



**Sociology**

### **Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of Sociology**

In their book *On "Society"*, Mac Iver and Page define: "Society is a system of usages and procedures and of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controlling of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever-changing, complex system, we call society. It is a web of social relationships. And it is always changing" This definition reflects that society is a network of social relationships. An individual is related to others through the ties of kinship, marriage, neighbourhood, caste, occupation, religions, political parties, and peers (friends groups). Thus, an individual becomes part and parcel of several layer groups through these different multiple relationships. These relationships do not occur at random. Rather these are patterned. Therefore, sociologists define society as the pattern of social relationships formed through interaction of its members. Society is an abstraction (notion, idea, thought) community is a concrete entity. According to sociologists, "whenever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community." Thus, a community refers to a group of individuals living in a geographical area. They share same physical environment and the basic conditions of common living. A neighbourhood or a village are good examples of a community. An association is a group of people, who come together and get organized for fulfillment of specific goals or purpose. Sometimes limited number of goals exist behind such organizations. For example, you may have seen Mohalla Sudhar Samities, or cricket club in your neighbourhood. There are also many other such associations like voluntary associations, music club and trade unions. Sociology is the child of 19th century modernity, grew by introspecting during the 20th century and matured during 21st century. Modernity: A term designed to encapsulate the distinctiveness, complexity and dynamism of social processes unleashed during the 18th and 19th centuries which mark a distinct break from traditional ways of living. It comes from Latin word *Modos* which means "thinking new" - thinking beyond tradition, in a new manner is Modernity. 'Modernity' assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes; that the truths of utility, calculation, and science take precedence over those of the emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics; that the associations in which men live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed; that work be separated from family, residence, and community in

bureaucratic organization - Rudolph and Rudolph Modernity involves the following concepts: a belief in the possibility of human progress, rational planning to achieve objectives, a belief in the superiority of rational thought over emotions, faith in the ability of science and technology to solve human problems, a belief in the ability and rights of humans to shape their own lives, and a reliance upon manufacturing industry to improve living standards - Industrialism, Capitalism, Urbanism, Liberal democracy Modernization has been defined as the process of rational transformation of the psychological / social, economic and the political aspects of a society Dark ages = fall of Roman empire to arrival of Renaissance = 5th century AD to 15th century AD, 17th to 18th century is Enlightenment which said society is humanly created and hence can be changed, nothing is sacred, everything can be questioned - **FR - IR THE FRENCH REVOLUTION:** The French Revolution, which erupted in 1789 marked a turning point in the history of human struggle for freedom and equality. It put an end to the age of feudalism and ushered in a new order of society. Ideas like liberty, fraternity and equality, owe their origin to French Revolution. The Basic Picture of the French society: Division into Feudal Estates The structure of the feudal French society comprised the 'Three Estates'. Estates are defined as a system of stratification found in feudal European societies whereby one section or estate is distinguished from the other in terms of status, privileges and restrictions accorded to a) The First Estate - consisted of the clergy, which was stratified into higher clergy, such as the cardinal, the archbishops, the bishops and the abbots. They lived a life of luxury and gave very little attention to religion. In fact, some of them preferred the life of politics to religion. They spent much of their time in wasteful activities like drinking, gambling, etc. In comparison to the higher clergy, the lower parish priests were over worked and poverty-stricken. b) The Second Estate - consisted of the nobility. There were two kinds of nobles, the nobles of the sword and the nobles of the robe. The nobles of the sword were big landlords. They were the protectors of the people in principle but in reality they led a life of a parasite, living off the hard work of the peasants. They spent extravagantly and did not work themselves. The nobles of the robe were nobles not by birth by title. They were the magistrates and judges. Among these nobles, some were very progressive and liberal as they had moved in their positions from common citizens who belonged to the third estate. c) The Third Estate - comprised the rest of the society and included the peasants, the merchants, the artisans, and others. The peasants were overloaded with so many taxes that they lived a hand to mouth existence. The King, in order to maintain the good will of the other two estates, continued to exploit the poor. The poor peasants had no power against him. As compared to the peasants, the condition of the middle classes, also known as the bourgeoisie comprising the merchants, bankers, lawyers, manufacturers, etc. was much better. These classes too belonged to the

third estate. But the poverty of the state, which led to a price rise during 1720-1789, instead of adversely affecting them, helped them. They derived profit from this rise and the fact that French trade had improved enormously also helped the commercial classes to a great extent. This class was rich and secure. But it had no social prestige. In spite of controlling trade, industries, banking etc. the bourgeoisie had no power to influence the court or administration. The other two estates looked them down upon and the King paid very little attention to them. Thus, gaining political power became a necessity for them. The clergy and the nobility both constituted only 2% of the population but they owned about 35% of the land. The peasants who formed 80% of the population owned only 30% of the land. The first two estates paid almost no taxes to the government. The peasantry, on the other hand, paid taxes to the Church, the feudal lord in the form of income tax, poll tax, and land tax to the state. On top of it all the prices had generally risen by about 65% during the period, 1720-1789.

**The Political Aspects of the French society** The theory of the Divine Right of King was followed in France. For about 200 years the Kings of the Bourbon dynasty ruled France. Under the rule of the King, the ordinary people had no personal rights. They only served the King and his nobles in various capacities. The King's word was law and no trials were required to arrest a person on the King's orders. Laws too were different in different regions giving rise to confusion and arbitrariness. There was no distinction between the income of the state and the income of the King.

**The Economic Aspects of the French society** The kings of France, from Louis XIV onwards, fought costly wars, which ruined the country, and when Louis XIV died in 1715, France had become bankrupt. Louis XV instead of recovering from this ruin kept on borrowing money from bankers. His famous sentence, "After me the deluge" describes the kind of financial crisis that France was facing. Louis XVI, a very weak and ineffective king, inherited the ruin of a bankrupt government. His wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, known for her expensive habits, is famous for her reply, which she gave to the poor, hungry people of France who came to her asking for bread. She told the people that, 'if you don't have bread, eat cake'.

**Important Events** i) In 1778 the King, Louis XVI, was forced to impose a tax on everyone irrespective of his or her social status. This imposition of tax led the rich nobles and the clergy to demand a meeting of the Estate-General, which they felt, was the only body, which could levy tax. The Estate-General met on May 5, 1789, but in this meeting, unlike the earlier practice, the representatives of the third estate wanted all the estates to meet and vote as one assembly. But the first two estates did not agree to this. The refusal of the first two Estates to meet with the third Estate as a single body led to the formation of the National Assembly. The meeting of the National Assembly led by middle class leaders and some liberal minded nobles was met with stiff resistance. On 20th June 1789 when a meeting was to be held in the Hall at Versailles near Paris, the members found that it was closed and guarded by the King's men. Therefore, the National Assembly

members led by their leader Bailey went to the next building which was an indoor tennis court. It was here that they took an Oath to draw a new constitution for France. This Oath, which marks the beginning of the French Revolution, is popularly known as the Oath of the Tennis Court. ii) On July 14th, 1789 took place the storming of the Bastille, an ancient royal prison that stood as a symbol of oppression. On this date the mobs of Paris, led by some middle class leaders, broke open this prison and set its inmates free. The causes for this event were the shortage of food, on the one hand, and the dismissal of a very popular minister called Necker, on the other. The mobs of Paris rebelled against the ruling class, especially the King. iii) Declaration of Rights of Man by the Constituent Assembly, (1789-1791), comprising the members of the third estate and some liberal minded members of the other two estates, guaranteed freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom from arbitrary punishments. It abolished the special rights and privileges of the clergy and the nobility. The King was no longer to rule by Divine Right and several important social and economic changes were brought about. According to this declaration 'all men were born and remain equal before law'. They have a right to choose their government and to resist oppression. Personal liberty becomes a right given to all individuals. Thus, the ideas of liberty and equality put an end to the age of serfdom, despotism and hereditary privileges found in the old feudal society. iv) In 1791 the king tried to escape but was recognized at the frontier and brought back. Since then he became a virtual prisoner. v) In Paris, the new Legislative Assembly (1791-1792) was formed. It comprised two very radical groups, namely the Girondin and the Jacobin. These groups considered the king a traitor and were in favour of establishing a Republic. vi) The King, Louis XVI, was beheaded in public on 21st January 1793 after being proved guilty of treason. The Queen was also beheaded later in the same year. France was declared a Republic. vii) A period referred to as "Reign of Terror" took place in France when several of the nobles, priests, some of the revolutionaries themselves were guillotined i.e. beheaded. This period lasted for three years. viii) Establishment of the Directorate took place in 1795. It lasted for four years till a young artillery officer from Corsica, a neighbouring island, overthrew the Directorate in 1799. He was Napoleon Bonaparte. He made himself the new Director and provided a much sought after stable government to the people of France. Thus the French Revolution ended with the overthrow of the Directorate by Napoleon. French Revolution changed the political structure of European society and replaced the age of feudalism by heralding the arrival of democracy. There were many significant themes, which arose due to the impact of this Revolution, which have been the focus of interest of the early sociologists. These included the transformation of property, the social disorder caused by the change in the political structure and its impact on the economic structure. A new class of power holders emerged - the bourgeoisie. It is also possible that by questioning modernity, there can be revivalism of tradition.

DR Tumpa Kumari, Assistant Prof. YBN University, Ranchi

Jacob Viener - Mercantilist theory - optimum utilization of resources - export finished goods and not raw material - avoid import, and import only when can be offset by export to the same country - state should go for preferential trade policy and monopolistic trade practices - if one country is making money, another is bound to be exploited - criticized by Laissez Faire theory and Adam Smith - said develop absolute advantage in some areas and depend on imports for rest Ricardo - comparative advantage theory against Smith - minimize opportunity cost Jeremy Bentham - materialistic and spiritual pleasure Nietzsche - sceptic - the other name of modern life is "perpetual loneliness". Man is born as a social being but modernity is converting him into an isolated individual. To adjust to loneliness, we take aid of technology, but it can't replace human relationship. However, we can't go back to traditional life and we have to stay in this modernity, lost, without hope and happiness USA - social system did not change after independence, like it did with FR Traditionalism vs Modernity: Spiritualism -> Utilitarianism Undeserved egoism -> truly deserved egoism Coercive nationalism -> voluntary nationalism Collective identity -> individualistic identity Class controlled public sphere -> mass participative public sphere