individualism, the great currents in social life based on the like mindedness and independent characteristics of unique attributes of the person, are not too different in structure. The



segmentary structure of the society is more and more overlaid by the other, but without ever disappearing completely.

Durkheim rejects the economic definition of division of labour as a rational device contrived by men to increase the output of the collectivity. To Durkheim social differentiation begins with the disintegration of mechanical solidarity and of segmental structure. Occupational specialization and multiplication of industrial activities are only an expression of a more general form of social differentiation which corresponds to the structure of society as a whole. Durkheim rejects the thesis of contractualists like Herbert Spencer, since the individuals, according to Durkheim were not free to enter into contracts with each other. It is wrong to assume that individuals were aware of their differences before social differentiation. In fact, contractualism is the result not the cause of social differentiation. Division of labour is also not due to hedonistic causes since men in primitive societies were no less happy than those in modern societies. Thus, according to Durkheim, division of labour is a social phenomenon. As he puts it "The division of labour varies in direct ratio with the volume and density of societies and, if it progresses in a continuous manner in the course of social development, it is because societies become regularly denser and generally more voluminous".

#### **Check your progress**

(i) Who wrote 'The Division of Labour in Society'?

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(ii) In what way Durkheim discussed about division of Labour?

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### **1.5 RELIGION : SACRED AND PROFANE :**

As you know The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life, Durkheim brings his analysis of collective or group forces to the study of religion in its most elementary manifestations. In this book he states at the outset, "we propose to study the most primitive and simple religion which is actually known ... found in a society whose organization is surpassed by none in its simplicity". He selected for intense study, though through secondary sources, the Amnta, an Australian tribe. This choice was based in part on the assumption that the Amnta represent a remote stage of evolutionary development; but Durkheim was also eager to study a case in which the whole society could be grasped and in which the internal features and institutional interconnections are experimentally observable.

Others had sought the most elementary form of religion. Spencer and Tylor, for example, had found it in the animism, or spirit worship, in primitive societies; Max Muller identified it with Naturism, the worship of nature's force. But Durkheim rejected these theories because they fail to explain the universal key distinction between the sacred and profane and because they explain religion away by interpreting it as an illusion. Durkheim, in contrast took Totemism as prevailing in the Arunta as the simplest form of religion. Totemism refers to an implicit belief in a mysterious force or principle that provides sanctions for violations of taboos, inculcates moral responsibilities in the group and animates the totem itself. The later in the form of an animal plant, or natural object - is a symbol of both the sacred totemic principle and the group. The life of the Amnta was sharply divided into the secular pursuits of scattered small groups and the sacred periodic collective gatherings of the clan marked by exaltation, group euphoria, and even the breaking of taboos. Durkheim sees these collective activities as the birth place of religious sentiments and ideas.

From study of this elementary case Durkheim develops his fundamental thesis that (1) group life is the generating source of efficient cause of religion; (2) religious ideas and practices refer to or symbolize the social group; and (3) the distinction between sacred and profane is found universally and has important implications for all social life.

The sacred, for Durkheim refers to things human beings set apart, including religious beliefs, rites, deities, or anything socially defined as requiring special religious treatment. Durkheim says "The circle of sacred objects cannot be determined, then once and for all. Its extent varies infinitely, according to the different religions". The significance of the sacred lies in the fact of its distinction from the profane. The sacred thing is par excellence that which the profane should not touch and cannot touch with impunity. People always draw this distinction, however diverse the designations of the two orders in different times and places. Participation, in the sacred order, such as in rituals or ceremonies gives a special social prestige, illustrating one of the social functions of religion. Religion itself may be defined as a unified system of beliefs and practices relating to sacred things. Sacred beliefs and practices unify people in a moral community. This collective sharing of beliefs, in turn, is essential for the development of religion.

"To what do the sacred symbols of religious belief and practice refer?" asks Durkheim. Nothing that they distort empiric reality, he argues that they cannot refer to the external environment or to individual human nature but only to the moral reality of society. The source and object of religion are the collective life; the sacred is at bottom society personified. This secular sociological explanation of religion is supported by Durkheim with discussions of the similarity of people's attitudes toward God and society; both inspire the sensation of divinity; both possess moral authority and stimulate devotion, self-sacrifice and exceptional individual behaviour. The individual who feels dependent on some external moral power is not, therefore, a victim of hallucination but a responsive member of society. Durkheim concludes that the substantial function of religion is the creation, reinforcement, and maintenance of social solidarity. So long as society persists so will religion. Thus Durkheim thought he had solved the religious - moral dilemma of modern society. If religion is nothing but the indirect worship of society, modern people need only to express their religious feelings directly toward sacred symbolization of society. Durkheim did not foresee, and would have been horrified at, the forms that the definition of society could take.

The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life includes, in addition to his analysis of religion, the beginnings of a similar explanation of the basic forms of classification and the fundamental categories of thought itself. Durkheim finds these collective representations also rooted in group life. Durkheim's venture into the social determination of classification and categories cannot be pursued here, but it should be noted that this speculative exploration brought Durkheim squarely into the field of the sociology of knowledge, an important division of sociological study today.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who advocated the theory of naturalism in context of origin of religion?

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(ii) What is totemism?

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### **1.6 THEORY OF SUICIDE :**

Now we have to discuss about The Theory of Suicide. The theory of suicide is a dazzling contribution of Emile Durkheim. He developed his own explanation of suicide with far reaching methodological and theoretical implications in sociology. His study on suicide is a hallmark in sociological literature. His study raised two major issues : (i) The theoretical significance of the causality of suicide; (ii) The methodological significance with special reference to the use of secondary data and application of statistics in sociological research. Durkheim speaks of suicidal currents as collective tendencies that dominate some very susceptible individuals and catch them up in their sweep. He believed that act of suicide is interpreted as a product of

these currents. The larger significance of suicide lies in its demonstration of the function of sociological theory in empirical science.

### **1.6.1 Types of Suicide :**

Based on the analysis of a mass of data gathered on many societies and cultures, Durkheim identified four types of suicide: Egoistic, Altruistic, Anomic and Fatalistic.

Now lets come to discuss each type of suicide as analysed by Emile Durkheim.

#### **1.6.1.1 Egoistic Suicide :**

The suicides committed by persons who are self-centred and to whom self-regard is the highest regard are called egoistic suicides. On account of their self centredness and lack of altruistic feelings, a sense of respect and regard for others, the egoistic persons are usually aloof and cut off from the mainstream of the society. They can never take whole hearted interest in social projects. An overwhelming sense of self-regarded needs and heightened sense of self importance leads to aloofness and indifferentism and this grows into social alienation. This social alienation produces apathy. Being basically a gregarious animal, man is unable to cope with social alienation and feels impelled to commit suicide. For example, both Catholics and protestants forbid suicide but the rate of suicide is far less among Catholics than protestants without any regard to race and nationality. Thus "The superiority of Protestantism with respect to suicide results from its being a less strongly integrated church than the catholic church". This is due to the fact that catholic church keeps its members more organised while Protestant Church gives more freedom, fosters free enquiry and circulates few common beliefs and practices. The suicide rate in England is less due to the fact, that Anglican Church is more powerfully integrated than other Protestant churches.

Durkheim has tried to explain the egoistic suicide by illustrating its nature by various examples. According

to him those persons who have none or few emotional attachments are more suicide prone than those who have strong attachments will always have a reason to live and can never experience the kind of apathy and acuity felt by unattached individual. Generally, single male or female are more suicide prone than married ones. Similarly, persons who are issueless commit suicide in greater number than persons who are fathers or mothers. This fact can be proved true in fields other than family. Durkheim hastened to prove that all suicides connected with war are basically due to social causes. He freely grants the observation that there is sudden rise in the incidence of suicide upon the cessation of hostilities; but according to him, it will be very superficial to see as the cause of this change in the suicide rate. Actually, there is great cohesiveness in social relations during war and a sense of common purpose and goal unite people into well knit social wholes. During war each person appears to be complementary to the other and co-operation is very real. But with stoppage of war all this is shattered. Soldiers who fought hand-in-hand are separated by wide distances. Nurses and soldiers whose romances flourished, all of a sudden everything comes to a dead stop. The social cohesion gives way to disharmony and discord. These social factors are the true causes of increase in suicide. Due to sudden disruption of routine in mutual relationship among soldiers, some soldiers, too, commit suicide.

#### **1.6.1.2 Altruistic Suicide :**

According to Durkheim the second type of suicide is altruistic suicide. Such suicides are committed by individuals having a peculiar type of personality. An altruistic suicide is a form of sacrifice in which a person puts an end to his life by some heroic means in order to promote or further the interest of the cause or idea dear to him. According to Durkheim, the persons committing altruistic suicide are those who attach great value and importance to the need and imperative of control. Compared to the value of society and its cause they consider their own personal life of no worth. For them the worth-whileness of their life lies in the maintenance and promotion of social forms of which they are shadows. Once such an outlook develops and takes firm

hold of the man, such a person easily and willingly sacrifices his life for social causes, ends and purposes. As a matter of fact such a person considers himself only a reflection of the society and, therefore, of no worth and value in himself. The ancient custom of sati, in which a wife would willingly jump into the funeral pyre of her husband and thus end her life, is an example of altruistic suicide and can be explained as being due to rigorous social control acquiesced to.

Out of Durkheim's detailed analyses of altruistic suicide three types of altruistic suicide may be defined (a) Obligatory altruistic; (b) Optional altruistic suicide; (c) Acute altruistic suicide. Three basic definitions from Durkheim are given below to clarify those types stated above.

- **Obligatory Altruistic Suicide :**

When a person commit suicide "it is not because he assumes the right to do so but, on the contrary, because it is his duty. If he fails in this obligation, he is dishonoured and also punished, usually, by religious sanctions".

- **Optional Altruistic Suicide :**

According to Durkheim it refers to –

A man kills himself without being explicitly forced to do so. Yet these suicides are of the same nature as obligatory suicide. Though public opinion does not formally require them, it is certainly favourable to them. Since here not clinging to life is a virtue, even of the highest rank, the man who renounces life on least provocation of circumstances or through simple vain glory whether is praiseworthy. A social prestige thus attaches to suicide, which receives encouragement from this fact, and the refusal of this reward has effects similar to actual punishment, although to a lesser degree. What is done in one case to escape the stigma of insult is done in the other to win esteem and if optional is added to make their special quality clearer, this word simply means that they are less expressly required by

society than when strictly obligatory. Indeed the two varieties are so closely related that it is impossible to distinguish where one begins and the other ends.

- **Acute Altruistic Suicide :**

According to Durkheim, this type refers to a situation when "... it even happens that the individual kills himself purely for the joy of sacrifice, because, even with no particular reason, renunciation in itself is considered praiseworthy". According to Durkheim, "Perfect pattern of which is mystical suicide"

### **1.6.1.3 Anomie Suicide :**

This type of suicides are concerned with social disorganization and imbalance. This results from normlessness or deregulation in society. Although this kind of suicide occurs during industrial or financial crises, it is not because they cause poverty, since crises of prosperity have the same result, but because they are crises of the collective order. Every disturbance of social equilibrium, whether on account of sudden prosperity or instant misfortune, results in a deregulation and a greater impulse to voluntary death.

Durkheim attributed anomic suicide to unlimited aspirations and the breakdown of regulatory norms. Man's aspirations have consistently increased since the beginnings of history. There is nothing in man's organic structure or his psychological constitution which can regulate his overweening ambitions. Social desires can be regulated only by a moral force. Durkheim views the collective order as the only moral force that can effectively restrain the social and moral needs. However, occasionally their mechanism breaks down and normlessness ensues.

Any abrupt transitions such as economic disaster, industrial crisis or sudden prosperity can cause a deregulation of the normative structure. According to Durkheim anomic is a chronic state of affairs in the modern socio-economic system. Sudden changes upset the societal scale instantly but a new scale cannot be immediately improvised. Collective conscience requires time to reclassify men and things.



During such periods of transition there is no restraint on aspirations which continue to rise unbridled. "The state of deregulation or anomie is thus further heightened by passions being less disciplined, precisely when they need more disciplining". Overweening ambition and the race for unattainable goals continue to heighten anomie. According to Durkheim, poverty protects against suicide because it is a restraint in itself: "the less one has the less he is tempted to extend the range of his needs indefinitely".

### **Check your progress**

(i) How many types of suicide are identified by Durkheim?

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(ii) Is suicide a social fact?

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### **1.7 LET US SUM UP :**

Durkheim's theory is fairly systematic and has been highly suggestive for his successors in France and elsewhere.

He defined sociology as the science of social facts and of social institutions. Social facts in turn, were analysed as constraining forces in the determination of human conduct or in more modern terms, as part of the apparatus of social control. In this way, his discussion of the collective conscience, in spite of their variation, call attention to the way in which social interaction and relationships significantly influence individual attitudes, ideas and sentiments.

- \* According to Durkheim, society is in reality sui-generis. It is an independent entity. A society has its own features and special characteristics. Only social facts are real. The social facts are objective which are capable of being perceived from outside.
- \* Sociology is a study of social facts. The nature of that study is determined in part by its subject matter. The social facts can be understood only by sociological law. There can be no psychological explanation of these facts.
- \* For Durkheim, comparative sociology is not a breach of the discipline; in so far as it ceases to be merely descriptive and seeks to account for social phenomena; it is sociology.
- \* Durkheim has distinguished between two forms of solidarity i.e. mechanical and organic. According to him, mechanical solidarity is a solidarity of resemblance. As a member of the same collectivity they resemble each other, feel the same emotion, cherish the same values and hold same things sacred. On the otherhand, organic solidarity is based upon differentiation. The individuals are no longer similar. They may be differentiated on the basis of their kinds, emotions and values.
- \* The division of labour is a structure of the society as a whole of which economic division of labour is mere expression. To Durkheim social differentiation begins with the disintegration of mechanical solidarity and of segmental structure. Occupational specialization and multiplication of industrial activities are only an expression of a more general form of social differentiation which corresponds to the structure of society as a whole.
- \* Durkheim defines religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things. Sacred things are those which have been set apart by religious practices. He explains the origin of religion with reference to 'totemism'. According to him "totemism" is the

religion, not of certain animals or of certain men, but of a kind of anonymous and impersonal force beings, without however, being identified with anyone of them.

- \* For Durkheim, suicide is a social fact. The causation of suicide should be referred to social structure and ramifying functions. The classified four types of suicide, i.e. (i) Egoistic, (ii) Altruistic, (iii) Anomie and (iv) Fatalistic suicide.

### 1.8 KEY WORDS :

- \* **Fact** : It is a statement about a phenomenon which is based upon the observations or experiences of a wide variety of persons.
- \* **Social Fact** : This term is used to describe social phenomena that were external to the individual yet constrained his or her actions. Social facts are (i) external to individual, (ii) coercive; and (iii) objective, that is, not merely a product of subjective definition.
- \* **Social Pathology** : The study of the basis of disordered function. Sociology refer to social pathology experiences the difficulty of knowing what the normal and desirable state of social life is, deviations from which may be described as pathological.
- \* **Empiricism** : In sociology, it is used positively to describe that type of sociology which tries to avoid untested theoretical speculation and to aim a I way sat the provision of quantitative, empirical evidence. Generally it is based on the supposition that the only source of knowledge has been experience.
- \* **Solidarity** : It refers to that condition within a group in which there has been social cohesion plus cooperative, collective action directed toward the achievement of group goals.

- \* **Division of Labour** : The phrase refers to the division of a work process in to a number of parts, each part-undertaken by a separate person or group of persons.
- \* **Sacred** : It includes phenomena which are regarded and experienced as extraordinary, transcendent and outside the everyday course of events.
- \* **Altruism** : Normally contrasted with egoism and individualism, altruism has been the principle of unselfish regard for the needs and interests of others.
- \* **Anomie** : The term refers to several aspects of social participation where the conditions necessary for man to fulfill himself and to attain happiness were not present.
- \* **Psychologism** : As a term of abuse in sociology, this refers to explanations of the social structure exclusively in terms of the attributes of individual psychology.
- \* **Functionalism** : It refers to the analysis of social and cultural phenomena in terms of the functions they carry out in a socio-cultural system.

### 1.9 PROBABLE ANSWERS :

<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) Emile Durkheim. (ii) No.
<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) Similarities among the individuals in societies. (ii) Two types, i.e., Mechanical and Organic solidarity.
<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) Emile Durkheim. (ii) In functionalist way.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Max Muller.
- (ii) An implicit belief in a mysterious force that provides sanctions for violations of taboos.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Four types.
- (ii) Yes, suicide is a social fact according to Durkheim.

**2.0 ASSIGNMENT :**

- Write a critical essay on Functionalism of Emile Durkheim.
- Define social fact? How does Durkheim explain the social fact?
- Describe mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity as conceived by Durkheim.
- Assess Durkheim's contribution to the study of Sociology of Religion .
- What are the main causes of suicide according to Durkheim? How has he distinguished between egoistic and altruistic suicide?
- Write a critical note on social thought of Emile Durkheim.

**2.1 FURTHER READING :**

- Timasheff. S.N. & Theodorson. : Sociological Theory, Random House, New York (1955).
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## **UNIT – 3 : MAX WEBER**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **1.0 Objectives**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 Verstehen And Ideal Type**

#### **1.3 Social Action**

#### **1.4 Authority and Power**

#### **1.5 Religion and Capitalism**

#### **1.6 Let Us Sum Up**

### **1.0 OBJECTIVES :**

After reading this unit, you will be able to acquaint yourself with –

- (i) the basic concept of verstehen and ideal type.
- (ii) concept of social action and its typology
- (iii) authority and power.
- (iv) Sociology of religion.
- (v) the relation between religion and capitalism.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION :**

A large number of Weber's writings do not belong to the field of sociology; of the sociological writings many deal with concrete problems rather than questions of general theory. But his mind was highly analytical, and even when he was treating problems not specifically oriented to theory he made important contributions to the later.

He founded German Sociological Society in 1910, along with Ferdinand Tonnies and George Simmel. He died on the 14th of June, 1920.

Weber has attempted his peculiar definition of sociology. He argued that sociology is the science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at causal explanation of its course and results. His concept of 'ideal types' and 'verstehen' are most significant contribution to sociology. The concept of social action is the centre of all social ideas of Max Weber. Weber developed his sociology of religion. He tried to make inter-relation between religion and economy. According to him ethics of protestant are responsible for the spirit of capitalism. Apart from these his discussion on authority and power is also a dazzling contribution to sociology. We will have to discuss his main contribution in a precise manner.

## **1.2 VERSTEHEN AND IDEAL TYPE :**

### **1.2.1 Verstehen : Understanding and Meaning :**

Weber's revolutionary approach to the study of human behaviour implicit in his key methodological concept called 'verstehen' which means comprehending or understanding on the level of meaning. The notion of verstehen is based on what Weber perceived as advantage of the social sciences over the natural sciences. In the natural sciences we can only observe uniformities and deduce generalizations about the functional relationships of elements; comprehension is therefore mediate. In the sciences, on the other hand, we can understand the actions and comprehend the subjective intentions of the actors; comprehension is immediate. We understand, for instance, why a student

is repeating a verse over and over, why a politician makes promises or why the mother rocks her baby. Verstehen makes possible the scientific study of social behaviour in two ways: it facilitates direct observational understanding of the subjective meaning of human actions and it facilitates understanding of the underlying motive.

When Weber combined his notion of 'understanding' with his modified platonism called 'ideal types', sociology took a giant step forward in both scientific sophistication and socio-political utility. Whereas social realities under Weber's analysis "must be understood by imagining oneself into the experience of men and women as they act out their own words", explain Collins and Makowsky, we understand the complementary "ideal types" to be "the tools for making scientific generalizations out of our understanding of this infinitely complex and shifting world". It was necessary for Weber to refine his methodological skills to handle large and complex social phenomena for he aspired to outline and analyze the entire matrix contributing to the rise of modern industrial civilization. Behind economics, law, politics and religion, Weber sought to analyze the interconnections of all social behaviour so that no rational human act was left out. In such a pursuit, he produced nothing short of an outright sociology of world history. He was not driven by a sublimated metaphysical allegiance but by a sheer obsession with scientific understanding of human existence manifest in behaviour. "For Weber", explains Rossides, "Verstehen sociology was not a search for the underlying principle of existence, but a conscious search for insights and solutions to the unique and changing problems that human beings face, an orientation that Weber stated epigrammatically when he said that social science has 'eternal youth'. Contending that sociology or any science is unable either to validate metaphysical knowledge or any system of values, Weber's scientific method was posited against both the liberal and Marxist positions which wished to 'use' science to further their own 'value' systems in the name of scientific truth.

In fostering the creative potential of his method, Weber was always ready to assert his position that social facts as human phenomena necessarily involve the action of agents who themselves attribute a sense or reason or causal factor to what they are doing.



Sociology, then requires an understanding of that sense of the attributed meaning or reason. In this respect, Weber found himself in the German tradition which claimed Hegel, Dilthey, and Rickert as proponents. When "Verstehen" seemed to lose its analytical capability, for example, when the scientists looked at unfamiliar or bizzare behaviour, Weber would supplement verstehen with a particularly distinct method of inquiry, viz., causal explanation, a concept to be discussed later. Weber's breadth of knowledge, not just in the classics but in philosophy and theology, history and economics, gave him a distinct advantage in terms of reach and grasp of ideals.

Thus Verstehen makes scientific study of social behaviour possible. This is done in two ways : (A) Direct observation understanding of the subjective meaning of human actions. (B) Understanding of the underlying motive. He combines the concept of understanding with what he calls "ideal type". According to him social realities must be understood by imagining oneself into the experience of human beings as they act in their own words.

### **1.2.2 Ideal Types :**

You know that the concept of ideal types introduced by Max Weber and it was complementary to his concept of verstehen. The study of social action, as Weber conceived it, calls for the method of the Ideal type.

The ideal type is a mental construct. It is formed by exaggerating or accentuating one or more traits or points of view observable in reality. Thus the type may be called ideal because it exists as an idea. It is an analytical construct that serve the investigator as a measuring rod to ascertain similarities as well as deviations in concrete cases. An ideal type is not a statistical average or an average of any sort. It is rather an extreme, a deliberately of certain characteristics to form a homogeneous mental image. That image, which may be a construct like "bureaucracy" or modern capitalism provides conceptual clarity against which the complexities of reality may be analyzed.

The ideal type is also not a hypothesis. It is rather a tool for analysis of concrete historical events or situations. Such analysis requires precisely and unambiguously defined concepts-standards that can be met only with ideal types. An ideal type is a limiting concept with which life situations or actions are compared in the process of investigation.

#### **1.2.2.1 Kinds of Ideal Types :**

Weber developed three kinds of ideal types based on their levels of abstraction.

- ideal types of historical particulars which refer to specific historical realities.
- ideal types which refer to abstract elements of the historical reality that are observable in a variety of historical and cultural contexts.
- ideal types that constitute rationalizing reconstructions of a particular kind of behaviour.

The ideal type as Weber understood it had nothing to do with moral ideal, for the type of perfection implied in the ideal is purely a logical one and not to be found in pure form in any socio-historical situation. Any social phenomenon has an ideal type, be it a brothel, a house of worship or a market place. The elementary duty of scientific self-control, "says Weber", and the only ways to avoid serious and foolish blunders require a sharp, precise distinction between logically comparative analysis of reality by ideal-types in the logical sense and the value judgment of reality on the basis of ideals". Furthermore, Weber is insistent that ideal types are decidedly not theoretical hypotheses which must be proved by reduction of the empirical world to universal laws. Weber continues:

"It is not 'actual' interconnections of 'things' but the conceptual interconnections of problems which define the scope of the various sciences. A new 'science' emerges where new problems are pursued by new methods and truths are thereby discovered which open us significant new points of view".

### **1.2.2.2 Characteristics of Ideal Type :**

Weber has based his sociology upon this theory of ideal types. In his work he had defined the nature of these ideal types. According to Weber three characteristics are found in his conception of ideal types.

#### **(i) Ideal Types are Subjective :**

The ideal types are subjective in character. The subjective nature of these types marks them off from the physical laws. The physical events or processes are objective, whereas social laws cannot be objective. This is because social laws pertain to human actions and behaviour and human behaviour is characterised by subjective motive, intention and goal. Man is a creature of free-will and his actions are not quite predictable on the basis of causal laws. Weber wanted to make sociology fully objective but full objectivity is not possible in human affairs because man's actions are not determined in the manner of physical events. However, with the help of the concepts like 'ideal types' it should be possible to achieve a great deal of objectivity.

#### **(ii) Ideal Types are Emotional :**

The ideal types are emotive in content, they pertain to our affections and reside in our imagination. The ideal types are not concrete but abstract in nature. Even the physical laws like laws of gravitation and motion are also abstract very much like ideal types in this aspect. Terms like 'economic man', 'religious man' etc. are also abstract and no existing man fully answers to these concepts.

#### **(iii) The Ideal Types are Changeable :**

According to Max Weber the ideal types are purely human constructions and are therefore, subject to the consideration of time and place. These are affected by the current thinking and social atmosphere. Naturally,

therefore, the ideal types are changeable. These cannot be eternal or permanent.

Weber never claimed the ideal type to completely exhaust every conceivable empirical structure. Social structures are too complex for that. Weary of attempts at adopting natural science ideas and concepts into the social sciences, Weber's criticisms of the whole field of naturalistic positivism and socio-cultural positivism centered around his belief that socio-historical life of mankind is too 'infinite and multifarious' for such reductionism.

The ideal type concept grew out of a creative convergence of two of Weber's other key concepts viz., verstehen and causal explanation. The ideal type is not, contrary to what German metaphysicians would have liked it to be, a purely classificatory concept rather than an 'ideal' classification, for the former concept is reached by "abstraction from a wide range of phenomena with differing individual characteristics" whereas the latter is intended "to illuminate what is peculiar to a given cultural phenomenon". Applied primarily to various types of rational behaviour it is fundamentally "a model of what an agent would do if he were to act completely rationally according to the criteria of rationality involved in his behaviour's sense". In such instances, the ideal type provides a milieu of precise language and procedure for analyzing specific behaviour while aiding in the formulation of theoretical explanations for behavioral instances which vary from what is called the "ideal-typical norm".

### **Check your progress**

(i) What do you mean by Verstehan?

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(ii) What is Ideal Types?

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(iii) Where from the concept of Ideal Type grew out?

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### **1.3 SOCIAL ACTION :**

As you aware, Weber's definition of sociology is based upon his concept of social action. As he tried to make sociology a scientific enquiry, Max Weber begins with the idea of social action. So, the idea of action is central to Max Weber's sociology.

#### **1.3.1 Meaning of Social Action :**

Defining social action Max Weber observes that the social action is that action of an individual which is somehow influences by the action and behaviour of other persons and by which it is modified or its direction determined. Thus, it is clear that by the term social action we mean the actions of individuals which are somehow influenced, guided or determined by the action of other individuals. Pointing out the importance of the sociologist's ability to grasp the subjective quality of human being, Weber wrote, "A correct causal interpretation of concrete course of action, is arrived at when the overt action and the motives have both been correctly apprehended and at the same time their relation has become meaningfully comprehensible".

### 1.3.2 Characteristics of Social Action :

Max Weber has given a very important subtle analysis of the concept of social action. He discussed it in scientific way. The sociologists find out some significant characteristics of his social action as mentioned below—

- (i) Social action may be influenced by an action of Past, Present or Future. It should be by now quite obvious to the reader that a social action is a result or a modification of some action of other person or persons. But it needs to be made clear here that the modifying action need not necessarily be contemporaneous with the modified action, that is, it may not be occurring at the same time or just before in order to influence the action of an individual. Indeed such an action may be a past occurrence or even an expected action in the future. Thus, a social action is necessarily a result or a modification of some action of some other individual, but the causal or modifying action may be an occurrence of past, present or future.
- (ii) Social action presupposes the existence of other individual and some action by him. A social action is a result of some action by some individual whose action, in turn, results in an action by some other individual. This means that there can be no social action in isolation, that is, an individual living in complete wilderness removed from all inter-personal contacts cannot do a social action. Social action is possible if and only if there is another human being whose action or behaviour is prompting to the giving individual to act in a particular manner.
- (iii) Necessity of subjective meaning : In a social act it is necessary to have subjective meaning to the doer of a particular social action. If two persons collide accidentally and without any motive whatsoever the collision will not be a social action. On the other hand if a notorious smuggler causes a collision of a truck with a police jeep resulting in injuries or death, then

such a collision would be a case of social action. Even if the accidental collision is followed by some quarrel or tendering of apologies to each other, then, too the action will be social action. A blind imitation without any understanding of the nature of act being imitated is not social action. Only if there is some understanding of what is being done, a social action is the result.

### **1.3.3 Stages of Social Action :**

Weber has described the various stages of social action. The stages of social action are determined by the patterns of social behaviour. According to Weber there are four stages of social action which are shown below.

- **Traditional Stage :**

This stage is concerned with long standing customs, traditions and usages. Thus, all those actions which are influenced, guided or determined by these customs or traditions are covered under this stage.

- **Emotional Stage :**

An emotional reaction to the action of others comes under this stage. If there is expression of love, hatred, sympathy, compassion or pity in response to the behaviour of other individuals, the consequent social actions are covered by this stage.

- **Valuational :**

The social actions pertaining to values are considered valuational. The religious and ethical actions come under this category.

- **Rational- Purposeful :**

The actions covered by this category are primarily guided by reason and discrimination. The pursuit of goals is a corollary of the facts, the rational choice involves consciousness of ends or goals.

#### **1.3.4 Classification of Social Action :**

Weber categorized four types of social actions on the basis of their "mode of orientations".

- **Rational Orientation to an individual end (ZWECKRATIONAL):**

This type of action involves rational end, rational means and rational results. That means 'reason' is the only yard stick used to measure this type of action.

- **Rational Orientation to an absolute end (WERTRATIONAL) :**

This type of action involves an absolute value and the actor acts in order to fulfill the 'commands' or the demands of the absolute value. The actor acts at any cost to uphold the value that prompts him to act that way. Terms like 'duty', 'honour', 'the pursuit of beauty', 'a religious call', or 'personal loyalty' are typical examples of such orientations that represent this type of actions. In this type of actions the 'act' itself is important and not its results.

- **Affectual Orientation (AFFEKTUELL) :**

This type of action involves an uncontrolled reaction to some exceptional stimuli. Satisfactions usually received by an actor out of revenge or some sensual acts are typical examples of such type of actions. In this type also act itself is important and not its results.

- **Traditional Orientation :**

This type of action involves 'habits' and an actor acts in an automatic manner. Most of the everyday actions represent this type of orientation.



Weber was well aware of the problems involved in such type of classifications because these types are neither watertight nor exhaustive. According to him, these types are only to formulate in conceptually pure form certain sociologically important types, to which actual action is more or less closely approximated or, in much the more common case, which constitute the elements combining to make it up. The usefulness of the classification for the purposes of this investigation can only be judged in terms of its results.

### **Check your progress**

(i) How Weber defines Sociology?

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(ii) Mention one important characteristic of social action according to Weber.

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(iii) How Weber categorized the social action?

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### **1.4 AUTHORITY AND POWER :**

Now we have to discuss about authority and power. Weber analysed two most vital issues of human society 'power' and actualization or executive of that power in the form of 'authority' in such a fashion that suffice it to say that these two concepts 'power' and authority are interdependent. Along with these two

concepts there is the concept of 'discipline' which links 'power-authority' in society. Weber's definitions of these three terms are important to note prior to any further elaboration of his ideas.

Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests.

Authority or Imperative Control is the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons.

Discipline is the probability that by virtue of habituation a command will receive prompt and automatic obedience in stereotyped forms, on the part of a given group of persons.

Putting these three concepts together, Weber elaborated on the power-authority nexus in human society. He classified 'authority' on the basis of three orientations of legitimacy.

#### **1.4.1 Rational-legal authority :**

The rational legal authority is derived from the social status or occupation of an individual or individuals. A person occupying no 'position' has no authority. In modern administrative set-up this form of authority is important. For example, a head of a corporation or Board has authority over all things under him. There is a well accepted proposition that it is the chair which bestows authority on the chairman and not the other way round.

#### **1.4.2 Traditional authority :**

The traditional authority is that power which is legitimized through the force of tradition. In different communities the traditions vary and this authority also varies in nature accordingly. In traditional authority a particular class or group is regarded superior only because this has always been so in the past. Reason has no place in the determination of the traditional authority. Certain classes are regarded inferior merely because this has always been so and no need for

rational justification is called for. In India, Brahmins have enjoyed supremacy on account of traditional authority.

There are certain individuals who are so talented and so versatile that they require neither position nor the boast of tradition to make impact upon others. This extraordinary form of authority is known as charismatic. The religious prophets and social reformers are persons who have charismatic authority.

Weber gave three types of charismatic authority with examples from the European social history.

- Persons with spells of "maniac passion" in medieval Byzantium culture.
- Persons with religious fervour. He gave the example of Joseph Smith - the founder of Mormonism.
- Persons with intellectual or demagogic capacity. He gave the example of Kurt Eisner, the leader of a socio-political experiment in communism in Bavaria in 1919.

### **Check your progress**

(i) What is authority?

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(ii) Give one example of Rational-Legal authority.

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(iii) How many types of Charismatic authority is mentioned by Weber?

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### **1.5 RELIGION AND CAPITALISM :**

As you probably know that the development of sociology of religion is the most significant contribution of Max Weber to human knowledge. The main theme of Weber's sociology of religion is that there is a direct link between the economic system and the practical ethics of a community. He says that the two are interdependent. He started investigation into religion, due to his dazzling analysis of Protestant Community. Unlike Marx, he tried to establish a multi causal origin of capitalism. Weber found the role of, ideas' in shaping various societal phenomena including economic institution along with other relevant variables at a particular socio-historical epoch, very significant. While discussing the role of ideas he analysed the ethical imperatives of Christianity vis-a-vis medieval Europe. When Protestantism emerged in Europe as a challenge against the dominant Catholicism there appeared some changes in the psychological structure of the people.

According to Weber, the economic system affects ethical ideas and the moral attitudes are also responsible for developing a particular economic factor and its impact upon religion. He discussed about the causes of Capitalism in Europe where he made relation in between Capitalism and Protestant ethics.

Capitalism in general, Weber holds, is a system of profit making enterprises bound together in market relations that have developed historically in many places and at various times. But modern mature capitalism is distinguished from capitalism in general by its rational character and the rational organization of free labour. How did this modern type emerge? Weber emphasizes that the problem of initial emergence is distinct from that of later growth since, once fully developed, a social system becomes self-supporting. Weber contends that the rise of mature capitalism was affected by the emergence of Protestant, especially Calvinist, ethics. In a preliminary way he established that in contemporary Germany, areas predominantly Protestant were wealthier than primarily Catholic sections of the nation and he went on to show the correlation between the growth of mature capitalism and Protestantism.

This reasoning by method of concomitant changes was often employed by the social scientists of his day.

But Weber wished to extend this concomitance to causal relationship by applying the method of agreement and as we shall see later, offering an explanation on the level of meaning. Modern or mature capitalism, he asserts on the basis of painstaking historical study, emerged not simply by inner economic necessity but as if it were pushed by another rising force, the religious ethic of Protestantism, again especially Calvinism. In his further discussion the terms of comparison are the spirit of modern capitalism and the spirit of Protestantism.

Mature capitalism is not based on simply the acquisitive urge. It is a rational activity, emphasizing order, discipline, and hierarchy in organization. It regards the performance of acquisitive behaviour as a kind of calling. It lays stress on success as such, not on the joys that economic success can purchase.

#### **Check your progress**

(i) What is the dissimilarity of Weber with Marx in context of Religion ?

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(ii) What is the relation between Religion and Economy according to Weber?

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#### **1.6 LET US SUM UP :**

- \* Max Weber used the concept "Verstehen". It means comprehending or understanding on the level of meaning. This is an advantage of the social science. The concept "Verstehen" makes scientific study of social behaviour possible. This is done in two ways :(a) Direct observational understanding of the subjective

meaning of human actions.(b) Understanding with what Weber calls "ideal type".

- \* The concept of Ideal types developed by Max Weber was complementary to his concept of Verstehen. According to Weber sociology is concerned with social action and social behaviour. Every social action has an ideal.
- \* Max Weber observes that the social action is that action of an individual which is somehow influenced by the action and behaviour of other persons and by which it is modified or its direction determined.

Weber classifies social action according to the mode of orientation. There are Zweckrational, Wertrational, affectual, and traditional.

- \* Weber analysed two most vital issues of human society- "power" and actualization or execution of that power in the form of "authority" in such a fashion that suffice it to say that these two concepts "power" and "authority" are interdependent. Authority is the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons. According to Weber authority determines the social action and the social organization. Weber recognizes three kinds of authority i.e. Traditional, Rational legal and Charismatic authority.

Power is the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which probability rests.

- \* Weber developed his sociology of religion in his book entitled "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism". He started investigation into religion, due to his analysis of Protestant Community. He wanted to find out the relationship between Protestantism and Capitalism. Weber identified some values of Protestantism which helped to increase the spirit of capitalism. These are- (i) Hard work, (ii) Seeking gainful enterprise and accumulate

wealth (iii) Rejection of holidays (iv) Strictures on Alcoholism, (v) Encouragement of literacy and learning and (vi) Collection of interest on loan.

According to Weber religion and economic phenomena are inter-dependent. There is mutual interaction between the two. Religion influences the economic system and is also subject to the influence of the later. Neither religion nor economic factor alone can adequately described the facts of social life.

#### 1.7 KEY WORDS :

- \* **Verstehen:** Usually translated as 'understanding', this concept has formed part of a critique of positivist or naturalist sociology.
- \* **Ideal-Types:** Ideal types in order to make explicit the procedures by which social scientists formulate general, abstract concept. Ideal types are hypothetical constructs formed by emphasizing aspects of behaviour and institutions which are empirically observable.
- \* **Social Category :** This term is used for a plurality of persons who are not organized into a system of social interaction but who have similar social characteristics or statuses.

#### 1.8 PROBABLE ANSWERS :

##### **Check your progress**

- (i) Understanding on the level of meaning.
- (ii) Mental construct.
- (iii) Creative convergence of two concepts, viz. Versthen & explanation

**Check your progress**

- (i) Study of social action.
- (ii) It is influenced by an action of Past, Present & Future.
- (iii) He categorized four types of social action, viz. Zweckrational, Wertrationa, Affektuell and Traditional.

**Check your progress**

- (i) A command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons.
- (ii) A head of a Corporation or Board.
- (iii) Three types.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Weber develops a functional attitude towards religion.
- (ii) Religions can motivate the people to do hard work, for which economy can be improved.

**1.9 ASSIGNMENT :**

- \* What are Ideal Types? How are they useful in sociological research?
- \* Explain the Weberian concept of "Verstehen"?
- \* Define Weber's social action? Analyse his typology of Social Action.
- \* Discuss Max Weber's theory of religion?
- \* How Weber makes link in between religion and economy?
- \* Critically analyse the Weber's masterpiece "Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism".



**2.0 FURTHER READING:**

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## **UNIT – 4 : KARL MARX**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **1.0 Objectives**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 Historical Materialism**

#### **1.3 Stages and Development of Capitalism**

#### **1.4 Class and Class Conflict**

#### **1.5 Alienation**

#### **1.6 Let Us Sum Up**

### **1.0 OBJECTIVES :**

After reading this unit, you may be able –

- (i) to acquire the knowledge of historical materialism.
- (ii) to discuss the stages and development of capitalism.
- (iii) to achieve the concept of class and class-struggle.
- (iv) to obtain the knowledge of Alienation.

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION :**

The impact of the major intellectual currents of his day may be found in Marx's writings. First, he was influenced by Georg Hegel (1770-1831), from whom Marx took dialectical scheme, the system of analysis through contradictions or opposites. Marx applied Hegel's dialectic to a materialistic analysis of history. He also took the concept of alienation from Hegel. Secondly, He was influenced by the English economists Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill. Marx regarded their works as Scientific, although incompleting. Another influence on Marx's thought were the ideas of the French socialists, such as Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, and Louis Blanc.

At the age of 17 in 1835 he entered the University of Bonn to study. In 1841 at the age of 23 he received the doctorate degree from the University of Jena for his thesis entitled, "On the Differences between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus".

The concept of history of Karl Marx is known as dialectical materialism or historical materialism. Historical materialism is the Marxist theory of society. According to Marx, the history of society is the history of development and the law. This succession passes through five stages, i.e. Primitive, Communal, Slave, Feudal, Capitalist and Socialist. Marx discusses the concept of class. A social class in Marx's terms is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production. He argues that class relationships tend to become simple with the development of capitalism. He advocates that the history of all hitherto existing societies has been the history of class, struggle. Marx foresaw the germ of self-destruction in capitalism. One of the most fundamental of certain conditions which would ultimately cause the proletarian class conscious, to become according to Marx, is the concept of "Alienation". The notion of alienation had been ever present in Marx's writings. Marx notion of alienation or the process of dehumanization in the capitalist society is based on the material conditions under which individuals live and have their beings.

## 1.2 HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Now we have to discuss the historical materialism. The concept of history of Karl Marx is known as dialectical materialism or historical materialism. This materialistic interpretation is the history of human society and this history that human civilization keeps record of, must be interpreted materialistically.

Historical materialism is the Marxist theory of society. This is clear in a detailed passage in the Preface to a contribution to the critique of political economy. In the social production which men carry on, they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or what is but a legal expression for the same thing with the property relations within which they had been at work. From forms of development of the forces of production, these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformation the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic in short ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness on the contrary this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradiction of material life, from

the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed, and the new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve; since looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation. In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs, in the progress of the economic formation of society. The bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from conditions surrounding the life of individuals in society; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of the antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the closing chapter of the prehistoric stage of human society.

The above passage expresses all the essential ideas of Marxist economic interpretation of history. These essential ideas are as follows:

- Men enter into definite relations by the force of economic circumstances such as the forces and relations of production. Thus historical processes are determined by economic forces.
- The intra-structure of a society includes forces and relations of production. On this, is based the superstructure of legal and political institutions as well as ways of thinking.
- The mechanism of the historical movement is the contradiction between the forces and relations of production.
- This contradiction leads to class struggle which, according to Karl Marx, is the main factor in historical evolution.

- Social reality governs consciousness and not vice-versa.
- The stages of human history may be distinguished on the basis of their economic mode of production. These stages are: the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the bourgeois. These four modes are again classified into the ancient and the modern. Asiatic mode of production does not constitute a stage in the history of western society.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who developed the concept of Historical Materialism?

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(ii) What is dialectical materialism?

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### **1.3 STAGES AND DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM:**

As you aware, Marx believed that reality lies only in nature and physical things. Moreover, he maintained that the foundation of society is human adaptation to nature, that is, the organization of activities to provide for material needs and wants. Thus, he held that the economic factor is the fundamental determinant of the structure and development of society, and that the economic structure or social organization of production forms the "substructure" or "infrastructure" of society. Economic structure not only limits but also in the final analysis, shapes the whole "superstructure"; political organization, laws, religion, philosophy, art, literature, science and morality itself. Therefore, ethical beliefs and

values, philosophical doctrines, laws and so on are not to be "taken for granted" in terms of their own logic and what they apparently state, but should be as a reflection of the economic position, the "class interests", of those who maintain them.

Marx took Hegel's dialectic and, combining it with materialism, derived what came to be called the philosophy of "dialectical materialism". Marx applied this concept to the analysis of history in the theory of "historical materialism". He saw history as a series of stages, each stage based on a particular level of technology and characterized by a particular type of economic organization suitable to the level of technology. He distinguished four stages in the history of the west until his time; primitive communism, the ancient stage based on slave labour, the feudal stage based on serfdom, and the capitalist stage based on wage labour. In every stage except primitive communism there is a class of exploiters, who controls the means of production, and a class of exploited. The position of the ruling class at each stage is based upon a particular form of economic organization, which, in turn, depends upon a particular level technology. Technology, however, is constantly developing and changing. In time the existing economic order is no longer suitable to the newly developed technological level; in fact, it becomes a hindrance to further development in its reliance on outdated forms. When such an imbalance exists between the forces of production and the relations of production, revolution occurs, led by a new class ready to take advantage of the latest technological developments, and history enters a new stage. Thus Marx maintained that during the feudal epoch technological developments occurred that led to the rise of the bourgeoisie who eventually overthrew the feudal nobility.

This succession of stages represented to Marx the dialectical process. In each stage the system of economic organization begins by being an affirmation - the best or most adequate of the orders possible at that time. But in time the established order becomes an obstacle to progress, and a new order begins to arise. A struggle ensues between the class representing the old order and the class representing the new order. The emerging class is eventually victorious, creating a new order of production that is a synthesis of the old and the new. This new order, however, contains the seeds of its

eventual destruction and the dialectical process continues. It should be noted that Marx's own historical studies - as incorporated in *Capital* and in such earlier works as the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* - were not guided, apparently, by the dialectical conception of the historical pattern. The dialectic, from the viewpoint of Marxist theory, can be used to analyze long range historical process; but Marx's investigations of specific historical events, such as the European revolutions of 1848, were more in keeping with conventional historical study.

Marx devoted a great deal of effort to uncovering the weaknesses of the capitalist system that would inevitably lead to its overthrow by the proletariat. Although he recognized the existence of classes other than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, he maintained that in time capitalist society would become increasingly polarized into these two basic classes. Moreover, he maintained that the proletariat would increasingly develop a sense of class consciousness and unity that would enable them to overthrow the capitalist society of the bourgeoisie. This would be facilitated by the inherent weakness of capitalism, among which was the eventual production of many more goods than the impoverished workers, whose competition with each other would keep their wages at the minimum necessary for survival.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who believed that reality lies only in nature and physical things?

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(ii) How many stages Marx distinguished in the history of the West?

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#### **1.4 CLASS AND CLASS CONFLICT :**

Now lets go to discuss about class and class conflict. As you know, "A social class in Marx's terms is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization of production". It is determined not by occupation or income but by the position an individual occupies and the function he performs in the process of production. For example, two carpenters, of whom one is the shop owner and the other his paid worker, belong to two different classes even though their occupation is the same. Bendix and Lipset have identified five variables that determine a class in the Marxian sense:

- Conflicts over the distribution of economic rewards between the classes;
- Easy communication between the individuals in the same class positions so that ideas and action programs are readily disseminated;
- Growth of class consciousness in the sense that the members of the class have a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their historic role.
- Profound dissatisfaction of the lower class over its inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be the exploited victim.
- Establishment of political organization resulting from the, economic structure, the historical situation and maturation of class-consciousness".

According to Marx, the organization of production is not a sufficient condition for the development of social classes. There must also be a physical concentration of mass people, easy communication among them, repeated conflicts over economic rewards and the growth of class consciousness. The small peasants form a vast mass and live in similar conditions but they are isolated from one another and are not conscious of their common interests and predicament; hence they do not constitute a class. "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode

of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them into hostile contrast to the later, they form a class. In so far as there is merely a local inter connection among these small peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no unity, no national union, and no political organization, they do not form a class":

From the beginning of human existence in community, society has been divided into classes because of its absolute dependence on the division of labour which precipitated dominance among the ruling class and subordination among the subjugated class. Marx's classic statement clearly establishes the most fundamental premise of all his theoretical work on the question of class.

"The history of all hitherto existing society in the history of class struggle. Free men and slave; patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeymen, in a word oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the classes".

Although the class war has always been between the oppressor and the oppressed, the leading contenders in the social drama of conflict differed markedly in different historical periods. "The fact that modern workers are formally "free" to sell their labour while being existentially constrained to do so makes their condition historically specific and functionally distinct from that of earlier exploited classes".

In addition to a recognition of the origin of class, Marx was even more interested in the future of class, especially as that future relates to the emergence of class-consciousness, an awareness of shared interests and the necessity of mutual support to other struggling classes against the ruling class. Marx made a distinction between "class in itself" and "class for itself" to reflect the movement from a class's potential "self-awareness to actual self-awareness. Only when the common "struggle" as a pain of consciousness appears within a class then that class actually emerge as a potential power force. "Self-conscious classes", Coser explains, "arise only if and when there exists a convergence of what Max Weber

later called 'ideal' and 'material' interests, that is the combination of economic and political demands with moral and ideological quests".

The assault upon the class structure of western society was almost an obsession with Marx. And the changing of social class was not to be thought of as manageable in terms of "social mobility", for which Marx gave virtually no room in his methodology or analysis. Social class was bigger than the individual and the individual was dominated by it. It fell upon the responsibility of the class system itself, of the state, to take a hard step to alter the situation.

In his Capital Marx said that "here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class relations and class-interests". To deal with the predicament of modern man, alienated, dominated, and estranged from himself, his neighbours, and his world, the analyst must not begin with the individual but with the social structures within which the individual is essentially caught up and lost as a person.

This emphasis on the objective determinants of man's class bound behaviour does not mean that Marx reified society and class at the expense of the individual; rather his primary interest lay in the identification of the source of the problem of modern man and his entrapment in the complexities of social relations that control and constrain him. "The individual is a social being", Marx insisted. "The manifestation of his life even when it does not appear directly in the form of social manifestation, accomplished in association with other men is therefore a manifestation and affirmation of social life.

### **Check your progress**

(i) In Marxian term, what is class?

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(ii) Which class exploit the labours in the production system?

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### 1.5 ALIENATION :

You know that alienation is a very significant concept of Marx. According to him the proletarian class consciousness would give rise to the proletarian revolution. Marx foresaw the germ of self-destruction in capitalism. One of the most fundamental of certain conditions which would ultimately cause the proletarian class consciousness, according to Marx, is the concept of 'Alienation'. The notion or concept of 'alienation' had ever been present in Marx's writings. Though in his later writings he did not use or write the term 'alienation' that often but his analysis certainly rests on his concept of 'alienation'.

Alienation may be described as a condition in which men are dominated by forces of their own creation which confront them as alien owners ... To Marx, all major institutional spheres in capitalist society, such as religion, the state and the political economy, were marked by a condition of alienation. Moreover, these various aspects of alienation were interdependent.

Marx showed that the alienated individuals are products of history and they are bound to shake off their alienated conditions in a classless society. "The idea of men's recovery of his own self is in fact comprised in that of alienation, which Marx continued to employ: for alienation is nothing but a process in which man deprives himself of what he truly is, of his own humanity". What Marx suggested was the process of "dehumanization" in capitalist economy in which individuals lose their true identity and accept rather certain alien power structures that strengthen their false identity in and through the process of alienation. Therefore, this dehumanizing process known as 'alienation' is not only a fact to be observed in history

but also as a critical phenomenon in sociological analysis of societies.

Marx's notion of alienation or the process of dehumanization in the capitalist society is based on the material conditions under which individuals live and have their beings. This materialist interpretation, as usual, is opposed to Hegel's idealist interpretation of alienation. To Hegel, 'alienation' refers to the sense of non fulfilment of human experience which individuals try to fulfill in their creative zeal in the course of history. Marx thought just the opposite i.e. the sense of non-fulfilment or incompleteness of individuals is not a sense of 'estrangement' of a lost 'soul' in search of its union with the 'world spirit' as Hegel assumed rather than the cause and meaning of alienation must be sought in the process of historical materialism.

Marx summarizes the alienation of labour in the following inimitable words:

First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his essential being; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He is at home when he is not working, and when he is working he is not at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, or mortification. Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him that in it he belongs, not to himself but to another.

Alienation, sociologically interpreted, is at one a historical, moral, and sociological critique of the present social order. In the capitalist regime, men are alienated; they are themselves lost in collectivity; and the root of all alienation is economic alienation.

If alienation is a 'critique' of contemporary society, then there must be a way to get rid of this phenomenon of alienation from today's society and Marx predicted a proletarian revolution which would give rise to a classless society. The proletarian revolution which would be the result of class consciousness and political mobilization of the proletariat would break the shackles of alienation from the existing social order.

But in order to overcome, alienation and make individuals regain their original freedom, so that they could realize their own being, a reader must follow Marx's 'alienation ideology' nexus without which it is difficult to understand his interpretation of history and society. A student of sociology must understand that in Marx's alienation and ideology are two sides of the same coin.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who developed the theory of alienation?

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(ii) Which class is responsible for creating alienation in human society?

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### **1.6 LET US SUM UP :**

The impact of the major intellectual currents of his day may be found in Marx's writings. Mainly, he was influenced by the German philosopher George Hegel, from whom Marx took the dialectical scheme. Marx applied Hegel's dialectic to materialistic analysis of history. Marx also took the concept of alienation from Hegel. Besides him, still influences on Marx's thought

were the ideas of the French socialists like Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon and Louis Blanc. Now let us sum up his contributions as mentioned below.

- \* Dialectical materialism contains all the essential ideas of Marx's economic interpretation of history. The first and essential idea is that men enter into definite relations that are independent of their will. Secondly, in every society there can be distinguished the economic base or infrastructure as it has come, to be called, and the superstructure within which figure the legal and political institutions as well as ways of thinking, ideologies and philosophies. Thirdly the mechanism of the historical movement is the contradiction, at certain movements in evolution, between the forces and relations of production.
- \* Class relationships tend to become simple with the development of capitalism. According to Marx, there are only two classes, the proletariat, consisting of those who possess only their labour power, and the capitalists who appropriate a portion of the surplus value.
- \* According to Marx, a social class is that which occupies a fixed place in the process of production. Marx distinguished three classes, related to the three sources of income; (i) Salaried workers - owners of simple labour power. (ii) Capitalists - owners of capital, and (iii) Land owners - whose
- \* Marx advocated that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class-struggles. A fundamental contradiction between wage earners and capitalists was the original idea of Karl Marx. The class conflict starts with the development of proletariat, the importance of property and the polarisation of classes.
- \* Economic exploitation and the inhuman working conditions in capitalist society lead to alienation of men. Marx said that "alienation is

apparent not only in the fact that my means of life belong to some one else..., but also that... an inhuman power rules over everything". According to Marx, among worker's alienation has four aspects: alienation from the objects produced, alienation from the process of production, alienation from himself and finally alienation from the community of his fellowmen.

### 1.9 KEY WORDS :

- \* **Class Consciousness** : The term is used for awareness of belongingness and identification with a given social class, accompanied by a feeling of some degree of solidarity with other persons of the same class.
- \* **Class Struggle** : This term is used for an inevitable struggle between social classes which are resulting from their conflicting interests.
- \* **Alienation** : Alienation, in wider views, denotes the estrangement of the individual from key aspects of his or her social existence.
- \* **Dialectic** : Development of contradiction and their solution as a way of advancing thought.

### 1.8 PROBABLE ANSWERS :

#### Check your progress

- (i) Karl Marx.
- (ii) The concept of history is known as dialectical materialism.

#### Check your progress

- (i) Karl Marx.
- (ii) Four stages.



**Check your progress**

- (i) A social class in Marxian term is any aggregate of persons who perform the same function in the organization.
- (ii) Capitalist class.

**Check your progress**

- (i) Karl Marx.
- (ii) Capitalist class.

**1.9 ASSIGNMENT :**

- Write an essay on the concept of historical Materialism given by Karl Marx.
- Explain Marxist theory of class.
- "The history of all hitherto existing societies has been the history of class struggle". Explain.
- Write short note on Karl Marx's theory of Alienation.
- Critically examine the merits and demerits of Karl Marx.

**2.0 FURTHER READINGS :**

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## **UNIT – 5 : VILFREDO PARETO**

### **STRUCTURE**

#### **1.0 Objectives**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

#### **1.2 (Classification of) Logical and Non-logical Action**

#### **1.3 Non-logical Action in Terms of the Theory of Residues and Derivations.**

#### **1.4 Theory of Social Change : Elite and Masses**

#### **1.5 Circulation of Elites**

#### **1.6 Let Us Sum Up**

### **1.0 OBJECTIVES**

After reading this unit, you will be able to know

- (i) the notion, meaning and nature of logical and non-logical actions.
- (ii) non-logical action in terms residues and derivations.
- (iii) the basic ideas of the Elites and Masses.
- (iv) about the circulation of Elite which is responsible for social change according to Pareto.

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

As you know that Pareto was a great sociologist who tried to establish scientific sociology. He published some excellent papers also in economics that led to his appointment as professor of political economics. Pareto regarded economics as the study of logical behaviour, but he came to believe that most human behaviour is non-logical and therefore to be explained by sociology rather than economics. When he was in University of Lausanne, he was stifled in his efforts to reform and restructure the social studies curriculum at the university because of resistance and lack of cooperation from his colleagues. Not only his attempt to strengthen sociology was thwarted, his inability to realize success in teaching was evident to all, despising as he did the lecturing to beginning students.

Pareto wanted to establish scientific sociology. By it he meant a "logico-experimental science" based exclusively on the observation or experimentation with the facts. He discussed about logical and non-logical action. He said that in everyday behaviour we find that not only people act according to their emotions and sentiments but also try to rationalise their actions by means of some theory. In this way, he discussed about the theory of residues and derivations. Apart from these, he also analysed the concept of elites. The theory of elites is the most significant contribution of Pareto to social and political theory. With the reference of elites in the society, he developed the theory of social change which is basically known as circulation of Elites.

## **1.2 LOGICAL AND NON-LOGICAL ACTION :**

Now we have to discuss logical and non-logical action. Behaviour, Pareto believed, that it is logical, both subjectively and objectively. An action is logical if the end is objectively attainable and if the means employed are objectively united with the end within the framework of the best knowledge available. For an action to be logical, the logical connection between the means and the end must exist both in the mind of the actor who performs the act and in objective reality, that is, "from the standpoint of other persons who have a more extensive knowledge". Non-logical action means simply

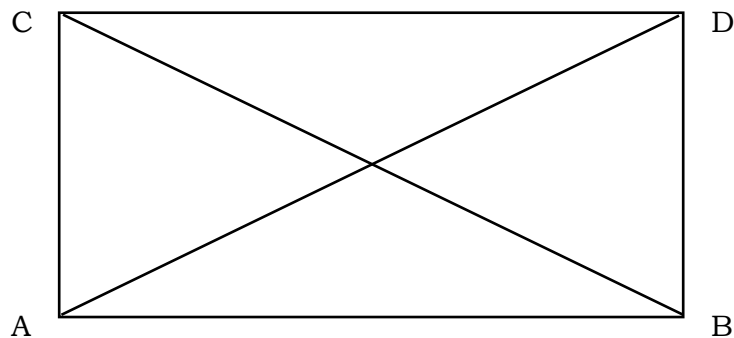
all human action not falling within the scope of the logical; it is for Pareto a residual category. Pareto is convinced that truly logical action is very rare indeed.

Though suggesting that civil law represents a theoretical form of logical action, Pareto even dubs the behaviour of trial judges as being often non-logical. He argues so because, he says even the role of the judge necessarily involves more than the mere logical application of abstract legal rules to specific objective cases. He contends that judicial decision to a great extent manifest the judge's sentiments and, Pareto points out, any reference to written law is an *ex post facto* explanation of a decision gained in another way. He wrote in his Treatise, "Court decisions depend largely upon the interests and sentiments operative in a society at a given moment; and also upon individual whims and chance events; and but slightly, and sometimes not at all, upon codes or written law". The analysis of these innerforces operative in the decision making process is based upon the critical distinction between logical and non-logical action.

Generally speaking, logical actions are those motivated by reasoning while non-logical actions are those that involve to some degree a motivation by sentiment. Since according to Pareto's rigorous definition of logical experimental method, science covers only a narrow domain of reality, logical behaviour can cover only a limited part of the whole range of human behaviour. In most cases science cannot help us determine our goals or foresee the consequences of our acts, therefore, the greater part of the human behaviour will be non-logical. However, all men want to give an appearance of logic to behaviour. Thus, by following an inductive procedure in developing his conceptual framework for the analysis of the non-logical element in human behaviour, he is able to argue that although individuals most often fail to demonstrate logical action they do have a rather powerful urge to "logicalize" their behaviour. In other words, Pareto believed that individuals wish to make their behaviour appear logically to follow from a legitimate set of ideas both to themselves and to others.

The analysis of inner forces is based on the distinction between logical and non-logical action. According to Pareto an action is logical if (i) its end is

objectively attainable, (ii) the means used are objectively united with the end in the framework of the best knowledge available and (iii) an individual is aware of the objective relation of the means to the ends; all other actions are non-logical. Presumably, logical actions are much less common than non-logical actions: In Pareto's treatise only a few examples of the former occur, including the formulation of scientific theory, economic action and the behaviour of trial Aron presents Pareto's central thesis in the following diagram.



- A : The actor's state of mind which we do not know;
- B : Creed or a combination of rationalizations, ideologies and doctrines.
- C : The various expressions of the actors, especially their words.
- D : Act or the behaviour of the actors.

Reciprocal relations' exist between expressions, creed and acts. Creed may exercise an influence upon theories by reinforcing the convictions of those who practise it, as I have remarked. Creed may also exercise an influence upon acts... Non logical actions are presented to us in a three fold form: acts; theories which justify act; and in the case of certain beliefs, in the form of creeds, which both entertain and express theories - the whole of these three terms being determined by a state of mind or a sentiment, the two words being interchangeable and designating a reality which we do not know directly but which we know by observation to

be the chief cause of the manifestation, i.e. theories, creed, or acts.

### **1.3 NON-LOGICAL ACTION IN TERMS OF RESIDUES AND DERIVATIONS :**

Non-logical action is related to residues and derivations. Both of the later are manifestations of sentiments that are indefinite but seemingly basic biopsychic states. Although Pareto points out that these states are not directly knowable, he indicates presumably the, specific nature of their expression in residues, derivations, and human conduct. Sometimes Pareto seems to use sentiments and residues interchangeably, but there is no doubt that he intends to distinguish between the two and usually does. Residues are motivating forces stemming directly from the sentiments. As manifestations of the sentiments, they are less deeply buried in the individual, closer to the surface, and discernible by analyzing what an individual says and does'. Pareto regards residues as a fundamental analytical concept of sociology, whereas the analysis of sentiments belongs to psychology. Pareto seems to believe that sentiments and residues result from instincts or innate human tendencies; for example, he names one of the most important residues "the instinct of combinations". On the other hand, he admits that residues are co-related with the changing conditions under which human beings live, that actions may stimulate or reinforce residues and that residues are engendered or stressed by the persistence of groups and in their turn, may help such groups to survive. These qualities of residues are not properties of innate and immutable instincts but rather characteristics of learned behaviour. The theory of learned behaviour was just being developed in psychology in Pareto's day, accounting in part for the ambiguity of his terminology.

Some of the sentiments, according to Pareto, urge men to justify their actions by formulating non-logical theories that their advocates consider to be highly logical. Examination of these "theories" reveals the distinction between deep, constant, and therefore important elements the residues which stem directly from the underlying sentiments and are the real motivating forces of behaviour, and superficial, variable, and therefore less important elements - the derivations,

which are in effect rationalizations or attempts to give logical explanations for non-logical behaviour. Residues can be discovered by studying diverse statements bearing on the same subject and abstracting from them the constant elements. Knowledge of residues, which are closer to sentiments than derivations, permits deeper penetration into the causes of human actions. Pareto notes that ideology may influence behaviour, but he regards such influence as far less significant than that of the underlying residues and sentiments.

Pareto emphasizes the difference between his view of human actions and rationalistic explanation. The latter assumes that human beings first think, first formulate ideas or theories, and then act accordingly. In Pareto's opinion behaviour follows the reverse process: commission precedes rationalization. For Pareto there is no direct causal relationship between theory and action. Both are caused by basic sentiments that are revealed constantly in action, but in theory or justification, sentiments are manifested almost at random. Every mode of conduct is justified by some theory, but in each concrete case the theoretical justification is determined by the accident of invention and therefore is of no great importance in analyzing behaviour.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who tried to establish scientific sociology?

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(ii) What is non-logical action according to Pareto?

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#### **1.4 THEORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE :**

As you probable aware that Vilfredo Pareto has developed his idea of elites in context of social change. Mainly, he has discussed the class of governing elites. According to Pareto all men are not equal. They differ among themselves in regard to their capacities and abilities. Some are more intelligent, efficient and capable than others. On account of this difference in regard to abilities, there is social stratification. Some belong to superior class by virtue of higher qualifications. Defining the class of elites, Pareto says, "so let us make a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity, and to that class give the name elites. The elite form the upper classes and are usually also the richest". Thus, in every sphere of social activity there is a class of superior persons which is termed elite.

Two types of definition have been given to the term elite – a broad and a narrow definition. The broad definition includes the whole social elite while the narrow definition refers to only the governing elite. According to Pareto, "By elite we mean the small number of individuals who in each sphere of activity, have succeeded and have arrived at a higher echelon in the professional hierarchy". Examples of this class are the successful businessmen, successful artist, the successful writer and the successful professor. This definition is objective and neutral. However, in the narrow definition elite means the governing class. It is on the nature of governing elites that societies are characterised as totalitarian or democratic. The governing elite is the small number of individuals who have succeeded and exercised ruling functions politically or socially. Pareto agrees with Machiavelli that the elite govern the many by force. The masses allow themselves to be governed by the elite. The elite control the means of force because they succeed in convincing the many. According to Pareto a legitimate government is one which succeeds in persuading the governed to obey them.

##### **1.4.1 Classes of Elites :**

Pareto has distinguished two classes of elites. These are –

- **Governing Elites :**

The persons who are directly or indirectly concerned with administration are included in this class. These persons play highly important role and enjoy prestigious place in society. According to Pareto the elite class may be divided into two categories: "a governing elite, comprising individuals who, directly or indirectly, play some considerable part in government, and non-governing elite comprising the rest".

- **Non-Governing Elites :**

The persons who are not connected with administration but occupy such a place in society that they somehow influence the administration are included in this class.

On the basis of the method to control the masses by force or fraud Pareto classifies the governing elites into 'lions' and the 'foxes'. In the economic field this classification may be compared to 'rentiers' and 'speculators', Explaining his concept of lions and foxes Pareto points out that the lions are conservative elites having faith and ideology, displaying group loyalty and class solidarity and gaining and regaining power by the use of force. The foxes, on the otherhand, are capable of innovation and experiments, materialistic, lacking fidelity to principle, and using fraud as a method for gaining and regaining power. Both these types of elites may be found in political field of every society. According to Pareto, history is 'a grave yard of aristocracies', Ruling elites circulate, emerge, dominate, fall and replaced by new elite. Explaining the counter parts of these political types of elite in the economic field Pareto writes, "In the speculator group Class I residues predominate, in the rentier group, Class n residues, The two groups perform functions of differing utility in society, The speculator group is primarily responsible for change, for economic and social progress. The rentier group, instead is a powerful element in stability, and in many cases counteracts the danger attending the adventurous captors of the speculators. A society in which' the

speculators predominate lacks stability, lives in a state of shaky equilibrium that may be upset by a slight accident from within or from without. According to Pareto, social order requires a judicious mixture of elites of men with class I and Class II residues, lions and foxes, speculators and rentiers. Whenever this equilibrium is broken, social change or revolution occurs and new types of elites are born.

### **1.5 CIRCULATION OF ELITES :**

As you aware that Pareto formulated the theory of the circulation of elites, which forms one basic theorem in his sociology. Elites consist of individuals of highest performance in their respective fields. There are two principal classes of elites: a governing elite comprising individuals who directly or indirectly plan an important role in the manipulation of political power; and a non-governing elite consisting of capable individuals not in power positions. The distribution of residues among the members of elites is much more important for social affairs than their distribution in the masses. Depending on whether class one or class two residues predominate two types of individuals are depicted and designated by the terms "foxes" and "lions". Foxes with a predominance of the instinct of combinations, are characterized by innovative and manipulative behaviour. They maintain their power in devious and cunning ways, using propaganda and economic manipulations. Lions on the other hand, who predominate in the residue of persistence of aggregates, are characterized by loyalty, traditionalism, and direct rather than devious action. They maintain their power by the open use of force.

Pareto holds that a natural tendency exists for the elites of the two types to rotate in positions of political power. When an elite of one type has ruled for sometime, superior elements accumulating the governed classes and, conversely, inferior elements develop in the ruling classes. Consequently, an elite consisting of foxes commits mistakes or becomes too corrupts, which opens the way to a take over by lions; after the later are consolidated in power positions, however, they also commit mistakes, opening the doors for the foxes. Pareto regarded the weak and corrupt democratic governments

of Italy and France in his day as controlled by foxes in a decadent state and ripe for takeover by lions.

Pareto also distinguishes a parallel pattern of elites in the economic realm. Economic elites with a predominance of the instinct of combinations are referred to as "speculators". Speculators promote rapid change, are willing to take risks, and are primarily responsible for progress. In contrast, economic elites with a predominance of the persistence of aggregates are referred to as "rentiers". Rentiers are cautious and conservative, promote stability, and resist change. A cyclic theory of social change is thus introduced, the two phases of the cycle being characterized by the dominance of conservative or of progressive attitudes.

It should be noted that Pareto's analysis of the circulation of elites has had a lasting interest among social scientists concerned with the nature and functions of the "ruling class" and other elite groups. According to Pareto the circulation of elites is due to acquisition or loss of qualities or merits. The persons who acquire merit move upward and those who become degenerate lose the membership of elite class.

### **Check your progress**

(i) Who developed the theory of circulation?

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(ii) Who is the best in between lion and foxes according to Pareto?

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**1.6 LET US SUM UP :**

After a meaningful and clear discussion of the basic contribution of Vilfredo Pareto, we can come to a conclusion that his approach to sociology is first of all characterized by his insistence on its scientific nature. Let us sum up his contribution as mention below.

- \* He wanted to establish scientific sociology the only method in sociology as is the logico-experimental method.
- \* Pareto defines logical actions as those that use means appropriate to ends and which logically links means with ends. On the otherhand non-logical action is action guided by sentiments and other non-logical factors.
- \* Non-logical action is related to residues and derivations. Both of the later are manifestations of sentiments that are indefinite but seemingly basic biopsychic states.
- \* Pareto has developed his idea of elites in an original way. According to him all men are not equal. They differ among themselves in regard to their capacities, abilities and feasibility. Some are intelligent, efficient and capable than others. First group is elites and second group is masses. Thus, in every sphere of social activities there is a class of superior persons which is termed elite. He has distinguished two classes of elites, i.e., Governing Elites and Non-governing elites.
- \* Pareto mentions that there are upward and downward movements of members of elite and non-elite. An elite may degenerate into non-elite and non-elite may mobilize to the level of elite. This exchange between classes is technically known as circulation of elites.
- \* As he mentions in his discussion, the circulation of elites is due to acquisition or loss of qualities or merits.

**1.7 KEY WORDS :**

- \* **Residues** : Residues display or states of mind, and these are to be found generally in human society.
- \* **Derivation** : The term is used for rational explanations for non-logical actions. As man usually has conflicting sentiments, his conduct is often non-logical.
- \* **Elite** : Refers to a minority groups of individuals within a society, who may be socially acknowledged as superior in some sense and who influence or control some or all of the other segments of the society.

**1.8 PROBABLE ANSWERS :**

<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) Vilfredo Pareto. (ii) It is simply all human action not falling within the scope of the logical. It is guided by emotions and sentiments, not by logic.
<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) By elite Pareto meant the small number of individuals who in each sphere of activity, have succeeded and have arrived at a higher echelon in the professional hierarchy. (ii) Two types, viz. Governing and Non-Governing elite.
<b>Check your progress</b>
(i) Vilfredo Pareto (ii) Lion.

**1.9 ASSIGNMENT :**

- \* Discuss logical and non-logical actions? How Vilfredo Pareto relates non- logical action with residues and derivation.
- \* Critically examine Pareto's theory of Elites.
- \* What does Pareto mean by "Circulation of elites"?
- \* Discuss Pareto's theory of Residues and Derivations.
- \* Critically examine Pareto's thesis that sociology is a Logico-Experimental science.

**2.0 FURTHER READINGS :**

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