

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY



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Module 1

Sociological Theorizing : Roots and Background

SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIZING ROOTS AND BACKGROUND

- The emergence of sociological thought is traced to the conservative reaction to the Enlightenment philosophy of the 18th century.
- Prior to the middle of the 18th century the study of society was dominated by social philosopher rather than social scientists.
- Social philosophy studies human society as part of the universe

TRANSITION FROM SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY TO SOCIOLOGY

- Sociology emerged from the contributions of philosophers and religious thought of all civilizations.
- Social philosophy is an attempt by the philosophers to provide guidance and answers in order to solve the problems of the society.
- The philosophical analysis of society were essentially based on speculation on untested assumptions and they lacked systematic analysis of the structure and functions of societies.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

The important factors that hastened the process of the establishment of sociology as a separate science are the following :

- 1.** The French revolution and Formation of the modern state
- 2.** Industrial revolution and the rise of Capitalism
- 3.** Development of scientific spirit

Module 2

Origin of Sociology as a Distinctive Discipline

AUGUSTE COMTE

Jan 1 1798 – Sept 5 1857



- Auguste Comte was born in Montpellier of southern France
- Comte was the first thinker who realized the need for a distinct science of human society.
- He coined the word Sociology as ‘the science of society’ or ‘the science of human behaviour’.
- He is regarded as the **father of sociology**.

AUGUSTE COMTE

Major Contributions

- Law of Three Stages and Hierarchy of Sciences
- Positivism
- Social Statics and Social Dynamics

Major works

- Positive Philosophy (1830-42)
- System of Positive Polity (1851 -54)
- Religion of Humanity (1856).

LAW OF THREE STAGES

According to Auguste Comte the evolution of human mind parallels that of the development of the individual's intellect. his evolutionary theory or the law of three stages constitute that there are three intellectual stages.

- **Theological or Fictitious stage** - childhood superstitions and fears of supernatural powers
- **Metaphysical or Abstract stage** - adolescent belief in great cosmic principles
- **Positive or Scientific stage** - adulthood's practical positivism

HEIRARCHY OF SCIENCES



Sociology

Biology

Chemistry

Physics

Astronomy

Mathematics

POSITIVISM

- Positivism is the philosophical system of Auguste Comte, recognizing only positive facts in observable phenomena and rejecting metaphysics, theism and religious system founded
- By positive method he meant “the subordination of concepts to facts and acceptance of the idea that the social phenomenon are subject to general laws.
- Positive Philosophy helps us discovering rational laws of the evolution of the human mind, reorganization of society and play an important role in the maintenance of social order.

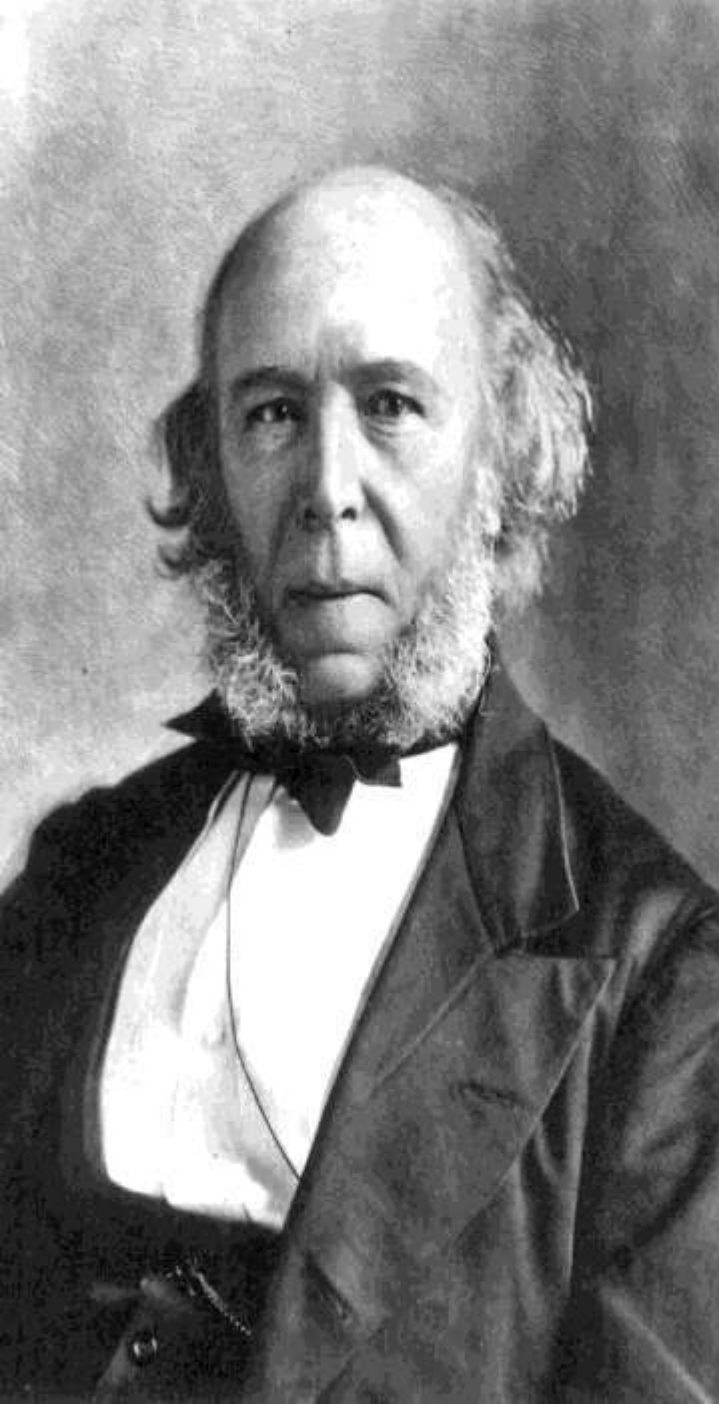
SOCIAL STATICS & SOCIAL DYNAMICS

In order to make an orderly study of the subject, Comte divided the sociology in to two divisions - **Social Statics and Social Dynamics**

- **Social Statics** is concerned with the present structure of society. It studies the current laws, rules and present conditions of the society.
- **Social dynamics** is the theory of social progress. Social dynamics describes the successive and necessary stages in the development of mind and society.

Module 3

Theoretical Developments in Sociology



HERBERT SPENCER

- Herbert Spencer was born on 27 April, 1820 in Derby in England.
- He was treated as the continuator of Comte's evolutionary approach and often called "**the second founding father of sociology**".
- Spencer's first and foremost concern was with evolutionary changes in social structures and social institutions.
- An important work of Spencer was his theory of Organic analogy in which he developed the tendency to see society as an organism

THE MAJOR THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SPENCER

- Development of Sociology
- Contribution to Methodology
- Social Evolution
- Organic Analogy
- Social Darwinism

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

- In his opinion a science of society is possible because in society there is order of co-existence and progress.
- According to Spencer the subject matter of sociology is peculiar. Sociology is a science which must explaining the present state of society by concentrating on the initial stage of evolution.
- Spencer hope to explain the known present by means of the unknown past.
- Sociology can become a science only when it is based on the idea of natural, evolutionary laws.

CONTRIBUTION TO METHODOLOGY

- Spencer suggested that the social scientist must make a deliberate effort to free itself from biases, sentiments and emotional and intellectual difficulties.
- Spencer use partly comparative method and partly functional method.
- Spencer stressed upon comparative analysis of the societies of the past with present, like with unlike etc.
- According to Spencer we must learn by inspection, the relation of coexistence and sequence in which the social phenomena stand one another.

SOCIAL EVOLUTION

- Spencer strongly emphasized that all universal phenomena, inorganic, organic and super organic are subjected to the natural law of evolution.
- In the 'First Principle' he wrote evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which matter passes from a indefinite incoherent heterogeneity to definite coherent homogeneity during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.

SOCIAL DARWINISM

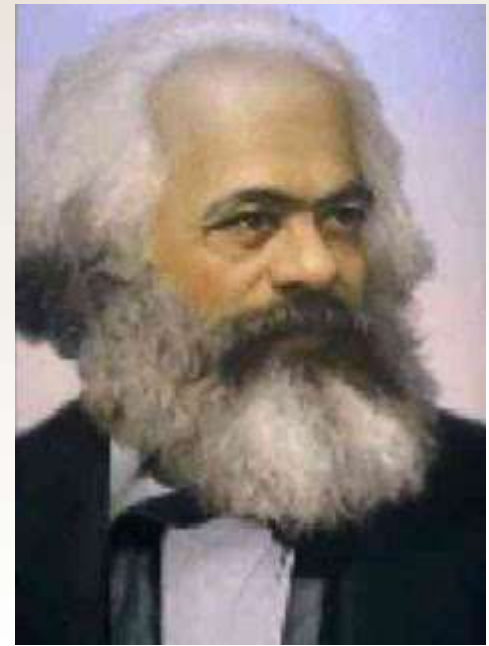
- Physical and biological unit social aggregates also grow through gradual differentiation and the movement is towards greater size, multi formities and definiteness ie, change from homogeneity to heterogeneity
- Social Darwinism revolves around two principles.
- The principle of survival of the fittest. -
- The principle of non-inference

ORGANIC ANALOGY

- The identification of the societies for certain purpose with a biological organism.
- He recognize the similarity between society and organism and it is the first step towards a general theory of evolution.
- Society organize more than an analogy between them.
- The same definition of life applies to biological as well as social organism.

KARL MARX

- Karl Marx, was born on 5th May, 1818 in Trier, in the Rhineland province of Prussia.
- He is known to the world as an architect of socialism and a champion of communism.
- He was a socialist theoretician and good organizer, a major figure in the history of economic and philosophical thought, a political propagandist, a journalist and a great humanitarian and social prophet



MATERIALISTIC CONSUMPTION OF HISTORY

- The concept of history of Karl Marx is known as dialectical materialism or historical materialism.
- To Marx, “Matter is not a product of mind, on the contrary, mind is simply the most advanced product of matter”.
- It is not the consciousness of man that determine their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determine their consciousness.

THEORY OF CLASS

- A social class, according to Karl Marx, is that which occupies a fixed place in the process of production.
- “A social class is any aggregate of persons' who perform the same function in the organization of production.”
- It is determined not by occupation or income but by the position an individual occupies and the function he performs in the process of production.

THEORY OF CLASS STUGGLE

- Karl Marx point out that there has always been class conflict among different classes.
- “The history of all hither to existing societies is the history of class struggles”.
- Free men and slaves, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journey man, in a word oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL CLASS

Class conflict presupposes the development of social classes.

1. The development of the proletariat
2. Importance of property
3. Theory of Surplus value
4. Polarization
5. Proletarianization
6. The rise of political authority
7. Pauperisation
8. Alienation
9. Class conflict
10. The dictatorship of the proletariat
11. Inauguration of the communist society

CHANGE AND PROGRESS

- Theory of social change put forward by Karl Marx is known as economic determinism.
- Marx's theory of social change is much interrelated with his concept of social class and class conflict.
- Marx believed that the class struggle was the driving force of social change.
- Marx considered society as fundamentally dynamic not static. It considers conflict as a normal process and not abnormal and he believed that the existing conditions in any society contain the seeds of future social change.



EMILE DURKHEIM

- Emile Durkheim was born at Epinal in Lorraine, a frontier province of France on 15th April, 1858 of Jewish parentage.
- Durkheim's primary concern was to lay down a firm foundation of a positive science of society. The core of Durkheim's approach is that society is a reality and formed by the association of individuals.
- According to him the ultimate sociological reality to the group and not to the individual.

SOCIAL FACTS

- Durkheim has defined sociology as a science of social facts
- Social facts are collective ways of acting, thinking and feeling that present the noteworthy property of existing outside the individual consciousness.
- Social facts are first and foremost “things” which are social in nature.

Features of social facts :

1. Exteriority
2. Generality
3. Constraint

DIVISION OF LABOUR IN SOCIETY

- The study on division of labour in society, was Durkheim's doctoral thesis and his earliest work.
- In the work Division of Labour, Durkheim analysed the working of modern society on the basis of division of labour; that makes individuals depend upon one another in spite of their specialization.
- Durkheim, particularly concerned about the manner in which the division of labour make individuals to feel as the part of the society as a whole.

SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

- Solidarity means solidity of the organization.
- The theories relating to social solidarity were developed in his first book, *The Division of labour and society* (1893).
- A vital concept in Durkheim's theory of solidarity is the collective conscience which is the sum total of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of society.
- Durkheim identified two forms of solidarity: **Mechanical and Organic.**
- Mechanical solidarity is solidarity of resemblance
- Organic solidarity develops out differences

SUICIDE

- Theory of suicide is linked with his theory of social constraint and his views on collective conscience.
- This study delves deep in to the sources of social order and disorder that are the root of suicide.
- According to Durkheim, the causation of suicide should be referred to social structure and its ramifying functions.
- **Types of Suicide**
 - 1. Egoistic Suicide
 - 2. Altruistic Suicide
 - 3. Anomic suicide

MAX WEBER



- Max Weber was born on 21 April 1864 in Erfurt, Thuringia.
- He developed a new branch of sociology known as sociology of religion in his famous work *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* was the Weber's first book
- Weber's definition of sociology is to be found in his book "*The Theory of Economics and Social Organization*".
- "Sociology is the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects."

WEBER'S METHODOLOGY

- Weber's methodology, of course, depends upon his conviction of the social scientist can 'understand' 'meaningful' social 'relationship.
- Weber used the term "sympathetic introspection" to designate the core of this approach.
- "For the verifiable accuracy of interpretation of the meaning of a phenomenon", wrote Weber, 'it is a great help to be able to put one's self imaginatively in the place of the actor and thus sympathetically to participate in his experience.

SOCIAL ACTION

- social action is that action of an individual which is somehow influenced by the action and behaviour of other persons and by which it is modified or its direction determined.
- Action is social by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individuals.

- **Types of social action**

1. Zweck-rational action
2. Wert-rational action
3. Traditional action
4. Affectual action

SOCIAL ACTION

Characteristics of Social Action

- Social action may be influenced by an action of past, present or future.
- Social action presupposes the existence of other individual and some action by him.
- Necessity of subjective meaning.

IDEAL TYPES

- An ideal type is an analytical construct that serves the investigator as a measuring rod of ascertain similarities as well as deviations in concrete cases.
- It is neither a statistical average nor a hypothesis; rather it is a mental construct, an organization of intelligible relations within a historical entity.
- It is known as “typological analysis.”

POWER AND AUTHORITY

- Weber defines power as the probability that an actor will be able to realise his own objectives against opposition from others with whom he is in social relationship.
- According to Weber authority is related to power. Indeed legitimate power is authority and authority is nothing but legitimate power.

Three kinds of authority :

- 1.** Traditional Authority
- 2.** Rational-Legal authority
- 3.** Charismatic Authority

PROTESTANT ETHICS AND SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

- In his essay on protestant ethics and spirit of capitalism, Weber observed that the connection between religious and economic forces.
- His concept of religion is more ethical than theological. Religion is a vital influence in everyday life.
- Weber wanted to examine its influence on the life of people.
- “To what extent the religious conceptions of the world and of existence have influenced the economic behaviour of various societies”.

Module 4

Schools of Sociological Theory

SCHOOLS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

- Sociologists understanding social phenomena on their own way and viewed from different theoretical perspectives.
- **Major Schools of Sociological Theories :**
- Functionalism
- Conflict school
- Social Interactional perspective

FUNCTIONALISM

- The functionalist perspective emphasize the idea of system stability or equilibrium.
- Any change in any of the parts leads to a disturbance of that state of equilibrium. An equilibrium state ensures a smooth functioning of the society.
- Functionalism is simply a view of society as a self-regulating system of interrelated elements with structured social relationships and observed regularities.

CONFLICT SCHOOL

- The conflict theorist concludes that societies are in a constant state of change, in which conflict is a permanent future.
- Conflict does not necessarily imply utterly violence. It includes tension, hostility, severe competition and disagreement over goals and values.
- Conflict is not deemed here as an occasional event, that disturbs the smooth functioning of the system.
- It is regarded as a constant process and an inevitable part of social life.

SOCIAL INTERACTIVE PERSPECTIVE

- The interactionist perspective focuses on the social behaviour in everyday life.
- It tries to understand how people create and interpret the situations they experience, and it emphasizes how countless instances of social interaction produce the larger structure of society- government, economy, and other institutions.
- This perspectives presumes that it is only through these social behaviour of the people that society can come into being.

CONCLUSION

- Sociology as a distinct discipline emerged against the background of intellectual and material changes in the second half of the 19th century.
- Comte held the view that social sciences are similar to natural sciences due to which he emphasized social evolution.
- Spencer expressed the ideas about the origin and evolution of the state.
- Marx constitute the gospel of revolution, Marxism has become the state dogma and the creed of political orthodoxy in many countries.
- Durkheim's idea on "collective representation" & "collective conscience" throws light on the relationship between the individual and society.
- Weber made use of his knowledge on history, philosophical tradition, religious systems and social structures to refine his concepts and to develop general theoretical schema on various social phenomena.

THANK YOU

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