

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCING WESTERN SOCIOLOGISTS

Points To Remember

Three revolutions paved the way for the emergence of sociology:

- the Enlightenment, or the scientific revolution
- the French Revolution; and
- the Industrial Revolution

The Enlightenment

- During the late 17th and 18th centuries, Western Europe saw the emergence of radically new ways of thinking about the world. Referred to as 'The Enlightenment', these new policies established the human being at the centre of the universe, and rational thought as the central features of the human being.
- This means that the Enlightenment was made possible by, and in turn helped to develop, attitudes of mind that we refer today as secular, scientific and humanistic.

The French Revolution

- The French Revolution (1789) announced the arrival of political sovereignty at the level of individuals as well as nation-states.
- The Declaration of Human Rights asserted the equality of all citizens and questioned the legitimacy of privileges inherited by birth.
- It signalled the emancipation of the individual from the oppressive rule of the religious and feudal institutions that dominated France before the Revolution.
- The ideas of the French Revolution - liberty, equality and fraternity - became the watchwords of the modern state.

The Industrial Revolution

- The foundations of modern industry were laid by the Industrial Revolution which began in Britain in the late 18th and early 19th century.
- It had two major aspects:
 - (i) The first was the systematic application of science and technology to industrial production.
 - (ii) Secondly, it also evolved new ways of organising labour and markets on a scale larger than anything in the past.

- Social changes due to Industrial Revolution :
- The factories set up in urban areas were manned by workers who were uprooted from the rural areas and came to the cities in search of work.
- Low wages at the factory meant that men, women and even children had to work long hours in hazardous circumstances to eke out a living.
- Modern industry enabled the urban to dominate over the rural.
- Modern forms of governance, with the state assuming control of general development created the demand for new kinds of knowledge.

Karl Marx

- Marx argued that human society had progressed through different stages. These were : primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and capitalism. He believed capitalism would give way to socialism.
- Capitalist society was marked by an ever intensifying process of alienation operating at several levels.
- But he believed that capitalism was nevertheless a necessary and progressive stage of human history because it created the preconditions for an egalitarian future free from both exploitation, and poverty.

Concept of alienation given by Karl Marx

Alienation is a process in a capitalist society by which human beings are separated and distanced from

- (a) nature;
- (b) other human beings;
- (c) their work and its products; and
- (d) their own nature or self.

Marx's conception of economy

- Marx's conception of economy was based on the notion of mode of production.
- The mode of production was being something like a building in the sense that it consisted of a foundation or base and a super structure on top of the base.
- The base is primarily economic and includes productive forces and production relations.
- A productive force refers to all the means or factors of production such as land, labour etc.
- Production relations refers to all the economic relationships and forms of labour organization which are involved in production.

Class Struggle

- As the mode of production changes, conflicts develop between different classes which result in struggles. Marx was a proponent of class struggle.

He believed that class struggle was the major driving force of change in society.

- In capitalism the bourgeoisie owned all means of production whereas, the working class lost all means of production that it owned in the past.
- For conflict to occur it is necessary for the two classes to become subjectively conscious of their class interests and identities.
- Such 'class consciousness' leads to class conflicts which can lead to the overthrow of a dominant or ruling class by the previously subordinated class - called a revolution.

Emile Durkheim

- According to Durkheim, the subject matter of sociology - the study of social fact-was different from the other sciences.
- Like most of the natural sciences it was to be an empirical discipline.
- Division of labour is the specialisation of work tasks, by means of which different occupations are combined within a production system.

'Social Solidarity' as given by Emile Durkheim:-

Mechanical Solidarity	Organic Solidarity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existed in preindustrial society • Agriculture was the main occupation and all the work was labour intensive. • Existed in small population. • Social relationships are more personal. • The society is person oriented. • Relationships between members are intimate, close and direct. • The people have common interest. • No formal code of conduct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It existed in industrial society • Many other occupations are taken up and work is done by machines. • Existing in large population. • Social relationships are more impersonal. • The society is goal oriented. • Relationships are neither intimate nor close but formal. • The people have selfish aims. • There is detailed code of conduct.

Difference between repressive and restitutive law given by Emile Durkheim:-

Repressive Law	Restitutive Law
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repressive laws are designed to repair or prevent deviation from community norms. • It was sought to punish wrong doers and enforced a sort of collective revenge for their acts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restitutive law is designed to correct the wrong that is done by a criminal act. • The primary purpose of the legal system is to restore to the individual which has been wrongfully taken away from him.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were made because the individual and the community were so tightly integrated that it was feared that any violation of code of conduct could result in disintegration of the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It stresses restitution in place of punishment.
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Bureaucracy

- It is an organisation based on the separation of public from the domestic world.
 - This means that behaviour in the public domain is regulated by explicit rules and regulations.
 - As a public institution, bureaucracy restricts the power of the officials in regard to their responsibilities and does not provide absolute power to them.
- Functioning of Officials:-** Officials have fixed areas of 'official jurisdiction' governed by rules, laws and administrative regulations.
 - Hierarchical Ordering of Positions:-** Authority and office are placed on a graded hierarchy where the higher officials supervise the lower ones.
 - Reliance on Written Document:-** The management of a bureaucratic organisation is carried out on the basis of written documents (the files) which are preserved as records.
 - Office Management:-** As office management is a specialised and modern activity it requires trained and skilled personnel to conduct operations.
 - Conduct in Office:-** Official's conduct in office is governed by exhaustive rules and regulations.

Concept of social fact as given by Emile Durkheim

- For Durkheim, society is a social fact which existed as a moral community over and above the individual.
- Social facts are the norms, rules and regulations of the society which are aspects of social reality and exert pressure on individual's behavior to conform to the norms of the groups.
- For him, moral code determines behavior pattern of an individual. He stresses on the collective representations which reflect collective morals, values, beliefs, traditions etc.
- These social facts are general throughout the society and are collectively followed by everyone.

Max Weber

- Weber was among the first to discuss the special and complex kind of 'objectivity' that the social sciences had to cultivate.

- 'Empathetic understanding' required the sociologist to faithfully record the subjective meanings without allowing his/her own personal beliefs and opinions to influence this process in any way.

Definition of Ideal Types

Weber's 'ideal type' —

- (i) is a methodological tool.
- (ii) is a logically consistent model of a social phenomenon that highlights its most significant characteristics.
- (iii) is not meant to be an exact reproduction of reality.
- (iv) exaggerate some features of phenomenon that are considered to be analytically important, and ignore or downplay others.
- (v) should correspond to reality in a broad sense, but its main job is to assist analysis by bringing out important features and connections of the social phenomenon being studied.
- (vi) helpful for analysis and understanding but for how accurate or detailed a description it can provide.

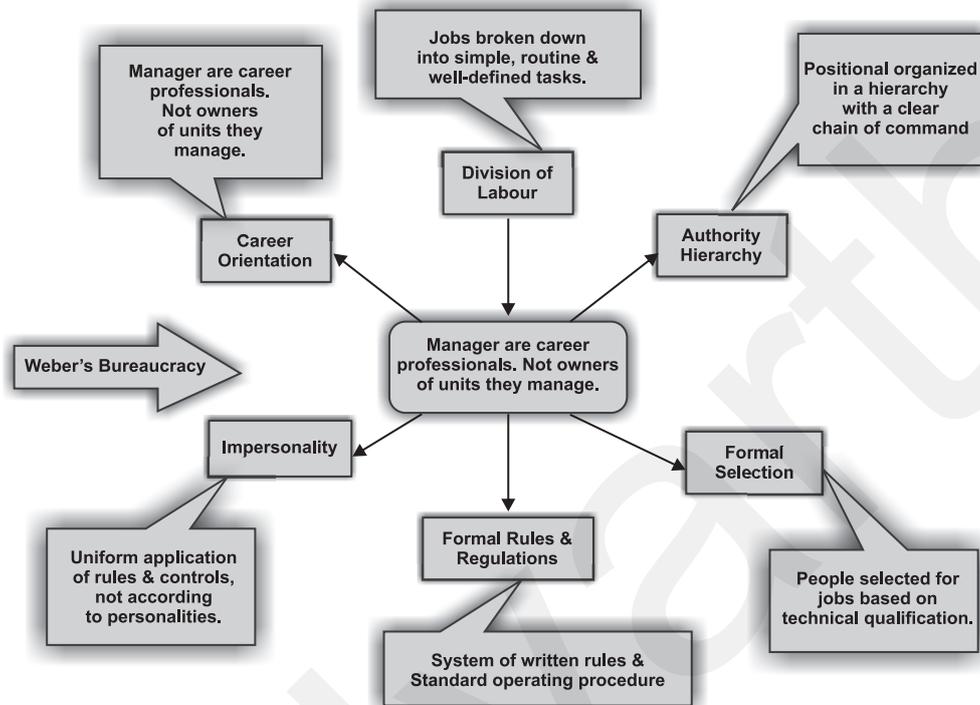
Examples —

1. The ideal type was used by Weber to analyse the relationship between the ethics of 'world religions' and the rationalisation of the social world in different civilisations. It was in this context that Weber suggested that ethics of certain Protestant sects within Christianity had a deep influence on the development of capitalism in Europe.
2. Weber again used the ideal type to illustrate the three types of authority that he defined as *traditional*, *charismatic* and *rational-legal*.

Bureaucracy

- Bureaucracy was a mode of organisation which was premised on the separation of the public from the domestic world.
- This means that behaviour in the public domain is regulated by explicit rules and regulations.
- As a public institution, bureaucracy restricts the power of the officials in regard to their responsibilities and does not provide absolute power to them.

Diagram of Bureaucracy



It is characterised by the following features:

- (i) Functioning of Officials
- (ii) Hierarchical Ordering of Positions
- (iii) Reliance on Written Document
- (iv) Office Management; and
- (v) Conduct in Office

TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1. **Alienation:** A process in capitalist society by which human beings are separated and distanced from (or made strangers to) nature, other human beings, their work and its product, and their own nature or self.
2. **Enlightenment:** A period in 18th century Europe when philosophers rejected the supremacy of religious doctrines, established reason as the means to truth, and the human being as the sole bearer of reason.
3. **Social Fact:** Aspects of social reality that are related to collective patterns of behaviour and belief, which are not created by individuals but exert pressure on them and influence their behaviour.

4. **Mode of Production:** It is a system of material production which persists over a long period of time. Each mode of production is distinguished by its means of production (eg: technology and forms of production organisation) and the relations of production (eg: slavery, serfdom, wage labour).
5. **Office:** In the context of bureaucracy a public post or position of impersonal and formal authority with specified powers and responsibilities.

2 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. Give the meaning of the word enlightenment?
2. What are the different stages society has progressed according to Karl Marx?
3. What do you understand by the term bureaucracy?
4. How is traditional authority different from charismatic authority?
5. What is social facts?
6. Name the three revolution that paved way the emergence of sociology.

4 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. Write a short note on French Revolution.
2. Describe the consequences of industrialisation in social life.
3. Explain the process of alienation.
4. Discuss Karl Marx's view point on class struggle.
5. Explain Durkheim's vision of sociology.
6. What are the characteristic of society based on mechanical solidarity?
7. 'Organic solidarity characterises modern society.' Discuss.
8. Explain Karl Marx's view on capitalism.

6 MARKS QUESTIONS

1. Briefly explain the intellectual contribution of Karl Marx in sociology.
2. Explain the characteristic features of bureaucracy.
3. Discuss Max Weber's contribution in sociology.
4. Highlight Durkheim's contribution in the field of sociology.