Module - I

1A

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM AND CONFLICT THEORIES

Unit Structure

1A.0 OBJECTIVE

To understand the concept of functionalism; the contributions of various functionalists; the causal factors of social change; the rate of social change; the impact of social change on human society; and social change and the future after completing this Unit.

1A.1 INTRODUCTION

Functionalism is a perspective in which sociology and social anthropology theories have explained social institutions or other social phenomena primarily in terms of their functions. When we talk about the consequences of some social institutions, social activities, or social phenomena on the operation of other institutions, activities, or society as a whole, we're talking about things like the consequences of a crime punishment or a reward for a rare scientific discovery. In the nineteenth century, some social thinkers used an 'organic analogy' to explain society. This analogy concept comes from biology, as there is a biological organism that is analogous to it. A society can be viewed as a complicated organism made up of multiple separate and interdependent organs. Its origins can be traced back to early-nineteenth-century organicism. Herbert

Spencer was one of the pioneers of the concept of 'organic analogy.' Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, was another important proponent who clearly theorised the functions of social institutions.

B. Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, for example, were early twentieth-century British social anthropologists who championed the idea of studying social life in terms of social functions. The idea of structural-functionalism or structural functional perspective, which is related to social structure, dominated the sociology scene in various parts of the world. Two prominent sociologists, Talcott Parsons and R.K. Merton, conducted some evaluation in American sociology in light of contemporary social processes.

In addition to others who have not been as well recognized, the contributions of these two American sociologists are considered path breaking in the functional perspective. Neo-functionalism is a more recent approach to societal theory, retaining some of the founders' basic ideas. It identifies the flaws in existing notions of functionalism and proposes improvements to earlier fundamental considerations of functionalism.

1A.2 FUNCTIONALIST FOUNDERS

1A.2.1 Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) is an Englishman was a British sociologist who is regarded as a continuation of Auguste Comte's philosophical and evolutionary perspective by certain sociologists. However, he does not share Comte's general outlook. "Comte endeavoured to give a coherent account of the 'development of human conceptions,' whereas my purpose is to give a coherent account of the history of the external world...to describe the necessary and actual, filiation of things... to interpret the genesis of events that comprised nature," he claims (Coser 1996). Spencer categorises organic and social aggregates based on their size progression. Social aggregates, like organic aggregates, go from relatively undifferentiated stages in which parts resemble one another to differentiated states in which parts differ... once parts diverge, they become mutually dependent on one another (ibid). As a result, as differentiation increases, so does interdependence, and thus integration. His essential consideration of pieces with progressive differentiation becoming interdependent and this working for or resulting in integration indicate the genesis of “structural-functional” theorising of society as an organism, a living whole. On the basis of such writings it is said that the notion of social function had been formulated in the nineteenth century most explicitly by Hebert Spencer. He provided this analysis of social structure and function in his well-known book Principles of Sociology. This is where sociologists first began to theorise social function (Bottomore 1975). Other sociologists and social anthropologists afterwards took it up methodically, thoroughly, and explicitly in the late nineteenth century and early-mid twentieth century. The following are Herbert Spencer's main ideas on functionalism:

1) Society is a collection of interconnected systems. It is a connected and interdependent whole.
2) This system can only be comprehended in terms of the operation of distinct structures, each of which serves a purpose in the maintenance of the social whole.
3) The systems have needs that must be satisfied if the systems have to survive (i.e. continuity of society). As a result, determining the function of a structure requires an understanding of the needs it fulfills.

Though Herbert Spencer is credited with explicitly formulating the tenets, At first, his theories on functional demands and other aspects of the social system, to which he compared a social organism to a biological organism and analysed its evolution, were controversial.

As a result, he is classified as an evolutionary rather than a functionalist. "The Study of Sociology " and "Principles of Sociology" are two of his most well-known books among sociologists, among his many publications during his lifetime. He was admired by radical thinkers like John Stuart Mill, Aldous Huxley, and others.

1A.2.2 Emile Durkheim

Emile Durkheim was a philosopher who lived in the nineteenth century. Durkheim, David Emile (1858-1917), was a French sociologist who is widely regarded as the founder of both French sociology and sociology as a distinct discipline. He devised a methodological framework that combined empirical research and sociological theory. His research centred on the evolution and functioning of traditional and modern societies. Four of his publications, The Division of Labour in Society, The Rules of Sociological Method, Le Suicide, and Elementary Forms of Religious Life, are regarded as the most valuable by sociologists all over the world. Emile Durkheim defined sociology and its methodology. He selectively borrowed some ideas from Herbert Spencer's contributions. He made a significant contribution to the development of the concept of (social) functions and established functionalism as a coherent, transparent, and justifiable theory. He codified the concept of function in his seminal work, "The Division of Labor in Society," in which he examined the division of labor's functions in society (or for the society as a whole).

Let's take a look at how he defines functions first. In his book 'Division of Labor in Society,' he starts with a simple definition of function. 'The function of a social institution, according to him, is the congruence between it (the institution) and the needs of the social organism' (this analogy of social organism is derived from Spencer).

That is, a social institution meets a societal need. So, what is society's most pressing requirement? In this study, he tackles this topic. According to him, the maintenance of social solidarity is a critical or fundamental need of society (in other words, integration of society). He asks, "What is the function of division of labour in society?" when

studying it as a social institution. He discusses this issue in terms of the society's most pressing need. Social solidarity, according to Durkheim, is a critical requirement of society. The division of labour in Industrial Society (as it was in late-nineteenth-century Western Europe) is the bedrock of this social solidarity. In comparison to simpler societies, these are rapidly differentiating societies. Durkheim views solidarity as a necessary condition for society's survival, arguing that without it, the community will disintegrate and may cease to exist.

He studies the causes and functions of religion in his later work (last book), "The Elementary Forms of Religious Life." Durkheim argues that religion is one of the great sources for regulating the society, thus fulfilling the function of maintaining solidarity. Religion brings individuals together around a shared set of beliefs (collective consciousness), which then governs the collective's activities. He believes that if the basic need for social solidarity is not addressed, pathological (abnormal) forms such as 'anomie' are prone to arise. This viewpoint sets sociology apart from other social sciences. In sociology, he is credited as the father of functional perspective or theory. However, some social philosophers believe that his functionalism is based on evolutionary theory, which appears to be true to a degree. But he deserves credit for establishing sociology as a distinct discipline with its own subject matter and methodology. Similarly, he is credited with establishing the functional perspective as Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) was a British social anthropologist noted for his functionalism theory. Emile Durkheim, C.G. Seligman, and E. Westermarck are said to have had a significant academic effect on him. Many social anthropologists were impressed by him, and under his influence, they focused on the precise and meticulous description of actual behaviour in specific communities. His functional method placed a strong emphasis on field work, which included precise observation and documentation of social behaviour. He investigated the Trobriand Islanders using a method he developed called "participant observation." His fieldwork on the Trobriand Islanders resulted in his book, 'Argonauts in the Western Pacific.' With the release of this famous book, he became a well-known anthropologist around the world. He came out firmly against the Evolutionary Theory and the Comparative Method of older sociologists and anthropologists, and his distinctive functionalism, based on this precise and meticulous depiction of Trobriand civilization. In a subsequent essay, 'A Scientific Theory of Culture,' he provided the conceptual formulation of functional approach. He maintained that "every " cultural artefact contributes to the preservation of the culture as a whole, and thus fulfils some of the culture's needs. He goes on to say that "every cultural artefact serves an important purpose." Malinowski utilised the concept of function to imply that society (culture) can be thought of as a collection of interconnected elements (what he calls "cultural objects") that work together to meet various social demands. Malinowski's functionalism introduced two new concepts: I the concept of system levels, and (ii) the concept of various systems demands at each level. There are three system levels, according to him: biological, social, structural, and symbolic.

Malinowski places a strong focus on studying culture as a whole (or whole), with all of its functions and patterns. He investigated, described, and analysed why and how culture works, as well as how diverse aspects of culture are connected to form a larger cultural pattern. Functionalism, in his opinion, tries to explain the roles that institutions perform within the larger cultural whole. Institutions exist to meet the needs of individuals as well as society as a whole. Every facet (element) of culture has a role, according to Malinowski, and they are all interdependent and interrelated. As a result, a functional unity can be observed among them in the maintenance of human existence.

The main premise of Malinowski's thesis is that every feature of culture serves a purpose, i.e. it satisfies a need. He divides needs into three categories: primary, institutional, and integrative. The biological demands of sex, food, and shelter are the most basic. Institutional needs refer to the institutions (economic, legal, and so on) that aid in the fulfilment of primary needs. Integrative needs, such as religion, are those that assist society retain coherence. Some sociologists believe Malinowski's functionalism was individualistic in nature because it focused on people' basic biological needs. Others have referred to his functional approach as "pure functionalism." His functional approach is also believed to have included a strong affirmation of every society's functional integration.

1A.2.3 Radcliffe-Brown, A.R.

Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) was a British social anthropologist whose functionalism (structural-functionalism) differed from Malinowski's. Emile Durkheim's functionalism is said to have had a big influence on him. He explains how functionalism can solve some of the challenges of organic analogizing. "The concept of function is founded on a parallel between social life and organic life," he acknowledges. He believes that functionalism's major flaw was the tendency for analysis to appear teleological. Using Durkheim's definition of function as "the way in which a part (a social institution) satisfies a system's needs," Radcliffe-Brown argued that the term "needs" should be replaced with "necessary conditions of existence." It was his attempt to escape functionalism's teleological consequences. As a result, he replaces Durkheim's phrase "needs" with "essential conditions of life." For him, the question is which conditions are required for survival, which is an empirical issue. For each social system, it would have to be discovered. He believes that different systems require a variety of conditions in order to survive. He avoids asserting that every cultural item (as defined by Malinowski) must serve a purpose and that products from different cultures must serve the same purpose.

Radcliffe-Brown believes that structural functional analysis, rather than a single functional analysis, includes five key assumptions — (1) One of the conditions for a society's survival is that its parts are minimally integrated; (2) the term function refers to the processes that maintain this necessary integration or solidarity; (3) structural features can thus be

shown to contribute to the maintenance of the necessary solidarity in each society. According to Radcliffe-Brown, the social structure and the conditions required for its persistence are irreducible in this approach.

Radcliffe-Brown, like Durkheim, understood society as a reality in and of itself throughout this research and understanding. As a result, he used to think of cultural objects like family rules and religious rites as being explicable in terms of social structure, notably the need for solidarity and integration. Radcliffe-Brown assumes that the system must have some level of solidarity. He looked into lineage systems and how they affected the preservation of this bond. He examines the purpose of weeping and dance rites in his study 'The Andaman Islanders.' These rites, which are repeated, adjudicate issues and thereby re-establish the system's (community's) cohesiveness (which had previously fallen apart owing to minor conflicts). 'Functional unity (integration or solidarity) of a social system is, of course, a theory,' says Radcliffe-Brown. Finally, he considers function to be the contribution made by a partial activity to the overall activity (as a whole) of which it is a part. All partial activities (parts) contribute to the maintenance of the whole and create a sense of unity, which is referred to as the organism's social unity. Although he is regarded as a functionalist, his functionalist viewpoint is limited to structure. 'Structure and Function in Primitive Society,' his well-known work, contains his specialised essays on the concept of function.

Check Your Progress

1. Mention the founders of Functionalism .

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2. What is an organic analogy ?

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SUBSEQUENT FUNCTIONALISTS

Talcott Parsons is a character in the film Talcott Parsons

Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) was an influential American sociologist who is widely regarded as the twentieth century's most influential theory. Early functional analysis, particularly the concept of a social system as a collection of interconnected elements, was included into Parsons' functionalism in an attempt to incorporate the suggestiveness of early functional analysis. Current types of functional theorising have attempted to address the analytical issues of teleology and tautology, which Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown failed to address. This modern

functionalism of Parsons and others supplied early sociological theorising with a unified conceptual framework by inheriting 19th century organicism and leveraging conceptually the unity of perceiving system elements as having consequences for the operation of the systematic whole.

From the 1950s to the 1970s, Parsonian functionalism was unmistakably a main point of critical debate. Even now, Parsonian functionalism is a source of significant debate. His primary work, 'The Structure of Social Action,' was released in 1937, and his theories reigned for the next four decades. His main concept was based on a series of the performers' actions. An actor is directed towards obtaining goals (social goals, including individual goals) through functioning in situational situations by following specific norms, values, and other ideas (as provided in the system). Action systems emerge as a result of this. The important word in his functional analysis is system' of social action or social system.' Statuses, roles, and conventions make up the social system. Actors are oriented to situations in terms of reasons, according to him (needs). There are three sorts of motives (or needs): cognitive (need for information or knowledge), cathetic (need for emotional attachment), and evaluative (need for evaluation). Parsons also introduces the concept of functional prerequisites.

He sees integration (inside and across action systems) as a basic survival requirement (i.e., a need of the social system, or, in simpler terms, a need of society), following Durkheim and Radcliffe-lead. He is interested in the integration of the social system as a whole, as well as the integration of the social system with the cultural system on the one hand and the social system with the personality system on the other. In his analysis, these three systems, namely the Social System, Cultural System, and Personality System, are critical. His conceptual framework emphasises the interconnectivity of social processes in a systematic way. Later, he returns to the issues of culture and personality integration. The concept of institutionalisation is another term related to his concept of social systems. A social system can be said to exist when interactions become institutionalised. Institutionalisation, he claims, is the process of constructing and maintaining social structures. A social system is made up of institutional clusters of roles, or stable patterns of interaction. He analysed the structural aspects and functional prerequisites of the social system in order to comprehend it. Goals, roles, norms, and values are the structural aspects. Every social system must have functional prerequisites, i.e., institutionalised organs (or Functionalism sub systems) within the sphere or perimeters of the social system, in order to meet the needs of the social system. This is presented in the 'AGIL' paradigm, which he created. The letters A, G, I, and L stand for adaptation, goal achievement, integration, and latency, respectively (i.e. pattern maintenance and tension management). Adaptation is a societal system for meeting basic necessities such as food, shelter, and so forth. According to him, the economy, or the economic subsystem, satisfies these requirements. In all

cultures, this subsystem is always available. Goal attainment is a system that focuses on how to set these objectives. He distinguishes between individual and collective aims, with the latter receiving the most of his attention. Polity (as a subsystem of the social system) satisfies the demand for goal achievement within the context. Another critical requirement of the social system is integration. Institutionalized arrangements, such as (and most significantly) religion, are used to accomplish this. As a result, religion, in his opinion, corresponds to the necessity to maintain social unity. There is no way to keep a system running and maintained if there are no controls in place. If there are any deviations or conflicts, the social system must be able to contain them all.

Latency is maintained in Parsons' paradigm by the institutions of law — the courts, the police, and the administrative system. As a result, the legal system (as a subsystem) satisfies the requirement for latency. When a social system is big and has numerous interconnected institutions, these are referred to as subsystems. As a result, the aforementioned AGIL is an example of interconnected subsystems. It's important to remember, according to Parsons, that a social system is defined by cultural patterns and imbued with personality systems. As a result, Parsons' formulations of functionalism are well ahead of Durkheim's and Radcliffe- Brown's. The establishment of four functional requisites – A, G, I, and L – according to Jonathan Turner, is not a dramatic departure from previous research. True, structures are evaluated in terms of their functional implications for achieving the four requirements. As a result, the social system's survival capability increases, and the Parsonian scheme begins to resemble an extensive mapping operation. Of course, Parsonian functionalism has received a lot of criticism, but most theoretically desirable alternatives borrow some strands from it, whether they reject it entirely or in part. As a result, his functionalism is a well-known twentieth-century theoretical statement.

1A.2.4 Merton, R.K.

Robert King Merton (1911-2003) was an American sociologist who sought to correct the flaws in functionalism as proposed by its founders, Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, and Malinowski. Along with Talcott Parsons, he is one of the two major American sociologists who dominated the functionalist theory scenario around the middle of the twentieth century. He started with the etymological connotations of 'function,' then separated the pertinent and contextual interpretations of the term used by early sociologists from those. In this context, function refers to a "vital or biological activity examined in terms of how it contributes to the organism's preservation." This definition explains how it has been utilized in biology. Early sociologists Durkheim and Radcliffe Brown accepted this term, with changes suitable to the study of human society (as an organism), and so clarified the crucial idea, 'function.' Radcliffe-Brown, according to Merton, has been the most clear in attributing the working Perspectives in Sociology-I idea of social function to the biological

analogical model. Durkheim also mentioned "vital organic processes and the organism's necessity."

Naturally, Radcliffe-Brown went on to explain the "purpose of any recurring action, the role it plays in social life as a whole, and the contribution it contributes to the preservation of structural continuity." All of this, however, was predicated on a comparison between a social organism (a society) and its constituent pieces (activity or institution in society). The claim was also made against earlier theorists' functionalism that functionalism solely considers maintenance, i.e., stability, and that there was no space for understanding change, and that the notion was only applied to simpler civilizations.

In his reformulation or refinement of the concept of function, Merton addressed these constraints. He defines function as "those observed outcomes that lead to the adaptation or adjustment of a particular system." Merton believed that the old definition of function, which stated that "functions are those observed outcomes that provide for the adaptation or modification of a particular system," had flaws. According to him, the term has a propensity to focus on an item's beneficial contribution to the social or cultural system in which it is embedded. However, he claims that some social or cultural elements make contributions that, over time, result in the opposite, i.e., they constitute a barrier or hindrance to adaptation or adjustment. He established the alternative idea of 'dysfunction' in response to this possibility (which is sometimes empirically proven). He defines dysfunctions as "those observed effects that reduce a specific system's ability to adapt or adjust," as well as the empirical potential of non-functional consequences that are simply irrelevant to the system in question. Using the terms manifest functions' and 'latent functions,' he further expands on the concept of function to include 'obvious and concealed implications.' It is not only a logical possibility or utopia, but it has been proven to be true in empirical instances as well. Merton was convinced of this truth and confirmed the function (contribution) of certain social structures, norms, and traditions. This basic formulation can be used to investigate the concept of function as it was proposed by earlier functionalists. He was a keen observer of the changes that were taking place in western civilizations in general, and in American society in particular, during his lifetime.

The prior concept of function, as advocated by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski, believed that there was no stress or conflict in society (as there might be in simpler civilizations), but stress or conflict was a significant feature in social life in complex societies of his (Merton's) time. Changes of any type, let alone changes in the functions of social institutions or social products, are indicated by the stress. He has studied the older formulation, which he dubbed 'Prevailing Postulates of Functional Analysis (in Sociology)', in light of these arguments. "The function of a particular usage is the contribution it makes to the whole social life as the functioning of the total social system," writes Radcliffe-

Brown when defining and applying the idea of function. This notion, according to Merton, indicates that the social system has a particular form of unity, which he refers to as functional unity. He defines functional unity as a state in which all elements of a social system work in harmony and with internal consistency (without causing any long-term problems). This viewpoint may be correct when considering small, closely interwoven primitive tribes, but not when considering highly varied sophisticated societies with enormous realms. By tracing many cases, Merton explores Functionalism's "postulate of functional unity" (codified from the term offered by Radcliffe Brown). This complete society's oneness cannot be predicated on observation. In order to do a functional analysis, the item must be specified in terms of the units for which it is functional. Because a given item may have some functional repercussions while also having some dysfunctional ones, we cannot always assume full integration of all cultures.

Merton looks at the second postulate of 'Universal Functionalism,' which is derived or codified from Malinowski's views. According to Malinowski, "the functional perspective of culture emphasises that every custom, material object, idea, or religion plays some vital function in every sort of civilization." This, according to Merton, may be the case in small, illiterate civilizations. The concept of survival and function of every cultural piece was exaggerated by functionalists. Because social things have functions and dysfunctions, the 'net balance of consequences (difference between positive and negative repercussions)' is what remains. As a result, he contends that the assumption must be based on 'the net balance of effects' in complex societies.

He returns to the third formulation, i.e., the third postulate, which codifies Malinowski's prior statement highlighting the importance of the word vital. Following the assumption, he uses religion (a social institution) as an example of something that is absolutely necessary in society. According to Malinowski's ``Functional Indispensability, "maintaining integration' is the society's indispensable requirement, not the institution, because the same need can be met by various social institutions in complex varied societies. Over the assumption of functional indispensability, Merton proposes the concept of functional alternatives, equivalents, or substitutes.

Merton collected and simplified all of these concerns, analyses, and reformations in a collection of points/issues he called the "Paradigm for Functional Analysis in Sociology." All of these phrases, concepts, and the ability of using them in empirical research in complex societies are contained in his paradigm. This paradigm is made up of eleven points, ranging from function principles through application and understanding of change in system elements. In his landmark book, 'Social Theory and Social Structure,' he presents his theories in detail.

Check Your Progress

1. WHAT ARE THE MANIFEST AND LATENT FUNCTIONS ?

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1A.3 SUMMARY

Functionalism's theoretical perspective tries to comprehend society through the functioning of diverse parts (things, institutions, activities, and so on) that contribute to the fulfilment of the social system's vital needs (society as a whole). The founding authors focused on the social institutions that correspond to the necessities or required conditions of society's existence. The components or institutions are thought to be interconnected and interdependent. Society is viewed as a collection of functionally interconnected component pieces. These components conduct functions that are critical to society's survival and continuance. Each element contributes to this upkeep in a favourable way. Later sociologists realised that, particularly in complex-differentiated societies, some institutions have harmful long-term implications. According to Parsons, the social structure must be capable of containing these abnormalities (latency). Finally, Merton believes that institutions' roles are replaced by other alternatives, allowing stresses to be addressed, some of which may always occur in the system. This might be interpreted within the framework of his functional analysis.

1A.4 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Functionalism and theories of its main contributors .

1A.5 REFERENCES

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1B

CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

Unit Structure

1B.0 OBJECTIVE

You will be able to comprehend the following after reading this unit: An introduction to the notion of conflict in sociology;

- The Classical Approach to Conflict Sociology;
- The contribution of eminent academics; and
- The adaptation of conflict theory to modern culture

1B.1 INTRODUCTION

There was an early departure from traditional structural theories of social solidarity in sociological theory. The most fundamental difference between functionalism and conflict theory is not whether either structure or change is absent from either, but which of these takes precedence. Although conflict theory was first adopted into sociological theory in the twentieth century, and only with the work of Ralph Dahrendorf and Coser did it receive a particular designation as a sub-branch, it has been latent in historiography since the time of ancient Greek thinkers like Thucydides. Structure and change are both important aspects of all civilizations, therefore conflict theory and functional theory take both into account. Conflict and social change can only occur within existing structures, thus if we're seeking for change, we need to start with an entity, a changing social structure. Conflict theorists, unlike functionalists, believe that conflict lies at the heart of social structure, driving it toward inevitable change.

Conflict is viewed as a contributor to both good and negative stability, as well as anomic change. Thus, concepts of social solidarity and

stability emerge in conflict theory just as they do in functional theory; the only difference is how these concepts are perceived and used in explanations of social organisation and relationship formation, maintenance, and change.

It is critical to treat social groups as basic units rather than individuals from a sociological standpoint. In other words, scientific emphasis is focused on collective conflict rather than individual conflict. Conflict theory is based on the identification and classification of such groupings that may have a prospective or real antagonistic connection.

At its most fundamental level, conflict theory assumes that stratification, inequality, and dominance are inherent in all civilizations. As a result, the majority of social action is motivated by the desire to maintain disparity or to challenge dominance. Inequality and hierarchy are both caused and exacerbated by unequal distribution of societal resources, which remains a major cause of conflict. As a result of the escalation of conflict to a critical level, social transformation may occur, resulting in a new set of organisational principles that secures the redistribution of social resources. The Russian revolution, for example, resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of a communist/socialist administration. The antagonism between the aristocracy and the common people had reached a tipping point, resulting in the assassination of the entire Romanov family and a full power shift. Inequality is both a result of and a cause of an unequal power distribution.

As a result, conflict theorists continue to be concerned about inequality and the dynamic characteristics of hierarchy. Later generations of conflict theorists adapted power in novel ways to fit modern cultures with varying control and dominance structures. When addressing conflict theory, students must be cautious in their terminology selection since words that appear to be similar but have various meanings, such as differentiation and stratification, as well as contradiction and conflict. As a result, differentiation does not always imply stratification until there is inequality, and contradiction does not always imply conflict unless it triggers a power consolidation and confrontation that leads to action. Conflict potential does not imply that real conflict will occur, and even if it does, the intensity of the conflict may not be sufficient to cause large-scale societal reform.

1B.2 CLASSICAL THEORISTS

The first theories of conflict were macro-historical in nature, focusing on the greater structural changes that could occur as a result of conflict between society's primary social groups, which are also interest groups with often opposing aims. The historical circumstances for evolution or transformation were recognised as sustained features of the system that were naturally antagonistic. Karl Marx, a nineteenth-century macro sociologist, was the first to offer a thorough theory of social

revolution through the operation of conflict between different parts of society. His historical materialism thesis set the stage for the development of a conflict theory of social transformation based on the fundamental contradiction that exists between classes in society due to unequal economic distribution. According to him, the bourgeoisie is created by property (or capital) ownership, and the proletariats are the workers whose labour is exploited to keep the bourgeoisie in power. In political terms, this was interpreted as a struggle between the haves and the have-nots, as the Communist Manifesto phrased it.

Marx, on the other hand, identified a considerably more complicated and nuanced reality as a thinker and historiographer as he chronicled the many historical epochs. His theory of social evolution was also prescient, as he predicted that feudalism would give way to capitalism (a process that was already underway), which would be followed by socialism (the abolition of the concept of private property), which would bring society stability by eliminating all class contradictions. His thesis was politically incorrect, but the method Conflict Perspective of dialectics, of opposing forces colliding to form a third stage of stability or new oppositions as the driving force of history was accepted and is the core premise of conflict theory in sociology. The sociological theory of conflict, on the other hand, is largely non-political; it does not support communism, capitalism, or any other political philosophy. The goal is to identify the many social groups and processes that cause change, as well as to develop a general theory of social structures and their organisation from a dynamic standpoint.

Max Weber is the next significant classical theorist to be identified. His significant contribution to Marxian theory was to establish that, in addition to economic classes, there were also non-economic status groups and power groups that were responsible for social stratification. Weber was especially interested in the many types of social organisations since it is through them that important weapons of conflict and revolt are produced, and it is through them that society asserts its weapons of dominance and control. As a result, Weber established three ideal forms of organisational structures: ideal-typical, bureaucratic, and patrimonial, which can be found in any form of dominance, such as the state, the church, or the economy. Weber was able to demonstrate how certain types of dominance become acceptable and may endure even if they are exploitative and discriminatory by introducing the concept of legitimacy into power. There are societal mechanisms in place, such as socialisation, to ensure that the general public accepts institutions like the church and state, at least to a point, and alternative organisations that oppose them must build their own legitimacy and structure in order to be effective.

In order to be effective, opposition forces must also organise and establish internal bureaucracy. Organizations that begin with charismatic leadership, such as new political parties, eventually settle down to rational-legal, and even traditional types of leadership. As a result, they

may elect the next generation of leaders (bureaucratic) or follow dynastic rule (traditional). A particular religious reform, such as the Protestant reform (named Protestant because it protested against the Catholic Church's existing edicts), arose from the charismatic leadership of an individual named Martin Luther, but it later became an organisation with its own internal bureaucracy and status hierarchy. The current protestant church leaders are generally not charismatic, but rather rational-legal (taking tests and receiving training), and very rarely combine charisma with the more formal requirements.

Despite the fact that this protest movement underwent huge alterations and that there was and still is violent struggle (as in Ireland) over the partition of the Christian church, the new forms have become routinized and establish a status based hierarchy. Weber had a lasting impact on the development of sociology, even though subsequent scholars did not expand on his contributions and instead pursued their own paths.

Lewis Coser was a key figure in the development of classical conflict theory. He was born in Berlin in 1913 and studied at the Sorbonne in Paris before being imprisoned and imprisoned by the French authorities for being German during WWII. He was granted asylum in the United States and received his Ph. D. from Columbia University in New York, where he studied under Robert K Merton. Instead of following Weber, Coser chose to follow Simmel. He believed that conflict is inherent not only in society, but also in the human being; it is a component of our natural human behaviour. He proposed the terms "absolute" and "relative" deprivation. When a human group is deprived of all resources to the point where members are barely able to exist, this is known as absolute deprivation. They lack fundamental necessities such as food, drinking water, health care, and housing.

The term "relative deprivation" refers to people who are better off but still have enough survival resources to think about and compare themselves to those who are far better off. When society as a whole is well-equipped yet there are significant differences between the rich and the poor, relative deprivation is more likely to arise. People living in absolute poverty, as has been observed, rarely engage in violence because they lack the resources to do so. For example, we frequently hear about people in isolated rural places who are starving, but we seldom hear about them fighting. However, as Coser points out, the odds of conflict grow when people go from absolute to relative impoverishment.

The Dalit movement, for example, arose not from the rural areas where the untouchables lived a life of bare survival and absolute misery, but from the urban districts where the untouchables lived a life of bare survival and total agony. It began in urban industrial areas, where the rural poor had migrated as wage labour; despite being poor and exploited, they had some cash income, and because they worked in larger groups as industrial labour, they were able to band together and organise under the

charismatic leadership of B.R. Ambedkar. Only after they moved to cities and were exposed to urban life were they able to realise their exploitation and compare and contrast their living conditions.

Coser also classified conflict levels as emerging from various social settings and conflict development conditions. Escalation and persistence of violence are less likely when people have clearly defined goals that are both pragmatic and rational. Because the objectives are well-defined and attainable, such as a higher wage for workers or better living circumstances for the poor in cities, tension will dissipate once the demands are realised. Workers on strike, for example, may call off the strike. When the goals are emotionally charged and transcendental, the fight becomes more violent and persistent. Take, for example, the long-running battles over religion, ethnicity, and sub-nationalisms. Such emotionally charged and esoteric goals are unresolvable, much like the unresolvable hostility between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, which frequently bursts into great violence.

Coser, following the functional school of his time, classified conflict into two forms, external and internal to the group, to identify the functional characteristics of conflict. Internal group conflict is often of low intensity but occurs frequently. When two (or more) potentially antagonistic groups, such as Whites and Blacks in the United States, Hindus and Muslims in India, Protestants and Catholics in the United Kingdom, dwell in close proximity to one another, small-scale and regular skirmishes are likely. However, most of the time, such low-intensity violence can be contained by internal law and order processes, and tensions tend to dissipate, resulting in comparatively extended periods of peace. The good side of such small-scale disputes is that it leads to better administrative machinery organisation and more developed conduct norms. Improved labour rules, for example, restrict frequent flare-ups between workers and management, which might be harmful to the economy. External conflict also serves to strengthen the group's internal cohesion and create more clearly defined boundaries.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Conflict Theory ?

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2. What do you mean by Relative Deprivation ?

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1B.3 CONFLICT SCHOOLS OF THE MODERN ERA

In more recent times, Ralph Dahrendorf, a German who was also the director of the London School of Economics for many years and from where he built up a recognised school of conflict sociology, is credited with coining the term "conflict perspective" in sociology. Dahrendorf believed that neither Marxism nor structural-functionalism were enough to explain modern, industrial capitalist societies, based on current sociological theories at the time. Marxism's failure was due to its inability to comprehend the importance of consensus and integration in modern democracies. Furthermore, Parsons structural functionalism acknowledges change, whereas Marxism's theory of contradiction cannot be described without assuming an existing structure. As a result, no society, least of all modern democracies, is without both integrative and conflictual elements. What stands out the most is how much more complicated social structures are than the dialectical paradigm used by Marxism. There are many more types of class in modern society than the bourgeoisie and proletariat, which Marx depicted as society's basic contradictions. It's no longer a question of one layer wielding power while another being exploited. Workers are backed by trade unions, collective bargaining, and legislative initiatives in modern industrial society. Other organisations, such as international labour unions and human rights commissions, intervene in a variety of situations.

Individual ownership of private property has been greatly tempered by the emergence of Joint Stock Companies, in which, in addition to the capitalist owners, managers and share-holders play important roles. "By social class shall be understood such organised or unorganised collectivities of individuals who share manifest or latent interests arising from and related to the authority structure of imperatively coordinated associations," writes Dahrendorf in his classic work, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (1959:238). Social classes are always conflict groupings, according to the categories of latent and visible interests." Dahrendorf posits a broad distinction between the 'command class' and the 'obey class' at a more generalised level to account for differences in interest holding groups and the complicated nature of property and authority, and class conflict would therefore refer to the struggle between those with authority and those without.' However, the disadvantage of this proposal is that social classes would only exist under specific conditions, just as some people may be in charge in one region but not in another. Furthermore, social classes will exist across society and will lose their structural significance. As a result, Dahrendorf preferred the term stratum for the structural and static notion of hierarchy, and regarded class as a dynamic phenomena of real society.

Gerhard Lenski is another influential conflict theorist. By the twentieth century, sociologists were more interested in the distribution of power in society and how it was deployed than in the concept of class as an economic category or static stratification. Lenski (1966:75) described

class as an "aggregation of individuals in society who share a comparable position in terms of power, privilege, and status." More contemporary sociologists had to comprehend the dynamics of power in a society that was more dynamic and diverse, with many more roles to fill and various sources of power to draw from. The major issue was to explain the foundations on which power was dispersed, as well as who received what and why. As a result, the idea of class has been superseded by that of power classes. There are layers of authority and control in modern society, and just like in a corporate organisation, a big number of people may be involved at different levels.

Managers with administrative responsibility may not be able to benefit from the profits that they contribute to. Workers can use collective action to exert pressure and gain a portion of the earnings. As a result, authority and control may not always imply that the same people are reaping all of the benefits. As a result, Wright (1979:18) changed the definition of class to align it more closely with Marx's concept of appropriation. "Classes are determined first and foremost by relations of surplus product appropriation, and secondarily by relations of control over the technical division of labour and relations of authority." As a result, managers and owners are separated. However, as long as the principle of legitimacy applies to those in power, conflict is often latent and not visible. As a result, in modern communities, certain people may be considered as naturally qualified for a position of authority due to their education and competence, while others will obey without question. As a result, a suitable foundation for authority legitimization will lead to a stable condition of society, and conflict may arise when such justifiable causes are challenged or questioned.

1B.4 ELITE THEORY

Elites were also introduced by scholars such as Lenski and Dahrendorf to explain socioeconomic class and the resulting conflict in society. Vilfredo Pareto, an economist and political scientist (born in 1848 to an Italian father and a French mother) whose academic life flourished in Florence, is credited with the invention of Elite theory. Pareto was also a classical theorist who believed in societies and social systems in their natural state of equilibrium. He advocated for a liberal philosophy and free trading with an antipathy to state control, following Adam Smith's lead. He saw power as a manifestation of corruption and malice, and he saw the state as a manifestation of all of these. All difference and stratification, however, he attributed to natural factors such as unequal capabilities, age, sex, physical strength, and health, as well as demographic characteristics such as fertility and fecundity. As a result, the disputes, paradoxes, and battles that ensued were unavoidable and natural. Even if sociologists understood them, there was nothing they could do to stop them. While he recognised that society was always changing, he did not believe in linear growth, preferring to express change through fluctuation and curves. In this, as in all other areas, his conflict theory is nearly diametrically

opposite to Marx's. He did not attach any causation to economic or organisational considerations, but instead blamed everything on natural reasons, blaming human nature. He described elites as individuals who aim to dominate others from within a group or class. The only way for elites to stay in power, despite attempts to overthrow them, is to use force to kill the opposition or to assimilate them into their fold. This process, which he calls endosmosis, is a social circulation process in which individuals move up the social ladder while society's class structure remains unchanged.

Lenski established four sorts of elites, but Conflict Perspective Pareto had already recognised them in terms of their innate nature. In Pareto's nomenclature, there are four types of elites: coercive elites (lions), inducing elites (foxes), expert elites (owls), and commanding elites (bears). In real life, these are ideal kinds (Weber), and they may overlap. As a result, an expert can be both commanding and coercive. Someone who is inducing, that is, employing strategy, can also be commanding, and so on. The command and obey classes proposed by Dahrendorf follow the same formula of an elite and a ruled class.

The classical elite idea, according to John Scott (2001), is useless because it is overly inclusive. As a result, when discussing broad categories such as Dahrendorf and Pareto, a definition of power that is overly inclusive loses its relevance. Positional studies, he claimed, should be replaced by more dynamic categories. Furthermore, power should be defined solely in terms of its effect. As a result, true social power might be described as the power wielder's deliberate endeavour to influence the behaviour of those who are subjugated.

As a result, a true elite cannot be defined in terms of skill or prestige; rather, it should be limited to individuals who can really wield power, or who have the capacity to wield power. Because power cannot be wielded in a vacuum, elite theory or the concept of social power can only be visualised in terms of two parties: those who exercise it and those who are subjected to it. As a result, power relationships are inherently asymmetrical, including at least two persons with opposing interests and agendas. Elite theory is essentially a conflict theory because of its emphasis on hierarchy and the exercise of social power.

Check Your Progress

1. Can you briefly explain Elite Theory ?

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1B.5 CURRENT TRENDS IN CONFLICT THEORY

In recent years, there has been a shift away from relational structures and toward cultural building of institutional structures. Michel Foucault, one of the most prominent intellectuals of the twentieth century, revolutionised the way we think about power. Unlike all other traditional understandings of power, Foucault believed that power is spread throughout society, not concentrated in certain actors or strata. Power does not have to be destructive; it may also be used as part of a communal effort to develop and produce. Capillary power was a term coined by Foucault to describe power that is diffuse and may be employed in any setting and by anybody. Even in a group of friends, a single individual can assume command in a crisis scenario, such as when someone becomes ill at a picnic or when a school bus is involved in an accident, and so on. Every connection, according to Foucault, has conflict, negotiation, and contradictions. According to John Scott, power may be roughly defined as possessing two types of influence. Persuasive influence, which acts via arguments, appeals, and reasoning, and corrective influence, which functions through penalties and incentives.

The former is classified into two types: coercion and manipulation, while the latter is divided into two types: signification and legitimation. The latter functions through shared cognitive meanings and value commitments and is made effective by a communal conviction. This isn't to say that the latter isn't exploitative or that it doesn't foster hierarchy, but it does lead people to believe differently. Because it is possible to conceal the truth of the situation, the latter procedure is able to control conflict and prevent any form of protest.

Throughout his writings, Foucault demonstrated how the most successful mechanisms of control are the ones that are least evident. Randall Collins (1975) adds a micro dimension to conflict theory's macro level. He, like Foucault, saw conflict in the everyday processes of existence. On the one hand, all relationships are founded on some level of hostility, dominance, and conflict, and on the other hand, there are patterns of solidarity. Unlike the classical conflict theorists' broad generalised metatheories, more modern researchers like Collins have relied on actual evidence and more grounded theorization. Collins employed Goffman's interaction rituals model, which included the notions of front stage and back stage performance. These are the techniques used by humans while putting on a front-stage show. All social contact, according to Goffman, is akin to a stage performance, because most of us pretend and say and do things we don't necessarily intend. As a result, persons who are given orders to follow may do so outwardly while harbouring resentment in their hearts.

The term "backstage performance" refers to instances in which we let down our guard and openly chat and perform. As a result, a guy can follow orders from his employer and be publicly subservient to him, even

praising him in public. When he's at home with his wife, though, he may vent his frustrations by abusing his boss and even calling him an idiot. As a result, performance rituals conceal actual sentiments and animosities. At the same time, solidarity among equals is maintained via solidarity rituals such as sharing meals or assisting one another with work. As a result, the intricacies of organisational structures are shaped by the battle for power, which may be subversive but occasionally spills over. As a result, tensions in the office may rise to open rejection of the boss's authority, or a workplace strike may occur. Scholars today are increasingly concerned with finding the micro-processes of struggle and control in real-world circumstances. Microprocess theorists are more interested in a more sophisticated and thorough examination of status groups and people performing diverse roles in the battle for resources and power than in categorising people into bigger classes.

1B.6 SUMMARY

The student has learned about ideas that focus on society's organisation, resource distribution, and power division in this course. Everyone is never equal in any human society, except perhaps the simplest, and while in a small society, people are usually allocated according to given norms, in most other societies, the control and distribution of resources; questions about who gets what and how are determined by the society's structure of organisation, which is invariably stratified. Some scholars believe that inequality is an unavoidable part of life, while others believe that we can overcome it and achieve a more fair and just society. While Pareto is an example of the first type, Karl Marx is an example of the second.

As we've seen, the origins of conflict theory are frequently assigned to Karl Marx's class theory. Later academics, although admitting the dialectically opposed forces of warring parties in theory, disagreed on their nature. The single criterion of economy or property ownership was abandoned in favour of recognising many other forms of power in society, including those based on experience, knowledge, political manoeuvring, and other factors like gender, colour, and ethnicity. We have entered the age of the corporate, of public sector enterprises, and of joint stock holding companies, where ownership, authority, and control may vest in different locations of the organisation, as a result of the arrival of a new age capitalist society, one that differs significantly from what Marx had conceptualised. Scholars have used a variety of approaches to granting precedence to various forms of power. While some perceive power as a source of authority and legitimacy, others see it as the sole source of coercion and the capacity to force people to do what one wants. While traditional conflict theories are macro-historical in nature, focusing on bigger evolutionary societal shifts and their causal variables, contemporary tendencies have shifted to examining conflict in terms of its everyday manifestations. Recent theoreticians have a preference for

empirical inquiry and finding the micro-processes of contradiction, conflict, and their results in specific places.

Conflict theorists are interested not only in the study of conflict, but also in the settlement of conflict, as well as the research of social solidarity and the preservation of social balance. The primary difference between them with functionalists is that they investigate how equilibrium and continuity are preserved in the face of potential conflict, which is caused by the unavoidable hierarchy, inequality, and exploitation that are inherent in all societies, varying only in degree. As a result, conflict theorists regard conflict as a natural and fundamental part of social and organisational interactions. As a result, society transitions from one condition of maintaining stability to another by changing its organisational structure. These groups strive to minimise or conceal the true nature of conflict, which is constantly present but not always evident. Conflict theory is essentially a study of social organisation and behaviour in general, with the primary methodological difference being whether scientists employ a macro-historical or a situational empirical approach. Conflict theory has been particularly effective in the study of inequality, stratification, and hierarchy, both in terms of comprehending and locating the source of the problem. Overall, conflict theory may be used to reduce or eliminate inequities, but the ideas are not political in and of themselves.

1B.7 QUESTIONS

1. Elaborate on the Conflict School of thought.
2. What are the current trends of Conflict theory ?

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2

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the main tenets of symbolic interactionism.
- To gain an insight into the contribution of G.H. Mead to symbolic interactionism.
- To evaluate the Dramaturgical Approach of Goffman.
- To understand and acknowledge the contributions of Erving Goffman.

2.1 INTRODUCTION: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Towards the end of the 19th century, the social theorists concentrated on complexities of the individual's relationship to large scale structures of society. Symbolic interactionism is a perspective that emphasises the nature of interaction, the patterns of social action and social relationship. Interaction is taken as a unit of analysis with individuals who not only react but perceive, interpret and act. The individual has not only a mind but also self which is a social process that emerges in the course of social experience and activity. The entire process of interaction is symbolic with the constructed meanings- the meanings of what we communicate with others, our definition of the social world and

our experience of and response to the reality evolve in the process of interaction.

Herbert Blumer was one of the key figures of symbolic interactionism. In Europe it was sociologist George Simmel who investigated social interaction that must exist among individuals in order that macro structures in society can exist at all. Symbolic Interactionism was influenced by Weber's ideas on Verstehen. For Weber the core issues of concern in sociology were intentional, meaningful and symbolic social action. The first generation of American sociologists understood the phenomena of large-scale social structures and processes such as class, the state, family, religion was linked to individual relationships. Herbert Blumer- who coined the term symbolic interactionism and one of the major architects of symbolic interactionism writes: 'The term 'symbolic interaction refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between the stimulus and the response in the case of human behaviour" (Abraham 1982: 210). All varieties of symbolic interactionism share the view that human beings construct their realities in a process of interaction with other human beings.

Symbolic interactionism is represented by the ideas of Herbert Blumer, Manford Kuhn and Goffman. The most significant of the numerous thinkers contributing to the development of symbolic interactionism are Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead.

Some symbolic interactionists (Blumer, 1969a; Manis and Meltzer, 1978; A. Rose, 1962; Snow, 2001) have tried to enumerate the basic principles of the theory. The basic principles of symbolic interactionism are:

1. Human beings, unlike lower animals, have the ability to think.
2. The ability to think is shaped by social interaction.
3. In social interaction people learn the meanings and the symbols that allow them to utilise their distinctively human capacity for thought.
4. Meanings and symbols enable people to engage in distinctively human action and interaction.
5. People are able to modify or alter the meanings and symbols that they employ in action and interaction based on their interpretation of the situation.
6. People are able to make these changes and adaptations due to their ability to interact with themselves, which allows them to examine

possible courses of action, assess their relative advantages and disadvantages, and ultimately choose one.

7. The interconnected patterns of action and interaction makeup groups and societies.

The crucial assumption that human beings possess the ability to think differentiates symbolic interactionism from its behaviourist roots. The ability to think is embedded in the mind, but the symbolic interactionists have a somewhat unusual conception of the mind as originating in the socialization of consciousness. They distinguish it from the physiological brain. The mind according to symbolic interactionists is neither an object or a physical structure but a continuing process.

It is a process that is itself part of the larger process of stimulus and response. The mind is related to virtually every other aspect of symbolic interactionism, including socialization, meanings, symbols, the self, interaction, and even society (Ritzer 2011: 370). Humans act in response to objects based on the meanings they attach to them. People's Ability to think is shaped through the process of social interaction. People's meanings are formed through social interaction. Such a view leads the symbolic interactionist to concentrate on a specific form of social interaction— socialization. According to the symbolic interactionists, socialization is a dynamic process that enables people to improve to think and develop in distinctively human ways. Also socialization is not just a one-way process in which the actor receives information, but is dynamic in nature whereby the actor shapes and adapts the information as per his or her own needs . Symbolic interactionists, following Mead, prefer to attribute causal significance to social interaction. People learn both symbols and meanings in social interaction.

Symbolic interactionists' main concern is with the impact of meanings and symbols on human action and interaction. Meanings and symbols give human social action (which involves a single actor) and social interaction (which involves two or more actors engaged in mutual social action) distinctive characteristics. In the process of social interaction, people symbolically communicate meanings to the others involved. The others interpret those symbols and accordingly act on the basis of their interpretation. These meanings are modified and handled through an interpretive process that is used by each person in dealing with the things they encounter.

Check your progress:

1. Enumerate the principles of symbolic interactionism.

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2.2 GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

Born in the USA in 1863 Mead began his studies in sociology and philosophy at Harvard University and focussed his attention on the concept of 'self'.The two most important conceptual foundations of Mead's work in particular, and of symbolic interactionism in general, are the philosophy of pragmatism (D. Elliot, 2007) and psychological behaviourism (Joas, 1985; Rock, 1979).In Mead's analysis the social takes precedence. He believed that self emerged from social interaction and is shaped by society. He rejected the behaviourist views of human beings that people blindly and unconsciously respond to an external stimulus. He believed that people had consciousness – a self- and that it was the responsibility of a sociologist to study this aspect of social reality.

Mead's work is significant because he helped shift the concept of 'self' away from a purely psychological concept into something with a societal context.

Mead's analytical concerns included small units of individual interaction. He called his sociology- social psychology primarily concerned with the study of the relationship between society and the individual. He was interested in the nature and significance of group membership to individual behaviour. The data of society is social act and the task of social psychology is the analysis of the action in human encounter. The focus is upon the behaviour of human interaction. He argued for the centrality in behaviour of the 'inner experience of the individual'. Whereas Cooley relied on man's mental cognizance of his social world, Mead concentrated upon the resulting act of this consciousness awareness.

For Mead symbolic interaction was an evolutionarily developed social ability required for any kind of meaningful encounter of the individual. Language is one of the most important social acts evolving out of the need for individuals to cooperate in a rational way. Language has its beginning in gesture-a social act that are either 'preparatory- beginnings of acts-social acts, i.e., actions and reactions which arise under the stimulation of other individuals or reinforce and prepare indirectly for action' (Abraham 1982: 219).The gestures initiate and facilitate meaningful interaction or mutually understood symbolic communication. Social gestures are significant symbolically when members of a social group mutually agree to their specific meaning.

His major work is Mind, Self and Society, a series of his essays compiled after Mead's death and originally published in 1934, a work in which he highlights how the social world shapes various mental states in an individual.

This theory of the emergence of mind and self out of the social process of significant communication has become the foundation of the symbolic interactionist school of sociology and social psychology. Mead is widely regarded as the founder of the symbolic interaction approach, arguing that social interaction creates mind and self, and it is through symbolic forms of communication that the self and community are constructed. From Mead's approach, Herbert Blumer and others developed the symbolic interaction perspective. According to which, sociology is the study of human interaction, the use of symbols and communication in these social interactions, social action arising from humans, considering the meaning things have for them and humans adaptability to different situations and contexts. Mead founded the symbolic interactionist school of sociology by establishing a method of analysis and theoretical approach. Later sociologists in this tradition are Blumer, Erving Goffman, Arlie Hochschild, and Norman Denzin.

In Mind, Self and Society, Mead started with the behaviourist assumption that social psychology begins with observable activity, such as social action and interaction and he extended behaviourism in two directions, into the mind and into society. He argued that psychological behaviourism, with its roots in animal psychology, ignored both the internal (mental) and the external (social) dimensions. The goal of sociologists is to comprehend the human mental processes. Mead was not satisfied to postulate a society, he also wanted to give it causal importance in his framework.

Mead's argument progressed through three main components- mind, self and society.

Mind

Mead saw the human mind as a social process rather than as a thing/entity. Mead gave importance to the social world in understanding social experience. The human mind differs qualitatively from the minds of lower animals. Human action involves the intervention of deliberative mental processes between stimulus and response. For e.g., a raised fist of the opponent in human fight is more than a gesture, it is a symbol with a set of meanings. It has a set of meanings for each of us, it may have multiple meanings and our minds interpret the meaning based on the situation.

Significant symbols may take the form of such physical symbols or a linguistic form. Humans differ from other animals due to their capability of creating, storing and using language. Language enables us to respond not only to physical symbols but also words.

Language is a social product and allows for the existence of the mind. The mind can be defined as an internal conversation with one's self through the use of significant symbols. The ability to play the role of the

others is important in the interaction process. By putting oneself in the place of others we can understand the meaning of what the person says or does. The conversation we have with ourselves over the meaning of a particular gesture in the context is the essence of the mind.

For the existence of social life actors share significant symbols. The process of thinking, of acting and interacting are facilitated by the fact that significant symbols have the same meaning for all and arouse the same reaction in the people using them as in the people reacting to them. Mead also valued the flexibility of mind that allows interaction to occur even in situations where a given stimulus has different meanings for all involved. The people in such a situation have the mental ability to adapt to each other and to the situation to make sense of the particular symbol. Mead placed special emphasis on the verbal significant symbol as we can hear ourselves although we may not always be able to see our physical gestures.

Mead defines the mind as a process and not as a thing. It emerges and develops as a result of the social process and is an essential component of that process. The social process precedes the mind; it is not the product of the mind as many believe it to be. For Mead the process of thinking is part of the social world. As a result, the mind is defined functionally rather than substantively. Mind emerges from the maturing capacity of the child's ability to distinguish and discriminate symbols of interaction, by perceiving, conceiving and understanding gestures and language. The more developed the mind in terms of symbolic interaction skills, the more advanced is the level of meaningful communication among individuals (Abraham 1982: 221).

Self

The self is the central social feature in the symbolic interaction approach. For Mead 'it is the self that makes the distinctively human society possible' (Mead 1934). Rather than being passive and influenced by values or structures, Mead considered the self as a process that is active and creative-taking on the role of others, addressing the self by considering these roles, and then responding. This is a reflexive process, whereby an individual can take himself or herself to be both subject and object. This means that the individual is an object to himself, and so it follows that, an individual is not a self in the reflexive sense unless he is an object to himself.

The self is a reflective process — i.e., "it is an object to itself." For Mead, it is the reflexivity of the self that "distinguishes it from other objects and from the body." and it is this reflexivity of the self that distinguishes human from animal consciousness (*Mind, Self and Society*, fn., 137).

For Mead reflexiveness or the ability to respond to one's self as one does to others, "is the essential condition, within the social process,

for the development of mind" (Mead, 1934/162: 134 quoted in Ritzer 1988: 298). Self is not an object but a conscious process that involves several dimensions:

1. The ability to respond to one's self as others respond to it.
2. The ability to respond to one's self as the collectivity, the generalized other, responds to it.
3. The ability to take part in one's own conversation with others.
4. The ability to be aware of what one is saying and to use that awareness to determine what one is going to do next.

This process is not mental and the ability to engage in it are socially acquired. Language is an important aspect of it which we use and interpret verbal significant symbols.

To acquire self, people need to learn more than language. The key to developing self is to take the role of the other. Mead suggested that self-consciousness emerges in three evolutionary stages viz the imitative stage, the play stage and the game stage. In the imitative stage the child mimics the behaviour of his parents, siblings and other ' significant others' i.e., people in his immediate social environment without understanding underlying intentions and so have no self. The play stage begins where the child assumes various roles of his significant others, especially parents. According to Meadto play involves playing a role. The child learns to take the roles of specific significant people that gives children a distinct sense of social reality. Through play children learn to reflect on who they are and to choose behaviours to meet their own ends. However, they lack a clear or integrated sense of self. Children acquire a clearer sense of the self in the game stage where the child develops the ability to take the roles of a number of others at the same time and to engage in activity that involves group participation. They learn to take the role of the generalized other. Mead used the term generalized other to refer to the widespread cultural norms and values we use as a reference in evaluating ourselves. Whether it is perceiving the various and conflicting attitudes of his parents and siblings during family conflict or the ability to play in a baseball game or chess, he is able to enter into human interaction because he can ' imagine' the role of others. To illustrate this idea Mead used the game of baseball. In the play stage the child was able to take the role of fan, catcher, pitcher etc. However, these images were separate without giving the child a clear sense of what the game was about. However, in the game stage there is fuller development of the self where the child's activity can be planned, judged, selected and coordinated with the activities of the whole group. The child develops the ability to take the role not just of a single other, but of a generalized other. As life goes on the self continues to change along with our social experiences.

By taking the role of the other one becomes self-aware. The two basic components of self are the I and the me. The me is that part of the

self of which the actor is aware, the internalization of the organized attitude of others, of the generalized other. It represents the forces of conformity and of social control. The I is the part of the self of which the actor is unaware, we are aware of it only after an act is complete. All social experiences have both components. To put in briefly, as a me the individual is aware of himself as an object and as an I he is aware of himself as a subject. We initiate an action - the I phase of self and then we continue the action based on how others respond to us- the me phase of self.

The self continues to change along with our social experiences. But no matter how much events and circumstances affect us, we remain creative beings, able to act back on the world.

Society:

The third dimension in Mead's perception of the social world is society. To him society was more than the social organisation in which mind and self-arise. Society is a human construct- an organized activity governed by the generalized other and within which individuals make adjustments and cooperate with one another. It occurs in human communications emerging out of the complex interactional adjustment of conflict, compromise, innovation and cooperation. The institutions of society which constitute the organised and patterned interaction among a variety of individuals are dependent for both their emergence and persistence upon mind and self. Through the mind coordinated activity among several individuals is made possible. The self helps in social control needed in any meaningful and sustained coordinated activity. For Mead it is important to study the dynamic relationship that exists between mind and self out of which society is generated, in addition to the emergent process of self-consciousness. This dynamic relationship between mind and self is responsible for the changes in society.

At the most general level, Mead uses the term society to mean the ongoing social process that precedes both the mind and the self. Given its importance in shaping the mind and self, society is clearly of central importance to Mead. At another level, society to Mead represents the ordered set of responses that are taken over by the individual in the form of the “me.” Thus, in this sense individuals carry society around with them, giving them the ability, through self-criticism, to control themselves. We carry this organized set of attitudes around with us at all times and they regulate our actions, largely through the “me.” Education is the process by which the actor internalises the common practises of the community (the institution).This is an essential process because, in Mead’s opinion, people neither have selves nor are genuine members of the community until they can respond to themselves as the larger community does. To do this, people must have internalized the common attitudes of the community.

According to Mead, institutions should define what people ought to do only in a very broad and general sense and should give space for individuality and creativity. Mead here demonstrates a modern understanding of social institutions as both confining and helping individuals to be creative (Giddens 1984).Mead was different from the other classical theorists in emphasising the enabling character of society while ignoring society's constraining power (Athens 2002).

Mead also deals with the evolution of society. But Mead has relatively little to say explicitly about society, in spite of its centrality in his theoretical system. His insights on mind and self are his most important contributions. Baldwin (1986) admits that "The macro components of Mead's theoretical system are not as well developed as the micro" (1986:123). What Mead lacks in his understanding of society in general, and institutions in particular, is a true macro sense of them in the way that theorists such as Marx, Weber, and Durkheim dealt with this level of analysis.

To conclude, at the centre of G. H. Mead's theory of the origins and process of consciousness was the process he called "taking the role of the other" by which humans are able to imaginatively enter the mind of the other. Mead's theory has developed a considerable following within sociology and social psychology, the school of thought known as 'symbolic interaction'. However, because of the unrelenting abstractness of the theory, it has been difficult for Mead's followers to develop a clear theory and method that could be applied to actual events. Like most social theories, it has continued to be discussed at an abstract level that it has never been clear how well it defines human behaviour.

Mead has contributed significantly to symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is interpretative and definitional. Human communication is interpretative due to its capacity to ascertain the meaning of other persons actions and definitional as it attempts to convey a verbal or nonverbal significant gesture as to how other individuals can be said to be conceptualisations of social interaction as a complex of strategic adjustments, negotiations, compromises, innovations etc between individuals in the human environment (Abraham 1982: 232). Symbolic interactionism is concerned with not only what the individual does but also with his perceptions, thought processes and self-indication. Instead of treating individuals as organisms that make up the organisation as the social system, culture, institutions, social situation, it treats human beings as dynamic and rational problem solvers who interpret, cooperate, takeroles, communicate and align their acts. For Mead mind and self are seen as emergent from the social process.

Check your progress:

1. Name the major work of Mead where he emphasises how the social world develops various mental states in an individual.

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2. Explain the work of G. H. Mead.

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2.3 BLUMER AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

A student of Mead, Blumer agreed with Mead that society is continuously changing as a result of the interactions of individuals. He emphasised the processual nature of society over the rigid structural analysis of the functionalists. Society is dynamic and evolving and the existing social structures - the roles, statuses, norms, authority etc- are not merely determinants of action but outcomes of interaction. Significant meaning ascribed to specific objects is because individuals have mutually agreed upon the definition of the situation e.g., rock, chair etc.

According to Blumer the conceptualisation of the process of constructing action through self-indication is a distinct symbolic interactionist orientation which is different from other sociological or psychological perspectives. The process of self indication is 'a moving communicative process in which an individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning'; it is through this process that humans develop their conscious action (Abraham 1982: 239).

Research methods must attempt to get at the definitions of those individuals interacting in the social environment under analysis by means of personal documents, case studies, participant observation and life histories.

The features of symbolic interactionism according to Blumer are:

1. Human society is made up of individuals who have self. The self is the central mechanism which enables the human being to make indications to himself of things in his surroundings, to interpret the actions of others and to guide his own action by what he observes.

2. Individual action is constructed, and not just a reaction, through a process of self indication, through noting and interpreting features of the situation in which he acts.

3. Group or collective action consists of aligning individual actions brought about by the individuals' interpreting or taking into account other's actions. In taking a role the individual determines the intention or direction of the acts of others and forms and aligns his own action on the basis of such interpretation of the act of others.

Blumer makes a distinction between definitive concepts and sensitizing concepts. The definitive concepts provide prescriptions of what to see, sensitizing concepts suggests the direction along which to look. Blumer suggested that sociologists rely more on sensitizing concepts that provide general orientation in dealing with empirical reality. Therefore, for Blumeronly qualitative methodologies are appropriate for sociological analysis.

Check your progress

1. Explain the contribution of Blumer to symbolic interactionism.

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2.4 GOFFMAN AND DRAMATURGICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Erving Goffman (1922–1982) is often regarded as a prominent twentieth century micro-sociologists. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, Goffman authored a series of books and essays that gave birth to dramaturgical analysis as a form of symbolic interactionism. Goffman's The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life written in 1959 is a key work in the Symbolic interactionist paradigm that provides a detailed description and analysis of process and meaning in daily routine interactions. Through a micro sociological analysis, Goffman explores the details of individual identity, group relations, the impact of environment, and the movement and interactive meaning of information. His perspective, though limited in scope, provides new insight into the nature of social interaction and the psychology of the individual.

Goffman's sense of the self was formed by his dramaturgical approach. To Goffman , like Mead and other symbolic interactionists, 'the self is not an organic thing that has a specific location. . In analysing the self then we are drawn from its possessor, from the person who will profit or lose most by it, for he and his body merely provide the peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. . .. The

means of producing and maintaining selves do not reside inside the peg. (Goffman, 1959:252–253)

Dramaturgical analysis is clearly consistent with its symbolic-interactionist roots. It has a focus on actors, action, and interaction. Goffman in his Dramaturgical analysis has used the metaphor of theatre to explain small-scale social processes.

Goffman's conception of the self is influenced by Mead's ideas especially his discussion of the tension between the I and the me. The tension is due to the disparity between what people expect us to do and what we may want to do spontaneously. We are expected to act in a manner that others see as appropriate behaviour in a particular situation and we are not expected to deviate. As Goffman put it, "We must not be subject to ups and downs" (1959:56). Individuals to project a 'stable self-image' perform and act for their audiences. In interaction they attempt to manage the image they present. Social behaviour is thus similar to theatrical performances. Goffman saw much in common between theatrical performances and the kinds of "acts" we all put on in our day-to-day actions and interactions. Goffman uses terms like script, audience, identity kits, performance, props and other theatrical references. By utilising the language of drama Goffman has provided an insightful account of the presentation of self in everyday life. Interaction is seen as very fragile, maintained by social performances.

The self is the product of dramatic interaction that might be disrupted during the performance. Poor performances or disruptions are seen as great threats to social interaction just as they are to theatrical performances.

The dramaturgical approach is concerned with the processes by which such disturbances are prevented. When individuals interact, they engage in impression management- the techniques actors use to maintain specific impressions, problems they are likely to encounter and methods they employ to cope with these problems.

When individuals interact, they want to present a certain sense of self that others will accept. However, as they present themselves, they are aware that members of the audience can disturb their performance. The actors hope that the sense of self that they present to the audience will be strong enough for the audience to define the actors as the actors want. The actors also hope that this will cause the audience to act voluntarily as the actors want them to.

Using his theatrical analogy Goffman claims that social life is a performance carried out by teams of participants in the front stage, back stage, and off stage.

In all social interaction there is a front region, which is similar to the stage front in a theatrical performance. Actors both on the stage and in social life are seen as being interested in appearances, wearing costumes, and using props. Examples of front stage behaviour include the everyday routines of people's daily lives like shopping, going to work, students' behaviour in the classrooms etc.

Front stage is that part of the performance that functions in rather fixed and general ways to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Within the front stage Goffman further distinguished between the setting and the personal front. The setting refers to the actual scene that must be present if the actors are to perform without which they cannot perform e.g.for the taxi driver a cab, for an ice skater ice. The personal front consists of those items that the audience identifies with the performers and expects them to carry with them into the setting.

The personal front is subdivided into appearance and manner that is expected to be consistent with each other. Appearance refers to the items that tell us the performer's social status and the manner tells us about the role the performer expects to play in the situation.

Individuals attempt to create an idealized image of themselves in the front stage and conceal certain truths about themselves that are incompatible with their performance (e.g., drinking alcohol). It may be necessary for actors to hide from the audience the work involved in making of the final product. They may simply show only the end result concealing the process involved in it (a professor spending hours preparing for the class, but showing as if they always know the material).

An important aspect of dramaturgy in the front stage is that actors often try to convey the impression that they are closer to the audience than they actually are and convey that the present performance is the most important one. To do this the actors ensure that their audiences are segregated so that the falsity of the performance is not known and even if it is known the audiences may try to cope with the falsity so as not to shatter the idealized image of the actor. The actor through the performance conveys the impression that there is something unique about this performance as well as his/her relationship to the audience. Actors try to ensure that all parts of performance blend together. A single slip on the part of the actor can disrupt the performance that may damage the overall performance greatly. For e.g A slip by the priest on a sacred occasion could be more disruptive than a taxi driver taking a wrong turn.

Goffman also discussed the back stage- the stage where facts are suppressed in the front or the kinds of informal actions may appear. It is cut off from the front stage. Backstage is a place "where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (Goffman1959:112). Backstage means how people act when they are relaxed or unobserved. There is no need for any kind of impression

management and people can step out of character, shed their roles and be themselves.

E.g.,when we are with our friends we behave in a more relaxed manner, we are off stage, unobserved and thus more relaxed. The stage thus becomes a metaphor where we act in ways that fulfil our need to be accepted in society.

There is also the Off Stage, the outside that is neither front or back. No area can be one of these three domains. A given area can also occupy all three domains at different times. For e.g. A professor's office is front stage when a student visits, is the back stage when the student leaves the office and is outside when the professor is at the marketplace.

Maintaining the separation of front and back stage is important for impression management. It can be found in all areas of social life. However, this distinction can also break down resulting in embarrassment undermining the credibility of the previous performance. Whether effective or not impression management involves an audience that also has a stake in ensuring successful performance. Sometimes when performance goes wrong the audience may attempt to save the day by providing excuses for the untoward behaviour. However, as Goffman demonstrates in Asylums (1961) and Stigma (1965) there are situations where the audience makes the effective performance of a role difficult.

2.4.1 Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates.

In this controversial work through his four essays, Goffman provides a powerful analysis of the significance of social structure in producing conforming behaviour, especially in environments that Goffman labelled "total institutions", such as mental asylums, prisons and military establishments. Goffman saw total institutions as a "forcing house for changing persons, as a natural experiment on what can be done to the self" (Goffman, 1961: 12). Total Institutions are those social settings in which every aspect of the inmates is dictated and controlled. A chief concern is to develop a sociological version of the structure of the self.

In the total institution the inmate is separated from ordinary collaborators and engages with a staff that requires different terms of collaboration. Inmates are exposed to a series of humiliations, degradations and profanations of themselves and a withdrawal of all the physical and social supports that once supported them.

The inmates may experience what Goffman calls a 'mortification of the self'. Total institutions impose such regimentation often with the purpose of a radical resocialization, changing an inmate's sense of self through deliberate manipulation of the environment. The power of a total institution to resocialize is also enhanced by its forcible segregation of inmates from the 'outside' by means of physical barriers such as walls and

fences topped with barbed wire and guard towers, barred windows and locked doors. Cut off in this way, the inmate's entire world can be manipulated by the administrative staff to achieve long term reform- or at least immediate compliance – in the inmate. This process is carried out in the name of God, country, justice or cure.

Goffman does not object to this. However, he describes the self's resistance to its stripping. The self resists this change and struggles against its transformation, perversely insisting on retaining some portion of its familiar substance. He points out that inmates engage in secondary adjustments that do not directly contradict the staff of the total institution but they assert that they are still their own persons, with some influence and control over their surroundings, control that is independent of God, country or party.

In characterising the self's struggle, Goffman employs a number of phrases - " expressed distance", "holding off from fully embracing all the self- I implications of its affiliation, allowing some ... disaffection to be seen, even while fulfilling ... major obligations" and perhaps most precisely, "a defaulting not from prescribed activity, but from prescribed being." (Goffman, 1961:188).He believes that without something to belong to one cannot have a stable self and yet total commitment and attachment to any social unit implies a kind of selflessness. As a result,one's sense of being a person can come from being drawn into a wider social unit; our sense of selfhood can arise through the little ways in which we resist the pull.

2.4.2 Stigma: Notes on The Management of Spoiled Identity.

In his dramaturgical approach in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Goffman suggests that the performer has extensive control over the image of the self, but in Stigma this control is compromised. Take for example the dwarf, disfigured, alcoholic, imprisoned, homosexual or the stigma of race, nation and religion- there is a gap between the virtual identity and the actual social identity. Virtual identity refers to what an individual is intended to be in the eyes of others and actual identity is the attributes an individual can be "proved to possess". Social identity is spoiled when there is a difference between the virtual and the actual identity as is often the case for individuals with stigma. Many "normals" believe that "the person with stigma is not quite human" and will practice various forms of discrimination that reduces the life chances of the stigmatised individuals. The stigmatised individuals also hold the same belief about their identity as the 'normals'. As a result, the stigmatised perceive themselves as "that whatever other profess, they do not really 'accept' him and are not ready to make contact with him on 'equal grounds'" (1965:7)

In Stigma Goffman focuses primarily on the information the stigmatised convey about themselves in mixed contacts with 'normals', on their attempt to project or protect the self they believe they have, and on

how "we normals" respond to their discredited features and encourage their adoption of a good adjustment. In his book, Goffman studies various situations (case studies, autobiographies) in which he examines a person's feelings about himself and his relationship to people whom society calls "normal." The term 'stigma' describes the 'situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance'.Goffman argues that stigma is closely linked with stereotype, and both these are related to the unconscious expectations and norms that govern social interactions.

2.4.3 Critique of Goffman

Critics of Goffman's approach make some similar points to those leveled at other microsociologists. Perhaps he does not give enough recognition to the role that power plays in structuring social relations, tending to understand interactions from the participants' point of view. The dramaturgical analogy can also be questioned. This may be a good model for studies of organizations and 'total institutions', but may not be so effective in other social settings. Similarly, Goffman's theatrical analogy works best in modern Western societies that have established a distinction between the public and the private spheres of life (front and back stages). But in other societies, this division is either less evident or just does not exist in the same form.His writings are often criticised for the subjectivist approach that defies objectification and verification.

2.4.4. Contemporary significance:

Goffman's work has had a profound influence not only on sociology as a discipline, but on numerous scholars, who have been inspired to become professional sociologists as a result of reading his writings. He is widely regarded as having made some of the most thoughtful and stimulating contributions to the discipline. Many sociologists still refer to his original writings for example of how to conduct micro sociological research and the concepts he developed have become part of the very fabric of sociology in a variety of fields.

Check your progress:

1. What is the Dramaturgical approach?

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2. What does Goffman mean by the front and the back region?

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3. What are total institutions?

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4. Evaluate the works of Goffman.

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2.5 CRITICISMS OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism has made a significant impact on the various branches of sociology enriching sociology of knowledge. It has proven to be an effective theory in explaining the process of socialisation, in the study of deviance, in the field of medicine and in the study of organisations. Mead's ideas were a break from psychological behaviourism that generalised from animal behaviour to human behaviour. He saw man as an active agent rather than a passive receiver of external stimuli emphasising on the idea of 'emergence' in social relations. However, many sociologists have criticised the ambiguity of concepts such as mind, self, I and other core symbolic interactionist concepts claiming that they are confusing and imprecise and incapable of providing a firm basis for theory and research thereby making it difficult to operationalise them (Kuhn1964, Kolb 1944, Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds 1975). They have been criticised for not paying attention to the larger structures. Weinstein and Tanur(1976) argued that symbolic interactionism ignores the interconnectedness of outcomes to each other. It also ignores factors such as the unconscious and the emotions and psychological factors like needs, motives, intentions and aspirations focussing instead only on meaning, symbols, action and interaction. It ignores the larger historical or social settings as well as social facts like power, structure, and their restricting influence on human action and interaction.

2.6 SUMMARY

The American social behaviourist George Herbert Mead is credited with establishing the foundations for a general approach to sociology called interactionism. This is a general label that encompasses all the approaches that investigate the social interactions amongst individuals, rather than society or its constituent social structures. Interactionists often reject the very idea that social structures exist objectively or they simply do not focus on them at all. Herbert Blumer who coined the term 'symbolic interactionism argues that all talk of social structures or social systems is unjustified, as only individuals and their interactions can be

said to really exist at all. Symbolic interactionism is concerned with micro-level interaction and the way in which meanings are constructed and transmitted across the members of society.

In Mead's most important work Mind, Self and Society, he extended the principles of psychological behaviourism to mental processes. His concern was the relationship between the mental processes, action and interaction. In analysing this relationship, he defined many concepts important in symbolic interactionism- gestures, symbols, language, I and me and socialisation. He defined self as a process and viewed man as freer and more active agents.

Blumer emphasised the processual nature and changing character of the self. Blumer attributed the potential for spontaneity and indeterminacy to human behaviour and treated men as active creators of the world. He saw action as construction through active self-direction.

The Dramaturgical approach of Goffman is an extension of fundamental symbolic interactionism. In his writings he observes that the social world is not self-ordered and meaning is not inherent in behaviour. The social order and the meaning of a particular behaviour is significant because people value it. In interaction individuals present not only themselves to each other but also engage in impression management. Goffman has emphasised on face-to-face interaction. He, like the Chicago school, bases his research on personal observations and experiences. His writings are often criticised for being subjective, defying objectification and verification.

2.7 GLOSSARY

Back region: An area away from 'front region' performances, characterized by Erving Goffman, where individuals are able to relax and behave in an informal way.

Dramaturgical analysis:Erving Goffman's approach to the study of social interaction based on the use of metaphors derived from the theatre.

Front region: A setting of social activity in which individuals seek to put on a definite 'performance' for others.

Game stage: Period of self-development that follows the play stage. It involves the development of the ability to take the role of the generalised other and to take part in group activity.

Generalized other: A concept in the theory of George Herbert Mead, according to which the individual takes over the general values of a given group or society during the socialisation process.

Gesture: Sound or body movements that are used to stimulate the actions of another creature such that an act involving the mutual influence of both parties occurs.

I: Creative and imaginative phase of the self, which notes present circumstances and environmental contexts and suggests new actions. The self as "knower".

Impression management: An idea associated with the American sociologist Erving Goffman. People 'manage' or control the impressions others have of them by choosing what to conceal and what to reveal when they meet other people.

Me: The judgemental and the known aspect or phase of the self.

Play stage: The period of self-development in which the individuals learn to take account the role of a single other at a time.

Self: George Herbert Mead's term for a person's distinct sense of identity as developed through social interaction.

Symbolic interaction:A theoretical framework that views society as the product of the everyday interactions of people doing things together.

Taking the role of the other: The ability to project oneself mentally into a position where one can imagine how another or others will react to one's behaviour. The other can be either a particular or a generalised other.

Total institution: An institution in which members are required to live in isolation from the rest of society.

2. 8 QUESTIONS:

Q.1 Discuss the main tenets and merits of the symbolic interactionist approach.

Q.2 Elaborate on Mead's important work Mind, Self and Society.

Q.3 Do you agree that the symbolic Interactionist Approach of Mead has validity today? If yes, illustrate with examples.

Q.4 Explain in detail the works and life of G. H. Mead.

Q.5. Explain in detail the Dramaturgical Approach of Erving Goffman. Illustrate With examples.

Q.7. Explain the validity of the works of Goffman in present times.

Q.8. Critically evaluate the works of Goffman.

Q.9. Evaluate the contribution of Blumer to the Symbolic Interactionist Perspective.

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3

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Unit Structure

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- to give the reader an insight into Ethnomethodology
- to evaluate the contribution of Harold Garfinkel.
- To understand the conversational analysis and narrative analysis

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethnomethodology borrows and extends ideas from phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Ethnomethodology was "invented" by Garfinkel beginning in the late 1940s. The main ideas of ethnomethodology were first laid out with the publication of Garfinkel's Studies in Ethnomethodology in 1967. Over the years, ethno methodology has grown immensely expanding in a number of different directions. Only a decade after the publication of Studies in Ethnomethodology, Don Zimmerman concluded that ethnomethodology encompassed "a number of more or less distinct and sometimes incompatible lines of inquiry" (1978:6) with several varieties of ethnomethodology.

The term Ethno methodology coined by Harold Garfinkel examines the 'folk methods' people use in dealing with each other on a daily basis. Ethnomethodology is the study of folk or common-sense

methods used by people to make sense of everyday activities by constructing and maintaining social reality.

Garfinkel wanted to explore how we make sense of countless familiar everyday situations by looking at the practical reasoning we employ in everyday situations. We engage regularly in intentional speech or action; but these efforts rest on deeper assumptions about the world that we usually take for granted. Ethnomethodology studies the process by which people invoke certain taken for granted rules about behaviour with which they interpret an interaction situation and make it meaningful.

Ethnomethodologists do not use a common-sense method, rather they study common sense methods of constructing reality, the common methods people employ whether scientists, housewives, workers, teachers, jurors, to create a sense of order about the situations in which they interact. Zimmerman points out ethnomethodology 'is not a comprehensive theory of society .....but rather is an approach to the study of the fundamental biases of social order.' (Zimmerman 1978). Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods used by members of a group for understanding community, making decisions, being rational, accounting for action etc.

Ethnomethodologists are interested not only in explaining human behaviour but are interested in the interpretations people use to make sense of social settings, how people create a sense of reality. By making sense of the events in terms of preconceived order for society people create an ordered world. For the ethnomethodologists emphasis is not on questions about reliability and validity of investigators' observations but on the methods used by the scientific investigators and layperson to construct, maintain and alter what one believes to be a valid and reliable set of statements about order in the world (Turner 1999: 393).

The important concepts in ethnomethodology are:

Reflexive action and interaction: Interaction sustains a particular vision of reality. Much human action is reflexive. Humans interpret gestures, words and other information from each other in a way that sustains a particular vision of reality. Even contradictory evidence is reflexively interpreted to maintain a body of belief and knowledge. E.gThe belief that the ritual activity directed towards God sustains the belief that God influences everyday life. Such ritual activity is reflexive action, maintaining a certain vision of reality and upholding a belief even when the evidence shows that the belief may be incorrect. Instead of rejecting the belief the believers proclaim either they did not pray hard enough or maybe the cause was not just.

Accounts: Accounting is the process by which people make sense out of the world. Ethnomethodologists give attention to analysing people's accounts as well as to the ways in which accounts are offered and accepted

or rejected by the others. E.g., When a child is giving an explanation to the other child about a drawing of his own explaining and interpreting the shapes and colours the child is giving an account. One of the reasons ethnomethodologists are interested in conversational analysis is because of this.

Indexicality: Ethnomethodologists view that all accounts, expressions and all practical actions must be interpreted within the context in which it occurs. To say that an expression is indexical is to underline that the meaning of that expression is dependent on the context in which it occurred. Ethnomethodologists must not impose their view of reality on the actors. Instead, they must try to put themselves in the actors' place to understand what is happening. Actors create expressions that reflect their shared understanding of social reality. It focusses investigator's attention to actual interactive contexts to investigate how actors create indexical expressions that includes words, facial and body gestures to create and maintain the assumption that a particular reality governs everyday life.

Etcetera Principle: All situations have gaps to be filled in by the participants. Despite being confronted with uncertainties we engage in social life. As the action progresses, we seek information within the context that allows us to grasp the situation. Stopping to question every ambiguity would make social life impossible and therefore the etcetera principle should be followed.

Documentary method: It entails taking other people's behaviour, statements and other external appearances as a document or reflection of an underlying pattern that is used to analyse appearances. The need to reveal the underlying pattern is the documentary method.

Natural language: Is a set of activities that enables people to speak, hear and witness the objectively produced and displayed social life.

Check your progress:

1. Enumerate the important concepts in Ethnomethodology.

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3.2 GARFINKEL AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL INQUIRY:

Garfinkel's Studies in Ethnomethodology firmly established ethnomethodology as a unique field of inquiry that tries to understand the methods people use to make sense of the world. Garfinkel emphasised the role of language in the construction of reality. For Garfinkel 'to do interaction is to tell interaction '. The primary folk technique used by

actors is verbal description. As a result, people relyon accounts to create a sense of reality. For e.g., when a student explains to the professor why she couldn't give an exam, she is offering an account. The student is attempting to make sense of the situation to provide an explanation to the professor. Ethnomethodologists use a process called "ethnomethodological indifference" where they do not judge the nature of accounts but study how the accounts are used in real world action. They are interested in the accounts and the strategies used by the speaker and listener to comprehend, accept and reject the accounts.

Garfinkel gave emphasis to **indexicality or** a reality that members' accounts are linked to a particular social context. Garfinkel used empirical research to validate their assumptions about what is real. One of his research methods was known as a "breaching experiment" in which the normal course of interaction is purposefully interrupted, disrupting temporarily the world that individuals take for granted and see how they react.In a breaching experiment, the researcher purposely breaks a social norm or behaves in a socially awkward manner. The goal of this is to reveal background assumptions that have been accepted as reality for a long time. His breaching experiments tested sociological concepts of social norms and conformity. He argues that the only way to discover how we make sense of the events is to observe what happens when we break them.

He reports a series of conversations in which the student experimenters challenged every statement of selected subjects.

One of these exchanges ran as follows (E is the student volunteer, S is their friend):

S: How are you?
E: How am I in regard to what?
My health, my finances, my school work, my peace of mind, my...?
S: [red in the face and suddenly out of control]: Look' I was just trying to be polite. Frankly. I don't give a damn how you are.

Why would a friend get so upset so quickly?

In this situation the experimenter was deliberately violating an underlying rule for this type of interaction. In any interaction there are certain implicit features that everyone should grasp and not question in order to carry out their everyday conversational affairs without disruption. Such strategies direct everyday activities and are critical in the formation of the idea that an external social order exists among interacting individuals. Through breaching Garfinkel hoped to discover the implicit ethnomethods by forcing actors to actively participate in the process of reality construction after the situation had been disrupted.

For Garfinkelthe stability and meaningfulness of our daily social lives are dependent on the sharing of unstated cultural assumptions about what is said and why if we were not able to take these for granted, meaningful communication would not be possible. Any question or contribution to a conversation would have to be followed by a massive 'search procedure' of the sort Garfinkel's subjects were told to practice, and interaction would simply break down. What seem at first sight to be unimportant conventions of talk, therefore, turn out to be crucial to the very fabric of social life, which is why their violation is so serious. In everyday life, people occasionally feign ignorance of unstated facts. This may be done with the intention to rebuke others, poke fun at them, cause embarrassment or point out a double meaning in what was said.

In one of his experiments Garfinkel asked students to act as guests in their own homes recording their parent's reactions as they attempted to understand the breakdown of their long-term informal relationship with their children.

Consider, for example, this all too typical exchange between parent (P) and teenager (T):

P: Where are you going?
T: Out.
P: What are you going to do?
T: Nothing.

In the above example the teenager provides no appropriate answers at all- essentially saying, 'Mind your own business"

Comedy and joking thrive on such deliberate misunderstandings of the unstated assumptions involved in talk. There is nothing threatening about this so long as the parties concerned recognize that the intent is to provoke laughter. By delving into the everyday world which we all inhabit, Garfinkel shows us that the normal, smooth-running social order that some sociologists simply take for granted is in fact a social process of interaction, which has to be continually reproduced over the course of everyday interactions. In his 'breaching experiments', Garfinkel was able to demonstrate the robustness of daily life. Social reality may be socially constructed, but this is a hard construction that cannot be ignored.

Breaching experiments are used to investigate and discover the various unwritten social rules that control our lives. The breaching experiments illustrate the persistence of social reality, since the subjects move quickly to normalize the breach—that is, to render the situation accountable in familiar terms. It is considered that the way people handle these breaches tells us much about how they handle their everyday lives (Handel 1982). Although these experiments seem harmless, they frequently lead to strong emotional reactions. These strong reactions

reflect how crucial it is for people to engage in ordinary, common sense activities.

Garfinkel's research strategy illustrates the general intent of ethno methodological inquiry to penetrate natural social settings or create social settings in which the investigator can observe humans attempting to assert, create, maintain or change rules for constructing the appearance of consensus over the structure of the real world.

Check your progress:

1. Write a note on the breaching experiment.

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3.3 CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS

The guiding feature of everyday interaction is language. To comprehend society and the means by which it is created, one should look at language and the rules through which we speak. Human realities are constructed through talk. Conversational analysis is a collection of rigorous procedures to technically record and then analyse what happens in everyday speech.

The goal of conversation analysis is "the detailed understanding of the fundamental structures of conversational interaction" (Zimmerman, 1988:429). It is to study the taken for granted ways in which conversation is organised. Conversation analysts analyse the relationships among words/sounds in a conversation rather than the relationships between speakers and hearers (Sharrock and Anderson 1986: 68).

Conversation is defined in terms that are in line with the basic elements of the ethno methodological perspective: "Conversation is an interactional activity exhibiting stable, orderly properties that are the analysable achievements of the conversants" (Zimmerman, 1988:406). Although there are rules and procedures for conversations, they do not determine what is said but instead are used to "accomplish" a conversation.

Zimmerman (1988) details five basic working principles of conversation analysis.

- Conversation analysis requires the collection and analysis of extremely detailed data on conversations.
- Even the finest detail of a conversation must be assumed to be a well-ordered accomplishment.

- Interaction in general and conversation in particular have stable, orderly properties that are the results of the actors involved.
- "The fundamental framework of conversation is sequential organization" (Zimmerman, 1988:422).
- "The course of conversational interaction is managed on a turn-by-turn or local basis" (Zimmerman, 1988:423).

Listening to and observing language, recording it, transcribing it and even videotaping it is part of conversation analysis. Conversational analysts are concerned with the 'sequencing' of talk: how sentences flow from one another. Everywhere people are talking- at courts, streets, hospitals, television- conversational analysts are interested in understanding their talk– to see how people construct their daily talk. They see this talk and conversation as a topic to investigate in its own right: they are not interested in the content of what people actually say but they are interested in its forms and rules, which they perceive as the fundamental feature of social interaction.

Conversations are seen as internally, sequentially ordered. 'Normal' interaction depends upon this, and everyday life interactions can be possible if people are willing to follow certain 'sequencing rules'. One of these, for instance, is 'turn taking': people bide their time, they take turns at being hearers and tellers to talk to others. Another is the 'adjacency pair' through which most greetings, openings and closings of conversations have an unwritten rule that as one speaks a line, so another makes the most appropriate conventional response to it. Thus, for example, a standard opening line may be: how are you? And this requires a response, usually of the form: very well, thank you. Everyday life is in this way deeply regulated by social rules (Heritage, 1984).

Methodologically, conversation analysts are led to study conversations in naturally occurring situations, often using audiotape or videotape. This method allows information to flow from the everyday world rather than being imposed on it by the researcher. Rather than relying on his/her notes the researcher can examine and re-examine an actual conversation in minute detail. This technique also allows the researcher to conduct in-depth analysis of conversations. Conversation analysis is based on the assumption that conversations are the foundations of other forms of interpersonal relations (David Gibson 2000). They are the most common kind of communication, and a conversation "consists of the fullest matrix of socially organized communicative practices and procedures' ' (Heritage and Atkinson 1984:13).

Check your progress:

1. Write a note on Conversational Analysis.

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3.4 ETHNOMETHODOLOGISTS AND MAINSTREAM SOCIOLOGY

Ethnomethodologists are critical of mainstream sociology for imposing their sense of social reality on people rather than researching what people actually do. Sociologists distort the social world in many ways by imposing their concepts, data, and so on. Sociologists are also criticised for confusing topic and resource—that is, treating the everyday world as a resource rather than as a topic in its own right. Ethnomethodologists suggest that mainstream sociologists have treated human beings as a "cultural dope" who act out things as per the directives of society. Ethnomethodologists on the contrary, treat human beings as thinking creatures, who evaluate every situation according to the context and then give it meaning. As a result, humans shape their own social world rather than being shaped by it. The "conventional" sociologists treat the social world with an objective reality of its own. Therefore, they treat aspects like suicide and crime as having an independent existence and attempt to give an explanation for the same. But ethnomethodologists contend that the social reality consists of members' interpretations and accounts to make sense of the world. Therefore, sociologists should be studying the accounting procedures which the members use.

3.5 CRITIQUE

The ethnomethodologists have been criticized by mainstream sociologists as "folk sociologists." They are criticised for taking a detached view of the members of society. According to them the kind of members whom the ethnomethodologists are talking about, lack motives and goals in life. Ethnomethodologists overlook the impact that nature of power and power differentials can have on members' motives. Also, many ethnomethodologists overlook the objects and situations which are not interpreted by people.

3.6 CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

Ethnomethodology is an important approach to the study of everyday life and social interaction, Ethno methodology has produced much insightful work on the process of daily life and how it is experienced and made sense of by the people who constitute and reproduce it. As a result, it remains an influential perspective among academics and students of everyday life. To conclude ethnomethodology is significantly more widely accepted today than it was a decade or two ago while others argue that ethnomethodologists are losing sight of their phenomenological foundations.

Sociologists who are interested in large-scale social structures, power relations within the international system of nation-states and long-

term socio-historical change will always find ethnomethodology disappointing, Mainstream sociologists believe that ethnomethodology focuses on simple matters ignoring the more important issues of society. Ethnomethodologists on the other hand feel that studying everyday life is an important topic of study.

It could be said that the human capacity to produce order out of chaos is the only worthwhile capacity in the eyes of the ethnomethodologist. For them other human capacities, such as moral judgement, would only be seen as subjective and therefore possessing no true reality for them. However, ethnomethodology is a good method to understand how individuals make sense of the social world for themselves, building their own reality from limited real information provided.

Check your progress:

1. How does Ethnomethodology differ from mainstream sociology?

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2. Critically evaluate ethnomethodology.

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3. Discuss the contemporary significance of ethnomethodology.

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3.7 SUMMARY

Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods used by people to make sense of the social world and tends to emphasize empirical research focusing on action and interaction. The ethnomethodologist is primarily interested in the world as perceived by the people and as interpreted by them within social relations.

It is not the sense of order that makes society possible but rather the ability of humans to actively construct and use rules for persuading one another that there is a real world. They emphasise on the need for understanding the situation from the actors' point of view. To the ethnomethodologists the mainstream sociologist's concepts, techniques and statistics misrepresent the real nature of social reality. They critique

the traditional sociologist's tendency to impose its sense of reality on the social world rather than letting the sense emerge from the context. Basic concepts of ethnomethodology include reflexivity, accounts, indexicality, the etcetera principle, documentary method and natural language.

3.8 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Narrative analysis is a qualitative research method for analysing stories or narratives where researchers interpret stories delivered in the context of research and/or are shared in everyday life. Established within the social sciences since the 1990's it focuses on the narratives and stories for research. Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating (Hinchman and Hinchman, 1997). Narratives can be found in various forms. They can be obtained from journals, conversations, recorded histories, autobiographies, media texts, transcripts of in-depth interviews, policy documents etc. It is interdisciplinary in nature and borrows from theoretical orientation like phenomenology, interactionism and is applied to a wide range of social sciences like sociology, psychology, education and anthropology.

Narrative analysis is the basic human way of making sense of the world- we live storied lives (Reissman 1993). It is a necessary component of reality and identity. Narratives or stories occur when one or more speakers engage in sharing and recounting an experience or event. The telling of a story occupies multiple turns in the course of a conversation and stories or narratives and may have structural similarities. Researchers conducting this type of analysis make substantial and meaningful interpretations and conclusions by focusing on several components like the way in which the story is structured, the functions the story serves, the substance of the story and how the story is performed. They understand how research participants construct stories and narratives from their own individual personal experiences. The research participants first interpret their own lives through narrative and then the researcher interprets the construction of the narrative as presented by the research participant.

A common assumption of narrative methods is that people tell stories to help organize and make sense of their lives and their storied accounts are functional, and purposeful. Narrative sociology is based on the understanding that people construct meaning through the stories that define their everyday lives. Simply stated, narratives are the stories we tell one another. They order and connect events forming meaningful patterns. What makes such diverse texts "narrative" is sequence and consequence: events are selected, organised, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience.

Critics argue that narrative research can make the interior "self", pretend to offer an "authentic" voice – unalloyed subjective truth, and

idealise individual agency (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Bury, 2001). Narrative approaches are ineffective for studies of large numbers of nameless and faceless subjects. Structured interviews that follow a question answer format or written surveys, are less likely to capture narrative data. Narratives do not reflect the past rather they refract it. Imagination and strategic interests influence how storytellers choose to connect events and make them meaningful for others. Narratives are useful in research precisely because storytellers interpret the past rather than reproduce it as it was. The "truths" of narrative accounts are not in their faithful representations of a past world, but in the shifting connections they forge among past, present, and future. They provide a way for storytellers to re-imagine lives. Building on C. Wright Mills, narrative analysis can create connections between personal biography and social structure – the personal and the political' (Reissman 2003)

Conclusion:

Since the 'narrative turn' in the social sciences, narratives or stories have been the focus of considerable interest. This is because researchers have come to understand that personal, social, and cultural experiences are constructed through the sharing of stories. Narrative analysis can be used to examine how narratives reflect and shape social contexts. They are crucial as we use stories to make sense of the world.

Check your progress:

1. Explain Narrative analysis as a qualitative research method.

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3.9 GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Conversation analysis: The empirical study of conversations, employing techniques drawn from ethnomethodology. Conversation analysis examines details of naturally occurring conversations to reveal the organizational principles of talk and its role in the production and reproduction of social order. conversational analysis a rigorous set of techniques to technically record and then analyse what happens in everyday speech

Ethnomethodology: Harold Garfinkel's term for the study of how people make sense of what others say and do in the course of day-to-day social interaction. Ethno methodology is concerned with the 'ethno methods' by means of which human beings sustain meaningful interchanges with one another.

Narrative Analysis: In qualitative research narrative analysis takes stories as an investigative focus and the ways in which people create meaning through the stories they say.

3.10 QUESTIONS:

1) What is Ethnomethodology? Explain the contribution of Harold Garfinkeltowards its development?
2) Explain the concepts of reflexivity and indexicality as used in ethnomethodology.
3) Explain the concept of social order as understood by Ethnomethodologistsin comparison to other schools of thought in sociology.
4) How do ethnomethodologists distinguish themselves from mainstream sociologists? Give a critique of ethnomethodology.
5) Write short notes on:

   Conversational Analysis

   Narrative analyses.

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Module - II

4

WESTERN MARXISM AND THE CRITICAL THEORY

Unit Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVE

You will be able to comprehend the following after reading this unit:

- An introduction to the idea of Western Marxism in sociology
- The Classical Approach to Critical Theory Sociology
- The contribution of eminent thinkers and academics in Western Marxism and Critical Theory

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF WESTERN MARXISM

All philosophising in the Soviet Union and its eastern European satellites began with the framework of nineteenth-century Marxism, which was supplemented by philosophical recommendations from Lenin. However, much of Lenin's thought was focused on more practical problems like violent methods and the Communist Party's role in bringing about and strengthening the proletariat revolution. Following classic

Marxism, this practical interest was maintained, owing to the fact that it preserved the essential Marxist notion of what philosophy is and should be. Marxism (like pragmatism) linked theoretical concerns to practical concerns. It established the fundamental unification of theory and practise by discovering that the former serves the latter. Both Marx and Lenin believed that thought was always an expression of class interests, and that philosophy should be converted into an instrument for advancing the class struggle. Philosophy's job was to build the intellectual weapons of the proletariat, not to find the truth in an abstract sense. As a result, the two were inextricably linked.

In the West, there were two primary types of Marxism: orthodox communist parties, as described above, and Western Marxism, which included the more diffuse New Left organisations of the late 1950s and 1960s. Western Marxism, on the other hand, was a rejection of Marxism-Leninism, even if its proponents thought they were following the Soviet Communist Party's philosophy when it was initially developed in the 1920s. GyörgyLukács, Karl Korsch, and Lucien Goldmann of Hungary; Antonio Gramsci of Italy; Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jürgen Habermas of Germany; and Henri Lefebvre, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty of France were all important figures in the development of Western Marxism.

Western Marxism was formed mostly by the failure of the Western world's socialist revolution. The philosophical formulation of Marxism, especially in regard to cultural and historical studies, was more important to Western Marxists than the actual political or economic implementation of Marxism. They thought it was vital to investigate and comprehend non-Marxist views as well as all areas of bourgeois culture in order to explain capitalism's undisputed triumph.

Marx expected that revolution would first take place in Europe, but the newly decolonized countries of Africa and Asia proved to be more receptive. The technological advancements connected with capitalism were also championed by Orthodox Marxism, who saw them as crucial to the advancement of socialism. However, experience taught Western Marxists that technological advancements did not always cause the crises envisaged by Marx, nor did they always lead to revolution. They disputed, in particular, Engels' claim that Marxism is an integrated, scientific philosophy that can be applied universally to nature; instead, they saw it as a criticism of human existence rather than an objective general science. Disillusioned with Stalin's terrorism and the communist-party system's bureaucracy, they campaigned for worker councils to rule instead of professional politicians, believing that this would better serve the interests of the working class. Later, when the working class looked to be too fully integrated into the capitalist system, Western Marxists advocated for stronger anarchist measures. In general, they shared Marx's early humanist works rather than later dogmatic interpretations.

Western Marxism drew support from academics rather than workers, and orthodox Marxists dismissed it as unrealistic. Nonetheless, non-Marxists' perceptions of the world have been affected by Western Marxists' focus on Marx's social theory and critical appraisal of Marxist methods and ideas.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Western Marxism in brief.

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4.2 INTRODUCTION CRITICAL THEORY

Critical theory is the product of a group of German neo-Marxists who were dissatisfied with the state of Marxian theory, particularly its tendency toward economic determinism. The organization associated with critical theory, the Institute of Social Research, was officially founded in Frankfurt, Germany, on February 23, 1923. Critical theory has spread beyond the confines of the Frankfurt school. Critical theory was and is largely a European orientation, although its influence in American sociology has grown.

Critical theory is composed largely of criticisms of various aspects of social and intellectual life, but its ultimate goal is to reveal more accurately the nature of society.

4.3 CRITICISMS OF MARXIAN THEORY

Critical theory takes as its starting point a critique of Marxian theories. The critical theorists are most disturbed by the economic determinists—the mechanistic, or mechanical, Marxists (Antonio, 1981; Schroyer, 1973; Sewart, 1978). Some (for example, Habermas, 1971) criticize the determinism implicit in parts of Marx's original work, but most focus their criticisms on the neo-Marxists, primarily because they had interpreted Marx's work too mechanistically. The critical theorists do not say that economic determinists were wrong in focusing on the economic realm but that they should have been concerned with other aspects of social life as well. The critical school seeks to rectify this imbalance by focusing its attention on the cultural realm (Fuery and Mansfield, 2000; Schroyer, 1973:33). In addition to attacking other Marxian theories, the critical school critiqued societies, such as the former Soviet Union, built ostensibly on Marxian theory (Marcuse, 1958).

4.4 CRITICISMS OF POSITIVISM

Critical theorists also focus on the philosophical underpinnings of scientific inquiry, especially positivism (Bottomore, 1984; Fuller, 2007a; Halfpenny, 2001, 2005; Morrow, 1994). The criticism of positivism is related, at least in part, to the criticism of economic determinism, because some of those who were determinists accepted part or all of the positivist theory of knowledge. Positivism is depicted as accepting the idea that a single scientific method is applicable to all fields of study.

Positivism is opposed by the critical school on various grounds (Sewart, 1978). For one thing, positivism tends to reify the social world and see it as a natural process. The critical theorists prefer to focus on human activity as well as on the ways in which such activity affects larger social structures. . In short, positivism loses sight of the actors (Habermas, 1971), reducing them to passive entities determined by "natural forces." Given their belief in the distinctiveness of the actor, the critical theorists would not accept the idea that the general laws of science can be applied without question to human action.

Positivism is depicted as accepting the idea that a single scientific method is applicable to all fields of study. It takes the physical sciences as the standard of certainty and exactness for all disciplines. Positivists believe that knowledge is inherently neutral. They feel that they can keep human values out of their work.

4.5 CRITICISMS OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is attacked for its "scientism," that is, for making the scientific method an end in itself. In addition, sociology is accused of accepting the status quo. The critical school maintains that sociology does not seriously criticize society or seek to transcend the contemporary social structure. Sociology, the critical school contends, has surrendered its obligation to help people oppressed by contemporary society. Members of this school are critical of sociologists' focus on society as a whole rather than on individuals in society; sociologists are accused of ignoring the interaction of the individual and society. Although most sociological perspectives are not guilty of ignoring this interaction, this view is a cornerstone of the critical school's attacks on sociologists. Because they ignore the individual, sociologists are seen as being unable to say anything meaningful about political changes that could lead to a "just and humane society" (Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, 1973:46).

Check Your Progress

1. What is critical theory?

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2. What is the connection between Western Marxism and Critical Theory ?

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4.6 CRITIQUE OF MODERN SOCIETY

The critical school focuses primarily on one form of formal rationality—modern technology (Feenberg, 1996). Marcuse (1964), for example, was a severe critic of modern technology, at least as it is employed in capitalism. He saw technology in modern capitalist society as leading to totalitarianism. In fact, he viewed it as leading to new, more effective, and even more "pleasant" methods of external control over individuals. The prime example is the use of television to socialize and pacify the population (other examples are mass sport, and pervasive exploitation of sex). Marcuse rejected the idea that technology is neutral in the modern world and saw it instead as a means to dominate people. It is effective because it is made to seem neutral when it is in fact enslaving. It serves to suppress individuality. The actor's inner freedom has been "invaded and whittled down" by modern technology. The result is what Marcuse called "one dimensional society," in which individuals lose the ability to think critically and negatively about society. Marcuse did not see technology per se as the enemy, but rather technology as it is employed in modern capitalist society: "Technology, no matter how 'pure,' sustains and streamlines the continuum of domination. This fatal link can be cut only by a revolution which makes technology and technique subservient to the needs and goals of free men" (1969:56). Marcuse retained Marx's original view that technology is not inherently a problem and that it can be used to develop a "better" society.

4.7 CRITIQUE OF CULTURE

The critical theorists level significant criticisms at what they call the "culture industry" (Kellner and Lewis, 2007), the rationalized, bureaucratized structures (for example, the television networks) that control modern culture. Interest in the culture industry reflects their concern with the Marxian concept of "superstructure" rather than with the economic base (Beamish, 2007e). The culture industry, producing what is conventionally called "mass culture," is defined as the "administered . . .

nonspontaneous, reified, phony culture rather than the real thing" (Jay, 1973:216; see also Lash and Urry, 2007). 2 Two things worry the critical thinkers most about this industry. First, they are concerned about its falseness. They think of it as a prepackaged set of ideas mass-produced and disseminated to the masses by the media. Second, the critical theorists are disturbed by its pacifying, repressive, and stupefying effect on people (D. Cook, 1996; G. Friedman, 1981; Tar, 1977:83; Zipes, 1994).

The critical school is also interested in and critical of what it calls the "knowledge industry," which refers to entities concerned with knowledge production (for example, universities and research institutes) that have become autonomous structures in our society. Their autonomy has allowed them to extend themselves beyond their original mandate (Schroyer, 1970). They have become oppressive structures interested in expanding their influence throughout society.

4.8 CRITICISMS OF CRITICAL THEORY

A number of criticisms have been leveled at critical theory (Bottomore, 1984). First, critical theory has been accused of being largely ahistorical, of examining a variety of events without paying much attention to their historical and comparative contexts (for example, Nazism in the 1930s, anti-Semitism in the 1940s, student revolts in the 1960s). This is a damning criticism of any Marxian theory, which should be inherently historical and comparative. Second, the critical school, as we have seen already, generally has ignored the economy. Finally, and relatedly, critical theorists have tended to argue that the working class has disappeared as a revolutionary force, a position decidedly in opposition to traditional Marxian analysis. Criticisms such as these led traditional Marxists such as Bottomore to conclude, "The Frankfurt School, in its original form, and as a school of Marxism or sociology, is dead" (1984:76). Similar sentiments have been expressed by Greisman, who labels critical theory "the paradigm that failed" (1986:273). If it is dead as a distinctive school, that is because many of its basic ideas have found their way into Marxism, neo-Marxian sociology, and even mainstream sociology. Thus, as Bottomore himself concludes in the case of Habermas, the critical school has undergone a rapprochement with Marxism and sociology, and "at the same time some of the distinctive ideas of the Frankfurt School are conserved and developed" (1984:76).

4.9 THE IDEAS OF JURGEN HABERMAS

Although critical theory may be on the decline, JurgenHabermas and his theories are very much alive (J. Bernstein, 1995; R. Brown and Goodman, 2001; Outhwaite, 1994).

Habermas (1971) argues that Marx failed to distinguish between two analytically distinct components of species-being—work (or labor,

purposive-rational action) and social (or symbolic) interaction (or communicative action). In Habermas's view, Marx tended to ignore the latter and to reduce it to work.

Throughout his writings, Habermas's work is informed by this distinction, although he is most prone to use the terms purposive-rational action (work) and communicative action (interaction).

Under the heading "purposive-rational action," Habermas distinguishes between instrumental action and strategic action. Both involve the calculated pursuit of self interest. Instrumental action involves a single actor rationally calculating the best means to a given goal. Strategic action involves two or more individuals coordinating purposive-rational action in the pursuit of a goal. The objective of both instrumental and strategic action is instrumental mastery. Habermas is most interested in communicative action, in which the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding. In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions. (Habermas, 1984:286; italics added)

Whereas the end of purposive-rational action is to achieve a goal, the objective of communicative action is to achieve communicative understanding (Sean Stryker, 1998). Clearly, there is an important speech component in communicative action. However, such action is broader than that encompassing "speech acts or equivalent nonverbal expressions" (Habermas, 1984:278).

Habermas's key point of departure from Marx is to argue that communicative action, not purposive-rational action (work), is the most distinctive and most pervasive human phenomenon. It (not work) is the foundation of all socio-cultural life as well as all the human sciences. Whereas Marx was led to focus on work, Habermas is led to focus on communication.

4.10 RATIONALIZATION

The rationalization of communicative action leads to communication free from domination, free and open communication. Rationalization here involves emancipation, "removing restrictions on communication". This is where Habermas's previously mentioned work on legitimations and, more generally, ideology fits in. That is, these are two of the main causes of distorted communication, causes that must be eliminated if we are to have free and open communication.

At the level of social norms, such rationalization would involve decreases in normative repressiveness and rigidity leading to increases in

individual flexibility and reflectivity. The development of this new, less-restrictive or nonrestrictive normative system lies at the heart of Habermas's theory of social evolution. Instead of a new productive system, rationalization for Habermas (1979) leads to a new, less-distorting normative system. Although he regards it as a misunderstanding of his position, many have accused Habermas of cutting his Marxian roots in this shift from the material level to the normative level.

The end point of this evolution for Habermas is a rational society (Delanty, 1997). Rationality here means removal of the barriers that distort communication, but more generally it means a communication system in which ideas are openly presented and defended against criticism; unconstrained agreement develops during argumentation.

4.11 COMMUNICATION

Habermas distinguishes between the previously discussed communicative action and discourse. Whereas communicative action occurs in everyday life, discourse is *that form of communication that is removed from contexts of experience and action and whose structure assures us: that the bracketed validity claims of assertions, recommendations, or warnings are the exclusive object of discussion; that participants, themes, and contributions are not restricted except with reference to the goal of testing the validity claims in questions; that no force except that of the better argument is exercised; and that all motives except that of the cooperative search for truth are excluded. (Habermas, 1975:107–108)*

In the theoretical world of discourse, but also hidden and underlying the world of communicative actions, is the "ideal speech situation," in which force or power does not determine which arguments win out; instead the better argument emerges victorious. The weight of evidence and argumentation determine what is considered valid or true. The arguments that emerge from such a discourse (and that the participants agree on) are true (Hesse, 1995). Thus Habermas adopts a consensus theory of truth (rather than a copy [or "reality"] theory of truth [Outhwaite, 1994:41]). This truth is part of all communication, and its full expression is the goal of Habermas's evolutionary theory. As Thomas McCarthy says, "The idea of truth points ultimately to a form of interaction that is free from all distorting influences. The 'good and true life' that is the goal of critical theory is inherent in the notion of truth; it is anticipated in every act of speech" (1982:308).

Consensus arises theoretically in discourse (and pre theoretically in communicative action) when four types of validity claims are raised and recognized by interactants. First, the speaker's utterances are seen as understandable, comprehensible. Second, the propositions offered by the speaker are true; that is, the speaker is offering reliable knowledge. Third, the speaker is being truthful (veracious) and sincere in offering the

propositions; the speaker is reliable. Fourth, it is right and proper for the speaker to utter such propositions; he or she has the normative basis to do so. Consensus arises when all these validity claims are raised and accepted; it breaks down when one or more are questioned. Returning to an earlier point, there are forces in the modern world that distort this process, prevent the emergence of a consensus, and would have to be overcome for Habermas's ideal society to come about (Morris, 2001)

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss Contribution of Habermas in Critical Theory.

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4.12 SUMMARY

In the West, there were two primary types of Marxism: orthodox communist parties, as described above, and Western Marxism, which included the more diffuse New Left organisations of the late 1950s and 1960s. Western Marxism was a rejection of Marxism-Leninism, even if its proponents thought they were following the Soviet Communist Party's philosophy. GyörgyLukács, Karl Korsch, and Lucien Goldmann were all important figures in the development of Western Marxism. Western Marxism drew support from academics rather than workers, and orthodox Marxists dismissed it as unrealistic. They disputed, in particular, Engels' claim that Marxism is an integrated, scientific philosophy that can be applied universally to nature.

Disillusioned with Stalin's terrorism and the communist-party system's bureaucracy, they campaigned for worker councils to rule instead of professional politicians. When the working class looked to be too fully integrated into the capitalist system, Western Marxists advocated for stronger anarchist measures.

Critical theory is composed largely of criticisms of various aspects of social and intellectual life. Its ultimate goal is to reveal more accurately the nature of society. Critical theory was and is largely a European orientation, although its influence in U.S. sociology has grown. Positivism is depicted as accepting the idea that a single scientific method is applicable to all fields of study. Critical school contends that sociology does not seriously criticize society or seek to transcend the contemporary social structure.

Sociology is attacked for its "scientism," that is, for making the scientific method an end in itself. Critical school focuses primarily on one form of formal rationality—modern technology. Herbert Marcuse (1964)

was a severe critic of modern technology, at least as it is employed in capitalism. Marcuse retained Marx's original view that technology can be used to develop a "better" society.

Critical theorists are concerned with what they call the "culture industry". Culture industry is defined as the "administered. . . nonspontaneous, reified, phony culture rather than the real thing". Critical theorists are disturbed by its pacifying, repressive, and stupefying effect on people. Critical theory has been criticized for being largely ahistorical and ignoring the economy. Many of its basic ideas have found their way into Marxism, neo-Marxian sociology, and mainstream sociology.

Although critical theory may be on the decline, JurgenHabermas and his theories are very much alive. Communicative action, not work, is the foundation of all socio-cultural life and sciences, says Habermas. In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own successes. They pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action.

4.13 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Western Marxism . Elaborate on its historical context .
2. Elaborate on the ideas of Jurgen Habermas.

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5

FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Unit Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To learn about the origin of the Frankfurt school
- To understand its growth and work.
- To learn about the view of the Frankfurt school on media, technology.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will look into the historical context through which the Frankfurt school emerged. We will also look into the process of Frankfurt school, its growth and impact on the larger sociological theorization. This chapter is more theoretical. Learning about Frankfurt school is very important as it is a part of Social theory. It could be a topic even in your entrance exams or higher studies. Since the setting in which Frankfurt school emerged in Europe, it becomes difficult to apply it to the Indian setting. However, understanding this school becomes essential to understand the critical theory largely used while locating social problems in our society. The standard reference book for Social theory is Ritzer; you can read that book if you are more interested in learning about Social theory and critical theory. Let us now look into the Frankfurt school in detail.

5.2 MEANING OF SCHOOL

Before understanding Frankfurt school, let us first learn about what a school is. A school in lay person's language is a secondary group that helps in an individual's socialization. It plays an important role in the development of the child and society at large. However, here the meaning refers to an institution where scholars come together and work on a specific area. These schools produce a body of work that further leads to the development of the discipline. It helps in bringing further discussion, debates with the work they produced. It is only then a random university or institute qualifies to be called a school. A school is viewed as more serious than just a department in a University. It is also seen as an important body and has a say in the discipline. Generally, the school is built around a university or even associated with a particular study location. For example, in Urban Sociology, there are two dominant schools, i.e., Los Angeles School and Chicago School of Sociology.

5.3 ORIGIN OF FRANKFURT SCHOOL

The development of the Frankfurt school (German: Frankfurter Schule) is closely associated with the Institute of Social Research at Goethe, University Frankfurt (1929). Institute was founded in the early 1920s to promote radical intellectual ideas not controlled by traditional Marxist and social democratic parties or academic disciplines (Jay, 1973).

Over time, several universities' research capacities had developed through research commissions and third-party funds, particularly in Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Gottingen in the 1950s. With this, the "New Frankfurt School" began with the help of Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. The Frankfurt School remained consciously critical and even dismissive of American sociology and used selected Marxist and Freudian categories as a theoretical foundation for analyzing contemporary society.

The Frankfurt School is an influential school of thought that helped bring continental philosophy and German intellectual traditions to America. This school was associated with Frankfurt University in the 1920s and early 1930s and again in the 1950s through the 1960s (with a Nazi-era exile in Geneva and Columbia University and a post-war stay in California). The Frankfurt School thinkers produced an innovative blend of radical philosophy and social science. The Frankfurt School was a tight network of independent radical philosophers, economists, and sociologists associated with the German Institute for Social Research - essentially a Marxist think tank funded by a German millionaire grain merchant (Wiggershaus, 1994; Jay, 1973).

The Frankfurt School provides rich material for the sociology of knowledge. It is an example of how a once marginal school of thought

gained widespread influence and crossed the boundaries between disciplines, social movements, psychoanalysis, Marxism and national tradition. Marxism is an interdisciplinary subject that can be connected with any discipline. Here even Frankfurt school was influenced by it. The Frankfurt school developed through many difficulties where they had to constantly keep on moving due to the War happening in countries. However, they added it to it and shaped it according to their belief systems. Frankfurt school is associated with (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Kluge, Benjamin, Kracauer).

5.4 FRANKFURT SCHOOL VS. CULTURAL STUDIES

Both Frankfurt school and British Cultural studies were influenced by Gramsci's critique of the dominant mode of culture and media and it provided many valuable tools for cultural criticism. Lukács and Bloch developed the concepts of ideology, utopia and historical-materialist cultural analysis that influenced the trajectory of Frankfurt school cultural studies.

Thus, the work of the Frankfurt school has been central in establishing the basis for critical cultural studies. Equally important to the history of cultural studies and social theory is the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), or the "Birmingham school," established at the University of Birmingham, England, in the 1960s. In contrast to what many now see as the overly elitist perspective of the Frankfurt school, members of the CCCS offered theories of popular culture and the media that combined elements of Marxism, poststructuralism, feminist analysis, semiology, and many other perspectives. The views of both of these schools are addressed in entries on cultures, such as Media Critique, Television and Social Theory, Cultural Marxism and British Cultural Studies, and many others.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain in a few lines your understanding of the origin of the Frankfurt school.

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2. Explain Cultural studies vs. Frankfurt school in a few lines.

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5.5 CULTURE INDUSTRY

The culture industry produced consumers who would consume its products and conform to the dictates and the behaviors of the existing society. The culture industry thesis described both the production of massified cultural products and homogenized subjectivities. Mass culture produced dreams, hopes, fears, and longings for the Frankfurt school and an eternal desire for consumer products. Walter Benjamin also pointed out that (1969), the culture industry also produces rational and critical consumers able to dissect and discriminate among cultural texts and performances, much as sports fans learn to analyze and criticize sports events (Ritzer). Let us take an example of a mall – You see the same brand everywhere, the malls are homogenous too with the same set of shops. Buying a displayed product becomes more of an aspiration. It's tempting too. At times even it's a goal that one keeps. So, here we are sold to the idea of an industry that designs it for that. Let us take another example of French fries and burgers. We know it's unhealthy due to heavy oil, bread, etc., than plain vegetables, yet we tend to buy it. In other words, we are not buying food but we are paying for unhealthy food. So, how this happens is through the culture industry. When everyone is eating, you would also be tempted to eat. It's a psychological mechanism that operates, the fear of missing out.

5.6 VIEW ON MASS CULTURE

The Frankfurt School theorists were among the first neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes that were to be the instrument of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. They also analyzed how the culture industries and consumer society were stabilizing contemporary capitalism and accordingly sought new political change strategies, political transformation agencies, and models for political emancipation that could serve as norms of social critique and goals for political struggle. This project required rethinking Marxian theory and produced many important contributions—as well as some problematical positions. Frankfurt school tended, with some exceptions, to conceptualize mass culture as a homogeneous and potent form of ideological domination. For the Frankfurt school, mass culture and communications, therefore, stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialization and mediators of political happenings. Frankfurt School played an important role in understanding the institutions of contemporary societies. Frankfurt school viewed individual thought and action as the motors of social and cultural progress; instead, giant organizations and institutions overpowered individuals. The era corresponds to the staid, conformist, and conservative world of corporate capitalism that was dominant in the 1950s, with its organization of men and women, its mass consumption, and its mass culture (Ritzer)

5.7 VIEW ON TECHNOLOGY

The Frankfurt school focused intently on technology and culture, indicating how technology became a major production force and formative mode of social organization and control. In a 1941 article, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," Herbert Marcuse argued that technology in the contemporary era constitutes an entire "mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination." In the realm of culture, technology produced a mass culture that habituated individuals to conform to the dominant patterns of thought and behavior and thus provided powerful social control and domination (Ritzer). The point addressed by the Frankfurt school could be seen very much true in today's time. We could observe the impact of social Media on our lives. The time spent outdoor playing has reduced due to the heavy use of mobile phones by children. This has led to change in your habits like instant gratification demands. In a way, technology has been using behavioral psychology to capture the young and old ones' attention and it affects everyone immensely. It, at times, creates a world of artificial reality. Though technology has a positive side, too, to some extent.

5.8 VIEW ON MEDIA

Habermas noted that in the period of the democratic revolutions, a public sphere emerged. For the first time in history, ordinary citizens could participate in political discussions and debates and organize and struggle against unjust authority. Habermas's account also points to the media's increasingly important role in politics and everyday life and how corporate interests have colonized this sphere, using the media and culture to promote their interests.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss Frankfurt's school view on technology?

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2. Explain the Frankfurt school's view on Media.

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5.9 CRITICISM OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

When Frankfurt school had reached the United States during the War, the members of the Frankfurt school came to believe that American "mass culture" was also highly ideological and worked to promote the interests of American capitalism. Controlled by giant corporations, the culture industries were organized according to the strictures of mass production, churning out mass-produced products that generated a highly commercial system of culture, which, in turn, sold the values, lifestyles, and institutions of "the American way of life." (Ritzer). For example – In several parts of the world, a student has to take loans to complete his degree. After that, again, loans to build a house, to buy a car. The cost of living is expensive. It gives them the reason to run after the American dream of having a house and luxurious life, which leads to discontent living all their lives; the whole life looks like a chase. Let us take one more example – the companies which sell luxurious products have high margin earnings. As in a luxury product, the cost of the product may be the same, but the marketing is like it is unique, limited edition, etc. People also do not bargain with a luxury product as it looks cheap. So, the profit here is made by the company who sells it. The buyer is just buying the idea or feeling of it.

5.10 OBSERVATION ON THE TRANSITION IN SOCIETY

The Frankfurt School also provides useful historical perspectives on the transition from traditional culture and modernism in the arts to a mass-produced media and consumer society. In his path breaking book, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, Jürgen Habermas historicized Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry. Providing historical background to the triumph of the culture industry, Habermas notes how bourgeois society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was distinguished by the rise of a public sphere that stood between civil society and the state and mediated between public and private interests. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, directly expressing their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape bourgeois society. (Ritzer).

5.11 PUBLICATIONS FROM FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Some of the important work on Frankfurt School include –

- Traditional and Critical Theory, Max Horkheimer
- Dialectic of Enlightenment, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno

- Critique of Instrumental Reason, Max Horkheimer
- The Authoritarian Personality, Theodor W. Adorno
- Aesthetic Theory, Theodor W. Adorno
- Culture Industry Reconsidered, Theodor W. Adorno
- One-Dimensional Man, Herbert Marcuse
- The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics, Herbert Marcuse
- The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, Walter Benjamin
- Structural Transformation and the Public Sphere, Jürgen Habermas
- Towards a Rational Society, Jürgen Habermas

5.12 PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT OF FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Frankfurt school could be viewed from three phases–

1. **First Phase –** Here, they criticized positivism. They criticized the cultural theory. They took forward the Marxist tradition. They have blended the Freudian theory. Criticized the advance of capitalism. The institute made major contributions in two areas relating to the possibility of rational human subjects, i.e., individuals who could act rationally to take charge of their society and history. The first consisted of social phenomena previously considered in Marxism as part of the "superstructure" or as ideology: personality, family and authority structures (its first book publication bore the title *Studies of Authority and the Family*), and the realm of aesthetics and mass culture. Studies saw a common concern here in the ability of capitalism to destroy the preconditions of critical, revolutionary consciousness. This meant arriving at a sophisticated awareness of the depth dimension in which social oppression sustains itself. It also meant the beginning of critical theory's recognition of ideology as part of the foundations of social structure.

2. **The second phase** - The second phase of Frankfurt School critical theory focuses on two works that rank as classics of twentieth-century thought: Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) and Adorno's *Minima Moralia* (1951). The authors wrote both works during the institute's American exile in the Nazi period. While retaining much of the Marxian analysis, in these works, critical theory has shifted its emphasis. The critique of capitalism has turned into a critique of Western civilization as a whole. Indeed, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* uses the *Odyssey* as a paradigm for the analysis of bourgeois consciousness. Horkheimer and Adorno already present in these works many themes that have come to dominate the social thought of recent years. For example, nature's domination appears central to a Western civilization long before ecology had become a catchphrase of the day.

3. **Third Phase -** In the third phase of the Frankfurt school, which coincided with the post-war period, particularly from the early 1950s to the middle 1960s. With the growth of advanced industrial society under Cold War conditions, the critical theorists recognized that the structure of capitalism and history had changed decisively, that the modes of oppression operated differently, and that the industrial "working class" no longer remained the determinate negation of capitalism. This led to the attempt to root the debate in an absolute method of negativity, as in Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* and Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*. During this period, the Institute of Social Research resettled in Frankfurt (although many of its associates remained in the United States) with the task not merely of continuing its research but of becoming a leading force in sociological education and "democratization" of West Germany. This led to a certain systematization of the institute's entire accumulation of empirical research and theoretical analysis.

5.13 CRITICS OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Several groups criticized the Frankfurt school like -

- Some said that the theoretical assumptions of Marx and Freud had inherent problems, including the lack of understanding of the spiritual element, which limited their framework of interpretation.
- Although Frankfurt theorists delivered criticisms against the theories and practices of their days, they did not present any positive alternatives.
- Some scholars saw the intellectual perspective of the Frankfurt school as really a romantic, elitist critique of mass culture covered in neo-Marxist clothing. They saw that the Frankfurt school labeled certain forms and rejected certain forms. On the other hand, they could also be biased towards some cultural artifacts themselves.
- Another criticism, originating from the left, was that critical theory was a form of bourgeois idealism with no inherent relation to political practice and is isolated from any ongoing revolutionary movement.

Check Your Progress

1. Give two criticisms of the Frankfurt school?

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2. List out two works from Frankfurt school.

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5.14 SUMMARY

We began this chapter by understanding what a school is and what qualifies to be called a school. We further discussed the origin of Frankfurt school, which was through the Institute of Social Research, Frankfurt, in 1929. The school had to move out of Germany due to the Second War II. The scholars associated with the school's origin are Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer. These scholars were the Neo Marxists, i.e., they were influenced by some ideas of Marx; however, they added some of their observations. This school had a view on technology, culture, industry, mass culture, Media. We further saw the different phases of this school and the criticism associated with it.

5.15 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the different phases of Frankfurt school.
2. Discuss the origin of the Frankfurt school.
3. Explain the culture industry, and it's the interaction between cultural studies and Frankfurt school.
4. List out some of the works on Frankfurt school.

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6

POST STRUCTURALISM AND POST MODERN THEORIES

Unit Structure

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning and nature of Post Structuralism
- To learn about post-modern theories.
- To learn about different scholars' viewpoints on these two theories.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the scholarly tradition, scientists, social scientists try to explain the social change in society. At a given point in time, one theory dominates, rules, influences. However, after some time, the earlier theories are rejected and new theories are built. One point to observe in the theories is that not all aspects of a given theory can be applied to understand the problem. Yet, some aspects of a certain theory can be applied. Theories are like nature: some die, new ones emerge. Some aspects of the old ones remain. Though to understand the present and past, we have to look into

theories. In this chapter, we will discuss two main topics: Poststructuralism. The second one is Postmodern theories; both have emerged in the West but have spread worldwide and helped understand different societies.

6.2 MEANING OF POSTSTRUCTURALISM

Poststructuralism can be linked to a series of observations, expansions, and critiques of Structuralism that originated in the mid-1960s, mostly in France. Post-structuralism does not support a total rejection of Structuralism's ideas and arguments; rather, poststructuralist philosophy is best seen as a follow-up to Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Levi-Strauss' structuralist works. It is most commonly associated with philosophers like Roland Barthes, Hélène Cixous, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and Richard Rorty. However, few of these theorists use the word to describe their work.

Poststructuralism is generally known for its critiques on humanism, essentialism, and foundationalism. It also attempts to reject the idea of the search for absolute meanings and law-like generalizations. It also has a negative view of modernity. Structuralism, as shown in the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, the anthropology of Claude LéviStrauss, and the early literary theory of Roland Barthes, tries to create a theoretical tool that would become a foundation for rigorous analysis and research in social sciences.

6.3 STRUCTURALISM

To understand post-structuralism, firstly, we need to learn about Structuralism. Structuralism has four basic beliefs. First, it rejects the argument that all meanings, practices, and actions can be understood and forced by subjective consciousness. Secondly, Structuralism believes that meanings, practices, and actions can be explained only by studying the relations among elements in structures or systems. Third, Structuralism views the binary opposition as the key to understanding structural relationships among elements (e.g., signifier/signified, raw/cooked, male/female). Finally, structuralists tend to be concerned mainly with synchronic analysis, which is, studying the relations among elements of a structure at the moment in time.

6.3.1 Critique of Structuralism – Derrida

Two main theorists are associated with Post Structuralism – Derrida and Foucault. Poststructuralists generally agree with the first point but for various reasons but they reject the others. The work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault best explains the poststructuralist critique of Structuralism. Derrida argues that the structuralist view of language as a

stable system can be studied though there are certain assumptions. The most problematic of these assumptions is what Derrida calls logocentrism, which is a problematic assumption of most Western thought. Logocentrism is a term that describes the tendency of Western thinkers to privilege one term in a binary opposition over the other term, thus creating a hierarchy that organizes thought (e.g., speech over writing, male over female, reason over superstition). This hierarchy then appears to be a stable and natural one with its roots in a stable language system and its elements. Derrida tries to question these hierarchical relationships by showing that binary oppositions that are often contradictory interpret the binary as useless for descriptive or epistemological purposes. In addition, the two terms of a binary opposition define themselves against each other (which he calls supplementarity), and any hierarchy is therefore merely arbitrary. Derrida's project can be described as the deconstruction of logocentrism, which involves breaking down how logocentrism operates to break its hegemony in Western society. In short, Derrida aims for the supposed stability of language and how structuralists build binary oppositions. Let us take a simple example to understand this – Structuralists view things from binary like white, black, earth, sky— however, poststructuralists like Derrida question this aspect. The term white is seen as the White race, and black is seen as lower in the hierarchy. So, this invisible dimension of hierarchy is what is seen as problematic by poststructuralists.

6.3.2 Critique of Structuralism – Foucault

Foucault uses the structuralist approach to Foucault's early work on the archaeology of knowledge, 'The Order of Things' (1966). In the "death of man," Foucault points out that Structuralism helps social science to think about phenomena of life, language, and labor without dealing much with the subjectivity aspect. Foucault's archaeology of knowledge also shows the early influence of Structuralism in his work as it represents a search for the rules that govern. While Foucault's The Order of Things and other archaeological works use structuralist methods, it also highlights the limitations of structuralist thought.

6.4 GENEALOGY OF POWER

According to Foucault, the most important critique of Structuralism is its inability to explain how systems and structures change over time. Foucault considered himself a historian of systems of thought, and, as a historian, he was interested in how systems and structures change. At the same time, Structuralism limits itself to studying the relations among elements of structures in a synchronic way. i.e., at one moment at a given period. To ask and answer questions about historical change, Foucault began to develop a method of inquiry known as the **genealogy of power,** shown in his book Discipline and Punishes (1979). By using a genealogical method, he provides a way to approach historical problematizations of knowledge and governing. A genealogical method,

according to Foucault, studies events, but not the events of traditional political history or the history of great men; rather, **genealogy may take the formation and articulation of a problem (e.g., how a society deals with those who have violated its laws) as its event.** Genealogy focuses on problems to study the heterogeneous lines of descent that form collections of practices, the multitude of problematizing discourses that such practices generate, and the regimes of truth that these practices and problematizing discourses instantiate. In addition, Foucault categorized the genealogy of power as a "history of the present." This does not, however, suggest that the present is a necessary outcome of past historical events. Instead, it tries to use history to understand the present and demonstrate the happening of an event.

The genealogy of power is therefore often viewed as a form of social criticism. Foucault's genealogy of power notes that power and knowledge are inseparably linked. This is known as the power/knowledge connection. Critical to Foucault's genealogy is the argument that power is a source of dynamism that is productive and spreads throughout society into many local centers. **Through this lens of power, Foucault traces how early modern European states responded to such problems of governing as criminality, the practices of punishment and social control that emerged as ways of dealing with criminality, and the bodies of knowledge** (e.g., penology, criminology, and other social sciences) that emerged alongside these practices. Foucault adds that, while power is universal, it always meets some form of resistance. While Foucault's genealogy of power does not indict bodies of knowledge that emerge from practices of power as false or invalid, it challenges scholars and practitioners to consider alternative practices and discourses to counter the established regimes of truth and practice..

Check Your Progress

1. Explain logocentrism

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2. Discuss the genealogy of power as discussed by Foucault

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6.5 POSTMODERN THEORIES

Understanding Postmodern

Post-modernism In Western philosophy emerged during the late 20th-century as a movement. It tried to reject the grand theories which

tried to explain the world from a specific dimension or binary way or build generalizations and universal laws. Post-modern believes in a diversity of a given problem. For example, if you are going to study a product, why go by the traditional questionnaire method? But there are other ways you could understand the consumerist behavior of a given product and understand it. Let us take another example of Art – traditionally, what is approved by the kings, sanctioned, sponsored is seen as Art, recognized. Now, anything can be seen as Art – like abstract paintings. Who decides what Art is? If such questions are asked, then that is postmodern thoughts. Postmodernism has emerged in every field of architecture. For example – Look into the Eiffel tower. It is just a vertical structure seen as Art, celebrated rather than earlier times just pieces of palaces, churches, paintings were seen as Art. Postmodernism can be seen as a reaction against the intellectual assumptions and values of the modern period in the history of Western philosophy.

6.5.1 Defining and Writing Post Modern

Post-modern theorizing is preoccupied with the visual society, its representations, cultural logic, and the new types of personal troubles (AIDS, homelessness, drug addiction, family and public violence) and public problems that define the current age. At the most abstract level, the cultural logic of late capitalism defines the postmodern moment (Jameson 1991). But postmodernism is more than a series of economic formations. The post-modern society is a cinematic, dramaturgical production. Film and television have transformed American, and perhaps all other societies touched by the camera, into video, visual cultures. Representations of the real have become stand-ins for actual, lived experience. Three implications follow from the dramaturgical view of contemporary life. First, the reality is a staged, social production. Second, the reality is now judged against its staged, cinematic-video counterpart. Third, the metaphor of the dramaturgical society or "life as theater" has now become an interactional reality. The theatrical aspects of the dramaturgical metaphor have not crept into everyday life (Goffman 1959:254). They have taken it over. Art not only mirrors life, its structures and reproduces it. The post-modern society is dramaturgical.

Accordingly, the post-modern scene is a series of cultural formations that impose, shape, and define contemporary human group life. These formations are anchored in a series of institutional sites, including the mass media, the economy and the polity, the academy, and popular culture. In these sites, interacting individuals come in contact with postmodernism, which, like the air we breathe, is everywhere around us: in the omnipresent camera whenever lives and money exchange hands, in the sprawling urban shopping malls, in the evening televised news, in soap operas and situation comedies, in the doctor's office and the police station, at the computer terminal. The cultural formations of postmodernism do not have a direct, unmediated effect on the worlds of lived experience. The meanings of post-modernism are mediated and filtered through existing

systems of interpretation. These meanings may be incorporated into a group's ongoing flow of experience and become part of their collective vocabulary and memory (i.e., the New York post-modern art scene during the 1970s and 1980s).

The post-modern here helps to sustain and enhance a group's way of existence. On the other hand, postmodernism's numerous, contradictory cultural interpretations may be deemed irrelevant to what members of a group do and so disregarded (i.e., the rejection of postmodernism by mainstream American sociologists). Other groups may adopt certain postmodern aspects while rejecting the others (i.e., the cultural conservatives who value nostalgia). In this scenario, the post-modern will have a disjunctive influence, settling into one aspect of a group's way of life without being integrated into its larger interpretative framework.

Postmodernism may disrupt and even disrupt a way of life for others, such as when academic postmodernists challenge established literary rules of Western civilization and suggest radical new reading lists that convey the perspectives of racial, ethnic, and gender minorities. The sociologist recognizes that the absolute spectator has no privileged position when writing about this historical moment. How can the postmodern self-write about itself when the same postmodern ideas formed determine what it says, sees, feels, and hears? and any idea of impartiality based on the absolute viewer's privileged position must be discarded.

6.5.2 Background leading to the emergence of Postmodern view

There exists some background to the development of the postmodern view. Firstly the period from World War II to the present. These include the Vietnam War, the two Gulf Wars, the worldwide economic recessions of the 1970s and 1980s, the rise to power of conservative or neoliberal political regimes in Europe and America, the failure of the Left to mount an effective attack against these regimes, the collapse in the international labor movement, the emergence of a new, conservative politics of health and morality centering on sexuality and the family, totalitarian regimes in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and South Africa, the breakdown of the Cold War and the emergence of glasnost, and increased worldwide racism. Second, the post-modern references the multinational forms of late capitalism that have introduced new cultural logics and forms of communication and representation into the world's economic and cultural systems. Thirdly, it describes a movement in the visual arts, architecture, cinema, popular music, and social theory that goes against the grain of classic realist and modernist formations. Fourth, it references a form of theorizing and writing about the social anti foundational, post-positivist, interpretive, and critical.

6.5.3 Postmodern and cultural identity –

We now recognize the diversity of gender. Some individuals even do not recognize themselves to any gender identity. They view themselves as fluid. They view it as just human nature where they are evolving and growing and trying to understand themselves, rather than the binary model of male, female where one is trained. There are bisexual, queer identities, pansexual, homosexual, recognized by countries or decriminalized. This acceptance of diversity and breaking or imposing of identities is what postmodern thoughts.

6.5.4 Core arguments in post-modern theories -

1. An objective natural reality exists, a reality whose existence and properties are logically independent of human beings—minds, societies, social practices, or investigative techniques. Postmodernists dismiss the idea of simple realism. According to postmodernists, there is a conceptual construct, an artifact of scientific practice and language.

2. The descriptive and explanatory statements of scientists and historians can be objectively true or false. These scholars believe there is no ultimate truth, or it cannot be found too. Things are subjective to interpretation.

3. Through the use of reason and logic and with the more specialized tools provided by science and technology, human beings are likely to change themselves and their societies for the better. It is reasonable to expect that future societies will be more humane, more just, enlightened, and prosperous than now. Postmodernists deny this Enlightenment faith in science and technology as instruments of human progress. Indeed, many postmodernists hold that the misguided (or unguided) pursuit of scientific and technological knowledge led to the development of technologies for killing on a massive scale in World War II. Some go so far as to say that science and technology—and even reason and logic—are inherently destructive and oppressive because they have been used by evil people, especially during the 20th century, to destroy and oppress others.
For example – Nuclear bombs.

4. Reason and logic are universally valid—i.e., their laws are the same for, or apply equally to, any thinker and any domain of knowledge. For postmodernists, reason and logic are also merely conceptual constructs and are valid only within the established intellectual traditions in which they are used.

5. Human nature consists of faculties, aptitudes, or outlooks that are present in human beings at birth rather than learned or instilled through social forces. Postmodernists insist that all, or nearly all, aspects of human psychology are completely socially determined.

6. Language, according to postmodernists, is not a "reflection of nature," as American pragmatic philosopher Richard Rorty described the Enlightenment concept. Language refers to and represents an external

world. Postmodernists claim that language is semantically self-contained, or self-referential, as a result of the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure: the meaning of a word is not a static thing in the world or even an idea in mind, but rather a set of contrasts and differences with the meanings of other words. Meanings are never totally "present" to the speaker or hearer since they are functions of other meanings, which are functions of other meanings, and so on. Self-reference is a feature of not only natural languages but also more specialized "discourses" of specific communities or traditions; these discourses are embedded in social practices and reflect the conceptual schemes, moral and intellectual values, and moral and intellectual values of the community or tradition in which they are used. The inventor and major practitioner of deconstruction, French philosopher and literary theorist Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), is largely responsible for the post-modern understanding of language and discourse.

7. Human beings might gain knowledge about natural reality, and this knowledge could be justified by evidence or principles that are or can be immediately, instinctively, or otherwise with certainty understood. The effort, usually best represented by René Descartes's thesis cogito, ergo sum ("I think. Therefore I am") in the 17th century, to discover a basis of certainty on which to build the superstructure of empirical (including scientific) knowledge is criticized by postmodernists.

8. Within a specific field of research, it is possible to build general theories that explain many elements of the natural or social world—for example, a general explanation of human history, such as dialectical materialism. Furthermore, constructing such ideas should be an aim of scientific and historical investigation, even though they will never be entirely achievable in practice. Postmodernists ignore this idea as a silly idea, as well as an unhealthy tendency in Enlightenment discourses to adopt "totalizing" systems of thought (as the French philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas put it) or grand "metanarratives" of human biological, historical, and social development (as the French philosopher Jeanne-Claude called them). These theories are seen as not valuable—Derrida himself associated the theoretical tendency toward totality with totalitarianism.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss in a few lines your understanding of Poststructuralism.

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2. Explain two arguments associated with postmodernism

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6.6 POSTMODERNISM AND RELATIVISM

Postmodernists deny that there are objective aspects of reality; that there are statements about reality that are objectively true or false; that it is possible to know such statements (objective knowledge); that human beings can know some things with certainty; and that there are objective, or absolute, moral values. Discourses construct reality, knowledge, and value; hence they can vary with them. This means that the discourse of modern science, when considered apart from the evidential standards internal to it, has no greater purchase on the truth than do alternative perspectives, including (for example) astrology and witchcraft. Postmodernists sometimes characterize the evidential standards of science, including the use of reason and logic, as "Enlightenment rationality."

6.7 DISCUSSION REGARDING EXISTING LITERATURE

Part of the postmodern answer is that the prevailing discourses in any society reflect the interests and values, broadly speaking, of dominant or elite groups. Postmodernists disagree about the nature of this connection. In contrast, some validate the statement of the German philosopher and economist Karl Marx that "the ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class," others are more cautious. Inspired by the historical research of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, some postmodernists defend the comparatively distinct view that what counts as knowledge in a given era is always influenced, in complex and subtle ways, by considerations of power. There are others, however, who are willing to go even further than Marx.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain your understanding of Postmodern

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2. Discuss the historical background associated with the emergence of post-modernism.

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6.8 SUMMARY

We began this chapter by understanding Post Structuralism. Post Structuralism is nothing but critique made towards Structuralism. Here the

main ideas discussed are that not everything can be viewed from the binary model. For example – good or bad. It also questions the dominance existing within languages, signs. Two thinkers who are associated with post-structuralism are Derrida and Foucault. Derrida discusses his concept of logocentrism as the tendency of Western thinkers to privilege one term in a binary opposition over the other term, thus creating a hierarchy that organizes thought (e.g., speech over writing, male over female, reason over superstition). At the same time, Foucault uses the genealogy of power. In the second section of this chapter, we learn about post-modern and its emergence. Postmodernism is a movement that questions the idea of truth, generalization, science and history. It has entered into every field like literature, art, technology, architecture.

6.9 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of Poststructuralism and Derrida's point of view towards it.
2. Discuss in brief the arguments made by Foucalt regarding post-structuralism.
3. Write in brief the main arguments of postmodern theories.
4. Explain genealogy of power and critique of Structuralism by Derrida.

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Module - III

7

THEORIES OF STRUCTURATION, HABITUS AND PRACTICE

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the different Theories of Structuration.
- To learn about Habitus and its uses and application.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will learn about theories of Structuration as given by Gidden and its nature. We are also going to study Habitus, which was developed in sociology by Bourdieu. Both these concepts can be used to understand our society and its changing nature.

7.2 STRUCTURATION THEORY

The Structuration theory is connected with the Sociologist Giddens. Through this theory, he tried to combine modern and classical thinkers' ideas while developing the theory. In other words, he tried to find a mid-way between the macro (grand theories – Functionalism, Marxism)

and the micro theories (E.g., Ethnomethodology E.g. Interactionism) in Sociology. This theory was first used in Gidden's book, Central Problems in Social Theory (1979). He pointed out that Structuration describes an action, i.e. "to structure" or "to do or produce the structure." According to Giddens, actions by an individual are taken through one's past influence. However, in every new action, he/she also reproduces his existing structure. This continuity of the past and the reproduction of the present structure is what he calls 'structuration.'

According to Giddens, the actor always does some activity, and while doing the activity, he is doing Structuration, i.e., reproducing structure. Thus, reproduction of structure is Structuration.

7.3 MAJOR FEATURES OF STRUCTURATION THEORY:

Structuration theory can be explained through four major aspects-

(1) Human agency, i.e., agent- structure dualism, - where the social actor is a rational actor who can make decisions.

(2) Social practice – Here, there is a link between practice and context.

(3) Reflexivity- This involves a self-consciousness on the part of the individual and an ability to monitor the ongoing flow of social life and, at least sometimes, take one's understanding of this flow of social life into account when considering appropriate action and deciding on a course of action.

(4) Structure -These are the patterns in the social world that affect individuals and are composed of rules, resources, and agency.

7.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF STRUCTURATION THEORY

(1) Structures exist only in human memory.
(2) Structures exist only in practice. They are produced by agents, i.e., actors.
(3) Structures enable us to do actions. They also exercise control over the actor.
(4) Structures consist of rules and resources that agents or actors draw upon in social the production and reproduction of social life.

Structuration theory is a sociological concept that insights human behavior based on the "duality of structure." It believes in the combination of structure and agency effects, rather than describing human action as controlled by powerful, stable societal structures (educational, religious, or political institutions) or as a function of individual expression of will (i.e., agency). Structuration theory recognizes the interaction of meaning, standards and values, and power and suggests a dynamic relationship between these various aspects of society.

Check Your Progress

1. Briefly Discuss the characteristics of Structuration theory

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2. Briefly Discuss the features of Structuration theory

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7.5 UNDERSTANDING STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

Since its beginning, the combination of structure and agency has been a very important topic in sociology. Theories of structure and agency argue that structure is supreme (objectivist view). They point out that their socialization largely determines the behavior of individuals into that structure, for example - gender or social class. These structures play an important role in individuals' lives at various levels; At its top level, society can be seen as one where there are large-scale socio economic stratifications (such as through distinct social classes).

On a mid-range scale level, institutions and social networks (such as religious or familial structures) form the focus of study. At the microscale, one might consider how community or professional norms restrain agency.

Structuralists describe the effect of structure in conflicting ways. French social scientist Émile Durkheim emphasized the positive role of stability and permanence. In contrast, Karl Marx described structures as protecting the few, doing little benefits for the poor people of the society.

In contrast, supporters of agency theory (also called the subjective view) consider that individuals possess the ability to exercise their own free will and make their own choices. Here, social structures are viewed as products of individual actions that are sustained or discarded rather than incommensurable forces.

7.6 GIDDENS'S VIEW

Sociologists have questioned the polarized nature of the structure-agency debate, highlighting the combination of these two influences on human behavior. Giddens argues that just as an individual's independence is influenced by structure. Structures are maintained and adapted through the exercise of agency. The interface at which an actor meets a structure is termed "structuration."

Structuration theory attempts to understand human social behavior by resolving the competing views of structure-agency and macro-micro perspectives. This is achieved by studying the processes as the interface between the actor and the structure. Structuration theory assumes that social action cannot be fully explained by the structure or agency theories alone. Instead, it recognizes that actors operate within the context of rules produced by social structures, and only by acting in a submissive manner are these structures reinforced. As a result, social structures have no inherent stability outside human action because they are socially constructed. Alternatively, through reflexivity, agents modify social structures by acting outside the structure's constraints.

Giddens's framework of structure differs from that in the classic theory. He proposes three kinds of structure in a social system. The first is signification, where meaning is coded in the practice of language and discourse. The second is legitimation, consisting of the normative perspectives embedded as societal norms and values. Giddens's final structural element is domination, concerned with how power is applied, particularly in controlling resources..

For Giddens, structures are more specific and detailed than the system. According to him, rules and resources are the two primary features of market exchange, class structures, political organizations and processes, and educational institutions. They can be further classified into different types like -

- Procedural rules – This refers to how the practice is performed. Give and take encounters, language rules, walking in a crowd. Goffman (face, roles, role distance) and ethnomethodologists analyze them.
- Moral rules – appropriate forms of enactment of social action. Laws, what is permissible and what is not. These do not refer to ultimate values (e.g. spiritual or sacred values) but refer to appropriate ways of carrying out social action and interaction. Durkheim and Parsons emphasized the importance of these – norms, mores, customs, laws.
- Material resources – allocation of resources among activities and members of society. Means of production, commodities, income, consumer and capital goods. The marxian analysis demonstrates the inequalities associated with the allocation.
- Resources of authority. Formal organizations, how time and space are organized, production and reproduction, social mobility, legitimacy, and authority. Weber analyzed the latter issues in the context of power and its exercise. Wright included these resources as assets in his explanation of contradictory class locations.

7.7 CRITICISM

Two major criticisms come out of Structuration. One group of critics, comprising Thompson, Archer, Layder and Livesay, points out that Giddens emphasizes the agent's actor and enabling side at the expense of the constraining element, that is, structural frames.

Giddens does not specify how enabling or constraining structures are. The other side of the criticism concerns the applicability of the theory concerning empirical analyses. Gregson, Bertilsson and Thrift claim that although structuration theory is interesting and perhaps transcends some dualistic problems at a theoretic level, it is less fruitful in empirical research. The abstract level of the theory weakens its fruitfulness (i).

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the criticism associated with Structuration theory

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2. Discuss the different rules in the structure.

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1.8 MEANING OF HABITUS

Habitus, the term, has been used in writings connected to Aristotle. However, it was Bourdieu who used it in a Sociological context.. In the book 'The Logic of Practice, 1990), Bourdieu made a critique of structuralism from the point of view of practice and strategy where he used the concept of Habitus.

For Bourdieu, an individual's instinctive knowledge of how to live in and deal with that *field* is what he termed *Habitus*. Fields here refer to the different areas like religion, law, sports, etc. Habitus can also be described as a durable, fluid system developed in children because of their observation and imitation. He wanted to understand how people are forced or, as he binded by their own cultural practice. His account of how Habitus is formed is a theory of socialization that combines the behaviorism of the American Sociologist G.H. Mead.. (Alan Barnard).

Habitus is one of Bourdieu's most influential concepts. It also refers to the physical forms of cultural capital, like ingrained habits, skills, and nature that we possess due to our life experiences. Bourdieu often used the example of sports when talking about Habitus, and he used the term "feel for the game." Just like a skilled baseball player "just knows"

when to swing at a 95-miles-per-hour fastball without consciously thinking about it, each of us have an in-built type of "feel" for the social situations or "games" where we regularly find ourselves in. In the right situations, our Habitus allows us to navigate social environments successfully. For example, if you grew up in a rough, crime-ridden neighborhood in Mumbai, you would likely have the type of skill sets, smartness needed to successfully survive or deal with violence, know to avoid police surveillance or harassment. However, if you were one of the lucky few in your neighborhood to study in a college, you would probably find that this same set of skills and habits was not useful—and maybe even unfavorable—to your success in your new social scenario.

1.9 HABITUS AND CHOICE

Habitus also extends to our "taste" for cultural objects such as art, food, and clothing. In one of his major works. Bourdieu links French citizens' tastes in art to their social class positions. He argues that the culturally ingrained Habitus shapes one's tastes. Upper-class individuals, for example, have a taste for fine art because they have been constantly exposed to and trained to appreciate it since a very early age. On the other hand, working-class individuals generally do not have access to "high art" and thus they have not cultivated the Habitus needed for appreciation of fine art. The thing about the Habitus, Bourdieu often noted, was that it was so ingrained that people often mistook the feel for the game as natural instead of culturally developed. This often leads to justifying social inequality because it is (mistakenly) believed that some people are naturally inclined to the finer things in life while others are not

It needs to be observed that through habitus Pierre Bourdieu also tried to overcome the binary model in social theory like micro/macro, material/symbolic, empirical/ theoretical, objective/ subjective, public/private, structure/ agency. Through his work, he tried to reveal the practical logic of everyday life, understand relations of power, and develop reflexive sociology. One must also remember that gender, class, ethnicity, culture, education, and the historical period all shape an individual's habitus and practice. One's everyday life is dynamic and fluid, like a jazz musician improvising on a theme. On the other hand, Practice is the result of the relationship between an individual's Habitus, different forms of capital, and the field of action

Habitus can also be described as a durable, fluid system developed in children because of their observation and imitation. He wanted to understand how people are forced or, as he binded by their cultural practice. His account of how the Habitus is formed is a theory of socialization that combines the behaviourism of the American Sociologist G.H. Mead.

For Bourdieu, habitus is a conceptual framework in which there are varying degrees of explicitness of and competition among norms.

Under this framework, there are three ways that people experience the norms of their social existence. They do so through (1) a set of materially predisposed practices that express a belief about how the world works and reproduce that worldview. These predisposed practices tend to produce *doxa*, situations in which "the natural and social world appears as self-evident" (Bourdieu 1994, p. 160; 1976, p. 118); this is Habitus, the unquestioned order of things. People also experience the norms of their social existence through (2) the contrasting situation of orthodoxy, in which "social classifications become the object and instrument of … struggle" and in which the arbitrariness of the current system becomes evident, and through (3) heterodoxy—a situation of more or less equally "competing possibilities" (1994, pp. 164–165). Bourdieu emphasizes the "complicitous silence" of community members in the continuous reproduction of the "collective rhythms," or Habitus, of the community (1994, p. 182).

Habitus is the learned set of preferences or dispositions by which a person orients to the social world. It is a system of durable, transposable, cognitive 'schemata or structures of perception, conception and action' (Bourdieu, 2002: 27).

1.10 HABITUS AND PRACTICE

Habitus also takes place in an individual unconsciously. Bourdieu's theory of Habitus showed that it is practice by which the mind adopts certain patterns.

Practice is what humans do in their everyday lives. It is based more on improvisation rather than always governed by rules. It is kind of inbuilt in us and it generally functions when we are in different situations, space. For example - When you wake up in the morning, you take a toothbrush and start brushing your teeth. With time you may try out an electronic toothbrush too.

Bourdieu's emphasis on practice is not included in Marx's early writings, though Goffman uses it in his work. As researchers, we need to look into what people do and how they are told to do certain things through their culture and the gaps between these things.

For him, strategies are based on an unconsciously developed "practical logic," which develops through interactions between Habitus and the field. This is a kind of a rational action theory, sometimes known as "the feel for the game." In a world formed as a taken-for-granted principle, "the way things are," a world in which definite possibilities influence the expectations formed and held by individual value systems, strategies develop and make practical sense. For example - When you need something from your boss, you are always kind to him/her in good books. So here is the strategy you are using. The importance of habit in conditioning practice is equally significant, and it develops into Bourdieu's

theory through the concept of Habitus. He refers to formulating integrated creative characteristics when he uses the term habitus.

7.11 CRITICISM

Critics point out that Habitus is an overly deterministic concept limiting individual agency, innovation, and change. According to Habitus, Socioeconomically disadvantaged individuals are socialized into dispositions that destine them to think and act in ways that recreate the conditions of their disadvantage: structures produce dispositions, which produce practices, which reproduce structures. However, this aspect has been criticized by many. Critiques are also related concerns: that the dispositions of Habitus are set early in life and largely unaltered by subsequent experiences; that Habitus operates largely 'behind the back' of the individual, leaving little room for conscious, rational behavior; and that, as a consequence of its immutable and pre-reflective nature, Habitus leaves little purchase for individuality, innovation, and social mobility.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain in a few lines Habitus as Practice

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2. Who used Habitus in Sociology?

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7.12 SUMMARY

In the first section of the chapter, we learned about the Structuration theory given by Giddens. He discussed this theory in his book Central Problems in Social Theory (1979). Through this theory, he tried to find a midway between the modern theories in sociology and the classical theories. Giddens argues that just as an individual's independence is influenced by structure. Structures are maintained and adapted through the exercise of agency. The interface at which an actor meets a structure is termed "structuration." The second topic of the unit is that of Habitus. Habitus, the term, has been used in writings connected to Aristotle. However, it was Bourdieu who used it in a Sociological context.. In the book 'The Logic of Practice, 1990), Bourdieu made a critique of structuralism from the point of view of practice and strategy where he used the concept of Habitus. For Bourdieu, an individual's instinctive knowledge of how to live in and deal with that field is what he termed Habitus. This Habitus is affected by one's location, background, and cultural capital. One's past also influences this Habitus.

7.13 QUESTIONS

1. Explain in brief Gidden's view on Structuration Theory.
2. Explain Habitus and Practice.
3. Write a note on Habitus as discussed by Bourdieu

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8

THEORIES OF NETWORKS, RISKS AND LIQUIDITY

Unit Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To learn about networks and the different theories associated with them.
- To understand the concepts of risk and liquidity .

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will look into topics like Network Theories of Network and Risks and Liquidity. Studying this topic becomes important to understand the current scenario of both society and the economic system.

8.2 MEANING OF NETWORKS

The Cambridge dictionary defines a Network as 'a large system consisting of many similar parts connected to allow movement or communication between or along with the parts, or between the parts and a control centre'. The network approach originated initially in the field of mathematical graph theory. In social sciences and psychology, networks has been used to understand human social organization. In other words, the Networks term is generally used in computers; here, we will understand it from the context of human beings. We use networks in everyday life. For example – It is easy to get a job when someone recommends you when you are applying in an organization, or a friend of yours informs you that there is a vacancy in an organization and you could apply for it. In a competitive world where the population is constantly growing, which brings more and less demand in the labor market, networking becomes important.

Network models have been used to describe how ideas, opinions, information, and innovations spread through human societies. Such models provide a means to learn how information spreads (Valente 1995; Rogers 1995).

Network theory provides a quantitative framework that can be used to learn the social structure at the individual level and the large scale population. These novel quantitative variables provide a new tool in answering important questions in behavioral ecology, especially concerning the evolution of the social organization and its impact on the social structure on evolutionary processes. For example, network measures can be used to compare social networks of different species or populations, making full use of the comparative approach.

8.3 USE OF NETWORKS TO LEARN ABOUT DISEASES/ VIRUSES -

In principle, the network's approach can go beyond identifying structural patterns and is also used to learn about processes within animal populations such as disease transmission and information transfer. Finally, understanding the pattern of interactions in the network (i.e., who is connected to whom) helps us know the evolution of behavioral strategies. The social structure in a social network might explain why an individual might be more susceptible to an infectious disease. It would also help us know why the population might be vulnerable to the rapid transmission of disease. Depending upon the connections and networks, the fitness/ disease of an individual could develop. Network theory can be used to understand diseases related to sexuality. Sexual networks and questions regarding who mates, how often and with whom have been addressed in the sexually transmitted diseases. Traditional models did not consider the differences between individuals (e.g., differences in the number of social

connections. However, with diseases, contagious viruses, this approach has been taken seriously.

8.4 THEORIES OF NETWORK

8.4.1 Two-step flow model of communication -

This theory of communication points out that interpersonal interaction has a stronger effect on shaping public opinion than mass media outlets. The two-step flow model was given in 1948 by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, in the book *The People's Choice*, after research into voters' decision-making processes during the 1940 U.S. presidential election. It claims that the mass media content first reaches "opinion leaders," active media users who collect, interpret, and diffuse the meaning of media messages to less-active media consumers. According to the authors, opinion leaders pick up information from the media, which gets passed on to less-active public members.

8.4.2 Theory of Weak ties

Weak tie theory points out that acquaintances are likely to be more influential than close friends, especially social networks. Weak tie theory began from Nick Granovetter's 1973 article "The Strength of Weak Ties," which spread information through social networks. During those days, social networking used to take place in the physical world. He further classifies interpersonal ties as strong, weak, or absent.

A strong tie- is someone within a close circle of family and friends. Strong ties are essential for the real community. Still, they are typically groups with a great deal of similarity and, as such, less likely than more tenuous connections to carry new information and perspectives to their groups. Because networks of strong ties are self-limiting, they can lead to what is sometimes called a filter bubble: A restriction of news, information and ideas that results from things like search personalization and maintaining connections mostly within homogenous groups of people. The limitation can stem from confirmation bias, which is the human tendency to seek out sources of information that support our current perspectives and beliefs.

Weak tie - Social media influencers are prime examples of weak ties. Influencers today have large groups of followers, and their impact is also distributed among the networks of those followers. On the other hand, a larger social network, including numerous weak ties, is likely to challenge that tendency and support critical thinking.

Absent ties are connections (people) that might be expected to exist but don't participate frequently.

8.4.3 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

E.M. Rogers developed the diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory in 1962. It originated in communication to explain how an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system over time. This diffusion is that people adopt a new idea, behavior, or product as part of a social system. Adoption refers to doing something new than his old behavior (i.e., purchasing or using a new product, acquiring and performing a new behavior, etc.). The key to adoption is to perceive the idea, behavior, or product as new or innovative. It is through this that diffusion is possible. For example – Instagram Reels – A new song immediately becomes popular, and a large group follows it until the novelty persists. Adopting a new idea, behavior, or product does not happen once in a social system; rather, it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation.

Researchers point out that people who adopt an innovation early have different characteristics than people who adopt an innovation later. When promoting innovation to a target population, it is important to understand its characteristics to help or hinder its adoption. There are **five established adopter categories**. While most of the general population tends to fall in the middle categories, it is still necessary to understand the target population's characteristics. When promoting an innovation, there are different strategies used to appeal to the different adopter categories.

1. **Innovators** - These are people who want to be the first to try the innovation. They are venturesome and interested in new ideas. These people are very willing to take risks and are often the first to develop new ideas.

2. **Early Adopters** - These are people who represent opinion leaders. They enjoy leadership roles and embrace change opportunities. They are already aware of the need to change and hence are very comfortable adopting new ideas. Strategies to appeal to this population include how-to manuals and information sheets on implementation. They do not need the information to convince them to change. For example – Reviewers of products on YouTube with opening packing videos.

3. **Early Majority** - These people are rarely leaders, but they adopt new ideas before the average person. These individuals generally need to see evidence that the innovation works before they are willing to adopt it. Strategies to appeal to this population include success stories and evidence of the innovation's effectiveness.

4. **Late Majority** - These people are skeptical of change and will only adopt an innovation after the majority has tried it. Strategies to appeal to this population include information on how many other people have tried the innovation and have adopted it successfully.

5. **Laggards** - These people are bound by tradition and very conservative. They are very skeptical of change and are the hardest group to bring on board. Strategies to appeal to this population include statistics, fear appeals, and pressure from other adopter groups.

8.4.4 Actor-network theory

Actor-network theory (ANT) is an approach used to understand the new materialism behavior with the advent of technology. It was developed in the social studies of science and technology, which began in the second half of the 20th century. ANT has increasingly been used in other areas of social inquiry too. ANT is a sociological **theory** developed by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law. It is distinguished from other **network** theories because an **actor-network** contains not merely people but objects and organizations. These are collectively referred to as **actor**s or sometimes as actants (non-human). It looks into how material plays an important role in carrying out culture across different societies. The actor-network theory looks into the interaction and how both play an important role. For example, Mobile now can be said to play an important role; in the future, electric cars will play an important role in transportation. In this theory, the non-human is also seen as an actor, which makes this theory different from others. It is a socio-technical relationship based on Actor-Network theory. Here the treatment of non-human is seen as equal.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the use of networks in tracing diseases?

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2. Explain in brief the main points of diffusion of innovation theory.

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8.5 LIQUIDITY AND RISK

8.5.1 .Liquidity

Dictionary meaning of Liquidity is the ability or the ease with which assets could be converted into cash. Let us try to understand this through the example of the oil crisis during the pandemic. During the pandemic, lockdowns were implemented. As a result, the supply was more and the consumption was less. The storage capacity of the oil had been filled, and the consumption had reduced. The oil prices suddenly fell, which impacted all the other markets too. When the market has impacted, the individuals depending on it for employment face the risk of

unemployment. The fear continues till the problem is resolved or that of a solution is found out. With the Multinational companies nature where the headquarter is in a different country and that of the operation, marketing

8.5.2 Zygmunt on Liquidity

The sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman coined the concept of liquid modernity as a metaphor to describe the condition of constant mobility and change he sees in relationships, identities, and global economics within contemporary society. In the 1980s and 1990s, Bauman was also known as a key theorist of postmodernity. While many theorists of the postmodern condition argued that it signified a radical break with modern society, Bauman contended that modernity had always been characterized by an ambivalent, "dual" nature. On the one hand, Bauman saw modern society as largely characterized by a need for order—a need to domesticate, categorize, and rationalize the world to be controllable, predictable, and understandable. It is this ordering, rationalizing tendency that Max Weber saw as the characteristic force of modernization. But, on the other hand, modernity was also always characterized by radical change, by a constant overthrowing of tradition and traditional forms of economy, culture, and relationship—"all that is solid melts into air," as Marx characterized this aspect of modern society. For Bauman, postmodernity results from modernity's failure to rationalize the world and amplify its capacity for constant change. In later years, Bauman felt that the term "postmodern" was problematic and started using liquid modernity to better describe the condition of constant mobility and the change he sees in relationships, identities, and global economics within contemporary society. Instead of referring to modernity and postmodernity, Bauman writes of a transition from solid modernity to a more liquid form of social life.

For Bauman, the consequences of this move to a liquid modernity can most easily be seen in contemporary approaches to self-identity. According to Bauman, constructing a durable identity that coheres over time and space in liquid modernity becomes increasingly impossible. We have moved from a period where we understood ourselves as "pilgrims" searching for a deeper meaning to act as "tourists" searching for multiple but fleeting social experiences.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Zygmunt's view on Liquidity.

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2. Explain in brief traditional ways of handling risk.

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8.5.3 Risk

8.5.4 Traditional ways to handle risk -

Traditionally risk management has been practiced by women for a long time. This is through the gold that we wear or the cattle which are grown in households. Whenever there is an emergency like medical or sudden need for money, the first thing that is sold out is the cattle at home; this could be that of goats, cow, hens, or any other animal grown at home. These are sold at the local market and the money gained through that is being used for the household.

Apart from the cattle, gold also acts as an important investment instrument to prevent future risks. Generally, women have bangles around their hands which are made of gold. If not bangles, then at the least, the mangal sutra is made of gold. These bangles, earrings, or even the mangal sutra are kept in the local jewelry shop during an emergency. The money is received as a loan or sold, and the financial crisis at home is handled. Gold is celebrated in a country like ours, even with festivals like Akshaya Trithiya or even the Goddess Lakshmi worship during Diwali. They help us handle the crisis in our daily lives.

We make savings through various government schemes like the National Savings Scheme, post office schemes, or even fixed deposits. There are even schemes, especially for single girl children. All this is to create the habit of investment. At present, even health insurance is taken to reduce the future risk in terms of finance. An individual pays a certain amount of premium, and then during any health-related crisis like surgery.

8.5.5 Sociology Understanding of Risk

In Sociology, Risk and uncertainty can be interpreted as systematically linked to each other because there are different ways how risk can be managed. Furthermore, risk can be understood as rational calculation or uncertain business, too. Risks are at the same time both real and socially constructed. Risks and uncertainties have to be managed case by case. When ignorance or uncertainty exists, there are no general rationalities available to make reasonable decisions. For example - The crisis during the pandemic was an uncertain time, the future was unpredictable and several changes took place in the society, like migrants going back to their villages.

Risk is widespread. In the last decades, the concept of risk has spread out in several domains. The original focus was on technical and environmental risks now; it has widened to areas as health and physical/mental illness, crime, regulation, social inequality, the media, public and social policy, lifestyle, globalization, and global risk, as well as the management of everyday life and intimate relationships. Since the diversity of risk domains is neither covered by technical or psychological approaches, research on wider societal perspectives on risk and uncertainty is needed.

Several scholars have used the terms connected to risks like risk perception, risk communication and sociology of catastrophes like (Douglas, Tulloch/Lupton), risk society and reflexive modernization (Beck, Giddens), governmentality (Foucault, Ewald), systems theory (Luhmann, Japp) and edgework (Lyng).

8.5.6 Modernity and Risk

According to Giddens (1990; 1991), one of the major consequences of modernization has been a tremendous intensification of real and perceived risk. Indeed, Giddens (1999) and sociologists such as Ulrich Beck (1992; 1999) have described modern society as a risk society or risk culture. Giddens and Beck mean by this term that risk has become a central organizing principle guiding both individual and institutional behavior in contemporary society. Granting that hazards and danger have always been a factor in human existence, risk society theorists such as Giddens and Beck maintain that a heightened awareness or consciousness of risk and sustained effort to manage or contain risk are defining features of modernity.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain your observations on how people build networks in daily to day lives.

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2. What are your views on the theory of the two-step flow model of communication?

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8.6 SUMMARY

We began the chapter by learning about Networks. Network models have been used to describe how ideas, opinions, information, and innovations spread through human societies. Such models provide a means to learn how information spreads. Network models have been used to understand the spread of diseases/ viruses. We also looked into the different theories of Networks like the Two step flow model of communication, the theory of weak ties, which discusses three types of ties, i.e., strong, weak and absent, diffusion of innovation theory, and actor-network theory. The second section focussed on explaining Liquidity, where we observed Zygmunt's view on Liquidity and Risk from the traditional approach and through sociological thinkers' viewpoints.

8.7 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of network and two theories related to it.
2. Explain in brief the risk and traditional and sociological understanding of it.
3. Write a note on Liquidity.

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Module - IV

9

POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE, STANDPOINT THEORY AND BEYOND.

Unit Structure

9.0 OBJECTIVES

- To learn about postcolonial critique.
- To understand standpoint theory.
- To learn beyond standpoint theory like feminist standpoint and indigenous standpoint theory.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Some events influence every era in history in society. Several events have taken place that have impacted society like Colonization, French Revolution, Wars, Religious influence, Industrial revolution, Development of Science and Technology, Rapid Urbanization, Computers. Now we are nearing the era of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics and even 5G. Out of all these events, colonization impacted

nearly every society to some extent. Either through language, i.e., Dominance of English, or education, health or marginalization through trade or being controlled as colonies. In this chapter, we will learn about two topics: that of Postcolonial critique and the second is that of standpoint theory. Let us begin by understanding colonialization.

9.2 COLONIZATION

Colonization is a systematic process where certain countries, groups left their homeland and slowly, systematically encroached upon other countries and imposed their policies upon the other. Generally, it is a group from France, Portuguese, Britain - often; it is associated with a White race. They began this journey by trying to build trade relations with the host country. In other words, people who have crossed a sea with saltwater to reach another land than their own. Given this background, let us now look in-depth into understanding what Post colonialism is.

9.3 MEANING OF POST COLONIALISM –

Post colonialism is the historical period that focuses upon representing the aftermath of Western Colonialism, imperialism. It also includes criticism of the colonialism period. Postcolonial writings began in the 1990s. Today it is a separate field of literature too. Postcolonial theorists and historians have been concerned with documenting the consequences of modernity on philosophical, cultural, and historical perspectives. Post colonialism is nothing but a general field of intellectual inquiry. Post colonialism combines several disciplines like literary theory, cultural studies, philosophy, geography, economics, history and politics. One of the most important features of the history of imperialism has been the emergence of states either from the territories and politics or from the dissolution of empires or by making the combination of both. Hence, Post colonialism has to be seen from the perspective of the emergence of political thought too. *Post colonialism*, at times, has also been used to refer to the struggles of indigenous peoples in different parts of the world in the early 21st century. Post colonialism focused on criticizing colonial writings.

The first phase of postcolonial criticism was written by Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak. More recently, a new generation of academics has provided fresh assessments of the interaction of class, race and gender in cultural production. Scholars Aijaz Ahmad, Bell hooks, Homi Bhabha, Abdul Jan Mohamed, and David Lloyd, are also represented by scholars. Topics covered include negritude, national culture, orientalism, subalternity, ambivalence, hybridity, white settler societies, gender and Colonialism, culturalism, commonwealth literature, and minority discourse.

9.4 HISTORY OF POST COLONIALISM

The postcolonial theory emerged in the US and UK among academicians in the 1980s. It was a part of a larger wave of new and politicized fields of humanistic inquiry, especially with feminism and critical race theory. Postcolonial theory came due to the anticolonial thought from South Asia and Africa in the first half of the 20th century. It is an outcome of several social movements. Over the past thirty years, this discipline has been reimagining politics and ethics from underneath imperial power. It is an effort to write about those who continue to suffer colonization effects. The post-colonial theory has been discovering and theorizing new forms of human injustice, from environmentalism to human rights. Postcolonial theory has influenced the way we read texts, the way we understand national and transnational histories. Despite frequent critiques from outside the field, the postcolonial theory remains one of the key forms of critical humanistic interrogation in both academics and the world.

9.5 ENLIGHTENMENT AND POSTCOLONIAL WRITING -

One of the important themes in Postcolonial writing was criticizing the Enlightenment tradition. Some scholars saw certain aspects of Enlightenment thought as Eurocentric and thus deeply problematic when applied in non-European contexts or presented as offering genuinely neutral principles of political association or justice. Yet, Enlightenment continues to play an important role in policies to address global inequality. Postcolonialist theories believe that the dominant and important European process of modernity has multiple modernities, rather than just one.

9.6 WRITERS IN POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE -

The first phase of postcolonial criticism was written by AiméCésaire, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak. Later, a new generation of academics has based their work on interaction with class, race and gender in cultural production. Some scholars are Aijaz Ahmad, Bell hooks, Homi Bhabha, Abdul Jan Mohamed, and David Lloyd. The topics they covered included negritude, national culture, orientalism, subalternity, ambivalence, hybridity, white settler societies, gender and Colonialism, culturalism, commonwealth literature, and minority discourse.

The Postcolonial theorists viewed the orientalism writings as problematic as they wrote the Asian cultures from their scale. They used words like primitive, archaic to describe cultures other than their own. On the other hand, while writing their history, they use the terms advanced, civilized. Some Indian historians associated with Subaltern Studies used

Marxist perspective to explain the Indian peasant's struggle. For example – Ranjit Guha, A. R. Desai.

Foucault discussed the complex relationship between knowledge and power. He described it through the example of asylum in his book. He wrote about how deviant people are treated as a threat in society and boycotted and segregated. In a way, he questioned the Western rule and the knowledge itself and the producers of knowledge.

Fanon, a psychoanalyst, and philosopher had made a provocative analysis of the relation between colonized and colonizer in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) as well as in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon remains perhaps best known for his explosive justification of violence in *The Wretched of the Earth* (highlighted by Jean-Paul Sartre's preface to that work), where it is cast as the appropriate response to the violence perpetrated by Colonialism and as the mediation through which had been colonized. Colonization and identity has been discussed in his writings.

9.7 POSTCOLONIALISM CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

Colonialism focused on making a singular history of the world that is more than simply "a collection of the particular stories of different communities. It is through text, encyclopedia, education, media theories like evolutionary theory. The postcolonial thinkers' task is to rethink modernity in the context of this new data and develop paradigms that have their own history as a consequence of colonization. The challenge is perhaps greater to sociology than to history, a challenge to reconstruct the conceptual architecture of the discipline and its foundational understanding of modernity.

9.8 POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE OF ARCHAEOLOGY –

There exists a hierarchical relationship between the postcolonial critique and the field of archaeology, a discipline that developed historically in combination with European Colonialism and imperialism. Hence, scholars representing indigenous and minority communities and impoverished countries suggest strategies to rewrite its colonial heritage's archaeological theory and practice and create an equally sensitive discipline. The research is to identify current trends and chart future directions in postcolonial archaeological research. These work contain multiple voices and case study approaches and have consciously aimed to recognize the utility of comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the past.[iii]

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the meaning of Post colonialism.

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2. Discuss Post colonialist critique of Archaeology.

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9.9 CRITICISM ON POSTCOLONIAL CONCEPT

There are several important questions we need to ask. Is Colonialism really over? The idea of a post can apply. Can we use the term postcolonial? Still, Shakespeare is taught in colleges, scholars, scientists, opinions; texts are still taken seriously. Still, in a country like India, English is taught in school, internet users are highest in English. The Postcolonial writers said that the native language has to be used. However, we still speak English to a large extent.

Postcolonial writers are being criticized as they also studied and located themselves in a binary view - central self and decentralized. There is otherness and other, thereby defining and delimiting themselves in Baba or Said's work. It's kind of a victim stand and structuralism stand. Colonizer and Colonized as an opposition. There could be certain good relations and benefits not in all parts, but the colonized has benefited in some parts. However, the percentage of discrimination could be higher too.

One more argument or question we can ask is whether the real problem is that of Colonialism or if all over the world, we are in the process of Globalization.

One more criticism is the bias of writing about women in the Postcolonial period. Mainly the Postcolonial writers studied in the West and were men. So, there could be still a loophole in the claim of postcolonial representation.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the criticism of Post colonialism.

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2. Explain your understanding of Post colonialism

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9.10 STANDPOINT THEORY

Standpoint theory, in simple words, means a framework from which we analyze a particular event, phenomenon, act. It is a viewpoint which we have an understanding based on our social location. The social location could be gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. For example - A migrant during covid-19. He had to walk towards his village, manage his expenses, take risks, and handle the uncertainty. So, his standpoint about Covid would be entirely different from someone who had enough savings, owned a house, etc.

So, here the migrant would give a better picture of the real world, the experience of the crisis. They have a critical reflection. Standpoint theory points out that those oppressed and marginalized could give an informed view of the world. They would be able to see the status quo and write about it, as they are living through the status quo. Studying Standpoint theory is important as it gives the marginalized groups a platform for them, allowing them to challenge the status quo. The status quo which is often filled with views of dominant white male who are having a position on the basis of their privilege.

9.11 ORIGINS OF STANDPOINT THEORY

The roots of standpoint theory could be found in the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who explored the various viewpoints of slaves and masters in 1807. He used it to explain the master-slave connection, he believed, is about people's belonging positions and how the organizations influence people to earn authority. Karl Mannheim, one of the founders of sociology of knowledge, also proposed work on the relationship between social Standpoints and Knowledge, i.e., worldview, which is sometimes disregarded. The topic has long been debated in the field of sociology of knowledge and the Frankfurt School's debate with Critical Theory. However, standpoint theory has also become more popular with that of feminists.

9.12 FEMINIST STANDPOINT THEORY -

Feminist Standpoint Theory is a feminist theoretical paradigm that claims knowledge is derived from one's social position. This viewpoint disputes the objectivity of traditional science and claims that research and

theory have overlooked and suppressed women and feminist perspectives. This notion arose from Marx's argument that people from oppressed groups have special access to knowledge that those from privileged groups do not. In the 1970s, feminist writers were encouraged by Marx's insight to investigate how gender disparities affect knowledge creation. Their research looks into the nature and sources of knowledge, emphasizing that knowledge is universal.

Sandra Harding, an American feminist theorist, invented the term Standpoint theory to define epistemologies that place a high value on women's understanding. She claimed that those at the top of social hierarchies are prone to losing sight of actual human relationships and the true nature of social reality, causing them to overlook vital concerns about the social and natural world in their academic pursuits. People at the bottom of social hierarchies, on the other hand, have a distinct perspective that is a better beginning place for studies. Even though such persons are frequently overlooked, their marginalized status allows them to outline key research issues more easily and explain social and natural concerns.

Dorothy Smith is a sociologist from Canada. Smith argues in her 1989 book The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology that sociology has disregarded and objectified women, making them the "Other." Smith said, for example, that because women have traditionally been the carers in society, males have been able to devote their efforts to think about abstract concepts that are deemed more significant. As a result, women's activities are rendered invisible and viewed as "natural" rather than part of human culture and history. From a female standpoint, sociologists can raise specific questions about why women are assigned to certain activities and the consequences for social institutions such as education, the family, government, and the economy.

Objective empiricism—the concept that science can be objective through rigorous methodology—is also questioned by standpoint theorists. Harding, for example, claimed that, despite their claims of neutrality, scientists had ignored their own androcentric and sexist research methods and results and that understanding the viewpoint of knowledge producers makes people more aware of the power inherent in positions of scientific authority. According to standpoint theorists, starting from the perspective of women or other oppressed people increases the likelihood of acknowledging the relevance of standpoint and producing embodied, self-critical, and coherent knowledge.

In her book Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (1990), American sociologist Patricia Hill Collins advocated a kind of viewpoint theory that highlighted the perspective of African American women. Collins maintained that the matrix of oppression—an interwoven system of racial, gender, and class oppression and privilege—has provided African American women with a unique perspective on their excluded situation. She demonstrated how

economic exploitation of African American women's labor, political denial of their rights, and controlling cultural images that created harmful stereotypes oppressed them. She suggested that African American women can contribute something unique to feminist scholarship. As a result, Collins has advocated for a more inclusive scholarship that opposes information that dehumanizes and objectifies persons.

9.13 INDIGENOUS STANDPOINT THEORY (IST)

Indigenous knowledge fuels multi-billion dollar genetics supply industries, ranging from food and pharmaceuticals in developed countries to chemical products, energy, and other manufacturers. (United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Civil Society Organizations and Participation Programme (CSOPP), 1995, p. 9)

Indigenous Standpoint Theory has struggled to gain widespread acceptance in academic areas, particularly in the Humanities. An Indigenous methodological approach to research is a procedure in which research is conducted for the benefit of the researcher rather than for the non-indigenous researcher's academic institution. The community being studied retains and values the knowledge gained. This is viewed as an Indigenous protocol that might encourage Indigenous higher-degree research students to participate in the documentation of Indigenous knowledge within an Indigenous acceptability framework that is also academically rigorous. This enables Indigenous researchers to speak from their cultural standpoint, assist in cultural maintenance and present their own epistemological 'truth' to produce a more inclusive and therefore more complex form of knowledge. Martin Nakata is associated with the Indigenous standpoint theory.

IST is widely used in New Zealand, Africa, Tanzania Australia to study the indigenous people**.**

Few important key principles on which Standpoint theory is based are -

1. It aims at the promotion of human rights and social justice.
2. It focuses on raising the voices of indigenous people.
3. It tries to address the issues that are valuable and important for the community.
4. It focuses on empathizing and acknowledging the political, social, and historical contexts of a given society.
5. It works on building a healthy cultural interface, bond.
6. It tries to understand the role and position of the researcher in the research and that of the participants.

In the Article Indigenism and Australian Social Work, the author gives the cyclical diagram whereby the points they discuss are that of

understanding the aboriginal way of being (ontology) then aboriginal ways of knowing (epistemology, Decolonizing methodology, practicing Culturally safe methods, etc.

Examples of Indigenous research are studying the Jarawa community of Andaman by a Ph.D. student from JNU. He stayed with them for several years, recorded their language, understood them from pictures of body parts, birds, animals, and sign languages. He wrote about the grammar of the Jarawa language. The scholar writes how once the parents of the crying child had gone hunting and he saw the crying child and picked up, and that gave him acceptance into the community This shows that indigenous research is not just about techniques and bookish knowledge but being humble in the fieldwork. This Ph.D. is the first one in the Jarawa language in India.

Another example is that Dr. VaseemIqbal whose parents had died. However, he used the funds he got from the Tsunami to complete his education. He earned a doctorate on '*Sea Water Intrusion Along East and West Coasts of South Andaman Islands.'* The communitarian aspect can be seen when he was awarded, on the radio, it was announced in Andaman about him. People even asked if he would not be coming back to the village to treat the people. As people didn't understand the difference between doctorate and doctor. This is a classic example of Indigenous research. He is the first person from Andaman who resides there and studied about his community. This is also an example of Indigenous standpoint theory or literature.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the origin of standpoint theory.

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2. Discuss the principles of Indigenous standpoint theory.

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9.14 SUMMARY

We began the chapter by understanding Postcolonialism, which is the study of society, literature before the colonizers and after the colonizers. We also observed the different fields where Postcolonialism has impacted, like Archaeology. In the second section of the chapter, the

focus was upon standpoint theory. This theory gives importance to the social location of the actors. Lastly, we learned about indigenous standpoint theory, which focuses on bringing authenticity to research and those the research is conducted.

9.15 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Indigenous theory
2. Explain in brief the postcolonialism meaning and its criticism
3. Explain Feminist standpoint theory

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10

FEMINIST CRITIQUE

Unit Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To learn more about feminism and its different waves.
- To understand feminist critique from different disciplines and areas.
- To know about the pioneers in recent times on feminism from India.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand the feminist critique, we have first widen our knowledge on the concept of feminism further. So, here we are going to discuss feminism and also different waves of feminism. After that, we would look into the feminist critique in detail.

10.2 FEMINISM

Feminism attempts to comprehend women's social situation, explain their secondary role in history, and provide a foundation for reform and development. Feminists think that men and women are in a fundamental power struggle. This fight is potentially revolutionary since it revolves around class and race too. A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft claimed that women should have the same legal rights as men because of their equal humanity, moral value, rationality, and independence. It was wrong for women to be defined solely by their gender, with educational, legal, economic, and political rights restricted to them. There would be a change in the relationship if equality was achieved.

10.3 Waves of feminism

Let us now look into understanding the different waves of feminism.

There have been several ways of feminism. Diverse kinds of intervention described the first wave of feminism in the United States, and they have continued to inspire succeeding feminist groups. The first wave of feminism in the United States was initially intertwined with other reform movements, such as abolition and temperance, and heavily engaged working-class women.

It was, however, backed by Black women abolitionists like Maria Stewart (1803–1879), Sojourner Truth (1797–1883), and Frances E. W. Harper (1825–1911), who fought for women's rights. Women's rights suffered a significant backlash during World War I and World War II, as the focus shifted to calls for national unity and patriotism. Women's radical otherness, or rather, the cognitive and social process of "othering" women as the second sex in patriarchal cultures, was presented by writers like Woolf and Beauvoir.

Marxist feminism shared a fundamental conviction of inequality and opportunity for men and women. Still, the latter focused on working-class women and their participation in class struggle and socialist movements. Socialist feminists such as Rosa Luxemburg and, in particular, Alexandra Kollontai and Emma Goldman paved the way for second-wave feminism, fighting for women's rights to abortion, divorce, and nonlegislative partnerships—as well as against sexism in bourgeois society and within socialist movements—both politically and in their personal lives.

"Second-wave feminism" refers to the radical feminism of the late 1960s and early 1970s women's liberation movement. We begin our discussion of second-wave feminism with the earliest harbinger of a new Three Waves of feminism and the most widely known event in the United

States: the Miss America Pageant protests of 1968 and 1969. (Freeman, 1975). Radical second-wave feminists employed performance (e.g., underground or guerrilla theatre) to draw attention to what was now referred to as "women's oppression,"

The Redstockings, the New York Radical Feminists, and other significant feminist groups participated in the 1969 protest to demonstrate how women in pageant competitions were paraded like cattle, highlighting the underlying assumption that how women look is more important than what they do, what they think, or even whether they think at all (Freeman, 1975). It was a flawlessly planned press conference. A small group of women purchased pageant tickets. It was pasted in a banner that said "WOMEN'S LIBERATION," chanting "Freedom for Women" and "No More Miss America," thereby exposing the public to an early second-wave feminist objective (Freeman, 1969).

Feminists staged several types of theatrical activism while marching down the Atlantic City boardwalk and close to the event itself, including crowning a sheep Miss America and throwing "oppressive" gender artifacts like bras, girdles, false eyelashes, high heels, and makeup into a trash can in front of reporters (Freeman, 1975).

The desire to build a feminist theory and politics that honors conflicting experiences and deconstructs categorical thinking motivates third-wave feminists. The desire to build a feminist theory and politics that honors conflicting experiences and deconstructs categorical thinking motivates third-wave feminists.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss feminism in few lines?

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2. Discuss your understanding of the different waves of feminism?

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10.4 INTERSECTIONALITY AND FEMINISM

The oxford dictionary meaning of the word Intersectionality is “The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or

disadvantage.".This word was first used in women's rights by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989 to show how the problem is not the same for all women. For example – A Dalit woman would face problems of caste discrimination, class discrimination. However, a woman from a tribe would face different layers of marginalization. Bringing out the intersectional aspect in literature is very important.

https://iwda.org.au/3-ways-to-be-an-intersectional-feminist-ally/

The above art shows women in different forms. There is black woman, thin, healthy women with the scarf, and women who are differently-abled. Conclusion to this is what Intersectionality is, where different forms are accepted and the versions of inequality are different.

10.5 FEMINISM IN INDIA

Anagol shows that the development of feminist consciousness in India from the late nineteenth century to the coming of Gandhi was not one of uninterrupted unilinear progression. Her study of women's perspectives and participation in the Age of Consent Bill debates demonstrates how the rebellion of wives and their assertion in the colonial courts had resulted in men to reform rather than the current historiographical accounts, which claims that it was a response purely to threats posed by 'colonial masculinity.' She adds that the growth of the women's press, their writings and participation in the wider vernacular press highlights the relationship between symbolic or 'hidden' resistance and open assertion by women.

10.6 FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In colonial Maharashtra, women tried to express themselves and to society through biographies, autobiographies, articles in newspapers, journals. At times they even wrote books, trying to discuss women's issues that arose from the patriarchal system of society at the time. These writings criticized social customs and blind faith in religion about women. Writings were theoretical and visionary and stood out, creating a baseline

for feminist historiography. One such work is that of Tarabai Shinde called Stri Purush Tulana. As there is a chapter on Tarabai Shinde hence not much details are discussed over here.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss Intersectionality.

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2.Discuss feminist critique of social structure?

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10.7 INDIAN FEMINISTS

Let us now look into a few present-day Indian feminists women who have created an impact on thousands of people.

- Vandana Shiva - is an eco-rights activist who founded Navdanya, a national movement to conserve the diversity and integrity of living resources, particularly native seeds, after her battle against genetically modified seeds and for the conservation of native seeds. Navdanya has established one hundred twenty-two community seed banks. Farmers have also been taught about seed sovereignty, food sovereignty, and sustainable agriculture through the organization.

- Indira Jaising - Indira Jaising, a lawyer and human rights activist, has been named "formidable," particularly while recalling her work to develop the Domestic Violence Act (2005). Indira is also the Lawyer's Collective's founder, which works to get justice for marginalized groups. Indira was the first woman to be appointed to the Bombay High Court as a senior counsel. Indira has taken on environmental concerns such as coastal conservation and others and women's issues and human rights. She headed committees in Punjab to examine extrajudicial executions, police brutality, and disappearances in North India in the 1970s and 1980s. She has battled some of the country's most high-profile cases. She has also battled for compensation for victims of the Bhopal gas catastrophe in 1984 and the Gujarat riots in 2002.

- Vrinda Grover is a human rights lawyer and activist. She has worked on several high-profile cases, including the rape-torture case of SoniSori, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, the 1987 Hashimpura police

killings, the 2004 IshratJahan case, and the 2008 anti-Christian riots in Kandhamal. She has also taken on issues concerning domestic violence and minorities. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013, the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offenses Act of 2012, and the Prevention of Torture Bill of 2010 were all drafted with Vrinda's input. She opposes the two-finger test and criticizes the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, the death penalty, and other issues.

- VijiPenkoottu is a Kerala-based human right and women's rights activist. Her involvement in the Kozhikode 'Right to Sit' struggle. Basic human rights, such as the right to sit or use the restroom during working hours, were denied to women working in the stores and malls of Midhayitheru, SM Street. Viji founded Penkoottu, an all-trade women's union, to fight for the fundamental rights of saleswomen in Kozhikode and other regions of Kerala, where similar atrocities against working women are common. After an eight-year fight, the Kerala Shops and Commercial Establishments (Amendments) Act, 2018, allowed women to work flexible hours and have a space to sit.

- Kamla Bhasin is a social scientist who works as a development feminist, author, poet, and activist. She has worked on gender equality, education, poverty reduction, human rights, and peace in South Asia since 1970. In 1979, she began working with the Food and Agricultural Organization's Freedom from Hunger Campaign in New Delhi, where she campaigned to empower underprivileged people in rural and urban areas. She's written extensively about patriarchy and gender issues. Her published publications are Laughing Matters, Exploring Masculinity, Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition, What Is Patriarchy?, and Feminism and its Relevance in South Asia.

- Gail Omvedt - Omvedt, though, was born in Minneapolis in the United States. She stayed in India and wrote about India too. She first came to India to research her doctoral thesis on the 'Non-Brahman Movement in Western India', which men like Mahatma JyotibaPhule inspired.

  Her primary areas of interest were on the writings and philosophies of Jyotiba Phule and Dr. Ambedkar. She brought them to wide public consciousness, especially in the 1970s when social activism rose. In many ways, she was the voice of the Dalit community at a time when their struggle had not yet received public validation.

  Her work was almost all-encompassing, covering caste, class, gender, economics, tribal issues and socio-agricultural matters, especially rural women. Her notable works are - Among them were the following: Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India; Ambedkar: Towards and Enlightened India; JyotiraoPhule and the Ideology of Social Revolution in India; Dalit and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit

Movement in Colonial India; Understanding Caste: From Buddha to Ambedkar and Beyond; We Will Smash This Prison: Indian Women in Struggle; Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anti caste Intellectuals; and Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste. We Will Smash This Prison was a powerful recollection of her involvement, along with IndutaiPatankar, the veteran communist leader, and her mother-in-law, in the movement for women's rights in India.

Gail Omvedt and her husband, Bharat Patankar, founded the Shramik Mukti Dal in 1980 and other activists to organize farmers and peasants. The socio-political organization incorporated communist thought along with the liberating principles proposed by JyotibaPhule and Dr. Ambedkar. Thus, they dealt with several key issues like water rights, caste oppression, the rights of those affected by infrastructure projects, etc.

She was even at the forefront of public protests, padayatra, rallies, and conferences addressing people in Marathi. Gail Omvedt passed away recently.

10.8 IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING A FEMINIST CRITIQUE

Documenting will help the other generation to know the past and take further steps in the direction of growth.. It would further help you to sensitize and learn about the facets of oppression that anyone would be passively going through in their lives. This chapter may even help you to reflect on self and analyze one's conditions of existence.

10.9 UNDERSTANDING FEMINIST CRITIQUE

Ann Oakley defined gender where she notes, "Sex" refers to the biological division into male and female; "gender" to the parallel and socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity (see Sex, Gender, and Society, 1972). Feminists point out that gender training differs in different parts of the world, and gender is a construction of society. Strossen (1993) notes that the radical message of feminism is not the recognition of equality or just a measure of equalization or fairness, but it is part of a larger struggle for social change.

Ann Oakley's book titled, The Sociology of Housework is an important work that brings out several aspects of the private sphere, i.e., home. In this book, she discusses the SAHM – Stay-at-home mothers who contribute immensely to the household. She, in a waypoints out the gender inequity in the housework. Feminist critique is an important method for examining prior knowledge for androcentric and ethnocentric bias in all

aspects of knowledge development, from theoretical underpinnings through the steps of the research process.

10.10 FEMINIST RESEARCH

It needs to be observed that feminist critique is often portrayed as an important method for examining prior knowledge for androcentric and ethnocentric bias in all aspects of knowledge development. In the theoretical underpinnings and even throughout the different steps of the research process Despite the proliferation of research on women since 1970, the male bias remains prevalent in the scientific community. The problem in research operates twofold: not being a participant (subject) in the research and being a researcher just because the person is a female.

10.11 FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF MUSEUM

Thousands of diverse museums, including art galleries and heritage sites, exist around the world today. They draw millions of people, audiences who come to view the exhibitions and artifacts and, equally importantly, learn from them about the world and themselves. This makes museums active public educators who imagine, visualize, represent, and story the past and the present to create knowledge. Problematically, the visuals and narratives used to inform visitors are never neutral. Feminist cultural and adult education studies have shown that all too frequently, they include epistemologies of mastery that reify the histories and deeds of 'great men.' Despite pressures from feminist scholars and professionals, normative public museums.

10.12 FEMINIST CRITICISM OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The archaeology of gender and feminist archaeology critique is the representations of gender, sex, and sexuality. It challenges traditional constructions of archaeological knowledge and the role of archaeology in present-day society. It also uses the material culture from the past. This is done to understand gender and sexuality and how they were constructed, maintained, changed, negotiated, and resisted through social relations, roles, and ideologies. In addition, feminist archaeology is concerned with contemporary practice (fieldwork, analysis, and workplace issues), pedagogy, cultural heritage management, the past presentation, and working with local communities.

10.13 CRITIQUE OF EDUCATION-

Schools have become cultural sites of the reproduction of masculinities and gender roles. At times even the policymakers or the management of the school are involved in this process. It is through the uniform which is given to the girls. The textbooks and narratives which

are taught to the children. All these contribute in the construction of the persona of the child and their self-esteem. Suppose schools have strict policies like where the children are not supposed to interact with the opposite gender. In that case, they will have problems in adulthood interacting and communicating with the other gender.

10.14 BIOLOGY

Women have been marginalized based on biology. Biology is seen not merely as a privileged oppressor of women but as a co-victim of masculinist social assumptions. When gender biases are controlled, the fertility rate improves.

10.15 FEMINIST CRITIQUE IN LITERATURE

Literature reflects and shapes prejudices and other cultural preconceptions, according to feminist literary criticism. As a result, feminist literary criticism explores how works of literature represent or subvert patriarchal views, often in the same work. The following are some of the most common feminist literary critique techniques:

- Identifying with female characters: Critics question writers' male-centered perspectives by scrutinizing how female characters are defined. Women in literature have historically been portrayed as objects from a male perspective, according to feminist literary critique.

- Reevaluating literature and the context in which it is read: By reviewing classic literature, a critic might ask if society has appreciated male authors and their literary works more than female authors because males have been valued more than females.

The ultimate goal of feminist criticism in literature, according to Tuttle, is to "develop and uncover a female tradition of writing," "to analyze women writers and their writings from a female perspective," "to rediscover old texts," "to interpret the symbolism of women's writing so that it will not be lost or ignored by the male point of view," "to resist sexism in literature and to increase awareness of sexism in literature. (Lisa Tuttle: 1986, 184)

10.16 DIGITALIZATION AND MARGINALIZATION OF WOMAN

Technology has questioned the binary relations of males and females. Technology as a non-human agency has brought several changes in human lives. Gurumurthy, et.al (2016) points out that the development of girl child and protection for women schemes have been marginalized further due to digitalization. The Union budget of 2015-2016 revealed that

the budget for Women and child had been reduced by 1/3 compared to the previous years. It is also observed that fundings for schemes like the national rural employment guarantee scheme have been reduced. Even though such schemes directly help the poor women. The focus is on digitization rather than ground-level development. However, new strategies like Direct benefit transfers have been started. Support for health, education, food security, and childcare is replaced with more "efficient" cash transfers based on the technological restructuring of governance. The only structural solution to the ills of poor governance is that of the introduction of technology. Evidence on the ground shows, contrary to the hope that technology will reduce the layers of intermediaries, it has instead increased the number of intermediaries involved in payments, often with complex processes that make the payment process more opaque than in a purely bureaucratic mechanism. The privatization of social security has gendered impacts. Existing studies reveal that the assumption of an automatic link between cash transfers and women's empowerment can be misleading. In many instances, cash transfers may reinforce traditional gender roles and also leave intra-household gender inequalities untouched.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the impact of digitization on women?

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2. Explain in brief feminist critique of the museum?

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10.17 SUMMARY

This chapter observed the feminist critique on different fields like digitalization, education, museum, public space, intersectionality aspect, social structure, and research. We also learned about few Indian feminists, the social structure how it operates. The objective of this chapter was to open up a space for debate and discussion and help one understand the complexities associated with this topic.

10.18 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss feminism in India with some Indian feminists.
2. Explain feminist critique on fields like Archealology, literature, and education.
3. Explain in brief feminism and its different waves.

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11

SOCIOLOGY FROM BELOW: DALIT SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Unit Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the historical factors leading to emergence of perspective from below.
- To examine the major trends of transformation in Indian society.
- To differentiate between the perspective from below with other prevalent perspectives.

11.1 INTRODUCTION:

Indian society is the product of a long and complex historical process. The seven major events that contributed to the formation of this process are the Aryan advent, the emergence of the Indian 'protest' religions—Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, the entry of non-Indic religions into the sub-continent as immigrant religions, the Muslim conquests, western colonialism, the anti-colonial freedom struggle and the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 on the eve of the British exit (Oommen:1998). The product of this long process is a four-in-one society. Like all societies, Indian society too is stratified based on age, gender, rural-urban differences and class, but unlike many of them, Indian society is marked by considerable cultural heterogeneity. However, what is unique to India is the all-pervasive caste hierarchy, legitimised through the Hindu doctrine of karma and reincarnation.

11.2 MAJOR TRENDS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION:

The complex structure of Indian Society is based on four major trends of social transformation are in evidence (Oommen: 1998)

1. Trend from cumulative to dispersed dominance.

First, a transitional trend from cumulative to dispersed dominance. If status, wealth and power were earlier concentrated in the hands of the twice-born caste Hindus—Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya—accounting for a mere 15 to 20 percent of the population, now there is an incipient trend towards dispersal of political power to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) due to adult franchise.

In addition to the dispersal of political power there is also a limited dispersal of wealth among the above categories, heralding the birth of a middle class among them. The policy of protective discrimination as in reserving seats in educational institutions and government service are primarily responsible for the emergence of a bourgeoisie among the SCs and STs. The Kulaks among the OBCs are a product of agrarian reforms, which abolished absentee landlords and transferred land to the tenants and sharecroppers drawn from among them, and the Green Revolution, which provided subsidized inputs and assured minimum prices for agricultural products to owner cultivators.

However the changes in power and wealth are not matched by a change in status Inter-dining, intermarriage and social inter-action between the twice-born and the SCs are still rare, particularly in rural areas. This results in status incongruence, that is their upward mobility in wealth and power is not matched by mobility in status.

2. The gradual movement from hierarchy to equality:

The second major trend in social transformation manifests in the gradual movement from hierarchy to equality, resulting in the decline of traditional collectivism and the emergence of individualism. With the emergence of individualism, the salience of traditional collectivities manifested through joint family, jati, village, etc., are relegated to the background. While there is no neat and tidy displacement of collectivism by individualism, the birth of the Indian individual is clearly in evidence.

3. The simultaneous demands for equality and the assertion of collective identity:

The third important trend in social transformation in India is the simultaneous demands for equality and the assertion of collective identity. The Indian Constitution unambiguously assured equality and concomitantly, social justice to all individuals, irrespective of caste, creed or class.

At any rate, the stigma associated with their identity prompted them to abandon it and plumb for assimilation, as the process of sanskritization implied. But gradually it dawned on them that individual equality per se would not emancipate them and they needed to re-invent dignity in their collective identity .Expressions such as Dalits and Adivasis in the place of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes clearly point to this trend.

4. The movement from a plural society to pluralism:

The fourth transition is the movement from a plural society to pluralism (Oommen: 1997) A plural society is one in which different social and cultural segments uneasily co-exist, inter-acting in the economic context, but prohibiting legitimate transfusion of blood (inter-marriages) or transmission of culture. This arrangement prevailed within the Hindu society through the operation of the jajmani system for centuries. Latterly, the twice-born castes interact with the OBCs and SCs both in the political and economic contexts, but have very limited interaction in the socio-cultural contexts.

The four trends of change that have been listed, namely the movement from cumulative to dispersed dominance; from hierarchy to equality and the consequent birth of individualism; the simultaneous demand for equality and identity and the gradual transition from a plural society to pluralism (the dignified co-existence of different socio-cultural segments as equals in the polity) have tremendous methodological implications for the study of Indian society.

Check your progress:

1. Elaborate on major trends of transformation in Indian society

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11.3 CONTEXT:

The view from below is an old and persisting issue in social science, particularly in sociology and social anthropology. But concomitant to the emergence of the traditionally oppressed and stigmatized collectivities as partially emancipated and empowered ones, their conventional silence is being replaced by audible new voices. In turn, the need for their representation in the process of knowledge production is grudgingly being recognized.

If earlier, those who occupied the bottom of society were invisible due to the cognitive blackout perpetuated by upper caste, middle class, urban, male researchers, today, they are in full view and demand their

legitimate share of representation in the production and representation of knowledge.

All societies have their bottoms. Thus, the bottoms of societies which are homogenous and merely stratified are occupied by women, youth and the proletariat. These categories have questioned the knowledge produced by their counterparts—men, adults and the bourgeoisie. Over a period of time, the specific role of each of these disadvantaged categories has come to be recognized in the production of knowledge.

In culturally heterogeneous societies, if the segments are unequal, small or economically weak or culturally 'back-ward' or all of these, the tendency is to ignore them in the representations of reality. There are numerous instances when these ignored or marginalised communities demand to be represented in the process of knowledge production. A familiar example in India is the neglect of the numerous less developed linguistic communities.

In plural societies, the unrepresented bottom categories are invariably viewed as outsiders to the society, as in the case of followers of the non-Indic religions in India. Voices of protest from them have gradually led to the provision of space for their experience in the context of knowledge production.

The bottom layer in hierarchical societies is constituted by the cumulatively deprived sections of society. Unlike women, youth, proletariat, culturally backward or alien segments, which are deprived in one of the contexts, the cumulatively deprived are subjected to multiple deprivations. They are found only in hierarchical societies. The ex-untouchables of India afford an ideal example of this category of bottom.

11.4 PERSPECTIVE FROM BELOW AND THE OTHER PERSPECTIVES:

It is also necessary to indicate what the perspective from below is not. First, the view from below should not be confused, for the study of other cultures, the conventional avocation of anthropologists.

11.4.1 Anthropological Method:

The specificity of anthropological 'method' is the distinction between the etic and emic approaches both of which entailed the technique of participant observation, which is often mystified (Oommen:1969). But the demystification of participant observation was bound to happen when anthropologists started investigating their own societies. The point of interest for the present is that in hierarchical societies, anthropologists drawn from the upper castes were invariably reluctant to 'participate' at the bottom rung of the society, given the norms and values associated with the practice of untouchability. Should an effort to participate in the life-world

of the untouchables be made by a savarna anthropologist, it will be disapproved, not only by this own jati peers, but also by the untouchables themselves given the grip of the, doctrine of karma and reincarnation on them.

Even the distinction between the etic and emic approaches remained problematic. The etic approach identified and studied social reality independently of the natives' cultural judgments. The emic view, in contrast, is an insider's view.

11.4.2 Subalternist perspective:

Second, the perspective from below should not be confused for the much-heralded subalternist perspective Subalternists focussed their attention on the circles of elite politics and have emphasised the insurrectionary activities and potential of the subaltern classes (artisans, poor peasants and landless labourers, which are essentially economic categories), who, according to them, possessed self-conscious and coherent conceptions of resistance that were directed against rich peasants, urban traders/merchants or the colonial revenue administrators. Subalternists claim to have unfolded the incapacity of nationalist historiography to incorporate the voices of the weak into the project of history writing (Guha and Spivak (eds.), 1988, in Oommen 2001).

11.4.3 Proletarian, feminist or generational perspective:

Third, the view from below is different from the prole-tarian, feminist or generational perspective. Class in the sense of social gradations exist in all societies and there are no immutable boundaries between classes. Both embourgeoisement and proletarianisation are perennial possibilities. Indeed, declassing has been advocated and successfully attempted by many investigators There was a time, say in the 1960s, when the widespread belief prevailed that the youth alone had the capacity to cognise truth; those above 30 were adjudged to be incapable of perceiving truth (Feuer, 1969).

The extremists among feminists seem to take the view that only women can understand and analyse issues concerning women. The corollary of this is that only men can understand their problems.

11.4.4 Economic and political perspective:

Fourth, in plural societies, the segments, even when they are equals, remain cultural strangers. That is, even as they interact in the economic and political contexts which result in interdependence, culturally, they are insulated. Following Simmels' (1950) notion, one can even accept the advantages of doing research among strangers. The point is very that the perspective from below is the specific need of hierarchical societies such as that of India, wherein the society is so tightly compartmentalised that one segment cannot penetrate into the other.

Having said the above, we need to add a caveat here. If one were to take a position that there is a possibility of an outsider ever investigating a segment of society to which he does not belong, then each segment will have to produce its own set of researchers. This will leave some segments uninvestigated forever. For example, who will study children, individuals, imbeciles or insane people? At any rate, there is an advantage for those segments which can be studied by its own representatives and by outsiders also.

Check your progress:

1. Examine the contrast between the perspective from below with other prevalent perspectives in society

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11.5 THE NEED FOR A PERSPECTIVE FROM BELOW:

The need for a perspective from below is inextricably interlinked with the hierarchical nature of societies such as those of India. All the available evidence suggests that Indian sociologists and social anthropologists, predominantly drawn from the twice born caste Hindus, at least until recently, have largely neglected the social realities of the lowly placed and oppressed-the OBCs and SCs.

In All lndia Sociological Conference held in 1955 D.P. Mukherji insisted that it was not enough that an Indian sociologist be a sociologist, but that he be an Indian first. And how do sociologists acquire indianness? By situating himself in Indian lore, both high and low But, “unless sociological training in India is grounded in Sanskrit, or any such language in which the traditions have been embodied as symbols, social research in India will be a pale imitation of what others are doing" (Mukherji, in Saksena, 1961). Although Mukherji wanted sociologists to be familiar with Indian lore, both high and low, he thought that our traditions were embodied in Sanskrit.

11.6 PROBLEMS WITH THIS ADVOCACY:

First, only the twice-born caste Hindus were allowed any access to Sanskrit, in which the traditional texts of knowledge were written. By insisting that Sanskrit be the route through for Indian sociologists to cultivate originality, Mukherji was narrowing the recruitment base of Indian sociologists.

Second, by the time education became a constitutional possibility, Sanskrit ceased to be alive language.

Third, the reference to 'such other languages' may be an allusion to Pali and Tamil, but does it include Persian, too? If indeed all the four languages—Sanskrit, Pali, Tamil and Persian—are under reference, one cannot talk of tradition in the singular, for indeed, there is a multiplicity of traditions in India.

Fourth, even if one takes such an accommodative view, still all the traditions under reference are Great Traditions. And, the traditions of the vast majority of the people of India are Little Traditions, confined to folk regions. No sociologist can afford to neglect this rich variety of traditions if he wishes to be called authentic.

Fifth, it is difficult to comprehend why training in sociology grounded in Sanskrit and/or other such languages can inform sociology of originality. According to Mukherji's prescription, an overwhelming majority of Indian sociologists are pale imitators. On the other hand, those handful of Sanskrit-knowing sociologists hardly demonstrated any originality; they invariably indulged in exegetical jinalyses. In turn, this blurs the distinction between Indology and sociology.

Mukherji, in Indian Sociology and Tradition, said: "All our Shastras are sociological." There is an interesting link between the need to anchor a sociologist's training in knowledge of Sanskrit and the observation that the Shastras are sociological because the latter are in Sanskrit. But, a few uncomfortable facts may be noted here.

First, the observation stands for Hindus. But Indian sociology cannot be equated with Hindu sociology for the simple reason that one out of every eight Indians is a non-Hindu.

Second, Hindu sociology necessarily implies Muslim sociology, Buddhist sociology and the like, the very antithesis of sociology as a humanistic and encapsulating enterprise.

Third, our does not stand even for all Hindus, the majority of the Hindu population (the OBCs and SCs) have no role in the making of these Shastras and they are treated as congenital interiors by twice-born Hindus In fact, the panchamas, those of the fifth order (the untouchables) are not even accounted for in the 'Chaturvarna' theory which deals with the Hindu doctrine of creation.

Not only that, the Shastras also assign a marginal position to the women of even the twice-born Varnas. To put it pithily, the Shastras privilege upper-caste males and treat the vast majority of Hindus as inferiors. Can they be sociological? Sociology cannot ignore the experiences of any segment in society, much less treat them as inferior. The mission of sociology is all embracing and ought to be humanistic.

While the Shastras are theological, they cannot be socio-logical. To anchor Indian sociology to the Hindu Shastras is to undermine sociology's secular and humane foundations. Finally, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, in his debates with M.K. Gandhi in the 1930s, insisted that only if the Puranas and Shastras and all scriptures that supported caste (i.e. inequality and injustice), were disowned, could he call himself a Hindu. As is well known, the challenge was not admissible to caste Hindus and Ambedkar embraced Buddhism in 1956.

Check your progress:

1. Discuss the need of perspective from below and problems associated with it

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11.7 THE BOOK-VIEW AND THE FIELD-VIEW:

Indeed the 'book-view' of sociology in India was excessively in favour of projecting the view from above. To counter this, the field-view would have been greatly helpful if executed with care. But that was not to be. Almost all field studies in sociology and social anthropology until recently were under-taken from the perspective of twice-born middle class Hindus. For example, there is hardly any study of a village, a much celebrated theme in Indian sociology, which views the village reality from the perspective of a Cheri, Maharwada or Chamar MohalIa. And, in field studies as in texts those below the pollution line are designated as Chandals, Mlecchas, exterior castes, untouchables etc., if they are referred to at all. Even designations such as Scheduled Castes preferred by the state and Harijan coined by Narasinh Mehta and propagated by M.K. Gandhi are not acceptable to them. That is, the very labelling of these categories has been debilitating and stigmatising. The compelling need for a view from below will have to be situated in this context.

But it is important to note here that the bottom layer of Indian society itself is no more uniform and homogenous. The upwardly mobile, urban educated Dalit elite are qualitatively different from the cumulatively dominated rural illiterate, economically stagnant Dalits. The urban Dalit elite should not be allowed to endanger the cause and interests of the cumulatively oppressed rural Dalits. That is, the perspective from below is the epistemological privilege of the cumulatively oppressed. Those who are incorporated into the establishment often get disembedded from their roots. It is a time to indicate the theoretical foundation of the approach designated as the 'perspective from below'.

There has been a cognitive black-out in Indian social science, at least until recently, as far as knowledge regarding the life-world experiences of Dalit-bahujans is concerned. The fact that the lifestyles of

upper castes and Dalit-bahujans vary dramatically in terms of food habits, worship patterns or gender relations is tacitly acknowledged. But instead of squarely recognising these variations and explaining why they exist, the dominant tendency in Indian sociology has been to suggest that the Dalit-bahujans are abandoning their way of life in favour of the lifestyle of caste Hindus. This is what sanskritisation is all about. In this perspective, not only are the norms and values of caste Hindus privileged, but they are also christened as norm setters and value givers for society as a whole. Conversely, the norms and values of Dalit-bahujans are knocked out, ignored, stigmatised and de-legitimised. Indeed, the field-view has made Indian sociology more authentic as compared with the book-view, but its authenticity has been largely partial. To correct this imbalance, we need the perspective from below.

11.8 CONCLUSION:

Finally, it is necessary to recognise that knowledge has two uses: oppression and perpetuation of hegemony and institutionalisation of equality and justice. The view from above sometimes directly and almost always indirectly aids and abets oppression and hegemonisation. The view from below can and should provide the much-needed antidote to this, facilitating the institutionalisation of equality and social justice. This is the rationale and justification for the perspective from below, which can contribute to the nurturing of a robust civil society.

11.9 QUESTIONS:

Q.1 Elaborate on the need and problems associated with the perspective from below.

Q.2 Critically examine the complex historical process of Indian society and the major trends of transformation.

Q.3 Delineate how the perspective from below is different from other perspectives of society.

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