

2. Contribution of Western and Indian Sociologists

2.1 Introduction to Western Sociologists

2.2 Introduction to Indian Sociologists

Introduction

France is said to be the birthplace of Sociology as the foundations of Sociology were laid down by Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim in that country. The legacy of Sociology was later on continued in other countries in Europe and the western world.



Abdul Rahman Ibn-Khaldun

There is a tendency to think of sociology as a western phenomenon. However scholars were doing Sociology long ago in different parts of the world.

Abdul Rahman Ibn-Khaldun was born in Tunis in North Africa. After a very active political career and serving the Sultans of Tunis, Morocco, Spain, he returned to academics. He was committed to the scientific study of society, empirical research and the search for the causes of social phenomena. He devoted attention to various social institutions and their interrelationships. He was interested in comparing primitive and modern societies.

The development of Sociology is not restricted to the western world. Sociology has also developed in India. There are numerous sociologists in India. In this Unit we will focus on six sociologists – Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx from the west and G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and Iravati Karve from India.

Each sociologist has worked on specific areas within the broad scope of Sociology as a discipline. Many of them have developed specific concepts unique to their area of inquiry and developed theories through which they explain human social behaviour

2.1 Introduction to Western Sociologists

Auguste Comte (1798-1857)



Auguste Comte

Auguste Comte, popularly known as 'Father of Sociology' was born at Montpellier, France on 19th January, 1798.

His full name was 'Isidore Auguste Marie Francois Xavier Comte'. Right from childhood he was brilliant and won a number of awards and prizes. However, we should not forget that he was also rebellious and challenged the existing order. Basically, he was a mathematician and philosopher. At the age of 14, he expressed the need for 'reconstruction of society'.





Harriet Martineau

Harriet Martineau (1802 – 1876): was a British social theorist. Some writers honor Martineau as the first female sociologist. Martineau has many books and essays to her credit. As we all know, Auguste Comte published a book in French titled, 'Cours de Philosophie Positive' in 1839. Martineau undertook a translation that was published in two volumes in 1853, as 'The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte.' It was a significant achievement. She introduced Comte to the English-speaking world.

Martineau's reflections in 'Society in America', which was published in 1837, are important examples of her sociological methods. According to Martineau, "When one studies a society, one must focus on all its aspects which includes political, religious, and social institutions". She insisted on the need to include the lives of women in sociological studies. She was the first sociologist to study issues such as marriage, children, religious life, and race relations. She believed that comprehensive social analysis was crucial to understand women's secondary status in the society.

He formulated the Theories of 'Law of Three Stages', 'Positivism', 'Classification or Hierarchy of Sciences'. He also described Sociology with its 'static' and 'dynamic' aspects.

Comte believed that the evolution of human mind had taken place along with the evolution of the individual mind. In other words, he says that just as each individual develops from the stage of a devout believer in childhood, to a critical metaphysician in adolescence to a natural philosopher in adulthood, so also human beings and their system of thought have evolved in three major stages.

Comte's social philosophy is based on the concept of three stages of human thought. He was of the view that human knowledge passes through three stages of evolution:

- (i) Theological stage
- (ii) Metaphysical stage
- (iii) Positive/Scientific stage

(i) Theological Stage: Comte is of the view that in the first stage, ideas and views were influenced by spiritual and supernatural factors. It was believed that there was a monopoly of God over all events in the world. God is creator and controller of all things. Human beings had deep faith in God and supernatural beings. The human mind, at this level, supposed that all phenomena was produced by the immediate action of supernatural beings. For example, all natural calamities were the expressions of God's anger.

(ii) Metaphysical stage: This stage is also known as abstract stage of



thinking. In this stage, explanations based on faith in supernatural beings were replaced by those based on abstract power. This abstract power was considered responsible for guiding and controlling human and natural activities. This stage is more or less a developed stage of the first stage of thinking. Comte has characterised it as an amended and improved form of theological thinking; the conception of 'one God' is replaced here.

(iii) Positive/Scientific stage: In the words of Auguste Comte, this is an improved and scientific form of human thinking. Now, instead of imagination, we turn to observation. Reason and examination were basic planks of knowledge at this stage. Here, one seeks to establish laws which link facts and which govern social life.

Comte wanted Sociology to develop through these stages. That is why he applied the 'law of three stages' of development, in regard to knowledge, social organisation and other matters.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)



Emile Durkheim

honours and prizes for his scholarship as a young intellectual.

Emile Durkheim was born on 15th April, 1858 in the village of Epinal, France. A brilliant student in the college, he received many

Durkheim has written on social facts, social solidarity, collective representation, social values and morality, crime and punishment.

Durkheim's Theory of Suicide:

Durkheim has presented an elaborate analysis of suicide as a social fact and phenomenon in his book, 'Le Suicide'. Durkheim does not recognise suicide as being caused by personal weaknesses, psychological frustration or other personal, economic or familial factors. According to Durkheim, it is a social fact. On collecting numerous social surveys Durkheim proved that suicide is a social phenomenon.

Once there is lack of social integration or social solidarity the element of suicide begins. Even degeneration of moral values, value conflicts, negative pressure over individual can cause suicide.

Definition of Suicide

According to Durkheim, "suicide refers to every case of death which results directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act, carried out by the victim himself, knowing that it will produce this result".

Forms of Suicide

According to Durkheim, suicide has the following forms.

(i) Egoistic suicide: When a person becomes socially isolated or feels that she/he has no place in society, she/he destroys oneself. Usually those persons who are concerned with their own interests and have nothing to do with other members of society, commit



Egoistic suicide. It is committed by people who become introvert and have less desires to live in the company of others.

- (ii) **Anomic suicide:** ‘Anomie is a condition of normlessness, a moral vacuum, the suspension of rules, a state sometimes referred to as ‘de-regulation’. This type of suicide takes place in situations where one is not able to cope with circumstances which have cropped up suddenly. It is a situation which is far from the norm. Durkheim has said that once there is economic depression or extreme prosperity, anomic suicide takes place.
- (iii) **Altruistic suicide:** This is just the opposite of egoistic suicide. Here, an individual commits suicide with the object of doing well for others. This type of suicide is value-oriented. Hara-kiri committed by Japanese, or Sati committed by Indian women in the past, are examples of this type of suicide.
- (iv) **Fatalistic suicide:** When a repressive feeling is created due to extreme control of society, fatalistic suicide takes place.

In formulating the ‘Theory of Suicide’ Durkheim tries to explain how social situations, social circumstances, social factors are responsible for committing suicide and how it has become a ‘social fact’.



William Du Bois (1868 – 1963):

was an American sociologist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, writer and editor who was the most

important black protest leader in the United States during the first-half of the 20th century. During the course of his long life he authored many books. His study of race and racism is his most important contribution to Sociology.

Du Bois was the first Black man to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He articulated a cultural nationalism and encouraged the development of black literature and art and insisted that his readers must see “Beauty in Black”.

He conducted empirical research into the condition of blacks. For more than a decade he conducted approximately 2,500 in-person interviews of African-American households in Philadelphia. Based on this research he published a book titled 'The Philadelphia Negro' (1899) which is the first case study of a black community in the United States. He also extensively wrote on the extreme economic exploitation of Black workers and the division of workers on the lines of race. He also believed that blacks should develop a separate ‘group economy of producers’ and ‘consumers’ cooperatives as a weapon for fighting economic discrimination and black poverty.



Karl Marx (1818-1883)



Karl Marx

A German scholar, philosopher, economist, historian, political thinker, social scientist, journalist, lawyer and great revolutionary, Karl Marx, is also known as the architect of Communism. His

thoughts are very powerful and influential all over the world.

Capitalism is an economic system based on private property, private ownership of resources and means of production, wage labour, and competitive markets driven by profit.

Marxian Theory of 'class conflict'

The Theory of 'class conflict' is central to Marxian thought. In his 'Communist Manifesto' Marx has said that, at every stage in history, there is a war between the classes. There is antagonism and hatred between two classes, for example, capitalists and workers.

According to Marx, 'it is the economic factor that forms the basis of class'. In his philosophy he has given highest importance to class stratification. He has interpreted history in the light of class struggle.

Class in society simply means, 'economic class' which is based on the process of production and distribution of economic growth in society.

Marx's analysis of class conflict in

the capitalist society is summarized below:

- 1. The importance of property:** For Marx, the most important characteristics of any society is its form of property. Classes are determined on the basis of the individual's relations to means of production.
- 2. Polarization of classes:** The whole society breaks up more and more into two great hostile camps; two directly antagonistic classes. The tendency towards the radical polarization of classes is inherent in capitalist society.

ACTIVITY - 1

Discuss how "polarization of classes" and "class solidarity" are relevant in the present times.

- 3. Surplus value:** Capitalists accumulate profit through the exploitation of labour.
- 4. Pauperization:** The poverty of the workers' class grows with increasing exploitation of labour. According to Marx, poverty is the result of exploitation and not of scarcity.
- 5. Alienation:** Economic exploitation and inhuman conditions lead to the increasing alienation of workers. Work is no longer an expression of the worker but only a degraded instrument of livelihood. The worker becomes alienated from oneself, from the process, as well as the product.
- 6. Class solidarity and antagonism:** With the growth of class consciousness, the crystallization of social relations into two groups become streamlined.



The classes tend to become internally homogeneous and class struggle, more intensified.

7. **Revolution:** At the peak of class war a violent revolution breaks out. This destroys the structure of capitalist society.
8. **Dictatorship of proletariat:** The revolution brings about social dictatorship of the proletariat (workers). The revolution destroys the capitalist class. According to Marx, it is a transitional phase.
9. **Emergence of the communist society:** Abolition of effective private property will eliminate class and class conflict. As Marx says, the State will eventually wither away in a classless society. In this society nobody will own anything but each individual will contribute according to one's ability and receive according to one's need.

2.2 Introduction to Indian Sociologists

'Sociology' and 'Social Anthropology', both were brought to India from Britain. British scholars who lived in India and later, Indian scholars who were trained in Britain and USA played a major role in the development of these two disciplines in India when Sociology came to be recognised as an independent discipline in India. A separate Department of Sociology was started in the University of Bombay (then Bombay) under the guidance of Patrick Geddes, in the year 1919. Later on it was developed through the efforts made by pioneers of Sociology in India. They provided foundations for the study of Sociology in India. Among them were G. S. Ghurye, R. K. Mukherjee, D. P.

Mukherjee, B. N. Seal, B. K. Sarkar, M. N. Srinivas, A. R. Desai, Iravati Karve, S. C. Dube and many more.

We are going to understand the role played by G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and Iravati Karve in the development of Sociology in India, with their specific contribution.

Dr. G. S. Ghurye (1893-1983)



G. S. Ghurye

Govind Sadashiv Ghurye is known as the 'Father of Indian Sociology', because he had been engaged in building up, the entire first generation of Indian Sociologists in the post-Independence period. He formed the 'Indian Sociological Society' in 1952 and started the journal 'Sociological Bulletin.'

Ghurye's writings have enormous diversity of themes and perspectives. Ghurye's broad area of interest was the general process of evolution of culture in different civilizations in general, and in Indian civilization in particular. His seminal work on caste is widely read.

Ghurye's analysis of Indian Tribes: Ghurye's work on tribes was general as well as specific. In his work on Scheduled Tribes, he dealt with the historical, administrative and social dimensions of Indian tribes. He also wrote on specific tribes such as the Mahadev Kolis in Maharashtra.

Ghurye presented his thesis on tribes at a time when a majority of the established



anthropologists and administrators were of the opinion that a separate identity of tribes were to be maintained at any cost. The background to this was the scheduling of tribes by colonial administrators and the debate that ensued between government anthropologists, who favoured a protectionist policy, and nationalists who viewed the creation of 'Excluded' and 'Partially Excluded' areas, as yet another attempt to 'divide and rule'.

Ghurye referred to the long process of Hinduization of the tribes from different parts of India. According to Ghurye, tribal deities like Ganesh, Kali, and Shiva were getting equal space in Hinduism with Aryan deities like Indra, Vishnu and Brahma alongside, animism, totemism, naturalism for establishing synthesis between multiple cultures present in Indian society. As a result the tribes of India considered Hindu society and its cultural tradition, a new home for them. Therefore, voluntarily they assimilate themselves within the folds of Hindu society.

Many tribal leaders like Tana Bhagat, Vishnu Bhagwat, Kabir Panthi and others, successfully carried Hindu cultural attributes to tribal life. As a result, the tribes of the heartland of the country sharing Hindu values, Hinduised themselves. Ghurye's understanding of tribes and their problems largely manifest his nationalist appeal, as he considered cultural unity between tribes and caste as the only means to promote integration in Indian society.

Views of Ghurye on 'Caste in India': His book, 'Caste and Race in India' which was published in 1932 is a

classic and a significant contribution of Ghurye to Indian Sociology. It combines historical, anthropological and sociological perspectives to understand caste and kinship system in India. Ghurye studied caste system from a historical, comparative and integrative perspective. Ghurye regards endogamy as a principal feature of caste.

According to Ghurye, caste can be treated scientifically in relation to the reality of changing forces in India. Caste is one of the living issues of Indian social and political life. Dr. Ghurye's analysis of Caste system is given in detail in Unit 7.

Dr. M. N. Srinivas (1916-1999)



M. N. Srinivas

M. N. Srinivas was born on 16th November, 1916 in Mysore. After completing his early education in Mysore, he joined the Department of Sociology in the University of

Bombay and became a student of Dr. Ghurye.

His concepts of Brahminisation, Sanskritisation, Westernisation, Secularisation and Dominant caste are widely discussed even today.

Concept of 'Dominant Caste'

Indian society is based on the caste system. Large number of castes have been in existence since a long time. The mutual cooperation and harmony existed among them. However, there is interdependence as well as conflicts within the caste system. When one caste attempts to



dominate the other, or tries to exploit the lower castes, there is conflict. Castes are not equal anywhere in India.

According to Srinivas, all castes that are found in the framework of the Indian social system, are not equal in strength and their role and influence are not equal. Some of these castes are very much disorganised, while certain others are highly organised and exercise a powerful influence on other castes. It is in this context that M. N. Srinivas introduces the concept of 'Dominant Caste'.

Definition of Dominant Caste

"A caste is dominant when it preponderates numerically over the other castes, when it also wields preponderant economic and political power and when it enjoys a high ritual status in the local caste hierarchy".

He defined 'Dominant Caste' in terms of six attributes or determinants as follows:

- (1) Sizeable amount of arable land locally available.
- (2) Strength of numbers.
- (3) High place in the local hierarchy. (Ritual status)
- (4) Western education.
- (5) Enjoyment of greater economic and political power.
- (6) High occupations that people pursue in the caste.

Examples of dominant castes given by Dr. Srinivas are:

- (1) Lingayats and Okkaligas in Karnataka
- (2) Reddys and Kammas in Andhra Pradesh
- (3) Nairs and Ezhavas in Kerala

- (4) Gounder, Mudaliars Padayachi, in Tamil Nadu

ACTIVITY - 2

Read five newspaper articles related to caste issues (e.g. representation, atrocities, reservation) and share the findings with your class.

Dr. Iravati Karve (1905-1970)



Iravati Karve

Dr. Iravati Karve was born on 15th December, 1905 at Mynjan in Myanmar. She was the daughter-in-law of well-known social reformer Dhondo Keshav Karve.

Iravati Karve had published more than 80 research papers and published a number of books in English and Marathi.

She has immense contributions in Sociology and Anthropology, as well as Marathi literature.

Concept of 'Kinship Relations':

Iravati Karve has done pioneering work in her book 'Kinship Organization in India', published in 1953. In this book, she presents a microanalysis of the major kinship systems in India. The book on Kinship attempts to present a comparative picture of Kinship organisation in different parts of India. The book gives us a list of kinship terms in major Indian languages, their linguistic content, corresponding behaviour and attitudes, rules of descent and inheritance and patterns of marriage and family.

Kinship is primarily a socio-cultural



concept and subsequently it is related to factors of family, caste and language in India. The kinship system which is integrative in one linguistic group, is also present in caste and family.

She has presented kinship organisation on the basis of geographical regions - Northern, Central, Southern and Eastern; and linguistic regions like Indo-European and Dravidian. The kinship system also differs according to the geographical difference and linguistic group

differentiation.

In this chapter we have examined some of the main contributions to the emergence and development of Sociology as a distinctive discipline. You are now familiar with the contributions of European and Indian Sociologists viz; Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas and Iravati Karve.

SUMMARY

- Auguste Comte formulated the 'Law of Three Stages' - a pioneering theory in sociology.
- Durkheim described 'suicide' as a 'social fact' and elaborated four major forms of suicide.
- Karl Marx has offered a fundamental critique of capitalism and class inequality. His analysis of 'class conflict' is primarily based on 'economic factors'.
- Dr. Ghurye started an independent Department of Sociology in the University of Bombay. He is regarded as 'Father of Indian Sociology'.
- The 'Dominant caste' concept is a major contribution of Srinivas which has occupied significance in understanding the Indian social situation today.
- Iravati Karve is a pioneer of Indian Sociology who contributed to Sociology and Social Anthropology. Her concept of 'Kinship relations in India' is basically a socio-cultural concept.

EXERCISE

1. (A) Choose the correct alternative and complete the statements.

- (1) The Industrial Revolution took place in _____.
(North America, Europe, Australia)
- (2) Science is based on _____.
(beliefs, facts, guess work)

- (3) Significant work has been done on kinship organisation in India, by female sociologist _____.
(Iravati Karve, Suma Chitnis, Neera Desai)
- (4) The ____ stage of societal growth is characterised by explanations which are abstract but not God-centered. (Theological,



Metaphysical, Positive)

1. (B) Correct the incorrect pair.

- (1) (i) Abdul Rahman Ibn-Khaldun - North Africa
- (ii) Auguste Comte - France
- (iii) Harriet Martineau - England
- (iv) Karl Marx - Russia

1. (C) Identify the appropriate term from the given options.

Polarization, M. N. Srinivas,
R. N. Mukherjee

- (1) Marx argues that classes will become hostile towards each other.
- (2) The Indian sociologist who coined the term westernization.

1. (D) Correct underlined words and complete the sentence.

- (1) The stage of society where empirical evidence forms the basis for explanation is the Theological stage.
- (2) The book 'Le Suicide' was written by Hobbes.

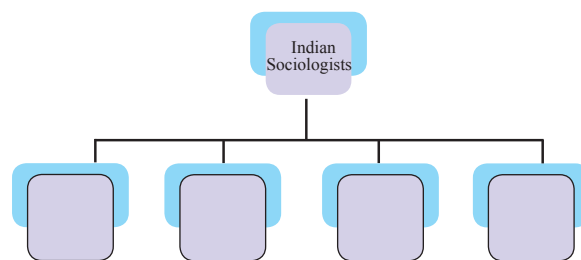
2. Write short notes.

- (1) Contribution of G. S. Ghurye to Indian Sociology
- (2) Types of suicide according to Durkheim

3. Write differences.

- (1) Theological stage and Positive stage
- (2) Anomic suicide and Altruistic suicide

4. (A) Complete the concept map.



(B) State whether the following statements are True or False with reasons.

- (1) According to Marx, capitalism gives rise to we feeling among workers.
- (2) Iravati Karve has made significant contribution to the study of Kinship in India.

5. Give your personal response.

- (1) Do you think globalization has led to polarization of classes? Discuss with relevant examples of your own.
- (2) Do you think kinship bonds are weakening? Give reasons for your response.

6. Answer the following question in detail (about 150-200 words).

You have studied about Comte's Law of Three Stages of human thought. With reference to the first and third stage, comment on the challenges it poses for Indian society.

ACTIVITY:

Prepare a Poster Exhibition or PPT (10-15 slides) on the Impact of the following on human society: (i) The contribution of sociologists (ii) Contributions of women sociologists (iii) Problem of Teen Suicide/ Farmers' Suicide in the present age and the social causes of it.

