

Notes

**2**

## **EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**In the previous lesson, you have learnt about the nature and scope of sociology. In this lesson you will study the emergence and development of sociology in the west and its India.**



### **OBJECTIVES**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain the causes for the origin of sociology as a subject of study;
- describe the history of development of sociology in the West; and
- describe the history and development of sociology in India.

### **2.1 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY IN THE WEST**

Human beings have always been interested in knowing and thinking about their society. When we study the past history we will find that sociological insights were found at that time. We can say that though this discipline does not have a long history but it does have a long past. Some scholars trace the origin of sociology from economics of Kautilya and politics of Aristotle. For example the statement of Aristotle reflects that 'man is a political (i.e. social) animal' sowed the seeds of sociology. Some others trace it to the writings of French scholars, especially Montesquieu, who offered a classification of societies including the simplest ones of hunters and food-gatherers. Thus, we take help of classical writings when we want to understand an ancient society. However, one should make a distinction



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between taking interest in understanding society and its affairs and the study of society as a profession. Right from the beginning, human beings have been interested in understanding their society, but **sociology as a subject emerged after the French Revolution of 1789.**

The French Revolution brought about a tremendous socio-political change in society, leading to a disruption of family life and other social relations.

Against this background, some social thinkers of that time were concerned about building their society anew. One such thinker was **Claude Henri de Saint-Simon**. He said that for bringing about changes in society, we must, first of all, study it in all its aspects so that we knew where the problem actually lay. This line of reasoning was further developed by Saint-Simon's disciple, **Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who is also known as the 'father of sociology'**. Comte argued that the methods used in physics should be used for the study of society. Such a study would reveal the laws of evolution and the laws of the functioning of society. Once this knowledge was available, we would be able to build society scientifically. Thus, the programmes of social reconstruction should follow a scientific understanding of society. In the following pages we would like to discuss the ideas of classical and modern thinkers of sociology.

**Auguste Comte** who gave sociology its name, identified three stages of human society:

**Theological**-In the first stage, the explanations of various phenomena were given in religious terms; this stage was called theological.

**Metaphysical**-Its successor was the stage of metaphysics, where the explanations were philosophical.

**Positivism**- The final stage in the evolution of human thought was of positivism, where phenomena were explained in terms of the scientific approach to the social world.

The idea of evolution was carried forward in the works of the British sociologist, **Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)**, who wrote a three-volume work entitled *Principles of Sociology* (1876, 1882, 1896), in which he argued for the universality of the principle of evolution.

Spencer was convinced that societies evolve in the same manner as animal species. As generations pass, the most capable and intelligent ("the fittest") members of a society survive, while the less capable die out. Thus, over time societies become more differentiated and complex.

Spencer called this principle "the survival of fittest" Although Spencer coined this



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phrase, it is usually attributed to his contemporary, Charles Darwin, who later proposed that living organisms evolve over time in order to survive the conditions of their environment. Because of their similarities, Spencer's views of the evolution of societies became known as social Darwinism.

The sociology of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer was best represented by Lester K. Merton (1814-1913) in the United States of America. He also made distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' sociology and argued that scientific processes could bring about social betterment.

The credit for developing sociology as an independent discipline and science also goes to **Emile Durkheim** (1858-1917), a French sociologist. He was the author of some well-known works, which are still consulted, such as *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (1897), and *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915).

**Emile Durkheim** said that sociologists study 'social facts', which are objective and exist in the consciousness of the collectivity. Examples of social facts are rules of marriage, laws, ritual performances and various kinds of social statistics, etc. Thus, social fact is exterior to human mind and but it constraints on human behaviour. Hence, social facts do not have their origin in the individual. Further, they should be explained by other social facts, rather than in terms of biological, psychological, environmental, or geographical facts.

In his work on suicide, **Durkheim** showed that although suicide is an individual act, suicide rate is not. The numbers of individuals per one thousand, who commit suicide every year, constitute the suicide rate of that society. Suicide rate is a social fact and not the case of an individual suicide. A variation in suicide rate with the passage of time is an indication of changes in society. Therefore, a preceding social fact would explain another social fact. In these terms, Durkheim showed the autonomy of a sociological explanation as different from explanations in other social science subjects. The impact of Durkheim on British social anthropology was tremendous.

In Germany, the most influential work was of **Max Weber** (1864-1920). He is known for the works titled *Basic Concepts in Sociology*, *General Economic History*, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. In comparison to Durkheim, Weber said that the sociologist studies 'social action', which is an act an individual performs to which he assigns meaning. The job of the sociologist is to understand the subjective meaning of an act. Weber was particularly interested in studying the



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factors that gave rise to capitalism in Western Europe. He said that Protestantism played a central role in generating the work ethic. He also made an important contribution to sociological methods.

The ideas of the German social thinker, Karl Marx (1818-1883), were also influential in sociology. In fact, much of Weber's sociology was a reaction to Marx's thoughts. Marx argued that every society beginning with slavery was divided into two classes, one of those who owned land, resources, and technology, and the other of those who did not have anything to sell in the market except their labour. Class was a relevant factor in understanding a person's behaviour, motivation, and ideas. Marx emphasized the role of historical factors in conditioning the behaviour of human beings. Marx believed that conflict was the initiator of social change. Therefore, he has given central importance to the concept of conflict as the positivist like comtrestrened the role of order

We have discussed the development of sociology in France (Comte, Durkheim), Germany (Marx, Weber), England (Spencer). The contributions of these scholars have exerted influence in sociology every where in the world. Later on, G.H. Mead, Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills exercised great influence in sociology around the 1929 and 1930s in U.S.A. and other parts of the world.

Gradually, the departments of sociology were started in the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century in the west. The first department of sociology in North America opened 1892 at the university of Chicago. McGill University in Canada gave its first department of sociology in 1922. Harvard university opened its department of sociology in 1930, the university of Caliphornia at Berkeley in 1950s, Prneetan university in 1960s followed by universities of Yale, Columbia etc. in U.S.A. Sociology as a discipline started vey late in the universities of U.K. though a large number great sociologists contributed from U.K. Even London school of Economics started in 1960.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

Answer the following questions in one sentence.

1. Which statement of Aristotle is believed to have sown the seeds of sociology?  
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2. After which revolution of which year is sociology supposed to have emerged?  
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3. Who is regarded as the 'father of sociology'?

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4. Define positivism.

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5. What are the various stages according to Comte through which human society has passed?

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6. Name the book that Sir Herbert Spencer wrote.

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7. Who is the author of the book titled *Suicide*, which was published in 1897?

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8. Name any one book that Max Weber wrote.

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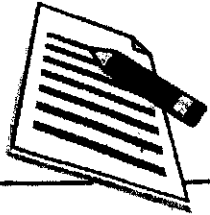
## 2.2 DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN INDIA

The growth of sociology in India can be divided into three phases. In the first phase, covering the period from 1769 to 1900, the foundation of sociology was laid down. Sociology became a profession, a university subject, during the second phase, from 1901 to 1950. The third phase, beginning after India's independence, was marked by programmes of planned development, increased interaction of Indian sociologists with their foreign counterparts, availability of money for research, and intensification of research and publications.

### 2.2.1 Foundations of Sociology in India

During the course of exercising their rule in India, the British officials realized that for smooth administration, it was important that they acquired knowledge of Indian society and culture. Information was also required about affluent families and their customs, which could be used for revenue collection. If local societies were administered according to their laws and customs, it was thought, there would be peace and harmony. Hence, their laws and customs needed to be recorded meticulously in detail. This prompted the origin of sociology in India.

In 1774, William Jones founded the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, the aim of which was to study 'nature and man' in India.



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The first attempt in this regard was made in 1769, under the supervision of Henry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar. Francis Buchanan carried out a survey of people in Bengal in 1807. A French missionary in Mysore, Abbe Dubois, wrote the famous book titled *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* in 1816, in which he described the characteristics of caste system and the interaction between castes. In 1820, Walter Hamilton's published a gazetteer, *A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and Adjacent Countries*, wherein an attempt was made to estimate India's population.

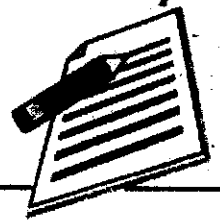
These works prepared the ground for more systematic studies that were undertaken in the second half of the nineteenth century. **The British government conducted the first all-India Census in 1871.** The need for census was felt because information was required for several purposes, such as famine relief, sanitation and control of epidemics, etc. Besides this, the need was also to collect details about people's lives before they disappeared because of social and culture change. With the efforts of colonial officials (such as Wilson, Risley, Baines, Bhunt, Thurston, O'Malley, Hutton, etc.), Census became an invaluable source of information for data on population, society, and cultural life.

British administration was also interested in understanding the classical Indian literature, for many ideas according to which people led their lives were embedded in it. From the early days, they engaged scholars on Sanskrit and Arabic to assist their judges in deciding cases involving religious practices, customs, and laws. With the help of Sanskrit scholars, a book on Hindu law in English was prepared in 1776 for British judges. The founder-president of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, William Jones, had special interest in Sanskrit. One of the main interests of his journal called *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1784) was the publication of articles based on a study of Sanskrit and Arabic literature. During the nineteenth century, Max Muller, a German scholar, translated several classical Indian texts into German, which were later translated into English.

The later scholars, writing in the last decades of the nineteenth century, made use of these writings. For example, Henry Maine, in both of his books, *Ancient Law* (1861) and *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871), referred to the writings on India. He had also visited India. Both Karl Marx and Max Weber, whose works were central to the development of sociology, as you have noted earlier, also made use of the information from India.

### 2.2.2 Professionalization of Sociology in India

During the initial years of this phase, the British officials continued with the bulk of their investigations into the lifestyles, customs and laws of people. A number of volumes on castes and tribes were prepared under the supervision of these scholars, such as Crooke, Sherring, Thurston, Russell, Hiralal, Ibbetson, and others. Each



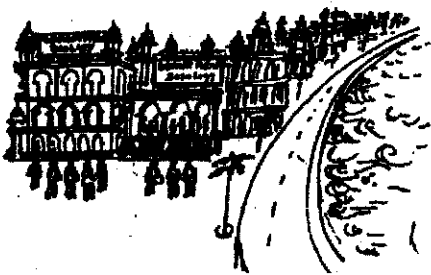
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volume consisted of a short description of each of these societies, its population and spread. The possibility of tribes transforming into castes was also pointed out in some of these volumes. In his *People of India* (1916), Sir Herbert Risley was one of the first ones to take note of the tribe-caste continuum.

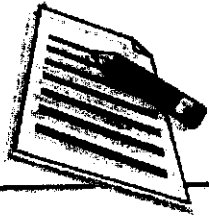
Along side, professional sociologists and anthropologists from Europe started working in India. Based on intensive fieldwork from 1901 to 1902, W.H.R. Rivers published his monograph in 1906 on a pastoral community of the Nilgiris, the Todas. He, then, sent his student, A.R. Brown, who later became A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, to do fieldwork with the Andaman Islanders. Brown spent two years (1906-08) with the Andamanese, but his monograph on these people appeared in 1922. Rivers was chosen to be the first head of the department of anthropology at Calcutta, but he could not join because of his death in 1921. The lectures he had written for delivering at Calcutta were later published in 1924 under the title *Social Organization*. His influence on Indian sociology continued through the works of his disciples, G.S. Ghurye and K.P. Chattopadhyay.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and S.C. Roy made the major contribution. Iyer wrote accounts of castes and tribes of Cochin and Mysore, besides carrying out a useful survey of the Syrian Christians of Kerala. S. C. Roy, who was a lawyer by profession, carried out studies of Indian tribes such as the Oraon, Munda, and Birhor.

A full-fledged department of sociology came into existence in Bombay in 1919. In 1921, a department of anthropology was established in Calcutta.



During this period, steps were also taken to introduce sociology and social anthropology as academic disciplines in Indian universities. In 1914, the University of Bombay started the teaching of sociology at under graduate level. The first full-fledged department of sociology was started in Bombay university in 1919. In 1917, sociology was introduced in Mysore University. In the same year, S.C. Roy founded the first journal of anthropology and sociology titled *Man in India*. The Bombay sociology department flourished under the leadership of G.S. Ghurye, who supervised students from different parts of India, advising each one of them



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to carry out fieldwork in his or her region. In this way, Ghurye was able to build a vast amount of literature on Indian communities. He founded the Indian Sociological Society in 1951 and started its journal entitled, *Sociological Bulletin*.

During this phase, Lucknow also emerged as an important center of sociology and anthropology. In 1921, a combined department of economics and sociology was created under the leadership of **Radhakamal Mukherjee**. A year later, **D.P. Mukherji** joined the department, and in 1928, **D.N. Majumdar** was appointed to teach 'primitive economy'. Because of these three scholars, Lucknow emerged as one of the prime places of teaching and research in sociology and anthropology. However, an independent department of sociology came into existence in 1951, followed by a joint department of sociology and social work.

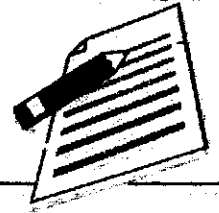
Scholars of Indian and foreign origin produced a number of important works on Indian society during this phase. Besides **S.C. Roy**, **J.H. Hutton** and **J.C. Mills** produced detailed studies of tribes in Naga Hills. In their studies **Verrier Elwin** and **Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf** spent several years with Indian tribes and wrote monographs on them. Elwin also proposed certain approaches and ways through which the condition of tribals could be improved upon. **D.N. Majumdar** carried out his fieldwork in north and west India, producing several works of repute. He also founded in 1947 a journal titled *The Eastern Anthropologist*. **N.K. Bose** was another important scholar of this time and is known for his work on the changes among tribes. During the last decade of this phase, one would place **M.N. Srinivas's** work on the Coorgs, which was first published in 1942, under the title *Marriage and Family in Mysore*.

### 2.2.3 Development of Sociology since India's Independence

After India's independence, Indian sociologists and anthropologists came in contact with their counterparts in the United States of America. Earlier, their academic contact was mainly with the scholars of the United Kingdom. Several collaborative projects of Indian and American sociologists began. Publications and researches increased. More teaching and research positions were created, as sociology and social anthropology became university subjects and more and more of their departments were opened up. In other words, there was a sharp increase in the popularity of sociology and social anthropology.

**Sociologists were engaged actively in planning and development programmes. The Census Organization, the Central Social Welfare Board, the Office of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, the Tribal Research Institutes, and institutions associated with the Community Development Programmes, needed the expertise of sociologists and anthropologists.**





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The other reason for the popularity of these subjects was the beginning of planned development in India. The need was not only to know about the social and economic problems of local communities but also to suggest their probable solutions. With the coming of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) in 1969, there was a further expansion of sociology. Besides the Indian Sociological Society established in 1951, as we noted previously, the other national forum for sociologists, which R.N. Saxena organized in 1955, was the All-India Sociological Conference. But in 1967, both these professional bodies were merged. Since then, this association organizes an annual conference for sociologists, which is an important professional event in the country.

During this phase, a number of village studies were undertaken. Several village monographs resulted from them, some of which are still of tremendous value, such as McKim Marriott's edited volume titled *Village India* (1955), S.C. Dube's study of a village in Hyderabad, called *Indian Village* (1956), and M.N. Srinivas's edited volume, *India's Villages* (1956). Some other important works were accomplished after India's independence. Kathleen Gough studied a Tanjore village and described the changes that had come in it because of British rule. F.G. Bailey wrote on a village in Orissa, documenting the changes surfacing in it once its land came to the market. Srinivas, from the study of a village in Karnataka, gave the concept of 'dominant caste', the caste that controls economic resources as well as exercises decisive political dominance. S.C. Dube studied the inter-relationship between planned development programmes and social and cultural factors in some villages in western Uttar Pradesh. From the study of a village in Tamil Nadu, Andre Beteille showed the changes that had come in the ranking system.

In addition, several Indian communities, both tribes and castes, were also intensively studied. Srinivas re-worked the data he had collected on the Coorgs in the 1940s for his later book published in 1952 that proposed the concept of upward mobility in caste system (i.e. *sanskritization*). Louis Dumont, a French sociologist, studied the Paramalai Kallar of Tamil Nadu and discussed their social organization, especially their marriage system. T.N. Madan studied the nature of kinship and family of Kashmiri Pundits. Sachchidananda carried out intensive studies among certain tribal groups of Bihar and Jharkhand. The impact of industrialization on the Santals was the focus of Martin Oran's work. A.M. Shah studied the dynamics of family and household in a village in Gujarat.

Besides contributing to empirical studies of Indian society, Indian sociologists have also arrived at important theoretical insights from their works. We noted earlier that from his Coorg study, Srinivas gave the concept of *sanskritization*. Another work of theoretical significance was of Dumont, who in his book called *Homo Hierarchicus*, discussed the basic principles and characteristics of caste system.



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He also started one of the leading journals in sociology, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. Several Indian sociologists examined in theoretical terms as the interaction of the Indian tradition with modernity e.g. the analysis is done by Yogendra Singh in his book on Modernization of Indian Tradition. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the studies dealing with the issues of ethnicity, gender, violence, development, stratification, etc. With all this, Indian sociology and anthropology have been able to make a mark at the international level.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2**

Answer the following questions:

1. In how many phases can you divide the growth of Indian sociology?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. In which year was the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal founded and by whom?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What was the contribution of Max Muller?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who wrote the book titled *Ancient Law*?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Which society did W.H.R. Rivers study?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Who studied the castes and tribes of Cochin and Mysore?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. When and where was the first department of anthropology founded?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Who started the journal, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. List the names of a couple of the communities that sociologists have studied after the independence.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Which professional society did G.S. Ghurye found in 1951?  
\_\_\_\_\_



### WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Human beings have always been interested in knowing and thinking about their society, but the subject of sociology came into existence after the French Revolution.
- Auguste Comte coined the term sociology in 1838.
- Comte proposed a scientific study of society because the knowledge thus gathered could be used for social betterment.
- Emile Durkheim and Max Weber made a major contribution to the development of sociology in France and Germany respectively.
- As a discipline, sociology has developed tremendously after the Second World War.
- In India, the development of sociology can be traced to the colonial rule.
- With the founding of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, sociological researches received a tremendous boost.
- The first full-fledged department of sociology was started in Bombay University in 1919.
- Village studies began in India after the independence especially because of the collaboration of Indian sociologists with their American counterparts.
- After independence, the number of sociology departments has increased in India and so is the increase in research projects.



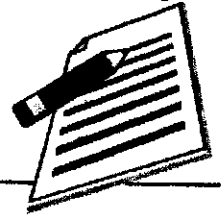
### TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Describe the contribution of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber to the development of Sociology.
2. Describe in your own words the development of sociology in India.
3. Write the major contributions of S.C. Roy.
4. What were the major contributions of sociology after India's independence?



### ANSWER TO INTXT QUESTIONS

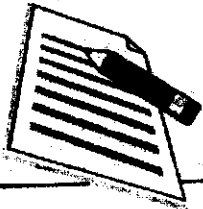
- 2.1 1. Man is a social animal.                      2. French Revolution of 1789.
3. Auguste Comte



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## MODULE - I

### Sociology-Basic Concepts



#### Notes

## Emergence and Development of Sociology

4. Where phenomena are explained in terms of scientific approach.
  5. Theological, Metaphysical, Positivism
  6. Principles of Sociology
  7. Emile Durkheim
  8. Basic Concepts in Sociology
  9. W.G. Sumner
  10. The basic idea was that conflict, competition, accommodation, etc. could be examined independently of the particular contexts in which they occur (such as schools, factories, churches, etc.)
  11. The term 'formal sociology' is used for the writings of Simmel.
  12. Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills.
- 2.2 1. Three phases- 1769-1900 foundation of sociology  
1901-1950 sociology became a profession, and  
after Independence—planned development
2. In 1774, William Jones founded the Royal Asiatic Society
  3. Translated several classical Indian texts into German, which were later translated into English.
  4. Henry Maine.
  5. A pastoral community of the Nilgiris, the Todas
  6. L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer.
  7. In 1921, a department of anthropology was established in Calcutta.
  8. Dumont.
  9. Coorgs, Santhals, Paramalai Kallar.
  10. He founded the Indian Sociological Society

## SUGGESTED READINGS

- TB Batomore : Sociology (1927)  
Alex Inkeles : What is Sociology? (1993)  
Anthony Giddens : Sociology (1993)  
D.N. Dhanagare : Themes and perspectives in Indian Sociology (1993)  
Yogendra Singh : Indian Sociology (1986)  
P. K. B. Nayar (ed.) : Sociology in India (1982)37