
UNIT 1 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY IN EUROPE

Emergence of Sociology
in Europe

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with the emergence of sociology in Europe. After studying this unit, you should be able to

- outline the background to the emergence of sociology
- describe the social conditions prevailing in Europe from the fourteenth to approximately eighteenth century
- list the main features of the French and the Industrial Revolution and
- define the main intellectual trends of that period which influenced the emergence of sociology.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of Block 1 of ESO-13 on “Sociological Thought”. This Unit will trace the relationship between the emergence of sociology and the social and intellectual conditions of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. This we will do because sociology, the subject that we study today, emerged first in Europe. Sociology can in this sense be studied as a response to the social and intellectual climate prevailing in Europe of that time. A proper understanding of this linkage will help you better appreciate the ideas of the Founding Fathers. These ideas you will study in the units that will follow the first unit.

Section 1.2 of the first unit describes the background to the emergence of sociology. To explain the social, cultural, political and economic conditions of Europe before the emergence of sociology, we give briefly in Section 1.3 an account of the Commercial Revolutions and the Scientific Revolution which took place in Europe from about fourteenth century to the eighteenth century.

We will then discuss in sections 1.4 and 1.5 two salient events of the period, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. They followed the Commercial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution in Europe, and left a lasting impact on the main themes of sociology.

You will learn in section 1.6 how different intellectual theories, the **Enlightenment** onwards, affected the growth of sociology.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

To understand the emergence of sociology in Europe we need to appreciate the relationship between society and ideas. There is always a connection between the social conditions of a period and the ideas, which arise and are dominant in that period.

To give you an example, let us remind you of the National Movement in our country. When India was under the British Raj, she had to suffer all

the ills of colonialism. Indians were economically exploited, politically bonded, socially humiliated, culturally bereft. At the same time, the Indian middleclass emerged as a product of the economic policies of colonialism. They had also been exposed to the **liberal** and radical European social thought. They were therefore disturbed by the exploitation of colonialism and started writing, campaigning and building up a movement to free India. Culture, theatre, songs, literature were pervaded by the spirit of freedom. Premchand's novel *Karma Bhumi*, which was serialized on television in the 1980s, depicts the changes of that time. You can thus see that ideas are normally rooted in their social context. It is in this context that we need to see the emergence of sociology as a discipline. Let us begin with a discussion of the Enlightenment period.

1.2.1 The Enlightenment Period

The roots of the ideas developed by the early sociologists are grounded in the social conditions that prevailed in Europe. The emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline can be traced to that period of European history, which saw such tremendous social, political and economic changes as embodied in the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. This period of change in European society is known as the Enlightenment Period as it embodies the spirit of new awakening in the French philosophers of the eighteenth century.

The Enlightenment Period marked a radical change from the traditional thinking of **feudal** Europe. It introduced the new way of thinking and looking at reality. Individuals started questioning each and every aspect of life and nothing was considered sacrosanct - from the church to the state to the authority of the monarch and so on.

The roots of the ideas, such as the belief that both nature and society can be studied scientifically, that human beings are essentially rational and that a society built on rational principles will make human beings realize their infinite potentials, can be traced in the development of science and commerce in Europe. The new outlook developed as a result of the Commercial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution and crystallised during the French and the Industrial Revolutions gave birth to sociology as a discipline.

To understand the social changes that were taking place in European society, we will first look at the kind of society that existed in traditional Europe, i.e. prior to the Enlightenment period.

1.2.2 Structure and Change in European Society

Old Europe was traditional. Land was central to its economic system. There were owners of land, the feudal lords and the peasants who worked on the lands. The classes were distinct and clearly demarcated. Religion formed the corner stone of society. The religious heads decided what was moral, what was not. Family and kinship were central to the lives of the people. Monarchy was firmly rooted in society. The king was believed to be divinely ordained to rule over his people.

The New Europe ushered in by the two Revolutions, the French and the industrial, challenged each and every central feature of old Europe. Classes

were recognised. Old classes were overthrown. New classes arose. Religion was questioned. Religion lost its important position. Family loyalties gave way to ideological commitments. The position of women changed. And finally monarchy was overthrown. **Democracy** was heralded in.

The central concepts of society, namely, religion, community, power, wealth, etc. were all taking on new bearings and new implications.

The contrast between present and past seemed stark. For the aristocrat, threatened with the loss of life and property the present was terrifying. For the peasant, the present was intoxicating as it offered new opportunities and powers.

Thus, you can see that everybody was affected. Since the significance of the changes that were taking place in Europe cannot be overestimated, it is better that you study about them in greater detail in the next section.

Check Your Progress I

- i) Mention two features of the old European society. Use about two lines.

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- ii) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

- a) The Indian Middle Classes had been exposed to the and European social thought during the Freedom struggle.
- b)was central to the economic system of old Europe.
- c) The Europe ushered in by the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution challenged each and everyfeature of old Europe.

1.3 THE SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN WHICH SOCIOLOGY EMERGED

Sociology emerged as a distinct science in nineteenth century Europe. Europe then was passing through a period of immense changes which had set in with the French and the Industrial Revolutions. Indeed, sociology can be considered above all a science of the new industrial society.

But before we go on to describe the salient points of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution we will explain to you the Commercial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution which took place in Europe between the fourteenth century and the eighteenth century. It was during these two Revolutions in Europe, covered by what is popularly known as the “Renaissance” period, when there took place a revival of art, literature, music, sculpture, science and so on.

1.3.1 The Commercial Revolution

The “Commercial Revolution” refers to a series of events between 1450 to approximately 1800. These events signaled to a shift from the largely subsistence and stagnant economy of medieval Europe to a more dynamic and worldwide system. The Commercial Revolution in this sense, signified the expansion of trade and commerce that took place from the fifteenth century onwards. It was of such a large scale and organised manner that we call it a Revolution. This expansion was as a result of the initiative taken by certain European countries to develop and consolidate their economic and political power. These countries were Portugal, Spain, Holland and England.

Let us now study some of the important aspects of the Commercial Revolution, namely overseas discoveries and conquests. Europe’s trade with the Oriental or Eastern countries like India and China was transacted by land routes. The northern Italian cities of Venice and Genoa were the major centers of trade. The result of the Italian monopoly was that the prices of goods like spices and silks imported from the East were extremely high. Portugal and Spain therefore, wanted to discover a route to the Orient that would be independent of Italian control.

Thus began a shift from land routes to sea-routes. The Portuguese were the pioneers in adventurous navigation and exploration, you probably know of the historic voyage of Vasco da Gama who, in 1498 landed on the Indian coast after having sailed around the southern tip of Africa.

Christopher Columbus, an Italian under the patronage of the Spanish King and Queen, set sail for India. However, he landed on the shores of North America. This accidental discovery of America was to prove very beneficial to Spain. It laid the foundations of what was to become a Spanish empire in America.

Britain, France and Holland soon followed Spain and Portugal. The parts of India and Africa, Malacca, the Spice Islands, West Indies and South America came under the economic control of Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland. Commerce expanded into a world enterprise. The monopoly of the Italian cities was destroyed.

European markets were flooded with new commodities; spices and textiles from the East, tobacco from N. America, Cocoa, Chocolate and quinine from S. America, ivory and, above all, human slaves from Africa. With the discovery of the Americas, the range of trade widened. Formerly, the items sought for were spices and cloth, later, gold and silver were added to the list.

As the Commercial Revolution progressed, the position of Portugal and Spain declined. England, Holland and France came to dominate Europe and the world.

1.3.1.1 Expansion of Banking

One of the important features of the Commercial Revolution was the growth of banking. Credit facilities were expanded, making it easy for merchants

all over Europe to do business. The “cheque” was invented in the eighteenth century. Paper money came to replace gold and silver coins.

Growth of companies: As trade and commerce expanded, new kinds of business organizations had to be devised to cope with this growth. “Regulated companies” arose in the 16th century. These were associations of merchants who bonded together to cooperate for a common venture.

“Joint-stock” companies emerged in the 17th century. In this set-up, shares of capital were distributed to a large number of investors. Some of these were also “chartered companies”, their governments gave them a charter or a contract which guaranteed them a monopoly of the trade in a particular region. Examples of these companies include the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company.

1.3.1.2 Rise of a New Class

As hinted at earlier in this section, one of the most distinctive characteristics of this period was the rise of the middle class to economic power. By the end of the 17th century, the middle class had become an influential group in nearly every western European country. It included merchants, bankers, ship-owners and investors. Their power, at this stage, was mainly economic. But later in the unit, we shall see how they became politically powerful in the 19th century. “Europeanisation” of the world

By this term, we mean the transplanting of European manners and culture in other societies. The activities of traders, missionaries and conquerors saw the Europeanisation of the Americas. Later, with the strengthening of colonialism, this process took root in Asia and Africa as well.

Activity 1

You have just read the details about the Commercial Revolution, which took place from 14th-18th century approximately in Europe. Now read a textbook on ancient Indian history and find out whether there was a parallel kind of Commercial activity in India during this period.

This period saw the strengthening of monarchy, the decline of the Church and the rise of the middle class. It marked the beginning of the process of “Europeanisation”, which was to reach a peak with colonialism. Thus Europe charted new areas for economic expansion - the whole world had become Europe’s oyster. Now let us examine the revolution in science.

1.3.2 The Scientific Revolution and the Renaissance Period

In this section, we shall examine the changes and developments that took place in a very significant area of human activity - science. Europe produced a “scientific revolution” in the Renaissance period of fourteenth to sixteenth century A.D. The impact of the scientific revolution was crucial not just in changing material life, but also people’s ideas about Nature and Society.

To begin with, let us clarify what we mean by the “history of science”, which is what we will be describing in this section. The history of science does not mean a list of dates and events to be memorized. It is a story of

the interconnection between science and society, polity, economy and culture.

1.3.2.1 Social Functions of Sciences

Science does not develop independent of society, rather, it develops in response to human needs e.g. various vaccines were not developed just out of the blue, but out of the necessity to cure diseases.

Apart from influencing the physical or material life of society, science is intimately connected with ideas. The general intellectual atmosphere existing in society influences the development of science. Similarly, new developments in science can change the attitudes and beliefs in other areas as well. It is important to keep this fact in mind. We shall constantly be demonstrating how new scientific ideas influenced scholars to think about society in new ways. The emergence of sociology in Europe owes a great deal to the ideas and discoveries contributed by science.

1.3.2.2 Science in the Medieval Period

As we have described in the earlier section, medieval society was characterised by the feudal system. The Church was the epicenter of power authority and learning. Learning was mostly of the religious variety. Nothing could challenge the 'dogmas' or rigid beliefs of the Church. New, daring ideas could not flower in such an atmosphere. Thus the development of science was restricted mainly to improvements in techniques of production.

1.3.2.3 The Renaissance period

The 'Renaissance' period saw the beginning of the 'Scientific Revolution'. It marked an area of description and criticism in the field of science. It was a clear break from the past, a challenge to old authority. Let us briefly observe some of the major developments in art and science of this period.

Visual art

Art, literature and science all flourished. A scientific approach to Nature and the human body became prevalent. We can see this in the paintings of that period, which explored the smallest details of Nature and the human body.

Medicine

Dissection the human body became acceptable. Doctors and physiologists directly observed how the human body was constructed. The fields of anatomy, physiology and pathology thus benefited greatly.

Chemistry

A general theory of chemistry was developed. Chemical processes like oxidation, reduction, distillation, amalgamation etc. were studied.

Navigation and astronomy

Vasco da Gama reached the Indian shores in 1498. Columbus discovered America in 1492. Remember, this was the era of expansion of trade and the beginnings of colonialism. A strong interest in astronomy, important for successful navigation also grew.

1.3.2.4 The Copernican Revolution

The first major break from the entire system of ancient thought came with the work of the Dutchman, Nicholas Copernicus.

It was generally believed that the earth was fixed or stationary and the sun and other heavenly bodies moved around it. (This is known as a 'geocentric' theory.)

Copernicus however thought otherwise. With the help of detailed explanations, he demonstrated that the earth moved around a fixed sun. (This is a 'heliocentric' theory.) The work of Copernicus is considered revolutionary because it drastically altered patterns of thought about the universe. Human being was not at the center of the universe, but a small part of a vast system.

In a nutshell, science in the Renaissance period was marked by a new attitude towards man and nature. Natural objects became the subject of close observation and experiment.

The Copernican revolution shattered the very foundations on which the old world rested.

Let us now outline some major scientific developments of the post-Renaissance era.

1.3.3 Important Post-Renaissance Developments

Here we describe the developments in different fields that led to new methods and perspectives in scientific research.

1.3.3.1 Experimental Method in Physics and Mathematics

The work of physicists and mathematicians like Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and subsequently, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) revolutionised science. It brought to the forefront the experimental method. Old ideas were challenged and alternatives were suggested. If these alternative ideas could be proved and repeatedly verified and checked out, they were accepted. If not, new solutions were sought.

Scientific methods thus came to be regarded as the most accurate, the most objective. You will later see how the use of the 'scientific method' to study society was recommended by pioneer sociologists.

1.3.3.2 Biology and Evolution

As has been mentioned earlier, dissection of the human body helped people gain a better understanding of its working: Circulation of blood was discovered by William Harvey (1578-1657). This led to a lot of rethinking. The human organism came to be viewed in terms of interrelated parts and interconnected systems. This had its impact on social thought of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, to name a few.

Let us now come to one of the most interesting contributions in biology, which created a furor in the society of that time. The British naturalist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published the *Origin of Species* in 1859. It was based on the observations made whilst traveling for five years all over

the world. Darwin put forward the theory that various living organisms compete for the limited resources the earth has to offer. Thus “survival of the fittest” is the natural law. Some species evolve or develop certain traits, which make their survival possible, other species die out.

Darwin studied ‘human evolution’, tracing it in his work, *Descent of Man* (1863). He traced the origins of the human species to some ape-like ancestors, which, over the centuries, evolved into modern human beings. This book created an uproar. It was believed that ‘God’ made humans “in his own image” and conservatives were not willing to accept that they were descended from the monkey.

Darwin’s evolutionary theory did, however, gain wide acceptance. It was applied to the social world by ‘evolutionary’ thinkers, notably Herbert Spencer. Not just organisms, but societies were seen as constantly ‘evolving’ or developing from a lower to a higher stage.

The forces of change set in by the Commercial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution would have now become clear to you by now. We will next describe the salient aspects of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which have together provided the social conditions which led to the emergence of sociology as a discipline. Since these two revolutions are of considerable significance let us discuss them in the next two sections (1.4 and 1.5). Before going on to them, let us complete Check Your Progress 1.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) What do you understand by the Commercial Revolution in Europe? Describe it in about six lines.

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- ii) Describe at least two developments in science during the “Scientific Revolution”. Use about six lines.

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- iii) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.
- Sociology can be considered above all a science of the new society.
 - It emerged as a distinct science in the century.
 - The Commercial Revolution and the “Scientific Revolution” in the history of Europe fall within the period.

1.4 THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The French Revolution, which erupted in 1789 marked a turning point in the history of human struggle for freedom and equality. It put an end to the age of feudalism and ushered in a new order of society. An outline of this revolution will explain to you the kind of turmoil that occurred in Europe. This revolution brought about far reaching changes in not only French society but in societies throughout Europe. Even countries in other continents such as, India, were influenced by the ideas generated during this revolution. Ideas like liberty, fraternity and equality, which now form a part of the preamble to the Constitution of India, owe their origin to the French Revolution. Let us first examine some of the major aspects of this revolution.

1.4.1 The Basic Picture of the French society: Division into Feudal Estates

The French society was divided into feudal ‘**estates**’. The structure of the feudal French society comprised the ‘Three Estates’. Estates are defined as a system of stratification found in feudal European societies whereby one section or estate is distinguished from the other in terms of status, privileges and restrictions accorded to that estate.

- The First Estate** consisted of the clergy, which was stratified into higher clergy, such as the cardinal, the archbishops, the bishops and the abbots. They lived a life of luxury and gave very little attention to religion. In fact, some of them preferred the life of politics to religion. They spent much of their time in wasteful activities like drinking, gambling, etc. In comparison to the higher clergy, the lower parish priests were over worked and poverty-stricken.
- The Second Estate** consisted of the nobility. There were two kinds of nobles, the nobles of the sword and the nobles of the robe.

The nobles of the sword were big landlords. They were the protectors of the people in principle but in reality they led a life of a parasite, living off the hard work of the peasants. They led the life of pomp and show and were nothing more than ‘high born wastrels’; that is, they spent extravagantly and did not work themselves. They can be compared to the erstwhile zamindars in India.

The nobles of the robe were nobles not by birth by title. They were the magistrates and judges. Among these nobles, some were very

progressive and liberal as they had moved in their positions from common citizens who belonged to the third estate.

- c) **The Third Estate** comprised the rest of the society and included the peasants, the merchants, the artisans, and others. There was a vast difference between the condition of the peasants and that of the clergy and the nobility. The peasants worked day and night but were overloaded with so many taxes that they lived a hand to mouth existence. They produced the food on which the whole society depended. Yet they could barely survive due to failure of any kind of protection from the government. The King, in order to maintain the good will of the other two estates, the clergy and the nobility, continued to exploit the poor. The poor peasants had no power against him. While the clergy and the nobility kept on pampering and flattering the King.

As compared to the peasants, the condition of the middle classes, also known as the bourgeoisie comprising the merchants, bankers, lawyers, manufacturers, etc. was much better. These classes too belonged to the third estate. But the poverty of the state, which led to a price rise during 1720-1789, instead of adversely affecting them, helped them. They derived profit from this rise and the fact that French trade had improved enormously also helped the commercial classes to a great extent. Thus, this class was rich and secure. But it had no social prestige as compared with the high prestige of the members of the first and the second estates.

In spite of controlling trade, industries, banking etc. the bourgeoisie had no power to influence the court or administration. The other two estates looked them down upon and the King paid very little attention to them. Thus, gaining political power became a necessity for them.

The clergy and the nobility both constituted only two per cent of the population but they owned about 35 per cent of the land. The peasants who formed 80 per cent of the population owned only 30 per cent of the land. The first two estates paid almost no taxes to the government. The peasantry, on the other hand, was burdened with taxes of various kinds. It paid taxes to the Church, the feudal lord, taxed in the form of income tax, poll tax, and land tax to the state. Thus, you can see how much burdened and poverty stricken the peasants had become at this time. They were virtually carrying the burden of the first two estates on their shoulders. On top of it all the prices had generally risen by about 65 per cent during the period, 1720-1789.

1.4.2 The Political Aspects of the French society

Like in all absolute monarchies, the theory of the Divine Right of King was followed in France too. For about 200 years the Kings of the Bourbon dynasty ruled France. Under the rule of the King, the ordinary people had no personal rights. They only served the King and his nobles in various capacities. The King's word was law and no trials were required to arrest a person on the King's orders. Laws too were different in different regions giving rise to confusion and arbitrariness. There was no distinction between the income of the state and the income of the King.

1.4.3 The Economic Aspects of the French society

The kings of France, from Louis XIV onwards, fought costly wars, which ruined the country, and when Louis XIV died in 1715, France had become bankrupt. Louis XV instead of recovering from this ruin kept on borrowing money from bankers. His famous sentence, “After me the deluge” describes the kind of financial crisis that France was facing. Louis XVI, a very weak and ineffective king, inherited the ruin of a bankrupt government. His wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, known for her expensive habits, is famous for her reply, which she gave to the poor, hungry people of France who came to her asking for bread. She told the people that, ‘if you don’t have bread, eat cake’.

Now let us examine the intellectual developments in France, which proved to be the igniting force in bringing about the revolution.

1.4.4 Intellectual Developments in France

France, like some other European countries during the eighteenth century, had entered the age of reason and rationalism. Some of the major philosophers, whose ideas influenced the French people, were rationalists who believed that all true things could be proved by reason. Some of these thinkers were, Montesquieu (1689-1755), Locke (1632-1704), Voltaire (1694-1778), and Rousseau (1712-1778).

Montesquieu in his book, *The Spirit of the Law*, held that there should not be concentration of authority, such as executive, legislative, and judicial, at one place. He believed in the theory of the separation of powers and the liberty of the individual.

Locke, an Englishman, advocated that every individual has certain rights, which cannot be taken by any authority. These rights were (i) right to life, (ii) right to property, and (iii) the right to personal freedom. He also believed that any ruler who took away these rights from his people should be removed from the seat of power and replaced by another ruler who is able to protect these rights.

Voltaire, a French philosopher, advocated religious toleration and freedom of speech. He also stood for the rights of individuals, for freedom of speech and expression.

Rousseau wrote in his book, *The Social Contract*, that the people of a country have the right to choose their sovereign. He believed that people can develop their personalities best only under a government which is of their own choice.

The major ideas of these and several other intellectuals struck the imagination of the French people. Also some of them who had served in the French army, which was sent to assist the Americans in their War of Independence from British imperialism, came back with the ideas of equality of individuals and their right to choose their own government. The French middle class was deeply affected by these ideas of liberty and equality.

So far you have learnt about the basic picture of the French society just before the Revolution. Now we will describe some of the major of the major events that took place during the Revolution.

1.4.5 Important Events

- i) In France there was a parliamentary body called the Estates-General in which all the three estates were represented but which had met last in 1614. It was in 1778 that the King, Louis XVI, was forced to impose a tax on everyone irrespective of his or her social status. The French government had become bankrupt due to the extravagance of the King, as well as, the help that they had given to the Americans in their War of Independence.

This imposition of tax led the rich nobles and the clergy to demand a meeting of the Estate-General, which they felt, was the only body, which could levy tax. The Estate-General met on May 5, 1778, but in this meeting, unlike the earlier practice, the representatives of the third estate wanted all the estates to meet and vote as one assembly. But the first two estates did not agree to this.

The refusal of the first two Estates to meet with the third Estate as a single body led to the formation of the National Assembly. The meeting of the National Assembly led by middle class leaders and some liberal minded nobles was met with stiff resistance. On 20th June 1789 when a meeting was to be held in the Hall at Versailles near Paris, the members found that it was closed and guarded by the King's men. Therefore, the National Assembly members led by their leader Baillet-Latour went to the next building which was an indoor tennis court. It was here that they took an Oath to draw a new constitution for France. This Oath, which marks the beginning of the French Revolution, is popularly known as the Oath of the Tennis Court.

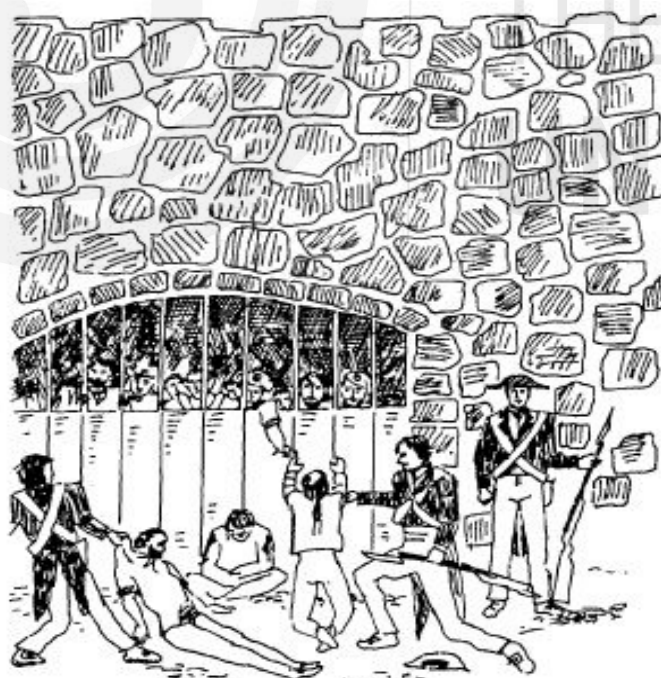


Figure 1.1: Storming of the Bastille

- ii) On July 14th, 1789 took place one of the most important events of the French Revolution. It was the storming of the Bastille, an ancient royal prison that stood as a symbol of oppression (see Figure 1.1: Storming of the Bastille). On this date the mobs of Paris, led by some

middle class leaders, broke open this prison and set its inmates free. The causes for this event were the shortage of food, on the one hand, and the dismissal of a very popular minister called Necker, on the other. The mobs of Paris rebelled against the ruling class, especially the King. This day is celebrated in France as its Independence Day.

- iii) Declaration of Rights of Man by the Constituent Assembly, (1789-1791), comprising the members of the third estate and some liberal minded members of the other two estates, guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from arbitrary punishments. It abolished the special rights and privileges of the clergy and the nobility. The King was no longer to rule by Divine Right and several important social and economic changes were brought about. According to this declaration 'all men were born and remains equal before law. They have a right to choose their government and to resist oppression. Personal liberty becomes a right given to all individuals. Thus, the ideas of liberty and equality put an end to the age of serfdom, despotism and hereditary privileges found in the old feudal society.
- iv) In 1791 the king tried to escape from France but was recognised at the frontier and brought back. Since then he became a virtual prisoner.
- v) In Paris, the new Legislative Assembly (1791-1792) was formed. It comprised two very radical groups, namely the Girondin and the Jacobin. These groups considered the king a traitor and were in favour of establishing a Republic.
- vi) The King, Louis XVI, was beheaded in public on 21st January 1793 after being proved guilty of treason. The Queen was also beheaded later in the same year. France was declared a Republic.
- vii) A period referred to as "Reign of Terror" took place in France when several of the nobles, priests, some of the revolutionaries themselves were guillotined i.e. beheaded. This period lasted for three years.
- viii) Establishment of the Directorate took place in 1795. It lasted for four years till a young artillery officer from Corsica, a neighbouring island, overthrew the Directorate in 1799. He was Napoleon Bonaparte. He made himself the new Director and provided a much sought after stable government to the people of France. Thus the French Revolution ended with the overthrow of the Directorate by Napoleon.

You would have by now developed a rough idea of what the French Revolution was and how significant its role has been in the history of human civilisation. It changed the political structure of European society and replaced the age of feudalism by heralding the arrival of democracy. There were many significant themes, which arose due to the impact of this Revolution, which have been the focus of interest of the early sociologists. These significant themes included the transformation of property, the social disorder, caused by the change in the political structure and its impact on the economic structure. A new class of power holders emerged - the bourgeoisie. In order to understand more about these themes, we need to learn the details of the Industrial Revolution.

1.5 THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The Industrial Revolution began around 1760 A.D. in England. It brought about great changes in the social and economic life of the people first in England, then in the other countries of Europe and later in other continents. In Europe, especially England, the discovery of new territories, explorations, growth of trade and commerce and the consequent growth of towns brought about an increase in demand for goods. Earlier goods (i.e. consumer items like cloth, etc.) were produced at domestic levels. This means that there existed a domestic system of production. With increased demand, goods were to be produced on a large-scale.

1.5.1 New Invention

During Industrial Revolution, new tools and techniques were invented, which could produce goods on a large-scale. During 1760-1830 A.D., a series of inventions in tools and techniques and organization of production took place and it gave rise to the factory system of production. Thus, a change in economy from feudal to **capitalist** system of production developed. Subsequently, there emerged a class of capitalists, which controlled the new system of production. Due to this revolution society moved from the old age of hand-made goods to the new age of machine-made goods. This shift heralded the emergence of Industrial Revolution.

One of the significant mechanical inventions, which led to a quicker and better method of production in various industries, was the Spinning Jenny, invented in 1767 by James Hargreaves, an English weaver. It was a simple machine rectangular in shape. It had a series of spindles, which could be turned by a single wheel. In 1769, Arkwright, an English barber, invented another tool, which was named after the name of its inventor and called Arkwright's Water Frame. This Water Frame was so large that it could not be kept in one's home and a special building was required to set it up. Thus on account of this it is said that he was responsible for introducing the factory system. Another invention called "the Mule" was by Samuel Crompton in 1779 in England. There were several other inventions, which all contributed to the industrial growth of European society.

1.5.2 Impact of the Industrial Revolution on Society

With the change in the economy of society several social changes followed. As capitalism became more and more complex, the developments of banks, insurance companies, and finance corporations took place. New class of industrial workers, managers, capitalists emerged.

The peasants in the new industrial society found themselves with thousands of other people like themselves, winding cotton in a textile mill. Instead of the famous countryside they found themselves in unhygienic living conditions. With the increase in production, population started increasing. Rise of population led to the increased rate of urbanisation. The industrial cities grew rapidly. In the industrial cities socio-economic disparities were very wide. The factory workers were involved in repetitive and boring work, the result of which they could not enjoy. In Marxist terms the worker became alienated from the product of his/ her labour. City life in the industrial society became an altogether a different way of life.

These changes moved both conservative and radical thinkers. The conservatives feared that such conditions would lead to chaos and disorder. The radicals like Engels felt that the factory workers would initiate social transformation.

Though the judgement of values differed, social thinkers of the time were agreed upon the epoch-making impact of the Industrial Revolution. They also agreed upon the importance of the new working class. The history of the period from 1811 to 1850 further indicates that this class increasingly agitated for their rights.

1.5.3 Significant Themes of the Industrial Revolution

The significant themes of the Industrial Revolution, which concerned the early sociologists, were as given below.

i) **The condition of labour:** A new population earning their livelihood by working in the factories arose. In the early years this working class lived in poverty and squalor. They were socially deprived. At the same time they were indispensable in the new industrial system. This made them a powerful social force. Sociologists recognised that the poverty of this class of workers is not natural poverty but social poverty. Thus the working class became during the nineteenth century the subject of both moral and analytical concern.

ii) **The transformation of property:** The traditional emphasis on land lost its value while money or capital became important during the Industrial Revolution. The investment in new industrial system came to be recognised. The feudal landlords became less significant while the new capitalists gained power. Many of these new capitalists were the erstwhile landlords.

Property was one of the central issues that were raised in the French Revolution too. Its influence on the social order is considerable. Property is related to economic privileges, social status and political power. A change in the property system involves a change in the fundamental character of society. Sociologists have grappled with the question of property and its impact on social stratification since the days of Marx, Tocqueville, Taine and Weber.

iii) **The industrial city, i.e. urbanism:** Urbanisation was a necessary corollary of the Industrial Revolution. Industries grew and along with it grew great cluster of populations, the modern towns and cities. Cities were present in ancient period too, such as Rome, Athens, etc. but the new cities, such as Manchester in England, famous for its textile, were different in nature. Ancient cities were known as repositories of civilised graces and virtues while the new cities were known as repositories of misery and inhumanity. It was these aspects of the new cities, which concerned the early sociologists.

iv) **Technology and the factory system:** Technology and the factory system has been the subject of countless writings in the nineteenth century. Both the conservative and radical thinkers realised that the two systems would alter human life for all times to come.

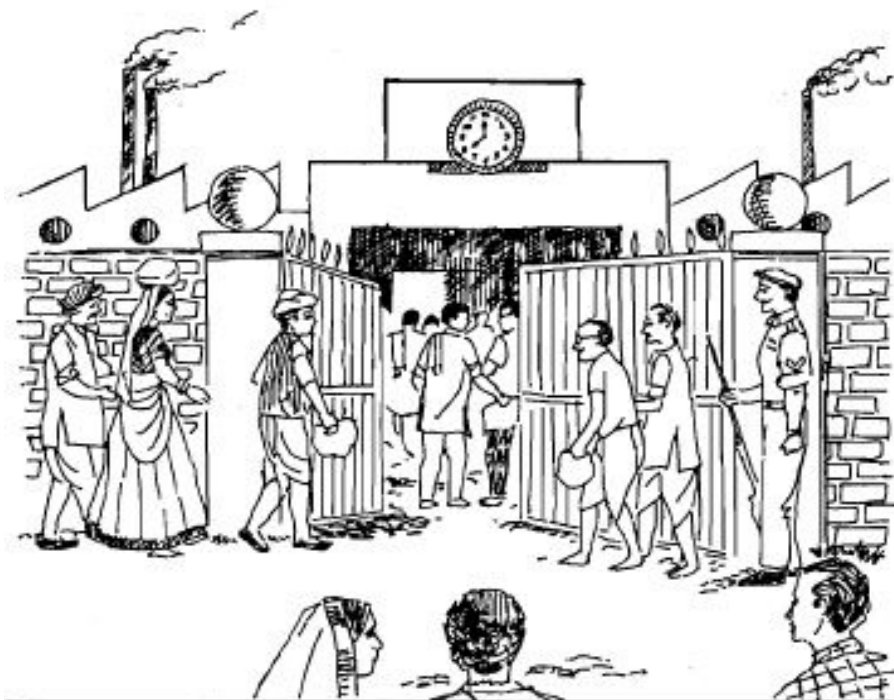


Figure 1.2: Shift from Domestic to Factory Work

The impact of technology and factory system led to large-scale migration of people to the cities. Women and children joined the work force in the factories. (See Figure 1.2: Shift from Domestic to Factory Work). Family relations changed. The siren of the factory seemed to rule peoples' life. The machine rather than man seemed to dominate work. As mentioned earlier the relation between the labourers and the products of their labour changed. They worked for their wages. The product was the child of everybody and of the machine in particular. The owner of the factory owned it. Life and work became depersonalised.

Activity 2

Read the section on the significant themes of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution carefully. Discuss with two elders the four significant themes given in the unit, in the context of our own society. Write a note of one page on any one of these four themes in the context of Indian society, for example, "Indian Society and the Condition of Labour".

Marx saw a form of enslavement in the machine and a manifestation of alienation of labour. Social scientists, felt that men and women had grown mechanical in heart, as well as in hand due to the industrial system of production. Thus themes, which you will notice in the units of this Block and other Blocks of ESO-13, kept recurring in the works of pioneers among sociologists, such as Durkheim, Marx and Weber.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) List three changes, which took place in Europe due to the Industrial Revolution.
- a)

- b)
- c)
- ii) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.
 - a) Industrial Revolution led to the transformation of the economy from to capitalist.
 - b) The French Revolution put an end to a political structure based on privileges and feudalism.
 - c) July 14th, 1789 is celebrated by the French people as their day.

1.6 THE INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology emerged as a response to the forces of change, which took place during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. The ideas, which are discussed again and again in early sociological writings, are thus essentially ideas of that period.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment of eighteenth century affected much of the early sociology. The Enlightenment appears as the most appropriate point of departure in the study of the origins of sociological theory, for various reasons including those mentioned below.

Firstly, a scientific approach to the study of society dates back to the tradition of Enlightenment. The eighteenth century thinkers began more consistently than any of their predecessors to study the human conditions in a scientific way using the methods of the natural sciences. They consciously applied scientific principles of analysis to the study of human beings and their nature and society.

Secondly, the eighteenth century thinkers upheld reason as a measure to judge social institutions and their suitability for human nature. Human beings, according to them, are essentially rational and this rationality can lead them to freedom of thought and action.

Thirdly, the eighteenth century thinkers believed that human beings are capable of attaining perfection. By criticising and changing social institutions they can create for themselves even greater degrees of freedom, which, in turn would enable them increasingly to actualise the potentially creative powers.

Sociological thinkers are concerned with the above three assumptions. Apart from them, three other intellectual influences current in the post-Enlightenment period influenced the emergence of sociology in Europe. They can be identified as

- i) the philosophy of history

- ii) the biological theories of evolution; and
- iii) the surveys of social conditions.

These three intellectual influences are the precursors of sociology and are reflected the writings of the early sociologists.

1.6.1 The Philosophy of History

In the early part of the nineteenth century the philosophy of history became an important intellectual influence. The basic assumption of this philosophy was that society must have progressed through a series of steps from a simple to complex stage. We may briefly assess the contributions of the philosophy of history to sociology as having been, on the philosophical side, the notions of development and progress. On the scientific side, it has given the concepts of historical periods and social types. The social thinkers who developed the philosophy of history such as Abbe Saint Pierre, and Giambattista, were concerned with the whole of society and not merely the political, or the economic, or the cultural aspects (Bottomore 1962: 14-15). Later the contributions of Comte, Spencer, Marx and many others reflected the impact of the loss of this intellectual trend in their sociological writings.

1.6.2 The Biological Theories of Evolution

The influence of the philosophy of history was further reinforced by the biological theory of evolution. Sociology moved towards an evolutionary approach, seeking to identify and account for the principal stages in social evolution. It tended to be modeled on biology, as is evident from the widely diffused conception of society as an organism, and from the attempts to formulate general terms of social evolution. Herbert Spencer and Durkheim are good example of this kind of writing.

1.6.2 Surveys of Social Conditions

Social survey forms an important element in modern sociology. It emerged due to two reasons, one was the growing conviction that the methods of the natural sciences should and could be extended to the study of human affairs; that human phenomenon could be classified and measured. The other was the concern with poverty ('the social problem'), following the recognition that poverty was not natural but social. The social survey is one of the principal methods of sociological inquiry. The basic assumption, which underlines this method, is that through the knowledge of the social conditions one can arrive at solutions to solve the social problems prevalent in society.

Having considered at length, the social conditions in which sociology emerged, it is now time to complete Activity 3 and Check Your Progress 4 before summing up the contents of the unit.

Activity 3

You have just now read about the relationship between society and the ideas that are generated from time to time in a society. You also learnt about the social change that took place in European society from the

fourteenth to the eighteenth century A.D. and during the period when the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution took place.

Keeping these ideas and developments in mind give at least two examples from Indian society where ideas have influenced society or where events taking place in society have influenced the ideas.

Check Your Progress 4

- i) Which of the following would you categorise as factors responsible for the growth of sociology?
 - a) The Enlightenment
 - b) The progress of Natural Sciences
 - c) The growth of religious authority
 - d) The strengthening of monarchy
 - e) The factory system
 - f) The growth of urban slums
 - g) Increase in poverty and squalor
 - h) The Industrial Revolution
 - i) The rise of modern state system
 - j) The concept of individual rights
 - k) The decline in the concept of divine will
 - l) The belief that society is man-made
 - m) The belief that men and women can change society
- ii) Identify two intellectual approaches affecting the emergence of sociology. Use about eight lines.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you studied how social conditions affect the ideas which people have. You learnt how certain changes taking place in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Europe bothered social thinkers. Sociology thus grew essentially as a product of the reflections of the great thinkers reflecting on society.

You learnt about the sociologically significant themes of the Commercial, the French and the Industrial Revolutions. Finally, you read about the intellectual influences such as the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and surveys of social conditions, which affected the emergence of sociology in Europe.

After learning about the setting in which sociology as a discipline emerged in Europe, you will now in the next two units read about the ideas of the founding fathers of sociology and contributions of these ideas to development of sociology.

1.8 KEY WORDS

- Capitalist** In an industrial system of production, the class of owners of the means of production (such as, the capital i.e. the money, the property, the tools, etc.) is called the capitalists.
- Democracy** A form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively. It is a state of society characterised by recognition of equality of rights and privileges, social and legal equally.
- Enlightenment** It refers to that period in European history, which embodies the spirit of the French philosophers of the eighteenth century. During this period a belief developed that both nature and society can be studied scientifically. Human reason and the ideas of progress developed.
- Estate** The system of stratification followed in medieval European society of around 17th-18th century, in which society was divided into different social groups having a different set of laws and social status for each
- Feudal** A system of tenure in agricultural areas whereby a vassal or serf served the landlord to whom the land belonged. In return the landlord allowed the serf to till his land and live on his land
- Liberal** A person who is broad minded and not bound by authority or traditional orthodoxy i.e. old fashioned beliefs

1.9 FURTHER READING

Berger, P. 1963, *Invitation to Sociology A Humanistic Perspective*, Anchor Books Double Day & Company, Inc.: New York

Bottomore, T.B. 1962, *Sociology A Guide to Problems and Literature*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd.: London

Inkeles, A. 1975, *What is Sociology?* Prentice-Hall: New Delhi.

1.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) The old European society was traditional feudal society in which land was the basic property. Religion provided the foundation to this society.
- ii) a) liberal, radical
b) land
c) new, central

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The forces of change in the largely subsistent and stagnant economy of the Medieval Europe from about 1450-1800 century A.D. led to what it called the Commercial Revolution in Europe. The cause of this Revolution was expansion of trade and commerce initiated by certain European countries. These countries, such as Portugal, Spain, Holland etc. tried to consolidate their political and economic power through overseas trade and commerce and conquests of new territories.
- ii) During the scientific revolution, the following two developments, among many others, took place and helped in advancement of knowledge. Dissection of human body started which led to an increased knowledge of the anatomy. Modern medicine developed due to this knowledge. The ancient belief that the earth was fixed and the sun revolved around it was shattered by Copernicus, who proved that it is the sun, which is fixed, and the earth, which revolves around it. This is called the “heliocentric theory”.
- iii)
 - a) Industrial
 - b) nineteenth
 - c) renaissance

Check Your Progress 3

- 1)
 - a) The production process of Europe was transformed with the new capitalistic factory system replacing the old feudal, largely agricultural system.
 - b) A new working class employed as wage labour in the industries arose.
 - c) The growth of urban slums changed both the physical as well as the social life of people.
- ii)
 - a) feudal
 - b) hereditary
 - c) Independence

Check Your Progress 4

- i) a), b), e), f), g), h), i), j), k), l), m)
- ii) Two intellectual approaches affecting the emergence of sociology are Philosophy of History: According to this approach, each society moves through a series of steps from a simple to complex stage and therefore progress is both natural and inevitable.

The Biological Theories of Evolution: The comparison of society to a biological organism made sociologists believe that (i) society moves inherently from a simple to complex structures, and (ii) society like an organism operates on the same principles of adjustments to an equilibrium.

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Early Origins
- 2.3 Auguste Comte (1798-1857)
 - 2.3.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 2.3.2 His Social Environment
 - 2.3.3 The Central Ideas
 - 2.3.2.1 The Law of the Three Stages
 - 2.3.2.2 Hierarchy of the Sciences
 - 2.3.2.3 Static and Dynamic Sociology
 - 2.3.4 Significance of Auguste Comte's Ideas to Contemporary Sociology
- 2.4 Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)
 - 2.4.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 2.4.2 His Social Environment
 - 2.4.3 The Central Ideas
 - 2.4.3.1 The Evolutionary Doctrine
 - 2.4.3.2 Organic Analogy
 - 2.4.3.3 The Evolution of Societies
 - 2.4.4 Significance of Herbert Spencer's Ideas to Contemporary Sociology
- 2.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.6 Key Words
- 2.7 Further Reading
- 2.8 Specimen Answers To Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit deals with the central ideas of two of the founding fathers of sociology. After studying this unit, you should be able to

- outline the biographical details of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer
- describe the social environment to which they belonged
- discuss the central ideas of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer
- compare and contrast the approaches outlined by them
- show the relevance of contributions of these early thinkers to contemporary sociology.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

You have already studied about the growth of sociology in Europe (Unit 1). Here we will introduce you to the pioneers of sociology. In this unit, we will confine our attention to the founders, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. In the next unit, we shall deal with some other founding fathers of sociology like Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen and Vilfredo Pareto.

You will find it interesting to notice how the themes of sociology, discussed in Unit 1, are dealt by each of the sociologist whom you will study in this unit. Section 2.2 explains the early origins of sociology. Section 2.3 discusses the social environment to which Auguste Comte (1798-1857) belonged, his central ideas and the significance of his sociology to the contemporary period. Section 2.4 elaborates upon the social environment to which Herbert Spencer belonged, his central ideas and the significance of his ideas on contemporary sociology. Finally, section 2.5 provides you the summary of this unit.

2.2 EARLY ORIGINS

In the previous unit, Unit 1 of ESO-03, you learnt about the emergence of sociology in Europe. Here we are describing the early origins of sociology to explain the social background of the founding fathers of sociology. As students of sociology we must know the central ideas of the founding fathers since their work reflects the main social concern of sociology and provides the basic foundation for discipline of sociology.

As you know, human beings have always been curious about the sources of their own behaviour. You must have pondered some time or the other on the strange ways of society. Why, you may have asked, must we behave in this way? Why is our society so traditional? Why is the society of other people so different from our own? These questions strike us now, just as they struck our forefathers before us.

Men and women have attempted to answer these questions. But earlier their attempt to understand themselves and society relied on ways of thinking passed down from generation to generation and expressed in religious terms.

The systematic study of human behaviour and human society is a relatively recent development, whose beginnings can be found in the European society of the late eighteenth century. The background to the new approach was the series of sweeping changes associated with the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. The shattering of traditional ways of life prompted those studying human behaviour to develop a new understanding of both the social and the natural worlds.

Just as natural scientists sought to explain the mysteries of life and nature, sociologists sought to explain the complexities of social life. A **science** of society was founded. To begin with the very beginning we shall start with Auguste Comte (1798-1857), commonly regarded as the founder of Sociology. It was he who coined the name 'sociology'. He was a French

man. Next, we will discuss the second founding father of sociology, Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who was a Britisher.

Before we start discussing Comte's ideas, you should be warned about the constraints of this unit. The period in which sociology emerged was marked with the rise of writers of distinction. Our treatment of the founding fathers has therefore been highly selective, with the single aim in mind of achieving clarity in seeing the major elements and tendencies which constituted the 'beginnings' of sociology.

2.3 AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857)

Auguste Comte was born in 1798 during the ferment of the French Revolution, that vast complex of events which heralded the birth of the modern world. You have already read in Unit 1 about the shattering changes taking place in the European social order in the aftermath of the French Revolution. To understand Auguste Comte's ideas fully, one has to appreciate how passionately he was concerned with the problems which people and society of his time were faced with. In order to gain an insight into Auguste Comte as a person, let us discuss his biographical sketch.

2.3.1 Biographical Sketch

Auguste Comte (1798-1857), a French sociologist, was born at Montpellier France of Catholic royalist parents (see Figure 2.1: Auguste Comte, 1798-1857). In 1814 he was admitted to one of the most prestigious educational institutions of France at that time called the Ecole Polytechnique. Here most of the professors were scholars in mathematics and physics. They had little interest in the study of society. But young Auguste Comte, being sensitive to the kind of social disorder that France was undergoing due to the Revolution, was keenly interested in human affairs and the study of society. Comte was involved in a student protest at the Ecole Polytechnique because of which he was expelled.

At the Ecole Polytechnique, he came under the influence of such traditionalist social philosophers as L.G. Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. It was from them that he borrowed the notion of an order governing the evolution of human society. From Condorcet, another major philosopher of France, who was beheaded later, Comte got the idea that this evolution occurs along with progress in human societies. In 1824, he became a secretary to Saint-Simon, an aristocrat by birth but an utopian socialist in ideas. He became a close friend and disciple of Saint-Simon, who stimulated his interest in economics. It was at this period that Auguste Comte worked out the general conception of a science of society, which he named sociology.

Auguste Comte's ambition was the political reorganisation of human society. According to him, such reorganisation will have to depend upon the spiritual and moral unification of society. Thus, with Saint-Simon, he developed several major ideas. However, their partnership was shortlived and they ended up quarreling with each other. Later Auguste Comte published some of his lecture notes in, *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (6

Vols., Paris 1830-42, 5th ed.). In this work he wrote about the law of three stages and developed his conception of a science of society. While working on this book, he discovered the principle of cerebral hygiene. This meant that in order to keep his mind uncontaminated he stopped reading other people's works.

Between 1851-1854, he wrote a treatise entitled, *System of Positive Politics*, (4 Vols.). In this book he applied the findings of theoretical sociology towards solving the social problems of his society. It was during this period that he met Clotilde de Vaux who became a close friend. Her death in 1846, a year after they met, affected Auguste Comte to such a great degree that his ideas turned towards mysticism and religion. His ideas, which he put down in *Systems of Positive Politics*, shifted partly from positivism to construct a religion of humanity. Due to this change in ideas he lost many of his disciples and intellectual friends such as, J.S. Mill of England. He took his role as the prophet of social regeneration so seriously that he even sent a plan to the Russian King suggesting ideas to reorganise society. However, till his end Auguste Comte's works were not recognised in France. Only after his death, in 1857 (a very important year in Indian history) he became popular first in England and then in France and Germany. The direct imprint of his thinking can be seen in the French scientific movement of the last half of the nineteenth century, represented by such thinkers as, Taine, Renan, Berthelot and such outstanding English figures as J.S. Mill.

2.3.2 His Social Environment

During the early nineteenth century the intellectual climate in France was favourable to the development of new, critical and rational ideas. Achievements in natural sciences and mathematics were a matter of pride and a new confidence had developed in the use and application of methods. You already know about the emphasis that the Enlightenment philosophers placed on the ideas of progress and human reason.

Auguste Comte, being a product of his time, was also affected by the social destruction brought by the French Revolution. He lived in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He was continually distressed and disturbed by the disorder of his time, and by the material and cultural poverty of the people. His fundamental and lifelong preoccupation was how to replace disorder by order; how to bring about a total reconstruction of society.

He saw the French Revolution as a crucial turning-point in the history of human affairs. The ancient regime was gone. Society was unable to cope with the new developments in scientific knowledge and industrialisation. A new order of social institutions in keeping with the changes taking place had not yet taken a firm hold. Amidst this confused state people too were in a state of flux. Their thoughts were disoriented. There were great differences between belief and knowledge. In other words the traditional value system was disturbed during this period. And the cultural values and goals of people lacked coherence, confidence and worthwhile objectives. Erstwhile loyalties had broken. New ones were yet to take root. The people were, therefore, in a state of confusion. A new policy or a new order of feeling, thought and action was necessary for the new, complex, industrial society. But this reconstruction needed a reliable basis of knowledge.

The question posed by Auguste Comte was – what would this body of knowledge be built upon? And the answer given by Comte was that people themselves have to take initiatives and found a science which would provide them with an alternative world view. It was no longer possible to fall back upon Gods, upon religion, upon metaphysical forces, traditional modes of belief and action. People were now responsible for their own destiny. They must make their own society.

You will ask, how? And it is towards answering this that Comte formulated his central ideas about sociology. But before we move on to the study of the central ideas formulated by Comte, let us tell you about the influence of Saint-Simon on Auguste Comte. It is important to know about Saint-Simon (1760-1825) because many of the ideas developed by Comte had their roots in Saint-Simon's works (see Box 2.1). In fact, Auguste Comte worked as a secretary to Saint-Simon and together they formulated the idea of a science of society.

Box 2.1: Saint Simon, a Utopian Socialist

Saint-Simon was a French aristocrat, but in his ideas he was one of the first utopian socialists (i.e. one who believes in an ideal society where everyone gets an equal share of opportunities and resources). He believed that the problems of his society could be best solved by reorganising economic production. This will deprive the class of property owners from their means of production and thus they will lose their economic freedom which was an important value of his time (Timasheff 1967:19). If you recall the main ideas about the French Revolution, you will remember that the feudal French society was divided into three estates, the first being the clergy, second the nobility and the third, the commoners. The first two estates between themselves owned the major portion of the landed property as well as wealth and status. It is this social and economic structure that Saint-Simon wanted to reorganise.

In a joint publication *Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the Reorganising of Society*, (1822) Saint-Simon and Comte wrote about the law of three stages through which each branch of knowledge must pass. They said that the object of social physics, the positive science of society later renamed as 'sociology', is to discover the natural and immutable laws of progress. These laws are as important to the science of society as the laws of gravity, discovered by Newton, are to the natural sciences. The intellectual alliance between Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte did not last long and in fact ended in a bitter quarrel.

According to Auguste Comte, sociology is the abstract theoretical science of social phenomena. He had initially called it social physics but later he reluctantly changed this name. He changed it because he found that a Belgian scientist, Adolphe Quetelet, had used this term to describe simple statistics. Thus, Auguste Comte was compelled to use the word sociology, a combination of a Latin and a Greek word which denotes "the study of society on a highly generalised or abstract level" (Timasheff 1967: 4).

Now in the next few pages we will discuss the central ideas of Auguste Comte, such as the law of three stages, the hierarchy of sciences and his division of **static** and **dynamic** sociology.

2.3.3 The Central Ideas

You have noticed that Auguste Comte wanted to reorganise society on new lines. He felt that the momentous changes taking place in European society, especially French, will have to be accompanied by new principles. These new principles will have to integrate and balance the different aspects of human life. Thus, for him, the discovery of social laws, which explain these principles of change in society, were very important.

Auguste Comte was not only talking about sociology as a science of society but also believed that it must be used for reorganizing society. He wanted to develop a naturalistic science of society. This science would be able to both, explain the past development of mankind as well as, predict its future course. According to him the society of human beings must be studied in the same scientific manner as the world of nature. The progress in natural sciences in establishing the laws of nature, such as Newton's laws of gravity, Copernicus's discovery that it is the sun which is fixed and the Earth and other planets which revolve around it, and so on; led him to believe that even in society we can discover social laws.

Auguste Comte maintained that the new science of society must rely on reasoning and observation instead of depending on the authority of tradition. Only then can it be considered scientific. But every scientific theory must also be based on observed facts and vice versa.

Thus, Comte's science of society, that is sociology, was to be patterned after the natural sciences. It was to apply the methods of inquiry used by the natural sciences, such as observation, experimentation, and comparison. However, along with the natural science methods given above, he also introduced the historical **method**. This historical method (different from the one used by historians) was a healthy advance in sociology. Historical method compares societies throughout the time in which they have evolved. This method is at the core of sociological inquiry since historical evolution is the very crux of sociology.

Through these methods Comte wanted to discover social laws because only when we know the laws in society can we restructure it. Thus, in his view social action beneficial to human beings became possible once the laws of motion of human evolution are established. It is these laws which, according to Auguste Comte, define the basis for social order.

According to Comte, nothing is absolute. Every knowledge is true in a relative sense and does not enjoy everlasting validity. Thus, science has a self-corrective character and whatever does not hold true is rejected. In this sense this new science, which was also called positive science, replaced the authority of tradition that could not be refuted (Cosser 1971: 5).

2.3.3.1 The Law of the Three Stages

In, as early as 1822 when Auguste Comte was still working as Saint-Simon's secretary, he attempted to discover the successive stages through which human race had evolved. In his study he began from the state of human race, not much superior to the great apes, to the state at which he found the civilised society of Europe. In this study he applied scientific methods



Figure 2.1: Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

Auguste Comte believed that the evolution of the human mind had taken place along with the evolution of the individual mind. In other words, he holds that just as each individual develops from the stage of a devout believer in childhood, to a critical metaphysician (one who questions the abstract notions of existence) in adolescence, to a natural philosopher in adulthood, so also the human beings and their system of thought have evolved in three major stages. These three stages of the evolution of human thought are

- i) the **theological** stage;
 - ii) the metaphysical stage; and
 - iii) the **positive** stage.
- i) In the theological stage, the mind explains phenomena by ascribing them to beings or forces comparable to human beings. In this stage, human being attempts to discover the first and the final causes (the origin and purpose) of all effects. Thus, human mind at this level supposes that all phenomena are produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings. For example, some tribes believed that diseases like small pox, cholera were the expressions of God's anger.
 - ii) In the metaphysical stage, the mind explains phenomenon by invoking abstract entities like 'nature'. These abstract entities are personified abstractions. Human beings pursue meaning and explanation of the world in term of 'essences', 'ideals', 'forms', i.e. in short, in a conception of some ultimate reality, such as God.

- iii) In the positive stage human beings cease to look for 'original sources' or final causes because these can be neither checked against facts nor utilised to serve our needs. Human mind at this stage applies itself to the study of their laws, i.e. their invariable relations of succession and resemblance (Cosser 1971: 7). Human beings seek to establish laws which link facts and which govern social life.

Auguste Comte maintained that each stage of the development of human thoughts necessarily grew out of the preceding one. Only when the previous stage exhausts itself does the new stage develop. He also correlated the three stages of human thought with the development of social organisation, types of social order, the types of social units and material conditions found in society. He believed that social life evolved in the same way as the successive changes in human thought took place.

According to Auguste Comte all societies undergo changes. There is a stage in which a society enjoys social stability. Intellectual harmony prevails in such a society and various parts of the society are in equilibrium. This is the organic period of the society. But when the critical period comes the old traditions, institutions, etc. become disturbed. Intellectual harmony is lost and there is a disequilibrium in society. The French society, in Auguste Comte's view, was undergoing this critical period. He said that there is always a transitional state of anarchy which lasts for some generations at least and the longer it lasts the more complete is the renovation of that society (Cosser 1971: 8).

In terms of the history of human race, the theological stage of human thought, in relation to political dominance, was dominated by the priests and ruled by military men. The metaphysical stage which corresponded roughly to the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, was dominated by the Church men and lawyers. The positive stage, which was just dawning, will be dominated by industrial administrators and scientific moral guides.

The theological stage, in terms of social unit, had family as its important unit, the metaphysical stage had state as its important unit, and the positive stage will have the whole human race as the operative social unit.

Auguste Comte believed that intellectual evolution, i.e. the evolution of human thought, was the most important basis of his explanation of human progress. However, he did not rule out other causal factors. For example, he considered growth in human population a major factor that determined the rate of social progress. The more population there was, the more division of labour occurred. The more division of labour there was found in a society, the more evolved it became. Thus, he saw division of labour as a powerful force in the process of social evolution. Following on his footsteps, Emile Durkheim developed his theory of social division of labour which you will learn in Block 3 of this course.

The law of the three stages was also linked with the hierarchy of the sciences. The same way as thought systems evolved, as did the different sciences came to be established. All the sciences, except sociology had reached the positive stage but with the development of sociology the process was complete. Let us examine the hierarchy of the sciences in the next

sub-section (2.3.2.1) and before proceeding to it, it is better to complete Activity 1.

Activity 1

You have just read the central ideas of Auguste Comte. In relation to his ideas of society, in an organic period there is social stability and equilibrium and in a critical period there is social unrest, disequilibrium, etc. Discuss with two elders the social situation in our own country.

On the basis of your discussion, write a short note on Indian Society and its State of Disequilibrium.

Compare your note, if possible, with those of other students at your Study Centre.

2.3.3.2 Hierarchy of the Sciences

Auguste Comte felt that an examination of the several established sciences showed not only that human thoughts in general have passed through the three stages mentioned earlier, but also each subject has developed in the same way. That is, each subject has evolved from a general, simple level to a highly complex level. He put forth a hierarchical arrangement of the sciences in a way which coincided with

- i) the order of their historical emergence and development
- ii) the order of dependence upon each other (each rests on the one which precedes it, and prepares the way for the one that follows it)
- iii) their decreasing degree of generality and the increasing degree of complexity of their subject matter, and
- iv) the increasing degree of modifiability of the facts which they study.

Thus, the final arrangement of the sciences in terms of their emergence and complexity on this basis were Mathematics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Physics, Biology, Sociology, and finally Morals – by which Comte really meant a study of human beings as individuals (a study which followed sociology and was a mixture of psychology and ethics).

Sociology was the most complex science because it had to study the most complex matter, i.e. society. Sociology therefore also arose much later than the other sciences. The object of study of the other subjects was relatively simpler than sociology. Sociology thus emerged because human beings recognised a new set of objective facts concerning their society; such as social disorganisation, development of slums, poverty, etc. which they could not explain, but which they needed to explain in order to deal effectively with them. When Auguste Comte spoke of Sociology as the ‘crowning edifice’ of the hierarchy of sciences, he had the general **unifying** nature of science in mind. He was not claiming any superior status for sociology. He only felt that with the growth of positive knowledge all sciences can be brought into relationship with each other.

According to Auguste Comte, all sciences pass through the three stages, the theological, the metaphysical and finally, the positive stage. But the

individual sciences do not move through these three stages simultaneously. In fact, the higher a science stands in the hierarchy, the later it shifts from one stage to another. With the growth of positive knowledge he also advocated the use of positive methods for sociology (Timasheff 1967: 23).

2.3.3.3 Static and Dynamic Sociology

Auguste Comte divided sociology into two major parts, namely, static and dynamic sociology. The idea of this division is borrowed from biology, which is in keeping with his notions of a hierarchy of sciences. Biology is a science which precedes sociology and thus shares common features with this science.

The static sociology studies the conditions of the existence of society, while the dynamic sociology studies the continuous movement or laws of the succession of individual stages in society. In other words, the first part studies the social order and the second social changes or progress in societies.

In his discussion on Auguste Comte, Timasheff writes that statics is a theory of order or harmony between the conditions of man's existence in society. Dynamics, according to Comte, is a theory of social progress, which amounts to the fundamental development or evolution of society. Order and progress, are closely interlinked because there cannot be any social order if it is not compatible with progress while no real progress can occur in society if it is not consolidated in order. Thus although we distinguish between static and dynamic sociology for analytical purposes, the static and dynamic laws must be linked together throughout the system. Auguste Comte's distinction between statics and dynamics each associated with the idea of order and progress is no longer acceptable today since societies are far more complex than to be explained by the simple notions of order and progress. Auguste Comte's perception was guided by the spirit of the Enlightenment period in which these ideas developed. Contemporary sociologists do not agree with these ideas. But his basic division of sociology continues to exist in the terms, social structure and social change (Timsheff, 1967: 25).

2.3.4 Significance of Auguste Comte's Ideas to Contemporary Sociology

You must have realised by now that the origin and development of sociology as a science of society owes deeply to the contributions of Auguste Comte. His ideas have influenced several major sociologists like, Sorokin, J.S. Mill, Lester Ward, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and several others.

Auguste Comte's law of three stages has been more or less rejected by the contemporary sociologists. But the essential notion of stages of development in ideas and culture in a modified form has been accepted. This can be perceived in the major works of such sociologists as Sorokin.

Auguste Comte's ideas anticipate majority of trends, which are observable in contemporary sociology. His propositions concerning the scope and methods of sociology have been rediscovered in later sociology. In the next section you will learn about another founding father of sociology,

Herbert Spencer, whose ideas proved to be equally significant to the history of sociology.

Before moving on to Herbert Spencer, let us complete Check Your Progress 1.

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Which of the following would you categorise as a part of Auguste Comte’s theory?
 - a) A typology of three stages of development
 - b) Emphasis on building a science of society on the model of a natural science
 - c) One of the three stages of development in society is the democratic stage.
 - d) The final stage of development is the positivist stage.
 - e) Sociology is one of the earliest sciences to emerge.
 - f) In the metaphysical stage, the mind explains phenomena by referring to abstract concepts like ‘nature’.
 - g) The task of positive science is the discovery of laws.
 - h) Positivism was thought to be one of the bases of change.

ii) List our three central concepts in Auguste Comte’s sociology.

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iii) Discuss Auguste Comte’s ideas about division of labour in society. Use about four lines.

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2.4 HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903)

Herbert Spencer, an Englishman and a contemporary of Auguste Comte, contributed several key ideas to the field of sociology. Like Comte, he too was trying to establish sociology as the science of society. Spencer had come into contact with Comte’s ideas but he did not accept them. Instead, he brought about a shift in the study of society. His sociology is based on the evolutionary doctrine and the organic analogy. You will learn more about these ideas in section 2.4.3. Let us first discuss the biographical sketch of Spencer and the social environment to which he belonged.

2.4.1 Biographical Sketch

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was born in a middle-class family in Derby, England, on 27th April. His father, George Spencer, was a school master. He and his whole family were staunch nonconformists and were individualists in outlook. Spencer was the eldest of nine children and the only one to survive into adulthood. This was perhaps one of the reasons why he advocated the idea of the “survival of the fittest” in his theory of evolution (see Figure 2.2: Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903: Survival of the Fittest).



Figure 2.2: Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903: Survival of the Fittest

Spencer never went to a conventional school but was taught at home by his father and uncle. He went to some small private schools but only for short periods, according to his autobiography, his training in mathematics was the best. In spite of not receiving a systematic training in other subjects like natural sciences, literature, history, he wrote outstanding treatises on biology and psychology.

At a young age Spencer started working as an Engineer in the railroad engineering field. After this work he changed his job and became a journalist. He started working as an Editor of the *Economist*, a well known English publication. After a few years he resigned his position and became an independent writer. He became a close friend of the poet, George Eliot. Their relationship did not materialise into marriage and Spencer never married anyone. He never suffered from poverty but he also did not become rich.

In 1850 he published his first book, *Social Statics*, which was well received in the intellectual world. In this book he presented the core ideas of his sociological theory. The terms social statics made some thinkers accuse Spencer of plagiarising Comte's ideas. But Spencer pointed out that the terms were his own as he had merely heard the name of Comte and not his ideas. Also, he stated that originally the title of his book was 'Demostatics'.

Besides others, Spencer was influenced by Charles Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*, (1859). He desired a lot of his ideas regarding evolution

from Darwin. However, Spencer stated that he was the first one to discover the basic ideas of ‘natural selection’ and ‘survival of the fittest’.

Spencer also advocated the principle of laissez faire or free market, which was popularised by the English economists of his time. He reached the peak of his popularity in 1882, when he visited the United States of America. However, at the end of his life he died a sad man because he believed that his life work had not achieved its goal as much as he expected.

2.4.2 His Social Environment

The turmoils around Spencer and around Comte were the same. The issues confronting them were the same too. Important differences apart, a broad similarity of concern and focus marked the two thinkers.

Both believed in progress and also had deep faith in the unity and irreversibility of historical development. This faith can be perceived in other major thinkers of this period too, such as Karl Marx. The period to which these thinkers belonged was the Century of Great Hope. Belief, therefore, in the law of progressive development of society is central to their argument. Now let us discuss some of the central ideas of Herbert Spencer.

2.4.3 The Central Ideas

The sociological works of Herbert Spencer, such as, *Social Statics* (1850), *The Study of Sociology* (1873), *Principles of Sociology* (1876-96), are dominated by the idea of evolution. Spencer believed that throughout all times there actually has been social evolution from a simple, uniform or homogeneous structure to a complex, multiform or **heterogeneous** one. Spencer has been influenced deeply by Charles Darwin’s book, *The Origin of Species* (1859). It had brought a revolutionary change in the understanding of how life evolved on earth from a simple unicellular organism to multicellular complex organisms like, human beings themselves.

Although Spencer wrote several books on sociology, he did not give a formal definition of the discipline. According to him, the social process is unique and so sociology as a science must explain the present state of society by explaining the initial stages of evolution and applying to them the laws of evolution. Thus, the evolutionary doctrine is central to his thesis. After explaining this doctrine, we will explain the meaning and significance of organic analogy. You will also learn about Spencer’s classification of societies according to their place in social evolution.

2.4.3.1 The Evolutionary Doctrine

Spencer’s entire scheme of knowledge rested upon the belief that ‘evolution’ was the key concept for the understanding of the world as a whole and of human beings place within it. The concept of evolution in turn rested on the assumption that the various forms of nature – be it mountains or oceans, trees or grass, fish or reptiles, bird or humans are forms and transformations of the same basic material substance.

All knowledge will thus consist of a systematic and testable body of propositions about these several patterns of transformation, which constitute the world, as we experience it. And this basic process of transformation,

present in every element of nature, is the evolutionary principle. By the terms systematic and testable body of propositions we mean simply the set of ideas, which can always be proved right or wrong in terms of changes that occur in the world. In other words, we are talking about the process of evolution that takes place on earth.

If you are finding this a little complicated, think about our own bodies, our own selves. Our bodies consist mainly of water, blood, bones, flesh – and each one of these has been drawn from the nature around us. When we die, we go back into the natural substances around us.

All processes of change are thus similar, in that they emerge out of the physical stuff of the world, have their own patterns of transformation and change, and according to these patterns, in due course decline and dissolve. In this, they move from

- i) a condition of simplicity to a condition of organised complexity.
- ii) a condition of indefiniteness to a condition of definiteness.
- iii) a condition in which their parts are relatively undifferentiated to a condition of increasing specialisation, in which their parts are characterised by a complex differentiation of structure and function.
- iv) from an unstable condition consisting of a large multiplicity of very similar units, relatively incoherent and disconnected in their behaviour, to a stable condition consisting of relatively fewer parts. Human beings now are so intricately organised and articulated that their behavior is regular, coherent and predictable.

2.4.3.2 Organic Analogy

Herbert Spencer proceeded to apply in his investigation of all fields of knowledge his idea of social evolution. In comparing human society with an organism, which is essentially what organic analogy means, Herbert Spencer, however, noted the differences between the biological organism and society.

He maintained that ‘a society’, as an entity, is something more than, and other than, an ‘organism’, even though human ‘organisms’ (individuals) are members of it. It is a total system of elements of social organisation and their interdependent functions. It is a super-organic entity; an organisational entity over and above the level of the organism.

Following this, Spencer accepted the ideas that a society was more than a collective name for a number of individuals. That is, it is not just a collection of several individuals but is a distinct entity. The whole is more than its parts. Thus, a house is more than a mere collection of bricks, wood and stone. It involves a certain ordering of parts. However, being an individualist Spencer believed that unlike biological organisms, where the parts exist for the benefit of the whole, in society it is the whole which exists for the benefit of the parts i.e., the individuals in society (Timasheff 1967: 38).

Spencer sought to build two classificatory systems of society related to his thesis of social evolution. The first thesis states that in the process of social evolution societies move from simple to various levels of compound on the basis of their degree of composition (See Figure 2.3: The Process of Evolution of Societies as Explained by Herbert Spencer).

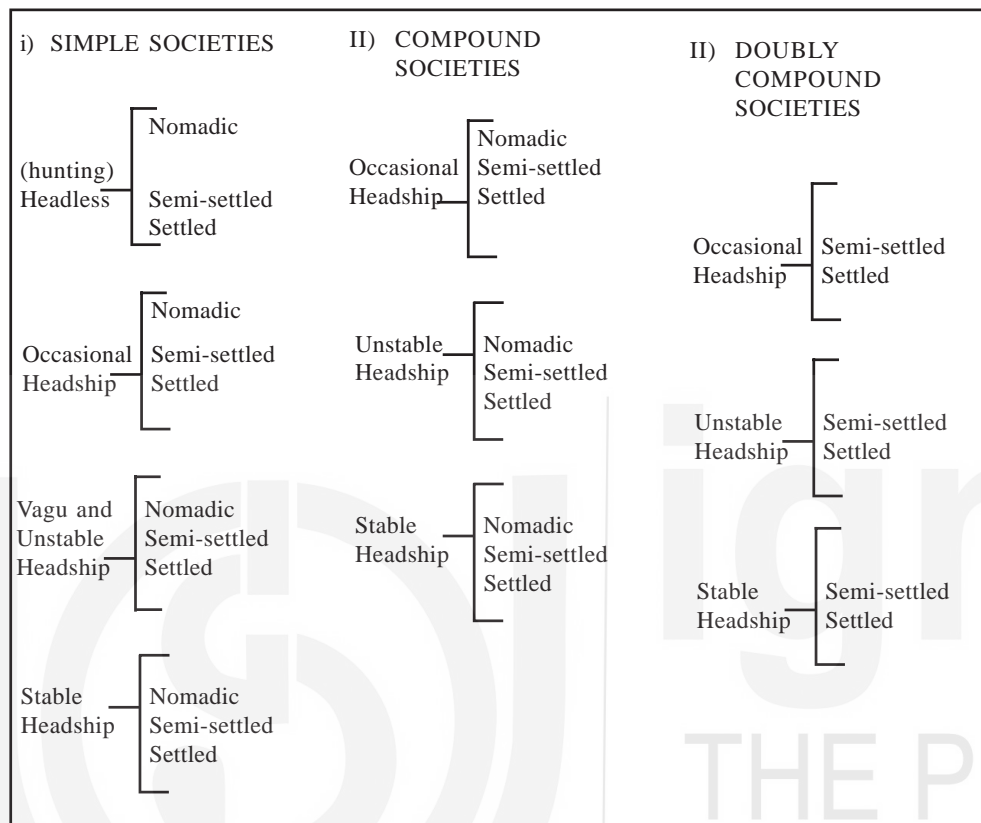


Figure 2.3: The Process of Evolution of Societies as Explained by Herbert Spencer

From the above diagrammatic representation, you would easily understand the process of evolution of societies’ as explained by Spencer. Let us explain it further. According to Spencer the aggregate of some simple societies gives rise to compound societies, the aggregate of some compound societies gives rise to doubly compound societies. The aggregate of some doubly compound societies gives rise to trebly compound societies (these have not been given in the above diagram). According to Spencer simple societies consist of families, a compound societies consist of families unified into clans, doubly compound societies consist of clans unified into tribes and the trebly compound societies, such as our own, have tribes brought together forming nations or states (Timesheff 1967: 40).

The second classificatory system is based on construction of types which may not exist in actual reality but which would help in analysing and comparing different societies. Here a different type of evolution is conceived of, from (i) military to, (ii) industrial societies.

i) The Militant Society

The Militant society is a type in which predominant organisation is offensive and defensive military action. Such society has the following characteristics.

- Human relationships in such societies are marked by **compulsory cooperation**.
- There exists a highly centralised pattern of authority and social control.
- A set of myths and beliefs reaffirm the hierarchical nature of society.
- Life is marked by rigorous discipline and a close identity between public and private life.

ii) **The Industrial Society**

The Industrial society is one in which military activity and organisation is peripheral to society. The greater part of society concentrates on human production and welfare.

The characteristics of such a society are that these societies are marked by

- voluntary cooperation,
- firm recognition of people's personal rights,
- separation of the economic realm from political control of the government and
- growth of free associations and institutions.

Herbert Spencer was aware that societies need not fit into either of the systems totally. They served the purpose of models to aid classification. These are some of the central ideas of Herbert Spencer. Now let us see in the next section (2.4.3) how relevant his sociology is for the contemporary period and what his influence is on contemporary sociologists. But, before going on to the next section, we need to complete Activity 2.

Activity 2

You have read the description of social evolution given by Herbert Spencer. Keeping this account in mind, discuss with three persons, one of your grandfather's generation, one your father's generation and one your own generation about the changes they have seen in any one of the major social institutions like marriage, family, economy or polity in India.

Write a note of about two pages comparing the details of social change observed in a social institution in each generation. Compare, if possible, your note with those of other students at your Study Centre.

2.4.4 Significance of Herbert Spencer's Idea to Contemporary Sociology

Unlike Auguste Comte, who is the first founding father of sociology, Spencer, known as the second founding father of sociology, had very different expectations from sociology. Auguste Comte wanted to guide men in the construction of a better society. Spencer, instead told people through sociology that human beings should not interfere with the natural processes in societies. Spencer had great faith in the innate instinct of freedom and believed any interference with this instinct to be harmful.

Herbert Spencer, under the influence of Darwin, believed in the notion of “the survival of the fittest”. He like Darwin said that nature had the power to get rid of the weak and unfit. The fittest people are those who are healthy and more intelligent. For him, the state was a “joint-stock company for the mutual protection of individuals” (Timasheff 1967: 41). According to him, nature is more intelligent than human beings and therefore, the government should stop interfering in the process of this evolution. He asked the Government to prohibit such activities as, education, sanitary measures, improvement of harbours, etc. Thus, for Spencer the Victorian laissez faire i.e. free market type society (where there was no government intervention and individuals were free to compete with each other) was the apex of all societies.

Herbert Spencer’s concept of society as a super-organic system had several problems. He was unable to see culture as part of an integrated whole. His explanation regarding the social evolution of societies from simple to compound, and so on, was also faulty. However, he formulated an integral theory of all reality. His law of evolution is a cosmic law and therefore, according to Timasheff (1946: 43) his theory is strictly speaking a philosophical theory rather than sociological.

In his own time, Herbert Spencer became very popular and it was considered a shame if an intellectual did not read his books. His popularity extended to England, the United States of America and Russia but he was not all that known in France and Germany. His ideas became popular because they served the need of his time, namely, the desire for unifying knowledge and the need to explain in a scientific manner the laissez faire principle. This principle was made popular by such economists as Adam Smith and Ricardo. It advocated the idea of a free market where prices will be determined on the basis of demand and supply. In such a market perfect competition could be the basis of demand and supply. In such a market perfect competition could be possible. This principle became popular during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries because it was considered by economists and social thinkers to be the best way to increase the wealth of a nation.

Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, both succeeded in raising the status of sociology to that of a science of society. In the next unit you will learn about some more pioneers of sociology.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Which of the following would you categorise as characteristics of Herbert Spencer’s thought?
 - a) Evolution is the key concept.
 - b) All knowledge will consist of a systematic and testable body of propositions.
 - c) All processes of change are markedly different.
 - d) Society is a super-organic entity.
 - e) Society is more than a collection of individuals.

Early Sociology

- f) A classificatory system was of society constructed.
 - g) The system built on the basis of composition comprised simple societies, compound societies, doubly compound societies and trebly compound societies.
 - h) The other system consisted of the industrial and military societies.
 - i) Scientific knowledge is unlimited.
- ii) Write in seven lines about the essence of Spencer’s arguments regarding social evolution.

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- iii) What is common in the ideas of Comte and Spencer? Write your answer in three lines.

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learnt that the systematic study of human behaviour and human society is a relatively recent development. You read about the biographical sketch of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and the social environment to which Auguste Comte belonged. He is the founding father of sociology. He coined the word sociology to describe the science of society. The central ideas of Comte are

- the law of the three stages: the theological state, the metaphysical stage, and the positive stage
- the hierarchy of the sciences
- the static and dynamic sociology.

You learnt also about the significance of Auguste Comte’s ideas to contemporary sociology.

In the second part of this unit, we outlined a sketch of Harbert Spencer the social environment to which he belonged. He is considered to be the second founding father of sociology. We explained the following central ideas of Spencer

- the evolutionary doctrine
- the organic analogy
- the evolution of societies, firstly in terms of composition from simple to compound and so on; and then in terms of transition from military to industrial societies.

Finally, we discussed the significance of Herbert Spencer's ideas to contemporary sociology.

2.6 KEY WORDS

Compulsory Cooperation It is that kind of cooperation among people which is compulsorily imposed by the leaders who represent authority.

Dynamic It is any mass or object or force which is in a state of motion. In society it corresponds to the notion of social change.

Evolution The process of slow changes through a long period of time in which life forms have developed from simple unicellular beings, such as amoeba, to complex multicellular beings, such as human beings.

Heterogeneous Composition of unlike elements. For example, India is considered to be a heterogeneous society since it has people of different languages, religions and cultures living in it.

Metaphysical Metaphysics literally means that branch of philosophy which investigates the first principles of nature and thought. For Comte it is a stage of development of mind in which the mind explains phenomenon by invoking abstract entities or forces like "nature". In this stage human beings explain the meaning of the world in terms of "essences", "ideas", etc.

Method The way of collecting data or facts about social phenomena, such as the method of observation, interview, survey, etc.

Positive Positive literally means anything in the affirmative. For Comte it is the last stage of the development of mind. Here the search for 'original sources' 'final ends' about existence of human beings stops. Instead human beings start observing phenomena and establishing

regular links which exist between these phenomena. Thus, in the positive stage human beings search for social laws which link facts and which govern social life.

Science

Systematised knowledge derived from observation, study and experimentation. Scientific knowledge can be tested, verified or proved.

Static

Any mass or object or force which is at an equilibrium, i.e. which does not move. In society it corresponds to the notion of the structure of society.

Theological

According to the dictionary, theology is the study of religion. For Comte it is the first stage of development of mind. In this stage mind explains phenomenon by ascribing them to beings or forces comparable to human beings. Here explanations take the form of myths concerning spirits and supernatural beings.

Unifying

The comprehensive nature of a science which can explain all aspects of existence.

Voluntary cooperation

It is the kind of cooperation among people which is not imposed on them but is voluntarily accepted by them.

2.7 FURTHER READING

Coser, Lewis A. 1971. *Masters of Sociology Thought Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. Second Edition, Harcourt Brace Jovonovich, Inc.: New York.

Hubert, Rene, 1963. *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. Vol. 1-IV, pp. 151-152. 15th printing. The MacMillan Co.: New York.

Timasheff, Nicholas S., 1967. *Sociological Theory. Its Nature and Growth*, Third Edition. Random House: New York.

2.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) a, b, d, f, g, h
- ii) a) Comte wanted to build scientific laws of society.

- b) Comte focused on both statics and dynamics, i.e. the analysis of the social system and the study of the changing forms over time and space.
 - c) Comte built a hierarchy of sciences, at the apex of which stood sociology.
- iii) Auguste Comte saw division of labour in society as a powerful force in the process of social evolution. It is closely linked with the increase in population. The more division of labour that occurs in a society the more complex and evolved that society becomes.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) a, b, d, e, f, g, h.
- ii) Spencer's theory rested on the principle of 'evolution'. The concept of evolution in turn rested on the premise that every form of nature undergoes changes and in essence derives from the same substance. The task of science therefore would be to build a body of knowledge to study the way various patterns of transformation are taking place in the world around us.
- iii) Both Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer believed in
 - a) the task of scientific knowledge being the establishment of testable laws.
 - b) Scientific laws were statements of interconnection, i.e. they are 'uniformities of co-existence and succession'.
 - c) Scientific knowledge alone provided reliable basis for prediction.

UNIT 3 FOUNDING FATHERS-II

Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Georg Simmel (1858-1918)
 - 3.2.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 3.2.2 Socio-Historical Background
 - 3.2.3 Central Ideas
 - 3.2.3.1 Formal Sociology
 - 3.2.3.2 Social Types
 - 3.2.3.3 Role of Conflict in Georg Simmel's Sociology
 - 3.2.3.4 Georg Simmel's Views on Modern Culture
 - 3.2.4 Impact of Georg Simmel's Ideas on Contemporary Sociology
- 3.3 Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923)
 - 3.3.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 3.3.2 Socio-Historical Background
 - 3.3.3 Central Ideas
 - 3.3.3.1 Logical and Non-logical Action
 - 3.3.3.2 Residues and Derivatives
 - 3.3.3.3 Theory of Elites and Circulation of Elites
 - 3.3.4 Impact of Vilfredo Pareto's Ideas on Contemporary Sociology
- 3.4 Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929)
 - 3.4.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 3.4.2 Socio-Historical Background
 - 3.4.3 Central Ideas
 - 3.4.3.1 Theory of Technological Evolutionism
 - 3.4.3.2 Theory of Leisure Class
 - 3.4.3.3 Leisure Class and Conspicuous Consumption
 - 3.4.3.4 Functional Analysis
 - 3.4.3.5 Concept of Social Change
 - 3.4.3 Impact of Thorstein Veblen's Ideas on Contemporary Sociology
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Further Reading
- 3.8 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to

- outline the biographical details of the early sociologists, Georg Simmel, Vilfredo Pareto, and Thorstein Veblen

- describe the socio-historical background of these early sociologists
- explain their central ideas
- discuss the impact of their ideas on contemporary sociology

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit you learnt about the major ideas of the two founding fathers of sociology, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. You learnt the reason why Comte developed the ideas of establishing a science of society, which he named sociology. You learnt about the seminal ideas of Herbert Spencer, who viewed society as a superorganic system. Of the founding fathers of sociology, the most crucial thinkers, such as, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim will be discussed in Blocks 2, 3, 4 and 5 of ESO-13.

In this unit, we will explain to you the central ideas of three of the most important early sociologists, Georg Simmel (1858-1918), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929). There are several other sociologists whose contributions are very significant to the growth of the sociology as a scientific discipline but you will learn about them in your later studies. However, we chose these three thinkers because each of them has given a new perspective to the scientific study of society. Georg Simmel was one of the first sociologists to consider the positive aspects of conflict. Vilfredo Pareto's theory of elite and circulation of elites is still a guiding force to students of political sociology. Thorstein Veblen's books might not be read so much today but his highly critical analysis of modern culture and his use of terms to describe social phenomena in capitalist societies like "**conspicuous consumption**", "trained incapacity", "**predatory classes**" etc. are used again and again not only by sociologists but also other social scientists.

Section 3.2 of the unit explains the central ideas of Georg Simmel; 3.3 describes the views of Vilfredo Pareto, 3.4 outlines the basic ideas of Thorstein Veblen, and finally section 3.5 gives the summary of this unit.

3.2 GEORG SIMMEL (1858-1918)

Georg Simmel (1858-1918), a German sociologist born of Jewish parentage, brought a new perspective to the understanding of society. He made an attempt to understand sociology from a different approach. He rejected the earlier existing organicist theories of Comte and Spencer about which you learnt in the previous unit. He also rejected the German historical tradition of his own country, which gave value to the historical description of unique events. Instead he developed the sociological theory, which conceived society as a web of patterned interactions. He believed that the task of sociology is to study the forms of these interactions as they take place and are repeated over time in different historical periods and cultural settings.

In the following sub-sections (3.2.0, 3.2.1, 3.2.2 and 3.2.3) we are going to describe to you the biographical sketch of Georg Simmel, the socio-historical period to which he belonged, his central ideas and the impact of his ideas on contemporary sociology.

3.2.1 Biographical Sketch

Georg Simmel was born on March 1, 1858, in the very heart of Berlin. He was born in a place in Berlin, which can be compared to our Connaught Place in New Delhi or Ameenabad in Lucknow. This curious birthplace is symbolically suited to a person who, according to Coser (1971: 194), throughout his life lived in intersections of many intellectual movements. He was a modern urban man with almost no roots in traditional folk culture.

Ferdinand Toennies, an eminent sociologist, wrote to his friend after reading Simmel's first book that, "the book is shrewed but it has the flavour of the metropolis" (Coser 1971: 194).

Georg Simmel's parents were Jews who later converted to Protestantism. In fact, Simmel, who was the youngest of seven children born to his parents, was baptized as a Protestant. His father died when Georg Simmel was very young. A family friend, who was the owner of a music publishing house, was appointed as his guardian. It was from his guardian that Simmel inherited a lot of wealth and thus he did not have to suffer economically throughout his life. His relations with his mother were distant since she was a very domineering person. As a result Simmel did not have a secure family environment. It was this sense of insecurity and marginality which characterised most of his writings.

In 1876 Georg Simmel joined the University of Berlin as an undergraduate student. Initially he joined history but later switched to philosophy. He received his doctorate from Berlin in 1881 for his dissertation on Kant's philosophy of nature. During this period he came in contact with such important academic figures of the day as Mommsen, Treitschke, Sybel and Droysen, and so on.

He became a Privatdozent (an unpaid lecturer dependent on student fees) in Berlin in 1885. He lectured on such diverse and wide ranging topics as, logic, history of philosophy, ethics, social psychology, and sociology. He spoke about the ideas of Kant, Schopenhauer, Darwin and Nietzsche among many others. The range of topics that he used to cover was exceptional and he proved to be a very popular lecturer. His lectures became leading intellectual events not only for the students but for the cultural elite of Berlin.

But in spite of his immense popularity as a lecturer, Georg Simmel's academic career proved to be failure. One reason was the anti-Semitism i.e. feelings against the Jews were bad which adversely affected Simmel's career. He received shabby treatment from the academic powers in Germany in spite of receiving support and encouragement of eminent academics like Max Weber, Heinrich Rickert, Edmund Husserl and so on. He remained a Privatdozent for fifteen years. In 1901 when he was 43 years old, he was finally accepted as an Ausserordentlicher Professor, a purely honorary title

which did not give him any role in the permanent academic world of Berlin. He remained an outsider to the established academic world.

The second reason for being treated as a virtual pariah by the academic powers was due to his non-confirmity. Simmel, unlike the conventional professors, did not confine himself to the development of one discipline or to catering to the academic world alone. His originality and sparkling intellect allowed him to move effortlessly from one topic to another. He could talk in one semester about such serious topics, like Kant's epistemology, i.e. theory of knowledge, and also at the same time publish essays on such topics as sociology of smell, sociology of coquetry and fashion, and so on.

In spite of being an outsider to the academic field, he enjoyed the company of the great intellectuals of his time. His worth was recognised by all intellectuals. He was a co-founder, with Weber and Toennies, of the German Society for Sociology. He and his wife Gertrud, whom he married in 1890, lived a comfortable bourgeoisie life.

Georg Simmel's lectures fired the imagination of a variety of people, let alone academics. This was also one reason for the antagonism of the academic powers. However, Simmel finally attained his academic goal when he was given the full professorship at the University of Strasbourg in 1914, during the First World War. It was a quirk of fate that when he attained an academic position, he lost his most valued academic role of lecturer. When he came to Strasbourg all the lecture halls were converted into military hospitals. Georg Simmel died before the end of the war, on September 28, 1918, of cancer of the liver.

3.2.2 Socio-Historical Background

The period in which Simmel came of age in Germany were the early years of the unified German Reich. The reich was established by Bismarck after the successful war of 1870 against France. It was from this time onwards that Germany saw tremendous change. Berlin, the capital city, became a world city. The pace of industrialisation and economic development increased to a great extent. But in spite of changes in the economic field, the political field remained the same. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Germany had become a capitalist country run by a political system that was semi-feudal.

In the intellectual field, the university professors enjoyed a place of honour. But unlike the intellectuals in liberal societies of France and England whose ideas revolutionised the way of thinking of the people of their country, in Germany nothing of this sort happened. This led to the backwardness of this country in social and political areas. The middle classes of Germany remained weak and disheartened and were too much in awe of the disciplined, ordered and specialised learning of the university professors.

As a contrast to this intellectual field, there existed, especially in larger cities like Berlin, a class of unattached intelligentsia. This intelligentsia was highly active, innovative and irreverent of established conventions, unlike their counterparts in the universities. This class constituted the journalists, playwrights, writers, bohemian artists who all lived in partially



Fig. 3.1: Georg Simmel (1858-1918)

overlapping circles exchanging ideas with more daring than it ever occurred in the academy i.e. the universities (Coser 1971: 207). This class, which represented the “counterculture” of Germany, was more politically alive and had several adherents of socialist ideas, materialism, social Darwinism, etc., which were looked down upon or rejected by the university professors.

Georg Simmel, who remained an outsider to the academia due to persecution practiced in both the university culture as well as in the Berlin’s counter culture. But, in both cases he remained a marginal person i.e. person participating in a group without ever becoming a member of that group. Because of his marginal status Georg Simmel was able to acquire the intellectual distance that made it possible for him to study and analyse society objectively. In other words, he did not become biased by any set of ideas or opinions or values of any intellectual group as he did not belong to any of them completely.

This was an outline of the period to which Georg Simmel belonged. Now, let us examine his central ideas.

3.2.3 Central Ideas

Georg Simmel, as we have already mentioned, rejected the organicist theories of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer and German historical tradition. He did not believe that society can be viewed as a thing or organism as Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer did. For him society is “an intricate web of multiple relations between individuals who are in constant interaction with one another: society is merely the name for a number of individuals, connected by interactions” (Coser 1971: 178).

Simmel introduced the term sociation, which he believed to be the major field of study for the students of society. Sociation implies the particular patterns and forms in which human beings relate to each other and interact. According to him society is nothing more than all the individuals who constitute it. But here he has also drawn attention to the fact that people in groups of different sizes – dyads, i.e., two persons, triads i.e., three people, or groups with more than three persons, interact differently from each other. A qualitative change in terms of organisation takes place with the increase in number of persons in a group.

According to Georg Simmel there cannot be a totalistic social science, which studies all aspects of social phenomenon, for even in natural sciences there is no one “total” science of all matter. Therefore, he states that science must study dimensions or aspects of phenomena instead of global wholes or totalities. In this context he believes that the task of sociology is to describe and analyse particular forms of human interaction and their crystallisation in group characteristics, such as, the state, the clan, the family, the city etc. He says that all human behaviour is behaviour of individuals but a large part of this human behaviour can be understood if we understand the social group to which the individuals belong and the kind of constraints they face in particular forms of interaction. He emphasised the study of forms of interaction and this approach gave impetus to rise of formal sociology. Let us discuss this point further.

3.2.3.1 Formal Sociology

Georg Simmel, like Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, believed that we can discover the underlying uniformities in social life. In other words, one can discover social laws. These uniformities for Georg Simmel exist in the forms of interaction, such as the relation of superordination i.e., domination over others and subordination i.e., being dominated by others. It is this pre-occupation with the forms of interaction which underlie all social, political, economic, religious, sexual activities that characterise Georg Simmel's sociological approach. This approach is, therefore, known as formal sociology. According to Georg Simmel one can find in distinct and sometimes even contradictory phenomena a similar interactive form. For example, the interaction pattern between the leader of a criminal gang and its members and that between the leader of a scout group and its members will be similar. If we analyse the forms of interaction at the court of Akbar, in medieval India and the forms of interaction underlying a village panchayat today, we might find similarity between the two.

It is not the unique events in history or specific individuals who matter, but it is the underlying pattern of social interaction, such as subordination and superordination, centralisation and decentralisation, and so on that counts. Georg Simmel has made it very clear that it is the form of social interaction, which is the special domain of sociological inquiry. His insistence on studying the forms of social interaction was a response to the beliefs of historians and other representatives of humanities. They believed that a science of society could not explain unique historical, irreversible events in history. Simmel showed them that such unique historical events, such as, the murder of Caesar, the accession of Henry VIII of England, the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, may be events in history but will not happen again. If we examine these events from a sociologist's point of view, we can discover the underlying uniformities in these historically unique events (Coser 1971: 179).

According to Georg Simmel there are no "pure" forms existing in any social reality. All social phenomena consist of a number of formal elements. These formal elements are like those of cooperation and conflict, subordination and superordination etc. Thus, there is no "pure" conflict or "pure" cooperation found in society. The "pure" forms are only abstractions which are not found in real society but have been created by Georg Simmel to study the real, existing social life. There is, therefore, a similarity between Georg Simmel's "forms" and Max Weber's concept of "ideal types" about which you will learn later in this course. Complementary to the concept of social form, Georg Simmel discussed the concept of **social types**.

3.2.3.2 Social Types

In the study of society, Georg Simmel made an attempt to understand a whole range of social types such as "the stranger", "the mediator", "the poor", and so on. His social types were complementary to his concept of **social forms**. A social type becomes a type because of his/ her relations with others who assign a certain position to this person and have certain expectations of him/ her. The characteristics of the social type are, therefore, seen as the features of social structure.

To explain his social type, Georg Simmel gives the example of “the stranger” in his book, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel* (1950). The stranger has been described by Simmel as a “person who comes today and stays tomorrow”. This stranger is someone who has a particular place in the society within the social group which he has entered. The social position of this stranger is determined by the fact that he or she does not belong to this group from the beginning. It is this status of the stranger which determines his or her role in the new social group and also the interaction that takes place. As a stranger, a person is simultaneously both near to one as well as distant. Not being part of the social group the stranger can look at it objectively without being biased. Thus, the stranger can be an ideal intermediary in any kind of exchange of ideas or goods. In this way, the position of the stranger is fixed in a society and defined. This is only example of Georg Simmel’s social types. He has discussed several others too, such as, “the poor”, “the adventurer”, etc. (Coser, 1971: 183).

3.2.3.3 Role of Conflict in Georg Simmel’s Sociology

Georg Simmel has, in all his works stressed both the connection as well as the tensions between the individual and society. In his opinion an individual is both a product of society as well as the link in all social processes that take place in society. The relationship between an individual and the society is, therefore, dual in nature. Individual is at one and the same time within the society and outside it. He/ she exists for society as well as for herself or himself.

Social individual, as Georg Simmel points out, cannot be partly social and partly individual. In fact, social individual is shaped by a fundamental unity in which we find a synthesis of two logically opposed elements. These elements are that an individual is both a being and social link in himself as well as a product of society (Coser 1971: 184). In Georg Simmel’s sociology we find this dialectical approach, which brings out the dynamic-interlinkages as well as conflicts that exist between social units in society.

According to Simmel empirically i.e., in real life no society can exist with absolute harmony. Conflict is an essential and complementary aspect of consensus or harmony in society. He maintains that sociation or human interactions involve contradictory elements like harmony and conflict, attraction and repulsion, love and hatred, and so on. He also made a distinction between social appearances and social realities. There are certain relationships of conflict which give the appearance of being negative to both the participants, as well as the outsiders. But, if we analyse these conflictive relationships we may find that it has latent positive aspects. For example, take the institution of blood feuds in some tribes in Africa where if a person of tribe A murders a person of tribe B, all the members, especially the kinsmen of the person of tribe B try to take revenge by murdering a person of tribe A. In this relationship which appears to be totally negative we can, on analysis, discover that it leads to the further cohesion of members in tribe A against tribe B. Thus, a negative social relationship leads to social solidarity.

3.2.3.4 Georg Simmel's Views on Modern Culture

According to Georg Simmel, in the pre-modern societies the relationships of subordination and superordination between master and servant, between employer and employee involved the total personalities of individuals. As a contrast, to this in capitalist modern society, there is a progressive liberation of the individual. The concept of freedom emerges and the domination of employer on employee, master on servant, becomes partial. For example, a factory worker outside the factory does not remain the subordinate of the factory owner.

In modern societies segmentation of roles and relations occurs. An individual plays multifaceted roles and in this process escapes domination of the total kind found in pre-modern societies, such as the relationship between the lord of the manor and his serf in feudal European society. Thus, individualism emerges in societies which have an elaborate division of labour and a number of intersecting social circles. But along with individual freedom in modern societies human beings get surrounded by a world of objects which put constraint on them and dominate their individual needs and desires. Thus, according to Georg Simmel, modern individuals find themselves faced by another set of problems. In modern societies, Georg Simmel predicts, "individuals will be frozen into social functions and in which the price of the objective perfection of the world will be the atrophy of the human soul" (Coser 1971: 193).

These are some of the major ideas developed by Georg Simmel. Now in the next section (3.2.3) we will describe the impact of Georg Simmel's ideas on contemporary sociology. But before going on to the next section, let us complete Activity 1.

Activity 1

You have read in this unit about Georg Simmel's concept of social form, which refers to the uniformity underlying the pattern of individual interactions, for example, interaction amongst the members of a panchayat, or a corporation etc. has the underlying element of subordination and superordination, conflict and harmony and so on.

Now you, as a member of your family, or workgroup, find out at least one element of uniformity underlying the individual interaction in your family or workplace.

Write a note of about one page on the form of uniformity underlying the pattern of interactions among the members of the particular group (your family or workplace). Compare it, if possible, with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

3.2.3 Impact of Georg Simmel's Ideas on Contemporary Sociology

Georg Simmel was so preoccupied with identifying and explaining the subject matter of sociology, and the concept of sociology itself that he never wrote a systematic treatise on sociology. Besides his preoccupation

with the subject matter, he also believed that it was premature or too early to write such a treatise. He believed that to be a science sociology must have a well-defined subject matter which can be studied by scientific methods (Tiansheff 1967: 102). He made an attempt to draw the boundary of the discipline of sociology and distinguish it from other social sciences like psychology, history, social philosophy, etc.

According to Coser (1971: 215), in terms of scholarly significance Georg Simmel's sociological method and programme of study can be compared with that of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim focused his attention on the study of social structure, within which he studied larger institutional structures, religious and educational systems, and so on. Georg Simmel has focused his attention on forms of interaction which is quite similar to social structure. But in contrast to Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel engaged in mainly a "micro-sociological enterprise". In other words, he did not believe in studying larger institutions but wanted to study the "interactions among the atoms of society". Here atoms are the individuals in society. He basically studied fundamental patterns of interactions among individuals that underlie the larger social formations. In Gerog Simmel's contribution to sociology, we therefore find a distinct attempt to outline the subject matter of sociology. This subject matter is distinct from the subject matter of all other disciplines like, history, political science, economics, etc.

Georg Simmel's sociology may lack systematic foundation yet we cannot ignore his contributions. In fact, Coser has summed it up very well when he writes that whether we read him (Georg Simmel) directly or see his ideas filtered through the minds of Robert Park, Louis Wirth, Everett C. Hughes, T. Caplaw, Theodore Mills, and Robert K. Merton, he continues to stimulate the sociological imagination as powerfully as Durkheim or Max Weber (Coser 1971: 215).

In this section, you learnt about the contributions of Georg Simmel, a German sociologist who gave a new perspective to the study of society. In the next section (3.3), you will learn about another founding father of sociology, Vilfredo Pareto. It is now time to complete Check Your Progress 1.

Check Your Progress 1

i) Explain Georg Simmel's concept of social forms.

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ii) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

a) Forms found in social reality are pure according to Georg Simmel.

- b) In his description of social Gerog Simmel has talked about, “the stranger”, “the poor” etc.
 - c) There is no society, where plays a positive role in society.
- iii) Write a short note about one aspect of modern culture described by Georg Simmel. Use about ten lines for your answer.

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3.3 VILFREDO PARETO (1848-1923)

Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), a distinguished Italian sociologist was born in Paris. His approach to sociology is distinct from that of other sociologists of his time due to his insistence on its being scientific or empiric in nature. In his major sociological work, *The Treatise on General Sociology*, published in 1915 and which later appeared in English translation as *Mind and Society* in 1936, he criticised Comte and Spencer because they have not considered empirical social reality but rather given a grand secular “religion” of progress, humanity and democracy (Timasheff 1967: 161). Let us first describe the biographical sketch of Pareto and then discuss his socio-historical background.

3.3.1 Biographical Sketch

Vilfredo Pareto was born in Paris on July 15, 1848. He was the son of an Italian aristocrat and his French wife. He had two sisters. He was trained as a civil engineer at the Turin Polytechnical School. He began his career as an engineer in the Italian Railways. After a few years he left state employment to become a managing director of an important group of iron mines, located in Florence.

Vilfredo Pareto, at this period of his life followed in his father’s footsteps and was a supporter of democratic, republican and pacifist ideals. These ideals he had imbued from his father. However, very soon due to certain political and personal reasons Pareto rejected these ideals and came to hate them fervently. He developed a cynical attitude towards such democratic values as humanitarianism, idea of progress etc.

Due to the inefficiencies and disorder created by the new regime after the fall of the rightist regime in 1876 in Italy, Pareto came to dislike this political system. He became an opponent of the new government and even contested for a post in the government in 1882 as an opposition candidate. But he was beaten by the government supported candidate. His failure in politics and inability to affect the state of affairs in Italy made him very bitter. The new ruling elites in Italy were in his opinion, a “band of corrupt contemptible and self-serving careerists who used the levers of government to enrich themselves...” (Coser 1971: 403). They were like the foxes whom he described in his theory of elites.

Vilfredo Pareto’s father died in 1882 leaving an inheritance of enough wealth which enabled him to leave business life and concentrate on his academic pursuits. In 1889 he married a young impoverished Russian girl, Alessandrina Bakunin and moved from Florence to a villa at Fiesole. Here he devoted himself to the study of economics. He also continued to attack the government.

His interest in pure economic theory arose due to his involvement in the controversies relating to free trade present during his time. As against the cause of protectionism, Pareto favoured free trade and took active part in public debates for this cause. In his study of economics he found that most of the economic thinking of his day was of an unscientific nature compared with the nature of the physical sciences. Thus, he devoted himself to the study of a new kind of economics based more securely on scientific methods that could provide more accurate and reliable guide to action.

By 1893 he had achieved enough recognition to be invited to the chair of economics in the University of Lausanne. He held this post till his retirement and established himself as an authority on theoretical economics. By this time Pareto had become a cynical, disillusioned loner who was at variance with all the tendencies of the age such as liberalism. He became a pathological hater of the left. All this affected his writings. Another factor which added fuel to his cynicism and lack of trust was the running away of his wife with his cook. Being an Italian citizen, he could not divorce his wife under Canon law.

It was around this time in 1898 that he inherited a considerable amount of wealth from the death of an uncle. This made him an independent person who did not depend on his academic salary alone. He started living a life of luxury and built a house for himself at Celigny, near Lausanne. With him lived his companion, Jane Regis who took care of him and his numerous Angora cats. Vilfredo Pareto retired from regular university teaching in 1907 but continued to give lectures on sociology on ad hoc basis. During the last period of his life he suffered from heart disease. Insomnia, i.e., sleeplessness made him read a lot. He lived a life of a recluse, surrounded by his cats and renowned wines, of which he used to boast a lot.

However, during the fascist regime of Mussolini, the dictator, Vilfredo Pareto again came to public life. He was made a Senator of the Kingdom of Italy, designated an Italian delegate to the Disarmament Conference at Geneva, and so on. To a certain extent Mussolini seems to have

implemented some of the programmes suggested by Vilfredo Pareto. However, Pareto saw only the beginning of Mussolini's rule. In 1923 he finally married Jane Regis by acquiring a divorce from his wife under a different law. On August 19, 1923, he died after a short illness at the age of seventy five.

3.3.2 Socio-Historical Background

Vilfredo Pareto, whose full name was Marquis Vilfredo Frederico Damaso Pareto, belonged to that period of European history when major changes were taking place in socio-political structure of Italian society. Initially he was influenced by the old fashioned liberal democratic views of his father and his friends but slowly with age he turned against these ideas, which represented the values and ideals of Mazzini, one of the great political leaders of Italy, who helped in the process of unification of Italy. Pareto rejected the values of humanitarianism, republicanism, and democracy of the kind found in France and Italy of his times and as Coser writes, "like a spurned lover he turned against the political system of Italy during this period, i.e. around the middle of the nineteenth century. The reason for his rejection of these ideals was that the government did not heed his advice and suggestions. In his book, *Treatise on General Sociology*, he has criticised democracy which later led Mussolini, the fascist ruler of Italy, to offer Pareto a seat in the Italian Senate. However, it goes to the credit of Pareto that he refused to accept this offer (Timasheff 1967: 161).

It was the disenchantment with the liberal democratic ideals, that perhaps led Pareto to say that the task of a social analyst is to unmask the real nature of values and theories like "equality", "progress", "liberty", etc. According to him these are vacuous or empty words which human beings use to rationalise or justify their actions. Now in the light of Vilfredo Pareto's socio-historical background let us examine some of his central ideas.

3.3.3 Central Ideas

Vilfredo Pareto, in order to avoid being non-scientific, stated that sociology should use a logico-experimental method. By experimental he actually meant something which could be empirically observed. This method was based solely on observation i.e., to study social reality which exists in real life, and then draw logical inference. By logical inference he meant to study several social phenomena and derive a conclusion in a logical, ordered manner. In his book, *The Treatise on General Sociology*, Vilfredo Pareto made it clear that he wanted to study social reality by applying to the social sciences the methods, which have been used in natural sciences, like physics, chemistry, astronomy etc.

Borrowing from the natural sciences, Vilfredo Pareto came to believe that society is a system in equilibrium and that any disturbance in one part of the system leads to adjustive changes in other parts of that system. Like the "molecules" in physical matter, the individuals in social system have interests, drives, and sentiments. Social system for him is a framework for analysing mutually dependent variations among a number of variables which determine human behaviour.



Fig. 3.2: Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923)

But Pareto was not interested in all kinds of variables. He wanted to study the non-rational variables. His earlier study of economics revealed to him that the rational variables of human action studied by economics do not cover the whole gamut of human behaviour. There are many kinds of human behaviours which are non-rational and **non-logical**.

3.3.3.1 Logical and Non-logical Action

As mentioned earlier, society for Vilfredo Pareto is a system in equilibrium. This equilibrium implies that in all societies there are certain forces which maintain the form or structure of that society. Outward forces change society and inner forces push towards restoring its equilibrium. According to Pareto, the inner forces are mainly composed of the sentiment of revulsion against any disturbance that affects the equilibrium of society. The validity of the theory of restoration of equilibrium is in the fact that a society even after undergoing a revolution or war readjusts itself and attains an equilibrium (Timasheff 1967: 162).

Vilfredo Pareto's concept of logical and **non-logical** action is related to the analysis of the inner forces in society. He has drawn a distinction between the two types of action. **Logical actions** are those "which use means appropriate to ends and logically links means with ends". These actions are both subjectively (i.e., the person who performs it) and objectively (i.e., from the point of view of the other persons) logical. Non-logical actions (which do not mean illogical or contrary to logic) are simply all actions which do not fall into the category of logical actions. Thus, non-logical action is a residual category.

The study of non-logical actions is important since it explains the inner forces, such as sentiments of actors. Vilfredo Pareto says that non-logical actions originate in the mental or psychic states, sentiments and subconscious feelings of human beings. But unlike the psychologists our task as social analyst is to treat these sentiments, etc, as data of fact without going deeper than that (Cosser 1971: 389).

3.3.3.2 Residues and Derivatives

It is the non-logical actions which are related to his theory of residuals and **derivatives**. **Residues** and derivatives are both manifestations of sentiments which are according to Pareto instincts or innate human tendencies. The study of these residues and derivatives can be used to unmask non-scientific theories and belief systems. By derivatives he means the changing elements or variables accounting for these theories. Residues as a contrast are the relatively permanent elements.

To explain these concepts of residues (which are basically constant elements) and derivatives (which are changing variable elements) further, let us take an example. We find in all societies a great variety of religions – polytheistic (which believe in the worship of many Gods or more than one God), monotheistic (believing in the doctrine that there is only one God), atheistic religion (which do not believe in the concept of God, such as, Jainism, Buddhism). These religions may take any form. However, in all these religious doctrines there lies a residue which remains constant everywhere and in all times. Thus, here we find that the changing forms

of religion found in many societies at various times are the derivatives while the constant common factors in all religions is the residue.

Vilfredo Pareto has described six classes of residues which have remained almost constant throughout the long span of western history. Out of these six classes of residues, the first two are important to us since they are related to Vilfredo Pareto's theory of elites and circulation of elites. These two classes of residues are i) Instinct for combination, and ii) Group persistencies (Persistence of Aggregates). Pareto's theory of residues helped him to explain various theories and belief systems. It also enabled him to explain social movements, social change and the dynamics of history (Coser 1971: 392). Let us now discuss Vilfredo Pareto's theory of elites and circulation of elites.

3.3.3.3 Theory of Elites and Circulation of Elites

Vilfredo Pareto firmly believed that human beings are unequal physically, as well as mentally and morally. In all social groups there are some people who are far more intelligent and capable than others. It is these people who become the elite in any social group or society as a whole. Pareto defined elite as "a class of the people who have the highest indices (or scores) in their branch of activity" (Coser 1971: 397).

He distinguished between the governing elites and the non-governing elites. Both these belong to the class of elites. However, the governing elites are those individuals who directly or indirectly play an important part in the government, while the non-governing elites comprise the rest of the elite population. In his work, Vilfredo Pareto has focused his attention more on governing elites.

In spite of defining elites as the most intelligent and capable people in a society, Vilfredo Pareto has many times failed to distinguish between elites who inherit their status due to inheritance of wealth, good connections, etc. and those who achieve their elite status on the basis of their merits. However, Pareto is clear about the fact that in cases where the majority of the elites occupy their status not due to their own achievements but due to their ascribed status, the society becomes degenerate. It is replaced by elites who have the first kind of residue, that is, instinct for combination. The new elites have vitality and imaginativeness which is lacking in the elites who derive their elite status on the basis of ascription.

Thus, according to Vilfredo Pareto it is not only the intelligence and capability but also the residue of class I that affects society. The ideal governing elite must have a mixture of residues of class I and class II kinds (class II stands for group persistence) for its proper functioning. These two residues correspond to two different types of individuals – the lions and the foxes. In this way Vilfredo Pareto's concept of circulation of elites is also related to his distinction between two types of human beings, the lions and the foxes. Pareto borrowed these concepts from Machiavelli.

The lions have the class II type of residue. They are conservative in ideas and represent social inertia i.e., the element of stability, persistence in societies. Such type of individual harbour strong feelings of loyalty to family, tribe, city, nation etc. They reveal in their behaviour class solidarity,

patriotism, and religious zeal and are not scared of taking strong action when a need occurs.

The foxes are characterised by residue of the class I, of instinct for combination. These people are involved in system making, manipulating various elements found in experience, such as in large scale financial manipulations. In other words “foxes” are responsible for the changes, experiments, innovations in society. They are not conservative and faithful or stable.

In Paretos’s opinion, the governing elite must have the mixture of lions and foxes for it to form an ideal governing class. He described the political system but the same rule follows for the economic system as well. In the ideal economic system a mixture of “speculators” who are foxes in this situation and “rentiers” who are the lions, is required. In society both lions capable of decisive and forceful action, as well as, foxes imaginative, innovative, and unscrupulous are needed.

Thus, in his theory of circulation of elites, from lions to foxes and vice-versa, Vilfredo Pareto has given a theory of social change. His theory of change is cyclical in nature. It is not linear like Marx’s theory in which the process ends with the coming of a communist society. In Pareto’s views all societies move from one state to another in a cyclical manner, with no beginning or end.

These are some of the major ideas of Vilfredo Pareto that we have described to you. Now let us examine the impact of his ideas on contemporary sociology.

3.3.4 Impact of Pareto’s Ideas on Contemporary Sociology

Pareto’s sociological theory has enduring significance. He was one of the first social scientists who gave a precise definition of the idea of a social system. A social system can be analysed in terms of the interrelations and mutual dependencies between the constituent parts. His contribution to the study of elites, his theory of elites and circulation of elites is of crucial significance. It continues to inspire political scientists and sociologists even today. Even today, investigations into the functioning of the upper strata of governing, as well as, non-governing elites are carried out with reference to Vilfredo Pareto’s ideas.

Like Durkheim, Pareto too has stressed the need to consider the requirements of the social system and had rejected utilitarian and individualistic notions. But unlike Durkheim, who stressed the objective nature of social facts, he emphasised the need to consider the desires, sentiments and propensities of human behaviour. In his works we find the influence of such thinkers as, Max Weber, Durkheim, Mosca and several others.

Impact of Vilfredo Pareto’s ideas can be seen in the works of political scientists like Harold Lasswell. Lasswell was one of the earliest proponents of followers of Pareto in America. He was inspired by Vilfredo Pareto’s theories of elite formation and circulation of elites. Other social scientists like C. Wright Mills, T.B. Bottomore, Suzanne Keller, Raymond Aron, all reflected the influence of Pareto’s ideas in their work.

You have learnt about the central ideas of Vilfredo Pareto and their impact on contemporary sociology. Now let us discuss the third founding father, Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), but first complete Check Your Progress 2.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Distinguish between logical and non-logical action given by Vilfredo Pareto.

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- ii) What are the two classes of residues mentioned in this unit? Describe.

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- iii) Distinguish between the “lions” and the “foxes”, discussed by Vilfredo Pareto.

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3.4 THORSTEIN VEBLEN (1857-1929)

Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) was born in the state of Wisconsin, United States of America. He studied at John Hopkins, Yale and Cornell Universities in America. His parents were Norwegian immigrants who settled down in the mid-West just ten years before his birth. In his sociology we find the reflection of the kind of changes that were taking place in America during his time as well as, the personal experiences and trait of personality of Thorstein Veblen himself.

Thorstein Veblen’s sociological theory deals with technological evolutionism. He was influenced by the evolutionary doctrine of Herbert Spencer which (as you have already learnt in unit 2 of this course) believed in the evolution of societies. Like Spencer, Thorstein Veblen believed that there is a process

of selective adaptation of societies. Like Spencer, he believed that there is a process of selective adaptation to the environment. But unlike Hegel and Marx, he did not believe that there is a goal or end to this process of historical evolution. Besides his technological evolutionism Veblen also gave a theory of **leisure** class for which he became very famous. He presented this theory in his book, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899). This was his first and the best known book. In this book he has presented his basic theoretical views on sociology. But before we begin to discuss these views let us first discuss the biographical details of Thorstein Veblen and then appreciate the socio-historical background of Veblen which shaped his ideas.

3.4.1 Biographical Sketch

Thorstein Veblen was born in the state of Wisconsin in U.S.A. on July 30th, 1857. His parents were Norwegian immigrants, Thomas Anderson Veblen and Karl Bunde Veblen. Thorstein Veblen was the sixth of twelve children. His parents came to America from Norway just ten years before his birth. They were of old Norwegian peasant stock. They settled in Wisconsin first and then moved to Minnesota. They had a very hard time in their old country and in the new country too, they encountered many problems regarding land and its ownership.

Veblen's parents had developed a hatred for land speculators, tricksters, shyster (tricky) lawyers, etc. who had cheated them time and again. It is this hatred of tricksters and speculators, who were present in great numbers during Thorstein Veblen's time, that is reflected in his later writings. His parents were very hard working and due to their consistent hard work they managed to move to a larger farm in Minnesota. They lived in a community which was exclusively of Norwegian stock. Therefore, the culture to which Thorstein Veblen was exposed for at least seventeen years of his early life was mainly Norwegian. The only exception was that he attended an English school.

Thorstein Veblen's father was well respected in his community. He was a man of judgment and intelligence and minded his own business, unlike many other of this community. This characteristic was inherited by Thorstein Veblen who proved to be a very precocious (prematurely developed) and intelligent child. As a child, he used to pester his elders, beat up the other boys and tease young girls as a child. He grew up to become a sarcastic person who translated his early aggression into biting witticism and skepticism. He became a misfit in his traditional community and also remained a stranger to the wider American society.

He was sent to Carleton College where he was exposed to the American English culture for the first time. Here emphasis was given to the teaching of classics, moral philosophy, and religion. The established doctrine in this academic environment was of Scottish common sense.

Veblen did not take very kindly to the ethos of the Carleton College. He remained a sceptic. Although he graduated from this college in 1880 and remained its most famous alumnus, no honour was accorded to him i.e. no plaque commemorating him on the campus exists. When he graduated from

Carleton most of the knowledge he had acquired was due to his own voracious reading. It was here that he developed a long lasting love for a fellow student, Ellen Rolfe, the niece of the president of the college, whom he married later in 1888.

Veblen left Carleton to become a teacher at a Norwegian school in Madison, Wisconsin. Here, too, the atmosphere was not suitable to him. Therefore, he left this job and went to Baltimore to John Hopkins with his brother to study philosophy. Thus, he moved from the mid-West to the East of America. But in spite of the great opportunities he felt an alien in this leisurely culture of the South, found in Baltimore. He was basically an egalitarian and a radical while southern society was based on hierarchy of traditional classes not much different from our caste system.

Here Veblen got the chance to read such authors as Kant, Mill, Hume, Rousseau, Spencer, etc. But he was not impressed by his teachers and very soon became homesick and lonely. He could not receive his scholarship here, therefore, he went to Yale. He was an agnostic (one who does not believe in God) but here he found himself among the students of divinity. So his sarcastic and sardonic attitude and distance-creating mechanism, which were a self-defense method, increased here. However, he came into contact with such teachers as W.G. Sumner, an authority in sociology, who impressed him a lot. Although Veblen criticised Sumner, as Dorfman, one of his contemporaries, pointed out, Sumner was “the only man for whom he expresseda deep and unqualified admiration” (Coser 1971: 279).

Thorstein Veblen specialised in his work on Kant and the post-Kantians. He was much admired by his teachers and academic colleagues. However, in spite of his completing his doctorate i.e. the research degree of Ph.D., he was not given any academic position. No one wanted a Norwegian and especially one who did not believe in God.

Thorstein Veblen started studying economics and become interested in the volatile agrarian scene of his time around 1888. He felt that economics might provide an answer to the agrarian crisis. Therefore, he went to Cornell and registered himself there. Here he managed to impress his teachers through his papers, such as, “Some Neglected Points in the Theory of Socialism” and several others. From here he went to the University of Chicago where he stayed from 1892-1906. Here he worked with such noted scholars and thinkers like John Dewey, William I. Thomas, and so on. He wrote profusely in several journals. Most of his writings are characterised by wit and sarcasm. In Chicago University he was promoted to the post of instructor at the age of 38 and his promotion to the post of assistant professor took place after five years.

Veblen died on August 3, 1929 of heart disease. Till the end of his life he remained a lonely and sad man whose defense mechanism to face life was to be critical and sarcastic or to remain silent. He remained a stranger to the life of his Norwegian community as well as to the American culture which he criticised in his works. He was a marginal man in true sense of the word.



Fig. 3.3: Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929)

His unorthodoxy and strange ways, as well as his origins, affected his career and his work. It is sad but true that people use Thorstein Veblen's concepts like, "conspicuous consumption", "trained incapacity" (i.e. a person becomes such an expert in one field that the wider knowledge of that subject declines), quite frequently even today; but very few people read his books, the most popular of which is *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899). He was a poor teacher but a very critical author.

3.4.2 Socio-Historical Background

The period in which Thorstein Veblen grew up saw tremendous industrial development in America. Prior to this development America was basically an agrarian society. This period in America is, therefore, called the Gilded age (i.e. age of gold). It is, however, also known as the Age of Protest.

A class of capitalist buccaneers or adventurers emerged during this period in America. They were also known as the Robber Barons who became extremely rich at the expense of the industrial poor, who laboured in the factories doing back breaking jobs. These industrial capitalists were hard headed, determined, vulgar and nouveau rich, that is, they had acquired their wealth recently. They were as Vernon Parington, another American thinker of this period, describes, "primitive souls, ruthless, predatory, capable, single-minded men" (Coser 1971: 293).

The domination of this industrial class led to the uprising of Midwestern farmers. These farmers were the first to mobilise force to fight the predatory classes of capitalists.

Thorstein Veblen's ideas reflect some of these upheavals and conflicts that were taking place in his society. It was the class of Robber Barons who inspired him to develop the theory of the leisure class. The technological changes, which brought about such immense changes in the structure of American society and the emergence of the classes of capitalists, industrial poor, etc., appear to have shaped his theory of technological evolutionism.

The description of the socio-historical background to which Thorstein Veblen belonged is just an outline of the changes that took place in American society in his time. It has been discussed here to explain to you the context in which Thorstein Veblen presented his ideas. Let us now discuss the central ideas of Veblen.

3.4.3 Central Ideas

The central ideas of Thorstein Veblen, as developed in his sociological works, consist of basically his theory of technological evolutionism and his theory of leisure class. Related to his theory of the leisure class is his theory of socially induced motivation for competition. His search for latent functions of social activities outlines his functional analysis. He has also given a theory of the lag between technological and institutional development.

3.4.3.1 Theory of Technological Evolutionism

As mentioned earlier, Thorstein Veblen was influenced by Herbert Spencer's ideas on social evolution. But, for him human evolution took place along

with the invention and use of new and increasingly more effective technologies. He said that social change in any society could be explained through the changes in the methods of doing things, such as methods of dealing with the material means of life. In other words, the “industrial arts” or the technologies of a society determined the nature of adaptation of human beings to their natural environment. It also determined their adjustment to the social environment (Coser 1971: 265).

According to Thorstein Veblen “man is what he does” or to explain it further human beings and their social organisations are dependent on their technological and economic spheres. Human thought in his view is a reflection of the way in which their community is organised. Social institutions embody the habits and customs of the people, their ways of acting and thinking in their struggle to survive in nature.

The process of social evolution according to Veblen reflects essentially the pattern of institutional changes. These institutional changes are themselves due to the changes in the technology of the society. In his writings Thorstein Veblen has described four main stages of evolution. However, Thorstein Veblen’s significant contribution to sociology is found in his study of the contemporary or near contemporary societies.

3.4.3.2 Theory of Leisure Class

Thorstein Veblen has drawn a distinction between two opposed categories, such as between those who make goods and those who make money, between workmanship and salesmanship. In the capitalist world, he says, there is an unresolvable opposition between business and industry, ownership and technology, those who are employed in monetary employment such as the business classes, finances etc. and those who work in the industries, the industrial workers. This distinction helped Thorstein Veblen to explain the prevailing development in American society. It also helped him to attack the earlier conception of evolution.

Unlike his teacher W.G. Sumner, who influenced his work a great deal, Thorstein Veblen did not believe that the leading industrialists and financiers in America contributed much to the production system. They were no the “flowers of modern civilisation” as believed by Sumner. In fact, in Thorstein Veblen’s opinion these industrialists and men of finance were “parasites growing fat on the technological leadership and innovation of other men” (Coser 1971: 266). Veblen writes that the leisure class to which the industrialists, men of finance who are involved in **pecuniary** activities belong, lives by the labour of the industrial poor. They themselves make no industrial contribution and in this sense they have no progressive role to play in the process of evolution.

He states that the people involved in pecuniary are in their thought style or way of thinking “animistic” or “magical”. In evolutionary sense they are left-overs of an earlier period. The industrially employed people, as a contrast, have rational minds and are matter of fact. According to Thorstein Veblen this rational reasoning becomes a must for them because of the “machines” which they use. The machine technology acts as a disciplining agent to the people who use them. In Veblen’s opinion future evolution of

mankind depends on these minds which are disciplined and rational as against the “predatory life styles and magically oriented minds” of the people employed in money making.

3.4.3.3 Leisure Class and Conspicuous Consumption

Thorstein Veblen’s analysis of competitive behaviour in modern capitalist society is very significant. He has analysed the habits of thought and the ways in which social actors behave in modern industrial societies. He has provided a very sophisticated theory of the social sources that underlie competitive behaviour in human beings.

According to him, the self-esteem of people depends on the esteem accorded to them by others in the society. In a competitive materialistic culture such as American, the worth of a person is judged by the worth of others in the system. Thus, there develops a vicious circle of “one upmanship” that is, doing better than your neighbours or friends.

In his book, *The Theory of Leisure Class* Veblen (1899: 30-31) wrote, “As fast as a person makes new acquisitions and becomes accustomed to the new standard of wealth, the new standard forthwith ceases to afford appreciably greater satisfaction than the earlier standard did....the end sought by accumulation is to rank high in comparison with the rest of the community in point of pecuniary strength”.

It is in the context of this vicious circle of accumulation and competition with others that Veblen talks about the concept of conspicuous consumption. Related to conspicuous consumption is the notion of conspicuous leisure and conspicuous display of high standing or position in society. These are all a means to excel one’s neighbours and gain their esteem (See Figure 3.1: Competitive Behaviour in Modern Societies).

Conspicuous consumption is that behaviour of social actors in which they utilise goods and services not just for the sake of utilising these goods and services but for the sake of showing off to others and maintaining a distance between themselves and their neighbours. For example, in our own society we find that rich people own several cars, servants, pet dogs, etc. and flaunt their material possession to establish their higher social status. People show off their wealth through the dress they and their family members wear. The more rich a man is, the more gold and diamond jewellery will his wife wear. Wearing jewellery serves two purposes, one to make the person wearing it look nice and the other to show off to others one’s wealth and success in life.

Sometimes, conspicuous behaviour can have no utility at all except to show to others one’s high position. For example, in Chinese society the Chinese Mandarins (officials in any of nine grades or party leaders) used to sport long fingernails which was a custom for them. But a social analyst can quite easily work it out that a man who has long fingernails cannot work with his hands and must therefore occupy a high rank and prestigious place in his society.

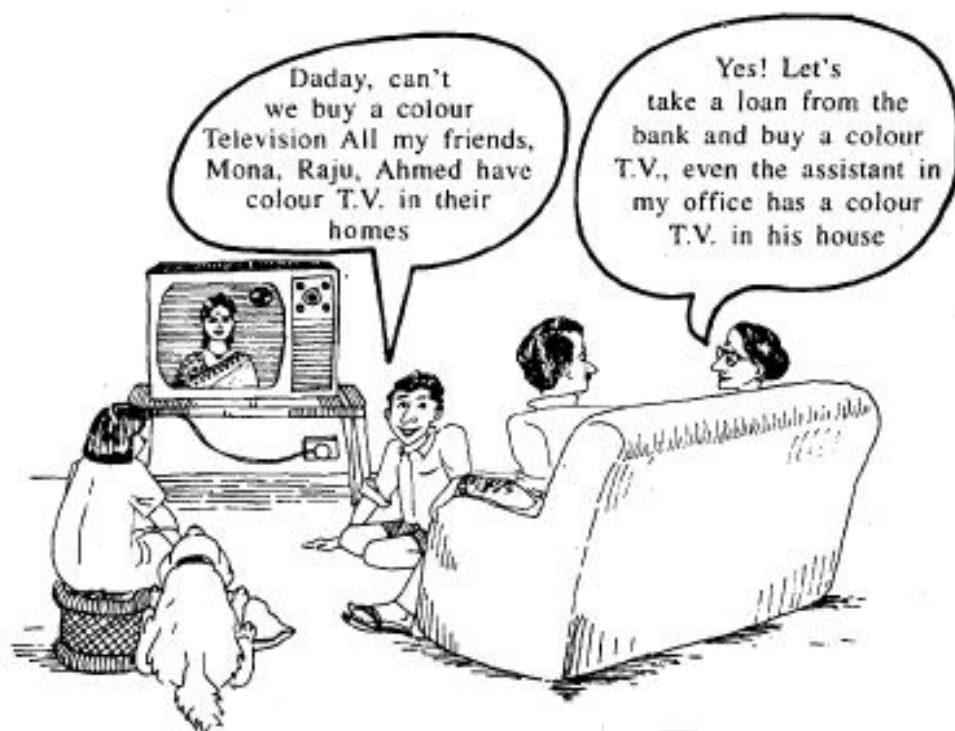


Figure 3.1: Competitive Behaviour in Modern Societies

In American society the rich people go for holidays, a practice which is found in our society too. The trips to sea beaches or mountain resorts which only the rich can afford are some examples of conspicuous leisure.

As Thorstein Veblen points out, in the aristocratic age the “wasteful” life style was followed by only a small section of the population. But in modern capitalist countries the competitive display has permeated to the whole social structure. Each class copies the life style of the class above it to the extent possible. Veblen writes that it is this acquisitiveness which results in the perpetual sense of “deprivation” felt by the poor in modern societies. He says that the industrial system does not make the poor poorer in an absolute sense but it makes them relatively poor in their own eyes which is just as important. In this analysis Thorstein Veblen has come very near to describing the concept of “relative deprivation” later developed by R.K. Merton (Coser 1971: 269).

Before moving on to the next sub-section, complete Activity 2 and find out the nature of competitive behaviour in our own society.

Activity 2

Read the section on the competitive behaviour in modern capitalist societies given by Thorstein Veblen in this unit. Select five families in your neighbourhood and find out from their members

- i) the latest technology items, which they have bought within last five years, such as, radio, bicycle, car or T.V., refrigerator, washing machine, personal computer, mobile phone
- ii) why they have bought these items.
- iii) How many of these five families possess these items.

Now write a note of one page. Give your conclusion whether you find (or do not find) a sense of competition in these five families regarding the purchase of technology items. Keep Thorstein Veblen's description in mind. Compare your note, if possible, with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

3.4.3.4 Functional Analysis

Thorstein Veblen found that there is a latent function behind conspicuous consumption, which a social analyst can discover. Why do people prefer to buy a posh Rolls Royce car when they already have Ambassador cars, why do people (who have money) buy imported goods when these goods are produced in one's own country? The real reason or function of these activities lies in the honour that possession of such articles bestow on them. Even good manners, pronunciation, high bred behaviour, etc. are conspicuous styles of living, which in turn reflect the high standing of the people who have them. This idea too is further developed by Robert K. Merton in his functionalist theory. Thorstein Veblen's ideas helped R.K. Merton to formulate his concept of latent and manifest functions.

3.4.3.5 Concept of Social Change

Thorstein Veblen's concept of social change is related to the technological evolutionism that he discussed in his writings. It is about the distinction he drew between the "predatory" class of people employed in pecuniary activities and the class of industrial workers.

For him the technology available to a society determines its culture. The social institutions found in a society represent the adaptation of that society to past technologies and are, therefore, never in full accord with the present needs. He says that the class which benefits from the persistence of the old order resists further technological changes. The former class believes in, "whatever is, is right", whereas the **law of natural selection** in the process of evolution rests on the notion of, "whatever is, is wrong" (Coser 1971: 272).

Thus, according to Thorstein Veblen, social change depends on the conflict that exists between the class which has vested interests in maintaining the old system and the class which brings about the new technological changes. But unlike Karl Marx, Thorstein Veblen did not believe that history of all societies is the history of class struggles. In his view, social change occurs due to the conflict that arises between advancing technology and the existing social institutions which tend to retard this change. Therefore, there is a lag between the social institutions found in a society and the technological developments that take place in that society (Coser 1971: 273).

Given above are some of the central ideas developed by Thorstein Veblen. Let us now discuss the impact of Veblen's ideas on contemporary sociology.

3.4.4 Impact of Thorstein Veblen's Ideas on Contemporary Sociology

Thorstein Veblen's contribution to sociological theory lies not so much in his own sociological works as it does in the kind of influence it had on

other social scientists. His caustic and critical comments about his society and his cynical outlook both made him a good judge of social reality, not just as it appeared but what it really was. His central ideas have continued to influence the minds of contemporary sociologists.

His attack on American culture, of the kind which was present during his time but does not exist now, has provided the perspective, which still remains valid to study society. His study of the social-psychological roots of competitive life styles can explain such behaviour as found in today's life styles. For example, the fashion of wearing torn, faded jeans but with a designer label revealed to a critical analyst the fact that wearing torn faded jeans did not mean that the wearers of such jeans were poor, but it meant that these people could afford to look poor. The faded jeans with designer labels were not cheap commodities but were available sometimes only in foreign countries and therefore not accessible to ordinary citizens of developing countries.

Thorstein Veblen's contribution to the theory of "relative deprivation" and analysis of the latent function (later developed by Robert K. Merton) are very significant contributions to sociology.

Check Your Progress 3

i) Describe Veblen's theory of technological evolutionism. Use five lines for your answer.

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ii) Fill in the blanks:

- a) Unlike W.G. Sumner, Thorstein Veblen believed that the industrialists and the men of finance were growing fat on the efforts of the industrial workers
- b) In a competitive materialistic culture the worth of a person is judged by the of the others in the system.
- c) In modern capitalist countries the competitive display of wealth and high rank has permeated the whole

iii) What is Veblen's view on social change? Describe it using five lines.

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the contributions of three founding fathers of sociology, Georg Simmel (1858-1918), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) and Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929).

We have first given a short description of his biography and details of the socio-historical background to which Georg Simmel belonged. Then we have presented to you some of the central ideas of Simmel, such as his formal sociology, his description of the social types, his ideas on the role of conflict in sociology, and finally his ideas about modern culture. We have also discussed the impact of his ideas on contemporary sociology.

Secondly, we have provided a short description of the biographical details of Vilfredo Pareto and the socio-historical background to which he belonged. We have discussed some of his seminal ideas, such as logical and non-logical actions, his concept of residues and derivatives, his theory of elites. We have described the role of the governing and the non-governing elites and about the Machiavellian concepts of the “Lions” and the “Foxes” borrowed by Vilfredo Pareto to explain two types of characters. Finally, we have discussed the impact of Vilfredo Pareto’s ideas on contemporary sociology.

Finally, we have described the biographical details of Thorstein Veblen and his socio-historical background. The central ideas of Thorstein Veblen have been discussed, such as his theory of technological evolutionism, theory of leisure class, leisure class and conspicuous consumption, functional analysis and his theory of social change in society. We have discussed in the end the impact of Veblen’s ideas on contemporary sociology.

3.6 KEY WORDS

Conspicuous Consumption It is the use of goods and services which makes the person who used them noticeable by others and raises their esteem in the eyes of others in a materialistic culture, such as wearing diamond studded shoes.

Derivatives A concept given by Vilfredo Pareto to explain the variable or changing aspects of a social system. For example, there are and there have been several systems of medicine in this world, such as Ayurvedic, Homoeopathic, Allopathic, etc. These various systems of medicine are in Pareto’s terms derivatives.

Law of Natural Selection It is a part of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution. Herbert Spencer too has talked about this law of natural selection in social

evolution. It means that in the struggle for survival in both the physical world, as well as, the social world there exists an automatic process of selection. Only those who are the fittest or best suited to their physical or social environment survive and those who are weak die.

Leisure

It is the time free from work when a person does what he or she wants to do, such as going for a holiday or on a trek, read novels or do painting.

Logical Actions

A concept given by Pareto which means that those actions which use means that are appropriate to ends and in which means and ends are logically related. For example, if it is raining a person carries an umbrella. Here means is the umbrella and the end is to protect oneself from getting wet in the rain. The means and the end are logically related.

Non-logical

Another concept given by Pareto to explain all other behaviours which do not fall into the category of logical action. It is these kinds of actions which are in his view subjects for sociological concern. For example, the act of burning valuable goods during the potlatch ceremony by the Indian tribes in America.

Pecuniary

It is any work or business related to money and money-making such as, finance, banking, profiteering etc.

Predatory

One who lives by plunder or on preys. For example, the tiger or lion who lives by hunting other animals. In the context of Thorstein Veblen's ideas, predatory refers to those people who do not contribute to the production system but live on the efforts of others.

Residues

A concept given by Pareto to explain the constant aspects of a social system. For example, there are several systems of medicine found in this world but behind all these various kinds of medicine there is a constant element of trying to cure a sick person. This element remains constant in all these kinds of medicine. This constant element is called residue by

Vilfredo Pareto and he has given six classes of residues out of which we have mentioned two in the unit. Class I residue relates to the instinct for combination, while the class II refers to the instinct for persistence.

Social Forms

This is a concept given by Georg Simmel. It refers to the underlying uniformities of patterns of interaction of individuals, social actors in social, political economic fields. For example, if we analyse the form of the activities taking place in a corporation we will discover the underlying form of subordination and superordination in the structure of the organisation, besides other forms.

Social Types

This concept too has been given by Georg Simmel and is related to his concept of social forms. He has described a whole range of types from “the stranger”, “the adventurer” to the “the renegade”. According to such concept as “the stranger”, a person is a stranger not because he/ she wanders from one place to another but because of the special status enjoyed by that person as one joins a social group in which he/ she is not originally a member. Thus, a stranger has a fixed social position in society and due to this position is not biased and can perform certain roles special to a stranger alone, like acting as an intermediary.

3.7 FURTHER READING

Coser, L.A. 1971 *Masters of Sociological Thought, Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. Under the General Editorship of Robert K. Merton. Second Edition. Harcourt Brace Javonovich Inc: New York

Timasheff, Nicholas S, 1967. *Sociological Theory. Its Nature and Growth*. Third Edition, Random House: New York.

3.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) According to Georg Simmel social forms are kinds of abstracts drawn from the pattern of individual interactions. However diverse the nature

of interactions in terms of interests and purposes might be, there is an underlying form which can be identical in both. Thus, the form of interaction between the leader of a criminal gang and his gang members can be identical to the form of interaction between the leader of a scout group and the other members of his group.

- ii) a) never
- b) types
- d) conflict, never
- iii) Georg Simmel talks about modern culture of industrial societies. He says that in today's world, as compared to the traditional feudal world, human beings have increasingly become more free. The concept of individual has developed due to the existence of intersecting circles of social existence. A factory owner does not have any authority over the factory worker outside the time for factory work, thus, in modern culture human beings enjoy more freedom.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Logical action, according to Vilfredo Pareto, are those actions which use means that are appropriate to ends and in which means are logically related to the ends. While non-logical actions are those which do not fall into the category of logical actions. It is these non-logical actions which are subjects for sociological inquiry.
- ii) The two classes of residues mentioned in the unit are Class I Instinct for combination; and Class II Group Persistence (Persistence of Aggregates).
- iii) "Lions" and the "Foxes" are types of personalities which Pareto has borrowed from Machivelli, the "Lions" belong to class II residue who are responsible, stable conservative, forceful in action. The "Foxes" belong to class I residue because they are imaginative, innovative and unscrupulous. According to Pareto, the governing elite of any society should have a mixture of these two types of people i.e., the "Lions" and the "Foxes" for its proper functioning.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) According to Thorstein Veblen the process of social evolution involves the invention and use of new and increasingly more efficient technologies. The social institutions of a society change along with the changes in technology. The technology or "industrial arts" of a society determines the nature of adaptation of human beings to their natural and social environment.
- ii) a) Parasites
- b) Worth
- c) Social structure
- iii) In Veblen's view social change takes place in society due to conflict. The conflict arises when technology of a society becomes advanced while social institutions of that society remain backward.

UNIT 4 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA -I

Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Social Antecedents of Indian Sociological Thought
 - 4.2.1 Social Thought in Pre-British Period
 - 4.2.2 Impact of the British
 - 4.2.3 Emergence of the Middle Classes
- 4.3 Socio-religious and Other Movements for Reform
 - 4.3.1 The Reformist Movements
 - 4.3.2 The Revivalist Movements
 - 4.3.3 Other Movements
- 4.4 Political Movement for Freedom after Freedom in India
 - 4.4.1 Social Background of Freedom Struggle
 - 4.4.2 Complementary Nature of Religious and Political Movements
 - 4.4.3 Political Movements related to Women, Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes
- 4.5 Intellectual Antecedents of Indian Sociological Thought in India
 - 4.5.1 Dilemma Between Tradition and Modernity
 - 4.5.2 Benoy Kumar Sarkar
 - 4.5.3 Ananda Coormaraswamy
 - 4.5.4 Some Other Intellectuals
 - 4.5.5 Structure of Modern Education in India
- 4.6 Emergence of Sociology and Social Anthropology in India
 - 4.6.1 Link Between Sociology and Social Anthropology
 - 4.6.2 Link Between Sociology and Indology
 - 4.6.3 Irawati Karve
- 4.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.8 Further Reading
- 4.9 Key Words
- 4.10 Specimen Answers To Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to

- describe the social antecedents of sociological thought in India
- discuss the socio-religious movements for reform
- explain the political movement for freedom

- describe the intellectual antecedents of sociological thought
- outline the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

So far in this block you learnt about the emergence of sociology in Europe in Unit 1, the founding fathers of sociology Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer in Unit 2 and about the founding fathers Georg Simmel, Vilfredo Pareto and Thorstein Veblen in Unit 3.

In this unit we have discussed the social and intellectual antecedents of the history and development of sociology in India. We have also mentioned the impact of the British in bringing about the change in the way of thinking, style of living and behaviour of the upper strata of Indian people. The socio-religious movements were an attempt to rid society of its social evils and rigid values. Freedom struggle and the Indian leaders who participated in this struggle had a great influence on Indian society and culture. It is in the background of these social changes that sociology and social anthropology emerged and developed in India.

Section 4.2 describes the social antecedents of Indian sociological thought; section 4.3 discusses the socio-religious reform movements while section 4.4 gives the social background of the freedom struggle, as well as, the complementary nature of the religious and political movements. Section 4.5 describes the intellectual antecedents of Indian sociological thought and finally, section 4.6 outlines the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India. In the next unit, Unit 5, you will learn more about three of the major pioneers of Indian sociology, namely, Radhakamal Mukherjee, D.P. Mukherji and G.S. Ghurye.

4.2 SOCIAL ANTECEDENTS OF INDIAN SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT

India has a history extending over nearly four millennia. Its cultural heritage consists of religious and philosophical works, which were composed in classical languages such as Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali. Besides, in the medieval period Bhakti literature was composed in regional languages such as Awadhi, Braj, Maithali, Bengali, Assamese, Marathi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. Then there are classical and folk forms of performing arts, architecture, sculpture that embody India's pluralistic tradition of socio-cultural formation, ranging from tribal groups to agriculturists and urban dwellers.

4.2.1 Social Thought in Pre-British Period

India is a complex civilisation especially where its literary tradition is concerned. The Indian philosophy consists of six schools of thought namely Yoga, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaishesika, **Vedanta** and Mimamsa. This is an important source of Indian thought. The thirteen principal Upanishads consist of philosophical enquiries into inner life and ultimate destiny of

human beings. Besides these we have the Buddhist and Jain religions which have many philosophical works. Generally, these schools of thought concern the evolution of mankind towards certain ultimate goals. Salvation, which in India means freedom from the cycle of births and deaths, is the objective of enquiry and cogitation in many of these philosophies. Indian society has all the same been changing and adapting itself to new conditions.

Indian social thought in pre-modern times was the articulation of a **multi-ethnic** society. We have had the impact of Islamic tradition which gave rise to the Sufi cult and had a wide ranging influence on the life style and values, especially in the North. The Sikh religion is a very good example of the mixture of Hindu and Islamic thought. All through, the freedom of enquiry prevailed in India and there was hardly any **persecution** of a group on grounds of belief. Hence, a tolerant attitude towards each other characterised the Indian social groups. While Indian religions thrived among the common populace, Indian philosophy was mainly cultivated among the literate, urban-based classes.

4.2.2 Impact of the British

The coming of British into India was an event which had far-reaching consequences for Indian society. The age-old traditions began to decline due to new social and economic forces. The classical languages such as Sanskrit and Persian declined and English became the official language. The traditional handicrafts in Indian country-side fell into decay as they were unable to withstand the competition of machine-made textiles and other goods brought by the British to the Indian markets from Manchester, Lancashire, Sheffield and London. The Indian villages were not able to continue as viable economic units under the colonial rule.

The British brought important changes in India by the introduction of railways, posts and telegraphs which facilitated communication between groups. Further, administrative and judicial services were extended to many parts of the subcontinent. Thus, India entered the modern stage. The schools, colleges and universities were started by the British rulers. **Missionaries** and Indian voluntary organisations also took steps to spread modern education in India.

4.2.3 Emergence of the Middle Classes

The erstwhile feudal classes such as, the Rajas, the Zamindars, the Talukdars, etc. were no longer in the center of the stage. Indeed, the middle classes, which emerged during the British period, are now prominent in nearly all spheres of social life in Indian society. The social thinkers discussed in this unit are drawn from the **middle class** base. Although castes are important in ritualistic and domestic spheres, classes have become significant in occupational, professional and public life. The term “middle class” is used here not as a pure economic category. The middle class is the product of both economics and culture. The members of the middle class not only share a common economic life but also a socio-cultural life.

4.3 SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS FOR REFORM

In the nineteenth century and the early parts of the twentieth century it is the members from middle classes who began to think in terms of reforming and modernising Indian society. The reformist attempts contained both religious and social components. Let us briefly discuss the reformist and revivalist movements of the nineteenth century India.

4.3.1 The Reformist Movements

One of the early nineteenth century reformers was Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833) of Bengal who believed that Indians could become progressive if they shed the superstitions and evil practices such as Sati, infanticide, etc. He advocated a new kind of religion which combined Christian teachings with Vedanta. He founded the Brahmo Samaj which was meant to be a spiritual **forum**, where a monotheistic, **non-idolatrous** worship could be conducted by its members who had nothing to do with caste or superstition. Ram Mohun Roy's influence was mainly confined to urban, literate groups of Bengal. In the same century, Mahadev Govind Ranade, a jurist of Maharashtra, founded the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. This was broadly modeled on the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal. The social reactions raised by the two movements were, however, quite different. The Brahmo Samaj by its insistence on Western-inspired liberalism gave rise to a stormy orthodox reaction. Ram Mohun's reforms were strongly opposed by orthodox Hindus led by Radha Kant Dev. Here was a confrontation between tradition and modernity. By contrast, the liberal trends initiated by Prarthana Samaj did not create a direct conflict between tradition and modernity. Unlike the members of Brahmo Samaj, its members did not lead a distinctive, anti-traditionalist life style. So, there was no sharp reaction from society.

4.3.2 The Revivalist Movements

Two revivalist movements may be also mentioned. The Arya Samaj launched by Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) was based on an appeal to people to shed the unhealthy features of Hinduism (such as narrowness of caste, superstition, ritualism, etc.) and go back to the pristine purity of Vedas. It sponsored a kind of education which had both traditional and modern components. The D.A.V. or Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Colleges spread education in North India on a wide scale. The Ramakrishna Mission founded by Vivekananda had a two fold purpose: one, to make educated people in India to realise their responsibility to the weaker sections and take steps to remove poverty and social backwardness; second, to propagate Indian Vedanta to the Westerners. In regard to first, many schools and hostels were founded in urban, rural and tribal areas to improve education and employment prospects of common people. In regard to second, Advaita centers were established in many Western countries to bring about spiritual awakening among Western people.

4.3.3 Other Movements

Just as reformist and revivalist movements were precursors for social reforms in India and they gave impetus to scholarly activities related to socio-cultural awakening in Indian society., we find that in post-Independence period, degradation of environment and misguided development related movements have also influenced intellectual activity among shows sociologists who focus on the study of and problems related to deforestation (Jain 1984), 1994 and 1998-99, 2001 & 2001 6+ 2003 Sillitoc et al 2002 displacement B 1995 , Fernades.....) and unbalanced sex ratio in India (Patel.....). Most of these issues are products of movements taking place in different parts of the country.

Except this brief mention of such trends, we will not go into these details as these developments in Sociology will be included in the syllabus of course of master’s degree in Sociology.

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Name the six schools of thought found in Indian philosophy. Use about three lines to list them.

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- ii) Mention three of the important changes brought about in Indian society due to the impact of the British rule. Use about ten lines for your answer.

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- iii) Who founded Brahma Samaj? What did it stand for? Write your answer using about seven lines.

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4.4 POLITICAL MOVEMENT FOR FREEDOM IN INDIA

Towards the end of nineteenth century, a political movement for the attainment of Independence arose in India. The National Congress, founded in 1885 by Octavius Hume, established a political forum for debates and discussions.

4.4.1 Social Background of Freedom Struggle

Most members of the National Congress were drawn from urban, literate groups. Its essentially middle class character persisted from 1885-1917. With the coming of M.K. Gandhi on the scene, the Congress became a mass based political party, in which urban professionals, peasants, artisans and industrial workers formed the bulk of primary members. Broadly speaking, intellectuals in India did not have to face the type of persecution faced elsewhere for holding independent political opinions or agitating for freedom. However, numerous congress leaders and followers went to prison under the charge of sedition during the Swadeshi Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement and Quit India Movement. Several people were also executed for their participation in anti-state and termed by the British as terrorist activities. However, the distinctive mark of the Indian struggle for Independence was its non-violent approach.

Activity 1

Read one novel by famous Indian authors like Tagore, Premchand, Mulkraj Anand, Raja Rao, Venkataramani, or any other author. The background of this novel should be the freedom struggle in India.

After reading this novel write an essay of about two pages about (i) the kind of social institutions, such as family, law, political associations mentioned in the novel; (ii) about the values and norms represented through the actions of different characters in the novel.

If possible, compare your note with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

4.4.2 Complementary Nature of Religious and Political Movements

While the religious movements indirectly contributed to political movements through education and reforms, the National Congress and other political parties directly participated in political activities. The former type of movement induced self-confidence, while the latter type created a political

consciousness. Thus, the two types may be viewed as complementary developments in Indian society. We have so far discussed the social and cultural scenario that provided a backdrop for development of sociology in India. However, before we go on to discuss the topic of development of sociology in India and its major pioneers, let us discuss the intellectual climate which gave rise to its emergence.

4.4.3 Political Movements related to Peasants, Women, Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Tribes

The interface of social institutions and political processes has often given impetus to collective action with some degree of organisation. We find that in India desire for social change beginning with lobbying or advocacy has led to political movements with fairly clear objectives, action-plan and organisation. You may discuss such movements arising in India in the context of rising expectation of the masses, which are not fulfilled by current political set-up (See Kothari 1960, Bayley 1962 and Desai 1965). Mukherjee (1977), Rao (1978) and Oommen (1977) have worked on theoretical and substraction aspects of such movements in India. For enumerating examples of political movement in India, we may look at the Telnagana peasant struggle movement between 1946 and 1951. It was led by the Communist Party of India (see Dhanagare 2002 (1983)). Similarly, various shades of communist parties have continued to organise the Naxal base movement of the 1960s today (see Bannerjee 2002 or 1980, 1996). Both the Telegana and Naxal bound movements have tried to change the existing agrarian relations.

The scheduled castes and tribes, being the most exploited and oppressed segments of Indian society, have quite a long history of protests, struggles and organised movements. Omvedt (2002 or 2001) has worked on the dalit movement after Ambedkar while Sinha (2002 or 1972) and Singh (2002 or 1983) have studied tribal movements. Women's movements in India and their links with the state are subject matter of studies by such scholars as Lingam (2002 or 1998), Jain (1984) and Desai (1988). Participation of youth in student movements has significance from the point of view of leadership formation that matures in the stage of later roels in regional or national politics (see Shah 2002 or 1979. The idea of mentioning these studies at this point is to take your attention to trends in current sociological pursuits. At the level of master's degree courses, such movements will be part of a full paper on sociology of social and political movements in India. (Please note that the year given after 2002 in the above references refer to first time publication of the articles which have been re-printed in the year 2002 publication, edited by G. Shah).

4.5 INTELLECTUAL ANTECEDENTS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THOUGHT IN INDIA

We may make here a reference to the British impact on Indian elites. India had a classical literary tradition which lasted for centuries. The hallmark of elitism was knowledge of Sanskrit. But during the Bhakti phase (approximately from ninth century A.D.) there was the development of a

high quality literature in regional languages. The Bhaktas, who inspired literary activity in regional languages, were either writers themselves or else their teachings inspired literary work. Mention may be made of Tulsidas and Surdas (Awadhi and Braj respectively), Kabir (variant of Hindu), Sankaradeva (Assamese), Chaitanya (Bengali), Namdev and Tukaram (Marathi), Narsi Mehta (Gujarati), Purandaradasa (Kannada), Nayanars and Alwars (Tamil) and many others.

While the Bhaktas remained pre-eminently folk-venerated figures in several regions of India, the elites continued to cling to Sanskrit as the ideal literary form. Prestige was attached to Sanskrit compositions. Even Rabindranath Tagore had to contend with the Bengali traditional elites who held that Sanskrit was much superior medium of instruction. There was a swift but partial change over to English among the Indian elites. According to Edward Shils, in spite of this shift to English there was a sub-conscious longing among the Indian elites for the older Brahminical tradition based on Sanskrit. In other words, the modern English educated elites were more inspired by literary, **humanistic** tradition than by science and technology. This persistence was due to the hold of Sanskrit on the elites.

4.5.1 Dilemma Between Tradition and Modernity

In sum, the Indian intellectual of the twentieth century were caught in the dilemma between tradition and modernity. Tradition stood for the old customs, values, ideals etc. while modernity implied the impact of the Western ideals of rationality freedom, equality etc. Tradition and modernity should not be viewed as polar opposites, but some scholars (e.g. Edward Shills) have used them as a device to distinguish between the old and the new values. Coomaraswamy, a famous social thinker and curator of Indian art in U.S.A., almost veered to the rejection of practices. He meant by tradition the basic premises or core values which were common to both the East and the West. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, an eminent sociologist, took the other extreme of setting aside the traditions of India which were rooted in religion and spirituality. He tried to show the secular strength of India. Yet, he did not altogether reject tradition. He wanted to extract the secular component of Indian culture and use it for human progress.

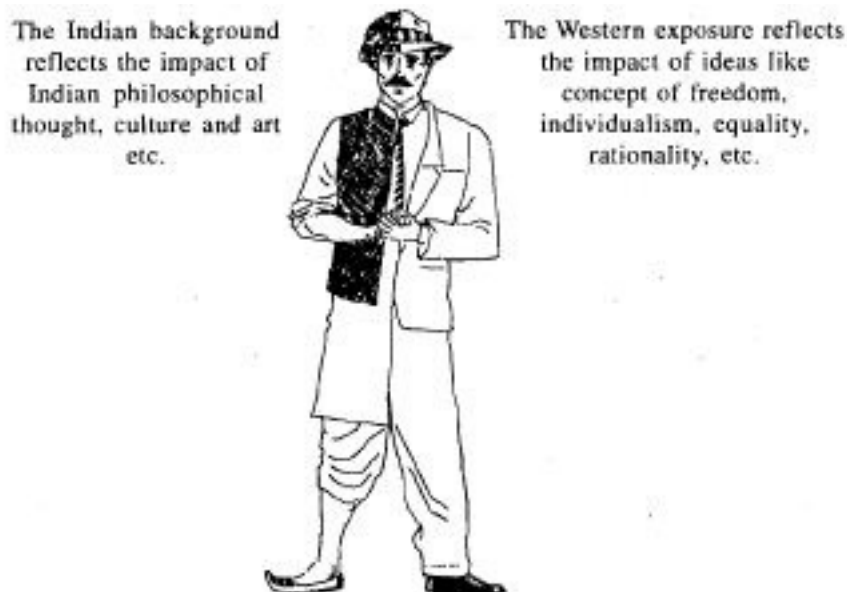


Figure 4.1: The Indian Intellectual

4.5.2 Benoy Kumar Sarkar

Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a rationalist. He did not agree with the view that the West was materialistic, while the East was spiritualistic. Sarkar argued that Indian society had materialistic as well as secular components. India's past could be described in terms of positive, materialistic terms. He did not subscribe to the view that India was mystical or otherworldly. Sarkar welcomed the transition of India from a feudal, agrarian past to a capitalistic present. The colonial rule had broken up the isolation of India and brought it into the global mainstream, capitalism or bourgeois culture was the dominant force of contemporary times. In his search for the rationalistic basis of India, B.K. Sarkar resembled Max Weber, who developed a sociology of capitalism. However, Sarkar focused on political aspects of capitalism, while Karl Marx discussed its economic aspects and Max Weber focused on bureaucracy.

In order to march along with the developed societies of the world, India needed self-confidence and poise. Sarkar was an atheist but he did not discard India's religious tradition. According to him, even India's religions had a secular basis. For example, the deities such as Shiva, Parvati or Ganesha were the creations of human mind rather than of divine origin. The Indian tradition with its undue emphasis on mysticism and renunciation could not help India's adaptation to changing times. It was appropriate, therefore, for educated Indians to reassert their rationalist, secular past and equip themselves for the challenges of an urban-industrial society. Sarkar, for example, was opposed to religious revivalism.

The bourgeoisie in the West had succeeded in setting aside their feudal past. The hegemony of the church with its mysticism and renunciation had receded to the background in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. The individuals were no longer mere cogs in the wheel of collectivity. Not only new productive patterns but also new social attitudes were emerging in the new epoch. Individualism gained prominence in the industrial society of Europe. The individuals needed to be aggressive and motivated for action and achievement. The old collective identities were, therefore, buried and new individualistic goals and aspirations began to thrive.

Sarkar was inspired by the two political philosophers of Europe: Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes. Niccolo Machiavelli (fourteenth century) wrote his political philosophy in the early days of emerging modern capitalism. The capitalist individual was aggressive, self-confident, and more interested in material gains. His prescription for political rulers was that they should seize hold the opportunity and act ruthlessly to achieve the goals. Thomas Hobbes (seventeenth century) was a later political philosopher. He proposed the theory of social contract. The self-seeking individuals depicted by Niccolo Machiavelli were no longer suitable for the more advanced capitalist society which required order and balance. Therefore, individuals must give up their selfish pursuits, enter into a social contract and abide by norms. This way the individual aggression would

be kept under reasonable control. Sarkar stated that Indians should firstly give up their mystical attitude and secondly they should develop a social perspective suitable to the capitalist order. Important works of B.K. Sarkar are *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*, 4 Volumes (published in 1914 and 1937); and *Political Institutions and Theories of Hindus* (1922). He taught economics at Calcutta University.

4.5.3 Ananda Coomaraswamy

Ananda Coomaraswamy was an early Indian social thinker whose works helped in the development of sociology in India. He was an **idealist**, i.e. a person believing in the abstract values of life like God, values of goodness, etc. In this he stood in contrast to B.K. Sarkar who wished to explore the material basis of Indian society. The first two or three decades of this century may be described as a period of Indian Renaissance. Notable personalities such as Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore were also trying to project an idealistic view of India. In essence all these men held that the greatness of India lay in its spirituality. Through the revival of her spirit, India could not only overcome its poverty and backwardness, but also bring solace to the West afflicted by materialistic greed and disrupted by war and violence.

Ananda Coomaraswamy extensively explored the evolution of art in India, especially architecture and sculpture. For him, Indian art in its myriad forms was not merely a decorative or aesthetic object, but it was the key to understand the Indian mind which recognises oneness of all in the universe or unity in diversity. It was an enduring testimony to a great civilisation and a culture. It embodied the ideals and values of the mankind. In a country where many people are not literate, the Indian art served as a visual medium of instruction; it depicted epics, puranas, and legends in stone, clay or marble for the instruction of folks. Further, it treasured India's religious values and summed up India's recognition of oneness in all forms of expression. Viewed thus, the harsh and the tender, the ugly and the beautiful, the rational and the expressive were all part and parcel of the total artistic experience.

Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote many books interpreting philosophy of Indian art. In the West, India's achievements in the past had been known mainly through the Sanskrit texts. The West had only a vague notion of Indian art which had developed over nearly four millennia. Coomaraswamy held that Indian images were not merely anthropomorphic forms (i.e. folk beliefs transformed in human forms) but also veritable treasure houses of Indian ideals. The Shiva-Nataraja not only denoted a peak achievement in sculpture but also symbolised liberation. Shiva's dance ended the mortal limitations and freed the human soul from its temporal trappings. He noted that there were many parallels between the Indian art and the European Gothic art. Although there were many interpretations of Indian art previously by W.B. Havell, Percy Brown etc., Coomaraswamy presented for the first time a comprehensive philosophy of Indian art.

Ananda Coomaraswamy made a unique distinction between tradition and modernity. He held that tradition was the epoch anchored in values of

collective life and qualitative achievement. As such it was common to all countries – East, Middle-East or West. This epoch was disrupted by the Industrial Revolution whose influence became world-wide. The competitiveness of the new age made human beings materialists and grasping. Ananda Coomaraswamy did not belittle science and technology. But he regretted that in modern times, the science and technology have been put to wrong uses; people became aggressive and selfish; the nations tried to dominate each other through violence and warfare.

In comparing East and West, he did not try to uphold India's superiority over the rest in spirituality and human values. He wrote extensively on the commonness of mysticism in European, Chinese and Arabic religious texts and documents. But he seemed to hold that the Western countries had smothered their mystical and spiritual traditions under the weight of materialistic achievements. Therefore, India could stimulate the spiritual regeneration of the West. India in a special sense stood for the whole of Asia. Although China was a great civilisation, much of its culture was moulded by Buddhism. The other Asian countries such as Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and Cambodia too have been moulded by India's culture. In the final analysis, what mattered was the activation of core values which were common heritage of all her mankind. Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote: "The chosen people of the future can be no nation, no race, but an aristocracy of the whole world, in whom the vigour of European action will be united to the serenity of Asiatic thought".

In a similar vein, he wanted the nationalists in India, who were then struggling for Independence, to nurture broad visions. He wanted the young Indians to aspire not only for independent India but for a better world free from strife and tension. Merely imitating the West in the name of progress was not going to help the emerging Indian nation. Indian women should redefine themselves in the Indian idiom; women should be true to themselves and exist on their own terms. If they merely compete with men, forgetting the core values, then they would not reach fulfillment. Ananda Coomaraswamy, in sum, did not advocate orientalising of the West nor did he desire a synthesis of the two. He stood for a return to "the first principles" by which he meant the moral values which were the basis of all humankind. His important works are: *The Dance of Shiva* (Indian edition, 1974); and *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (Indian edition, 1974).

4.5.4 Some Other Intellectuals

Radhakamal Mukerjee and G.S. Ghurye, two noted sociologists of Lucknow and Bombay Universities, respectively, were more directly influenced by India's Sanskrit heritage. They looked at modernity as an instrument of adapting traditions to contemporary conditions. In comparison to them, D.P. Mukerji, another eminent sociologist of Lucknow, started off as a Marxist. He viewed tradition and modernity as confronting each other and shaping each other, but he rejected the final Marxist solution of an Utopian state. In other words, he went back to Indian tradition for reconstructing modern India. You will learn more extensively about the contribution made by these three pioneers of sociology in India. But before doing that let us first understand the structure of education in India during the British period. This has had considerable influence on the nature and

type of sociology, besides other social sciences like economics, political science, etc. which developed in India. Sociology in India to a large extent became influenced by such developments primarily in Britain and then America and Europe. Therefore, to understand the structure of education in India is very important.

4.5.5 Structure of Modern Education in India

A few words may be said about the structure of Indian education. In the three British Presidencies, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, universities were established during the nineteenth century. In the princely states of India such as Baroda, Mysore, Hyderabad etc., institutions were established for modern education. While higher institutions had English medium, the lower schools had vernacular (i.e. regional languages) medium. The purpose of education was to train Indians in arts and sciences so they would help in the smooth functioning of British rule in India. The educated Indians were usually absorbed into the lower rungs of administration and judiciary.

In the arts and sciences, a limited number of subjects were taught. These included English, history, philosophy, economics, physics, chemistry, botany and zoology. Sociology came to be taught as a major subject only after the first two decades of the twentieth century.

Sociology developed as a discipline primarily due to the need felt by the British rulers during the colonial period to understand the customs, manners and social institutions of the Indian people. For better administration they required to know the customs and practices of the people whom they were trying to govern. Thus initially it was the British administrators such as, Herbert Risley, J. H. Hutton, Wilson, Alfred Lyell, Baines, etc. who conducted extensive studies of Indian peoples, their cultures and races.

Sociology was introduced in 1914 in Bombay University. The Government of India gave a grant to the university for teaching of sociology and a course of lectures in sociology and economics was offered to the post-graduate students in the same year. In 1919, department of sociology and civics was founded under the leadership of Patrick Geddes who was a distinguished biologist and town-planner.

It was introduced in Calcutta University in 1917, in the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Sciences by Sir Brajendranath Seal. Seal was appointed as the Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University at this time but he was a Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta earlier. It was his efforts and the efforts of A.R. Wadia of the Mysore University, which helped establish sociology as a discipline in the Indian universities. In Calcutta, sociology was taught by Radhakamal Mukerjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar. Both these sociologists are the pioneers in their fields. Radhakamal Mukerjee later went to Lucknow, which became another center for sociological learning in India in 1921, besides Calcutta and Bombay. He along with D.P. Mukerji and D.N. Majumdar, one a Marxologist/ sociologist and the other a social anthropologist helped found Lucknow an influential centre of teaching and research in sociology and anthropology.

We will discuss the emergence of sociology and anthropology further in section 4.6. Before going on to it, why not first complete Check Your Progress 2?

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Fill in the blanks:
 - a) The National Congress was founded in 1885 by
 - b) The National Congress was meant to be a forum for debates and discussions.
 - c) With the coming of Mahatma Gandhi, the Congress became a political party.
 - d) The socio-religious movements induced in the Indian people while the political movement created a consciousness in her people.
- ii) Describe some of the basic ideas of Benoy Kumar Sarkar using about five lines.

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4.6 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

Sociology, as a discipline, came much after the contributions made by social thinkers, philosophers, administrators who worked at understanding the Indian society, in general, as well as studying some specific aspects of Indian society, such as law, family, religion, caste system and so on.

It is the contributions made by the Indologists, such as, Henry Maine, Alfred Lyell, etc. which helped the development of sociology in India. They emphasised the need to preserve the indigenous social institutions found in Indian society rather than destroying them and imposing an alien way of life on her people. They recognised the past glory of Indian cultural and literary tradition.

Besides Indologists, there were British administrators who made extensive study of Indian people, their races and cultures. Most of these studies helped generate a body of knowledge, preserved in the Census Reports, Imperial Gazatteers, District Gazetteers, etc. as well as in books and monographs, which are referred by social anthropologists and sociologists even today.

Sociology was better established on the continent i.e. in European countries like France, Germany, etc. than in England. It took even stronger roots in American universities where it has retained a dominant position till now. Alongside of sociology, anthropology was also developing in Indian

universities. In the Indian context, it is just not possible to distinguish between anthropology and sociology except in terms of methodology. Generally, sociology has studied urban-industrial groups, while anthropology has focused on tribes, castes and communities. But the sociologists have also been anthropologists and vice versa. In fact, it is better to use the term “ethno-sociologists” to describe those writing in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Ethno-sociologists combine documentary and literary data with oral traditions and field data. Thus, in the Indian academic studies, we find that tribe, caste and region have been linked with each other in a variety of ways. Both sociology and anthropology in India have one thing in common: they are mainly based on empirical data. Both of them deal with aggregates of people in a number of locales, village, town and city. During British rule, a number of ethnographic works were written by J.H. Hutton, Edward Thurston, H. Risley, L.S.S. O’ Malley and others. There were also the writings of Sir Henry Maine and W.H. Baden-Powell on the village community in India. Besides, the many district gazetteers produced by the British officials provided ethnographic and economic data pertaining to Indian society. The Indian sociological works (e.g. G.S. Ghurye’s works) have often drawn upon these early books and documents written by British officials or observers.

In these two units, namely History and Development of Sociology in India Part I and Part II, references will be made to Indian writers who may be regarded as pioneers in Indian sociology. It may be observed that there was a difference between Western and Indian intellectual developments. In the West, modern intellectuals strove to “secularise” the thought. They were reacting to the hegemony of church in doing so. By contrast, in India, the religions did not place a bar on free thinking. The stimulus to creative work in the Indian social sciences came from interaction with the West. Now let us examine briefly in the sub-section 4.6.1 the link between sociology and social anthropology, which as you already know are closely interlinked. Then we will discuss the link between sociology and Indology in sub-section 4.6.2

4.6.1 Link Between Sociology and Social Anthropology

As has been already mentioned, the link between sociology and social anthropology is very close in India. The emergence and development of both these disciplines was influenced by the growth of nationalism in India. The nationalist movement was itself a product of the impact of the West, especially British colonial rule in India. The repercussion of this impact was felt widely due to several reasons, such as great improvement in communications, transport facilities, printing press, etc.

Modern law and Western education generated a new self awareness in Indian people. The awareness of people along the lines of religion, sects, caste, tribe, region, etc. became more heightened on the one hand, while at a wider level a new sense of unity emerged. All these social changes gave rise to new problems (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 18).

The roots of sociology and social anthropology go back to the period when British officials realised that a knowledge of Indian culture and social life

was indispensable for them in their administration work. In 1769, Henry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar, stressed in his directives to revenue supervisors the need for collecting information about the leading families and their customs. Besides the officials, the missionaries too, recorded valuable data about the society of that period. For example, Abbe Dubois, a French missionary in Mysore, wrote in 1816, a book entitled, *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, which is very valuable even today. In this book he wrote about the life, customs and rituals of the people with whom he lived. He studied caste and interrelations between castes.

In 1817, the first all-India census was undertaken by the British government. In 1901, Sir Herbert Risley attempted to establish an ethnographic survey of India which was part of the census. The census data became an instrument of official policy. It became a method of creating barriers between Hindus and other groups like tribes, between the various castes, and so on. The British began recording the scheduled castes as distinct from the other Hindu castes as a policy (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 20).

We have already described the establishment of sociology and social anthropology in the Indian Universities. But even before this development, several Indian and foreign scholars such as Brajendranath Seal, Patrick Geddes, W.H.R. Rivers, L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and S.C. Roy contributed to this field.

B.N. Seal, a Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta University was one of the first scholars to draw the attention of the university world towards sociology. He was actively involved in refuting the unilinear evolutionary doctrines, which believed that society like an organism has evolved from a simple primitive stage to a more complex industrial stage (a good example of this doctrine is the one developed by the second founding father of sociology, Herbert Spencer. For more details refer back to Unit 2 of this block).

According to the proponents of this doctrine Indian society, like several others, in its various aspects represented the lower rungs of a ladder. The twentieth century European civilisation represented the highest point of this ladder. This was an ethnocentric belief of European scholars who believed that their society was the best and most evolved while the rest of the world was in various stages of evolution.

Sir B.N. Seal rejected this view and wrote and lectured extensively, in defense of Indian culture throughout his *Comparative Sociology* (Becker & Barnes 1961: 1142). Seal was responsible for introducing sociology in Calcutta University and later Mysore University.

In Bombay, Patrick Geddes was responsible for the introduction of sociology. A department of sociology and civics opened in 1919 headed by Geddes. This was a landmark in the development of sociology in India. Geddes was influenced by Le Play, an eminent sociologist. Geddes was interested in human geography (i.e. in the relation between culture and environment) and town planning with specific interest in the problems of urban deterioration. He studied the town planning of such cities, as Calcutta, Indore, and temple cities of the South which are of great value. Many

Indian scholars were impressed by his work. G.S. Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukerjee show the influence of Geddes in their own sociological writings (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 25).

Besides these noted scholars who helped establish sociology in India, the ones who developed it and provided a firm foundation to this discipline are D.N. Majumdar and N.K. Bose. D.N. Majumdar of Lucknow university was trained in anthropology at Calcutta University. He worked extensively in both the anthropological field as well as, social anthropology. He studied the races, tribes and cultures in various regions of India. His specific interest was in the study of problems of culture changes and adaptation of tribes and their social problems. He conducted one of the first village studies in India of a village near Lucknow. He also conducted a survey of the city of Kanpur.

N.K. Bose, also a student of Calcutta University, made a very significant contribution to the development of sociology in India. He was a political and social activist who worked as a personal secretary of Mahatma Gandhi during his Noakhali (now in Bangladesh) travels in 1947. He was director of the Anthropological Survey of India from 1959-64 and from 1967-70 he held the office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Government of India. His contributions were basically in the study of Indian civilisation and culture. He had a historical approach. He was influenced by the teachings of Gandhi and later wrote a critical analysis of Gandhism. His best work is believed to be the *Hindu Samajer Garhan*, which is in Bengali (Srinivas & Panini 1986: 31).

In this section we have described the links between sociology and social anthropology in the context of their growth and development in India. Let us now see the link between sociology and Indology in the same context. Both these aspects are not separate from each other. Many Indological writings are sociological or social anthropological in nature. It is only for the purpose of clarity that we are discussing them in different sub-sections. Before going on to the next sub-section, let us complete Activity 2.

Activity 2

Select two persons in your neighbourhood. One should be a Pundit or Moulvi or any person who has knowledge of the religious scriptures of his/ her religion. Choose another person who has received formal education at least uptill B.A. in any of the social sciences, such as sociology, political science or economics.

Ask both these persons questions:

- i) Is Indian society materialistic or spiritualistic?
- ii) What are the guiding norms and values of our society?

Write a note of about a page on the opinions of these two persons in two parts, namely –

- i) similar points (ii) different points

Compare your note, if possible with the notes of other students at your Study Centre.

4.6.2 Link Between Sociology and Indology

The development of sociology in India owes deeply to the contributions made by the Orientalists, such as Sir William Jones, Henry Maine, Alfred Lyell, Max Mueller and others. These scholars studied the rich ancient cultural and philosophical tradition of India. It is for these reasons that they are known as the Indologists. Indology is the study of India and its culture.

Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787. Here he introduced the study of Sanskrit and Indology. One of the main tasks of this society was the publication of a journal devoted to anthropological and indological interests such as study of Sanskrit, comparative jurisprudence, comparative mythology, etc. Scholars like Max Muller learnt Sanskrit and helped in the translations of ancient epics and literature which had been long forgotten by the Indian people.

The knowledge of Sanskrit helped understand the great cultural and philosophical tradition of India. At a time when most educated Indians were facing ridicule at the hands of the British rulers, this knowledge helped revive the self-respect of the people. Ancient law and society came to be examined carefully by the Indologists. Henry Maine visited India and wrote *Village Communities in the East and the West* (1871),

Besides these scholars, there are other who used Indian material such as Karl Marx reports to study religion (Srinivas & Panini 1988: 22).

As already mentioned, the Indological writings dealing with the Indian philosophy, art and culture are reflected in the works of most of the Indian scholars. Ananda Coomarswamy, B.K. Sarkar, Radhakamal Mukerjee, G.S. Ghurye, D.P. Mukerji are some of the examples who have revealed this in their works. We discussed the first two thinkers in this unit but we will give you more details about the contributions of Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and G.S. Ghurye in the next units (5).

4.6.3 Irawati Karve

Besides these social thinkers there are others like Irawati Karve who has extensively used the Indological literature in her sociological writings. She was a student of G.S. Ghurye in Bombay. She came to head the combined department of sociology and anthropology which started in the late 1930s in Pune. She did extensive field-work in various regions of India. Her knowledge of Sanskrit helped her in understanding ancient literature like scriptures, law books and epics. She used this data to understand the kinship organisation in India. Her book *Kinship Organisation in India* (1952) is one of the best analysis of kinship system found in India (Srinivas and Panini 1986: 30). Irawati Karve belonged to an enlightened family and entered the family of Maharshi Karve as a daughter-in-law. That family had advocated reforms among the Brahmans to the extent of permitting widow remarriage. Her initial work was on the anthropometric measurements of various groups in Maharashtra: she distinguished social groups by their linguistic affiliations and was able to trace origins of different people following the same occupation (potters) and found how some of their groups were exogamous and formed 'castes'. On the other

hand their 'cluster' (or village community) of occupation based castes was joining together of such castes.

Her major work was *Kinship Organisation in India* (1953) in which she divided India into four zones and attempted their comparison. The work starts with the genealogies of the characters in the Hindu epic, Mahabharata and incorporates field notes from different parts of India. She read the Mahabharata intensively. She wrote on Hinduism and gave a new interpretation. In her work she combined her interest in the study of classics (called Indology by the Western writers) with field studies.

She was awarded a special prize for her work, *Yugantar*, based on Mahabharata. It was originally written in Marathi and later translated in several languages, including Hindi and English. Some of her literary pieces found a way into school books in Marathi. Those who have cleared their matriculation in Maharashtra know her as a litterateur and consider it an addition to their knowledge when they are told by their sociology teachers that she was also a sociologist. She laid the foundations of sociology and anthropology in Deccan College, Pune where great intellectuals in various fields were her contemporaries, for example, H.D. Sankhalia in Pre-History, D.R. Gadgil in Economics and so on. This academic climate led ultimately to the development of the University of Pune.

She was an engaging conversationalist and an eloquent speaker. She was also a brilliant teacher of the subject and of course, she was first in time and first in importance among the woman sociologists in India. She has been hailed as the first feminist sociologist of India (see Uberio 1993:96, and Jain).

Even today, the ancient Indian literature reveals a lot about the religion and society in India. Several sociologists are still making efforts to understand Indian society through its literature, art, etc.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) Name the three British Presidencies in which universities were established during the nineteenth century. Use about 2 lines.

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- ii) Who introduced sociology in the Calcutta University? Describe in about 10 lines his contribution to sociology.

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iii) What is Indology? Name some of the Indologists. Use about 5 lines to write your answer.

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you learnt about social antecedents of Indian sociological thought. We have described the socio-religious movements for reform in India and the political movement for independence. Both the religious as well as political movements are complementary in nature. The freedom struggle was led by leaders who primarily belonged to the middle classes. Middle class, as a category, emerged due to the impact of the British rule in India.

We have described the intellectual antecedents of Indian sociological thought and provided in Unit 4 an outline of the emergence of sociology and social anthropology in India.

4.8 KEY WORDS

Advaita	The vedantic philosophy of Sankaracharya, which believes in the existence of one God
Forum	An assembly or programme for discussion of public matters related to either social-political or economic matters
Humanistic	It is that system of thought or action which is based on the nature, dignity and ideals of human beings
Idealist	A person, whose behaviour or thought is based on ideals such as, those of a visionary or impractical dreamer, or those of an adherent or practitioner of idealism in art, philosophy or literature
Idolatrous	Worship of a statue or image of God
Middle Class	In this unit it is not used as a purely economic category and refers to that category of Indians who belong to the educated class

Missionaries	Those concerned with religious missions, in the context of this unit, the term refers to persons sent by religious (Christian) community to convert heather (non-Christians).
Multi-ethnic	A society having many races and cultures, like India is a multi-ethnic society
Orientalists	Those scholars who study the Eastern cultures like China, India, Pakistan etc.
Persecution	To discriminate against some people or a social group on the basis of religion, caste or class, for example, the persecution of the Jews in Europe on religious grounds
Rationalist	A person who believes in accepting reason as the only source of knowledge and as the only basis for forming one's opinions, beliefs or course of action
Vedanta	A system of Hindu monistic (belief in one God) or pantheistic (belief in many Gods) philosophy based on the Vedas

4.9 FURTHER READING

Oommen T.K. and P.N. Mukerji, (Eds.) 1986. *Indian Sociology*. Popular Prakashan: Bombay.

4.10 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) The six schools of thought of Indian philosophy are Yoga, Sankhya, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Vedanta and Mimamasa.
- ii) Three important changes brought about in Indian society due to the impact of the British rule are
 - a) the old traditions and customs based on religion began to decline and new social and economic forces emerged.
 - b) The classical languages, like Sanskrit and Persian, declined and English became the official language.
 - c) Traditional handicrafts declined and were replaced by machine made goods produced in England.
- iii) Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1835) of Bengal founded Brahma Samaj in the nineteenth century. It was a spiritual forum where a monotheistic (i.e. belief in one God), non-idolatrous (i.e. without worshipping a statue or image of God) worship could take place. It stood for a combination of Christian teachings with Vedanta.

Check Your Progress 2

- i)
 - a) Octavius Hume
 - b) Political
 - c) Mass
 - d) Self-confidence, political
- ii) Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a rationalist who tried to show the secular strength of India. He attempted to bring out the secular component of Indian culture in order to use it for human progress. He did not believe that Indian and western cultures were polar opposites, one being spiritualistic and other materialistic. According to him India had both materialistic and secular elements and it was not other worldly or mystical as popularly believed.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) The three British Presidencies where universities were established in the nineteenth century were Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.
- ii) Sociology was introduced by Sir Brajendranath Seal in Calcutta University in 1917 in the Post-Graduate Councils of Arts and Sciences. He was a Professor of Philosophy at this university and later went to Mysore University as its Vice-Chancellor. He was opposed to the unilinear evolutionary doctrine advocated by the European scholars who believed their society to be the most evolved while societies like India were at a lower rung. Seal conducted studies in what he called “Comparative Sociology”.
- iii) Indology is the study of Indian society, its culture, art philosophy, etc. Some of the noted Indologists are Sir William Jones, Henry Maine and Max Mueller.

UNIT 5 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA - II

History and Development
of Sociology of India-II

Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The Pioneers of Indian Sociology
- 5.3 Radhakamal Mukerjee (1889-1968)
 - 5.3.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 5.3.2 Central Ideas
 - 5.3.2.1 Relationship between Economic and Social Behaviour
 - 5.3.2.2 Social Ecology
 - 5.3.2.3 Plea for Conservation of Forests
 - 5.3.2.4 An Ameliorative Approach to Urban Social Problems
 - 5.3.2.5 Theory of Values
 - 5.3.2.6 Indian Culture and Civilisation
 - 5.3.2.7 Mukerjee's concept of universal civilisation
 - 5.3.3 Important Works
- 5.4 Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (1894-1962)
 - 5.4.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 5.4.2 Central Ideas
 - 5.4.2.1 Role of Tradition in Indian Society
 - 5.4.2.2 Integrated Development of Personality
 - 5.4.2.3 D.P. Mukerji's Views on Unity in Diversity
 - 5.4.2.4 D.P. Mukerji as an Economist
 - 5.4.3 Important Works
- 5.5 Govind Sadashiv Ghurye (1893-1984)
 - 5.5.1 Biographical Sketch
 - 5.5.2 Central Ideas
 - 5.5.2.1 Caste and Kinship in India
 - 5.5.2.2 New Roles of Caste in India
 - 5.5.2.3 Study of Tribes in India
 - 5.5.2.4 Rural-urbanisation in India
 - 5.5.2.5 Religious Beliefs and Practices in India
 - 5.5.2.6 Role of the Sadhu in Indian Tradition
 - 5.5.2.7 Indian Art and Architecture
 - 5.5.2.8 Hindu-Muslim Relationships
 - 5.5.3 Important Works
- 5.6 Let us Sum Up
- 5.7 Key Words
- 5.8 Further Reading
- 5.9 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- describe the contributions of the three pioneers of Indian sociology
- outline the biographical details of Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and G.S. Ghurye
- explain some of their central ideas in sociology
- list some of their important works.

5.1 INTRODUCTON

In Unit 4 **History and Development of Sociology India – I** of this block, you learnt about the emergence of sociology in India. We gave you a broad outline of how sociology came to be established as a discipline in Indian universities. You learnt about the role played by several Indian and foreign scholars in the development of sociology and its link with social anthropology and Indology. You have thus obtained a broad idea of the background in which sociology developed in India.

In this unit, we will deal with the contributions of three of the major pioneers of Indian sociology, namely Radhakamal Mukerjee (1889-1968), D.P. Mukerji (1894-1962), and G.S. Ghurye (1893-1984). We mentioned their names in the previous unit also but here we are going to discuss their central ideas. They worked during a time when the spirit of freedom was alive in the soul of every Indian. The National Movement was part of the background of these scholars and critically shaped their writings.

In this unit, section 5.2 gives a general picture of the three pioneers, Radhakamal Mukerjee, D.P. Mukerji and G.S. Ghurye. Section 5.3 describes the biographical sketch, central ideas and important works of Radhakamal Mukerjee. Section 5.4 provides the biographical sketch, central ideas and important works of D.P. Mukerji and finally, section 5.5 gives the biographical sketch, central ideas and important works of G.S. Ghurye.

5.2 THE PIONEERS OF INDIAN SOCIOLOGY

In this unit, some detailed references will be made to the contributions of Radhakamal Mukerje, D.P. Mukerji, and G.S. Ghurye to Indian sociology. They were contemporary figures in the Indian academic works. Radhakamal Mukerjee taught in Lucknow Unviersity's department of economics and sociology along with D.P. Mukerji, while G.S. Ghurye taught in the department of sociology, Bombay University. Their works as teachers, research guides and writers left a deep imprint on Indian sociology, especially in the first half of 20th century. They shared a common approach to sociology. Their works covered a number of social sciences in addition to sociology. Radhakamal Mukerjee criticised the **compartmentalisation** in social sciences. In his writings he combined economics, sociology and

history. He was always in search of linkages or common grounds between social sciences. D.P. Mukerji was a Marxist who wrote on Indian society in terms of the dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity. He was in search of an Indian personality whose modernity was based on Indianness. In his views, an Indian uprooted from his or her cultural heritage could not be called a balanced person. G.S. Ghurye was an ethnographer of tribes and castes but he also wrote extensively on other topics. In his writings, Ghurye emphasised integration. According to him, the guiding force in Indian society was the Hindu ideology. Even the Indian secularism was a product of the tolerant spirit of Hinduism. He used history and statistical data to supplement his sociological writings. However, there was a difference between D.P. Mukerji and Radhakamal Mukerjee. Radhakamal Mukerjee remained an economist in a broad sense throughout his career. Even D.P. Mukerji was an economist. He taught economics and sociology at Lucknow University. But Ghurye did not discuss economic topics in his works.

Neither Radhakamal Mukerjee nor Ghurye employed rigorous research methods to conduct their studies. They did not also employ hypotheses to test Indian social reality. They wrote articles and books partly in response to personal preferences and partly in response to pressures of public life. Hence, in their academic careers there was no consciously laid out plan. They wrote on a variety of topical themes such as family system in India, castes and classes, urban centres and agrarian or rural life. In their works, there were many references to Indian scriptures, **canonical** works, epics and Puranas. Radhakamal Mukerjee translated some important Sanskrit works into English during the later phase of his career. Ghurye was a Sanskritist by training before he entered the discipline of sociology. His work on Vedic India, written in the later years, was an example of his interest in Sanskrit works. Now, let us examine one by one the biographical details, central ideas and important works of each of the three thinkers.

5.3 RADHAKAMAL MUKERJEE (1889-1968)

Radhakamal Mukerjee was pioneer in the areas such as social ecology, interdisciplinary research and the social structure of values. We will first describe the biographical sketch and then discuss his central ideas.

5.3.1 Biographical Sketch

Radhakamal Mukerjee was born in 1889 in a large Bengali Brahmin family, in a small country town of West Bengal called Berhampur. He spent the first sixteen years of his life in this town. His father was the leader of the bar, that is a lawyer and was an accomplished scholar with a great interest in history.

Mukerjee, while describing his early years, says that his home was full of books on history, literature, law and Sanskrit (Singh 1956: 3). The general atmosphere in which he grew up was scholarly. His elder brothers were always reading books from which he, being a child, was kept at a distance. His father used to have long meetings with clients throughout the day and long intellectual and religious discussions during the evening. The interior

of the house, where the ladies of the house presided, there were rituals, ceremonies and devotional songs. Mukerjee remembered that his house used to be full of pet animals, especially a golden-hued cow which yielded milk throughout the year. He wrote that these early years were marked by “peaceful tenor of life with its play and schooling, piety and devotion punctuated by the periodic celebration of fasts and feasts, rituals and sacraments, story telling from the Epics and Puranas and visits of ascetics and saints and guest of the household” (Singh 1956: 3).

Mukerjee’s early memories, which left an imprint on his mind, consisted of the picture of sorrow and misery of a large population devastated by famine in Madras and Orissa during the early years of the twentieth century. He was deeply moved by the pictures of human skeletons on the verge of starvation and death published in the newspapers. This was further deepened by the Bengal famine of 1942-43 which he had witnessed in Calcutta. He also vividly recalled the childhood experiences of Muharram processions, Durgapuja festivals, and so on.

It was during the same period of his life that Bengal saw its socio-cultural and intellectual **renaissance**. In 1905 every city in Bengal was in a state of intellectual and political fervent. The partition of Bengal into East and West Bengal, introduced by Lord Curzon, led to a mass uprising against this event. Political meetings, street processions and singing parties, boycott of British goods and propagating swadeshi products introduced him to the mass movement of time.

Mukerjee had his early education in Berhampur. He went to the Krishnath College in Berhampur. He got an academic scholarship in the leading educational institution in India, the Presidency College in Calcutta. He took his honours course in English and History in this college. Here he came in contact with such scholars as H.M. Percival, M.Ghosh, brother of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh and the linguist Harinath De. He admired these scholars very much. It was here that he read books by Comte, Herbert Spencer, Lester Ward, Hobhouse and Giddings, besides many others, from cover to cover. As you must be aware by now many of these scholars are the leading men of sociology in Europe and America.

During this period of his life, Mukerjee launched himself into the area of adult education which remained his interest till the end. The country was going through a political and cultural upheaval during this period which, according to Mukerjee, completely changed the scale of values. This change was seen far more outside the Governmental institutions, taking the form of a literary and artistic renaissance. This renaissance slowly took the form of a mass movement. It was in order to help the process that Mukerjee started an Adult Evening School in 1906 in the slums of Mechaubazar of Calcutta. He wrote simple texts for adult education which sold in thousands. This school became a Community Centre and even the local physicians started taking interest in this movement of social education. They treated without charging any fee the adults and children of the slums (Singh 1956: 5).

Mukerjee valued his early training in the discipline of History very much but “the face-to-face contact with misery, squalor and degradation in the

slums of Calcutta” turned the focus of his interests towards the disciplines of Sociology and Economics. He wrote that there was a definite call in the country for the tasks and responsibilities of education of the masses, and that call could be answered by an Indian student best through the knowledge of the social sciences (Singh 1956: 5). Social sciences during Mukerjee’s time in Calcutta University included the disciplines of Economics, Politics and Sociology at M.A. level.

It was during this period that Mukerjee came in close association with Benoy Kumar Sarkar (We have mentioned Benoy Kumar Sarkar’s contributions to sociology in the previous unit.) Mukerjee and Sarkar shared the same flat and B.K. Sarkar was at that time Professor at Bengal National College, an institution which had given support to such leading thinkers of Bengal as Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh.

Mukerjee, like many other Indians of his time, was impressed by the fiery political speeches of Bipin Chandra Pal, one of the Congress extremists. But the main interest of Mukerjee was at that time educational rather than political. He and his friends called themselves “Ministers of the Poor” and dressed poorly, giving up western dresses like shirts, coats and shoes (Singh 1956: 6).

In 1910 Mukerjee went back to his old college in Berhampur as a teacher in Economics. He says that this was the busiest period of his life and it was during this period that he wrote his early works in Economics, such as the *Foundations of Indian Economics*. His interest in social ecology and the study of regions also originated during this period. The Principal of his College, Rev. E.M. Wheeler, was deeply interested in the sciences, especially Botany. Therefore, the teachers, including Mukerjee, spent a lot of time collecting specimens of plants and insects of all kinds and studying them. This experience developed Mukerjee’s interest in ecology and he became aware of its link with human community.

At this time Mukerjee also became the editor of the renowned Bengali monthly, *Upasana*. He wrote for this monthly regularly and kept in touch with the literary development in Bengali literature. He was a voracious reader and his interest in literature was very deep.

During 1915 when there were persecutions by the British Government, Mukerjee was once arrested for a day and all his adult schools were liquidated. The charges against him were that he was a “terrorist” or had sympathy with terrorism under the disguise of adult education. Thanks to his lawyer brother he was released very soon. He was offered a position in Lahore College in Punjab and he went there thus, nipping in bud any interest in politics.

He went back to the University of Calcutta where Asutosh Mookerji had established in 1917 the Post-Graduate Council of Arts and Science. He stayed here for five years and taught Economics, Sociology and Political Philosophy. In 1921 he went to the University of Lucknow as Professor and Head of the Department of Economics and Sociology on the very day when the university started functioning (Singh 1956: 10). He introduced an integrated approach in Economics, Sociology and Anthropology in both research and teaching in Lucknow university.

According to Mukerjee, using comparative methods in the study of social sciences in India, we must aim at the scientific study of the race and culture origins. In his intellectual career he was deeply influenced by three social thinkers. First was Professor Brajendra Nath Seal; second was Professor Patrick Geddes; and the third one was an old, intimate colleague who died early, Narendra Nath Sen Gupta. The first two, Prof. Seal and Prof. Geddes contributed to the establishment and development of sociology as a discipline in the Indian Universities. Mukerjee always consulted Seal in all his works. His stress on comparative method in cultural sciences was due to Seal's influence on his work. Patrick Geddes too, influenced Mukerjee's work on study of regions, ecology and population while Narendra Nath Sen Gupta helped generate Mukerjee's interest in Social Psychology.

Besides these Indian thinkers there were many Western social thinkers with whom Mukerjee worked and who influenced his writings. Some of these were sociologists like, Edward Allsworth Ross, Robert Ezra Park of Chicago, Mckenzie and P. Sorokin. Most of these Americans sociologists were interested in the study of region, urban disorganisation, human ecology, social change and so on. The friendship and intellectual interaction with these sociologists stimulated Mukerjee's own efforts in social sciences to which he gives due credit (Singh 1956: 3-20).

Mukerjee taught economics and sociology in Lucknow University for nearly thirty years. He also became the Vice-Chancellor and Director of the J.K. Institute of Sociology and Human Relation of the University. He wrote erudite volumes on several issues. The basic nature of his writings is the integration of the social sciences and he has been a path-finder in many fields. Many of his students and associates reflect this approach in their writings (Singh 1956: 3-20). He died in the year 1968 but his contributions have left a deep imprint on the students of sociology.

5.3.2 Central Ideas

In the Indian universities, the compartmentalisation of disciplines has dominated the scene. Disciplines such as sociology, psychology and statistics have existed side by side in the same college or university but there has been very little interaction between them. In his teachings and writings, Mukerjee emphasised the need for mutual interaction between social sciences on the one hand and between social sciences and physical sciences on the other. For example, Indian economics, modeled on British economics, mostly neglected the traditional caste networks in indigenous business, handicrafts and banking. Economic development was mainly viewed as an extension of monetary economics or market phenomenon. The Western model in economics focused on the urban-industrial centres.

5.3.2.1 Relationship between economic and social behaviour

In a country like India where many economic transactions take place within the framework of caste or tribe, the "market model" has a limited relevance. Mukerjee tried to show the relationship between traditional networks and economic exchange. The guilds and castes of India were operating in a non-competitive system. The rules of economic exchange were derived from the normative Hinduism, in other words, according to the norms of

Hindu religion wherein interdependence between groups was emphasised. Hence, to understand rural India, the economic values should be analysed with reference to social norms. Religious and/ or ethical constraints have always lent a direction to economic exchange. Values enter into the daily life of people and compel them to act in collectively sanctioned ways. For example, a hungry upper caste Hindu would not eat beef; likewise, an orthodox Muslim or Jew would not eat pork, however urgent may be the need for food. Therefore, it is wrong to always treat economic behaviour as separate from social life or collectivity.

5.3.2.2 Social Ecology

Social Ecology was another theme which preoccupied Mukerjee. He wrote a number of books on the theme. For him social ecology was a complex formulation in which a number of social sciences interacted. The geological, geographical and biological factors worked together to produce an **ecological** zone. In its turn, ecology is conditioned by social, economic or political factors. For example, in the past many Indian ecological regions were opened up for human settlement and agrarian development through political conquests. As there is a definite link between ecology and society the development of ecological zones must be seen in terms of a dynamic process: that is, challenge of the environment and response of the people who establish a settlement.

Ecological balance is not a mechanical carving out of a territory and settling people thereon. Such an attempt weakens or destroys social fabric. For example, in building irrigation dams in India, very often people of the concerned locations are moved to new settlements. The lack of a proper perspective on involuntary resettlement and rehabilitation has often caused damage to social life of these people. In many parts of India, there is a traditional system of interdependence known as *jajmani* in the north or by its equivalents in other regions. If people are moved into other locations such arrangements abruptly come to an end. Only by planning suitable alternatives in advance, can this disruption be overcome. For example, the cooperatives can help people, in the absence of old social patterns of interdependence. Hence, social perspective is necessary for orderly and systematic transformation of India into an urban-industrial economy.

In his works on social ecology, Mukerjee took a point of departure from the Western social scientists. In the USA, the Chicago School of Sociology gave importance to empirical studies of such social problems as social disorganisation, urban deterioration, etc. To this school belonged sociologists like Park and Burgess, Louis Wirth, Giddings and so on. This school emphasised the study of human ecology. Here, the focus was on social engineering involving transfer of slum dwellers to new settlements, improvements in living conditions, better prospects of employment, etc. But, according to Mukerjee, social ecology was the better alternative to the havoc caused by rapid industrialisation. India, with its long history, was a storehouse of values. Therefore, in building a new India the planning must not be confined to immediate and concrete problems but must be directed towards value-based developments.

As part of his interest in social ecology, Mukerjee developed the regional sociology. He argued for a better understanding of regional dimensions of national development. If the regions in modern India were developed so as to make them self-sufficient, then the nation as a whole would stand to benefit. Otherwise, some regions would dominate the rest resulting in a lopsided development. As India was a country of diverse regions, each with a distinctive ethno-history i.e. the history of its various ethnic groups, it was imperative to coordinate the developments schemes for maintaining ecological balance. In sum, he stood for a balance between economic growth and ecological fitness. In achieving this end, many skills, such as weaving, engraving etc., were inherited by caste groups in India. These crafts could be well incorporated into the modern cooperatives. In other words, the modernisation of Indian society should not neglect its traditional economic networks. Incidentally, in the post-Independent India, the traditional crafts have been organised into handloom cooperatives, etc. in Tamil Nadu and other states. Likewise, the Khadi Gramodyog has also used the traditional skills for modern production.

5.3.2.3 Plea for conservartion of forests

Mukerjee wrote extensively on the danger of deforestation. The cutting of trees subjects the soil to the fury of floods and reduces the fertility of soil. The topsoil which is washed away by floods or excess rainfall cannot be replenished. Therefore, the forest and woods of India were an ecological asset. His plea for conservation has been taken up at present by a number of activists, voluntary organisations such as Chipko and Apko, which focus on halting the destruction of trees. Mukerjee also referred to the danger of mono-cultivation, that is, raising a single cash crop (such as cotton or sugarcane) to the detriment of rotation of crops. Such practices as deforestation and **mono-cultivation** disturbed the fragile ecosystem and gave rise to severe environmental problems. Every year some parts of India especially in the north suffer either from floods or from droughts. Of course, cyclones of the coastal regions are beyond human control, but the man-made disasters, such as the depletion of natural resources through deforestation can be slowed down or prevented.

Mukerjee advocated the integration of village, town and nation into a single, broad-based developmental process. Urban development at the expense of the village should be kept in check. Agriculture should be diversified and industries decentralised. A more equitable distribution of wealth and resources, not only between sections of people but also between regions, would bring about a more balanced development.

5.3.2.4 An Ameliorative Approach to Urban Social Problems

Mukerjee was also interested in the **ameliorative** approach to the problems of working class. The industrialisation in India, which has been taking place during the last several decades, succeeded in bringing together people from diverse regions and languages. But the living conditions of workers in the urban centres such as Mumbai, Kanpur, Kolkata and Chennai were adversely affected by slum life. In the early days of industrialisation, urban slums gave rise to vices such as prostitution, gambling and crime. It was, therefore, necessary to bring about drastic changes in the lives of workers to improve their economic and moral conditions.

Today, many private industries and the public section units have provided facilities for the social welfare of a number of workers. Besides, the central and state governments have promulgated legislative acts which are binding on the employers. However, unorganised workers (i.e. who are underemployed, or temporarily employed) continue to live in slums. The rampant problems in the Indian slums at present are consumption of illicit liquor and drugs, crimes, and worsening housing conditions and civic facilities. Therefore, Mukerjee's analysis of the working class is relevant even for the present industrial organisation in India.

5.3.2.5 Theory of Values

As noted previously, Radhakamal Mukerjee had a sustained interest in the impact of values on human society. In the middle of the twentieth century, the notion of a value-free social science became dominant in academic circles both in the West and in India. Mukerjee held that a separation between "fact" and "value" was arbitrary. The facts and values could not be separated from each other in human interactions. Even a simple transaction like taking food, wearing dress or greeting others was a value-based or normatively conditioned behaviour. Each society has a distinctive culture and its values and norms guide the behaviour. Therefore, the positivistic tradition of the West which (on the analogy of sciences) wanted to separate facts from values, was not tenable to R.K. Mukerjee, especially in the study of a society like India. In the West, there was a compelling need to free scientific enquiry from the hold of church theology. Hence, it was perhaps necessary to hold that facts and values were separate.

Activity I

Note down at least five types of social behaviour that you perform in your daily life and state the values related with them. Some examples of social behaviour are wearing a sacred thread, going to the mosque, temple or church, touching the feet of elders, and so on.

Do you agree or disagree with Radhakamal Mukerjee's opinion that we cannot separate facts of social behaviour from the values which are associated with them? Write a note of one page about this and compare your note, if possible with those of other students at your Study Centres.

Mukerjee underlined two basic points in relation to values. Firstly, values are not limited only to religion or ethics. Economics, politics and law also give rise to values. In other words, human needs are transformed into social values and are internalised in the minds of members of society. Older civilisations such as India and China were stable. Hence, values were formed and organised into a hierarchy of higher and lower levels. Secondly, values are not a product of subjective or individualistic aspirations. They are objectively grounded in humankind's social aspirations and desires. In other words, values are both general and objective i.e., measurable by empirical methods. In general, the great civilisations of the world have subordinated instrumental or materialistic goals to intrinsic or spiritual goals.

To sum up, there are three salient points in Mukerjee's theory of values. Firstly, values satisfy the basic impulses of men and women in an orderly

fashion. This means that the selfish desires and interests are modified by collective living, wherein people give and take from each other. Secondly, values are generic in scope and include both individual and social responses and attitudes. This means that the values are shared by all through their symbolisation. The national flag, for example, is a common symbol for all individuals and groups who constitute a nation. Thirdly, in spite of diversities of human society, some universal values are discernible. The major religions of humankind are repositories of these universal values and norms. A dynamic approach to society will aim at an adaptation of inherited values to the needs of contemporary times.

5.3.2.5 Indian culture and civilisation

Mukerjee also wrote extensively on Indian art and architecture, history and culture. Mukerjee (1964) believed that Asiatic art aimed at collective developments and wrote, “Art in Asia became the torch-bearer of social and spiritual upheavals for millionsOriental art is most intensely charged with community feeling and is thus chiefly responsible for the historical continuity of Oriental Cultures”. In contrast, such artistic endeavour in the West had been dominated either by individualism or the feeling that art was an end in itself. This was just not conducive to either social solidarity or spiritual development.

Indian art was embedded in social or ethical sphere. R.K. Mukerjee wrote “The myriad temples, stupas and viharas of India bear witness to the link between art and ethics, religious and social values. Art in India is an enduring component of people’s interaction with each other which shows in concrete forms the active relationship between people’s aspirations and their artistic creativity”.

Indian art was constantly associated with religion. In his historical study of India Mukerjee was impressed by the non-aggressive nature of Indian religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. The remarkable quality of Indian religions was their insistence on ultimate truth rather than on a particular set of beliefs or rituals. The Indian influences spread to many countries not through war or conquest but through friendship and goodwill. Right from the time of Ashoka, the peaceful “colonisation” of Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Tibet, and other countries of Outer India took place. Indian art and religion enriched the local cultures and by doing so gave rise to a new culture. For example, even today, different styles of Ramayana, the Hindu religious epic, are performed in these countries and several others like Indonesia, Sumatra, Trinidad. Thus, there was the harmony between foreign and indigenous elements. In India itself, the Hindu legal texts such as Dharmasastra are flexible codes to accommodate the ethnic diversities of India. Correctly interpreted, these texts provide a framework of values and norms for the orderly living of diverse groups. Thus, art and religion in India have been tolerant of diverse forms and styles.

5.3.2.6 Mukerjee’s concept of universal civilisation

Mukerjee’s general theory of society sought to explain the values of a universal civilisation. He used the term “civilisation” in an inclusive sense; culture was part of it. He proposed that human civilisation should be studied on three inter-related levels. These are:

i) **Biological evolution**

The biological evolution of human beings has facilitated the rise and development of civilisation. They have the capacity to change the environment as an active agent. The animals can only adapt to an environment; but human beings can mould it in different ways. The human beings, as a biological species, are capable of overcoming competition and conflict and attain cooperation (symbiosis).

ii) **Psycho-social dimension**

There is a psycho-social dimension. In social psychology the people are often depicted within the framework of race, ethnicity or nationhood. Human beings are seen as prisoners of little selves or egos, whose attitude is parochial or ethnocentric. On the contrary, human beings have the potentiality to overcome the narrow feelings and attain **universalisation** that is, to identify oneself with the larger collectivity such as one's nation or even as a member of the universe itself. In the process, common values help to subordinate the particularistic values to universal values. According to Mukerjee, **ethical relativism** which means that values vary from society to society) is not helpful in the present times; there is need for ethical universalism which affirms the unity of the humankind. In the new perspective, men and women become free moral agents who are capable of recognising the common strands binding the humanity. They are no longer dictated by divisiveness or relativity.

iii) **Spiritual dimension**

In Mukerjee's views, the civilisation has a spiritual dimension. Human beings are gradually scaling transcendental heights. That is, they are moving up to the ladder of spirituality by overcoming the constraints of biogenic and existential levels i.e. the physical and material limitations. In this endeavour, art, myth and religion provide the "impulsion" or the force to move upward. As the social sciences have hitherto ignored these cultural elements, they are incapable of providing a spiritual perspective. Incidentally, a similar observation was made by Karl Mannheim, a German sociologist, who wrote on sociology of culture. Mannheim noted that the Western social sciences had neglected cultural dimensions (arts, myths, symbols, etc.) under the rigid code of positivism or structural functionalism. This resulted in a lopsided view of social reality. According to Mukerjee, humankind's search for unity, wholeness and transcendence highlight the spirituality of civilisation. In this respect, he commended the Indian and Chinese civilisations which had endured as stable entities since sixth century B.C. Their strength is derived from their universal myths and values which foster spiritual quest.

Mukerjee noted with satisfaction that the search for universality was embodied in the Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations Organisation (U.N.O.) in the twentieth century. These rights upheld liberty and dignity of people, in whichever country they might be living. Mukerjee's emphasis on spirituality was not an escapist dream. He stated that human progress (in the ultimate sense) was possible only if glaring

disparities of wealth and power between countries were reduced. So long as poverty persisted or political oppression continued, further integral evolution of mankind was not a practical proposition. The persisting human awareness of misery in the world had stimulated the search for universal values and norms.

5.3.3 Important Works

Some of Radhakamal Mukerjee's important works in sociology are

- i) *The Regional Balance of Man* (1938)
- ii) *Indian Working Class* (1940)
- iii) *The Social Structure of Values* (1955)
- iv) *Philosophy of Social Sciences* (1960)
- v) *Flowering of Indian Art* (1964)

Check Your Progress 1

- i) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences:
 - a) Radhakamal Mukerjee was a pioneer in the areas such as social interdisciplinary research and the social structure of values.
 - b) He was against the of social sciences.
 - c) In his writings he combined sociology and history.
- ii) Describe in about two lines what is meant by an ecological zone.
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- iii) What is the regional sociology, according to Radhakamal Mukerjee? Describe in about ten lines.
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- iv) Discuss in about five lines Radhakamal Mukerjee's opinion about "facts" and "values".

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5.4 DHURJATI PRASAD MUKERJI (1894-1962)

D.P. Mukerji (1894-1962) was a Marxist who analysed Indian history in terms of a dialectical process. Tradition and modernity, colonialism and nationalism, individualism and collectivism could be seen as dialectically interacting with each other. In the next sub-section (5.4.0) we will give you a biographical sketch of D.P. Mukerji. This will help you to understand his central ideas in their proper perspective.

5.4.1 Biographical Sketch

Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji was popularly known as "D.P.". He was born in 1894 in a middle class Brahmin family of Bengal. It was during this period that the literary influence of Rabindranath Tagore, Bankim Chandra and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee was at its peak. There was renaissance of Bengali literature at this time.

D.P. Mukerji did his graduation from Bangbasi College, Bengal. First he was a student of history which included economics at that time, then he took a degree in economics. He was a man of letters in Bengali and wrote some fiction also but he did not pursue this line for long. He did not confine to the boundaries of a particular discipline. It was perhaps for this reason that he became a sociologist, as Sociology is the most comprehensive social science. He attained not only national but international fame as a sociologist.

In 1922 he joined the Lucknow University as a lecturer in Economics and Sociology. He was in his own words a Marxologist. His roots in middle class Brahmin family led him instinctively to blend Marxism with Indian tradition. D.P. Mukerji always thought that ideas of Karl Marx were relevant in India when adapted to conditions of Indian history and tradition. He, therefore, always emphasised the study of social processes and social movements.

He was born in the golden age of criticism and reflected this age in true senses in his own work. To every subject he brought critical criteria from as many fields as possible. He had the faculty of looking at every problem from a new angle. He was an art critic, music critic, a drama critic and a critic of life. In him we find a blend of Anglo-Bengalee culture.

D.P. Mukerji was a man of aesthetic sensibilities. He was interested in style, even in the style of his dress. He was a slim man who disliked gaining even an extra pound of weight. In thinking also he hated padding or writing

anything superfluous or irrelevant. His style of writing was sharp, spare and incisive. He was a sophisticated man who rarely revealed his emotions. For him, emotions should not be exhibited but should be fused with the intellectual process.

He loved to be a teacher and was very popular amongst his students. He encouraged dialogue and interchange of ideas with his students. Thus, he was co-student, a co-enquirer who never stopped learning. He was such an influence on his students that he lived in the minds of his students even after his death.

For sometimes D.P. Mukerji became the Director of Information when the Congress assumed office in U.P. His influence brought the spirit of an intellectual approach to public relations. He was also part of the foundation of the Bureau of Economics and Statistics. He returned in 1939 to the Lucknow University when Congress relinquished office on the war issue at the beginning of the Second World War. In 1947 he was appointed as a member of U.P. Labour Inquiry Committee. It was in 1951 that he was made a professor. This was a late recognition but D.P. never felt bitter about it.

A year before his retirement at Lucknow, in 1953, he was invited to head the Department of Economics at Aligarh. He stayed there for five years. He went to the Hague as a visiting professor of sociology at the International Institute of Social Studies. He was a founder member of the Indian Sociological Association and one of the members of its Managing Committee and its Editorial Board. He also represented the association at the International Sociological Association of which he became the Vice President.

He wrote several books and articles in diverse fields. After Independence he watched political movements with great interest but was not a politician in any sense. He was influenced by two national leaders, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and Jawaharlal Nehru. He used to correspond with Nehru. As an intellectual he did not have a cloistered mind. He brought refinement to his subject. He was influenced by many but till the end he remained a scholar who influenced many others. He died of throat cancer in 1962. But as stated earlier, he survives through his students.

5.4.2 Central Ideas

Marxism, according to D.P. Mukerji, helped one to understand the historical developments well but it could not offer a satisfactory solution to human problems. That solution was to be found in the regeneration and reinterpretation of India's national culture. He was opposed to the positivism of modern social sciences which reduced individuals into biological or psychological units. The industrial culture of the West had turned individuals into self-seeking agents; the society in the West had become ethnocentric. By emphasising individuation (i.e., recognition of the roles and rights of the individual) positivism had uprooted the social anchors of humanity.

5.4.2.1 Role of tradition in Indian society

Mukerji held that tradition was the mainspring of culture. The individuals drew their nourishment from the tradition. They did not lose a sense of

purposes or direction. But tradition often became a deadweight, as in India. Also, people made fetish of it, that is, they idealised it and worshipped it. Cultural stagnation was bound to result on account of the people's uncritical attitude towards it. Therefore, individuation must also be encouraged. The individuals can recreate culture by infusing it with new vigour. The individual is to be neither totally free nor unfree. For the evolution of a healthy personality, there must be a balance between individuation and sociation. Sociation is the bond of the individual with society. Individual's freedom must not be anarchy but a creative expression of the tradition.

5.4.2.2 Integrated development of personality

Mukerji did not commend to Indians the positivistic construction of personality. The Western personality made a fetish of achievement. Science and technology had been harnessed to great improvements in the living conditions of masses. The capacity of human beings to control nature and use it to their advantage were the notable achievements of the modern age. However, the Western approach could not lead to an integrated development. For an integrated development of personality there was need for a balance between technological development and human freedom. Even a socialist society such as Soviet Russia had failed to evolve a balanced personality. There, the individuals had been dominated by the state or the political party.

D.P. Mukerji's dialecticism was rooted in humanism which cut across narrow ethnic or national consideration. In the West, the individuals had become either aggressive or docile. The Western progress was devoid of humanism. The Renaissance and Industrial Revolution had freed individuals from the grip of stagnant medieval tradition but at the same time reduced the humanist content of progress. The modern nationalism is essentially nurtured in the positivistic aspects of the West. It could not be an appropriate model for India. Besides, India's middle classes were a product of Western impact on India. They were uprooted from their own indigenous tradition. They had lost contact with the masses. India could become a modern nation if the middle classes reestablished their links with the masses. Only then a genuine development was possible. For D.P. Mukerji growth was a mere quantitative achievement, development was a qualitative term denoting value-based progress.

5.4.2.3 D.P. Mukerji's views on Unity in Diversity

D.P. Mukerji was involved in depicting Hindu-Muslim relations. His search for truth led him to discover humanistic and spiritual unity in the diversities of Indian culture. He was examining many of the areas within the broad framework of Hindu-Muslim interaction. There were three areas of interaction which were worthy of note. i) Politically, the Islamic kings ruled over the Hindu subjects from eleventh to seventeenth centuries A.D. in North India. At the same time, there were established alliances between Muslim rulers and Hindu rajas. Hence, there was a sense of partnership between Muslim rulers and Hindu subjects; this was more evident during the Mughal rule. ii) In economic relations, during the Islamic rule while the jagirdars (military chiefs) were Muslims, most of the zamindars were Hindus. These two groups shared many interests in common. Thus, together

these two classes formed an alliance. iii) Culturally, in literature, music, costumes, cultivation of fine arts, etc., there were reciprocal influences. Both Sufism and Bhaktism in the north encouraged mutual interactions. However, the Muslims and Hindus differed in their world view.

Mukerji noted that the Hindu mind thought in terms of cycles: the good and the bad succeeded each other. The Hindus had a fatalistic view. Further, the Hindu world view was the product of a distinctive territory, a subcontinent. Islam by contrast was a multi-ethnic, multi-national religion. Hindu approach to nationhood was idealistic, Islamic approach was pragmatic. For the Hindu freedom was a “birth right”; for the Muslim it was an opportunity. The Muslim view was non-cyclic and non-fatalistic. Hence the Muslim view favoured direct action to make the best use of a political crisis or opportunity.

5.4.2.4 D.P. Mukerji as an economist

D.P. Mukerji was by training an economist. His approach to economics was, however, distinct from that of other economists. He viewed the economic development in India in terms of historical and cultural specificities. The economic forces in India were influenced by social values. During ancient times, the king and the members of royal court did not own the lands. The powers conferred on the king were limited to fiscal obligations; that is to say, the tillers of land had to give a portion of their produce to the treasury as tax or revenue in return for the royal protection. The ownership of the land was mainly vested in the village councils. During the heyday of Buddhism, the Sangha (monastic organisation) often managed extensive lands, which were granted to them by kings. Although the individual monks (Bhikshus) could not possess or own property, the Sangha owned properties. One-sixth of the agricultural produce called as tax by the Sangha was utilised for the cultivation of learning and pursuit of ethical and spiritual goals.

Just as village lands were controlled by kin and caste groups, which were internally autonomous, even trade and banking in India were managed by kinship and caste networks in pre-modern times. The guilds which carried on regional trade were usually based on castes. Commercial banking was also controlled by castes. There were important money-lending Hindu families on the West coast whose influence was widespread especially during Mughal rule. Mukerji did not treat the merchants as mere parasites; on the contrary, he regarded them as those who established trade networks between urban centres and rural hinterland. But during the colonial rule they began exploiting as they shed their earlier cultural constraints. The Indian merchant princes often travelled to foreign countries to display their wares; thereby they linked India to the outside world not only through trade but through the spread of culture.

The British rule in India brought about widespread changes in Indian economy. The urban-industrial economy introduced by the British set aside not only the older institutional networks but also the traditional classes. This called for a new social adaptation. In the new set-up the educated middle classes of India's urban centres became the focal point of society. However, these middle classes were dominated by Western life styles and

thinking. The future of India would be secure if the middle classes reached out to the masses and established an active partnership with them in nation-building.

5.4.3 Important Works

Some of the important sociological works of D.P. Mukerji are:

- i) *Basic Concepts in Sociology* (1932)
- ii) *Personality and the Social Sciences* (1924)
- iii) *Modern Indian Culture* (1942)
- iv) *Problems of Indian Youths* (1946)
- v) *Diversities* (1958)

Out of these books, *Modern Indian Culture* (1942) and *Diversities* (1958) are his best known works. His versatility can be seen from his other contributions too, such as, his books,

- i) *Tagore: A Study* (1943)
- ii) *On Indian History* (1943)
- iii) *Introduction to Indian Music* (1943)

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Describe D.P. Mukerji's sociology in about six lines.
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- ii) Give the names of the two of D.P. Mukerji's major works in sociology.
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5.5 GOVIND SADASHIV GHURYE (1893-1984)

G.S. Ghurye, as you know, taught in the Department of Sociology, Bombay University. He was an ethnographer who studied tribes and castes of India using historical, Indological and statistical data. Let us first learn the biographical details about him. Then we will examine his central ideas and important works in sociology.

5.5.1 Biographical Sketch

In this sub-section we have described the biography of G.S. Ghurye based on his own book (1973) *I and Other Explorations*. Govind Sadashiv Ghurye was born on 12th Dec. 1893 in a small town called Malvan on the west coast of India. Malvan is some two-hundred miles away from Mumbai. He belonged to a fairly prosperous Brahmin family, which owned shops and other property. He was named after his grandfather who died the same year when he was born. His family was very religious and well known in that region for piety.

Due to loss in business and the death of his grandfather G.S. Ghurye's father had to take up a job. His job proved to be very lucky for the family. Ghurye was one of four children of his parents. He had an elder brother whom he admired very much, another brother and a sister.

He joined school in Malvan. In 1905 his "thread ceremony" was performed. At this time he had completed his fifth standard examination and joined an English school. His mother tongue was Marathi and his early schooling was also in Marathi. But knowledge of Sanskrit was there in the family. His grandfather knew Sanskrit. He too, started learning Sanskrit. The religious atmosphere of the family and its reputation for piety and learning had a deep influence on G.S. Ghurye. He grew up learning English and received modern education but his roots in Hindu culture and tradition were very deep.

He was sent by his mother to complete his matriculation from Junagad in Gujarat. Here his eldest brother was already studying. He became a student of the Bahauddin College in 1912. Here he became very proficient in Sanskrit. He joined Bombay university which used to have an entrance exam then. He cleared this examination with twenty other boys. There were no girls at that time but later a Christian girl joined their class. He had obtained first position in his college. In the university he secured fourth position. His brother was teaching physics at the university when Sadashiva joined it. G.S. Ghurye was a very hard working student and in spite of the short phases of illness he managed to do very well in his studies.

In 1916 when G.S. Ghurye had completed his B.A. examination and stood first in it, he was married to a girl of a fairly rich family of Vengurla (Maharashtra), of his own sub-caste. His parents named his wife Rukmini after the marriage as per the practice amongst the Maharashtrians. But Ghurye reverted back to calling her Sajubai, which was her original name when they established their own household in 1923. He was against the practice of changing the personal name of a girl after marriage. He was also against the traditional practice of tattooing the skin because he considered it barbaric. For his B.A. result he received the Bhau Daji Prize, named after the great Indologist Bhau Daji Lad who was one of the first physicians of Mumbai, trained in the western system of medicine. G.S. Ghurye had secured seventy four per cent marks in Sanskrit in his college.

Sadashiv was appointed a Fellow of the college and completed his M.A. degree. The languages he chose in his M.A. course were English, Sanskrit and later he took Pali. He also did a course which was newly introduced in the university on comparative philology. He got first class in M.A. also.

He was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal, a top most honour in the whole university. His success was unique in the history of the university because nobody before him had ever got first class in M.A. with Sanskrit.

He later applied for a scholarship to go abroad for studies in sociology, which the Bombay university had advertised earlier. He was asked to meet Prof. Patrick Geddes of sociology in Bombay university. During his interactions with Prof. Geddes he wrote an essay on "Bombay as an Urban Centre" which was highly appreciated by Geddes. This enabled Ghurye to get the foreign study scholarship.

Ghurye went to England by ship. He became a student of L.T. Hobhouse. Besides many other people, he met Dr. A.C. Haddon who was the world famous ethnologist studying preliterate cultures. It was Haddon who introduced Ghurye to Dr. W.H.R. Rivers whose influence on Ghurye was considerable. Rivers was at the pinnacle of his intellectual glory and was founder of the Cambridge School of Psychology. Rivers later came to India and studied a polyandrous tribe called the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills.

Ghurye wrote several articles in sociology at this time and got them published in the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* and in the journal, *Anthropos*. He wrote his most important work, *Caste and Race in India*, during the 1930s. He was awarded the degree of Ph.D. from Cambridge university. He came back to India after W.H.R. Rivers' death.

He worked in Calcutta for 7 months on a scholarship which he received from Bombay University. Then he and K.P. Chattopadhyaya of Calcutta University got appointments as Readers in Sociology at Bombay university, in 1924. He got this appointment due to the great respect and recognition given to him by the late Dr. W.H.R. Rivers. G.S. Ghurye joined the Bombay Asiatic Society as a member in the same year. He guided several students under him. Some of his students are now famous sociologists. They made significant contributions to the growth of sociology and social anthropology in India.

G.S. Ghurye was made a Professor of Sociology in 1934, ten years after he joined the Bombay university as a Reader and the Head of the Department of Sociology. He was elected the President of the anthropological section of the Indian Science Congress in 1934. In the same year he was elected as the nominee of the Royal Asiatic Society by the Managing Committee of its Bombay branch. In 1942 he became the President of the Bombay Anthropological Society and continued to hold this position till 1948. He wrote several books and articles and his knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to study the religious scriptures in the context of Indian society. He studied castes and tribes, rural-urbanisation, about the Indian Sadhus, about Indian costumes and so on. During his life time he won several top honours accorded to any intellectual in India. He became not only a nationally but internationally known sociologist of India. He died in the year 1984.

5.5.2 Central Ideas

G.S. Ghurye's contributions to Indian sociology were mainly in the areas of ethnography of castes and tribes, rural-urbanisation, religious phenomena,

social tensions and Indian art. Let discuss his ideas in the following sub-sub-section.

5.5.2.1 Caste and Kinship in India

In the early 1930s, G.S. Ghurye published a book, *Caste and Race in India* which still is an important source book on Indian castes. In this work, he examined the caste system from historical, comparative and integrative perspectives. Later, he made a comparative study of kinship in Indo-European cultures. In his studies of kinship and caste, Ghurye emphasised two points: (a) the kin and caste networks of India had parallels in some other countries also; and (b) the kinship and caste in India served as integrative framework. The evolution of Indian society was based on the integration of diverse racial or ethnic groups through these networks.

The gotra and charana were kin-categories of Indo-European languages which systematised the rank and status of the people. These categories were derived from names of the sages of the past. These sages were the real or eponymous founders of the gotra and charana. In India descent has not always been traced to the blood tie; the lineages were often based on spiritual descent from sages of the past. Outside the kinship we might notice the guru-shishya relationship, which is also based on spiritual descent; the disciple is proud to trace his descent from a master. Likewise, caste and sub-caste integrated people into a ranked order based on norms of purity-pollution. The rules of endogamy and commensality which marked off castes from each other, were in fact integrative instruments to organise them into a totality or collectivity. The Hindu religion provided the conceptual and ritualistic guidelines for this integration. The Brahmins in India played a key role in legitimising the caste ranks and orders through their interpretation of Dharmashastras, which were the compendia of sacred codes.

5.5.2.2 New Roles of Caste in India

Ghurye's work on caste contained some interesting speculations, which have been proved to be correct. Firstly, he noted that the Indian castes had fostered voluntary association for furtherance of education and reformist aims. The Nadars, Reddys and Kammas of South India, Saraswat Brahmins of Maharashtra and Vaisyas, and Kayasthas of North India, to mention only a few, founded caste associations. Ghurye presumed that in the future they would give rise to a political consciousness based on caste ties. In the post-Independent India, the caste associations have been quite vocal about getting political concessions to their members. In the later decades of twentieth century, Rajni Kothari, a political analyst, extensively analysed the caste associations. Unlike Ghurye, Kothari recognised the positive roles of these caste associations such as taking up welfare activities, etc. According to Ghurye, they have served to mainly articulate the people's political aspirations in a democratic framework. Secondly, Ghurye referred to the various agitations of the backward classes for better privileges. These struggles seemed to be undermining the integrity of the Indian society. Thus, the caste system was becoming "pluralist" in the sense that each caste was in competition or conflict with the other for bigger share of the nation's wealth. Hence, according to Ghurye this scramble for privileges was damaging the unity of society.

5.5.2.3 Study of tribes in India

Ghurye's works on the tribes were general as well as specific. He wrote a general work on scheduled tribes in which he dwelt with the historical, administrative and social dimensions of Indian tribes. He also wrote on specific tribes such as the Kolis of Maharashtra. Ghurye was of the view that the Indian tribes were like "backward Hindus". Their backwardness was due to their imperfect integration into Hindu society. The Santhals, Bhils, Gonds, etc. who live in South-Central India are examples of it. Ghurye (1963) wrote, "While sections of these tribes are properly integrated in the Hindu society, very large sections, in fact the bulk of them are rather loosely integrated..... Under the circumstances, the only proper description of these peoples is that they are the imperfectly integrated classes of Hindu society".

For Ghurye, the incorporation of Hindu values and norms into tribal life was a positive development. With increasing contact with the Hindu social groups the tribes had slowly absorbed certain Hindu values and style of life and came to be considered part of the Hindu caste society. The tribes gave up liquor-drinking, received education and improved their agriculture under Hindu influence. In this respect, Hindu voluntary organisations such as Ramakrishna Mission and Arya Samaj played a constructive role. In his later works on north-eastern tribes, Ghurye documented secessionist trends. He felt that unless these were held in check, the political unity of the country would be damaged.

5.5.2.4 Rural-urbanisation in India

Ghurye was interested in the process of rural-urbanisation. He held the view that the urbanisation in India was not a simple function of industrial growth. In India, the process of urbanisation, at least till 1980s, started from within the rural area itself. Ghurye quoted Sanskrit texts and documents to illustrate the growth of urban centres from the need for markets felt in rural hinterland. In other words, owing to the expansion of agriculture, more and more markets were needed to exchange the surplus in food grains. Hence, in many rural regions, one part of a big village was converted into a market; in turn, this led to a township which developed administrative, judicial and other institutions. We may add here that urban centres were also based on feudal **patronage**. In the past, demand of royal courts for silk cloth, weapons, jewellery, metal artifacts led to the growth of urban centres such as Varanasi, Kanchipuram, Jaipur, Moradabad etc.

In sum, Ghurye's approach to "rural-urbanisation" showed the indigenous source of urbanism. The growth of metropolitan centres during colonial times altered the Indian urban life. The towns and cities were no longer the outlets for agricultural produce and handicrafts; but they became the major manufacturing centres, which used rural hinterland for producing raw-materials and turned it into a market for selling industrial products. Thus, metropolis came to dominate the village economy. In contrast to previous pattern, now the urbanisation has started making inroads into the rural hinterland.

Ghurye made the study of a village in Pune district of Maharashtra to highlight the continuity of the social structure. This village named Lonikand

had been studied by a British officer in 1819. He described its general layout, economic infrastructure, caste composition, market transactions and political and religious dispositions. The re-survey of the village made by Ghurye in 1957 did not reveal any far-reaching differences in the demographic, economic and social dimensions of the village. Besides, he found that the layout of the village corresponded to the pattern laid down in a text of antiquity. He also noted that the village did not have a very well-knit social structure; there were loose strands in its social fabric. In spite of it the village had survived as a viable unit.

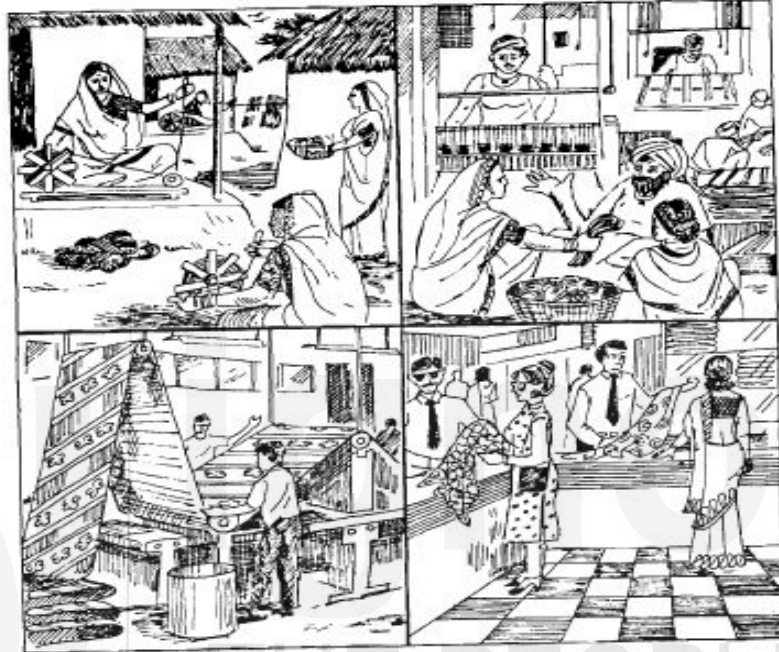


Figure 5.1: RURAL - URBANISATION

Activity 2

Read carefully the paragraphs in sub-section 5.5.2 on central ideas of G.S. Ghurye on rural-urbanisation in India. Discuss with two elders about the kind of changes they have seen taking place in their city, town or village after the colonial period. Ask them about the changes in the layout of the village, that is, how it has been planned, where the market is situated, where the residential areas are situated and so on.

Write a note of about a page on the – “Rural-Urban growth in My City or Town or Village”. Compare your note, if possible, with notes of other students at your Study Centre.

5.5.2.4 Religious Beliefs and Practices in India

Ghurye made original contributions to the study of Indian religious beliefs and practices. He wrote three books on this in the period between 1950 and 1965. He argued that the religious consciousness in ancient India, Egypt and Babylonia was centered around the temples. There were also similarities between Indian and Egyptian patterns of worship and temple architecture. In his work on the role of Gods in Indian religion, Ghurye traced the rise of major deities such as Shiva, Vishnu and Durga to the need to integrate local or sub-regional beliefs into a macro-level system of worship. The diverse ethnic groups in India were integrated into a religious complex around these deities. Political or public patronage was often the basis for the spread of popular cults in India. The Ganesha festival in

Maharashtra and Durga festival in Bengal gained popularity due to the efforts of nationalists such as B.G. Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal who were using religious idiom for the propagations of political ideas during the freedom struggle. Even in the beginning of the twenty first century, these festivals have retained some political overtones.

5.5.2.5 Role of the Sadhu in Indian tradition

In his work, *Indian Sadhus*, Ghurye (1953) examined the paradoxical nature of renunciation in India. In Indian culture, the Sadhu or Sannyasin is supposed to be detached from all caste norms, social conventions, etc. In fact, he is outside “the pale of society”. It is the usual practice among Shaivites to conduct a “mock funeral” of one who is entering the path of renunciation. It means that he is “dead” to society but is “reborn” in spiritual terms. Yet, interestingly enough since the time of Shankara, the eighth century reformer, Hindu society has been more or less guided by the Sadhus. These Sadhus are not individual hermits. Most of them are organised into monastic orders which have distinctive traditions. The monastic organisation in India was a product of Buddhism and Jainism. Shankara introduced it into Hinduism.

Indian renouncers have acted as the arbiters of religious disputes, patronised learning of scriptures and even defended religion against external attacks. So, renunciation has been a constructive force in Hindu society. Ghurye considered in detail the different groups of Sadhus. Important among them were the Shaivite Dashnamis (literal meaning: ten orders) and Vaishnavite Bairagis. Both these groups had the Naga (militant naked ascetics) contingents which were ready to fight off those who threatened the Hindu religion. Incidentally, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s Bengali novel, *Anand Math* recounts the story of a group of Shaivite monks who put up an armed struggle against the British forces in the nineteenth century. They were no doubt defeated by the British but they thereby revealed their staunch commitment to Hinduism. These Sadhus who assembled on a large scale at Kumbh Mela were the very microcosm of India; they came from diverse regions, spoke different languages but belonged to common religious orders. Asceticism, according to Ghurye, was not a relic of the past but a vital aspect of the current practices of Hinduism. The well-known ascetics of the recent times, Vivekanand, Dayanand Saraswati and Sri Aurobindo worked for the betterment of Hinduism.

5.5.2.6 Indian art and architecture

Ghurye was also keenly interested in Indian art. According to him, the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist artistic monuments shared common elements. By contrast, Hindu and Muslim monuments were grounded in diverse value systems. The Indian temples were indigenous in inspiration. The Veda, epics and Purana provided them with popular themes. But Muslim art was Persian or Arabic and had no roots in this soil. He did not agree with the view that the Muslim monuments in India represented a synthesis. The Hindu elements remained decorative in Muslim buildings. By contrast, the Rajput architecture retained its commitment to Hindu ideals, in spite of political control of Rajasthan by Muslim rulers. Ghurye traced the costumes in India from the ancient to the present time. He drew upon Hindu, Buddhist

and Jain artistic works (architecture and sculpture) to illustrate the variations in costume over the ages.

Radhakamal Mukerjee, as noted earlier, wrote on Indian art. There was, however, a difference in his approach to art. Mukerjee viewed it as a vehicle of values, norms and ideals of a civilisation which had thrived through centuries. Ghurye, by contrast, was looking at art as a specifically Hindu configuration. Ghurye wrote that Rajput architecture was the assertion of Hindu faith in its own destiny. Mukerjee looked at the same phenomenon of artistic activity somewhat differently. He held that the Rajputs were fervently engaged in building monuments which they believed would outlast them as their artistic heritage. Thus, in spite of their continuous battles with Muslim overlords, they used their resources to patronise art.

5.5.2.7 Hindu-Muslim relationships

Ghurye's works often discussed Hindu-Muslim relationships. He regarded Hindus and Muslims as separate groups, with little possibility of mutual give and take.

The pro-Hindu stance of Ghurye was based on the conflicts engendered by nearly seven centuries of Islamic rule in India. The forced conversions, destruction of places of worship, etc. no doubt damaged the Hindu psyche. Looking critically at Ghurye's views, it is necessary to add here that the predatory acts of Muslim rulers find no sanction in Koran. Islam does not advocate violence. What happened was that political expediency rather than commitment to faith made the Muslim rulers use force against their subjects. Besides, Hindu-Muslim interactions have been culturally productive and socially beneficial. Sufism stimulated Bhakti movement in India; the growth of Urdu literature, Hindustani classical music and shared patterns of life style showed that Islamic rule had a positive side. Communal tensions were in fact mainly a product of colonial rule. It was a political strategy of the British to divide the Indian society, especially the Hindus and the Muslims, after the 1857 Mutiny so that they could not fight them as a united force. Communalism also received a fillip by the expansion of urbanism due to conflict of interest. Mostly, the communal riots have almost always taken place in India's urban centres due to political and economic reasons under the garb of religion. Ghurye's works have focused on the disturbances during his life-time. In reality, in pre-British times there was good cooperation between the two communities.

5.5.3 Important Works

Some of the important works of Ghurye in sociology are

- i) *Indian Sadhus* (1953)
- ii) *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture* (1961)
- iii) *Gods and Men* (1962)
- iv) *Anatomy of a Rururban Community* (1962)
- v) *Scheduled Tribes* (1963)
- vi) *Caste and Race in India* (1969, Fifth Edition)

Some of his other works which show us the range of his interests are

- i) *Bharatnatyam and its Costume* (1958)
- ii) *Cities and civilisation* (1962)
- iii) *Indian costume* (1962, 2nd Edn.)

Check Your Progress 3

i) Name the British anthropologist who influenced G.S. Ghurye very much. Use about one line.

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ii) What was the approach of Ghurye in studying caste in Indian society? Describe using about two lines.

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iii) Give in about three lines the opinion of Ghurye regarding tribes in India.

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iv) Describe Ghurye's approach to the study of urban growth in India. Use about six lines.

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5.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt about the three pioneers of Indian Sociology, namely Radhakamal Mukerjee (1889-1968), Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (1894-1962), and Govind Sadashiv Ghurye (1893-1984).

You learnt about the biographical details of the three thinkers. We have described some of their major ideas in the field of sociology. All three thinkers have dealt with the study of society in their own ways. These thinkers have also studied Indian cultural tradition, art and civilisation. Finally, we have listed some of the important works of the three thinkers.

5.7 KEY WORDS

Ameliorative	A measure which leads to the welfare or betterment of a social group
Canonical	The laws, rules or general principles of a religion
Compartmentalisation	To divide anything into separate sections. In the unit, it refers to the limits put to the boundary of a social science like history, economics, political science or sociology.
Ecological	The study of plants, animals people or institutions related with the environment
Ethical Relativism	Variation of values from one culture to another is called ethical relativism.
Mono-cultivation	The cultivation of one cash crop year after year which depletes the soil of its nutrients making it infertile
Patronage	The protection and encouragement given to certain arts, crafts and architecture by a ruler, landlord or a rich and powerful person
Renaissance	It means a rebirth or revival in a literal sense but it also refers to the great revival of art, literature and learning in Europe in the fourteenth, fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries.
Universalisation	The process in which culture specific values become part of the value system of a larger society, such as a nation or the universe.

5.8 FURTHER READING

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5.9 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

i) a) ecology

- b) compartmentalisation
- c) economics
- ii) An ecological zone is a result of the combination of a certain kind of geological, geographical and biological factors.
- iii) Radhakamal Mukerjee's interest in social ecology led him to the study of regions in India. He call this study regional sociology. According to Mukerjee, if the regions in modern India were developed to the extent that they became self-sufficient then India will benefit as a whole. But if some regions lag behind they will be dominated by the developed regions and this will result in a lop-sided development of India.
- iv) Radhakamal Mukerjee was against the Western trend of separating "facts" from "values" as done by the positivists in sociology. According to him "facts" and "values" are inseparable elements of human interaction and such behaviour as taking or giving food, wearing a dress, etc. are value-based and normatively determined by the society.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) D.P. Mukerji was keenly interested in social processes taking place in a rapidly changing society like India. He was a Professor of sociology at Lucknow University which he had joined in 1922. He was trained in both economics and history and he too like Radhakamal Mukerjee combined sociology with economics and history. He called himself a Marxologist due to his belief that Marx's ideas were very relevant when adapted to Indian history and civilisation.
- ii) Two of his important works are
 - a) *Modern Indian Culture* (1942)
 - b) *Diversities* (1958)
- iii) a) uprooted
- b) Marxist
- c) spiritual

Check Your Progress 3

- i) The British anthropologist, who influenced G.S. Ghurye deeply, was Dr. W.H.R. Rivers.
- ii) Ghurye studied the historical, comparative and integrative aspects of caste system in India. His approach was ethnographic, using historical, Indological and statistical data.
- iii) According to G.S. Ghurye, the various tribes such as Bhils, Gonds, Santhals, etc. in India are like "backward Hindus". The backwardness of these tribes is a result of their imperfect integration in the Hindu society.

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- iv) The process of urbanisation in India, according to Ghurye, is unique since it is not as a result of industrial growth. In India urbanisation process began from the rural areas because of the need for exchanging surplus food grains. Markets developed in the rural areas slowly and became centres of small towns with their own administrative, judicial machinery and other institutions. These urban centres were also sometimes dependent on feudal patronage, some examples of such towns are Varanasi, Kanchipuram, Jaipur, Moradabad, etc.



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