

TRADITIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

M. A. Sociology First Year

Semester – I, Paper-II



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102SO21: TRADITIONAL SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Course Objectives: This paper will enlighten and educate the students: To understand the various theories developed by thinkers such as Auguste, Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and their views on evolution of society.

Course Outcomes: To prepare the students to enlighten about social thinkers and their theoretical ideologies on evolution and changing aspects of society.

UNIT I: Auguste Comte

1. Sociological Thought: Nature Development and the Social Context
2. Founding father of Sociological Thought Auguste Comte: Law of Three Stages, Human Progress, Hierarchy of Sciences
3. Social Statics and Dynamics and Positivism.

UNIT II: Herbert Spencer

1. Classification of Societies.
2. Social Evolution Theory
3. Organic Analogy

UNIT III: Emile Durkheim

1. Division of Labour
2. Suicides Theory
3. Social Facts, Elementary forms of Religious life

UNIT IV: Max Weber

1. Typology of Social action
2. Authority – Bureaucracy
3. Protestant Ethics and the spirit of Capitalism

UNIT V: Karl Marx

1. Historical and Dialectical Materialism
2. Class Struggle Theory
3. Surplus Value and Alienation

REFERENCES BOOKS:

1. Bogardus : The Development of Social Thought
2. Cohen, Percy : Modern Social Theory
3. Raymond Aaron : Main Currents in Sociological Thought
4. Margaret Vine : Sociological Theory
5. Timasheff, N.S. : Sociological Theory, Nature and Growth

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Lesson No. 1

SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

1.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand the nature, types of sociological theories and characteristics of sociological theory.

Contents:

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Meaning and Definition of Sociological Theory
- 1.3 Characteristics of Sociological Theory
- 1.4 Characteristics of Social Thought
- 1.5 Elements of Sociological Theory
- 1.6 Concepts: The Basic Building Blocks of Theory
- 1.7 Development of Sociological Theory
- 1.8 Process of the formation of Sociological Theory:
- 1.9 Development of Sociological Theory:
- 1.10 Summary
- 1.11 Technical Terms
- 1.12 Self Assessment Questions
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- 1.1 Introduction

Sociological theory attempts to provide systematic explanations and predictions relating to the nature, patterns and dynamics of human social interaction. A sociological theory integrates into a coherent pattern individual observations and insights about social life. In order to understand the nature of sociological theory we need to briefly review the structure of an empiric science, independently of its subject matter.

The foundation of every empiric science is observation. The result of an individual observation is expressed in a singular proposition stating that, at a given time and place, this particular phenomenon has taken place. The acquisition of such statements is a necessary prerequisite for any science but it is never sufficient. Individual observations must be brought into order and the manners of arrangement are many. Individual observations may be compared; this is tantamount to establishing similarities and differences. They may be classified; this means that types or classes are formed, each verifying a number of similar observations. The individual observation may be counted and submitted to statistical treatment. Resulting in frequency distributions, time series, coefficients of correlation and other statistical formulations. The individual observations may be arranged in genetic sequences showing the gradual unfolding of certain processes.

Generalisation drawn from the manners of arrangement may be expressed as laws of nature (in the field of social sciences, social laws), asserting that whenever specific conditions are present, a definite effect will follow. With certain precautions, generalizations of the statistical type (frequency distributions, time series) also can be transformed into social laws.

A generalization no longer refers to any fact in itself; it is based upon many facts and eventually may be used to predict facts likely to be established by further observation. Knowledge expressed in generalizations is of a higher level than expressed in singular propositions. But such knowledge is not yet the highest level attainable in empiric science, the highest level is that of theory. By accumulated efforts of men of science in a particular discipline, a large number of generalizations of various types are formulated. Unification of the scattered results is achieved by constructing a theory.

A theory is a set of propositions complying, ideally with the following conditions:

- 1) the propositions must be couched in terms of exactly defined concepts;
- 2) they must be consistent with one another
- 3) they must be such that from them the existing generalizations could be deductively derived;
- 4) They must be fruitful – show the way to further observations and generalizations increasing the scope of knowledge.

Theory cannot be derived from observations and generalizations merely by means of rigorous of induction. The construction of a theory is a creative achievement, and therefore it is not surprising that few among those labouring in the field of a science are able to carry it out. There is always a jump beyond the evidence, corresponding to the creative effort. But every theory thus obtained must then be subjected to verification to ensure that no known fact or generalization contradicts it. If there is contradiction, the tentative theory must be rejected or atleast modified.

In a mature science like Physics or Chemistry, commonly only one highly abstract theory or a set of interrelated and mutually complimentary theories is held by those working in the field. But this state of maturity is reached only after long and strenuous efforts during a period characterized by the coexistence of two or more conflicting theories-the condition still marking sociology. There exists no set of propositions commonly held by all sociologists, couched in identical terms and allowing them to present the known facts and generalizations as logical derivations of a few principles. On the contrary, the development of sociology has been characterized by the rise of an unusually high number of conflicting theories. Although this state of things has not yet been overcome, the struggle is no longer so acute as it was at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, the majority of sociologists agree upon a number of propositions included in a comprehensive sociological theory, although they often state these propositions in divergent terminology. Inspection of the sociological theories of the past and present shows that they revolve around a few problems, the most important of which are:

What is society and culture?

What are the basic units into which society and culture should be analysed ? What is the relationship between society, culture and personality?

What are the factors determining the state of a society and culture, or change in society or culture?

What is sociology? and, what are its appropriate methods?

The study of the growth of sociological theory must be focused on the various answers to these questions. In the presentation of the individual theories, however, one must go beyond these questions, because many theories assume the existence of other basic problem not covered by these questions.

1.2 Meaning and Definition of Sociological Theory

Psychological theory has been defined by various sociologists and social thinkers in different ways. Parsons in his book, 'Essays in Sociological Theories', has defined it in the following words:

“Theory is a system which covers a wide variety of different things which have in common only the element of generalised conceptualization.”

“A theoretical system in the present sense is a body of logical interdependent generalised concept of empirical reference.”

Sociological Theory as defined and explained by Murton – Murton has defined sociological theory in the following terms:

“What is now called sociological theory consists of general orientation towards data suggesting types of variables which need somehow to be taken into account, rather than clear variable statements of relationships between specific variables.”

1.3 Characteristics of Sociological Theory

Other sociologists and social thinkers have defined and characterised sociological theories in different ways. Some of them have called it as a dependable generalisation, based on the study of social events. This generalisation should be reasonable, logical, realistic and universal or true in almost all circumstances. In general terms it is called 'theoretical concept in the field of scientific study' that is known as theory. There is a lot of difference about interpretation of theory among the sociologists. Some of them have recognised the history and development of the sociology as a part of theory. Pitrim A. Sorokin has linked the theory with different schools while Bogardus has characterised only universal generalisation as theory, but sociologists like Murton propounded the 'Middle Range Theory', in this respect. They have in this respect said that.

"The term "Sociological Theory" has become widely used to refer to the products of several related but distinctive activities carried on by principles of professional group called sociologists. But since the several types of activities have significantly different bearings upon empirical social research, since they are different in their scientific functions they should be distinguished for purpose of discussion. Moreover, such discriminations provide basis for assessing the contributions and limitations characteristic of each of the following 6 types of works which are often lumped together as comprising sociological orientation:

- 1) Methodology;
- 2) General sociological orientations;
- 3) Analysis of sociological concepts;
- 4) Post-factum sociological interpretation;
- 5) Empirical generalisation in sociology; and
- 6) Sociological theory.

It would be worthwhile to analyse and study these 6 steps a bit in detail.

1. **Methodology:-** Methodology is the way through which we collect data about the research and propounding a theory. Different ways are employed in for this. These methods in order to be scientifically planned have to be in accordance with the subject matter.

2. **General sociological orientation:-** General sociological orientation is helpful in the analysis of the social facts and other social traits. On the basis of these orientations we study various concepts.
3. **Orientation of concepts:-** In almost all psychological theories the concepts are used so that clear-cut ideas about these concepts may be made. As a result of the study of these concepts it is possible to analyse various social events. On the basis of this analysis, sociological theories are propounded. According to Murton the concepts have to be very clear.
4. **Interpretation of data:-** Through the interpretation of data, the results are secured and on the basis of those results, generalisation is possible. For propounding of theory, interpretation of data is an important stage and important aspect.
5. **Generalisation:-** On the basis of the results secured, general principles are laid down. These general principles are also called as generalisation. The generalisations are universal. Murton has laid down the 'Middle Range Theory' in this respect.
6. **Theorisation:-** Once a particular rule is accepted as a generalisation, it assumed the form of a theory. Theory is based on logic, facts and reality.

In propounding of sociological theory, various elements concerning data are studied. As a result of study whether it is possible to propound a dependable and universal rules, is a matter of controversy. Some of the psychologists are of the view that sociological theories are based on reality only to a limited extent while others feel that universally acceptable theories can be propounded. Parsons was of the view that such thing was possible but Murton was of the view that such a thing was not possible. In spite of this controversy the fact cannot be denied that we have certain psychological theories and they occupy an important place in the study of sociology and social thought.

1.4 Characteristics of Social Thought:

Social thought as we have already seen is the result of inter-relations and inter-actions of human beings in historical social perspective. They originated from social problems. According to Bogardus these social thoughts have the following characteristics:

1. **Originated from social problems:** Social thoughts mainly originate from social problems. They are responsible for solution of various social problems which lead to the development of society, culture and civilisation.
2. **Related to social processes:** Social thoughts are not related to social problems alone but they are vitally related to process of social human and social life. That is why social utility is considered to be an integrated part of the social thought.
3. **Related to social relations:** Social thoughts as we have already seen are the result of social interactions and social-relations.
4. **Element of time and place:** Social thoughts are very much influenced by the element of place and time. They cannot be diverted from the time and place to which they belong.
5. **Influence of personal and social experiences:** In the development of the social thought, the thinkers are very much influenced by their personal experiences as well as the experiences of the society. Since the thoughts are the result of the human experiences and human beings are part of the society, social thought has the element of personal and social experiences.
6. **Result of development of civilization and culture:** As a result of social thought, civilization and culture grow and progress. On the other hand the growth, development and progress of cultural civilization do influence the development of social thought.
7. **Social thoughts are general as well as theoretical:** Their main objective is to explain and analyse the social processes and social life and help the solution of various

social problems. Social thoughts therefore continue to grow but in their growth they also heed upon the past experiences.

1.5 Elements of Sociological Theory

Theory is a mental activity. As I have already indicated, it is a process of developing ideas that can allow us to explain how and why events occur. Theory is constructed with several basic elements or building blocks:

1. Concepts,
2. Variables,
3. Statements and
4. Formats.

Although there are many divergent claims about what theory is or should be, these four elements are common to all of them. Let me examine each of these elements in more detail.

1.6 Concepts: The Basic Building Blocks of Theory

Theories are built from concepts. Most generally, concepts denote phenomena; in so doing, they isolate features of the world that are considered, for the moment at hand, important. For example, notions of atoms, protons, neutrons, and the like are concepts, pointing to and isolating phenomena for certain analytical purposes. Familiar sociological concepts would include group, formal organization, power, stratification, interaction, norm, role, status, and socialization. Each term is a concept that embraces aspects of the social world that are considered essential for a particular purpose.

Concepts are constructed from definitions. A definition is a system of terms, such as the sentences of a language, the symbols of logic, or the notation of mathematics, that inform investigators as to the phenomenon denoted by a concept. For example, the concept conflict only has meaning when it is defined. One possible definition might be: Conflict is interaction among social units in which one unit seeks to prevent the other from realizing its goals. Such a definition allows us to visualize the phenomenon that is denoted by the concept. It enables all investigators to “see the same thing” and to understand what it is that is being studied.

1.7 Development of Sociological Theory:

It is not possible to present a systematic study of the development of the sociological theories. But the fact remains that after 1880 sociological theories have developed constantly. Becker and Boskoff, in their book, “Modern Sociological Theory” in continuity and change have propounded a 8 point topological study of the development of the sociological theories. Since then the development has been going on. It is a fact that in the last 3-4 decades, the historians of the sociology and sociologists have while studying the immediate problems propounded certain specific theories. They recognised the importance of these psychological theories. These theories were no doubt varied and different but they had basic uniformity. Every sociologist recognized that it was needed to have proper concept of the outlines of sociology, developed proper methodology and collect data, the historical and contemporary sociological problems and illustrated general principles and theories. However it would be worthwhile to study a bit in detail the 8 steps put forward by Becher and Boskoff.

- 1) Monographic analysis of the works of leading sociologists or central concepts such as ‘progress’ and ‘social field’;
- 2) Expository text-books written to give the elementary student a simple, unchattered summary of leading social thinkers from ancient times to the period of systematic sociology;
- 3) Review of the social sciences, their methods, and their inter-dependence, and assessment of the developing specialists within sociology itself;
- 4) Critical evaluation of sociological theories and trends chiefly in the field of systematic sociology;
- 5) Survey of the development of sociology in a specific nation;
- 6) Panoramic histories;
- 7) Monographic studies resulting in refinement of theory and method.
- 8) Critical assessment of theories and methods in specialised field or related comparative fields.

1.8 Process of the formation of Sociological Theory:

The study of the history of social thought shall be incomplete unless we study the process of the formation of psychological theory. Different processes are involved in this task. According to Weber, the sociologists, in order to be able to propound the psychological theories in a dependable manner have to be well experienced and capable of experimentative. Without research and study such a process is not possible. According to *Lazavsfeld*, the following 4 steps are involved in the formation and development of psychological theories.

- 1) Formulation of the problems;
- 2) Classification of meaning and concepts;
- 3) Structure of arguments;
- 4) Systematic evidence.

It would be worthwhile to study these stages a bit in detail.

- 1) **Formulation of the problems:-** Propounding of a theory starts with the study of a problem and research about it. Unless we are in a position to formulate a problem we shall not be able to make study about it. Once we have succeeded in formulation of the problem, we shall be able to study it in proper manner and propound a theory on the basis of it.
- 2) **Classification on meaning and concepts:-** Unless we have clear idea about meaning and concepts of the problems used in our study research and logic it shall not be possible to have a clear idea of the problems that we are studying. There is a specific problem for every event and its proper connotation has to be understood. For example Juvenile Delinquency connotes a particular situation and we have to be clear about the fact that such an event is possible only in case of the boys. Therefore, we have to be very clear about the image of every problem that we use.
- 3) **Structure of arguments:-** In study and research we use a sound structure about the arguments. As a result of a particular theory, several concepts are born. These concepts and images have to be logical and reasonable. Unless they are so, it is not

possible to present a proper structure of the arguments. The structure of arguments has therefore to be built in a proper manner.

- 4) **Systematic evidence:-** For propounding a sociological theory, it is necessary to have systematic evidence. These evidences are based on facts. Unless evidences are based on facts, it would not be possible to propound a theory in a sound manner.

1.9 Summary:

To trace the development of sociological theory is not easy. The task is complicated by the fact that sociological theories have developed according to a pattern somewhat similar to that of the growth of a plant : Some branches have shot ahead vigorously with many sub branches, while others have, sooner or later, withered away. The situation is further complicated by the fact that, in addition to the pattern of branching, the pattern of convergence and merger is also observable. While through branching one theory gives rise to two or more, through convergence and merger, theories which have started as independent and incompatible explanations of social reality come closer to one another and sometimes coalesce into one. Despite this difficulty, Timasheff makes an attempt to present a schematic genealogy of sociological theories. His survey of the growth of sociological theory is divided into four periods. The first period, extending from the birth of sociology until about 1875, is classified as the period of the pioneers and of largely unrelated efforts. The second period, roughly corresponding to the last quarter of nineteenth century, is the period of the battle of the schools and simultaneously of the dominance of evolutionism, the battle largely concerned with the question of which factor (economic, geographical, racial or some other) determines social evolution. The third period, covering the first quarter of the twentieth century, is a time of indecision following the demolition of the evolutionary theory and a growing consciousness of the need to concentrate on empirical studies; during this period stress is laid on the psychological foundations. The writings of Cooley, Thomas, Pareto and Weber characterise this period of sociology, the fourth and present period is the period of the battle of frames of reference and also of convergence. The present period is characterised by increasing awareness of the existence of a large body of empirically established propositions (hence, a period of convergence) and the competition of points of view considered most

adequate to explain social reality in its totality. Neo-positivism, functionalism and conflict sociology are some of the representative orientations of this period.

The development of sociological theory or sociology itself is the result of a long process. This process is going on even today. Sociology as a branch of knowledge or a scientific study is the result of this process.

1.10 Technical Terms:

Generalization

Sociological Orientation

Theorisation

Sociological Thought

1.11 Self Assessment Questions:

1. Explain the nature and characteristics of sociological theory?
2. Discuss development of sociological theory and paradigms in sociology?

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Lesson 2

AUGUSTE COMTE

2.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to study the Auguste Comte's Law of three stages, Hierarchy of Sciences and Division of Sociology.

Contents:

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Major Works of Comte:
- 2.2 A Brief Account of Comte's Life
- 2.3 Law of Three Stages
- 2.4 Application of the law of the three stages on the development of social organization
- 2.5 Hierarchy of Sciences
- 2.6 Comte's Views Regarding Sociology
- 2.7 Religion of Humanity
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Glossary
- 2.10 Questions
- 2.11 References

2.1 Major Works of Comte:

1. The Prospectus of the Scientific Works Required for the Reorganization of Society – 1822 (a joint work of Comte and Saint Simon).
2. Positive Philosophy – 1830-1842 in six volumes.
3. System of Positive Politics – 1851-54 in four volumes.

Auguste Comte, a French Philosopher, moralist and a sociologist, has been traditionally regarded as the “father of sociology”. Comte who was an intellectual genius of the 19th Century had an enormously creative mind. It was he who provided for the first time an organized foundation for the field of social thought. He was also the first thinker to specify the field of social thought to show the relation of social thought to other fields of knowledge. He attempted to formulate conditions that account for social stability at any given historical moment. “The study of social dynamics and social statics—of progress and order, of change and stability – are the twin pillars of his system.” As Emory S. Bogardus has pointed out, “He was the first important social philosopher, and his “Positive Philosophy” the first treatise roughly to propose the field of sociology”.

2.2 A Brief Account of Comte’s Life

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was born at Montpellier, France on 19th Jan, 1798. He was the son of humble and law-abiding catholic parents. His father was a government servant and a royalist and traditionalist. From the very beginning Comte exhibited extraordinary mental ability, a strong character, and a tendency to defy authority. He is often described as “brilliant and recalcitrant”. He was a voracious reader and had an excellent memory power. In school he won many prizes and led the students who used to call him “the philosopher”. At the age of 16 he joined the “Ecole Polytechnique”, the most famous school in France at that time. Here he had the chance of being taught by professors who were scholars in mathematics and physics and who had no interest in the study of human affairs and society. But unlike them, Comte developed great social and human concern.

As a youth Comte was critical of Napoleon’s administration and disliked both parental and religious authority. He even led a group of students in demanding the resignation of one of his instructors. At the age of 19 he came in contact with Henri de Saint Simon (1760-1825) who was a great socialist thinker, and perhaps, a socialist dreamer. Comte became his secretary for which he was getting 300 francs as salary. In course of time, comte became his co-worker, co-writer and co-thinker. The friendship

between the two lasted only for a few years, that is, up to 1824 only. They jointly published the work “Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the reorganization of Society”—1822; (also known as “The Prospectus of the Scientific Works Required for the Reorganization of Society) and thereafter their partnership dissolved.

Comte married in the year 1825 but within 17 years, that is, in 1842, his wife deserted him. He almost led an isolated life for a long time due to his personal disappointments and quarrels with others. He had to face economic crisis also. A small group of his admirers invited him to deliver a series of private lectures on positive philosophy. Good number of learned men including scientists and economists were attending his lectures. His lecture notes were later published (between 1830-42) in six Volumes running to 4800 pages which constituted his masterly work called “Course of Positive Philosophy”. This treatise fetched him a sizeable number of admirers even outside France. J.S. Mill of England, a famous philosopher, for example, was impressed by his work.

In his later years, between 1851 and 1854, he wrote another splendid book entitled “System of Positive Politics”, in four volumes. In this work he applied the findings of theoretical sociology to the solution of the social problems of his time. His primary goal was improvement of society, and this in a way he accomplished in his own way. But in the process of doing it he deviated from the path and attempted to establish a ‘religion of humanity’. He was continuously writing letters to the members of his “Positive Society” started by him in 1848, to struggle for reconstruction of humanity. Comte, whose life was beset with stresses and strains, conflicts and controversies, poverty and isolation, breathed his last on 17th June, 1857. The religion which he started died along with him but the science which he set out to start continues to flourish.

2.3 Law of Three Stages:

Critically examine Comte’s law of Three Stages.

The law of three stages: The social philosophy of Auguste Comte is based on the concept of the three stages of the thought. He was of the view that man's knowledge passes through the 3 stages which are:

1. Theological or Fictitious Stage
2. Metaphysical or Abstract Stage
3. Positive Stage

Auguste Comte was of the view that when we study the development of the human mind or intellect in different societies and through different ages, we come to that basic law which guides the development of human mind and intellect. Definite proof in this regard is available in our organization and historical experiences. In other words it means that all our concepts passed through these 3 stages--- Theological, Metaphysical and Positive. It would be worth while to study all these stages one by one.

1. **Theological or Fictitious Stage:** Auguste Comte was of the view that during theological stage of thinking man's ideas and views were fictitious and more concerning to other world. He was of the view that man in his desire to study the development of the thoughts and in his attempt to trace the development of the world and its various factors comes to be influenced by the thinking that spiritual and supernatural factors influenced his activities. In those days man thought that all his activities were occupied by supernatural factors. It was so because he was not aware of the laws that governed the working of those things. At this primitive stage man believed that there was another world apart from this world where supernatural being resided and influenced events of the world. These events exhibit and display the happiness and unhappiness of supreme beings. Man did not think it proper to think anything beyond this.

On account of these things in those days, men believed too much in magic and talisman. He believed that in every object one God or Soul of the other resided. That was the reason why they had separate Gods for separate things. As a result of

this thinking the number of Gods multiplied. When this number became quite large an Hierarchical order was established and the most important God was placed first. As a result of this monotheism was apparent. According to Auguste Comte this was the final stage of the theological or fictitious stage of these developments.

Three stages of theological or fictitious stage of thinking according to Auguste Comte: Auguste Comte has laid down that there are three stages of the theological or fictitious stages of thinking. These three stages are;

a. Fetichism b. Polytheism. c. Monotheism.

a. **Fetichism:** In this stage of theological or fictitious stage of the development of social thought, man accepts all the actions and behaviour of the human world in a conscious manner. He accepts all the object of the nature as living being or with life. In other words he accepts the existence of the spirit or the soul.

b. **Polytheism:** As a result of polytheism, man falls a prey to all sorts of magic sorcery and allied activities. He is very much influenced and surrounded by wrong notions. As a reaction of this thinking man becomes more alert and conscious and slowly instead of accepting the presence of all powerful spirit or supernatural power in all the objects, transplants or imposes, specific or a special God in every object. This stage of development of the social or human thought has been called polytheism.

c. **Monotheism:** This is the last stage of the theological or fictitious stage of the development of social thought. At this stage human thinking becomes abstract and discreet. At this stage man is guided more by reason than anything else. At this stage man accepts that there is one centre of the centre power that guides and controls all the activities of the world.

2. **Metaphysical or abstract stage of thinking:** No doubt Monotheism is the last stage of the theological stage of development, but human thinking or human thought does not stop there. Its progress continues. As a result of this development, the reason develops in human thinking. As a result of development of reason, man ceases to think, that it is God that guides and controls the entire

working of the human world. Man also ceases to think that it is the supernatural being that controls or guides all the activities. He now replaces this supernatural, being by an abstract powers. It is this abstract power that is responsible for guiding and controlling the human and natural activities. In the metaphysical or abstract stage of thinking, man replaces the supernatural being as a factor responsible for guiding the human activities. These forces are accepted as the guiding factor for the activities of man and the nature. This stage is more or less a developed stage of the first stage of thinking. Auguste Comte has characterized it as an amended and improved form of the theological or fictitious stage of thinking.

3. **Positive stage of the development of the social thought:** This is in words of Auguste Comte as improved and scientific form of thinking. This stage follows the metaphysical or abstract stage of thinking. In this respect the following words of Auguste Comte need to be emphasized:

“From the nature of human intellect, each branch of knowledge in its development has to pass through three different theoretical states. The theological, or fictitious states; the metaphysical or abstract state; and The scientific or positive....”

This is in fact the final or the positive stage of human mind or thinking.

2.4 Application of the law of the three stages on the development of social organization:

August Comte has applied the law of three stages on the development or historical progress of the social and political organization. It would be worthwhile to analyse it properly.

1. **The first stage of the development of the social and political organization:** On the basis of the three stages of the development of knowledge of human thinking, he has analyzed the entire human society and its development. According to Comte at the first stage of the development of social and political organization, the laws are vague. An ‘Absolute Power’ which is under the control of nobody or

the Autocratic is considered to be the cause of every object, in other words, the representative of this absolute or autocratic authority is some ruler or leader. In support of this theory, Auguste Comte has cited the example of city, states of Rome and old theological states of Jews. In such a society sanction of the Divine Authority or 'theory of divine origin' is accepted as the test of every thing. In other words the ruler of such a society or organization is considered to enjoy sanction of the divine power. They cannot be violated.

2. **The second stage of the development of the social organization:** This is the stage when 'Doctrine of Abstract Right' dominates the society. At this stage the super-natural or spiritual rights are replaced by natural rights. This is the basic difference between the two stages. This stage is, from the point of view of development, a developed stage of the first stage.
3. **Third Stage:** The positive or scientific stage: This is a further developed stage of the development of the social thought. In this stage observation and study occupy a very important place. In the first and the second stage the basis of the social order and organization was more unstable and not reasonable. But this third stage is quite scientific and is based on reason. In this stage neither the theological beliefs nor abstract rights are given any important place. This stage gives importance to experiences that have to be studied and analyzed.

2.5 Hierarchy of Sciences

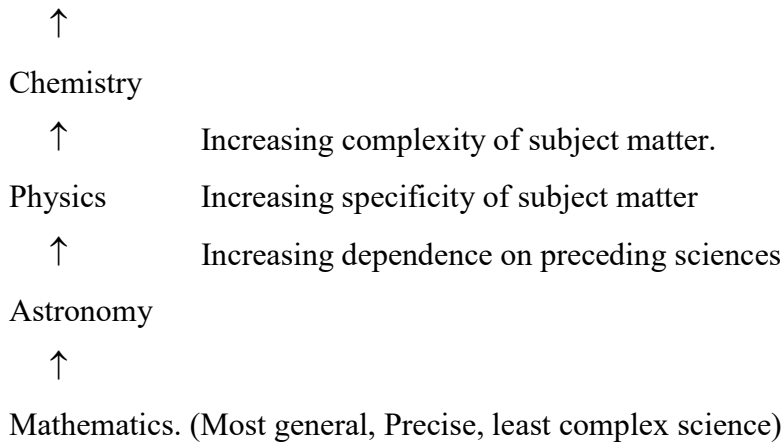
Any kind of knowledge reaches the positive stage early in proportion to its generality, simplicity, and independence of other disciplines. Each science in the series depends for its emergence and development on the prior developments of its predecessors in the hierarchy characterized by the law of increasing complexity and decreasing generality.

Comte believed that all fields of knowledge except sociology have reached the positive stage, with the rise of sociology the series would be completed.

Sociology. (Least general, least precise, most complex science)

↑

Biology



The hierarchy of science began with mathematics, which according to him is a basic tool of the mind. It is the most powerful tool, which the mind can use in the study of natural laws. It is the basic of all sciences. It is the oldest and most perfect of all the sciences. It measures precisely the relationship between objects and ideas. The highest form of mathematics in calculus. There is no scientific imaging where calculus is not used

Astronomical phenomena are most general of all and it develops on the basis of mathematics. Astronomy is the science which studies the movements of heavenly bodies. Next to mathematics it is the most general and simple, it is required to understand any terrestrial phenomena, its relation to other units of the solar system.

Physics is more general than Chemistry, it deals with masses rather than elements. Chemical phenomena depend upon the laws of physics. Chemical action is conditioned by the laws of weight, heat, electricity. Thus the study of inorganic falls under Astronomy, Physics and chemistry.

Organic phenomena include two: the individual and group; the first studies the structure and function of individual forms in plant and animal world. It is general physiology, Biology. Biology rests upon chemistry because in chemistry all knowledge about nutrition and secretion is found. Biology is linked to physics while studying weight, temperature is related to living organism. All accurate, works in biological

sciences need mathematics. Thus biology is dependent on all the preceding sciences in the hierarchy.

The development of sociology had taken place late hence had to depend on all the sciences preceding it on the hierarchy. Each of the six general sciences has passed through the three stages of the thought. Mathematics has advanced, farthest into the positive stage. The other sciences are less further. Sociology is the latest science to develop but hoped would reach positive stage.

Comte does not distinguish between political science and sociology. For him sociology is the perfected political science. His political theory is inextricably connected with his psychology, theology, ethics and economics. He treats each social science as a phase of social evolution and organization.

2.6 Comte's Views Regarding Sociology

Comte is acclaimed as the 'father of sociology'. First he named the science which he set out to establish as "social physics". But later he came to know that the Belgian statistician by name Adolf Quetelet had already used that term in his "An Essay on Social Physics". Hence Comte dropped that term and in its place used the term 'Sociology' in 1839. This term is a combination of two words—the Latin word 'socius', meaning 'society', and the Greek word 'logos' meaning 'science' or study. Etymologically 'sociology' means, 'science of society'.

As stated earlier, according to Comte, sociology represents the culmination of the development of science. It is based on mathematics and is dependent on biology, chemistry, physics and astronomy. These sciences have taken time to become free from theological and metaphysical speculations and thinking. Hence, Comte argued that sociology too would require some time to attain the full status of the positive science. Comte believed that sociology would be helped to become scientific by means of his writings.

Social Statics and Social Dynamics

According to Comte, there are two divisions in Sociology (i) Social statics and (ii) social dynamics. The distinction between these two does not refer to two classes of facts, but they represent two aspects of the same theory. The distinction corresponds to the double conception of order and progress. Order and progress or statics and dynamics are hence always correlative to each other.

- i. **Social Statics:** Social statics refers to “the study of the laws of action and reaction of the different parts of social order...” It studies the balance of mutual relations of elements within a social whole. It deals with the major institutions of society such as family, economy or policy. It inquires into the co-existence of social phenomena. Comte stressed that there must always be a “spontaneous harmony between the whole and the part of the social system”. The parts of a society cannot be studied separately, “as if they had an independent existence”. When the harmony between the parts is lacking a pathological situation may prevail. Social statics emphasizes the unity of society or social organization.
- ii. **Social Dynamics:** If statics examines how the parts of societies are interrelated, social dynamics focuses on whole societies as the unit of analysis, and reveals how they developed and changed through time. Social dynamics was equated by Comte with human progress and evolution. It inquires as to how the human civilization progresses in different stages. Comte was convinced that all societies move through certain fixed stages of development and that they progress towards ever increasing perfection.

Nature and Features of Sociology--- Comte's Views

Comte defined sociology as the science of social phenomena “subject to natural and invariable laws the discovery of which is the object of our investigation”. He mentioned the following features of sociology in some or the other context--- 1. Sociology is the objective analysis of social phenomena 2. Sociology is an abstract science 3. Sociology is a synthetic science. It synthesizes the knowledge of all the other sciences. 4. Like all the other sciences, sociology can also provide the knowledge of the

future in the sense, in can make predictions 5. Sociology is not just a science. It is a science committed to social reconstruction and moral rejuvenation.

2.7 Religion of Humanity

Comte's focus on sociology as a scientific enterprise could be clearly understood by a glance at his masterpiece "Positive Philosophy". But, Comte, the promising scientist too had his own normative ideas which figured prominently in his "Positive Polity" published in 1852. An important change had taken place in his thinking by this time. Comte purported to establish a new religion, a 'scientific religion', or a religion of humanity.

Comte was of the opinion that a society which was built upon scientific principles needed very badly a religion which he termed as religion of humanity. Comte conceived of a society directed by the spiritual power of priests of the new positive religion and leaders of banking and industry. These scientific sociologist-priests would be the moral guides and controllers of the community. They use their "superior knowledge to recall men to their duties and obligations" They would be the directors of education and the supreme judges of the abilities of each member of society. They "would sternly hold men to their collective duty and would help suppress any subversive ideas of inherent rights". Comte claimed himself to be the high priest of this new religion committed to "institute a reign of harmony, justice, rectitude, and equity". The new positivist order Comte claimed "would have Love as its Principle, Order as its Basis, and programme as its Aim". The egoistic tendencies of mankind as evidenced in all the previous history "would be replaced by altruism, and by the command, 'Live for Others'. Individual men would be imbued with love for their fellows. Comte at this stage made 'love' and 'affection' the central points of life. "We tire of thinking and even of acting he asserted, but we never tire of loving". "The Comtean ideals became a disinterested love of mankind".

It is clearly ascertainable that during his later years Comte "considered himself not only a social scientist but also, and primarily, a prophet and founder of new religion that promised salvation for all the ailments of mankind". Comte, thus tried to create a purely "social religion". He made mankind an end in itself. "He was morality-

intoxicated”. Comte was not a strict religionist as such, but he considered the atheist “the most irrational of all theologians”. It is said that Comte was so absorbed in his task of projecting this new religion that he stopped reading the works of other writers. J.S. Mill rightly remarked that Comtean ideas of religion instead of protecting his mental health made him to lead an isolated life and develop strange thoughts. Thomas Huxley called Comte’s religion “Catholicism minus Christianity”. Some other criticized it as highly ‘egoistic religion’. A few others considered it as utopian in character. As L.A. Coser has remarked the normative aspects of Comte’s thought may be importance for the historian of ideas; but they are of little importance for the sociologist. Viewed from the social and intellectual contexts in which Comte’s thoughts emerged, his religious idea has its own place in social thought.

2.8 Summary:

Auguste Comte, a French Philosopher, moralist and a sociologist, has been traditionally regarded as the “father of sociology”. Comte who was an intellectual genius of the 19th Century had an enormously creative mind. It was he who provided for the first time an organized foundation for the field of social thought. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was born at Montpellier, France on 19th Jan, 1798. He was the son of humble and law-abiding catholic parents. His father was a government servant and a royalist and traditionalist. From the very beginning Comte exhibited extra-ordinary mental ability, a strong character, and atendency to defy authority.

The social philosophy of Aguste Comte is based on the concept of the three stages of the thought. He was of the view that man’s knowledge passes through the 3 stages which are: 1.Theological or Fictitious Stage, 2.Metaphysical or Abstract Stage, 3.Positive Stage

Comte believed that all fields of knowledge except sociology have reached the positive stage, with the rise of sociology the series would be completed.

2.9 Glossary:

Fetichism

Polytheism

Monotheism

Social Statistics

Social Dynamics

2.10 Questions:

1. Explain Comte's Law of three stages and Hierarchy of Sciences?
2. Discuss the contribution of Auguste Comte to Sociology?

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Lesson No. 3

Hierarchy of Sciences, Social Statics and Dynamics

3.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand the Comte's hierarchical classification of various sciences and the importance of social statics and dynamics. .

Contents:

- 3.0 Objective
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Hierarchy Sciences
- 3.3 Social Statics and Social Dynamics
- 3.4 Summary:
- 3.5 Technical Terms:
- 3.6 Self Assessment Questions
- 3.7 Reference Books

3.1 Introduction

The development of sociology as a science occurs, according to Comte, within the framework of general orientation of human thought, According to the 'law of three stages' that was expanded by Comte, every single branch of knowledge has to pass through three different theoretical stages before it reaches maturity – theological or fictitious, metaphysical or abstract, and positive or scientific stage. The function of the second stage is to act as an

intermediary, since the first and last stages are clearly so different in their general outlook that it is impossible to pass directly from the first to the third. In the third stage, all phenomena are regarded as subject to invariable natural laws that can be investigated by observation and experimentation. The differences, because of the varying degree of complexity of their respective substances reach the stage of maturity at different times. Comte then proceeded to locate all the different sciences in terms of the stage of their development. The order followed is a logical order, beginning with the least complex or most general phenomena which are also most remote from humanity and ending with those more relevant to human beings. The order of the sciences is therefore Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Social Physics (Sociology).

Comte chose as his principle of classifying knowledge, the order of increasing dependence. He arranged the sciences so that each category may be grounded on the principal laws of the preceding category, and serve as a basis for the next ensuing category. The order, hence, is one of increasing complexity and decreasing generality. The simplest phenomena must be the most general-general in the sense of being everywhere present. Sciences, Comte asserted, were either theoretical or practical (applied). The theoretical could be further divided into descriptive (concrete) and abstract the first dealing with concrete phenomena and the second striving for the discovery of the laws of nature governing these phenomena. The abstract theoretical sciences form a series or hierarchy in which every higher link depends on the preceding one because it deals with more concrete and complex phenomena. The base of the hierarchy is occupied by Mathematics which deals with abstract aspects of all phenomena. Next in rank is Astronomy, a science which in his day was making spectacular advances. Astronomy is followed by Physics, Chemistry and Biology. And above them all was to be erected the new science of Social Physics or Sociology.

3.2 The Hierarchy Sciences

The fundamental theoretical foundations of this hierarchical classification were:

- First that each science depends upon those below it in the series?

- Second, that, as one advances through the series the subjects become more specific, complex and less amenable to scientific measurement and prediction; and
- Finally, the difficulties of sociology are due to the greater complexity of the phenomena with which it deals and the lack of adequate measurement of these phenomena.

Comte explains his classification of sciences further with mathematics as the tool, the classification of sciences may proceed. All natural phenomena fall into two grand divisions.

1. Inorganic and
2. Organic

1. Inorganic: The inorganic are more general and should be considered first; Inorganic phenomena are of two classes.

- (i) Astronomical and
- (ii) Terrestrial

i. **Astronomical:** Astronomical phenomena are the most general of all. Astronomy is the science by which the movements of the heavenly bodies, including the earth are measured. How can we thoroughly understand any terrestrial phenomena without considering the nature of the earth and its relation to the other units of the solar system:

ii. **Terrestrial:** Terrestrial phenomena includes two fields (i) Physics and (ii) Chemistry

Physics: Physics is more general than chemistry; it deals with masses rather than elements.

Chemistry: Chemical phenomena depend upon the laws of physics, without being influenced by them in turn

The study of Inorganic phenomena thus falls under three scientific heads:

- a) Astronomy,
- b) Physics and
- c) Chemistry

2. **Organic:** Organic phenomena include two types: Individual and Group. The first refers to the structure and function of all individual forms in the plant and animal worlds. It is general physiology or biology, in modern terms. It involves the study of all life and the general laws pertaining to the individual units of life.

Biology rests upon chemistry, because in chemistry all reliable knowledge about nutrition or secretion is found. Biology is indebted to physics for knowledge concerning the weight of temperature of and related facts about living organisms. Biological laws are partially determined as astronomical factors. If the earth were to rotate faster than it does the course of physiological phenomena would be accelerated and the length of life would be shortened. If the orbit of the earth were to become as eccentric as that of a Comet, changes of a fatal nature would occur to all life on earth. If there were no inclination of the earth's axis, the seasons would be unknown, and the geographical distribution of living species would be vastly different from the present situation. All accurate work in biological studies is mathematical in character. This biology the science of organic phenomena is dependent on all the preceding divisions on the scale of knowledge. Social physics or sociology is the most dependent of all.

3.3 Social Statics and Social Dynamics

According to Auguste Comte Sociology may be divided in to two parts

1. Social States
2. Social Dynamics

Through social statics, it is possible to study the laws governing various parts and reaction of the society and through social dynamic progress of the society and the allied matters may be studied. Both these things have to co-exist and work accordingly. There is need to develop social theory through which the intellectual anarchy can be done away with.

The study of progress—of mind and society through history—was greatly facilitated by the fact that the development of all societies is governed by the same laws, so that the development of general principles may begin with the study of the advances made by the vanguard of humanity, viz., French culture.

In this study of social progress and human development, Comte saw two components at work—what he called statics and dynamics. Social statics, he pointed out, is the study of conditions of society's existence at any given moment which is analyzed by means of a theory of social order. "The statical study of sociology consists in the investigation of the laws of action and reaction of the different parts of the social system—apart, for the occasion, from the fundamental movement which is always gradually modifying them." Social dynamics, on the other hand, is the study of continuous movements in social phenomena through time by means of a theory of social progress. Throughout his writings, Comte wrestled with the dialectical tension he saw in the socio-political activities of his time between order and progress within society. A true science of humanity, of social life, must discover those laws making both order and progress possible. In Vol. II of his *Positive Philosophy*, Comte wrote: "The distinction is between two aspects of theory. It corresponds with the double conception of order and progress: for order consists in a permanent harmony among the conditions of social existence, and progress consists in social development." By studying order, sociologists come to a better understanding of those components necessary to the existence of society; by studying progress, a better understanding of social movements is made. Both are essential.

A basic fact of the social order which, according to Comte is established by the laws of nature is that of consensus universalis, a universal agreement among all societies of the dialectically creative role of order and progress. Such a consensus exists in all realms of life but reaches its climax in human society. Between all social components of human life—science, art, politics, values, ideas—the consensus universalis is the foundation of solidarity in a society. Within this context of analysis, Comte eliminated the study of individuals, contending that sociology is the study of social systems consisting of homogeneous elements. He argued that the family is the basic social unit, though he never completely excluded his work from the constant plague of individual versus society issues. Social statics consisted of

the analysis of society's structure at a given moment, on the one hand, and on the other, of the analysis of the element(s) which at any given moment determine the consensus, which makes the collection of individuals into a society, the plurality of institutions into a unity. Social statics, then, is particularly adept at contributing to an understanding of the nature of social order.

Social dynamics which must be subordinated to social statics consist merely of the description of the successive and necessary stages in the development of mind and society—incorporating historical analysis. Furthermore, social dynamics is history devoid of individual names, history of a scientific character in search of an abstract order of social laws operative in mind and society through historical progression. Fully and quite articulately affirming that progressive development in the evolution of society does not advance in a straight line—contrary to the Comtean antagonists who have for decades falsely accused him of being a unilateralist in social evolution—Comte did believe that the study of social dynamics must rightfully begin with human development and social progress. For Comte, the two causal corollaries of progress were population increase and the growth of human mental abilities. He once argued persuasively to his readers that children of each society develop in quantity and speed commensurate with their society's corporate development. Progress, he reasoned, is observable in all aspects of society—physical, moral, intellectual, political. The intellect is fundamental and most conspicuous since history is dominated by the development of ideas. And, concomitantly, intellectual development stimulates material development. Among these lines, Comte suggested by way of explanation that the differential velocity of progress so blatantly evidenced in Europe and the world was traceable to such variables as race, geography, and political system.

The concept of statics can be logically divided into two parts: the study of the structure of human nature, on the one hand, and the study of the structure of social nature, on the other. The concept of dynamics involves the theory or progress, the law of three stages and the inevitable evolutionary development of order. "In short, social dynamics studies the laws of succession, while social statics enquires into those of co-existence; so that the use of the first is to furnish the true service in regard to order, and this suitability to the needs of modern society is a strong confirmation of the philosophical character of such a combination."

3.4 Summary:

Auguste Comte has drawn a hierarchical classification of various sciences and said that it had begun with mathematics. He has therefore divided science on the basis of the beginning and the development of knowledge and placed science as the first, geometry second and physics, chemistry, biology after that. He has placed science in the last. Since Auguste Comte has given a hierarchical classification and division, he has stated with the presumption that the science that follows, is dependent on the science that proceeds. Comte urged that no science could effectually be studied without competent knowledge concerning the sciences on which it depends. It is necessary not only to have a general knowledge of all the sciences, but to study each of them in order. Comte's classification of sciences is based on the thinking of the great philosophers who had divided knowledge into the following three categories. Physical sciences, Ethics, and Political sciences.

According to Comte sociology may be divided into two parts. One is social statics and the other is social dynamics. Through social statics, it is possible to study the laws governing various parts and reaction of the society and through social dynamic progress of the society and the allied matters may be studied. Both these things have to co-exist and work accordingly. There is need to develop social theory through which the intellectual anarchy can be done away with.

3.5 Technical Terms:

Social statics

Social Dynamics

Social progress

Positive philosophy

3.6 Self Assessment Questions

1. Analyse Auguste Comte's Hierarchy of Sciences with suitable examples?
2. Discuss Comte's social statics and social dynamics?

3.7 Reference Books

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Lesson No. 4

Auguste Comte's Positivism

4.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand the Comte's Positivism and social thought.

Contents:

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Contribution of Auguste Comte to Social Thoughts:
- 4.3 Comte's Positivism:
- 4.4 Social reconstruction and Auguste Comte's Positivism:
- 4.5 Comte's Philosophy and Industrial System:
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Technical Terms
- 4.8 Self Assessment Questions
- 4.9 Reference Books

4.1 Introduction

Auguste Comte and Social Thought:

Auguste Comte occupies a very important place in the process and development of the organisation and scientific study of social philosophy and social thought. Comte born in France was an eminent philosopher and sociologist. He was the first to give importance to the systemised study of social events. In this scientific study of the social events he gave great

importance to observation analysis, classification and other steps of scientific study of social events. He also felt the need for independent science that was given the name of 'Sociology'. On account of his views, Auguste Comte is called the 'Father of Sociology'. After Comte, the nature and method of study and other features of Sociology underwent an extraordinary change. They were also developed. The credit for giving sociology a strong base goes to Auguste Comte. He brought about a great development in study of sociology.

Time of Auguste Comte:

Every individual howsoever great he may be, is influenced by his circumstances and conditions. This was true to Auguste Comte as well. Just 9 years before Auguste Comte was born, France had seen chaos that lasted for a very long time. This influenced the world of thought of France as well. When Auguste Comte started this thinking, the French world of thought was divided into two parts: On one hand there were revolutionists and on the other there were religious thinkers. These religious thinkers were opposed even to social reforms what to talk of revolutionary social thoughts. Comte opposed and rejected both these ways of thinking. He adopted the scientific outlook and made attempt to solve the social problems on the basis of scientific analysis and through scientific outlook. He tried to analyse the base of social theories and principles on the basis of scientific method. For his thoughts, he borrowed from Aristotle, St. Simon, in one form or the other. From Aristotle he borrowed the principle of social organisation. On the other hand from Hume, Kant and Gall, he borrowed the scientific outlook and fatalism. From Hume, Kant and Target he borrowed historical fatalism and from St. Simon and others he borrowed concept of 3 stages of the development of the mind of man. He established co-ordination between these ways of thoughts. That is why he has been called the first thinker who treated sociology as the sole science of human activities. Because of his approach he was also called the 'Father of Sociology'.

Short life sketch of Auguste Comte:

Comte was born in France in the town of Montpellier in France with parents of a middle class who were Roman Catholic. In Ekela polytechnic he acquired higher education. At the age of 19, he came in contact with famous thinker St. Simon and continued to be with him for six years. Auguste Comte was Simon's great friend and admirer, but his friendship

could not continue long. In 1824 two started having differences. In spite of it, it cannot be denied that Auguste Comte borrowed a lot from St. Simon.

4.2 Contribution of Auguste Comte to Social Thoughts:

We have already seen that Auguste Comte was the father of sociology. He contributed a lot to the world of the social thought. His work entitled “A programme of scientific work required for the Reorganisation of society” published in 1822 contains an outline of his thoughts. Later on between the year 1830 and 1842, his monumental work, “Positive Philosophy” was published in 6 parts.

Between 1836 and 1846 he worked as an Inspector in the Polytechnic but later on resigned it. After that he depended for his living on his followers and admirer. It was in the year 1848 that he established “Positive Society”. Later on between 1851 to 1854, his another work “Positive Philosophy” was published in 4 parts. In 1857 he passed away.

The name “Positivism” derives from the emphasis on the positive sciences i.e. on tested and systematized experience rather than on undisciplined speculation.

Comte coined the name positivism for the philosophical system upon which he founded sociology. He believed that it would be possible to create a science of society based on the same principles and procedures as the natural sciences. He maintained that the application of the methods and assumption's of the natural science would produce a “positive science of society” which would reveal that the evolution of society followed “invariable laws”. It would also show that the behaviour of man was governed by principled of cause and effect which were just as invariable as the behaviour of matter the subject of the natural sciences. The invariable laws that govern all phenomena cannot be understood through theological or metaphysical deduction but calls for the method of science. The scientific approach to all phenomena and thereby to all knowledge, is positivism, Comte asserted that if human knowledge is to be extended in the future, it must e accomplished through the application of the positive or scientific method of observation, experimentation and comparison. The first and foremost aim of positivism is to liberate human minds from the

strings of theological and metaphysical conceptions and to bring the study of social phenomena to scientific level. Positivism is purely an intellectual way of looking at the world.

The sociological theory of Comte forms a system at the centre of which are two correlated propositions: the law of the three stages, and the theorem that the sciences form a hierarchy in which sociology occupies the summit.

The law of the three stages means, first of all, that each field of knowledge passes through three periods of growth: theological metaphysical and positive. But the individual sciences do not move simultaneously; the more complex the science, the later it shifts from one stage to another. Comte believed that all fields of knowledge but one had reached the positive stage; with the rise of sociology, the series would be completed.

In Comte's system however, the law of the three stages is much more than a principle governing the advance of knowledge. The development and education of the individual also must pass through the three stages, as well as the development of human society itself. Positive social development and organisation depend on scientific, that is, sociological knowledge of social phenomena.

Comte's positivism viewed human history as progressing through three stages: the theological, the metaphysical and the scientific. His positivism was presented as articulating and systematizing the principles underlying the last (scientific) stage. Law, morality, politics and religion were all to be reconstituted on the new scientific basis.

4.3 Comte's Positivism:

Auguste Comte's basic contribution to sociology and social thought is in the form of 'Positivism or Positive philosophy'. It is said to be the last stage of intellectual or historical development. He has based his positivism on the scientific thinking of the 17th and 18th

century and is very much influenced by Aristotle and Plato. He has differed from them also Plato (428-343 B.C.) had described the material world as unreal and laid his faith in the ideal world. But by the time of Comte, this concept has undergone a change. Material world was considered to be quite real and dependable. Now instead of theological concept, experiences and observations came to be accepted as realities and this is the basis plank of positivism of Comte.

Relativism is another important aspect of Comte's Positivism:

In other words it means that social laws can be found out with the help of the mutual activities and not through observations, experimentation, classification, and other steps of scientific thinking. It is so because we are more concerned with the realism. In words of *Rollin Chambliss*.

“Positivism is concerned with the real rather than fanciful, with useful knowledge, rather than all knowledge. It is concerned with precise knowledge rather than vague impression with ever changed organic truth rather than eternal varieties with the relative rather than absolute. In short positivism is a mode of thought which can be universally accepted.”

(Social Thought: Rollin Chambliss)

Importance to Scientific Method:

The whole of our world is guided by certain set industrial laws. These laws cannot be understood on the basis of theological concept but on the basis of scientific laws. This is true about the society as well. Social events are occupied by basic laws of cause and effect and they have to be understood in that very light. Auguste Comte therefore, in his positivism has kept aside the theological and metaphysical laws and given importance to observation, analysis experimentation, classification etc., all these experimentation is truthful and its result is very dependable. Positivism, therefore, gives greater importance to observation, analysis, classification etc.,

Final Stage of the development of intellect:

Auguste Comte has described positivism or positive stage as the last stage of the development of the society and thinking. As already said the positive stage follows the theological and metaphysical stages. Thus principle of three stages he has applied to social as well as political institution.

4.4 Social reconstruction and Auguste Comte's Positivism:

Auguste Comte has not confined his positivism only to theoretical discussions; he has carried it further and treated it as a mode of social reconstruction and analysis of the society. According to Auguste Comte, social reconstruction was inevitable. He was born at the time of French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which has bringing about these organisations of social orders and new society was being born. This was in fact the period of transition for Western Social thinking. Some of the persons were welcoming these developments while others were not prepared to accept it. Capitalism was a new social institution and it was opposed by people. Comte's view in this regard has been summed up by Lery Bruhel in the following words.

“It established dangerous for those who ask for bread. It believes that millions of men will be able to remain indefinitely, encamped in modern society without being properly settled in it with definite and suspected right. Capital which it holds in its hands after having been an instrument of emancipation, has become one of oppression. It is thus, that, by a paradox difficult to uphold, the inversion of machinery, which a priori, one would be laid to believe, would soften condition of the proletarian has on the contrary, been a new cause of suffering to them has made their lot a doubly hard one. Here in brief, we have formidable indictment against middle classes and in particular against the political economy which has nourished them.”

(Lucien, Levy Bruhel).

Criticism need not be done away with: Although Comte has accepted the weaknesses of capitalism but he has not considered it necessary to do away with it. He does not accept the view that the defects are present in the economic and industrial order but in fact that with the industrial growth, industrial morality has not developed. That is why proper description

and control has not been established. It is further said that industrial system can be called defective only if the employers use their power for the suppression of the persons who are under them but if they realised their duties and use their power for their well-being this is not a bad social order. Bruhel has analysed all these in the following words:

“Modern society has not yet got its system of morality. Industrial relations which have become immensely developed in it are abandoned to a dangerous empiricism instead of being systematised according to moral laws.”

4.5 Comte’s Philosophy and Industrial System:

Comte was of the view that for the new industrial order there is need for a new industrial and social morality which can be imported only through the scientific system of education. He was of the view that socialist society cannot be established through plans and the rules. It has to be brought about by social reconstruction. He was also of the view that the whole structure should be based more on moral basis than on political and economic basis. Comte was also of the view that once a moral system of education or moral education has been established through spiritual power, there is no fear of the capitalist class for other classes. As a result of this education, people who owned capital shall make arrangements for others. He was in fact more interested in establishment, new social morality which could solve the problems created by new social order.

The three basis of the social reconstruction of Auguste Comte: Auguste Comte was of the view that human personality is also based on three objects namely:

1. Feeling
2. Action
3. Intellect

These are responsible for various powers and particularly the social powers.

Three types of Social powers: According to Auguste Comte social power is of three types

1. Material power
2. Intellectual power
3. Moral power.

Three Classes of people: Like the three stages of development three aspects of personality, three types of powers, Auguste Comte has laid down that there are three classes of people in the society:

1. Priests
2. Women
3. Political leaders

1. **Priests:** They are responsible for guiding our intellectual life and draw plans for our social development
2. **Women:** They are the centres of sympathy, affection and love and provide inspiration to the society.
3. **Political leaders:** They are responsible for guiding the society and people.

In this connection it may be pertinently said that Comte has not mentioned about the general public. According to Comte public is responsible for establishment of co-ordination between all these persons.

4.6 Summary:

The name “Positivism” derives from the emphasis on the positive sciences i.e. on tested and systematized experience rather than on undisciplined speculation. Auguste Comte has not confined his positivism only to theoretical discussions, he has carried it further and treated it as a mode of social reconstruction and analysis of the society. According to Auguste Comte, social reconstruction was inevitable. He was born at the time of French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which has bringing about these organisations of social orders and new society was being born. This was in fact the period of transition for Western Social thinking. Some of the persons were welcoming these developments while others were not prepared to accept it. Capitalism was a new social institution and it was opposed by people.

4.7 Technical Terms:

Social Reconstruction

Positivism

Social Power

Material Power

Moral Power

Intellectual power

4.8 Self Assessment Questions:

1. Critically discuss Comte's Positivism?
2. Contribution of Auguste Comte to Social Thoughts: Contribution of Auguste Comte to Social Thoughts:

4.9 Reference Books:

1. An Introduction to the History of Sociology, Barnes, H.E. (Ed.), University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948.
2. Sociological Theory, its Nature and Growth, Timsheff, N.S., Random House, New York, 1967.
3. The Development of Social Thought, Bogardus, E.S. Allied Pacific Private, Ltd., Bombay, 1960.
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Lesson No. 5

Herbert Spencer – Social Evolution & Organic Analogy

5.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand the Social Evolution theory and Organic Analogy theory given by Herbert Spencer.

Contents:

- 5.0 Objective
- 5.1 Herbert Spencer - Life and works
- 5.2 Spencer's Theory of Social Evolution:
- 5.3 Spencer's theory of social evolution – an evaluation:
- 5.4 Theory of Social organic Analogy:
- 5.5 Difference between Society and Organism:
- 5.6 Critical Evaluation of Spencer's Theory of Social Organism:
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Technical Terms
- 5.9 Self Assessment Questions
- 5.10 Reference Books

5.1 Herbert Spencer - Life and works

Herbert Spencer was born in Derby, England. He is often regarded as the second founding father of Sociology. He never went to a conventional school; he was taught at home and for short periods in small private schools. His training, as he acknowledges in his autobiography, was first rate only in Mathematics.

When still young Spencer entered business in the rail road engineering field. Thereafter he shifted to journalism and became an editor of the “Economist”, and during the four years that he served in this capacity he produced his first important contribution to Sociology, “Social Statics” (1850), in it he presented a preview of his sociological theory : both in organism and society, progress is development from conditions in which like parts perform like functions to conditions in which unlike parts perform unlike functions, that is from the uniform to the multiform.

In the years following the publication of Social Statics, Spencer came across some of the outstanding contributions to the biological theory of the times, pointing to the fact that the development of an organism was marked by change from homogeneity or uniformity of structure to heterogeneity or multiformity. Drawing inspiration from this, he theorized that the advance from homogeneity to heterogeneity was the universal law of progress, whether in the inorganic, organic or superorganic (social, orders...)

A few years later a new perception gave Spencer insight into the causal background of this tendency : the instability of homogeneous. This insight allowed him to make a decisive step toward what he called a completely deductive stage of his enquiry in other words, towards the formulation of a theory. This theory from the beginning was grounded on physical science.

In 1859. Charles Darwin published his “origin of the Species”, Spencer readily assimilated the new Darwinian Concepts. They were akin to his own.

About 1860, Spencer embarked on an almost super human enterprise : the writing of a system of synthetic philosophy, unifying all the theoretical sciences of his day. The first volume, entitled “First Principles” appeared in 1862. Following the publication of “First Principles”, new precipitations arose in Spencer’s mind concerning the connection between the increasing integration of matter and the concomitant dissipation of motion. By 1867 his

thought system was complete, and it never changed thereafter. His new insights were incorporated in revised editions of “First Principles” and “Social Statics”. Spencer’s other major works were “the study of Sociology” (1874) and “The Principles of Sociology”(3 volumes, 1876-1896)

Although Spencer’s treatment of Sociology was primarily theoretical, he was of the opinion that sociology should also serve the purpose of providing principles of social policy. It will be remembered that Comte had wanted Sociology to guide men in the construction of a better society, Spencer, in contrast wanted Sociology to demonstrate that men should not interfere with the natural process going on in society. Spencer is known for the principle of non-interference (*laissez faire*). He believed in the existence of an innate instinct of freedom and that every interference with that instinct produced harmful reactions. He believed that nature is more intelligent than man; nature knows where it goes and prepares a better future for men.

Spencer is also known for his extreme individualism. The individual is paramount he believed; society should not interfere with men the individual has to act and through action can do best for himself and society. In keeping with his extreme individualism he postulated that the characteristics of the component parts the individuals, completely determined the characteristics of society.

5.2 Spencer’s Theory of Social Evolution:

Law of Social Evolution: Herbert Spencer has applied his law of evolution on the society as well. According to Herbert Spencer several societies grew and finished. This growth and destruction is governed by the process of adjustment with the environment or acclimatization. Those races which are able to acclimatise themselves to the environment and adjust accordingly, come out victorious in the struggle for existence, and those that fail to do so get destroyed. This is true of the human society as well. In this process he has come out with his views about the evaluation of the society from simple to complex.

Society evolved out from simple to complex nature: According to Herbert Spencer the form and the structure of the society as we see today is not what it was originally. In the

beginning human society was nothing but a group neumatic in nature and disorganised in structure. There was no aim and object of the life. All the persons were concerned only with earning their bread, getting shelter and covering their body. They did not have any social feelings. If anybody was dead nobody bothered about the dead person. With the passage of time, changes were brought about by the evaluation and man started heading towards civilization and culture. Thus man became collectivist. He acquired culture and civilization. As a result of this evaluation, the division of labour took place in the society. As a result of this division of labour took place in the society. As a result of this division of labour, the man became dependent on others. This interdependence is the result of the social evaluation.

Division of Labour: We have already seen that in the beginning there was no definite form of the society. There were different ways for fulfilling the wants and men were more self-dependent and self-reliant than being inter-dependent. They did not realise the loss caused by death of their fellowmen. The realisation came as a result of evaluation and the development of the society. This is what Giddings, F.H. has said in the following lines quoted from his, ‘A Lecture—Sociology’:

“In the peaceful type of society, cohesion diminishes spontaneity and never indicative in uses. Social organisation becomes elastic and individual moving freely from place to place changes his social relations and without destroying social cohesion, the elements on which our sympathy and knowledge in place of primitive force.”

5.3 Spencer’s theory of social evolution – an evaluation:

Spencer’s theory of social evolution is quite interesting, but it suffers from the following weaknesses and drawbacks:

1. **Lack of Practicality:** Some of the social thinkers are of the view that the theory of social evolution as propounded by Herbert Spencer is not practical and realistic. Even today there are several tribes and aboriginals that do not show any sign of evolution.

2. It is not possible to have a uniform pattern of social evolution, in all the societies because the factors and circumstances responsible for evolution differ from one another.
3. Mere survival for existence is not enough for man. In human society qualities like sympathy, sacrifice, kindness, love etc. Are also present. These are quite different from the struggle for existence.

5.4 Theory of Social organic Analogy:

The theory of social organism as propounded by Spencer is an important aspect of his philosophy. Herbert Spencer is well known for his 'Bio-Organismic concept of Society'. According to Spencer, 'society is not merely a collection of individuals, it is more than that, just as an organism is more than a mere collection of cells' He has himself said:

“We consistently regard a society as an entity because they form of discreet units, a certain concreteness in the aggregate of them is employed by the general persistence of the arrangement among them throughout the area occupied and it is this trait which leads our idea of the society. For, withholding the name from an ever-changing clashes such as primitive men formed, we apply it only where some constancy in the distribution of parts as resulted from settled life”.

Herbert Spencer has compared life with an organism. According to him society is like a biological system, a greater organism. Like an organism it is also subject to process of gradual growth or development from a simple to a complex state. It also shows different integration in functions and structure. Similarity between the society and the organism may be studied under the following 6 heads:

- i. From simple to complex
- ii. Interdependence
- iii. Centre of control
- iv. Importance of wholeness
- v. Continuity

vi. Unit structure

- i. **From Simple to complex:-** Society and organism are different from inanimate being. In the beginning both are simple and they are small in form but as they grow they become bigger and complex. When a child is born his body is small and quite simple but with the growth this body develops. A social structure also becomes quite complex. So is the case with the society. In the beginning man had limited life. He was hunter and lived by whatever he could get as a result of hunting. But with the passage of time complexity became an order of the society and the social order.
- ii. **Interdependence:-** Every organ of the body is dependent on the other. For example if we at the hand lift the morsel and the mouth grabs. Later on it goes to the digestive system as a result of which blood is formed and the body is maintained. The same is true about the human society. Different organs of the society depend on mill-owners and the mill-owners depend on the labourers.
- iii. **Centre of the control:-** In the body it is the brain or the mind that acts as the centre of control. It controls the functioning of the body. On the other hand the government or the administration acts as the rein or the centre of control of the society. Different groups of society carry out the orders issued by the centre of control or the government.
- iv. **Importance of wholeness:-** In human organism, one part may be important, but it is the whole organism which is really important. Unless we look at the organism as a whole, we shall not be able to realise the importance of the different parts. Same is the case with the society. It is the society as a whole that is important in its different parts.
- v. **Continuity:-** In the body the old elements get destroyed and the new ones are born. Same is true of the human society. In human society also old principles and old units are gone and they are replaced by new ones. In spite of it the process of continuity goes on.
- vi. **Unit structure:-** In the human organism or living organism there are different cells. The same is true of the society as well. Gettel, R.G. has nicely summed up in the following lines:

“The main organs of the society were the sustaining system under which the industrial organisation of society was compared to the elementary organs of the individual, the

distributing system under which the commercial organisation of society was compared to the regulatory organs of the individual and the regulatory system, nerve-motor organs of the individual.”

5.5 Difference between Society and Organism:

On one hand Spencer has compared the society with living organism, but on the other, he has distinguished between the two. The differences between the two may be summed up under the following heads:

- 1) Different organs of the society are not connected with one another
- 2) Every organ of the society has a separate consciousness
- 3) No centralisation of the consciousness
- 4) Cells of the society are not meant for the welfare of the entire

It would be worthwhile to study each of them separately a bit in detail.

- 1) **Different organs of the society are not connected with one another:-** In the living organism different organs are connected together. That is why the body is a uniformed organ. But this is not true of the social organism or society. Different units of the society are not connected together. They are independent and free. In this respect the living organism and the society differ from one another.
- 2) **Every organ of the society has a separate consciousness:-** In a living organism is a centralised consciousness. There is no separate consciousness in different units or organs of the body. This is not true about the society. In society every organ has a different consciousness. Here there is no centralised consciousness.
- 3) **No centralisation of the consciousness:-** We have already seen that the living organism has a centralised consciousness. Its different organs do not have different consciousness. This is not true of the society. In society consciousness is not centralised. Every organ of the society has a separate consciousness.
- 4) **Cells of the society are not meant for the welfare of the entire:-** Different cells of the body exist for the welfare of the entire organism. In regard to the society, the

situation is reverse. The entire society made for the welfare of the smaller units. Thus in regard to the society reverse is true of what is true of living organism.

Spencer believed in the freedom of the individual cells of the society. By studying the difference between the living organism and the society, Spencer came to the conclusion that the welfare of the individual was not linked with the society, although individual was the basic unit of the society. Spencer was of the view that the consciousness of the individual is centralised not in the society but in the individual itself. He knows and understands his own welfare. That is why Spencer has held that the State should leave the individual free to bring about his welfare. Then only it would be possible for the individual to make progress. On the one hand, Spencer believed in granting freedom to the individual to make his own progress, on the other, he pleaded for granting freedom to the society so that it may make its own progress. He was of the view that control of the State hampers the welfare of the society.

5.6 Critical Evaluation of Spencer's Theory of Social Organism:

We have already seen that Spencer has tried to treat society similar to a living organism. Many of the scholars have not agreed with the view of Spencer that society is comparable the living organism. According to them this theory suffers from the following drawbacks:

- 1) Imaginative description
- 2) Incompleteness of functional distribution
- 3) Specific nature of consciousness

- 1) **Imaginative description:-** The theory that society is comparable to living organism is based on imaginative description. Body is something concrete while the society is abstract. It is not possible for us to see what the society actually is. In other words, body has a physical base while society has none and so it is not possible to compare the two. Comparison is based more on imaginative considerations than actualities and realities.

- 2) **Incompleteness of functional distribution:-** There is no perfect and complete functional distribution amongst the various organs of the society, while in regard to body it is not so. Different organs of the body have different specific and specified functions. It is not possible for hand to perform the function of foot. Similarly heart cannot perform the function of lung. But this is not true of the society. A group can change its functions and perform functions assigned to a different group. An individual can also change and shift his own functions. He can also perform more than one functions. Such a thing is not true about the human body.
- 3) **Specific nature of consciousness:-** In human body, consciousness is centralised in a definite and specific manner. After death this consciousness disappears. This is not true of the society. There no central place where the consciousness of the society is located. It is located in different organs. From this point of view two are not similar.

5.7 Summary:

Unlike his French counterpart Comte, Spencer enjoyed enormous acceptance and universal recognition during his lifetime. His books sold widely and sometimes even wildly in the intellectual centres of England, the United States of America, Europe, and especially in Russia. Without doubt, his were the dominant intellectual ideas about man and society at the time, particularly from the mid-1860's to the early years of the 1900's. His appeal, so it seems, was strong because his system was able to creatively respond to the urgent needs of those rather volatile times, viz., the desire for the unification of knowledge which was expanding by leaps and bounds bringing confusion, division, and directionlessness in its wake, and second, a solid, rational, and respectable justification for the social, political, and economic laissez-faire in vogue in England and beginning in the United States. In 1882, when Spencer was at the peak of his international popularity, he visited America.

No one after Spencer ever matched either the sheer volume of sociological writing nor made more significant contributions to the science of human society. A lonely, troubled, intellectual who favoured individualism and laissez-faire politics, Spencer spoke in his writings to the needs of his time. Times have changed, but once again his work seems to commend itself to our age as it searches for answers to age-old questions about how to live in community while maintaining individuality.

5.8 Technical Terms

Social Evolution

Organic Analogy

Division of labour

Social Organisation

5.9 Self Assessment Questions

1. Explain Social Evolution Theory given by Herbert Spencer?
2. Critically examine Herbert Spencer's Organic Analogy Theory?

5.10 Reference Books:

1. The Sheff, N.S., Sociological Theory its Nature and Growth, Random House, New York, 1967.
2. Bogardus, E.S., The Development of Social Thought, Allied Pacific Private Limited, Bombay, 1960.
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5. Sills, David (Ed), 'Herbert Spencer', International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol.15,pp 121-128, The Mac Millan Company and the Free Press, 1968.

Lesson: 6

EMILE DURKHEIM : DIVISION OF LABOUR, SUICIDES AND SOCIAL FACTS

6.0 Objective:

The main objective is to understand Durkheim's theory of Suicides, Division of Labour and Social Facts.

Contents:

- 6.0 Objective
- 6.1 Life History
- 6.2 The Theory of Suicide
- 6.3 Durkheim's Theory of Division of Labour
- 6.4 Effects of the division of labour
- 6.5 Dynamic nature of Division of Labour
- 6.6 Rules of Observation and Explanation of Social Facts
- 6.7 Summary
- 6.8 Glossary
- 6.9 Model Questions
- 6.10 References

6.1 Life History:

Emile Durkheim, the important most pioneers of sociology and social thought was born in the year 1858 at Epinal in France. He is recognized as one of the greatest French Social thinkers, who ranks only next to Auguste Comte. In fact he is the first academic sociologist of France who interpreted and developed the social thoughts of Comte and Spencer. He also implemented the legal forms put forward by Manne (1822-1888) and gave an elaborate treatment to the interaction theory of Gabriel Tarde. He gave a scientific and factual base to his sociological theories and thoughts. Through his scientific approach based on factual data, Durkheim, succeeded in presenting a new approach to social thought and earned an important place amongst the contemporary sociologists. He was

educated in Paris and studied full sociology and cultural anthropology in Germany. For some time he was teacher of sociology in the University of Bordeaux. In 1893 he earned the Doctorate of Philosophy on his thesis, 'Division of Labour'. In 1879, he entered to Ecole Normale Supérieure de Paris at the time when Fustel de Coulanges was its Director. It was after that he traveled in Germany and studied there. After teaching sociology at the university of Bordeaux, Durkheim went to the University of Paris.

Works of Emile Durkheim:

Emile Durkheim as we have already seen was a successor of Auguste Comte. He was also influenced by Alfred Espin. His teaching envisaged a deep study, gave him an insight to various social problems which he gave out in form of various writings. It would be worthwhile to have a look at these works one by one in brief.

1. **The Social Division of Labour (1896) :** After earning his Doctorate Degree in 1893, Emile Durkheim published his other works, 'Social Division of Labour' , 'Division of Labour in Society'. It was nothing but reflection of his thesis which was entitled in French as 'De La Division de Travail Sociale.' General Division of Labour is treated as a subject of economics but Emile Durkheim treated it from a sociological angle. This book has two parts – first one deals with the functions and effect of division of labour and in the second part its nature and factors have been studied. In this book an attempt has been made to deal with social evolution on the basis of division of labour. Durkheim showed in the original state there was no division of labour. Durkheim showed in the original state there was no division of labour but with the evolution and development of society, division of labour came to occupy an important place.
2. **Rules of Sociological Methods:** This book is entitled in French as Les Regles de La Methodes Sociologique – published in the year 1895, and deals with the subject-matter to 'Scope of Study' and the method of the sociology. In this work Durkheim has laid great stress on the fact that sociology should be treated as the natural science and in its study objectivity and objectivism should be perfectly followed. According to Durkheim a student of sociology should keep himself

away from imagination, prejudices, inferences etc. and base his study on cause and effect relationship. In other words, Durkheim has said that sociology should be studied on scientific lines and in proper manner.

3. **The ‘Suicide’:** This book entitled as ‘Le Suicide’ in French was published in the year 1897 which analyses the causes of personal disorganization which leads to suicide from a sociological angle. In this book the quantitative and other factors that are responsible for suicide have been rightly analyzed. According to Durkheim suicide is not a personal problem which is the result personal cause and reasons but it is a social evil and social factors that bring about misbalance and disorganization that causes suicide. In other words he has studied the phenomenon of suicide from a sociological angle.

The elementary form of religious life:

This book which has been entitled in French as *Les Forms Elementaries de La-yie Religious* was published in the year 1912 with the object of studying the institution of religion from sociological angle. In this book Durkheim has made a scholarly study of the origin form of development and influence of religion. On the basis of criticism of the existing theories he has analyzed the social factors responsible for the growth and development of religion.

Other Works:

Apart from the important works enumerated above, 3 more books were published after his death and the credit for their publication goes to his wife. These books are:

1. *Education et Sociologie* (1922);
2. *Sociologie et Philosophy* (1924);
3. *Education Morale* (1925).

In these books Emile Durkheim has studied education, philosophy and morality from sociological point of view.

Articles and Essays – Emile Durkheim was a great philosopher and thinker. He wanted the people of France to progress and become more powerful. In his essays and

articles he has expressed his views about sociology and other social problems in an elaborate and detailed manner. His important essays are:

1. Collective Representation;
2. Laws to all French Men; and
3. Other essays.

Works of Emile Durkheim deal with theory of sociology. His theory about sociology analyses all social types and factors pertaining to society and other social phenomenon. In fact, Emile Durkheim was a great theoretician and equally great philosopher with capability to render his thoughts into writings. That is why he has influenced his successors. *Le Suicide* is regarded as his classic and his other books are the landmarks in the development of sociology and social thought.

6.2 The Theory of Suicide

Durkheim's Theory of 'suicide' is related in various ways to his study of 'the division of labour'. It is also linked with his theory of 'social constraint' and his views on "Collective Conscience". In this study delve deep into the sources of social order and disorder that are at the root of suicide. In this large monograph with extensive statistical analysis Durkheim probably intended to serve two purposes: (i) "to refute those theories of suicide based on psychological, biological (racial), genetic, climatic, or geographic factors. (ii) to support with empirical evidence his own sociological, theoretical explanation".

Durkheim has established the view that there are no societies in which suicide does not occur. It means suicide may be considered a 'normal', that is, a regular, occurrence. However, sudden increase in suicide rates may be witnessed. This he said could be taken as "an index of disintegrating forces at work in a social structure". He also came to the conclusion that different rates of suicide are the consequences of differences in degree and type of social solidarity. Suicide is a kind of index to decay in social solidarity.

Durkheim has spoken of three kinds of suicide: egoistic, anomic, and altruistic. All occur as an expression of group breakdown of some kind or the other. These types of suicide reveal different types of relations between the actor and his society.

1. **Egoistic Suicide:** The egoistic suicide is a product of relatively weak group integration. It results from loneliness, from excess of individualism. When men become “detached from society”, and when the bonds that previously had tied them to their fellows become loose—they are more prone to ‘egoistic’ or individualistic suicide.
2. **Anomic Suicide:** The breakdown of social norms and sudden social changes that are characteristic of modern times, encourage anomic suicide. When the collective conscience weakens, men fall victim to anomic suicide. “Without the social backing to which one is accustomed, life is judged to be not worth continuing: .
3. **Altruistic Suicide:** ‘Altruistic’ or ‘fatalistic’ suicide is taking off one’s life for the sake of a social cause. Durkheim showed that even high level of social solidarity induces suicide. Altruistic suicide is an example of that. In primitive societies and in some modern armies such types of suicide do take place. Japanese sometimes illustrate this type (which they call Harakiri) when they take their own lives for the sake of the larger social unity, that threatens to be broken. They consider that self destruction would prevent that.

These three kinds of suicide understood as social types also correspond approximately to psychological types. “Egoistic suicide tends to be characterized by a kind of apathy, an absence of attachment to life; altruistic suicide, by a state of energy and passion; Anomic suicide is characterized by a state of irritation or disgust”—Raymond Aron.

Durkheim’s theory of suicide is summarized by Raymond Aron in the following way. “Suicide is an individual phenomenon whose causes are essentially social. There are social forces—suicidogenic impulses—running through society whose origin is not the

individual but the collectivity:. These are the forces that are real and determining causes of suicide. The social forces that are the causes of suicide “vary from one society to another, from one group to another, from one religion to another. The emanate from the group and not from the individuals taken separately”. Specific social phenomena govern individual phenomena. “The most impressive, most eloquent example is that of the social forces which drive individuals to their deaths, each believing that he is obeying only himself.

Durkheim’s theory of suicide is quite fascinating even though he is charged of having committed the error of overemphasizing the social forces in causing suicide. As L.A. Coser has pointed out, “Suicide” could be cited “as a monumental landmark study in which conceptual theory and empirical research are brought together in imposing manner”.

6.3 Durkheim’s Theory of Division of Labour:

Division of Labour: Durkheim made a very valuable contribution to the division of labour. We have already seen that his one work ‘Social Division of Labour’ or ‘Division of Labour in Society’ is entirely to this subject. In fact he was the first thinker to have studied the division of labour. His study of the division of labour is an unparalleled gift to sociology. No doubt John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer had thought about it but he was the first to give it a shape of theory. He said that division of labour is the most important factor of social change and social evolution. According to him division of labour is a variable and other social events flow from it. Civilisation and culture can be properly understood only by studying the division of labour in its proper form. According to him this fact has been present right from the origin of the society. But it became complex and clear as the society became complex and complicated.

Basic necessity: In his book 'Division of Labour in Society', Durkheim has said that division of Labour is the basic necessity.. He did not confine his study to the economic or other aspects but he gave it a broad based sociological approach.

Sources of Division of Labour: Durkheim has thought differently as compared to his predecessors right about the division of labour. According to his predecessor, division of labour was result of the desire of people to have a higher standard of living, but Durkheim said that division of labour was result of the desire of man to keep his joys that he had received in inheritance from his forefathers. Division of labour was not the result of the desire of people to give more joy but it was the result of the people to have higher standards of life and morality. According to him division of labour is the result of growth in population. This is what Parsons has said in the following lines:

“..... In the last analysis social differentiation is a result of increase of numbers in society, of population pressure.”

According to Durkheim industrial struggle is the result of the division of labour. As the society develops, specialization takes place and the mechanical solidarity is gone and organic solidarity is established. All this leads to 'division of labour'.

Element of the division of labour:

Durkheim has hinted that division of labour is the result of the social contract which we enter into for fulfillment of our needs and desires. In the beginning or in the original form of society, the division of labour existed between men and women, man was responsible for hunting and the woman for looking after home. There was a contractual relationship leading to specialization and division of labour. Mere contractual relationship is not sufficient to hold long. It can be broken easily and so society in order to maintain itself and to have functional efficiency evolved a theory of the division of labour. In order to maintain its division of labour certain controls, may they be conventional control or legal control, were found out. Thus it may be said that in the beginning the division of labour grew in form of social contract but later on it assumed the role of division of labour and various types of controls were found out.

Factors of Division of Labour:

Utilitarian who preceded Durkheim were of the view that division of labour took place as a result of the desire of man to have increased production and gain greater pleasure, but Durkheim said that it is the result of increase in numbers of population. According to Durkheim division of labour is the result of the desire to have greater efficiency. He does not think that division of labour is only confined to economic production increase in happiness and welfare. But it has direct relationship with the density of population. He has himself said.

“happiness is connected with social health which is imperiled by excess of every sort including superabundance of material luxuries.”

6.4 Effects of the division of labour:

As a result of division of labour certain effects are seen. These effects are in many respects helpful for the preservation and better organization of the society. These effects are;

1. Specialization
2. Progress and competition
3. Interdependence
4. Co-operation
5. Organic Social Unity
6. Origin of new groups.
7. Growth of individualism
8. Change of repressive laws to restitutive laws.
9. Moral pressure and
10. Differentiation integration

1. **Specialization:** As a result of division of labour, people acquire specialization and efficiency in certain functions. They enjoy their position and status as a result of this specialization. This specialization results from constant progress.

2. **Progress and Competition:** As a result of progress and competition different vocations are born and it leads to competition. Competition leads to progress and new inventions are made. All these are helpful for the development of society.
3. **Interdependence:** As a result of specialization, every individual does not have to do everything. He specializes in one thing. Since he has specialized in one thing alone he has to depend upon others. This interdependence is the gift of the division of labour.
4. **Co-operation:** Once people take to specialization as we have already seen they become interdependent. In order to live successfully they have to seek co-operation. The whole modern social organization is based on co-operation which is the gift of division of labour.
5. **Organic Solidarity:** In the original society there was mechanical solidarity. Mechanical solidarity does not recognize individual difference and the element of specialization. With the development of division of labour, mechanical solidarity is replaced by Organic solidarity or social unity. In this type of social unity people co-operate with one another and live in unity as a result of their obedience to certain objects. They do not live together in a mechanical manner, but on the basis of reason, logic and knowledge.
6. **Origin of new groups:** As a result of division of labour certain persons devoted themselves to certain jobs. This leads to origin of certain groups and interests. Sometimes special classes are also born.
7. **Growth of individualism:** Division of labour brings about the importance of the man or individual who is engaged in a specialized task. Since in a society based on division of labour, every individual has his job and attitude, individual interests and attitudes grow. This leads to individualistic thinking. The status of the individual is changed by his ownself.
8. **Change of repressive laws to restitutive laws:** In the original form of society the unity is maintained on the basis of repressive laws. Anything that goes against the wishes of society is repressed with the ruthless hands. But once the division of labour has taken place it is not possible to force people to do things through

repressive laws. They are replaced by restitutive and compensatory laws. Durkheim has himself said:

“The relation governed by co-operative law with a restitutive sanctions and solidarity which they expressed result from the division of labour”.

9. **Moral pressure:** Although in a society based on division of labour individualism is recognized and individual is given importance. But in such a social set-up, those who indulge in despotism are curbed with the help of social pressure. No doubt in such a society man is free to take decision but these decisions cannot go against the interests of others. Durkheim has himself said.

“Individualism was a moral duty forced upon the individuals through the division of labour”.

10. **Differentiation of Integration:** Division of labour leads to differentiation no doubt but it makes people co-operative and self-disciplined and dependent. In such a social set-up functional relationship is established and people have to live together. They cannot be egoistic or hedonistic alone but they have to be integrationist all right. In other words division of labour leads to integration also.

6.5 Dynamic nature of Division of Labour:

According to Durkheim Division of Labour is dynamic in nature which results from the density of population and consequently social changes. As a result of density of population social progress takes place and industrial development leads to density of population. All these factors are responsible for existing more acute and specialization and division of labour becomes order of the day.

The Study of Social Facts in Durkheim Main Works:

In order to gain an idea of how Durkheim used the concept of a social fact we can briefly outline the structure of his argument in his three major works. 1. Division of labour (2) Suicide and (3) Elementary forms of Religious life. In each work the argument is arranged in three parts.

1. He gives a definition of the subject matter.
2. He presents various suggested explanations of this phenomena, usually of a psycho logistic or individualistic nature.
3. He then uses a combination of argument and data to show the inadequacy of these explanations.

In each case he puts forward his own sociological explanation in which the social fact in question, the growth in the division of labour, the growth in population volume, population density and the moral density produces a growth in social differentiation leading to the Division of labour and the consequent emergence of organic solidarity. In suicide the comparative rates of suicide are determined by different suicidogenic currents which are themselves the result of religious and political values in the society. While in elementary forms he argues that religion serves certain functional needs that bind people together and that what people worship is really society.

6.6 Rules of Observation and Explanation of Social Facts:

Social Facts as things:

We have already come across some of Durkheim's main rules for sociological observation most notably in his statement "consider social facts as things" to which he added "To treat phenomenon as things is to treat them as data and this constitute the point of departure of science. By advocating and treating them as things he meant we should adopt a certain attitude toward them of mature skepticism with regard to common assumption and preconceptions. The phenomena could only be explained scientifically through the study of their externally observable characteristics or indicators. They cannot be perceived or known directly but only through the phenomenal reality expressing them. Even phenomena which seem purely arbitrary is the result of some ones will, which on further investigation reveal qualities of consistency or regularity which are symptomatic of their objectivity. Nor can such facts be altered very easily by a mere act of the will, they are recalcitrant and require strenuous effort if they

are to be changed, “far from being a product of the will, they determine it from outside. They are like moulds in which our actions are inevitably shaped”.

Durkheim has been criticized for these statements, the criticism is that he seemed to think that the proof of the existence of an objective fact was that it was resistant to change in the same way as matter resists modifications. The second criticism is that this gave his sociology an inherently conservative bias because it made it seem as if the naturalist state of the social phenomena was static and that there were no intrinsic forces causing dynamic change. However what he really had in mind was the difficulty of changing institutions in an arbitrary fashion, without regard for the casual network in which they are embedded. He was particularly opposed to humanist doctrines which taught that human nature had a specific and circumscribed character which was expressed in institutions. Human nature and ideas about it were extremely variable and they varied according to that social situation said Durkheim.

Criteria for Social Facts:

The concept of social facts was developed then through three phases: 1. Exteriority or the givenness of empirical existence as in the case of physical environment; 2. Constraint is the effect of a normative rule to which sanctions are attached 3. Moral authority of internalized values and norms which constrain the individual to conform by arousing guilt in his own conscience if he does not conform. An element of exteriority is involved in moral authority because although internalized, the normative system must also objectively be part of a system extending beyond the individual. It is not subjective in the sense of being purely private to the individual, for it is also a “cultural object” in a sense relevant to the idealistic tradition.

6.7 Summary:

Emile Durkheim, the important most pioneers of sociology and social thought was born in the year 1858 at Epinal in France. He is recognized as one of the greatest French Social thinkers, who ranks only next to Auguste Comte. In fact he is the first academic sociologist of France who interpreted and developed the social thoughts of Comte and

Spencer. Durkheim's Theory of 'suicide' is related in various ways to his study of 'the division of labour'. It is also linked with his theory of 'social constraint' and his views on "Collective Conscience". egoistic, anomique, and altruistic. All occur as an expression of group breakdown of some kind or the other. These types of suicide reveal different types of relations between the actor and his society. Durkheim made a very valuable contribution to the division of labour. We have already seen that his one work 'Social Division of Labour' or 'Division of Labour in Society' is entirely to this subject. In fact he was the first thinker to have studied the division of labour. His study of the division of labour is an unparalleled gift to sociology. In order to gain an idea of how Durkheim used the concept of a social fact we can briefly outline the structure of his argument in his three major works. 1. Division of labour (2) Suicide and (3) Elementary forms of Religious life. In each work the argument is arranged in three parts. He gives a definition of the subject matter. He presents various suggested explanations of this phenomena, usually of a psycho logistic or individualistic nature. He then uses a combination of argument and data to show the inadequacy of these explanations.

6.8 Glossary:

Suicide

Division of Labour

Social Facts

Organic Solidarity

Co-operation

6.9 Model Questions

1. Explain Durkheim's Suicides theory and Social Facts?
2. Define Division of Labour? Analyse effects of division of labour?

6.10 References:

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Lesson: 7

MAX WEBER

7.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to study Max Weber's Concepts of Authority, Social Action and Protestant Ethics and spirit of capitalism.

Contents:

- 7.0 Objective
- 7.1 Life History
- 7.2 Works of Max Weber
- 7.3 Social Action and Max Weber
- 7.4 Authority
- 7.5 Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Glossary
- 7.8 Model Questions
- 7.9 References

7.1 Life History:

Max Weber is recognized as one of the greatest sociologist and social thinkers of the modern era. On the basis of his intellectual depth, studiousness and originality, he has earned an important place for him in the history of social thought. He was the first to make a serious study and analyze all the social events and laid down 'Interdependence' of the social conditions and social situations'. He was a jurist, an Economist, Philosopher and a Historian, no doubt but basically he was a sociologist and an exponent of a new concept of sociology known as 'Interpretative Sociology'. This great sociologist and political economist was born in Erfurt Thuringia on April 21, 1864 in a prosperous family

of 'National Liberal Politician'. His father was a famous political figure and a jurist. His background made Weber doubly interested in politics from the very beginning. He came in contact with important political figures and the economists of his age, and studied law as well as economics. He received his degree in law and published a remarkable work on 'Roman Agrarian History' in the year 1866. This work got a good name to him as a writer. Then he established himself as a jurist in Berlin. He wrote a thesis on topic 'History of Trade Companies in the Middle Ages'. In this book he tried to explain and interpret the relationship between the jurisprudence and economics but by and by he was directed towards pure Economics or Political Economy. In the year 1892 his famous book *Die Verhältnisse der Landarbeiter im ostelbischen Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1892) saw the light of the day and it gave him a recognized place as a political economist. After this he was called upon to teach law in the University of Berlin. But since he was not interested so much in law, as in political economy, he when called upon in the year 1893 to work as a Professor of Political Economy at Freiburg, readily accepted it. After that in 1897 he went over to Heidelberg and later on to Munich. In 1900, Max Weber fell ill and this interpreted his academic career. He was sick for full 4 years, but his study and thinking did not cease. His articles in the magazine 'Social Politics' gave that magazine a lot of strength. He had keen interest in politics and carried out research on 'Economy and Society'. Basically he was a democrat and all his thinking reflect his thoughts. He was one of the founders of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziologie and editor of Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft. In the magazine that he edited, he published almost all his writings on sociology. It was these writings that studied the social phenomenon from theoretical as well as practical angles, and that is why his contribution to sociology in form of interpretation of human behaviour and social phenomenon is recognized as original and outstanding.

In 1905, Weber learnt the Russian language. But he was one of the great opponents of the socialist movement of his country. He was also member of the Warsaw Peace Pact and one of the Architects of Weimar constitution.

From politics he again went back to his academic world and was appointed visiting professor in the University of Venna in the year 1918 where after he joined Munich university as a Professor. It was here that Max Weber suffered an attack of Pneumonia in the year 1920 and succumbed to it at the age of 50 years.

7.2 Works of Max Weber:

Max weber was a versatile genius with intellect and studious temperament. He wrote several books. Which were invariable written in Germany language, but almost all of them now stand translated in English and other languages. His important books are:

1. **Protestants Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism:** This book is recognized as the first book of Max Weber which was published in the year 1906. It discusses the relationship between capitalism and Protestantism, on the basis of historical evidence. This study inspired him to make study of other religions also.
2. **Sociology of Religion:** Because of his interest in the study of Protestantism, he was inspired to make study of the religions in India and China. He wrote books on both the religions as well, but they could not be completed and they have been published in 3 volumes under the following 3 heads:
 - a. The Hindu Social System or Religion of India;
 - b. The Religion of China, Confucianism and Taoism; and
 - c. The Ancient Judaism
3. **Economy and Society:** This is also a posthumous work of Weber in which he has compiled essays of great sociologists of his time. The essays of Max weber have been translated into English by Talcott Parsons and published in the year 1947 under the title, 'The Theory of Social and Economic Organization'.
4. **Essays on Sociology:** This contains important writings of Max Weber on sociology. They have also been translated into English.
5. **Max Weber on Methodology of Social Science:** We have already seen that Max Weber's main object was to develop sociology as an independent social science and in this book he has tried to fulfill that object.

Apart from these important works, some of his other works are:

6. General Economic Theory
7. The City

Influence on Weber:

Max Weber as we have already seen was a studious and original thinker. Most of his works are influenced by intellectual and political atmosphere of Germany of his days, as a result of 'Idealistic Philosophy' a discussion was going on whether the scientific methods could be applied to social sciences as well. Max Weber propounded the theory that, even in social sciences, the scientific method and generalizations are possible. He was influenced by Marx, but he was opposed to it and tried to lay bare the weakness of his theory of 'Economic Determinism'. In his work he has tried to establish relationship between 'Variables and Functions'. His contribution to the field is original and it shall always be remembered.

7.3 Social Action and Max Weber:

In the preceding pages while talking about definition of sociology we have talked about social action as conceived by Max Weber. We have already seen that sociology is a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action. We have also seen that social action is society oriented. Max Weber has in this respect himself said:

"Action is social in so far as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals) or it takes into account or the behaviour of others is thereby oriented to its course."

That is Max Weber has not recognized every other action as a social action. A social action has to be guided by the object or the meaning because which it has been done. Similarly it has to be a social connotation. Every action or any action that is guided towards inanimate objects alone is not a social action. Similarly every action which is based on imitation is not the social action. It has to be a meaningful orientation to the

actor imitating it. Even if an action is identical with the similar action of many persons, many persons or that action influenced by other persons, shall not be social action unless it has a meaningful or an objective behind it. Social action unless it has a meaningful or an objective behind it. Social action has to have relationship and orientation with the action of others.

Types of Social Action:

While talking about social actions, in discussion of the meaning and definition of sociology, we have enumerated that social actions are of four categories. This categorization is based on the characteristics enumerated by Weber himself. In order to have complete understanding of Weber's theory of social action, we must know the meaning of social action as well.

1. **Traditional Social Action:** Those actions that are performed under the compulsion or force or customs and traditions are put under this category. All those actions that were performed by forefathers and are being performed even today and placed under this category. Almost all the persons perform these actions because they are forced to follow the traditions and customs.
2. **Emotional or Effective Actions:** Such actions grow as a result of our responsibility to the behaviour of others in terms of love, envy hatred, anger etc., Such actions are performed under the influence of strong impulse or emotion. It is not necessary that these actions shall be rational. It is quite possible that many such actions may be regarded when the person has agreed himself of the influence of these emotions and actions.
3. **Evaluative actions:** These actions are performed under the influence of Aesthetic religious or ethical values. These actions also do not develop in rational ground. We act in a particular manner because others accept us to act according to those norms. These norms or values are taken for granted and we do not exactly know whether we shall gain anything out of them or not. We have to discharge

these actions not for any material gain but because of the responsibility imposed on us.

4. **Rational or Rationalistic Performance of Action:** Such actions are performed after conscientiously weighing both means and ends. Once the benefits and the losses have been weighed, we perform these actions. In doing these actions we are guided by gains material as well as of other types and we also avoid losses.
5. In fact Weber's sociology is a sociology of social action and is based on his concept of social action.

7.4 Authority

It is important to understand here that any of these three types cannot be found in reality in their pure form. It is often the combination of the two that is found in practice. For example, Nehru was a charismatic leader but also wielded rational legal authority.

1. Rational Legal Authority:

The effectiveness of legal authority rests on the acceptance of the validity some mutually dependent ideas.

Any given legal norm may be established by agreement or by imposition, on grounds of expediency or rational values or both with a claim to obedience at least on the part of the members of the corporate group. A person in authority occupies an office and issues commands that are subject to impersonal order to which his actions are oriented. While the person who takes commands does so only as a member of the group and in reality only obeys the law but not the person.

Weber sees the practice of rational legal authority in a typical bureaucracy which can be found every where in modern world. In the business enterprise, in terms of corporate groups and in government, in terms of typical administration governed by strict rules based on a written code. In other words, rational legal authority works on the basis of impersonality and bound by rules without any reference to the individuals who occupy positions.

2. Traditional Authority:

In systems where the authority is drawn or legitimacy is claimed on the sanctity of the order and the attendant powers of control as they have been handed down from the past, 'have always existed'. The person or persons exercising authority are designated according to traditionally transmitted rules. The object of obedience is the personal authority of the individual which he enjoys by virtue of his traditional status. The organized group exercising authority is in the simplest case primarily based on relations of personal loyalty. The person exercising is not a superior but a personal chief. His administrative staff does not consist primarily of officials but of personal retainers. Those subject to authority are not members of an association like in bureaucracy which is legal authority, but subjects. What determines the relations of the administrative staff to the chief is not the impersonal obligation of office but personal loyalty to the chief. The commands of the chief is legitimized partly in terms of traditions which themselves directly determine the content of the command and the objects and extent of authority to some extent it is also a matter of the chiefs free personal decision. Following this we find in traditional authority the chief sometimes confers grace on the basis of his personal pleasure or displeasure (like King granting favours). It is impossible in the pure type of traditional authority for law or administrative rules to be deliberately created by legislation.

The most primitive types of traditional authority are the cases where a personal administrative staff to chief is absent. These are gerontocracy and patriarchalism. Gerontocracy can be found as a system where the authority rests with the elders, in fact elders in age, who are more familiar with the sacred traditions of the group. Patriarchalism can be defined as a system where authority is exercised by a particular individual who is designated by a definite rule of inheritance, but then it is not uncommon for gerontocracy and patriarchalism to be found side by side.

3. Charismatic Authority

The term charisma denotes a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These qualities are seen as not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. In olden times this peculiar kind of defence is attributed to prophets, to people with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, and to leaders in the hunt, and heroes in war.

7.5 Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism

His monumental work in this respect is 'Protestant ethics and Spirit of Capitalism, in which he has tried to analyse the close relationship between the 'Protestantism and the growth of capitalism. Thereby he has tried to prove that there is closer relationship between religion and economic ethics. Bierstedt has in this respect asserted:

“There is something in Protestantism that help to create the system of economic norms we know as capitalism and that it was the Protestant Reformation that gave a direct impetus to the development of capitalistic economy.”

By the term 'spirit of Capitalism', is a set of attitudes towards the acquisition of money and the activities involved in it. It is, of course, an attitude which strongly endorses such acquisitive activities but not in any and every form among positive attitudes towards a quite specific one:.

Modern Capitalism and its Characteristics:

According to Max Weber, modern capitalism needs an economic structure of its own type. For this such men are needed who shall have a special type of economic ethics and mental attitude. Lethargy, superstitions and inefficient people shall not be able to build a capitalist order of the society. For this a special type of psychology and a special type of ethics is needed for this special type of social situation are required. According to Weber for such a type of social order the following things are required:

1. A scientific and proper management and account of trade or business
2. Sufficient means of production and employment of scientific techniques in the method of production

3. Scientific laws
4. Free labour and free enterprise
5. Markets for trade and sale.

For all these things a special type of sociology and special type of ethics is needed. According to Weber, in a capitalist society, 'time is money' and 'money grows money' is the best policy. 'Honesty' is the best policy is another catch-word that helps the growth of capitalism and brings about efficiency. These things belong to the world of religion all right but they also belong to the field of economics.

Characteristics of development of Capitalism: Capitalist order of society is guided and motivated by the following factors:

1. Trade and business based on private property
2. Trade, commerce and business is organized on scientific lines
3. Production is made for earning profit and marketing
4. Production is made not for consumption, but for earning wealth
5. There is enthusiasm for work
6. Efficiency and faith in the profession are the great requisites of a capitalist order of society.

According to Weber, in the modern capitalism, business becomes a part of religion and the day-to-day life of man. It is not treated as something casual but is treated as 'calling' which people have to attend with honesty, efficiency and in all sincerity. The responsibility towards business according to Weber is 'vocational ethics'

Ideal type of Capitalism:

In the field of 'Sociology or Religion' or state of the relationship between capitalism and the religion, Max Weber has again used 'ideal type'. On the basis of this ideal type he has tried to analyze the guiding factor of the modern capitalism. Sorokin has analyzed it in the following terms:

“In this we have an illustration of Max Weber’s methodological theory of “ideal type”. This ideal type is a concrete, but at the same time a general image of study of social phenomenon in which we must summarize the specific characteristics of the phenomenon in its most conspicuous even in an exaggerated form, to make quite clear the specificity of the phenomenon.

....The outline, ‘Spirit of Capitalism’ is an example of one of the ‘ideal types’ of Max Weber.

Max Weber on the basis of the study of the ‘ethics of religion, and the underlying principles of that ethics has tried to see the spirit of capitalism. Max Weber has also tried to explain those factors, particularly those connected with religion on the basis of which he analyzed the development of his capitalism. Once again Sorokin has rightly interpreted Weber as given below:

“Weber answers; modern western capitalism has been originated by the Protestant Religion and its ‘Wirtschaftsethik’. The spirit of modern capitalism is that of Protestantism, of its rules of conduct and practical ethics”

Max Weber has said that ‘Protestantism created favourable conditions and the psychology for growth of modern capitalism’. For this he has put forward and analyzed the principles laid down by great religious thinkers. According to Weber, Protestantism has not discouraged the material welfare but encouraged its values to take it up. Sorokin has interpreted this aspect of Max Weber in this following term:

“Protestantism set forth rationalization of human life on a larger scale, it gave money ethical value to a worldly vocation and calling. It gave consecrated labour and beginning of reality arbitrary honest and enthusiasm performance on man’s vocational work as to sacred duty; and through its preachings that the salvation of man consisted primarily and arbitrarily in rational living. It converted man from a aesthetic ideal and turned him to a more worldly to religious duties.”

According to Max Weber, the real spirit of capitalism is the spirit of 'Protestantism' also. In order to prove this point, he has quoted the example of England, America and Holland, the leading centers of Protestantism who were also economically well-off and governed by the modern capitalist system. He quoted the example of Italy and other Catholic countries who were economically backward.

On the basis of the statistical study that he made of the people of Germany, Max Weber proved that even in those countries those who followed Protestantism were economically well off as compared to Roman Catholics. He also quoted the number of the students in the schools. According to Max Weber, Protestant children were in larger number in schools as compared to Roman Catholics. Through all these things, he tried to prove that a modern capitalism was the gift of Protestantism. This point he tried to stress in order to prove that economic factors are inter-linked.

7.6 Summary:

This great sociologist and political economist was born in Erfurt, Thuringia on April 21, 1864 in a prosperous family of 'National Liberal Politician'. His father was a famous political figure and a jurist. His background made Weber doubly interested in politics from the very beginning. While talking about social actions, in discussion of the meaning and definition of sociology, we have enumerated that social actions are of four categories. This categorization is based on the characteristics enumerated by Weber himself. In order to have complete understanding of Weber's theory of social action, we must know the meaning of social action as well. It is important to understand here that any of these three types cannot be found in reality in their pure form. It is often the combination of the two that is found in practice. For example, Nehru was a charismatic leader but also wielded rational legal authority.

"There is something in Protestantism that helps to create the system of economic norms we know as capitalism and that it was the Protestant Reformation that gave a direct impetus to the development of capitalistic economy." By the term 'spirit of Capitalism', is a set of attitudes towards the acquisition of money and the activities

involved in it. It is, of course, an attitude which strongly endorses such acquisitive activities but not in any and every form among positive attitudes towards a quite specific one:.

7.7 Glossary:

Charismatic Authority

Economic Determinism

Patriarchalism

Spirit of Capitalism

7.8 Model Questions:

1. Analyze Weber's Concepts of Social Action and Authority?
2. Describe Weber's Protestant Ethics and spirit of capitalism?

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Lesson: 8

KARL MARX

8.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand theories of Historical Materialism or Social Evolution, Class struggle and Dialectical Materialism propounded by Karl Marx.

Contents:

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8.1 Life History:

Karl Marx the father of Communism and the spiritual father of Soviet Union was one of the luckiest persons whose views and philosophy were put into practice. He could not see his dream fulfilled in his life time but it was fulfilled no doubt in the year 1917 as a result of Great Russian Revolution. Karl Marx, the greatest materialist and dialectic interpreter of society was born on May 5, 1818 in Treves near Coblenz in Rhine land Province of Germany. Karl Marx belonged to an upper middle class Jewish family, but his

father embraced Christianity while he was still six years old. This change in the faith was on account of several reasons, political as well economic. Marx passed his childhood in a very happy and affectionate atmosphere, and this had effect on his personality as well as outlook. Between 1830 and 1835, he was educated in a good school in the town of his birth. He had interest in economics from the very beginning. That is why for his leaving school subject he chose a topic, 'views of a Youth In the Choice of Profession', which clearly shows that he had a promising career around him. After finishing his school education, Marx entered Bonn and then Berlin university. There he studied Law, but he was equally interested in philosophy and history. He had also love for literature and wrote poetry.

While Marx was at Berlin, he came in contact with the intellectuals of Germany who were very much influenced by Hegel and his philosophy. For some time Marx became a complete Hegelian, but he soon realized that 'Pan Logical System of Hegel' and 'Critical Philosophy of the Young Hegelian Intellectuals' with whom he moved was not perfectly correct.

Karl Marx made a study of history, law and philosophy. He worked for the Doctorate Degree from the Berlin University but the members of the faculty of the Berlin University were not in agreement with the views expressed by Karl Marx. That was the reason that he was not accorded with Doctorate Degree. However, he earned his Doctorate's Degree in 1841 from the University of Jena. The subject of his thesis was, 'Difference Between the Philosophy of Democratics and Epicurus'. Prior to that in the year 1838, he had lost his father.

Academic background:

After completing his university education Karl Marx wanted to become a Professor in University of Bonn. By that time he had become a revolutionary and an atheist. The Government was not prepared to put up with these views of Karl Marx. He therefore could not get it. Marx apart from Hegel was very much influenced by the philosophy and thinking of Ludweig Fenerback. Ludweig Fenerback. Ludweig Fenerback was recognized as the greatest philosopher of the materialistic school.

Having failed to become a professor, Karl Marx took to journalism and started writing in a paper entitled, 'Rheinische Zeitung'. This was a liberal paper and welcomed the views of Karl Marx. In 1842 Karl Marx went to Cologne where he became the Editor of this magazine. Unfortunately, this magazine was suppressed by the Government in March, 1843.

It was around 1843 that Karl Marx had two very major events in his life—one was his marriage with his friend of the childhood, 'Jenie'. It was about this time that he wrote his famous critique on 'Hegelian Philosophy of the State'. Karl Marx was very much dissatisfied with the conditions in Germany. He was not finding it convenient to express his views in Persia and therefore he with his wife moved to Paris. From Paris he published another revolutionary magazine. There he also became editor of 'Franco-German Year Book'. This Year Book which saw only one of its issues contained two important articles of Karl Marx, one on the question of Jews and the other one in Hegelian Philosophy of Right Wing. This article made Karl Marx's life long friend of Friedrich Engels. It was while writing philosophy of Hegel that Karl Marx and Engels together presented a new revolutionary philosophy for the reconstruction of the society and ushering in a socialistic society. With this object they started taking part in revolutionary organizations.

In 1845 Persian Government made a request to the French Government for turning Karl Marx out of that country. French Government acceded this request and Karl Marx had to leave France. He then started living in Brussels. It was here that he established a 'Communist League'. In 1848 the famous, 'Communist Manifesto' written by Karl Marx and Engels saw light of the day. During this period there was some trouble in Belgium and Marx had to leave that country. He again went to Germany. There also due to his revolutionary ideas he could not stay long and he had to go to France. Even France was not a safe place for him because of his revolutionary ideas. He had to move to France England and its Capital, London, which is known for its democratic temperament and outlook provided shelter to Karl Marx. He made London his home for the rest of his

life. It was on March 14, 1883, that he breathed his last, but his philosophy is immortal, and his name is remembered even to this day.

Dauntless fighter for his ideals:

Karl Marx was in fact an indomitable fighter for his ideological commitments. He was very much hard pressed economically but he did not leave either writing on new sketch of the future of the society. In 1855 his 9 year old only son died for want of proper care and treatment yet he did not lose heart and he continued organization of the working class and fighting for them. In 1864 he was successful in the formation of 'International Workmen's Association' in which about 200 representatives of over 20 million workmen took part. This organization gained international recognition no doubt, but it had an adverse effect on his health. His falling health had an adverse effect on his studies. Even then he started writing of his classic, 'Das Capital' in the year 1866 and completed its 3 parts in 1870. In fact he was studious and scientific analyst. He was philosopher as well as a great active worker. He gave idea as well as organization. Although he lived in penury yet he carried on his struggle against exploitation of man and social inequalities.

8.2 Works and writings of Karl Marx:

Karl Marx as we have already seen was basically a philosopher, thinker and social revolutionary. He expressed his views and philosophy in his works and writings. He was a journalist who wrote in various papers. Most of his articles are revolutionary in nature. His important works are being enumerated below:

Writings as an Editor:

We have already seen that he wanted to be a teacher in the university but having failed in his ambition he took to journalism, and became editor of the famous magazine Rheinische Zeitung. Later on he also became editor of Franco-German Year Book. As an

editor he wrote some of the Leaders and Articles that have come to occupy a lasting place in social philosophy and socialist movement.

Revolutionary Articles:

Karl Marx, as we have already seen was basically a revolutionary who wanted to change the phase of the society. He has expressed his views in form of articles which appeared in various magazines and papers. All these articles which are revolutionary articles have been published by 'Marx Engels Institute'. These revolutionary articles deal with the exploitation of working people by the capitalists and the feudal Lords. They are guiding letters for the working class and the revolutionaries.

Poverty of Philosophy or Philosophy of Poverty:

This was written with the object of giving reply to Proudhon's work 'Philosophy of Poverty'. It was written in French Language. Proudhon in his book has given liberal interpretation of the causes of poverty. Marx has disagreed with this ideology and said that whole of human history is the history of class struggle and people should treat it in that way. He categorically suggested ways for removal of poverty.

Communist Manifesto Published in 1849:

Communist Manifesto was the joint work of Marx and Engels. It is the Bible of the Proletariat. This book has called upon the workmen of the world to come together and unite. It has also brought to the forefront the social fact that social exploitation is the case of the exploitation of the working class by the capitalists. It also calls upon to bring about international revolution. It has also suggested ways and means for emancipation of the working people from the clutches of the exploiters. It has been regarded as a very revolutionary and important work of Karl Marx. Communist Parties of the world have based their tactics on this very background.

A Critical Political Economy:

This book presents all detailed analysis of the historical materialism and was published in the year 1852. Karl Marx's 'Economic Determination' is based on this very book of Karl Marx.

Das Capital:

This is the immortal classic of Karl Marx which is also the Bible of the Communist regimes of the world. It is the result of the 18 years of hard labour of Karl Marx. This book contains a detailed analysis of the views of Karl Marx about social facts, social phenomenon and other social forces. It also presents a scientific and detailed analysis about capitalism, exploitation of the working people and the institution of capitalism and capitalism as a social phenomenon.

Gotha Programme:

This deals with the historical development of the society and also predicts about the bright future under communist regime. It also discussed the transition from capitalism to socialism. In this book Karl Marx has discussed the various stages that deal with all these things.

Karl Marx was a great philosopher, a great reader, a great writer and a great organisationist. His works reflect all these qualities.

8.3 Historical Materialism

In order to give a scientific base to factors of history, Karl Marx said that material and the economic life of the common man is the real basis of the history. Other social, cultural and political institutions grow as a result of these factors. The real factors of history would be that which studies the social developments in the light of development of economic and social development and factors. According to Materialistic interpretation of history, the following factors should be given importance:

1. **Existence of man:** Life or existence is the first requirement of human race and in order to survive, he tries to find out food, clothes, shelter etc., That is production is the first historical event and the development of history takes place as a result of the development of the method and means of production and relationship between various groups engaged in the task of production.
2. **Social and political institutions which grow as a result of historical development are the result of the production relationship:** As a result of the growth of the relationship between various groups engaged in the task of production, several social, political and other groups are formed. As a result of the changes in relationship the changes take place in former and the working of the social groups. The society develops as a result of changes in the social conditions or objective physical conditions caused by improvement in the means of production and the relationship between the various groups engaged in the task of the production.
3. **Idealism and spiritualism cannot present a scientific interpretation of history:** Ideas, Ideals and spiritualism cannot present a scientific interpretation of the history. The scientific and real interpretation of history is possible only on the basis of the economic life, means of production and the production relationship. It is not a collection of the activities of great men or heroes. It is activity of the common man engaged in the task of survival.
4. **Various epochs or eras of history:** Karl Marx on the basis of materialistic interpretation of history of factors of history on the basis of dialectical materialism has divided the development of society into the following five stages. These stages are nothing but the 'epochs' or eras of history:
 - a. Primitive age
 - b. Age of Slavery;
 - c. Feudalism
 - d. Capitalism
 - e. Socialism
- a. **Primitive Age:** This is the first epoch of the history when all the means and methods of production were controlled by the group or the society. People lived

by hunting and collecting the vegetation, food etc., There was no private property. It is described as the age of primitive communism.

- b. **Age of Slavery:** As the wants developed and the needs became complicated, the people developed new means of production. Agriculture and animal husbandary came as a means of living. New implements made of metal were invented and pastures were developed and found out for feeding the animals. This could be called pastoral age or the age of initial agriculture. This age gave birth to the institution of slavery. Human beings were sold like animals for discharging certain jobs and functions. This brought about the development of the institution of private property. As a result of development of this institution, the economic power or the institution of production were concentrated in a few hands and most of the persons became their slaves and dependent on them.
- c. **Feudalism:** This is age of agricultural capitalism. Due to advancement of agriculture and the means of agriculture, the land became the property of a few. Those who controlled the landed property were called 'feudal Lords' and others were their serfs. They produced for the feudal lords and lived on bare subsistence. This historical epoch also gave birth to the two classes (i) Feudals and (ii) Serfs.
- d. **Capitalism:** As a result of the scientific and technological developments, industries came to be set up and the agriculture was relegated to the secondary position. Due to development of industries, the importance of 'capital' gained much higher place. In this process all the production, means of production are concentrated in a few hands. Others are their employees and earn their livelihood by working for them. They sell their physical and mental labour.. Due to this system not only the means of production but the wealth and economic power did concentrate in a few hands or in a class of people. Those who really work and bring about production are deprived of the benefits of production. This economic neglect leads to class tension and class struggle. The class that controls the economic power, according to Marx is called 'Bourgeoisie' and the class that works for these capitalists is called 'proletariat'. According to 'Karl Marx' it is this society out of which socialism is born.

- e. **Socialism:** This is the last stage when once again all the means of production pass into hands of society or community. In such a society, everybody gets according to his needs and is made to work according to his capacity. In such a society there is no class of stage because when the State also withers away, there is no need to have an agency to control the actions of the individuals because economically they are satisfied and morally they are pretty high.

Evolution of the theory of historical materialism or materialistic interpretation of history:

Materialistic interpretation of history or historical materialism is a practical application of dialectical materialism to the field of history. This theory is based on the fact that the physical life and the physical conditions are mainly responsible for the historical events and the development of the history. According to Engels:

“The decisive element (in the development of history) is pre-eminently the production and the production of life and its material requirements. This implies on the one hand, the production of the means of existence (food, clothing, shelter and the necessary tools) On the other hand the generation of children the propagation of species”.

8.4 Marxian Theory of Class Conflict :

As it has been stated above, in the capitalist society, the bourgeoisie and proletariat are dependent upon each other. However, the mutual dependency of the two classes is not a relationship of equality and of respectable reciprocity. Instead, it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. The capitalist class (the ruling class) gains at the expense of the labour class (the subject class) and there is therefore a conflict of interest between them.

Marx developed his theory of class conflict in his analysis and critique of the capitalist society. The main ingredients of this theory of conflict have been enlisted by Abraham and Morgan which may be briefly described here:

The Development of the Proletariat:

Accentuation of capital is the essence of capitalism. In Raymond Aron's words. "The essence of capitalist exchange is to proceed from money to money by way of commodity and end up with more money than one had at the outset". Capital is gained, according to Marx, from the exploitation of the masses of population, the working class, "The capitalist systems, transformed the masses of people into workers, created for them a common situation and inculcated in them an awareness of common interest. Though the development of class consciousness the economic conditions to capitalism united the masses and constituted them into "a class for itself"... (Abraham and Morgan)

The Importance of Poverty :

According to Marx, the most distinguishing feature of any society is its form of property. An individual's behaviour is determined by his relations to property. Classes are determined on the basis of individual's relation to the means of production. Means of production or forces of production represent a type of property which in the capitalist society are owned by the capitalists. Here, an individual's occupation is not important but his relations to the means of production, are important. "Property divisions are the crucial lines in the class structure".

The Identification of Economic and Political Power and Authority :

From a Marxian perspective, political power derives from economic power. The power of the ruling class therefore stems from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The political and legal systems reflect ruling class interests. In Marx's words: "The existing relations of production between individuals must necessarily express themselves also as political and legal relations". The capitalists who hold monopoly of

effective private property take control of political machinery. Their interests are clearly reflected in their political and ideological spheres. As Raymond Aron points out, “Political Power, Properly so-called, is merely the organized power of one class for oppressing another”. The political power and ideology thus seem to serve the same functions for capitalists that class consciousness serves for the working class.

Polarisation of Classes:

In the capitalist society there could only be two social classes: (i) The capitalists who own the means of production and distribution, and (ii) the working classes who own nothing but their own labour. Though Marx had repeatedly referred to the intermediate state such as the ‘small capitalists’, ‘the petty’, ‘bourgeoisie’, and the ‘lumpenproletariat’, he was of the firm belief that at the height of conflict these would be drawn into the ranks of the proletariat. Raymond Aron has termed this process and ‘proletarianisation’.

The Theory of Surplus Value:

Marx believed that the capitalists accumulate profit through the exploitation of labour. In fact, the relationship between the capitalists and workers is not only one of dominance and subordination, but also of exploitation. The workers produce more wealth in the form of food, manufactured goods and services than is necessary to meet their basic needs. In other words, they produce “surplus wealth”. But they do not enjoy the use of the surplus they have created. Instead, those who own the means of production are able to seize this surplus wealth as “profit” for their own use. According to Marx, this is the essence of exploitation and the main source of conflict between the classes.

Pauperisation:

Exploitation of the workers can only add to their misery and poverty. But the same exploitation helps the rich to become richer and richer. As Marx says “the wealth of the bourgeoisie is swelled by large profits with corresponding increase in the mass of poverty of pressure, of slavery, of exploitation” of the proletariat. In every mode of production which involves the exploitation of man by man, the majority of people, the people who labour, are condemned to toil for no more than the barest necessities of life.

With this, society gets divided into rich and poor. To Marx, poverty is the result of exploitation not of scarcity.

Alienation:

The process of alienation is central to Marxian theory of class conflict. The economic exploitation and inhuman working conditions lead to increasing alienation of man. Alienation results from a lack of sense of control over the social world. The social world confronts people as a hostile thing, 'caving them "alien" in the very environment that they had created. The workers caught in the vicious circle of exploitation find no way to get out of it. Hence they lose interest in work. Work becomes an enforced activity, not a creative and a satisfying one. The responsibility of the workers gets diminished because he does not own the tools with which he works, he does not own the final product too. He is "a mere cog in a machine" and nothing else. This situation of alienation ripens the mood of the worker for a conflict.

Class Solidarity and Antagonism:

With the growth of class consciousness among the working class, their class solidarity becomes crystallised. The working class becomes internally more homogeneous and this would help to intensify the class struggle. Because of this class feeling and solidarity, the workers are able to form unions against the bourgeoisie. They club together in order to keep up the rate of wages. They form association in order to make provisions beforehand for occasional revolts. Here and there contest breaks out into riots.

Revolution:

When the class struggle reaches its height a violent revolution breaks out which destroys the structure of capitalist society. This revolution is most likely to occur at the peak of an economic crisis which is part of the recurring booms, and recessions characteristic of capitalism. "Marx predicted that the capitalists would grow fewer and stronger as a result of their endless competition; that the middle class would disappear into the working class, and that the growing poverty of the workers would spark a

successful revolution”. (I. Robertson). Marx had asserted, unlike other wars and revolutions, this would be a historic one.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat:

Marx felt that the revolution would be a bloody one. This revolution terminates the capitalist society and leads to the social dictatorship of the proletariat. Since the revolution results in the liquidation of the bourgeoisie, they will cease to have any power and will be reduced to the ranks of the proletariat.

Inauguration of the Communist Society:

After attaining the success in the revolution, the workers in course of time, would create a new socialist society. In this new society the means of producing and distributing wealth would be publicly and not privately owned. This new socialist society would be a classless and a casteless society free from exploitation of all sorts. The state which has no place in such a society will eventually “wither away”. In this society nobody owns anything but everyday owns everything. Each individual contributes according to his ability and receives according to his needs. His, in brief, is Karl Marx’s theory of class conflict.

8.5 Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism has been widely thought of as the PHILOSOPHY of Marxism, in contrast and relation to Marxist Science, distinguished as historical materialism. The term was probably first used by Plekhanov in 1891. It was in that first generation after Marx’s death that ‘Diamat’ (a shorthand term which became current especially in the USSR) emerged, as the work of Marx and Engels gave way to that of their followers. Marxism itself crystallized out of that transition and dialectical materialism was constitutive of it (see Marxism, Development of). The first generation of Marxists was dominated by the two most famous books of the founders, Marx’s Capital and Engel’s Anti-Dubring. The former represented the basic economic science of

historical materialism. It was Engels in *Anti-Dühring* who was regarded as having presented in its 'final shape' (Plekhanow 1908, p. 23) the philosophy of Marxism. Dialectical materialism was a powerful force in the Second International and following the Russian revolution it became essential to communist party orthodoxy.

Probably the most difficult and least important addition that Marx made to materialism was the dialectic. Therefore his position is sometimes referred to as dialectical materialism. The dialectic seems to have originated in Greek thought as a means of attaining truth through a process of questions and answers. In answer to an original question, such as the meaning of courage, beauty, justice or the like, a position is stated. The questioner then criticizes this position through the question and answer process until an opposite or significantly different position is taken. Then by a continuation of the process, an attempt is made to arrive at the true parts of both positions. The process, an attempt is made to arrive at the true parts of both positions. The process is then continued until all are satisfied that the current answer has been reached.

Marx took the dialectic from Hegel. Hegel's dialectical method of thought comprises three stages

1. The initial position or the thesis
2. The negation of the thesis or the anti-thesis and
3. Finally the negation of negation or the synthesis.

Thus the example, if we start with ignorance thesis we see that when the state of mind becomes conscious ignorance tends to change to non-ignorance anti-thesis; finally with the definite development of knowledge are reach the stage of science, synthesis. Figure, below represents the most common way of picturing the process. This illustration shows us something of what both Hegel and Marx are getting at starting at the bottom with original thesis (first position) we see its "opposite" in the antithesis (second position). This position is not one of complete difference; it is produced from the thesis in one of two ways, spelled out in the first two laws of the dialectic.

1. The transformation of quantity to quality changes in degree gradually produce a quality or kind.
2. Unity or identity of opposites. Contradictions in the thesis accumulate until they destroy the original unity of the thesis and become the antithesis (see change of quantity into quality). Thus the opposites are actually one. Also, the thesis and antithesis become unified, differently, in the synthesis.
3. Negation of the negation. Contradictions continue to accumulate until another qualitative change is made and the synthesis is reached.

The synthesis or the unity of the opposites, is a qualitative change as was the original step from the thesis to the antithesis. In other words, a new position is reached that is not simply the combination of the thesis and antithesis. In a similar way, chemists sometimes speak of synthesizing a new product from two or more products. Thus water, H₂O is a synthesis of one part hydrogen with two parts oxygen to produce a product that is significantly different from the original components. The synthesis is then treated as a new product, and the process continues in the same manner. These three laws are often neglected or slighted by students of Marx, but as will be seen later, they help to provide an understanding of the pattern taken by his analysis of history.

What does the transition in the Hegelian dialectic from one stage to another, from thesis to anti-thesis imply? It implies nothing more than the elimination of the contradiction existing between the two stages and factually, the advance or movement of the process towards a truer realization of the absolute idea in other words. Hegel's process is governed by a strict logical necessity for the realization of the synthesis or the final stage, which is at the same time the realization of the synthesis or the final stage, which is at the same time the realization of the absolute idea involves the conflict between the partial or isolated ideas at the different stages of the process. Each stage forward is therefore, not a suppression of the partial idea, but its elevation, its advance towards the absolute ideal. Hence, the synthesis or the final stage, which is the highest expression of thought does not destroy the concept of the idea at any previous stage of the process, but only integrates it into the true and final reality which is achieved with the synthesis.

Indeed, according to Hegel, the destruction of the partial idea that is, the idea at the thesis or anti thesis stage would render the dialectical process impossible. Thus science is born of the activity of conscious ignorance, just as the motion of a boat is made possible by the resistance offered to the oars by the current in the river.

But Hegel's dialectic is idealistic and therefore meaningless to the materialist Marx, who stressed the means of production and the material environments the driving force.

8.6 Summary:

Karl Marx, the greatest materialist and dialectic interpreter of society was born on May 5, 1818 in Treves near Coblenz in Rhine land Province of Germany. Karl Marx belonged to an upper middle class Jewish family, but his father embraced Christianity while he was still six years old. This change in the faith was on account of several reasons, political as well economic. In order to give a scientific base to factors of history, Karl Marx said that material and the economic life of the common man is the real basis of the history. Other social, cultural and political institutions grow as a result of these factors. The real factors of history would be that which studies the social developments in the light of development of economic and social development and factors. Instead, it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. The capitalist class (the ruling class) gains at the expense of the labour class (the subject class) and there is therefore a conflict of interest between them.

8.7 Glossary:

Surplus Value

Alienation

Labour Exploitation

Pauperisation

8.8 Model Questions :

1. Explain Karl Marx Class Struggle Theory critically ?
2. Give an account on Historical Materialism and Dialectical Materialism?

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Lesson 9

Talcott Parsons Structural Functionalism

9.0 Objective:

The main objective of this Lesson is to understand Social Action, Pattern Variables and Structural Functionalism theories of Talcott Parsons.

Contents:

- 9.0 Objective
- 9.1 Talcott Parsons-Life Sketch
- 9.2 Works of Talcott Parsons
- 9.3 Theory of Social Action
- 9.4 System of Social Action
- 9.5 Pattern – Variables
- 9.6 The Structural Functionalism
- 9.7 Summary
- 9.8 Glossary
- 9.9 Model Questions
- 9.10 References

9.1 Talcott Parsons-Life Sketch:

Talcott Parsons is recognized as one of the most talented and deep social thinkers of the modern era. His contribution to the field of social thought is yet to be evaluated fully because he has influenced the sociologists every day. In spite of being the contemporary of the most modern sociologists, Talcott Parsons, the famous American sociologist has acquired an important place in the history of the sociology. Born in the year 1902, Parsons acquired his education and earned his Graduates Degree in the year 1924 from London School of Economics. In the year 1927, he earned his Ph.D. Degree

from Hiedelberg University. He was a student with thirst for knowledge and curiosity. In the beginning he was more interested in biology, but later on he developed his interest in the Institutional Economics. The credit for this goes to Prof. Hamilton. His co-students and contemporaries were Jins Berg, Hobhouse, Malinvosky and other great sociologists and anthropologists at London School of Economics. After completing his education at London School of Economics, Parsons shifted to Germany and started studying the works of German Social thinkers and particularly Max Weber. It was on the topic 'Max Weber and Sompart—and their schools of Capitalism that he earned his degree of Ph.D. He also translated Max Weber's monumental work 'Protestants Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism'. After earning his Ph.D. Degree, he started teaching in Emerist College where he stayed on for a year. In the year 1927, Parsons was appointed at Harward University and later on in the year 1944, he was appointed Professor of the department of the Sociology in that year. Since then he has been continuing there.

9.2 Works of Talcott Parsons:

Talcott Parsons has tried to provide to give new and original forms to the social thought. He has developed the prevalent concepts in an original manner. His thoughts are in a developing stage and his real assessment is still a manner to be judged. In spite of it has to be recognized that he has influenced the contemporary generation of the sociologist to a very great extent. His works deal with social thought and they may be enumerated as below:

1. Translation of Protestant Ethics and the spirit of Capitalism.
2. Structure of Social Action: This book was published in the year 1927 and it is recognized as his first famous book.
3. The theory of Social and Economic Organizations
4. Essay in Sociological theory
5. The Social Systems: This was published in the year 1952 and is recognized as his monument of work
6. Towards a General Theory of Social Action

9.3 Theory of Social Action:

Once we have studied the concept of Parsons about society we can proceed to study his theory of Social Action. His theory of Social Action is the result of the development of his thoughts. Since 1936 he has been trying to develop his theory about social action. In the year 1937 his work 'Structure of Social Action' was published. In this book he has tried to analyze the nature and implication of social action. Later on he developed it in the year 1951 his another book 'The Social System' saw light of the day. In this book also he has tried to study and analyses the theory of social action.

Definition of Social Action:

Parsons is known in the field of sociology mostly for his theory of social action which is defined by him the following words:

“Action (social action) is a process in the actor-situation system which has motivational significance to the individual actor or in the case of collectivity, its component individuals”.

On the basis of this definition it may be said that the processes of action are related to and influenced by “the attainment of the gratification or the avoidance of deprivations of the correlative actor, whatever they concretely be in the light of the relative personal structures that there may be.” All social actions proceed from mechanism which is their ultimate source. It does not mean that these actions are solely connected with organism. They are also connected with actor's relations with other persons social situations and culture.

Elements of Social Action:

From the definitions given above, we can see that every social action has the following four elements:

1. **Actor:** This is the medium of action. In other words, it means that it is the actor through whom the actions are performed.
2. **The End:** Every action is guided by one object or the other. From sociological point of view to action is without an end or object. The analysis of every action has therefore to be made in the light of the ends that have motivated it.
3. **Situation:** No action is performed in isolation. It is performed under certain conditions and situations. These situations and conditions may be divided into two theories—one those situations that are beyond the control of the actor and secondly those situations over which the actor has a control. Parsons has characterized the former as ‘Condition of Action’, and the latter ‘Means’.
4. **Selection of Alternative Means:** The actor has several ends before him. He can use various means for achieving all these objects. The means that he achieves are not always the same. They are also called alternative means.

Every social action is performed under the conditions enumerated above. These conditions have to be fulfilled. It does not mean that without these conditions the social action is not possible.

9.4 System of Social Action:

Social actions are guided by the following three systems which may also be called as three aspects of the system of social action:

1. Personality system
2. The Cultural system
3. The Social system.

Personality system: This aspect of the system of social action is responsible for the needs for fulfillment of which the man makes efforts and performs certain actions. But once man makes efforts he has to meet certain conditions. These situations have definite meaning and they are distinguished by various symbols and symptoms. Parsons has defined them in the following words:

“Various elements of the situation come to have several ‘meanings’ for ego as ‘signs’ or ‘symbols’, which become relevant to the organization of his expectation system.”

Cultural system: Once the process of the social action develops, the symbols and the signs acquire general meaning. They also develop as a result of systematized system, and ultimately when different actors under a particular cultural system perform various social inter-actions, special situation develops.

Social System:

This is the third aspect of the system of social action. Parsons has defined it in the following terms: “A social system consists in a purity of individual actor’s interacting with each other in a situation which has atleast a physical or environmental aspect, actors are motivated in terms of tendency to be ‘Optimization of gratification’ and whose relations to the situation including each other, is defined and motivated in terms of system of culturally structured and shared symbols”

Significant role of systems:

From the discussions given above, we come to realize that for social action personal-cultural and social systems are required. These three systems act as three units of the social action. They are also interdependent. According to Parsons himself, “each is indispensable to others two in the sense that without personalities and culture there would be no social system and so on around roster of logical possibilities.”

9.5 Pattern – Variables:

Parson’s most unique contribution to sociological theory is his conception of the pattern-alternatives of value-orientations.

Parsons and Shils attempted to construct a short hand means of pointing out all the logically possible ways in which an actor makes his situation meaningful. In other

words, when confronted with choices and decisions to make, what ways are open to him in assessing the dilemmas? Parsons and Shils maintained that five dichotomous choices present themselves. These choices define the meaning of the situation and indicate ways of resolving decisional dilemmas.

Affectivity	Versus	Affective neutrality
Diffusion	Versus	Specificity
Particularism	Versus	Universalism
Quality	Versus	Performance
Orientation	Versus	Self-Orientation

An actor confronting a situation sees its meaning in terms of one or more of these five categories each of which presents two alternative interpretations. This subsequent action is taken in accordance with his interpretations, the necessities for choice are termed the dilemmas of action. The choice of only one alternative over another is one of preference or primary, and the choice becomes patterned only after repeated choices in one direction or the other.

The pattern-variables constitute categories for the orderly description and comparative analysis of the structure of systems of action. They may be applied at four analytical levels. On the concrete level of empirical action, pattern variable exist as five discrete choices which the actor must explicitly or implicitly make before he can act. On the collectivity level, they constitute aspects of role definition or role expectation whereby roles are characteristically specified in terms of one side or the other of the dilemmas denoted by the pattern variables. On the cultural level, they represent aspects of value standards. Finally, in so far as an actor's personality is committed to a value-standard, such an actor will habitually choose the horn of the dilemma specified by adherence to that standard.

1. Affectivity Vs. affectivity neutrality is the gratification-discipline dilemma.

This dilemma is posed because on the one hand no action system can be organized or integrated unless members renounce some gratifications. On the

- other hand, no actor can live without some gratifications. In an organized action system the most direct path to gratification is through expressive orientations. Subscribing to such an orientation represents affectivity. Renouncing such gratification for instrumental, evaluative or moral considerations implies discipline. Such an orientation represents affective neutrality.
2. **Diffuseness Vs. Specificity** is the dilemma of defining the relation borne by object to actor as indefinitely wide in scope, infinitely broad in involvement morally obligating (diffuseness), or specifically limited in scope and involvement (specificity). In other words, this dilemma is focused on viewing alter or the object in terms of specific obligations and properties or more diffused ones.
 3. **Particularism Vs. Universalism** poses cathetic standards against cognitive standards. This deals with using universal or particular norms to govern the situations. Absolutely universal evaluative dimensions applied impartially by an actor to a class of objects (others) possessing the relative attributes is universalistic and implies the primacy of cognitive standards. If on the other hand, the actor applied partial and particularistic evaluative criteria, the choice implies the primacy of cathetic standards.
 4. **Quality Vs. Performance (also designated as ascriptions Vs. achievement)** is the dilemma of whether to be concerned about an object (other) because of what it is or what it does. In other words, the dilemma is whether to evaluate the other on the basis of his assumed qualities or his performance (achievement).
 5. **Collectivity orientation Vs. Self-orientation** is the dilemma of the collective interest as against private interest. Subscription to the values commonly held by the collectivity and conformity with such a value pattern are ingredients of collectivity orientation. Deviation from commonly held values for private instrumental advantages refers to self-orientation. The dilemma, in short, is whether to the selfish or selfless.

Parsons sees four of the sets of pattern variables as being paired. The first two sets, affectivity Vs. affective neutrality and diffuseness vs. specificity, constitute

attitudinal pairs which focus on the actor and are termed “the orientation set”. The second set, particularism and universalism and quality and performance, constitute the object-categorization pairs which focus on the object (other). These pairs constitute the modality set. Parsons felt that, to be logically complete the list of pattern variables should provide a sixth dilemma to pair with the fifth unmatched pattern variable namely collectivity orientation vs. self orientation. This was supplied after 1959 by the instrumental vs. consummatory dilemma. Parson’s novelty consists in treating these dichotomous categorizations of action as (1) exhaustive and as (2) defining a society or at least defining relational – expectations or roles, which in turn define a society. By counting the permutations and combinations of this system of dichotomies, one will have established a system of possible societies.

Parsons and Shils maintained that just as one might characterize a given personality according to his way of handling these dilemmas so might we characterize an entire social system or culture. In a highly integrated society there will be congruence among the choices as manifested in the role structure the culture, and individual personalities. In a poorly integrated society, dissonance or incongruence would be the more normal condition.

This pattern variables have been a powerful tool widely used among sociologists and among social scientists in general. But they have been questioned in terms of their exhaustiveness, their formulation and whether they are dichotomous or scalable.

9.6 The Structural Functionalism:

The social system exhibits the same characteristics as behaviour in general. Behaviour is goal-directed, behaviour is adaptive, behaviour is motivated, and is guided by symbolic processes. Exactly the same thing may be said of society. All social systems function in accordance with the four exigencies of goal-seeking, adaptation, motivation and symbolization. Firstly, society must provide for the utilization of the resources available to it. This means that societies must be adaptive. Secondly, individuals and

groups in society must be able to recognize and be impelled towards certain ends perceived as possible gratifications of felt needs. That is, the group must be organized towards goal-attainment. Thirdly, the social unit must be preserved from disintegration by disruptive tendencies. In other words, the specific patterns of activities, beliefs and values of society must be guarded from violent and destructive change, that is, a combination of processes must reinstate the latent patterns of order and work to maintain tension at a manageable level. Fourthly, the different social units must mutually adjust themselves to each other in a continuous way so that they contribute to the effective functioning of the system. This means that an integrative subsystem is needed to facilitate internal adjustments and to adapt the system to the demands of the changing external situation.

Thus Parsons maintains that any social system can be analyzed in terms of the functional imperatives (prerequisites) he has identified. The function of any part of the social system is understood as its contribution to meeting the functional prerequisites of adaptation, goal attainment, pattern maintenance and integration. Solutions to the four survival problems must be organized in the forms of ordered, stable social institutions which persist through time.

The first functional prerequisite: Adaptation, refers to the relationship between the system and its environment. In order to survive social systems must have some degree of control over their environment. At a minimum, food and shelter must be provided to meet the physical needs of their members. The economy is the institution primarily concerned with this function.

Goal attainment refers to the need for all societies to set goals towards which social activity is directed. Procedures for establishing goals and deciding on priorities between goals are institutionalized in the form of political systems. Governments not only set goals but allocate resources to achieve them.

Integration refers primarily to the “adjustment of conflict”. It is concerned with the coordination and mutual adjustment of the parts of the social system. The law is the main institution which meets this need. Legal norms define and standardize relations between individuals and between institutions and so reduce the potential for conflict. When conflict does arise, it is settled by the judicial system and does not therefore lead to the disintegration of the social system.

Pattern maintenance refers to the maintenance of the basic pattern of values, institutionalized in the ‘society. Institutions which perform this function include the family, the educational system and religion. The pattern of values is transmitted from one generation to the other through the process of socialization by these social institutions. Parsons had conceived social system as an open one interacting in complex ways with the other three action systems.

9.7 Summary:

Talcott Parsons is recognized as one of the most talented and deep social thinkers of the modern era. His contribution to the field of social thought is yet to be evaluated fully because he has influenced the sociologists every day. In spite of being the contemporary of the most modern sociologists, Talcott Parsons, the famous American sociologist has acquired an important place in the history of the sociology. His theory of Social Action is the result of the development of his thoughts. Since 1936 he has been trying to develop his theory about social action. In the year 1937 his work ‘Structure of Social Action’ was published. In this book he has tried to analyze the nature and implication of social action. Later on he developed it in the year 1951 his another book ‘The Social System’ saw light of the day. Social actions are guided by the following three systems which may also be called as three aspects of the system of social action: Personality system, The Cultural system and The Social system. Parsons sees four of the sets of pattern variables as being paired. The first two sets, affectivity Vs. affective neutrality and diffuseness vs. specificity, constitute attitudinal pairs which focus on the actor and are termed “the orientation set”. The second set, particularism and universalism

and quality and performance, constitute the object-categorization pairs which focus on the object (other). These pairs constitute the modality set. Parsons felt that, to be logically complete the list of pattern, variables should provide a sixth dilemma to pair with the fifth unmatched pattern variable namely collectivity orientation vs. self orientation. This was supplied after 1959 by the instrumental vs. consumatory dilemma. Parson's novelty consists in treating these dichotomous categorizations of action as (1) exhaustive and as (2) defining a society or at least defining relational – expectations or roles, which in turn define a society. The pattern of values is transmitted from one generation to the other through the process of socialization by these social institutions. Parsons had conceived social system as an open one interacting in complex ways with the other three action systems.

9.8 Glossary:

Pattern Variables

Functionalism

Social Action

Social System

9.9 Model Questions

1. Explain Talcott Parsons Pattern Variables theory?
2. Analyze Parsons Social Action and Structural Functionalism?

9.10 References:

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Lesson 10

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND PHENOMENOLOGY

10.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand perspectives of Ethnomethodology and Phenomenology.

Contents:

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Ethnomethodology -Meaning
- 10.3 The Origins of Ethnomethodology
- 10.4 Garfinkel's Pioneering Inquiries:
- 10.5 Ethnomethodology and main stream sociology
- 10.6 Critical Evaluation of Ethnomethodology
- 10.7 Introduction to Phenomenology
- 10.8 Edmund Husserl's Contribution
- 10.9 Alfred Schutz and his contribution
- 10.10 Summary
- 10.11 Technical Terms
- 10.12 Self Assessment Questions
- 10.13 Reference Books

10.1 Introduction:

Sociology was dominated by macro-theoretical perspectives till the 1960's. Structural functionalism and conflict theory were the most prominent macro-theories. During the era of the dominance of these macro-theories, the only micro theory worth mentioning was symbolic interactionism. However, by the late 1960's there was the ascendance of an impressive array of micro-theories – phenomenology and ethno methodology, two micro-theories that became dominant at this time. Their coming into prominence represented not only a shift in the level of analysis but also an attack on the scientific principles of mainstream sociology. These micro-theories come under humanistic sociology or subjectivist as against objectivist and positivist sociology. The 'humanistic' tradition drew a firm distinction between natural and human phenomena and further, claimed that each realm required different methods of study. Although the humanistic sociological theories like phenomenology, ethno methodology, interpretive sociology, symbolic interactionism and existential sociology are different in their theories and methods, they share two key assumptions.:

1. That human beings are not merely acted upon by social forces but are constantly shaping and creating their social worlds in interaction with others.
2. That social methods are required for the study and understanding of these uniquely human processes.

Phenomenology, symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology are perceived as being closely linked. This is because Husserl's and Schutz's phenomenology have influenced both symbolic Interactionism and Ethnomethodology. While Husserl's influence is indirect, Schutz's is more direct. As a result of the influence of phenomenology on the other two perspectives certain communalities can be seen between these perspectives. They are:

1. Criticism of the methodology employed by conventional sociology
2. Sharing subjective view of the world

3. Attempt to explain empirical reality from the perspective of the people being studied.
4. Focus of analysis on the individual in face to face interaction, and
5. Emphasis on the importance of language

10.2 Ethnomethodology -Meaning

The term Ethnomethodology was coined by the American sociologist Harold Garfinkel who is generally regarded as the founder of this school of thought. Garfinkel's book "Studies of Ethnomethodology" published in 1967, provides the initial framework for this perspective. Roughly translated, ethnomethodology means the study of the methods used by people. "Ethno" refers to the stock of commonsense knowledge available to members of society and methodology refers to the methods they use in different settings to make their meaning understandable to others. In more general terms Garfinkel's concern is with the investigation of members' methods for producing the world of everyday life. From the EDL (everyday life) perspective, daily life is a series of problematic encounters. Successful negotiation through this maze of predicaments requires the actor to have some good theories about human nature and how others are likely to act. Such everyday strategies that individuals use to study and organize their world are called ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology could be described as folk methodology since it is the way the average individual actor tries to study his situations.

10.3 The Origins of Ethnomethodology:

Ethnomethodology borrows and extends ideas from Phenomenology and, despite disclaimers to the contrary, from Mead-inspired symbolic interactionism. In extending the ideas of these schools of thought, however, ethnomethodology claims to posit a different view of the world. And so, it appreciates just how ethnomethodology differs from more traditional forms of Sociological theory.

10.4 Garfinkel's Pioneering Inquiries:

Harold Garfinkel's *Studies in Ethnomethodology* firmly established ethnomethodology as a distinctive theoretical perspective. Although the book is not a formal theoretical statement, the studies and the commentary in it established the domain of ethnomethodological inquiry. Subsequent ethnomethodological research and theory begins with Garfinkel's insights and takes them in a variety of directions.

Garfinkel's work established ethnomethodology as a field of inquiry that seeks to understand the methods people employ to make sense out of their world. He places considerable emphasis on language as the vehicle by which this reality construction is done. Indeed, for Garfinkel, interacting individuals' efforts to account for their actions—that is, to represent them verbally to others—is the primary method by which the world is constructed. In Garfinkel's terms, to do interaction is to tell interaction; or in other words, the primary folk technique used by actors is verbal description. In this way, people use their accounts to construct a sense of reality.

Garfinkel places enormous emphasis on indexicality—that is, on the fact that members' accounts are tied to particular contexts and situations. An utterance, Garfinkel notes, indexes much more than it actually says; it also evokes connotations that can only be understood in the context of a situation. Garfinkel's work was thus the first to stress the indexical nature of interpersonal cues and to emphasize that individuals seek to use accounts to create a sense of reality.

10.5 Ethno methodology and mainstream sociology

One of the major concerns of sociology is the explanation of social order. Typically, the sociologist assumes that social order has an objective reality and his research apparently indicates that it actually exists. The sociologist further goes on to explain its origin, and to provide causal explanations for its presence. Thus from a functionalist perspective, social order derives ultimately from the functional prerequisites of social systems which require its presence as a necessary condition of their existence.

From a Marxian perspective, social order is seen as precarious but its existence. From an interactionist perspective, social order results from interpretive procedures employed by actors in interaction situations. Although each of these perspectives provide very different explanations for social order they nevertheless agree that some form of order actually exists and that it therefore has an objective reality.

Ethnomethodologists abandon the belief that an objective social order exists. Instead they proceed from the assumption that social life appears orderly to members of society. Thus in the eyes of members their everyday activities seem ordered and systematic but this order is not necessarily due to the intrinsic nature or inherent qualities of the social world. Ethnomethodology is also critical of the standard sociological way of tackling the problem of order in society. The reality of social order is seen by sociologists as being a reality that individuals internalize through the social norms reflecting their culture. Ethnomethodologists object to the idea that order has a reality of its own and to the portrayal of man as a “cultural dope” who simply acts out the standard directives provided by the culture of his society. Instead, the ethnomethodologist pictures man as a skilled member who is constantly attending to the indexical qualities of situations, giving them meaning. People try to “make sense” or “make order” out of whatever action or situation they encounter. Thus it is suggested that order is attributed to situations by participants.

Garfinkel points out that while objective expressions are essential to science, they are awkward for most informal discourses. As a science, sociology attempts to use objective expressions but these objective expressions are superimposed upon interaction which uses indexical expressions. For example, standard research instruments in sociology attempt scientific precision, but they are studying people engaged in constructing practical reality. Garfinkel further asserts that when sociologists analyze action, they must remember that such action occurs within a larger context, each action has a history that may be traced to other contexts. For example, a person who has never been to a city, uses past experiences of others who have gone to city and information derived in the past from literature to guide his behaviour when he actually goes to the city.

10.6 Critical Evaluation of Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology has been severely criticized by both conventional and radical sociologists. Following are the specific criticisms leveled against ethnomethodologists. While ethnomethodologists have been quick to criticize the existing methodological techniques employed in sociology, they have failed to state their own methodology clearly and precisely.

While professing interest in the operation taken-for-granted assumptions of everyday life, ethnomethodologists have failed to demonstrate how these assumptions operate and to offer their own coherent thesis about the nature of social reality. Ethnomethodology has not made any positive contribution to sociology. Its main contribution is a negative one; that of criticizing existing sociological techniques such as survey and interview methods and of criticizing sociologists for their theoretical conception of social order. Ethnomethodology has not concerned itself with such issues as power, the distribution of resources in society, or the historical shape of institutions. Professor Lewis Coser, in his presidential address of American Sociological Association, is highly critical of ethnomethodology for its “Sectarian exclusiveness” and its “embarrassing triviality” , both of which stem from ignoring institutional factors in general, and the centrality of power in social interaction in particular.

10.7 Introduction to Phenomenology

The term “phenomenon” refers to that which is given or indubitable in the perception or consciousness of the conscious individual. Phenomenology thus comprises the attempts to describe the phenomena of consciousness and to show how they are constituted although the descriptions and the analyses of the various strands of the movement differ in the way they regard consciousness. There is no “one”

phenomenology as there is no “one” sociology. The movement comprises several strands which complement each other and also disagree over certain issues.

Phenomenology in a general sense could be literally the orderly study of phenomena and as such encompass much of traditional philosophy and science. In its restricted sense, however, it refers to the study of phenomena as phenomena and more specifically to a twentieth century movement in German Philosophy centered on Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). The German social thinker Alfred Schütz (1899-1959) has selectively borrowed and transformed Husserl’s ideas.

10.8 Edmund Husserl’s Contribution

As the father of phenomenology, there can be little doubt that Edmund Husserl’s thought has profoundly influenced contemporary social science. Husserl’s phenomenology goes back to Descartes for its inspiration and draws liberally from the psychological analysis of William James and Husserl’s own teacher, Franz Brentano. Husserl’s early interest was in the phenomenological basis of mathematics and logic from which he moved to epistemology and eventually to a transcendental phenomenology. One of Husserl’s major aim was to give the sciences and the human sciences in particular, a social philosophical foundation. As pointed out by Timasheff, Husserl Phenomenology is a critique of positivism which assumes that scientist through their five senses can investigate the world and build a body of knowledge that accurately reflects the objective reality of the world.

Husserl’s extensive writings present the main concerns and problems of phenomenology and provide a background against which to set off the writings of other contributors to the movement. As developed by Husserl the aim of phenomenology is to describe the constitution of experience uncontaminated by scientific theory and other preconceptions. Husserl wanted to overcome the problem of historical and cultural relativity of our knowledge of the world. The means adopted by Husserl to overcome this relativity is the method of phenomenological reduction, by which consciousness cleanses itself of all its social and historical baggage and constitutes itself as an absolute.

This is of course, only a methodological procedure in order to help us overcome our animal bias and make it possible for us to take a coolly intellectual view of things. Greek Philosophy used the term “epoche” to indicate this kind of suspension of judgment. Husserl presses this term into service.

Husserl held that whatever is genuinely true must be so, universally and eternally. Yet, the attainment of this truth is inhibited by the fact that human experience is a product of history, culture and society and therefore subject to the various distortions of prejudice, interest and so on. To reach the untarnished truth one must suspend or “bracket” what Husserl called the “natural attitude”. The natural attitude is the ordinary cognitive posture we adopt towards the world in which we are immersed. We take this everyday world for granted, not questioning its reality and accepting it as it presents itself to us. Although Husserl initially used the term “natural attitude” later he substituted it with the term “life world”. Both these concepts are used to emphasize that human beings operate in a taken-for-granted world that permeates their mental life. Moreover, this life world is seen by Husserl as an “intersubjective” world. The term intersubjectivity is used to describe the inherent sociality of consciousness and to the experience of the world by self and others as a world in common. The thesis of the “reciprocity of perspectives” describes the basic form of intersubjectivity. This means that in spite of our unique biographical situations, we interpret common objects, facts and events in an empirically identical manner. It is the notion of intersubjectivity which crystallizes the relevance of phenomenology for sociology.

10.9 Alfred Schutz and his contribution

Alfred Schutz (1899-1959): Titled *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967), Alfred Schutz's seminal text actually placed phenomenology as a distinct school in sociological theory. The decade of the 1960s was all important for the development of phenomenological sociology precisely because Schutz's text was translated for the English-speaking world in 1967, although his original German text was out in 1932. The phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl was adopted by Schutz to give it a

more vigorous sociological turn. He laid the foundations of social constructions for a wide range of social, cultural and feminist studies.

Biography and Influences:

Born in 1899, Alfred Schutz enrolled himself at the University of Vienna, Austria. In fact, he hailed from Vienna and had the opportunity of studying law and social sciences. Sociologist, Othman Spann at Vienna introduced him to the works of Max Weber. Weber's methodological treatise interested Schutz, as he too endeavoured to seek a basis for an interpretative sociology. Schutz adopted the Weberian school of thought that understanding social action was the methodological and epistemological foundation of sociology. But his was a critical acceptance of Weber's approach, and for a consistent theory of meaning (which was supposed to be distinctive of human action) he looked forward to Husserl's ideas.

The original German text of *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1967), a result of a rigorous research for twelve years, was published in 1932. Between Husserl and Schutz, there had been a great deal of deliberations after Schutz dedicated a copy of the text to Husserl. Finally, Schutz headed for the United States after spending a brief period in parts of France, to escape the Nazi Occupation of Austria. He prospered academically as he joined the New School for Social Research in New York City. Subsequently he was involved in the establishment of the International Phenomenological Research. He collaborated with Thomas Luckmann for his last work *The Structures of the Life-World*, which was published posthumously in 1973. Schutz died while working on this text in the year 1959. Summarily, we can say that Schutz was drawn primarily towards Weber's interpretative sociology and tried to enrich it by a critical adaptation of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. While accepting Husserl's notion of the everyday world of experience characterized by the natural attitude of uncritical acceptance, Schutz accounted for social reality as one in which people cognitively suspend doubt.

Beyond Weber's Notion of Social Action

Alfred Schultz was a social philosopher who fled Germany in 1939 to escape the Nazis. He is generally credited with introducing phenomenology to American Sociology. He assigned central importance to the meanings imparted to situations in every day life. He adapted Husserl's philosophy to sociology and incorporated Weber's concept of *Verstehen* into his system. There was also certain degree of cross-fertilization between schultz's phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Schultz's contribution resides in his ability to blend Husserl's radical phenomenology with Americal Interactionism and Weber's Social action theory. This blend was in turn to stimulate the further development of phenomenology, the emergence of ethnomethodology and the refinement of other theoretical perspectives. In these early years, Schutz was deeply influenced by Husserl's phenomenology. But he departed from Husserl's strategy of searching for the "pure mind" or the abstract laws of consciousness.

He accepts Husserl's notion and humans hold a natural attitude and life world that is taken for granted and shapes who they are and what they will do. He also accepts Husserl's concept of intersubjectivity.

Having accepted these lines of thought from Husserl, Schultz, advocates Weber's strategy of sympathetic introspection into people's consciousness. Only by observing people in interaction, rather than in radical abstraction as Husserl had recommended, can the processes whereby actors come to share the same world be discovered. This abandonment of Husserl's philosophical approach has allowed Schultz to empirically study what he considered to be the most important social reality – the creation and maintenance of intersubjectivity. For Schultz, the everyday world is an intersubjective one, shared with others with whom we interact. To this extent, Schultz's theory shares much with that of Mead, the symbolic interactionist. Schutz contends, however, that this intersubjective world is made up of multiple realities, with the reality of everyday

experience emerging as paramount. It is to this, taken-for-granted, common-sense, everyday world that Schutz directs his attention.

Our common-sense reality and everyday existence may be termed as practical interest in the social world. This practical interest may be contrasted to the scientists' scientific interest. Scientific theory attempts to observe and understand the world systematically whereas people operate on a practical level, sharing this intersubjective world with others who also experience it.

The best way to approach Schutz's phenomenology is to see it at work in his characterization of the social world. The social world is primarily the world of everyday life as lived and interpreted by common-sense men. "Common sense men" include all of us in-so-far as we act in the world rather than observe it formally as disinterested scientists. Within the "natural attitude" of daily life, epistemology and metaphysics have no place.

In sum, Schutz is primarily responsible for liberating Husserl's concern with the basic properties and processes of consciousness from radical abstraction. Schutz brought Husserl's vision of life world back into the process of interaction. In so doing, he began to ask how actors come to share, or presume that they share, intersubjective states. He made Husserl's ideas more compatible with interactionists' concern with socialization and role-taking as well as with their emphasis on pragmatic actors seeking to cope with their world. But Schutz gave these concerns a new twist: Human acts as if they see the world in similar ways, and they deal with each other as if others could be typified and categorized. Schutz combines both phenomenological and sociological insights. He is responsible for much of the posture of ethnomethodology, especially the recognition that social sciences have their foundations in everyday social world. The basic position common to the work of Schutz and ethnomethodologists is that they view the social scientists' task as the reconstruction of the way in which men in daily life interpret their own world.

10.10 Summary:

Sociology was dominated by macro-theoretical perspectives till the 1960's. Structural functionalism and conflict theory were the most prominent macro-theories. During the era of the dominance of these macro-theories, the only micro theory worth mentioning was symbolic interactionism. The term Ethnomethodology was coined by the American sociologist Harold Garfinkel who is generally regarded as the founder of this school of thought. Garfinkel's book "Studies of Ethnomethodology" published in 1967, provides the initial framework for this perspective. Roughly translated, ethnomethodology means the study of the methods used by people. "Ethno" refers to the stock of commonsense knowledge available to members of society and methodology refers to the methods they use in different settings to make their meaning understandable to others. Garfinkel's work established ethnomethodology as a field of inquiry that seeks to understand the methods people employ to make sense out of their world. He places considerable emphasis on language as the vehicle by which this reality construction is done. Indeed, for Garfinkel, interacting individuals' efforts to account for their actions—that is, to represent them verbally to others—is the primary method by which the world is constructed.

The German social thinker Alfred Schütz (1899-1959) has selectively borrowed and transformed Husserl's ideas. The term "phenomenon" refers to that which is given or indubitable in the perception or consciousness of the conscious individual. Phenomenology thus comprises the attempts to describe the phenomena of consciousness and to show how they are constituted through the descriptions and the analyses of the various strands of the movement differ in the way they regard consciousness. There is no "one" phenomenology as there is no "one" sociology. The movement comprises several strands which complement each other and also disagree over certain issues.

10.11 TechnicalTerms:

Ethnomethodology

Phenomenology

Interactionism

Inter-subjectivity

Functionalism

10. 12 Self Assessment Questions:

1. Describe critically the perspective of Ethnomethodology?
2. Give an account on Phenomenological perspective?

10.13 ReferenceBooks:

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Lesson 11
SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

11.0 Objective:

The objective of this lesson is to study Social Exchange Theory and nature and Elements of Social Exchange Theory.

Contents:

- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Blau's Theoretical Strategy
- 11.3 Basic Exchange Principles
- 11.4 Nature of Exchange Theory
- 11.5 Elements of Exchange Theory
- 11.6 Summary
- 11.7 Glossary
- 11.8 Model Questions
- 11.9 References

11.0 Introduction:

Social exchange theory was founded by George Homans. Man as a rational being lies at the foundation of such a theory. The individual as a rational being is seen as rationally calculating loss or gains, pleasures and pains in order to maximize profits. Thereby the exchange theory implies that an individual being is universally motivated by self-interest. Accordingly, as per the provision of the social environment individual

beings maximize their profits in social interaction. By exchanging gains and loss, or rewards and punishment, human beings interact with each other.

George C. Homans(1910-89) - A Biographical Sketch and Intellectual Influences:

George Homans is credited as the pioneer in establishing social exchange theory as a major sociological perspective. In his own admission, he became a sociologist as a matter of accident (Homans 1984). He was born in 1910 in Boston, United States. He had an early interest in academics. He was privileged with a household library, from which he benefitted most. Homans joined Harvard and earned his bachelor's degree in 1932 with English literature as major. However, his sustained interest in sociology began in 1933 at the Harvard Business School in the association of Professors Laurence Henderson and Elton Mayo. Both were into behavioural psychology and Mayo guided Homans to the anthropological works of Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown and Raymond Firth. Through an acquaintance with the classical anthropological works Homans was more into an understanding that instead of cultures being unique, human nature is universally similar under similar situations.

As far as common human behaviour and psychology is concerned, Homans was impacted upon by Vilfredo Pareto's psychological treatment of basic human behaviour. In fact, along with Charles Curtis, he co-authored *An Introduction to Pareto* (1934), which helped him to get a position in the sociology department at Harvard. During World War II, he served the navy, and while on duty at sea he reflected on the vast material of 'field' studies of small human groups, both modern and pre-modern. And then and there he could conceive of fitting those detail studies in a conceptual frame work which would be common for all human groups. The result was his first major work. *The Human Group* (1950), which he developed after returning from the war duty to Harvard.

Homans was greatly influenced by Henderson, and his first major work was an introduction to the work of Pareto. He subsequently turned to work in English social

history, which culminated in his *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*. Though this book was highly praised by historians, it did not have much impact on American sociology. Such was not the case with his subsequent work. *The Human Group* (1950) presents a theoretical reanalysis of a series of previous studies of such diverse subjects as work groups in factories, street gangs, the kinship system in primitive societies, and the structure of a declining New England community. In this work, Homans attempted to develop a theoretical scheme of interrelated propositions derived from observed regularities in the initial accounts of these studies. He then used an inductive strategy much at variance with that of Parsons. However, the book was at least partly rooted, like Parsons' own work, in the functionalist approaches of Durkheim and of the British anthropologists Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. Homans's strategy set out to extract from the studies under investigation a number of propositions and to establish the conditions under which such propositions would in fact hold. He showed, for example, that increased interaction between persons would increase their liking for one another, but qualified this statement by noting that this could only be the case if they had roughly equal status positions, one not holding significant authority over the other. While *The Human Group* may still be said to be largely congruent with the emergent functionalist perspective, Homans's subsequent work, notably his *Social Behaviour. Its Elementary Forms*, abandons this perspective in favour of an exchange theory largely constructed from building blocks provided by the Skinnerian version of psychological behaviorism and classical utilitarian economic theory.

Peter Blau (1918-2002)--A Brief Biographical Sketch

Peter Blau is credited with developing George Homans' scheme of social exchange from its application to elementary forms of social life to an analysis of complex structures. In simple terms, he qualified the theory of social exchange beyond its original micro roots. Peter Blau's contention involves as to how at the higher levels social life is organized into more complex structures out of the association among women. Blau's ideas are useful for a sociological understanding of the intricate relation between

organization, power and bureaucracy. His *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (1964) stands out as the major sociological work based on the theory of social exchange.

Peter Blau is a doctorate from Columbia University (1952) and completed his undergraduate sociology from the little known Elmhurst College, Illinois. He was born in Vienna, Austria in 1918 and later migrated to the United States. His school days were interrupted by World War II. He taught at many of the US universities and became a Professor of Sociology in Columbia University. Later on, he shifted to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

In the sociology syllabi across the world, Peter Blau mainly figures for his study of the American Occupational Structure (1968) and his theory on occupation and social stratification. However, his major contribution remains in his effort to theoretically integrate small-scale issues with large-scale sociological theories. He has also contributed to the development of the structured theory. In fact, he collaborated with advanced functionalist Robert King Merton to co-author 'Continuities in Structural Inquiry' (1981). Blau has authored many articles and books mainly on the themes of organization and modern society.

Peter M. Blau has been one of the most productive social theorists over the last three decades. In this early work on informal processes within bureaucracies, he noted how frequently employees exchanged assistance with their work for respect, information for social approval, and other processes of giving and receiving nonmaterial rewards. Yet, in looking back on this early empirical work, he recently remarked, "I was not aware, or did not remember, that conceptions of social exchange had been used by many others before, from Aristotle to Mauss. In some ways, I think that this ignorance may have been an advantage because in rediscovering exchange processes, Blau created a constructive blend of exchange, functional, and dialectical conflict theories. And although Blau has in recent years abandoned his exchange approach for another theoretical strategy, I think that his exchange orientation is still very important and worthy of a more detailed analysis.

Blau's Theoretical Strategy:

In contrast with Homans's concern with developing deductive explanations, Blau offers what he terms a theoretical prolegomenon-or a conceptual sketch that can serve as a preliminary to more mature forms of theorizing. In many ways, Blau's strategy resembles Talcott Parson's for he appears less concerned with developing a rigorous system of propositions than with enumerating concepts that can capture in loosely phrased and related propositions the fundamental processes occurring at diverse levels of social organization. While there is less categorization than in Parsons's conceptual efforts, Blau is concerned with developing an initial bundle of concepts and propositions that can provide insight into the operation of a wider range of sociological processes, from the behavior of individuals in small-group contexts to the operation of whole societies.

Yes, as his more recent theorizing reveals and as he was led to remark in a retrospective look at his exchange approach, sociologists should be concerned with exchange analysis because it is one of the few subject matters, outside of mathematical sociology, that lends itself to the development of systematic axiomatic theory. Thus, although he does not develop his exchange ideas into an axiomatic format as does George Homans, he clearly had this goal in mind. And as we will see he has tried in recent years to implement a more formal deductive approach. And so, as I proceed with Blau's approach, I will convert his ideas into formal principles. Such conversion is, I feel in the spirit of his underlying theoretical strategy.

But at this stage in his theoretical work on exchange, Blau tries to use a bundle of exchange concepts and implicit principles to bridge the micro-macro gap. For he thought that exchange theory could provide a means for analyzing individual interactions as well as more structural relations in terms of the same basic frame work. Although he is no longer so convinced that this can be the case, he sought in *Exchange and Power in Social Life* to (1) conceptualize some of the simple and direct exchange processes occurring in relatively small (2) then expand the conceptual edifice to include some of the

complexities inherent in less direct exchange processes in larger social systems. In a vein similar to Homans's analysis, Blau first examines "elementary" forms of social exchange with an eye to how they help in the analysis of "sub institutional" behaviour. However, unlike Homans, who terminates his analysis by simply presenting a conceptual "orgy" in Social Behaviour, Blau begins to supplement the exchange concepts describing elementary processes in an effort to understand more complex processes of institutionalization. Thus, in a manner reminiscent of Parson's analysis of the process of institutionalization in "The Social System" Blau begins with a conceptualization of basic interactive processes; then, utilizing and supplementing the concepts developed in this analysis, he shifts to the analysis of more elaborate institutional complexes.

Basic Exchange Principles:

Blau does not define the variables in his exchange scheme as explicitly as Homan does. Rather, considerably more attention is devoted to defining exchange as a particular type of association, involving "actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others and that cease when these expected reactions are not forthcoming." For Blau, exchange occurs only among those relationships in which rewards are expected and received from designated others. Much like Parson's conception of voluntarism and Homan's rationality proposition, Blau conceptualizes as exchange activities only those behaviors that are oriented to specified goals, or rewards, and that involve actors selecting from various potential alternatives, or costs, a particular line of action that will yield an expected reward. In pursuing rewards and selecting alternative lines of behaviour actors are conceptualized as seeking a profit (rewards less costs) from their relations with others. Thus, Blau employs the basic concepts of all exchange theories— reward. Cost and profit—but he limits their application to relations with others from whom rewards are expected and received. This definition of exchange is considerably more limited than Homan's definition, which encompasses all activity as exchange, regardless of whether rewards are expected or received

In common with Homans, however, Blau recognizes that in focusing on associations involving “an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible and more or less rewarding and costly, between two persons.” An elementary economic model is being employed. Indeed, social life is conceived to be a market place in which actors negotiate with each other in an effort to make a profit. But Blau shares the skepticism that led Homans to reject the theory of games as good advice but a poor description of human behaviour and that induced Parsons’s earlier in *The Structure of Social Action* to discard the extremes of utilitarianism. Blau recognizes that, unlike the simple “economic man” of classical economics (and of more recent rationalistic models of human behaviour), humans are ;

- 1) Rarely pursue one specific goal to the exclusion of all others
- 2) are frequently inconsistent in their preferences
- 3) virtually never have complete information of alternatives and
- 4) are never free from social commitments limiting the available alternatives.

Furthermore, in contrast with a purely economic model of human transactions, social associations involve the exchange of rewards whose value varies from one transaction to another without a fixed market value and whose value cannot be expressed precisely in terms of a single, accepted medium of exchange (such as money). In fact, the vagueness of the values exchanged in social life is a “substantive fact, not simply a methodological problem. As Blau emphasizes the values people hold are inherently diffuse and ill defined.

Social exchange theory is one of the interpretative perspectives in sociology. It tries to explain symbolic meanings attached to social life. In theory and construction, the exchange theory comprises the strains of British individualistic orientation, French collectivistic orientation. Exchange theory is an admixture of utilitarian economics, functional anthropology and behavioural psychology. Its genesis is rooted in the anthropological works of James Frazer, Malinowaski, Manss, Main and Levi Strauss. The

exchange theory perspective gained significant recognition and status in Sociology by the works of modern proponents of exchange theory like George Homans and Peter Blau.

Modern exchange theory owes a debt to experimental psychology, which is a branch of learning theory. It suggests that persons actions can be shaped and controlled and therefore can be predicted by manipulating environments, especially the things that reward and punish. Thus, it is possible to observe a subject as the learns to cope with or master his environment and conceptualize the subjects response to the rewarding or punishing features of it.

Hedonism as a philosophy affirms that individuals are capable of discriminating between pleasure and pain and that naturally they will always try to avoid pain and gain pleasure. It was thought this “pleasure and pain” principle was a basic law of human affairs, and that it would be senseless to expect people to behave as it it were not. Experimental psychology makes somewhat the same assumption in postulating that we can always expect persons to discriminate among stimuli and act on the basis of whether they find them rewarding or not.

Exchange theory represents an individualistic approach in social theory. Its focus is on the behaviour of individuals. It assumes that people act for their own reasons to maximize what they value and minimize what they dislike. Therefore, a person’s social action can be determined by manipulating rewards.

Nature of Exchange Theory:

The aim of sociological theory is to explain social order. Accordingly exchange theory’s purpose in sociology is to build upon a set a basic principles, drawn from consistent and complimentary lines of thought (Economic individualism; experimental psychology and hedonistic philosophy) by which to give a coherent and workable general explanation of social order.

The exchange theory concerns the exchange among individuals of valued objects or sentiments as basis of social order. The exchange commonly involves intangibles such as esteem, assistance liking and approval. Exchange also applies to the avoidance of something such as pain, expense, embarrassment etc., Sometimes exchange also involves opportunities, advantages or some comparative aspect of human relations. In general the idea of exchange is very broad and inclusive, not limited to the giving and receiving concrete things.

Exchange theorizing was based observable activities. It seeks to apply concepts from the economic theory to all social transactions and tries to emerge with a general theory of social order. The idea behind is an economic market analogy to general social order. In other words, the forces that kept economic markets relatively stable and functioning were specific manifestations of principles accounting for social order in general.

In exchange theory it is difficult to separate particular theoretical work from the generalities of the theoretical model.

Elements of Exchange Theory:

Exchange theory focuses on individual. It intends to examine the social interchanges persons have among themselves that account for order and change. By focusing on individual exchange, theorists hope to learn about the nature of groups. In exchange theory, groups are understood as serving the ends of their members. Hence, the unit of analysis, the thing to watch when observing, and the thing that plays the main part in the explanation of order, is the “individual”.

The premise, exchange theorists assume is that persons are egoistically motivated by their private and unique goals and wants. They view Motivations a private and individual matter.

Exchange theorists assume person's act egoistically to gain pleasure or satisfaction. It means all will have to give as well as get. It is so, because, in the absence of mutual satisfaction there would be no social interaction at all. Because of this give and take there is normally defined as the effort required to gain satisfaction and plus the potential rewards forgone as a result of the specific choice. Profit accrues when reward is greater than cost. Exchange theorists assume that persons maximize their rewards and minimize their costs.

Exchange theory views everyday behaviour as responsive to individual desire and calculation. It assumes a large degree of freedom of choice for actors. In other words exchange theorists emphasize the type of social action that can be called VOLUNTARY.

Reward is a corner stone of the theory of social exchange. The things that reward people may be unique to them. Categorizing rewards would violate a basic assumption about individuality. However, exchange theorists recognize some generalized rewards of which the most powerful one is SOCIAL APPROVAL

Exchange theory is now one of the most prominent theoretical perspectives in Sociology. A number of exchange perspectives have emerged in recent decades. The modern exchange theory as it deals with the related issues of inequality, power and conflict, merges the behaviourist tradition in psychology and utilitarian heritage in economic theory.

Thus the perspective of social Exchange is based on the belief that life is a series of exchanges involving rewards and costs. In economic exchanges, people exchange money goods and services hoping to profit or at least break even in the exchange. Exchange theory assumes that people seek rewarding statuses, relationships and experiences and try to avoid costs, pain and punishments. Given a set of alternatives, individuals choose those from which they expect the most profitable rewarding or satisfying and avoid those that are not a profitable rewarding or satisfying when the costs exceed the rewards, people are likely to feel that they got a good deal. Both parties are

More likely to be satisfied with the interaction of them is perceived equity in the exchange, a feeling on the part of both that rewards were worth the costs.

It is generally acknowledged that social exchange theory to have been formulated by George Homans and developed by Peter Blau. With subsequent refinements by Richard Emerson and others. George Homans believed that behaviour could be explained in terms of rewards and punishments. In exchange theory, the rewards and punishments and the behaviour of other people and those involved in exchanges assume that their rewards will be proportional to their costs. Peter Blau is the advocate of a different school of exchange theory. Blau argued that the exchange is more subjective and interpretive and that exchanges occur on the symbolic level. As a result, money may be a just reward only if it is defined by the receiver as such, and psychic rewards of satisfaction with doing a good job or of pleasing some one may be as important as money, gifts or outward responses of praise. Both agreed that all exchanges involve mutually held expectations that reciprocate will occur. If there is indeed an imbalance of rewards and costs, then there must be some form of negotiation to restore the necessary balance of exchange.

11.6 Summary:

Homans was greatly influenced by Henderson, and his first major work was an introduction to the work of Pareto. He subsequently turned to work in English social history, which culminated in his *English Villagers of the Thirteenth Century*. Peter M. Blau has been one of the most productive social theories over the last three decades. In this early work on informal processes within bureaucracies, he noted how frequently employees exchanged assistance with their work for respect, information for social approval, and other processes of giving and receiving nonmaterial rewards. Social behaviourism represented the reaction of a group of predominantly protestant thinkers to the contemporary problems of social change in an industrialized society in the traditions of Enlightenment idealism and pragmatism. Thus this paradigm consists of the application of idealism and pragmatism is the understanding of social action and

interaction. It views society a microscopically based system of norms, values and social interpretations. Using interpretive understanding as a method these theorists developed microscopic typologies of social action and social exchange. Exchange theory represents an individualistic approach in social theory. Its focus is on the behaviour of individuals. The exchange theory concerns the exchange among individuals of valued objects or sentiments as basis of social order. The exchange commonly involves intangibles such as esteem, assistance liking and approval. Exchange also applies to the avoidance of something such as pain, expense, embarrassment etc., Sometimes exchange also involves opportunities, advantages or some comparative aspect of human relations. In general the idea of exchange is very broad and inclusive, not limited to the giving and receiving concrete things. Exchange theory is now one of the most prominent theoretical perspectives in Sociology. A number of exchange perspectives have emerged in recent decades. The modern exchange theory as it deals with the related issues of inequality, power and conflict, merges the behaviourist tradition in psychology and utilitarian heritage in economic theory.

11.7 Technical Terms:

Social Exchange Hedonism
Social System
Socialism
Rational Choice Theory
Group Formation

11.8 Self Assessment Questions:

1. Explain the nature and elements of Social Exchange Theory?
2. Analyse the significance of Social Exchange Theory?

11.9 Reference Books:

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Lesson 12

Auguste Comte-Law of Human Progress

12.0 Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to understand the Comte's Law of three stages, human social progress and criticism on law of three stages and human progress.

Contents:

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Comte's Law of Three Stages:

12.3 The Law of the ThreeS tages and the Development of Science:

12.4 Application of the law of the three stages on the development of the social organisation:

12.5 Comte's Preference for Positive and3rdStage:

12.6 Law of Human Progress

12.7 Evaluation and Criticism of Auguste Comte's Laws of Three Stages:

12.8 Bogardus's Evaluation of the Law of Three Stages:

12.9 Summary

12.10 Technical Terms

12.11 Self Assessment Questions

12.12 Reference Books

12.I Introduction

Life and Works of Auguste Comte:

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was born in Montpellier, France. At the age of sixteen, the man who was to become the founding father of Sociology enrolled in the “Ecole Polytechnique”, the most distinguished school in France at that time and received his higher education there. Its professors, mostly scholars in Mathematics and Physics had little interest in the study of human affairs and society. But the young Comte had. Comte saw that the French and industrial revolutions had disintegrating effects on the old social order and became keenly conscious of the evils of the new, though still transitional society. Therefore, the improvement of society became Comte’s main preoccupation, the very goal of his life. To improve society, Comte believed that a theoretical science of society was needed. Since no such science was available at that time, he set about creating a science of society. In his opinion, the new science depended on other sciences; therefore, he decided to study the whole series of theoretical sciences which he identified with positive philosophy. From the results of such study Comte sought to formulate a system of laws governing society so that he could postulate a cure for society on the basis of these laws.

Comte’s achievements, even the formulation of his gigantic enterprise, were greatly stimulated by the fact that, at the age of nineteen and when still a student of Ecole Polytechnique he made the acquaintance of count Henri de Saint-Simon the well-known utopian socialist. The friendship lasted only a few years, but long enough to exert a deep influence upon the youthful Comte. Their collaboration, though brief, is evident in Comte’s first work entitled “Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the Reorganisation of Society”, published in 1822. In this work, the programme of a new science namely Social Physics (later renamed Sociology), as a necessary instrument of social reform was clearly stated and the leading proposition of Comte’s sociological theory—the law of the three stages—proclaimed. Comte asserted that each branch of knowledge must pass through three stages; the theological, the metaphysical and the positive and that the objective of social physics (Sociology) was to discover the natural and immutable laws of progress which are as necessary as the law of gravity.

In justification of the necessity of the new science, he pointed out that we possess a celestial physics, a terrestrial physics, a vegetable physics and an animal physics and that a social physics is needed to complete the system of knowledge of nature. The subject of study of social physics will be social phenomena and is to be studied in the same spirit as astronomical, physical, chemical, and physiological phenomena that are subject to natural invariable. It was with great reluctance that Comte changed the name of the new science from social physics to sociology when he was compelled to do so because the old one had been usurped by a Belgian scientist.

Comte's two leading works are the positive philosophy and the positive polity. The former appeared in six volumes during the years from 1830 to 1842. In this, Comte worked out in detail his main theoretical positions. These include the hierarchy of the sciences, the necessity for , and the nature of sociology, with its two main divisions of social statics and social dynamics, and the law of the three stages of intellectual progress, with ample historical illustrations and confirmation.

The second major work, positive polity, in four volumes was published in the years from 1851 to 1854. It was a detailed expansion of his theoretical doctrines and their practical application to the solution of the social problems of his time—through this he accomplished his initial goal, the improvement of society. But in doing so, he partly deviated from positivism and made an attempt to reconstruct a religion of humanity.

Comte's Sociology is divided into two major parts, statics and dynamics. The basic fact of social order is consensus Universalis, the necessary correlation between the elements of a society. Such a consensus exists in all realms of life but reaches its climax in human society. Consensus Universalis to Comte is the very foundation of solidarity as well as the basis for the division of social labour. The latter shows that society is analogous to an organism. Here and there specific functions are performed by specific but always solidary organs. Here Comte is utilizing the Organismic analogy, though he never identified society with biological organism. There is great difference between the two he insisted. Organisms are internally immutable, while society is capable of immense improvement if guided according

to scientific principles. This statement reflects both Comte's faith in progress and his conviction that human society can be improved only on the basis of positive science.

12.2 Comte's Law of Three Stages:

The law of three Stages:- The social philosophy of Auguste Comte is based on the concept of the three stages of the thought. He was of the view that man's knowledge passes through the 3 stages which are

1. Theological or Fictitious Stage.
2. Metaphysical or Abstract Stage
3. Positive Stage.

Auguste Comte was of the view that when we study the development of the human mind or intellect in different societies and through different ages, we come to that basic law which guides the development of human mind and intellect. Definite proof in this regard is available in our organisation and historical experiences. In other words it means that all our concepts passed through these 3 stages—Theological, Metaphysical and Positive. It would be worthwhile to study all these stages one by one.

1. **Theological or Fictitious Stage:-** Auguste Comte was of the view that during the theological stage of thinking man's ideas and views were fictitious and more concerning to other world. He was of the view that man in his desire to study the development of the thoughts and in his attempt to trace the development of the world and its various factors comes to be influenced by the thinking that spiritual and supernatural factors influenced his activities.

Three stages of the theological or fictitious stage of thinking according to Auguste Comte—Auguste Comte has laid down that there are three stages of theological or fictitious stages of thinking. These three stages are;

- i. Fetichism
- ii. Polytheism
- iii. Monotheism

- i. **Fetichism:**-- In this stage of theological or fictitious stage of the development of social thought, man accepts all the actions and behaviour of the human world in a conscious manner. He accepts all the object of the nature as living being or with life. In other words he accepts the existence of the spirit or the soul.
 - ii. **Polytheism:**-- As a result of polytheism, man falls a prey to all sorts of magic sorcery and allied activities. He is very much influenced and surrounded by wrong notions, As a reaction of this, thinking man becomes more alert and conscious and slowly instead of accepting the presence of all powerful spirit or supernatural power in all the objects, transplants or imposes, specific or a special God in every object. This stage of development of the social or human thought has been called polytheism.
 - iii. **Monotheism:**-- This is the last stage of the theological or fictitious stage of the development of social thought. At this stage human thinking becomes abstract and discreet. At this stage man is guided more by reason than anything else. At this stage man accepts that there is one centre of the entire power that guides and controls all the activities of the world.
2. **Metaphysical or Abstract stage of Thinking:**-- No doubt Monotheism is the last stage of the theological stage of development, but human thinking or human thought does not stop there. Its progress continues. As a result of this development, the reason develops in human thinking. As a result of development of reason, man ceases to think, that it is God that guides and controls the entire working of the human world. Man also ceases to think that it is the supernatural being that controls or guides all the activities. He now replaces this supernatural, being by an abstract powers.
3. **Positive Stage of the Development of the Social Thought:**-- This is in words of Auguste Comte an improved and scientific form of thinking. This stage follows the metaphysical or abstract stage of thinking. In this respect the following words of Auguste Comte need to be emphasised:

“From the nature of human intellect, each branch of knowledge in its development has to pass through three different theoretical states. The theological, or fictitious states; the metaphysical, or abstract state; and... The scientific or positive”.

This is in fact the final or the positive stage of human mind or thinking.

12.3 The Law of the Three Stages and the Development of Science:

Auguste Comte had his very definite view in regard to society, social control, social organisation and science. In regard to science he was of the view that every science, before reaching the stage of its perfect scientific estate has to pass through the theological and metaphysical stages. According to Comte's thinking, every science has to pass through these stages. While giving this analysis, he has also expressed the view that every knowledge that we achieve through metaphysical and theological approaches is doubtful. This can be true as well as imaginary. It is necessary to understand the events of the world through observation, classification and examination. It is also necessary to find out their causes. In other words every knowledge has to be tested through various stages of the development of sciences. Comte has applied the law of 'Three Stages of Development' in regard to knowledge, social organisation and other matters.

12.4 Application of the law of the three stages on the development of the social organisation:-

Auguste Comte has applied the law of three stages on the development or historical progress of the social and political organisation. It would be worthwhile to analyse it properly.

1. **The first stage of the development of the social and political organisation:** On the basis of the three stages of the development of knowledge of human thinking, he has analysed the entire human society and its development. According to Comte at the first stage of the development of social and political organisation, the laws are vague. An 'Absolute Power' which is under the control of nobody or the Autocratic is

considered to be the cause of every object, in other words, the representative of this absolute or autocratic authority is some ruler or leader. In support of this theory, Auguste Comte has cited the example of city, states of Rome and old theological states of Jews. In such a society sanction of the Divine Authority or 'theory of divine origin' is accepted as the test of everything. In other words the ruler of such a society or organisation is considered to enjoy sanction of the divine power. They cannot be violated.

2. **The second stage of the development of the social organisation:** This is the stage when 'Doctrine of Abstract Right' dominates the society. At this stage the supernatural or spiritual rights are replaced by natural rights. This is the basic difference between the two stages. This stage is, from the point of view of development, a developed stage of the first stage.
3. **3rd stage: The positive or scientific stage:-** This is a further developed stage of the development of the social thought. In this stage observation and study occupy a very important place. In the first and the second stage the basis of the social order and organisation was more unstable and not reasonable. But this third stage is quite scientific and is based on reason. In this stage neither the theological beliefs nor abstract rights are given any important place. This stage gives importance to experiences that have to be studied and analysed.

12.5 Comte's Preference for Positive and 3rd Stage:

Comte has given importance and shown his preference for this third or scientific or positive stage of thinking. According to Auguste Comte, every law or principle of this stage is quite clear and true, because it is based on psychologically analysed facts. On account of this fact different industries and material researches take place in this stage. No doubt at this stage the principles and the theories are based on scientific facts but they are not permanent and when established they are changeable according to the will and the power of man. These principles and theories are more complicated and more dependable as compared to the theories of other sciences. Comte has accepted these theories and principles as the theories of

sociology. The stage at which these theories are formed is the positive or scientific stage according to Auguste Comte.

12.6 Law of Human Progress

Social Progress:

The law of the three stages, according to Comte is the governing principle of social progress.

The basic stages of progress were described in the propositions which Comte designated as 'The great discovery of the year 1822'. The law of the three stages means, first of all, that each field of knowledge passes through three periods of growth : the theological, metaphysical and positive.

In Comte's system, the law of the three stages is much more than a principle governing the advance of knowledge. The development and education of the individual also must pass through the three stages as well as the human society itself. Therefore, the governing principle of social progress is to be found in the law of the three stages of intellectual advance. None of these stages the theological, metaphysical nor scientific can be eliminated, though intelligent direction may hasten the process, or lack of wisdom retard it. Each stage is the necessary antecedent of the following one.

Progress may be regarded as consisting in man's increasing control over the environment. Again, progress may be broken up into three constituent parts intellectual, material and moral. Intellectual progress is to be found in the law of the three stages of mental evolution; material, progress in "an analogous progression in human activity which in its first stage is conquest, then Defence, and lastly industry". Moral progress "shows that man's social nature follows the same course; that it finds satisfaction, first in the family, then in the state, and lastly in Race," . In promoting progress the desires and emotions are the driving forces, and the intellectual factors are the guiding and restraining agencies.

In the course of his lengthy discussion with ample historical illustrations and confirmation, Comte established correlations between the basic intellectual stages and stages in the development of men's material life, types of social units, types of social order and prevailing sentiments.

Comte's periods of intellectual development in broad outline were the theological, divided into fetishism, polytheism and monotheism, the metaphysical stage or the period of "western revolution" from 1300 to 1800 and the beginnings of the positive period from 1800 onward. Each of these periods was further subdivided.

Comte submitted the first stage, the theological, to a more detailed study than the other two, probably because the positive was just beginning while the meta-physical had lasted for a much shorter period of time than the first. He subdivided the theological stage into sub-stages each of which was supposed to have made definite contributions to progress. The sub-stages and their social contributions, he outlined as follows:

Fetishism	-	The family
Polytheism (oriental empires)	-	The state, landed property
Intellectual polytheism (Greece)	-	Intellectual contributions
Social monotheism (Rome)	-	The Fatherland
Defensive Monotheism (the Catholic World)	-	Emancipation of women and workers

In the period of fetishism or animism the family was instituted and with it the fixity of residence which made later development of state possible.

In the first polytheistic period that of the theocratic or conservative polytheism (i.e., the period of the great oriental empires), the main political contribution was the founding of the city (i.e., the state) and the development of the institution of landed property. Its great defect was the attempt to found a church before civic life had been perfected. Another feature of this period was the wide development of the caste system.

In the next period, that of intellectual polytheism (i.e., the Greek age) there were no important political contributions except in a negative sense. The service of the Greeks was intellectual and was rendered by freeing humanity from theocratic influences. National solidarity was impaired by the attacks of the Greeks upon property and upon caste without providing other unifying influences.

In the age of social monotheism (Roman period), there were several phases of political progress. The most important was the development of the conception of "Fatherland". When

Roman warfare was transformed from conquest into defence, it naturally transformed slavery into serfdom and the Empire into a small-state system. This opened the way for the development of feudalism.

The next period was that of the defensive, monotheism, or the catholic feudal transition. It was the period of the establishment of the Church, comparable to the foundation of family and state in earlier periods. The general purpose of the period was to systematize life, and this, the work of the Church, failed for the most part. The special purpose of the age was the emancipation of women and labourers, the work mainly of feudalism, and this was, to a large degree, successful. Since the religion of this period was universal and political power local, there then began the indispensable separation of church and state. At the same time, warfare was finally transformed from aggression to defence.

12.7 Evaluation and Criticism of Auguste Comte's Law of Three Stages:

Three stages theological, metaphysical and positive have been criticised by various social thinkers in different ways. They have detected different types of inconsistencies in these theories and laws. Vaughan has criticised it in the following words:

“No doubt the metaphysical conception, irrational as it is, marks and advances, historically speaking upon the theological. Its mission was to break up the fabric of the past and to prepare a group for the new building to be generated by the scientific spirit of the future. But its foundation is purely negative and destructive. It is powerless to construct and, when credited with the ability to do so, it brings forth, nothing but anarchy and bloodshed.”

(Studies in History of Political Philosophy. C.E. Vaughan).

12.8 Bogardus's Evaluation of the Law of Three Stages:

Bogardus has also criticised the law of three stages of the development of the thinking as propounded by August Comte. Bogardus was of the view that Comte could only analyse three stages of the development of thinking and missed the fourth that is 'socialised stage of thinking'. His words in this respect are quoted below:

“**Comte failed** to postulate a fourth mode of thinking, namely specialised thinking or a system of thought which would emphasize not simply the use of natural forces but the use of natural force for social. Forces serve for the purposes of building constructive, just, harmonious societies, and of developing persons, who will evaluate life in terms of welfare of other persons.”

12.9 Summary:

From the very earliest efforts at constructing a positive “social physics,” young Comte perceived the function of the new science to be the essential understanding of the necessary, indispensable, and inevitable course of history in such a way as to promote the realization of the new order now dawning upon human society. The subject matter of the science Comte wanted to establish, viz., sociology, was the history of the human race regarded as a whole. His science was meant to resolve the crisis of the modern world, to provide a system of scientific ideas which will preside over the reorganization of society, the true emergence of social engineers, though Comte never used that now popular title. Comte’s humanitarian preoccupation was reflected in his description of the function of the new science. Social science must ultimately be dedicated to concrete benefit of mankind—to the amelioration of the human condition. “From science comes Prevision,” Comte wrote at the beginning of his Positive Philosophy, “and from Prevision comes Action.”

12.10 Technical Terms:

Human Progress

Positivism

Fetichism

Polytheism

Monotheism

12.11 SelfAssessmentQuestions:

1. ExplaintheLifeandWorksof AugusteComteandLawof Human Progress?
2. CriticallyanalyseLawofThreeStagesandDevelopmentofSocialOrganization?

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Lesson 13

FUNCTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

13.0 Objective:

The objectives of this lesson are

- To know the meaning of functionalist.
- To understand the functionalism perspective.

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13.1. Introduction:

In order to study sociology, one must begin by making some assumptions about the nature of what is studied. For example, the ancient Greeks believe that the universe was run

according to the whims of the gods. By contrast, all scientists assume that the universe is orderly and operates in certain regular ways which we may be able to discover. Thus, Newton developed the laws of gravity after observing that apples always fall down, never up. A working set of assumptions is called a "Perspective" an "approach" or sometimes a "Paradigm".

Sociologists approach the study of human society in different ways. They can look at the "big picture" of society to see how it operates. This is a macro view, focusing on the large social phenomena of society, such as social institutions and inequality. Sociologists can also take a micro view, zeroing in on the immediate social situations in which people interact with one another from these two views sociologists have developed various theoretical perspectives, each a set of general assumptions about the nature of society. There are three well-known theoretical perspectives in sociology: The functionalist and conflict perspectives, which both provide a macro view of society, and the symbolic interactionist perspective, which offers a micro view.

Sociologists provides several perspectives for looking at group behaviour. Functionalism conflict theory, and interactionalism. Each of these perspectives provides a different slant on human behaviour in groups. Exclusive use of any one perspective presents seeing other aspects of group life. All these perspectives together, however, allow us to see most of the important dimensions of social life of interest in sociology.

Evolutionalism, the dominate theme of mid-nineteenth century, and a new school of thought called structural functionalism came to gain prominence in analysis and theorization about social phenomena. Modern sociological theory has been profoundly influenced by structural functional or simply functional analysis which them enormously popular at the turn of the century. Today functional analysis has become the principal, if not the only reigning, paradigm of contemporary sociology with more adherents than any other mode of sociological analysis or school of thought.

13.2 Concept of Functionalism:

Functionalism is simply a view of society as a self regulating system of inter related elements with structural social relationships and observed regularities. It is a sociological

perspective which seeks to explain a social element or cultural pattern in terms of its consequences for different elements as well as for the system as a whole.

Functional analysis looks at any social institution such as the caste system, religion, the joint family, a political party, or an industrial complex, it looks at it as a social system with interrelated parts and seeks to explain how the parts are related to one another and to the whole and what functions they all serve. Similarly, every social usage, behavioral pattern, even the so called superstitions are analyzed in terms of their functions. In short, functional analysis seeks to describe the consequences of a given cultural usage or social element, explain the persistence of an observed pattern of behaviour, and analyze the specific contribution of a part of some whole to other parts and to the whole.

13.3. Functionalist Perspective:

In functionalist perspective a society is seen as an organized network of cooperating groups operating in a fairly orderly manner according to a set of rules and values shared by most members. Society is seen as a stable system with a tendency to maintain a balanced, harmoniously operating system.

The functionalist perspective draws its original inspirations from the work of Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim. Spencer compared societies to living organism. Any organism has a structure which consists of a number of interrelated parts. Each of these parts has a function to play in the life of the total organism. In the same way, Spencer argued, a society has a structure, it also consists of inter-related parts, such as the family religion and state etc. Each of these components has a function which contributes to the overall stability of the social system.

Characteristics of Functionalist Perspective

- (i) The Social System : Functionalist theory implies that society tends to be an organized, stable, well-integrated system in which most members agree on basic values. In the functionalist view, a society has an underlying tendency to be in equilibrium. Social change is therefore likely to be disruptive unless it takes place relatively slowly, because change in one part of the system usually provokes changes elsewhere in the system.
- (ii) Functions and Dysfunctions : The supposed purposes of some components the social system do not necessarily tell us what its functions are because those components can have

consequences other than those that were intended. Robert Merton (1968) distinguishes between manifest functions—those that are obvious and intended—and latent function—those that are unrecognized and unintended.

Merton also points out that not all elements in the social system are functional at all times; on occasion some element may actually disrupt the social equilibrium and may therefore be dysfunctional.

This perspective is useful in explaining why some elements in a society exist and persist, but it also has some demerits. An important criticism of the perspective is that it tends in practice to be inherently conservative. This is because their main emphasis is of dismissing changes as dysfunctional, even if those changes are necessary, inevitable and beneficial on the long run.

13.4 Prominent Functionalists:

(a) August Comte

According to August Comte, the parts of society are connected to one another in a harmonious arrangement, much like the parts of a biological organism. Comte's philosophical evolution represents the three ways in which the human unity is developed. According to him, human mind, passes through three stages namely

- (i) Theological Stage
- (ii) Metaphysical Stage
- (iii) Positive Stage

During the theological stage, main ideas and views are fictitious and governed by supernatural factors because man is not aware of the laws that govern the working of these things. In metaphysical stage, man replaces the supernatural being as a factor responsible for guiding the human activities. Finally in the positive stage, man is content to observe phenomena and to establish the links existing among them.

(b) Herbert Spencer

The principal feature of Spencer's sociology was its attempt to combine utilitarian individualism with an organic model of the evolution of social system. Influenced by the

biological theories of natural selection, Spencer argued that social systems, like organisms, adapt to their environment by a process of internal differentiation and integration.

The evolutionary progress of societies was from simple homogeneity in 'militant' society to complex heterogeneity in industrial society. Spencerian sociology is often associated with the principle of 'the survival of the fittest' and Social Darwinism, but Spencer thought that competitive struggle was only dominant in early militant societies. An advanced industrial society would rely on cooperation, persuasion and altruism rather than aggression and conflict. Spencer contributed to the emergence of functionalism.

(c) Emile Durkheim :

Emile Durkheim has made a very valuable concept of sociology, in the form of his theory of 'social solidarity'. He recognizes the importance of society. But while recognizing the importance of society, he also recognized its various aspects. In his book, '*Social Division of Labour*' he has envisaged 3 aspects of social life:

- (i) Social Solidarity
- (ii) Division of labour
- (iii) Social evolution

According to Emile Durkheim, solidarity is of two types

- (i) Mechanical Solidarity
- (ii) Organic Solidarity

Durkheim assumes that the society has certain functional pre-requisites, the most important being, social Durkheim reasoned that if society is made up of many diverse parts each of which contributes to the fund of the whole, then social facts could be explained by showing their functions in the social order. A society lacks unity becomes sick and fails to deliver the goods.

According to Durkheim, sociology is the study of is the science of social facts. Its purpose is to know the causes and consequences of every social fact. Durkheim preferred to use the term 'function'. This was because the word 'function' is neutral whereas the words 'aim' and 'purpose' suggests good or favorable consequences. The results of consequences of social facts may or may not be favorable. The facts are spontaneous and do not depend upon human desires.

(d) Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons was heavily influenced by Durkheim and Max Weber, synthesizing much of their work into his action theory, which he based on the system-theoretical concept and the methodological principle of voluntary action. Society according to Parsons is an element in the complete whole of human society which is also affected by the factors of heredity and environment as well as by the element of culture knowledge, religious metaphysical and political system of ideas and forms an artistic expression. According to Parsons society is the complex whole of social relationship. It covers all types of relations of man with man. "Society exists apart from these things. They play a part in all the concrete manifestation, but they are not society comprises only the complex of social relationship as such."

According to Talcott Parsons, society is the sum total of the human relationships. On this concept he develops his theory of Social Action.

Parsons views society as a system. He argues that any social system has four basic functional pre-requisites: adaptation, goal attainment, integration and pattern maintenance. The function of any part of the social system is understood as its contribution to the functional prerequisites. Solutions to the four survival problems must be institutionalized if society is to exist.

Adaptation refers to the relationship between the system and its environment. Goal attainment refers to for all societies to set goals towards which social activity is directed. Integration refers primarily to the action of conflict. Pattern maintenance refers to the maintenance of the basic pattern of values, institutionalization of society.

According to Parsons, no social system is in perfect state of equilibrium. The process of social change is pictured as a moving equilibrium. Parsons views social change as a process of social evolution from simple to complex forms of society.

(e) Radcliffe Brown

Brown defined social structure as the continuing arrangement of persons controlled by institutions, i.e. socially established norms or patterns of behaviour. Social group is continuing arrangement of persons. He formulated the important principles concerning the description of structure.

- (i) The description of social structure should include not only the social groups and social classes but set of socially fixed relationships of person to person.
- (ii) Thus the social structure at a particular place and time consists of the whole set of social relations.
- (iii) Social relationships should be defined in terms of social institutions.

(f) Robert Merton

R.K. Merton points out that functions are those observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system and dysfunction are those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system.

Merton distinguishes between manifest functions those that are obvious and intended and latent functions those that are unrecognized and unintended. He points out that not all elements in the social system are functional at all times; on occasion some element may actually disrupt the social equilibrium and may, therefore, be dysfunctional.

He attempted to define and develop functionalist analysis. He singles out three related assumptions which have been employed by many functionalists and questions their utility. These are as follows :

(i) Postulate of the Functional Unity of Society:

This assumption states that any part of the social system is functional for the entire system. A”M parts of society are seen to work together for the maintenance and integration of society as a whole. He states that in highly differentiated societies, this functional unity is doubtful. Functional unity is a matter of degree. The idea of functional unity implies that a change in one part of the system will automatically result in a change in other parts.

(ii) Postulate of Universal functionalist : This assumption states that all standardized social or cultural forms have positive functions. Merton argues that the assumption that every aspect of social system performs a positive function is not only premature; it may well be incorrect. He suggests that functionalist analysis should proceed from the assumption that any part of society may be functional, dysfunctional or non-functional. In addition, the units for which a particular part is functional, dysfunctional or non-functional may be individuals, groups or society as a whole. He suggests that the postulate of universal functionalism should be replaced by the

provisional assumption that persisting cultural forms have a net balance of functional consequences either for the society or for sub groups sufficiently powerful to retain these forms intact by direct or indirect persuasion.

(iii) Postulate of Indispensability : He directed towards the assumption that certain institutions are indispensable for society. Functionalists often see religion in this light. Merton argues that same functional pre-requisites may be met by a range of alternative institutions. He suggests the concept of functional equivalents or functional alternatives.

(g) Almond and Powell

In the 1970s, political scientists Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell introduced a structural functionalist approach to comparing political systems. They argued that, in order to understand a political system, it is necessary to understand not only its institutions (or structures) but also their respective functions. They also insisted that these institutions, to be properly understood, must be placed in a meaningful and dynamic historical context.

This idea stood in marked contrast to prevalent approaches in the field of comparative politics — the state-society theory and the dependency theory. These were the descendants of David Easton's system theory in international relations, a mechanistic view that saw all political systems as essentially the same, subject to the same laws of "stimulus and response" — or inputs and outputs — while paying little attention to unique characteristics. The structural-functional approach is based on the view that a political system is made up of several key components, including interest groups, political parties and branches of government.

In addition to structures, Almond and Powell showed that a political system consists of various functions, chief among them political socialization, recruitment and communication: socialization refers to the way in which societies pass along their values and beliefs to succeeding generations, and in political terms describes the process by which a society inculcates civic virtues, or the habits of effective citizenship; recruitment denotes the process by which a political system generates interest, engagement and participation from citizens; and communication refers to the way that a system promulgates its values and information.

13.5 Summary

Functional analysis seeks to describe the consequences of a given cultural usage or social element. It also explains the persistence of an observed pattern of behaviour and analyse the specific contribution of a part of some whole to other parts and to the whole. More specifically, it focuses on social integration, stability, order and cooperation. The theories propounded by Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Almond and Powell are some of the prominent functionalists that explained various dimensions of functionalism and viewed society as an organized network of cooperating groups operating in a fairly orderly manner according to a set of rules and values shared by most members. Thus, all the elements of society from families to a simple hand shake bears important functions that help perpetuate society.

13.6. Key words :

Function

Paradigm

Social System

Social Action

13.7. Questions:

1. Define Functionalism?
2. Bring out characteristics of functionalist perspective?
3. Write briefly about, prominent functionalists?
4. Describe functionalist perspective?

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Lesson 14

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

14.0 OBJECTIVE:

The objectives of this lesson are to know the meaning of conflict, to understand the conflict perspective.

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- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Concept of Conflict
- 14.3 Main Assumptions
- 14.4 Prominent Theorists
 - (a) Karl Marx
 - (b) Ralf Dahrendorf
 - (c) Lewis Coser
- 14.5 Summary
- 14.6 Keywords
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14.1 Introduction:

The several social theories that emphasize conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist, conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of

analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

The materialist view of history starts from the premise that the most important determinant of social life is the work people are doing, especially work that results in provision of the basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter. Marx thought that the way the work is socially organized and the technology used in production will have a strong impact on every other aspect of society. He maintained that everything of value in society results from human labor. Thus Marx saw working men and women are engaged in making society, in creating the conditions for their own existence.

Conflict theory emphasizes competition, change and constraint within a society. Although this theoretical perspective was not very popular among most American sociologists until the 1960s, its roots go back as far as functionalism. Karl Marx (1818-1883, originally published in 1848) and George Simmel (1858-1918), two German sociologists whose work underlies the conflict perspective, lived at about the same time as Spencer and Durkheim. Marx contended that the nature of a society is based upon its economy, and that a class conflict is inevitable in all capitalistic economies. Modern conflict theorists such as C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), Ralf Dahrendorf (1929-2017), and Lewis Coser (1913-1991) do not limit themselves to economic determinism and class conflict. They broaden Marx's insights to include conflict among any segments of a society. Conflict exists between Republicans and Democrats, unions and management, industrialists and environmentalists. It is easy to understand conflict theory if you know about functionalism.

14.2 Concept of Conflict:

The conflict paradigm is a framework for building theory based on the assumption that society is a complex system characterized by inequality and conflict that generate

social change. This approach complements the structural-functional paradigm by highlighting not integration but dimension based on social inequality. Guided by this paradigm, sociologists investigate how factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, sex, and age are linked to unequal distribution of valuable resources, including money, power, education, and social prestige. Therefore, rather than identifying how social patterns can be functional for society as a whole, this approach investigates how they are useful to some people and harmful to others.

14.3 Main Assumptions of Conflict Theory:

1. **Conflict and Change:** The assumptions of the conflict perspective are different from those of the functionalist perspective. Conflict theories assume that societies are in a constant state of change, in which conflict is a permanent feature. 'Conflict' does not necessarily imply outright violence; it includes tension, hostility, competition and disagreement over goals and values. It is a constant process and is an inevitable part of social life.

Conflict theorists do not see social conflict as a necessarily destructive force, although they admit that it may sometimes have that effect. They argue that conflict can often have positive results. It binds groups together as they pursue their own interests and the conflict between competing groups focuses attention on social problems and leads to beneficial changes.

2. **The Beneficiaries:** A modern society contains a wide spectrum of opinions, occupations, life styles and social groups. On any social issue there are some people who stand to gain and some who stand to lose. Social processes cannot be fully understood without referring to this conflict of interest, a conflict whose outcome always favours the stronger party.

The conflict perspective has the advantage of highlighting aspects of society that the functionalist perspective, with its emphasis on consensus and stability, tends to ignore.

14.4 Prominent Theorists:

(a) KARL MARX (1818-1884):

Karl Marx's major aim was to analyze the relationship between life conditions (economic substructure) and ideas (superstructure) on an ongoing and changing basis through society's historical development. His aim was to analyze the transformation of society into a state in which "natural" rather than "alienated man" would be resynthesized with his natural and social environment.

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM:

Dialectical materialism is a philosophical concept that interprets the development of the society. The term 'Dialectic' has been derived from the Greek word 'Dialigo' which means 'reasoning', 'logic'. Later on the Dialectical methodology was used for understanding physical and natural events. According to this philosophy, natural events are dynamic and developments take place as a struggle between the opposing forces. Marx's dialectical materialism is based on the study of the human conditions and the physical world. In this concept, the idea has been replaced by action and reality has replaced imagination. It opens new path for the future while interpreting the development of the society.

Characteristics of Dialectical Materialism:

1. **Matter is Real, Thought is Secondary:** In Hegel's ideology, development of the society takes place certainly on account of the struggle between two opposing

factors, but these opposing factors belong to the world of ideas and not reality. Marx in his respect was quite different. According to him, matter is clear and idea or thought is only secondary.

2. **Inseparability of Thought:** According to Marx, there is nothing absolute. Idea of Almighty, a nature and life are objective truths and they cannot be separated. Marx's dialectical materialism interprets and analyses the social events on the basis of struggle of the material forces. It treats every event in connection with other events. In dialectical terminology, there is thesis which has its struggle with anti-thesis and as a result of the struggle between the two opposing forces, synthesis takes place.
3. **Complexity of Reality:** According to Marx's dialectical materialism, nature is a complex reality which is born out of interlinked objects and events. That is why, dialectical materialism tries to study the social facts in relation to other social facts.
4. **Constant Changes:** Nature is ever changing, because everything is involved in struggle. As a result of this struggle, old things get destroyed and new things are born in their place. Because of these factors, the face of the society changes.
5. **The change is Revolutionary:** As a result of process of contradiction, according to dialectical materialism, contradiction is-inherent in every event and object. Every thesis has its antithesis, which leads to struggle and consequent change. In society every event has a negation which leads to further development. Because of this process of contradiction, changes take place. But these changes are not evolutionary; rather they are revolutionary changes. The process of changes goes on and a stage is reached when there is explosion and it brings about revolutionary changes.
6. **Matter is Essentially Dynamic:** According to dialectical materialism, nothing is static. The matter itself is basically dynamic and the process of evolution goes on. The process of change goes on and this process ultimately leads to the society.

7. **Scientific base:** Karl Marx has propounded his theory of dialectical materialism on a scientific base. According to this theory, every change is the result of the contradictory and opposing forces which bring about revolution.

CLASS AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE:

Marx has characterized the human history as the struggle of the warring classes. These classes are characterized in the first place by an antagonism between oppressor and oppressed and in the second place, by a tendency towards polarization into two blocks.

“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 and 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:

1. Conflicts over the distribution of economic rewards between the classes
2. Easy communication between the individuals in the same class positions so that ideas and action programmes are readily disseminated;
3. Growth of class consciousness in the sense that the members of the class have a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their historic role.
4. Profound dissatisfaction of the lower class over its inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be the exploited victim.
5. Establishment of a 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 masses of 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.

Marx developed his theory of class conflict in his analysis and critique of the capitalist society. The main ingredients of the theory may be summarized as follows:

The first attempts of the workers to associate among themselves always take place in the form of combinations (unions). Large-scale industry concentrates in one place a crowd of people unknown to one another. Competition divides their interest. But the maintenance of wages, this common interest which they have against their boss, unites them in a common thought of resistance - combination. Thus combination always has a double aim, that of stopping the competition among themselves, in order to bring about a general competition with the capitalist.

The capitalist economic system transformed the masses of people into workers, created for them a common situation and inculcated in them an awareness of common interest. Through the development of class consciousness, the economic conditions of capitalism united the masses and constituted them into a class for itself.

The importance of property. To Marx, the most distinguishing characteristic of any society is its form of property, and the crucial determinant of an individual's behaviour is his relation to property. Classes are determined on the basis of individual's relation to the means of production. It is not a man's occupation but his position relative to the instruments of production that determines his class. Property divisions are the crucial breaking lines in the class structure.

The identification of economic and political power and authority. Although classes are founded on the forces and relations of production, they become socially significant only in the political sphere. Since the capitalist society is based on the concentration of the means of production and distribution in the hands of a few, political power becomes the means by which the ruling class perpetuates its domination and exploitation of the masses. The capitalists who hold the monopoly of effective private property take control of the political machinery, and their interests converge in the political and ideological spheres.

Polarization of classes. Inherent in capitalist society is a tendency toward radical polarization of classes. The whole society breaks up more and more into two great hostile camps, two great, directly antagonistic classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. The capitalists who own the means of production and distribution, and the working classes who own nothing but their own labour.

The theory of surplus value. Capitalists accumulate profit through the exploitation of labor. The value of any commodity is determined by the amount of labor it takes to produce it. The labor time necessary for the worker to produce a value equal to the one he receives in the form of wages is less than the actual duration of his work. Let us say that the worker produces in five hours a value equal to the one contained in his wage, and that he works ten hours. Thus he works half of his time for himself and the other half for the entrepreneur. Let us use the term “surplus value” to refer to the quantity of value produced by the worker beyond the necessary labor time, meaning by the latter the working time required to produce a value equal to the one he has received in the form of wages. Since employers have the monopoly of the instruments of production, they can force workers to do extra hours of work, and profits tend to accumulate with increasing exploitation of labour.

Pauperization. Poverty of the proletariat grows with increasing exploitation of labor. One capitalist kills many others and the wealth of the bourgeoisie is swelled by large

profits with corresponding increase in 'the mass of poverty; of pressure, of slavery, of exploitation, of the proletariat. It follows that in every mode of production which involves the exploitation of man by man, the social product is so distributed that the majority of people, the people who labor, are condemned to toil for no more than the barest necessities of life. Sometimes favourable circumstances arise when they can win more, but more often they get the barest minimum-and at times not even that. On the other hand, a minority, the owners of means of production, the property owners, enjoy leisure and luxury. Society is divided into rich and poor. Thus, to Marx poverty is the result of exploitation, not of scarcity.

Class solidarity and antagonism. With the growth of class consciousness, the crystallization of social relations into two groups becomes streamlined and the classes tend to become internally homogeneous, and the class struggle more intensified.

Revolution. At the height of the class war a violent revolution breaks out which destroys the culture of capitalist society. This revolution is most likely to occur at the peak of an economic crisis his part of the recurring booms and repressions which are characteristic of capitalism.

The dictatorship of the proletariat. The bloody revolution terminates capitalist society and leads to the social dictatorship of the proletariat. The revolution is violent but does not necessarily involve mass killings of the bourgeoisie; since property is wrested from them, the bourgeoisie will cease to have power and will be transformed into the ranks of the proletariat. Thus the inevitable historical process destroys the bourgeoisie and the proletariat establishes a social dictatorship, merely a transitional phase, to consolidate the gains of the revolution.

Karl Marx's thought laid the foundation of conflict theory and his critical influence continues even today in contemporary conflict theory and radical sociology.

(b) RALF DAHRENDORF:

The conflict theory of Dahrendorf is based exclusively on the relations of authority. To him, social organizations are imperatively coordinated associations rather than social systems. Authority structure, which is an integral part of every social organization, results in the creation of a dichotomy of positions of domination and subjection. Some are entrusted with the legitimate right to exercise control over others who are subordinate to the former. This distribution of authority leads to the formation of two conflict groups corresponding to the two positions of control and subjection - those who give orders and those who take orders. Since the interests of the two groups are divergent, conflicts between the rulers and the ruled are inevitable. Dahrendorf (1973:102) argued that authority structure is an essential part of every social organization and cannot be done away with; therefore, it is impossible to eliminate conflict altogether. Although conflict is inherent in the social structure, it is not always violent or manifest. Social conflict can be latent, regularized or temporarily suppressed or channelled but 'neither a philosophical-king nor a modern dictator can abolish it once and for all;

He identified the essentials of conflict theory as follows:

1. The main features of society are domination, conflict and coercion.
2. Social structure is based on the authority of some groups over others, bosses over employees, officers over enlisted men and so on.
3. Each of these groups has a set of common interests which are different from those of the other groups.
4. When people become aware of their common interests, they may organize into a social class. It may be a trade union or a lobby.
5. Class conflicts become more intense if (a) a few people have almost all the authority and the rest have almost none; (b) there is no opportunity for those without authority to acquire it; and (c) people are free to form political groups.

(C) Lewis Coser:

Lewis Coser has written extensively on the positive functions of social conflict. Conflict allows expression of hostility and the mending of strained relationships. It leads to the elimination of specific sources of conflict between parties and enables redress of grievances through the establishment of new norms or the affirmation of old ones. Hostility towards the out-group, a community or caste, unifies the in-group. When the need for greater solidarity is felt, members of the in-group tend to exaggerate conflict with other groups, and where such conflicts exist, any deviation from the group norm is severely condemned. Social conflicts not only generate new norms and institutions but also new coalitions and alliances; they bring about technological improvements, revitalize the economy, and lubricate the social systems and they facilitate the release of tension and frustration and enable the social system to adjust itself. Social conflicts and movements not often resulted in significant reforms and positive social changes. Therefore, conflict is not always or necessarily dysfunctional.

Other conflict theorists, such as Herbert Marcuse and Habermas argue that the main conflict in contemporary society is between the large state bureaucracy and the mass of citizens dominated by it.

14.5 Summary:

In brief, conflict refers to a state of dilemma, disagreement between two ideas, opinions in the social fabrics of the society. Conflict theory expounds on competition, change and constraints within a society. The factors such as social class, race, ethnicity, sex and age are linked to unequal distribution of valuable resources, including money, power, education and social prestige. This lesson overviews the ideas of Karl Marx, Ralf Dahrendorf and Coser that causing conflicts in the society on various perspectives.

14.6 Keywords

Conflict

Class

Values

Social Order

Stratification

14.7 Questions:

1. Define the concept of Conflict?
2. Describe the main assumptions of conflict perspective?
3. Describe the contributions of Karl Marx, Ralt Dahurbant and Coser towards conflict theory?

14.8 Reference Books:

1. Coser L.A : Masters of Sociological Thought, Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1471.
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3. Kinloch G.C. : Sociological Theory, its development and major Paradiams, Mc Graw Hill, New York 1477.
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Lesson No. 15

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION PERSPECTIVE

15.0 Objective:

The objectives of this lesson are:

- To understand the symbolic interaction perspective
- To examine the theories of Erving Softman, G.H. Mead, C.H. Cooley, Herbert Blumber

Contents:

- 15.0 Objective
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Concept of Symbolic Interaction
- 15.3 Important Exponents
 - George H. Mead
 - Charles Hertun Cooley
 - Herbert Blumber
- 15.4 Summary
- 15.5 Keywords
- 15.6 Questions
- 15.7 Reference Books

15.1 Introduction:

The functional and conflict paradigms share a macro-level orientation, meaning a focus on broad social structures that characterize society as a system. A macro-level approach to society is rather like investigating a city from high above in a helicopter— noting, for example, that highways facilitate traffic flow from one place to another, o that there are striking contrasts between the neighborhoods of the rich and the poor. The symbolic-interaction paradigm, by contrast, uses a micro-level orientation, meaning a, focus on situational patterns of social interaction. Exploring urban life in this way means being at Street level, observing, for example, face-to-face interaction in public parks or how people respond to a homeless person they pass on

the street. The symbolic-interaction paradigm, then, is a theoretical framework based on the assumption that society is continuously recreated as human beings construct reality through interaction.

Symbolic interactionism, or interactionism for short, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. This perspective has a long intellectual history, beginning with the German sociologist and economist, Max Weber (1854-1915) and the American philosopher, George H. Mead (1863-1931), both of whom emphasized the subjective meaning of human behavior, the social process, and pragmatism. Although there are a number of versions of Interactionist thought, some deriving from phenomenological writings by philosophers, the following description offers a simplified amalgamation of these ideas, concentrating on points of convergence. Herbert Blumer, who studied with Mead at the University of Chicago, is responsible for coining the term, “symbolic interactionism.”

Interactionism Originators

Functionalism and conflict theory deal with large social units and broad social processes—the state, the economy, evolution, class conflict. At the close of the nineteenth century, some sociologists began to recognize the importance of the ways people relate within groups. Max Weber (1946, 1958, 1964a, 1964b) and George Simmel (1955) were the earliest contributors to interactionism, the theoretical perspective that attempts to understand social life from the viewpoint of the individuals involved. Later sociologists, such as Charles Horton Cooley (1902), George Herbert Mead (1939), W. T. Thomas (1931), Erving Goffman (1959), Harold Garfinkel (1967), and Herbert Blumer (1969), have developed in greater detail the insight that groups can only exist because their members influence one another's behavior.

15.2 Concept of Symbolic Interaction:

Symbolic interactionism, which has been the most influential approach to interactionism, emphasizes interaction based on mutually understood symbols. Symbols—objects, colors,

concepts, sounds, facial expressions, body movements stand for something beyond themselves, symbols are not determined by the things they are determined by those who create and use them. One cannot tell by looking at an X in an algebraic equation what it stands for; one cannot ascertain with the ears alone the symbolic value of the phonetic compound is; one cannot tell merely by weighing a pig how much gold he will exchange for; one cannot tell from the wavelength of a color whether it stands for courage or cowardice, “stop” or “go.”

Main characteristics of interactionist perspective are as follows:

- (i) **Interaction, the Basis of Social Life:** Interactionist theorists are often wary of the emphasis that other sociologists place on the major components of society and on such large-scale issues as social order and social change. It is people that exist and act and it is only through social behaviour that society can come into being at all. Society is ultimately created, maintained and changed by the social interaction of its members.
- (ii) **Symbolic Interaction :** Symbolic interaction is the interaction that takes place between people through symbols-such as signs, gestures, shared rules, and important written and spoken language. The essential point is that people do not respond to the world directly, they place a social meaning on it and respond to that meaning.

The interactionist perspective provides a fascinating insight into the basic mechanics of every day life and it has the advantage of revealing fundamental social processes that other perspectives easily ignore. But the perspective is open to the important criticism that it neglects larger social change, institutions and societal processes of stability and change, institutions and processes which, after all, have powerful effects on social interaction and on our personal experience.

This perspective differs from functionalism and Marxism on following points:

1. It does not focus upon such large structures such as the state, concerned primarily with the everyday social interaction that:
2. It usually rejects the notion of a social system. As a result it is a reaction to the system.

3. Interactionist theorists are often wary of the emphasis on the major components of society and on such large-scale issues such as social order and social change. Concepts, such as economy or 'state' are after all merely abstract. They cannot exist or act by themselves. It is people that exist and act. It is only through their social behaviour that society can come into being at all. Society is ultimately created, maintained and changed by the social interaction of its members.
4. It is often assumed that while functionalism and Marxism are macro-sociologies and deal with society as a whole, interactionism approaches are micro-sociologies dealing with face-to-face interactions.
5. The Interactionist perspective begins from the assumption that action is meaningful to those involved. It therefore follows that an understanding of actions require an interpretation of meanings which actor give to their activities.

It is common place to class together symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology as forms of interaction. Symbolic interaction is fundamentally different from the world of social transactions, which take place between creatures with minds, beings capable of communicating with each other.

Symbolic interactionist does not insist that there is a sharp and unbridgeable separation between nature and society. Human society is a part of the general and natural process of evolution and social development itself depends on the organic development of human beings which make them capable of linguistic activity and the comprehension of symbols.

Marxists and functionalists are apt to insist that society is the primary reality and while others, like Max Weber, take an individualist view and insist that society has no reality above and beyond the individuals which comprise it. Symbolic interactionism finds this a false one; one cannot separate the individual from society or society from the individual. Hence the study of social interaction is also the study of the way the individual mind is developed and formed.

A major emphasis in symbolic interactionist work is the development of the self. Our actions in society follow very much from and are responded to by others in terms of conceptions

of who we are and it is through these interactions, that we acquire, enact and respond to conceptions of ourselves and others.

15.3 Important Exponents:

(a) G.H..Mead

Symbolic Interactionism has its intellectual roots in the concept of self as developed by G.H. Mead who argued that reflexivity was crucial to the self as a social phenomenon. Social life depends on our ability to imagine ourselves in other social roles and taking the role of other depends on our capacity for an internal conversation with ourselves society was conceived by Mead as an exchange of gestures which involves the use of symbols:”

The process of forming the self, according to Mead occurs in three different stages.

- a) **Imitation:** In this stage, children, copy the behaviour of adults without understanding it.
- b) **Play Stage :** During this stage, children understand behaviours as a actual roles — doctor, father, driver and so on and begin to take on those roles in their play.
- c) **Gamle stage :** In this stage, the child must learn what is expected not just by one other person but by a whole group.

According to Mead, self is composed of two parts, the “I” and the “me”. The “I” is the person’s response to other people and to society at large; and the “me” is a self-concept that consist of how significant others — see the persons. He rejected the idea that human behaviour is a set of passive reactions to rewards and punishments. Instead, all human action, according to him, is based on communication.

(b) C.H. Cooley

Cooley believed that personality arises out of people's interactions with the world. According to Cooley, people create "looking-glass selves" in these interactions. The looking glass self is composed of three elements.

- i. What we think others see in us.
- ii. How we think they react to what they see.
- iii. How we respond to the perceived reaction of others.

(c) Herbert Blumber

The term symbolic interactionism was coined by Herbert Blumber (1969). According to him all human interaction is a continuous dialogue in which people monitor, interpret and react to one another's intended meanings.

An interpretation of a stimulus occurs between the time the stimulus is presented to us and the time we respond to it. During this time we figure out what the stimulus means and decide how to respond. In other words, we connect the stimulus with a symbol and respond on the basis of that symbol.

According to him there are two kinds of actions: non-significant gestures or automatic reflexes and significant gestures or actions based on interpretations of stimuli. Communication is possible when people assign the same meaning to a given symbol.

15.4 Summary:

Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical framework based on the assumption that society is continuously recreated as human beings construct reality through interaction. It emphasizes that human interaction is based on mutually understood symbols such as objects, colors, concepts, sounds, facial expressions and body movements stand for something beyond themselves. This lesson briefs the ideas of various exponents such as George H Mead, C.H.

Cooley, Herbert Blumber and host of others on the symbolic interactionism and its impact on human beings.

Functional, conflict and symbolic Interactionist perspectives - all of these starts from different assumptions, each view point is therefore likely to produce different types of conclusions. The functionalism primarily focuses on social order and stability; conflict perspective primarily on social tensions and change interactionism on the ordinary experiences of every day life. Each of the perspectives has a part to play in the analysis of society. So no theory is better than the other or neither are they always incompatible. Thus all these perspectives can be applied to any study although each would focus on a different aspect of the subject under study.

15.5 Keywords

Communications

Symbols

Behaviour

Attitudes

Values

Looking - glass self

15.6 Questions:

1. Define symbolic interaction?
2. Write briefly about important exponents of symbolic interactionists perspective?

157. Reference Books

1. Coser L.A Masters of Sociological Thought, Hartcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1971.
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