UNIT 12 ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY

Structure

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to describe:

- the inter-relationships between economy, technology and society
- the process of development of technology in pre-modern and modern societies
- the impact of technological development on the process of production, and socio-cultural institutions of the society.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we will study the relation between economy, technology and society. We will study the technological development in simple societies, pastoral societies, peasant agricultural societies and urban industrial societies. We will also learn about industrial revolution and several other aspects of economy. This will include industrially advanced societies. The role of technology and economy in industrially advanced economies in modern societies. This

includes a discussion of technology and work relationship including work ethics. Job creation, role of machines, and unionism are the other issues discussed in this unit.

12.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMY, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

In all societies we find people struggling to survive. In this struggle for survival they use products of nature like wood, stone, mud, grass, metals etc. to create tools and other inventions to serve their needs. The satisfaction of material, physical and social needs of the people is what constitute the economy of that society. Now we will tell you what economy and technology are and how they are related with a distinct type of society.

12.2.1 Definition of Economy

Individuals everywhere in the world experience wants that can only be satisfied by the use of material goods and the services of others. To meet such wants, human beings rely on the economic system which consists of the provision of goods and services. Any need related to physical well-being is a biological want. People must eat, drink, maintain a constant body temperature, defend themselves and deal with injury and illness. Satisfaction of these needs requires the use of material goods, food, water, clothing, shelter, weapons, medicine and the co-operative services of others. In addition, social wants are essential to the maintenance of social relationships and availability of material goods and services. People identify particular social roles with special clothing and bodily adornments or tools.

For example, a doctor must wear special clothing, use special medical instruments and work in a clinic furnished with examination table, X-ray machine, etc. Without these material items and the services of nurses and technicians the doctor could not play the role successfully. People also use material goods and services to enhance social solidarity by exchanging them with others. Gifts, for instance, reaffirm kinship ties at religious and social functions.

12.2.2 Definition of Technology

Technology has been broadly described as practical arts. These arts range from hunting, gathering, fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, mining etc., to manufacturing construction, transportation, provision of food, power, heat, light, etc. It also includes means of communication, medicine and military technology. Technologies have been described as bodies of skills, knowledge, and procedures for making, using and doing useful things. It centres on processes that are primarily biological and physical rather than psychological and social processes. They represent the cultural traditions developed in human communities for dealing with the physical and biological environment, which includes the human biological organism itself.î (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 15)

12.2.3 Economy and Society

Economy of any society is related not only to the social standards of the community but it is also a function of tools and technological inventions that have taken place in that society. This fact is clearly evident when we examine the growth of human societies and the development of technologies from simple, pastoral to agrarian and modern industrial societies.

But before we go on to describe the development of technology in pre-modern and modern societies, we will like to explain that goods and services do not automatically fulfil biological and social wants of human beings. There must be some organised system of behaviour that permits individuals to create and obtain the material items and resources required. The economic system provides this organisation by defining some fundamental areas of activity such as production, distribution and consumption.

12.3 DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN PRE-MODERN SOCIETIES

Broadly speaking the study of technological change merges with the general study of socio-cultural changes. Tools and techniques have developed along with the growth of human societies from simple societies to modern industrial societies via various stages.

12.3.1 Simple Societies

In simple societies people survived in the forests, deserts, mountains etc., by hunting and food gathering. They used simple tools like the bow and arrow for hunting; wore animal skins as clothes and sometimes domesticated dogs for help in hunting. During this time two great discoveries were made which gradually replaced the hunting life with new forms of economic organisations of greater complexities. These discoveries were, (a) the domestication of animals, such as cattle, and (b) agriculture. With these discoveries of agriculture and domestication of animals came other discoveries and mechanical inventions.

Agriculture led to the private ownership of land. However, there are many agricultural people whose land is owned by the clan. This is evident when we study the hunting cultures of the tribals who have plots assigned to each family from this communally owned land. The crops belong to the individual families working on the same plot. In such cultures, generally plough was not used. Instead a digging stick called the hoe was used. Therefore, this culture is also called hoe-culture.

In India we see tribal people practicing 'jhum' cultivation. Each season new plots were cultivated and the old one left fallow. This was possible when population was less and forest lands were more.

12.3.2 Pastoral Societies

Domestication of large animals assured a permanent supply of food as compared to the life in the wild state of nature as well as to the capricious nature of agricultural crops. Thus, we find several pastoral tribes in India, Africa and some other places.

Herds of cattle symbolise not only food but wealth as well, which can be exchanged and traded. However, this task was purely a male task and therefore, men assumed dominant position among pastoral peoples as compared to the hoe-cultures. Use of such animals as elephants, horses and camels led to the development of military techniques. They were used for swift transportation as well.

12.3.3 Peasant Societies

Agriculture, on a large scale brought stability which led to the building of permanent houses. Handicrafts like pottery-making are correlated with stable agriculture. The weaving of hair, or wool, or cotton developed. With cloth, pottery, baskets and crops, property began to accumulate and became very significant. The advanced skills required for these crafts led to further specialisation. The foundation for exchange was thus laid from this early period of agriculture.

12.3.3.1 Rise of Agricultural Surplus

With settled agriculture, plough was added to the domestication of animals and hoe. With the improvement of tools and techniques more land came under cultivation and the yield of crops increased. Individual ownership became the rule. This means that a family owns a plot of land and a family in this context could mean a large group of kins as well.

12.3.3.2 Emergence of New social Institutions

Land became the major basis of wealth in society. Since men desire wealth, there developed large landholdings by the process of purchase, by marriage alliances, and by force in places where surplus labour was available. This labour was in some places kinsmen, in others slaves or serfs, and in still others sharecroppers. This led to the development of social classes, like peasantry and landed aristocracy. The big landholders fought amongst themselves for wealth and power and the most wealthy and powerful among them assumed government functions, including the judicial and military.

The wealthy families sometimes sponsored art, architecture, and religious undertakings. The inception of feudalism took place at this time. Gradually and sometimes by revolution, family control was wrested away from these authoritarian single family dominations. This resulted in the birth of states. Villages developed into towns, and towns into cities and cities into metropolitan centres, etc. with the growth of trade and commerce. (Ogburn & Nimkoff 1968)

12.3.3.3 Division of Labour

Development of handicrafts led to the growth of property, as well as increasing demand for labour. Discovery of metals like copper, tin, gold, sliver and iron led to the development of tools, weapons, valuable ornaments, etc. Since these metals were relatively rare, only some people could master the art of making them. Thus specialisation developed. Agriculture on a mass scale also led to the division of labour in society. In some societies like the Indian, it took the form of caste which had an elaborate division of people, according to birth into different occupational groups which were ranked.

12.3.4 Growth of Cities

With the increase of food surplus, handicrafts, etc. trade and commerce developed. Use of swift transportation led to the development of cities, or metropolitan centres, which gave rise to industrial urban cultures. In cities people do not grow food for themselves but buy it from the market. Thus, expansion of market economy occurred and trade and commerce thrived. Feudalism in Europe gradually gave way to capitalism which we borrowed from the Britishers during the long period of their rule in India. The great impetus of the process of development of capitalism in Europe and America has its origin in the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Let us examine some of the technological changes that have taken place during this revolution.

Activity 1

Interview 5 elders in your family/community about the history, population growth, geographical changes economic development, political and cultural involvement of your village/town/city where you reside. Write an essay of about one page on 'My village, town/city (whichever applicable to you) and its Growth'. Discuss your essay with other learners at your study centre.

12.4 DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN SOCIETIES

One way of explaining the industrial revolution which began in England during the later half of the eighteenth century is to point out that it was made possible by a large number of inventors. Thus, James Hargreaves who invented the Spinning Jenny in 1764 and Richard Arkwright who invented the Spinning Frame in 1768 improved the methods of spinning yarn. James Watt who developed the steam engine in the 1780's showed the way to the use of steam power in the coal mines and textile mills and made it possible for England to increase her industrial production.

The contributions made by these remarkable persons to the industrial development of England are commendable, but the social conditions prevalent during the period are more important. If the social conditions did not encourage the application of these inventions to industrial production, the industrial revolution would not have occurred. For instance, in an earlier period Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the famous Italian painter was also supposed to have been a remarkable engineer and architect who devised new weapons and had even made drawing of aeroplanes. But his drawings largely remained on paper because at that time the social and economic conditions were not ripe enough to apply his ideas to practical uses.

12.4.1 The Industrial Revolution

And when we turn to England during the period of industrial revolution, the industrial workers and craftsmen had formed scientific societies to learn more about science and engineering so that they could use this knowledge to increase industrial production. Similarly, when technological developments of great importance occurred in the U.S.A. during the nineteenth century they could be traced to social and economic conditions prevailing then in that country. There, the availability of vast agricultural lands and the shortage of people to work on it led to the discovery and use of machinery in agricultural universities and engineering colleges. Apart from these circumstances, the freedom, and encouragement that the American

culture gave to entrepreneurship is regarded by some persons as the single most important factor responsible for the technological development in that country. The operation of a free market in America encouraged individual mobility. People starting from small beginnings could make huge fortunes if they worked hard enough and had a good idea to sell. Anybody who was inventive enough could experiment with his ideas and reap the advantages of his inventions by acquiring a legal right over the use of his or her invention through the law of patents.

Change of Technology in Different Societies

Technology Advancement

12.4.2 Models of Development

While the U.S.A. provides us one model of development, Japan provides another. Since 1868 the year of the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese government actively promoted industrialisation by sending her young men to western countries to learn modern science and technology and by setting up several industrial units.

Japan's economic miracle has been spectacular especially since the 1950's. Japan became the first Asian country to be counted among the top ten wealthy nations of the world. The Japanese have become the technological leaders in various industries including electronics, iron and steel, automobiles and shipping. Several American industries have been unable to withstand the competition from the Japanese who are continually improving and upgrading their products.

The Japanese experience raises very interesting questions about the influence of social factors in promoting technological and industrial development in the last few years.

12.5 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the western civilisation the individual is given importance and the values and norms of the society uphold the individual's rights, but in Japan, the 'individual' is subordinated to the society. The Japanese industrial corporation works like big communities. A corporation is a big business house which provides employment to a large number of people. It also has a large production capacity. Once a person joins a corporation he spends the rest of his working life serving that corporation. Wages and salaries are paid according to the seniority of the worker concerned and not so much by his qualifications. The production plans of the corporation are discussed by the workers in advance and approved. Once the plans are approved, it becomes the duty of everyone in the corporation to do his utmost to attain the production targets. A strong sense of corporate solidarity binds the workers and the managers into a well knit and efficient productive unit.

In comparison with Japan, the U.S.A. in recent years has not shown its industrial dynamism. It is argued that the very individualistic orientations of U.S.A. now comes in the way of gaining an edge in industrial competition. Investment in research and development, especially in the areas of advanced technology is a highly risky proposition. Such investment becomes worthwhile if everyone accepts the unspoken understanding that they will all continue to work together for a long period even if it means that some have to forego attractive opportunities to make profit.

12.5.1 Industrial Corporations

Thus the workers developing a new product or design may gain very valuable experience and may learn new ways of doing a job. For instance they may, in the course of their work, learn how to lower the percentage of defective casting made of some rare alloys. When they gain this experience, they are likely to be waived by other industrial corporations who will be willing to compensate them substantially for changing jobs. If the workers accept such tempting offers the entire investment made in developing the new technology may become wasteful. It is argued that the fierce individualism of the American society protects those who leave the corporation rather than those who remain with it. As a result, corporations and individuals are supposed to be hesitant to take up research and development efforts requiring heavy initial investments.

The comparison of Japan and the U.S.A. shows that in the U.S.A. the very institutions which promoted individualism there and in turn contributed to that country's technological and industrial growth in an earlier period are nowadays, perhaps, preventing it from acquiring industrial leadership in many spheres. This is all the more interesting because the U.S.A. continues to be the leading country in the world in terms of basic research in science and technology. This shows that it is not only important to create conditions for the promotion of modern science and technology but it is also equally important to ensure that these researches are translated into profitable production ventures.

12.5.2 Theses of Karl Marx and Max Weber

In the discussion above, it is possible to interpret the available evidence on technological development either from Marx's point of view or from Weber's point of view. It is important to note here that Weber's ideas on Protestant Ethic and its role in the origin of capitalism were specific to a particular period in European history. Nonetheless, Weber's thesis has been employed in explaining development in Japan and other third world countries. Such a demonstration involves identifying religious ideas of entrepreneurial communities and showing how similar they are to the Protestant Ethic. Such interpretations have been carried out on the Japanese technological and industrial development and with regard to several entrepreneurial communities in different parts of the world. Some of the more important of these studies have influenced the theories of modernisation which will be discussed later.

With regard to Marx's ideas, it is argued that a proper assessment should test Marx's predictions regarding the future of capitalism. This would naturally take our discussion to the study of the effects of technology and industrial production on society.

12.5.3 Emergence of Affluent Workers

One general remark made by many critics of Marx is that Marx's predictions have not come true. Instead of capitalism being overthrown, it flourishes with seemingly greater strength in the industrially advanced countries of the world including the U.S.A. Japan, U.K. and other West European countries. Instead of bringing about a revolution the working class seems to have accepted the capitalist system of production. This is attributed to the steady rise in the standard of living of the industrial workers in these countries. And because they are getting a better deal, the workers are said to be less interested in joining trade unions to fight for their interests. One of the more influential research efforts supporting this thesis is reported in the study on The Affluent Workers in The Class Structure, conducted in England in 1970's by Goldthorpe, Lockwood and others, to examine the embourgeoisement hypothesis. This study, has pictured the affluent worker as someone who regards his factory as only a source of his livelihood. He does not have any sense of pride in belonging to his factory. He does not develop a sense of friendship or comradery with his fellow workers. Work does not anymore give him a sense of identity or meaning in life. He seeks his identity in his leisure time activities. He looks forward to going home and spending time with his family and a small circle of intimate friends. He leads a very private life and zealously guards his privacy. He continues to be a member of the trade union but he is not an active participant in the Union's affairs. He looks upon the union as a mere instrument in his getting higher wages. Thus instead of becoming an active agent of social transformations the worker is becoming a passive acceptor of the system and is interested only in getting a better deal for himself from the system. All this evidence seems to specifically contradict Marx's comments on the role of the working class in capitalist societies.

12.5.4 Alienation of Modern Workers

In fact, even before hard evidence was brought up by the affluent workers study, some leading Marxist thinkers had pointed to such a change in the workers attitudes. Marcuse, a highly influential Marxist theoretician, had commented in the 1960's that in the modern society, even the workers have become profoundly estranged and alienated. Industrialisation has robbed them of their individuality and has deadened their sensibilities. The worker has become a human extension of the machine. Just as a slave who has tasted no freedom cannot imagine what freedom is, the modern worker leads such a mechanical existence that he or she does not even want freedom from this slavery. That is why Marcuse considered that university students who are not yet spoilt by the modern society could be the people who could bring about the revolution.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How did development of technology lead to accumulation of property? Describe using about seven lines.

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2) Write a brief note on industrial corporation. Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) In what way has Marx's prediction regarding revolution failed? Describe using about five lines.

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4) What were the main findings of the affluent worker study? Discuss in about seven lines.

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12.6 MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND WORK RELATIONSHIPS

If we want to understand the nature of modern technology it is important to understand the distinction between using a machine and using a hand tool. When a worker uses a hand tool he is controlling the pace of work himself. In a machine, even the simplest of them, this tool is taken away from the worker's hands and fixed. It can be only moved in a particular direction in contrast to the tool in the human hand which can be moved in many directions. Once the tool is fixed in this manner, the worker has to adjust his speed of work to the machine rather than the other way round. But the advantage is that the machine can do more work and turn out more items than the human being because the machine does not get tired from repeated movements while the human hand does.

A machine comes into use when the number of products that need to be produced is large. Take for instance, the case of a cobbler making shoes. If he has to cut only a pair of leather shoes, he takes leather and cuts a number of pieces according to the shape and size of the foot for which the shoe is being made, places them one on top of the other and stitches them along the edge to make the sole. Then he cuts a large piece of leather to form the upper part of the shoe and stitches this upper part to the sole. Later he cuts leather again to make the heel of the shoe and nails the heel on to the sole of the shoe. This is followed by colouring and polishing of the shoe. After making one shoe he may proceed to make another repeating all the above operations. But if he has to make a large number of shoes, it pays for him to cut all the soles first, then cut the uppers, make the soles then stitch all the uppers to the soles and so on. It may prove worthwhile for him now to develop special tools and machines to undertake the different operations. It pays to standardise the sizes of shoes and use standard patterns for cutting the shoe uppers and the soles. For stitching, it will help if he can use special sewing machines. Use of specialised machines will speed up the work and increase the number of shoes produced. Further, it will prove advantageous to hire more workers and put each in charge of a specialised job. This type of division of labour, into separate operations, is facilitated by the use of machines.

12.6.1 Machines and Production

Once machines are introduced into the production process, a tendency is set in motion which gradually gets intensified. The machine at first takes away the tool from the hands of the worker and forces him to adjust his own motions to the rhythm of machine work. Gradually the machine not only takes away the tools but also the skills from the worker. This has been

facilitated in recent years by the use of computerised machines. For instance, a computer can perform a job today to a greater degree of accuracy than even the most highly skilled machinist. Once the specifications of the particular job are fed into the lathe, the computer itself gives directions to the lathe controlling the entire work process. The machinist can be replaced by an unskilled or a semi-skilled worker who is only required to read a panel and is called to press certain buttons mounted on it. True, the job of instructing the computer or to monitor the operation of the lathe is a highly skilled job and the systems analyst who does that and the engineers who ensure that the machines operate without any hitch, are highly paid personnel. But if the owner of the factory employs only a few of these highly skilled personnel he can dispense with several machinists and employ only a handful of semi-skilled workers at very low wages. This trend is noticed even in office work. For instance, computerisation has made the task of monitoring telephone calls, of maintaining a diary, and of reminding the manager of his appointments, a routine task which can be done without the help of a secretary. Similarly the use of word processors has simplified the task of letter writing, a task which can now be done by an ordinary typist. Thus the secretary's skill is broken down into operations which can now be handled by machines and less skilled workers. This is the process of de-skilling. Modern technology is strengthening this trend towards de-skilling of jobs.

12.6.2 Job Creation

The impact of modern technology on the creation of jobs is a controversial topic. Some hold the view that the new jobs created by modern machines are compensating for the number of jobs displaced by them but it is certainly true that modern technology is rapidly making skills redundant, and is thereby creating problems of adjustment for those rendered redundant. The modern society is getting divided into two classes of workers. On the one hand are a vast majority of the workers who are getting de-skilled whereas on the other a tiny minority is monopolising most of the skills. Already a typical modern industrial plant has become a place which hires only a handful of workers. The management of the company can afford to pay them high enough wages to keep them satisfied and can ensure that there is no militant trade union activity. Under these circumstances protests will stem from workers who have been thrown out of their jobs or those whose jobs have been de-skilled. Such protests, however, are as futile as the protests of drivers of horse-drawn carriages against the modern railways or buses.

12.6.3 Technology and Unionism

Modern technology is not only rendering workers redundant, it is sapping their capacity to collectively fight for their interests. The frustrating end of coal mine workers strike of 1984-85 in England is a pointer to the relative weakness of the working class. In spite of a long drawn strike, the mine workers in England had to ultimately capitulate to the decision of the government to rationalise mining to increase their productivity. Rationalisation means using modern technological devices extensively. The mine workers of England who were till recently famous for maintaining the tradition of working class culture and for retaining their autonomy in work, could not resist the intrusion of computerised machinery which have de-skilled their work. These industrial workers could not gain public sympathy for their actions because the government convincingly argued that rationalisation of mining would increase productivity. It would lead to prosperity for the whole country. The working class has been pushed to a defensive position rather than adopting an aggressive and assertive posture which is associated with trade union struggles.

There is some evidence from Japan which also indirectly supports the position that modern technology is changing the working class consciousness. A recent study of the impact of modern technology points out that the Japanese workers spend more time away from their wives and have bound their women even more securely to the home, because of modern household gadgets and television. The workers do not any more feel the need to come home because their wives can entertain themselves watching the television. Far from emancipating women, modern technology seems to have strengthened conservative attitudes towards women.

Activity 2

Watch at least one or two television serials that are being shown on the different TV Channels. Analyse the roles played by women in these serials and write a report on "Women and Technology : Past and Present" depicting the values and norms that they are displaying in these serials. Share your answer with other students at your study centre.

Some people point out that the helplessness of the workers and the general trend towards conservatism are due to the capitalist system of production that prevails in the advanced industrial countries. Modern technology, they say is capable of reducing the hours of work for every worker. Instead of being thrown out of jobs, under a different system of production the leisure hours of all workers can be increased and indeed it can be ensured that everyone gets a decent wage to pursue his or her creative interests during their leisure hours. Unfortunately, under the capitalist regime, it is argued, an equitable distribution of wealth is not possible and the tendency to create unemployment cannot be avoided. As against this, however, those in favour of capitalism point out that is socialist countries, because a free market did not operate and because there was no profit incentive, the production system became inefficient and there were always shortages. Socialist systems, it was argued only succeeded in redistributing poverty. These critics also point out that the recent policies of China in giving scope for private enterprise demonstrates the soundness of their argument.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss briefly the relation between modern technology and work relationships. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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2) Write a note on technology and Unionism. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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12.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the relationship between economy and technology. We have examined the development of technology in simple pastoral societies and peasant agricultural societies. Here we have described the various technologies developed during the process of industrial revolution. We have seen in this unit that modern technology has a very powerful impact on the production systems and on society. Modern technology has been weakening the position of workers and it is leading to their estrangement and alienation. But at the same time it also holds out a promise of creating a world of plenty. This promise, of course, goes along with the prospect of robbing the workers of their skills and their revolutionary potential. Instead of modernising societies, modern technology is indirectly strengthening the forces of conservatism causing alienation of individuals in society and leading to new social psychological problems of adjustment in societies, like depression, mental tension and stress, etc. However, it is unmistakable that there is an inherent tendency towards making the worker and the poor a vulnerable and dependent class.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

Blauner, R. 1964: *Alienation and Freedom : The Factory Worker and His Industry*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Mckee James, B. 1981: *Sociology: The Study of Society*, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New Your.

12.9 KEY WORDS

Affluent : A person or group which has great amount of wealth.

Corporation : A big business combine with a large employment and production capacity.

Model : A simplified description of a system which explains its crucial aspects.

Technology : The total sum of the means which provide objects required for human sustenance and comfort.

Unionism : A grouping together of workers to assert/demand their rights.

12.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) When agricultural tools developed from hoe to plough and domestication of larger animals took place, large plots of land could be brought under cultivation. The yield of crops increased leading to the increase in food. This led to building of permanent houses, development of skills like weaving hair, wool and cotton for making clothes, pottery making, etc. which led to accumulation of property. Ownership of land by individual families their increasing landholdings and power led to their patronising art, architecture, religious undertaking, etc.

2) Industrial corporation is an institution where production process takes place. It is a big business combine with a large employment and production capacity. For example in Japan the plans for production of a corporation are discussed by the workers in advance and approved. After this step it becomes the duty of everyone in the corporation to complete the production target.

3) Marx's prediction regarding revolution by the working classes in industrial society has failed. Capitalism has not been overthrown, instead it flourishes with greater strength. The working classes seem to have accepted capitalism due to certain reasons like increase in wealth, standard of living etc.

4) This study revealed that the affluent worker regarded his factory as only a source of his livelihood. It did not give him a sense of pride to belong to that factory. He did not have any friends in the factory. The work in the factory did not give him any sense of satisfaction of identity or meaning in life any more. He sought identity in his leisure time and looked forward to spending time at home with his family and a small group of intimate friends.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The relationship between modern technology and work relationship is that modern technology takes the tedious, repetitive jobs from the worker. But it also creates unemployment by making a large number of unskilled workers redundant. Only a minority of skilled workers are required to operate the modern machines like the computers. This leads to monopolisation of work by a minority, which is well paid.

2) Development of modern technology is one of the reasons for the weakness of the working class. It has led to a decline in their revolutionary potential. The coal mine workers strike of 1984-85 ended without any result. Even the mine workers of England had to capitulate to their government's decision to rationalise mines. Thus, technology has led to the weakening of working class power and unionism.