

B. A. SOCIOLOGY (HONS)
BAHS- 302, SEMESTER 3
SOCIAL CHANGE AND
SOCIAL CONTROL

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- ▶ Any alteration, difference or modification that takes place in a situation or in an object through time can be called change. The term 'social change' is used to indicate the changes that take place in human interactions and interrelations. Society is a web of relationships and social change means a change in the system of social relationships, social processes and social organization and structure.
- ▶ Definitions –
- ▶ Maclver and Page-“Social change refers to “a process” responsive to many types of changes; to change in the man made condition of life; to changes in the attitudes and beliefs of men, and to the changes that go beyond the human control to the biological and the physical nature of things.”
- ▶ Kingsley Davis- “By social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society.”
- ▶ H. T. Majumdar –“ Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, ether modifying or replacing the old in the life of a people or in the operation of society.”

UNIT 1 – SOCIAL CHANGE – CONCEPT, MEANING AND NATURE

- ▶ **Social change is continuous:** Does not stop, it is endless changes. From the beginning of history down to this day.
- ▶ **Social change is temporal:** Change happens through time. Innovation of new things, modification and renovation of the existing behavior and the discarding of the old behavior patterns take time.
- ▶ **Social change is environmental:** It takes place within a geographic or physical and cultural context. Never takes place in vacuum.
- ▶ **Social change is human change:** It involves the human aspect. People affect change and are themselves affected by it.
- ▶ **Social change may be planned or unplanned:** Plans and programmes of men determines the rate and direction of change. Unplanned changes refer to natural calamities, pandemic etc.
- ▶ **Short versus long-run changes:** Some social changes may bring about immediate results
- ▶ while some others may take years and decades to produce results.
- ▶ **Pace of change:** Where change is resisted it is slow, while fast when it is accepted by society.
- ▶ **Social change involves rate and direction of change:** Direction is inevitable. Direction maybe determined ideally, regarded as progress. Rate of change varies from time to time and society to society.
- ▶ **Social change creates chain reaction:** Change in one aspect of life may lead to a series of change in other aspects.

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

- ▶ Social change is seen to be a neutral concept. The two other terms that have often been allied with this concept are 'evolution' and 'progress'.
- ▶ Evolution comes from the Latin word 'evoluere', which means to develop or unfold. Indicates change from within. It is spontaneous and a continuous change. This concept was applied to the internal growth of an organism.
- ▶ Concept of evolution comes from Zoology, Charles Darwin's 'Origin of Species' Darwin argued that evolutionary changes were based only on naturally occurring processes – processes that are still occurring around us now.
- ▶ Evolution expresses continuity and direction of change. It means more than growth. 'Growth' implies a direction of change but essentially in size or quality. Evolution involves something more intrinsic, a change not only in size but also of structure.
- ▶ Herbert Spencer applied the principle of evolution to the social world and called it social evolution. This explained the evolution of human society and evolution of social relations.
- ▶ According to Spencer, evolution is a change from a state of homogeneity to heterogeneity, from simple to complex.

TYPES OF SOCIAL CHANGE - EVOLUTION

- ▶ The concept of development is multi-dimensional in nature. It is viewed in both restricted and comprehensive ways. In a restricted sense, it may refer only to economic changes. In a broad sense, development implies a relatively stable increase in real national income that is accompanied by a change in the attitudes of the people, their motivation, institutional set up, production techniques, etc. Thus, development has both economic and non-economic dimensions, and these two are interlinked.
- ▶ Economic development influences non-economic spheres in the life of people. Similarly, non-economic factors promote or hinder economic development.
- ▶ The concept of development is associated with other concepts such as growth and modernization. Its historical roots lie in the period of major changes connected with the industrial revolution when industrial and social change in Europe became synonymous with social progress.
- ▶ After the end of the Second World War the dominant view of development was that of modernization of the ex-colonial countries through adopting institutions, ideas and practices of the developed countries such as modern science and technology, democratic political institution, capital and expertise etc.
- ▶ This involved a one-way process of import of ideas, technology, capital, skills and such resources from the developed countries to the backward ones. But this view has been severely criticized by the underdevelopment theorists.
- ▶ Another view holds that what is underway is the process of 'dependent development' of a section of the people in the developing countries as a result of their close linkages with the developed ones

DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Different people may look on the same social changes and to some they may spell progress but to others decadence.
- ▶ Progress has a different significance for different individuals, for different times and for different social groups. To the 18th century thinkers it meant emancipation from the bonds of tradition while to the 19th century America it meant the triumphant expansion of society and exploitation of resources.
- ▶ Some define it as consisting of changes in the social structure which release, stimulate, facilitate and integrate human functioning.
- ▶ **According to Ogburn progress is a movement towards a goal for the foreseeable future that is thought to be desirable by the general public.**
- ▶ Attributes of Progress:
 - ▶ 1. Presupposes the presence of change
 - ▶ 2. Change towards some desired goal considered beneficial to human welfare
 - ▶ 3. Sociologically, progress means the welfare of the entire group and not just an individual
 - ▶ 4. Progress is defined in terms of values
 - ▶ 5. Cannot be measured as the idea of progress is subjective and can have diverse interpretations
- ▶ **According to Haridas T and Majumdar, the idea of social progress includes the following points: (1) Enhancement of dignity of man, (2) Respect for each human personality, (3) Ever increasing freedom for spiritual quest and for investigation of truth (4) Freedom for creativity and aesthetic enjoyment, (5) Promotion of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness with justice and equality to all.**

PROGRESS

- ▶ Social revolutions are **sudden changes in the structure and nature of society**. They transform society, economy, culture, philosophy, and technology along with but more than just the political systems.
- ▶ May involve a sudden change from the current ruling power structure into a new structure that transforms the social, political institutions and entire systems. Revolution fundamentally changes an entire system while reform changes parts of the system and not the entire system.
- ▶ Two common causes for social revolution are class conflict and inequality.
- ▶ Class conflict represents a power struggle between opposing groups from different socio economic classes over control of society and its resources. Tension grows into a conflict between the haves and the have nots.
- ▶ Inequality is symptomatic of class struggle but inequality also reflects inequality in power. For eg. Being governed by colonial powers and lacking freedom raises tension and may lead to an establishment of a new social order.
- ▶ The American revolution of the late 1700s saw the American colonies claiming independence and natural rights to rise against the British empire and monarchy.
- ▶ The French revolution overthrew France's King Louis XVI and his system of government that unfairly taxed the citizens to fund the king's lavish life style. Class conflict and inequality caused the French revolution. Ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity inspired the rebolution.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION