

Framework

Lecture 3-4: Modernity and Social Changes in Europe and Emergence of Sociology

Objective:

This chapter aims at providing an understanding of the historical context of the emergence of sociology as a distinct social science. An in-depth analysis of socio-economic and political conditions prevailing in Europe in the post-renaissance period would enable the learner to acknowledge the need for a distinct discipline which could study society and its dynamics in a scientific manner. Further, an introduction to intellectual debates during the enlightenment period would help the learner understand both, goals of sociology as well as means (in terms of methodology) that was advocated by the founding fathers of the discipline.

Refer: Booklet P-I T-1 (Sociology – The Discipline)

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Tradition and Modernity

- **Meaning of Modernity**

Lloyd Rudolph and Susanne Rudolph

Prof. Satish Deshpande

Enlightenment Thinkers (Saint Simon, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber)

Features of Medieval European Society (AD 600 – AD 1500)

- **Social** Feudalism, Estate System of Social Stratification, Dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, Closed Society Based on Ascription, Community Life
- **Economic** Subsistent and Stagnant Agrarian Economy, Hereditary and Paternalistic Relations Between Feudal Lords and Serfs
- **Political** Divine Theory of Kingship, Highly Decentralized System, Politically Unstable, Authoritarian and Autocratic Rule, Rulers-Subjects, No Concept of Citizen

Changes in the Medieval European Society (14th Century Onwards)

- **Renaissance** (14th Century)
- **Commercial Revolution** (15th Century)
- **Scientific Revolution** (15th Century)
- **Religious Reformation** (16th Century)
- **Agricultural Revolution** (16th Century)
- **Industrial Revolution** (mid-18th century)
- **Enlightenment** (18th century)
- **French Revolution** (1789)

- **Renaissance (14th Century Onwards)**

Literally Means ‘Rebirth’

Early Phase: (Period of Revival)

Revival of Interest in the Learning of the
Classical Civilizations of Greece and Rome

Latter Phase: (Period of Innovation)

Growth of Modern Thought, Rational Thinking,
Focus on Scientific Enquiry, Humanism,
Use of Printing

- **Commercial Revolution (15th Century)**
 - Voyages of Discovery (Search for Sea Routes)
 - Growth of Trade and Commerce
 - Emergence of Semi-Independent Towns
 - Capital
 - Rise of Mercantile Class (Mercantile Capitalism)
 - Changes in the Method of Production
(Guilds – Putting-Out System – Factory System)
 - Changes in the Purpose of Production
(Production for Market, Food Crops to Cash Crops)

- **Scientific Revolution (15th Century)**
 - Developments in Astronomy, Physics, Biology, etc.
 - Instilled the Spirit of Scientific Enquiry
 - Emphasized on Empirical Observation and Experimentation
 - Demystified the Doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church
- **Religious Reformation (16th Century)**
 - Doctrines of the Catholic Church Vs Scientific Discoveries
 - Charges of Corruption in the Church (Letters of Indulgence)
 - Martin Luther – Founder of the Protestant Church (Germany)
 - Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin – Protestant Church in Switzerland

- **Agricultural Revolution (16th Century)**

Investment of Capital in Land and Agriculture

Scientific Farming and Sheep-Rearing

Capitalistic Transformation of Agriculture

Production for Market, Food Crops to Cash Crops

Transformation of Subsistent Economy into Surplus Economy

Agrarian Capitalism

Land Became a Private Property

Enclosure Movement

Mass Eviction and Displacement of Serfs/Agricultural Workers

Migration Towards Newly Emerging Towns

Beginning of the Breakdown of Feudal System

- **Industrial Revolution** (mid-18th century)
 - Began in England around mid-18th century
 - Later Spread to France, Germany and Rest of the Europe
 - Machine Based Mass Production of Goods in Factories
 - Profit Motive, Industrial Capitalism
 - Forces of Production Owned by Capitalists (Bourgeoisie)
 - Workers Owned Only Their Labour
 - Wage-Labour Relationship
 - Emergence of Working Class (Urban Proletariat)
 - Overcrowding in Towns and Industrial Centres due to
 - Displacement Caused by the Enclosure Movement,
 - Unhygienic Conditions, Extreme Exploitation of Workers,
 - Starvation and Poverty

- **Enlightenment** (18th century)

Refers to the Intellectual Movement in the 18th Century Europe

Absolutist View Vs Enlightened View

Challenged the Absolutism of the Church as well as the State

Emphasis on Reason and Scientific Enquiry to Arrive at the Truth

Belief in Individual's Potential and Dignity

Enlightenment Thinkers (Locke, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc.)

Believed in Individual Rights and Freedom

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

Impressed and Inspired by the Success of Natural Sciences

particularly Newtonian Physics

Shared a Vision of Human Progress

- **French Revolution (1789)**

Estate System of Social Stratification

Three Estates (The Clergy, The Nobility and The Commoners)

Rising Aspirations of the Emerging Mercantile Class (Bourgeoisie)

High Inflation and Unjust Taxation System

Ideas of Enlightenment Thinkers

Estates-General (The French Parliament)

Discontentment among the Representatives of the Third Estate

Formation of National Assembly by Middle Class Leaders and Liberal Minded Nobles

Leader of the National Assembly – Bailly – Oath of the Tennis Court – 20 June 1789 –

Marking the Beginning of the French Revolution

Storming of the Bastille – 14 July 1789 – Independence Day (France)

Declaration of the Rights of Man by the National Assembly

Ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity

Features of Modern European Society (18th Century Onwards)

- **Social** Decline of Feudalism and Rise of Capitalism, Class System of Social Stratification, Desacralization of Social Life, Rationalization, Open Society Based on Achievement, Community Bonds Disrupted
- **Economic** Surplus Economy, Capitalist and Industrial Society, Contractual Wage-Labour Relations Between Capitalists (Bourgeoisie) and Working Class (Proletariat)
- **Political** Separation of State and the Church, Rule of Law, Democracy, Individualism, Fundamental Rights, Citizenship

Paradox of the Emerging European Society

Hope

Vs

Despair

Social

Scientific Temper, Humanism,
Equality, Freedom, Achievement

Disruption of Community Bonds,
Social Disorder, Anomie

Economic

Surplus Economy, Industrialism,
Unprecedented Accumulation of Wealth

Gross Economic Disparities,
Exploitation, Poverty, Slums

Political

Democratization, Rule of Law,
Fundamental Rights, Citizenship

Political Instability, Civil Wars,
Corruption

The Conservative Reaction to the Enlightenment

Joseph de Maistre (1753 – 1821) and Louis de Bonald (1754 – 1840)

Conservatives Scholars were Disturbed by the Revolutionary Changes

Deplored Developments such as Industrial Revolution and French Revolution

Yearned for a Return to the Peace and Harmony of the Middle Ages

Emphasized on the Traditional Institutions like the Family, the Monarchy

and the Church

Intellectual Contributions to the Emergence of Sociology

Early Sociology Developed as a Reaction to the Enlightenment
While the Enlightenment Thinkers Emphasized on the Individual,
Conservative Thinkers Emphasized on the Society
Primacy of Society over the Individual was Established
Individual was seen as a Product of the Society (Socialization)
Parts of Society were seen as Interrelated and Interdependent
(Conservative Bias)

Enlightenment Thinkers' Emphasis on Empirical Observation and
Research was also Influential

Conclusion:

Social Conditions Created Necessary Conditions for a Distinct Discipline to Study Society

Intellectual Conditions Facilitated the Emergence of a Distinct Discipline 'Sociology'

Social Problems of Modern Society Required a New Body of Scientific Knowledge

Conservative Ideas Guided the Goals of Sociology

Enlightenment Ideas Served as the Means to Achieve These Goals

Sociology, thus, Emerged out of the Confluence of Enlightenment and counter-Enlightenment Ideas

Sociology is Simple

Sociology is Scoring

provided that you

Study Sociology Systematically

SOCIOLOGY

*We Don't Just Teach Sociology,
We Also Train You To Think Sociologically*

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