

## Development-a Sociological Perspective



## Education

**KEYWORDS :** Economic, Social ,Human development Social dynamics, Social evolution

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### ABSTRACT

*Development is a function of society's capacity to organize human energies and productive resources to respond to opportunities and challenges. Scholars often trace the emergence of higher, more complex, more productive levels of social organization through the stages of nomadic hunting, rural agrarian, urban, commercial, industrial and post industrial societies. And in the process try to examine ways by which new activities were introduced by pioneers, imitated, resisted, accepted, organized, institutionalized and assimilated into a culture. The evolution of social institutions acts as a powerful stimulus for development by increasing the frequency, intensity and efficiency of social interactions. This evolution has moved through three successive but overlapping stages of development-physical, vital and mental.*

*Summary of the paper One of the early concerns of anthropologists and sociologists was to examine the development and progress of human society from evolutionary perspective. The grand ideas of Morgan, Comte, Spencer, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and many others are still considered for examining the journey of human society through various stages of development and progress. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the philosophy of history, which helped formulate the general ideas of progress, became very important especially through the writings of Hegel and Saint-Simon who, later on, left their imprint on the work of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx and others.*

Human society has made a ceaseless journey from the stages of savagery to barbarism, from barbarism to civilization, from theological to metaphysical, from metaphysical to positive scientific, from simple to doubly compound, from doubly compound to trebly compound, from homogeneous to heterogeneous, from underdeveloped to developed, from ancient to feudal, from feudal to capitalist, from traditional pre industrial (mechanical solidarity), to industrial (organic solidarity) from pre-rational/pre capitalist to rational capitalist, from primitive to intermediate, from intermediate to modern, agrarian to industrial, rural to urban and so on.

One of the early concerns of anthropologists and sociologists was to examine the development and progress of human society from evolutionary perspective. The grand ideas of Morgan, Comte, Spencer, Marx, Durkheim, Weber and many others are still considered for examining the journey of human society through various stages of development and progress. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the philosophy of history, which helped formulate the general ideas of progress, became very important especially through the writings of Hegel and Saint-Simon who, later on, left their imprint on the work of Auguste Comte, Karl Marx and others. Here, we will try to understand the perspective of various sociologists regarding development:

#### **AUGUSTE COMTE:**

Auguste Comte, the founding father of sociology gave a universal scope and a deeper meaning to the idea of progress when he expounded the law of three stages of human evolution. To him, the human mind passes through three stages of progression – theological, metaphysical and positive. In the theological stage human beings explain phenomena by ascribing them to beings or forces comparable to humans themselves. In the metaphysical stage human beings explain phenomenon in terms of nature; in the positive scientific stage man examines the phenomena and their linkages are examined in terms of reasoning.

When Auguste Comte defined sociology as the science of order and progress, and divided it into social statics (order) and social dynamics (progress), he was in fact inferring that progress was possible through order. He tried to understand social changes that occurred in the early years of industrial revolution as an evolutionary process. The theory of evolution explains that societies pass through a number of stages starting from a simple form and becoming more complex as the process of evolution progresses. In the same way, Auguste Comte put forward the idea of evolutionary change and also related the idea of progressive

change to the development of intellect, in particular the development of scientific thought. This law of three stages postulates that intellectual progress is accompanied by moral development with a number of changes in social institutions as well. Comte considered material as well as moral progress to be essential types of progress and social change as a product of internal forces.

#### **MORGAN:**

Morgan was the first person to bring forth the definite order of human society systematically. He identified three main epochs through which human society progressed. These are savagery, barbarism and civilization. He subdivided savagery and barbarism again into lower, middle and upper orders according to the progress made in the production of the means of subsistence. To him, "Upon their skill in this direction the whole question of human supremacy on the earth depended. Mankind are the only beings that maybe said to have gained an absolute control over the production of food. The great epochs of human progress have been identified more or less directly with the enlargement of the sources of subsistence."

#### **KARL MARX:**

Marx presents an interpretation of the structure, functioning and progression of the capitalist society from the previous stages. Marx however provides the idea of radical transformation of society by elucidating a comprehensive theory of human progress in terms of contradiction inherent in the material structure of society. To him the actual basis of society is its economic structure. Marx outlines the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the capitalist as the major modes of production or epochs in the progress of human society. The Asiatic mode of production does not constitute a stage in the western society. Primitive communities are characterized by community ownership and their subordination by the State. In the ancient mode of production, slavery and in the feudal mode of production, serfdom provides the foundation of the productive system. The Capitalist mode of production is characterized by large scale commodity production, emergence of free labour markets and rapid growth of technology. Marx forecasts that capitalism would be replaced by socialism through violent revolution.

#### **HERBERT SPENCER:**

Herbert Spencer believed in progress and in the unity and irreversibility of historical development. The law of Progressive Development of society was his central concern. Spencer was highly influenced by Charles Darwin's work *The Origin of Species*

(1859).

Spencer propagated that all through the ages there had been social evolution from a simple, uniform or homogeneous structure to a complex multifold or heterogeneous one. Thus he drew an analogy between the living organism and human society in explaining their progresses through evolutionary processes. To him in the process of evolution, societies march from simple to various levels of compound on the basis of their composition. The aggregate of some simple societies give rise to doubly compound societies. The aggregate of doubly compound societies gives rise to trebly compound societies. Simple societies, according to Spencer, consist of families unified into clans, doubly compound societies consist of clans unified into tribes; and trebly compound societies have tribes bought together forming nations or states.

#### **DURKHEIM:**

Durkheim also conceived society in terms of an evolutionary scheme. He talked about social solidarity by which he meant the moral beliefs and ideas, which defined the common sense underlying social life. Like a social evolutionist, he was of the view that mechanical solidarity was based on agreement and identity between people, while organic solidarity in industrial societies was derived from agreement to tolerate a range of differences, conflicts being moderated through a variety of institutional arrangements such as courts, trade unions and political parties. Durkheim tried to explain social change as the result of changes in the bonds of morality, which he called social solidarity. Societies based on mechanical solidarity are transferred to organic solidarity by the growth of industrialization, heterogeneity, differentiation, specialization of activity and individualism. The problem of the growth of population, shrinking of natural resources and growing individualism, according to him, is resolved by division of labour in the industrial society, i.e. in the organic solidarity. As each individual is specialized and also individualism is respected they are socially integrated with bondage of division of labour. Indeed division of labour in the organic solidarity ensures the integration of individual specialization in the system.

#### **MAX WEBER:**

Weber has examined the question of development of human society in the context of his study on capitalism. He pointed out that capitalism, as a symbol of progress, emerged out of rationalization of work ethics, savings, frugal life, style beliefs, values and attitudes. Weber pointed out that capitalist industrialization emerged in selected countries of Western Europe and not in other places because Calvinist Protestants of these countries developed a lifestyle of this worldly asceticism by way of rationalizing their thoughts, religious beliefs and values to reduce consumption and to promote investment in industry with a view to glorifying the world as desired by god. Turning to India, Max Weber pointed out that the predominance of traditional values of Hindustan in terms of Dharma, Karma, Moksha and Sansar, traditional caste values etc. were the major hindrance to the de-

velopment of rational capitalism in India. So we can say Weber observed the development of human society from traditional pre-industrial to rational capitalist which was mediated by a process of rationalization of religious beliefs.

#### **David McClelland:**

Like Max Weber, emphasized those internal factors like the values and motives of the persons to provide opportunities to shape their own destiny. Therefore, the problems of backwardness, poverty, malnutrition, etc. are vitally linked to traditional and non-traditional thought. He was of the view that educational programmes and technical aid aimed at increasing the 'need for achievement' of the people of backward areas are needed to solve these problems. McClelland concluded that modernization and development can be achieved through a process of diffusion of culture, ideas and technology

#### **L.T.Hobhouse:**

Hobhouse was strongly influenced by both Comte and Spencer. Following Comte 'he propounded that the development of the human mind was the crucial factor in social development.' While from Spencer he took the viewpoint of social evolution or development as a process of increase in scale, complexity and internal differentiation. Hobhouse highlights that the development of the mind brings about social development and 'since this mental development includes a development of moral ideas towards the ideal of a rational ethic, which transforms the major social institutions, it can be regarded as progressive'(Bottomore 1962: 293)

#### **Talcott Parsons :**

Parsons has used an evolutionary perspective to explain the development of human society through several stages. He introduced the concept of evolutionary universals to mean that despite historical specificities there are some general directions of evolution through each social system evolves. He also emphasized on a historical and comparative analysis of major types of evolutionary stages of the social system across the globe ranging from primitive to the modern industrial society. Parsons analysed the following types of evolutionary societies: Primitive, intermediate and modern.

Modern societies are a unique contribution of the West to humanity, which evolved because of the industrial revolution, democratic revolution led by French revolution and educational revolution. The industrial revolution brought about radical changes in the production process with the help of advanced technology and science. The French revolution brought forth the ideas of equality, fraternity and justice paving the way for democratic governance and achieved social status. Education initiated the process of secularization and universalisation of liberal thought. The main feature of modern society, according to Parsons are: the growth of universalistic law, evolution of the modern institution of money and banking, rational bureaucracy and growth of democratic society.

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