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NCERT SOCIOLOGY

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NCERT CONDENSED / SUMMARISED CLASS 11 Part 2

UNDERSTANDING SOCIOLOGY

Chapter 1 - Social Structure, Stratification and Social Processes in Society

Chapter 2 - Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society

Chapter 3 - Environment and Society

Chapter 4 - Introducing Western Sociologists

Chapter 5 - Indian Sociologists

Chapter 1 - Social Structure, Stratification and Social Processes in Society

- The term social structure' points to the fact that society is structured i.e. organised or arranged in particular ways.
- The structure of anything consists of the relatively stable interrelationship among its parts; moreover the term 'part' itself implies a certain degree of stability.
- There are underlying patterns and regularities, in how people behave in the relationship they have with one another.
- Social structures are made up of human actions and relationships.
- What makes the pattern of structure in the society is its repetition across period of time and distance of space.
- This is the reason, the ideas of social reproduction and social structure are closely related to each other in sociological analysis e.g. in a school the admission procedure, code of conduct, annual functions, daily assemblies, school uniform and school anthems are followed and repeated over the years and become institutions.
- Human beings do bring changes to reproduce the structure by introducing changes.
- They cooperate as well as compete with each other, often viciously and ruthlessly.
- Two major themes explain the pattern of human behavior related to cooperation as well as conflict.
- Emile Durkheim emphasizes that society is primary over the individual person. Society is far more than the sum of individual acts; it has a 'firmness' or 'solidity' comparable to structures in the material environment.
- Other social thinkers like Karl Marx emphasizes the constraints of social structure but at the same time emphasizes on human creativity or agency to both reproduce and change social structure.
- In short, social structure refers to relatively stable social units and patterned relationships.
- These are special sequence of interrelations of various units.



- Social structure manifests the external form of society which is visible, comparatively permanent and abstract. .
- Social structure involves four elements i.e. it is normative system, status system, sanction system and anticipated response system which functions at social relationship level organisation or group level and community level.
- Social stratification refers to the existence of structured inequalities between groups in society, in terms of their access to material or symbolic rewards.
- It is a system of society on the basis of which individuals and groups get high or low
- The concept of stratification refers to the idea that society is divided into a patterned structure of unequal groups, and usually implies that this structure tends to persist across generalizations.
- Functions of social stratification are related to various strata. No individual can fulfill all his needs alone.
- Most evident forms of stratification in modern societies involve class divisions, race and caste, religion and community, tribe and gender.
- Social stratification is a part of the broader social structure. It is characterized by a certain pattern of inequality.

Caste system is a form of social stratification which have following features:

- Social and religious disabilities of different groups.
- Restrictions on food and coexistence.
- Restrictions of marital relations.
- Restriction on choice of occupation.

Basic forms of advantage which privileged groups may enjoy:

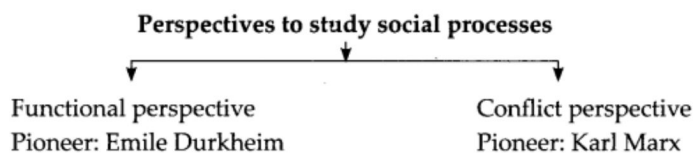
- **Life chances:** All those material advantages which improve life of the recipients e.g. wealth, income, benefits related to health, job security and recreation.
- **Social status:** Prestige or high standing in the society.
- **Political influence:** Dominance of one group on another on the basis of decision making ability of a particular group.



- The opportunities and resources available to individuals and groups to engage in competitions, cooperation and conflict are shaped by social structure and social stratification.

Ways of understanding social processes in sociology:

- Sociology seeks to explain the processes of cooperation, competition and conflict in terms of the actual social structure of society.



- Both the perspectives presume that human beings have to cooperate to meet their basic needs, and to produce and reproduce themselves and their world.
- Conflict perspective emphasises, how forms of cooperation changed from one historical society to another.
- For instance, in simple societies where no surplus was produced, there was cooperation among members of the society. But in capitalist society where product was surplus, the dominant class controlled it and instead of cooperation, conflict and competition emerged on the issue of controlling the surplus.
- Conflict perspective: The conflict perspective emphasises that groups and individuals are placed differently and unequally within the system of production relations. Thus, the factory owner and the factor worker do cooperate in their every day work but a certain hidden conflict of interests or rested interest can be seen in their relationships.
- The conflict perspective focuses on division of society on the basis of caste or class or patriarchy. Some groups are disadvantaged and discriminated.
- Functionalist perspective: It emphasises on the 'system requirements' of society- certain functional imperatives, functional requisites and prerequisites. These refer to the fulfilment of the broadest condition which are necessary for a system's existence e.g. The socialization of new members. Shared system of communication.

Notes

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Methods of assigning roles to individuals.

- Functional perspective assumes that different parts or organs of society have a function or role to play for the maintenance and functioning of the society.
- According to functional perspective, cooperation, competition and conflict can be seen as universal features of all societies, and the relationship among them is often complex and not easily separable.
- Cooperation refers to the continuous and common effort of two or more than two individuals working together equally and willingly towards a goal.
- Cooperation is an associative process. It is different from conflict because conflict is an dissociative social process.
- Cooperation may be conscious or an unconscious process while conflict is mostly a conscious process.
- Cooperation is universal and continuous process. It involves sympathy as well as empathy towards others. It is selfless in nature. Cooperation is psychological as well as social necessity.
- Cooperation may entail (require) conflict and there is a difference between enforced and voluntary cooperation. This can be understood through the example of daughters' property right in Indian society. If they ask for her right then she is looked upon as greedy and if as a compulsion she leaves her right then it is labelled as cooperation. So cooperative behavior can also be seen as a product of deep conflict in society.
- A functionalist often uses the term accommodation to explain such situations. It is basically an effort to compromise and co-exist despite conflict.
- Accommodation may be defined as that form of social process in which two or more persons or groups interact in order to prevent, reduce, or eliminate conflict.
- Cooperation and accommodation are two different processes, but both are process of associations. Both lead to formation of group life, conciseness, integration, assimilation and harmony in the society.



- Assimilation refers to a social process through which two or more persons or groups accept and perform each other's pattern of behavior.
- Cooperation deals with relationship among persons or groups to attain a common goal whereas accommodation and assimilation represent different stages in the process of cooperation.

Cooperation and Division of labour:

- Concept of cooperation rests on certain assumptions of human behaviour.
- Cooperation helps in human survival. It makes goal attainment easy. It unites people, enhances opportunities to attain knowledge as very helpful in economic domain.
- Durkheim's solidarity is fundamental for understanding of cooperation.
- The role of division of labour – which implies cooperation – is precisely to fulfil certain needs of society.
- Durkheim distinguished between Mechanical and Organic solidarity. Both are forms of cooperation in society.
- Humans are cooperative. Thus they do not passively adjust and accommodate but also change the natural or social world to which they adjust. Although Durkheim and Karl Marx both emphasis cooperation but they also differ.
- For Marx, cooperation is not voluntary in a society where class exists since their cooperation is not voluntary but has come about naturally. In other words, workers lose control over how to organise their own work and they lose control over the rewards of their labour. This is very different to a weaver or potter or iron smith who derives feeling of fulfillment and pleasure of creativity with that of a worker involved in a factory whose sole task may be to press a button through out the day. Cooperation in such a situation is enforced.

Mechanical Solidarity	Organic Solidarity
1. Form of cohesion (togetherness) in lifestyle, specialization or division of labour, age and sex.	1. Form of social cohesion based on division of labour and resulting into inter-dependence
2. They have togetherness due to similar beliefs, sentiments, and consciousness e.g. family engaged in farming.	2. As they become more specialized, they become more dependent upon each other e.g. garment or car manufacturing company.



Competition as an idea and practice:

- Like cooperation, competition is also universal and natural dissociative social processes.
- However, the sociological explanation is different from naturalistic ones.
- In the contemporary period competition is a predominant idea and one cannot imagine a society where competition is not a guiding force.
- Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx have noted the growth of individualism and competition respectively in modern societies. Both developments are intrinsic (internal) to the way modern capitalist society functions. In capitalist society, the stress is on greater efficiency and greater profit maximization.
- The ideology of competition is the dominant ideology in capitalism. The logic of this ideology is that the market operates in a manner that ensures greatest efficiency e.g. competitions ensure that the students with higher marks or best studies get admission in prestigious colleges and get best jobs.
- This ideology assumes that individuals compete on an equal basis i.e. all individuals are positioned equally in the competition for education, jobs or resources, but as stratification and inequality show, individuals are placed differently in society which ultimately leads to conflict.
- **Conflict:** Conflict is a dissociative social process. The term 'conflict' implies clash of interest.
- Conflict is the dissociative social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or the threat of violence. It includes all activities in which people contend against one another for any objective.
- Scarcity of resources in society produces conflict as groups struggle to access to and control over those resources.
- The bases of conflict vary. It could be class or caste, tribe or gender, ethnicity or religious community.
- Sociologists have drawn attention to the fact that conflict changes in nature and form at different stages of development. But conflict has always been part of any society.



- Social change and greater assertion of democratic rights by disadvantaged and discriminated groups make the conflict more visible.
- Conflicts are different from competition. Competition may be an unconscious process while conflict is mostly a conscious process. The main motive of competition is to achieve the goals while conflicts are mostly for personal goals.
- Conflict appears as a discord or overt clash only when expressed openly but the absence of movement does not imply the absence of a conflict.
- Since, conflict is often not overtly expressed, the subordinate sections e.g. women or peasants develop different strategies to cope with conflicts and ensure cooperation.
- In this context, sociological research funding that covert conflict and overt cooperation is very true and quite common in the societies.

Important terms:

- **Altruism:** The principle of acting to benefit others without any selfishness or self-interest.
- **Alienation:** It refers to the loss of control on the part of workers over the nature of the labour task, and over the products of their labour.
- **Anomie:** For Durkheim, a social condition where the norms guiding conduct break down, leaving individuals without social restraints or guidance.
- **Accommodation:** Form of social process in which two or more persons or groups interact in order to prevent, reduce or eliminate.
- **Assimilation:** Social process through which two or more persons or groups accept and perform on another pattern of behavior.
- **Conflict:** A dissociative social process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist by violence or the threat of violence.
- **Capitalism:** A system of wage-labour and commodity production for sale, exchange and profit, rather than for the immediate need of the producers.

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- **Cooperation:** Associative social process where individuals interact among themselves and work together to attain a common objective.
- **Competition:** Dissociative social process of daring effort to achieve something which is not in abundance to fulfil everybody's demand.
- **Structure:** It refers to constructed frameworks and patterns of organisation, which in some way constrain or direct human behavior.
- **Culture:** The way of life of its members, the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.
- **Cultural traits:** The smallest units of culture are cultural traits.
- **Stratification:** System of society on the base of which individuals and groups get high or low positions.
- **Race:** Biologically inherited group having a distinctive combinations of physical traits and tend to breed them from generation to generation.
- **Modernity:** The distinctiveness, complexity and dynamism of social processes unleashed during the 18th and 19th centuries which mark a distinct break from traditional ways of living.
- **Social constraints:** Groups and societies of which we are part exert a conditioning influence on our behavior. According to Durkheim, this is distinctive property of 'social facts'.

Chapter 2 - Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society

Change is the most permanent feature of any society. Social change can be defined as transformation in the methods of thinking and working of people. It is basically changes in social structures and social relationships of a society.

Social change occurs due to physical, social, demographic, cultural and technological factors.

- Population growth influences adversely on the usage of natural resources which also causes social change.
- Evolution, progress and revolution are various forms of social change.



- Sudden or accidental changes are called revolution whereas slow and gradual social changes are called revolutions.
- Social change is a broader concept. It includes all the areas of society like political, cultural, economic and physical etc. By and large there are five broad sources of social change i.e. environmental, technological, economic, political and cultural change.
- Social change can be seen in terms of structural changes. Structural change refers to transformation in the structure of society to its institutions or the rules by which these institutions run e.g. Paper money as currency marked a major change in the organisation of financial markets and transactions.
- Changes in values and belief can also facilitate change.
- Physical environment and ecology also play a significant role in the structure of society e.g. poor economic conditions are inevitable in the geographical regions where natural calamities are common.
- Technology also alters nature and relationships. It allows us to adopt to the problems posed by nature. For example, Japan being mostly hilly and cold country developed expertise in electrical and electronic gadgets.
- Industrial revolution has caused massive social changes in almost all the societies of the world.
- Use of gun powder, paper, mode of transport, railways and aviation's have brought tremendous social changes. The social changes due to technological factors are very fast and complex.
- Social changes occur differently in rural and urban societies.
- Rural societies are mostly agriculture based and this lacks technology and specialization.
- People are more comfortable with traditional knowledge and members of their group instead of experts.
- Joint family system, caste system, superstitions, homogeneity and illiteracy are very common in rural societies. In such societies social change is particularly very slow.



- Urban societies are mostly industrialized. There is differentiation and stratification not only on the basis of caste but also class.
- Heterogeneity in occupation is common. There are a variety of people and culture in a high density area.
- The association and relationship are secondary and time based.
- People of different castes, religions and regions live together with more tolerance.
- Urban societies are slightly individualistic and characteristic segregation of groups and functions significantly.
- Cities are basically commercial hubs.
- In such urban societies social changes are drastic and quick.
- As social change is inevitable, similarly all societies need to have a network of social control.
- Social control means the active maintenance and reproduction of a particular pattern of social relations and of values and norms.
- All societies encourage members spontaneously. They abide by a set of rules and norms or people are compelled in various ways to obey such norms.
- For control, society needs authority. Authority is a person who has inherent power to give reward or punishment to maintain social network. According to Weber, authority is a legitimate power. Bureaucracy, police, judiciary etc. exercise their power. The authority is provided to them by the system.
- Domination and law are another aspects of social control.
- Domination is a psychological phenomena. Dominance exists as a feeling in the personality of the individual. It is a personal trait which may also be related to a specific situation e.g. a father has a dominant role in Indian family system.
- Law refers to an explicitly codified norm or rule which is usually in written form.
- In social term, legitimacy refers to the degree of acceptance that is involved in power relations.



- Contestation is a broad form of insistent disagreement. Competition and conflict are more specific than this. Counter cultures among faith is example of this. These are refusal to conform to prevalent social norms.
- Contestations are manifestation of protest against laws or lawful authorities.
- A crime is an act that violates an existing law. Basically crime is the breaking of the law.
- Crime has many features like any behavior prohibited by law, criminal intent. It is directly linked with punishment, positively correlated to behavior and causing harm etc.
- There are various factors of crime like biological factors, economic factors, geographical factors, socio-cultural and psychological factors.

Important terms:

- **Authority:** It refers to a person or institution which has inherent power to give reward or punishment. It may be traditional authority, legal authority or charismatic authority.
- According to Weber, it is legitimate power.
- **Social change:** Changes which occur in the social organisation or social structure and function.
- **Internal social change:** Changes in norms and values.
- **External social change:** Changes in forms of family, marriage, caste, class, kinship, marriage etc.
- **Change:** Difference in the form of any condition or existence from its previous form is called change.
- **Cultural lag:** Any imbalance that occurs in the speed of change between two types of culture.
- **Law:** Body of rules which are recognized, interpreted and applied to particular situations by the courts of the state.
- **Contestation:** The broad forms of insistent disagreement. A situation when people tend to protest against to conform to existing social norms.
- **Conformity:** A type of social influence. It is behavior according to pre-existing group norms.



- **Obedience:** A type of social influence. It is behavior according to the orders or command of any authority.
- **Compliance:** A type of social influence. It is behavior according to request made by some one, may be an authority.
- **Social sanctions:** Related to reward and punishments that are used to bring about social control.
- **Crime:** Any act of the individual that violates the existing law is considered as crime.
- **Diffusion:** Transmission of some traits of a particular culture to another culture, which causes change is known as diffusion.
- **Social evolution:** A kind of social change which manifests gradual and slow process of change in institutions.
- **Revolution:** Sudden or accidental change in the structure of society is called revolution.
- **Charismatic authority:** A leader having great influence on others due to his personality is known as charismatic authority.
- **Rural society:** A simple community based on agriculture.
- **Urban society:** A large organisation of people living in limited area with high population, density and high degree of intercommunication.
- **Village:** A unit of the rural community, where rural life upholds itself and does perform its functions.

Chapter 3 - Environment and Society

Social relationships with the environment have changed over time and they vary from place to place.

There are a few environmental problems that demand attention.

All societies have an ecological basis. The term 'ecology' denotes the web of physical and biological systems and processes of which humans are one element.

The ecology of a place is also affected by the interaction between its geography and hydrology. Ecology has been modified by human action. What appears to be a natural feature of the environment – aridity or flood for example, is often produced by human



intervention. Deforestation in the upper catchment of a river may make the river more flood prone.

- It is often difficult to distinguish between the natural and human factors in ecological change.
- Social environment emerges from the interaction between biophysical ecology and human interventions.
- For instance, the fertile soil of the Indo-Gangetic floodplain enables intensive agriculture. Its high productivity allows dense population settlements and generates enough surpluses to support other non-agricultural activities, giving rise to complex hierarchical societies and states.
- The interaction between environment and society is shaped by social organization.
- Property relations determine how and by whom natural resources can be used.
- Landless labourers and women will have a different relationship with natural resources than men.
- In rural India, women are likely to experience resource scarcity more acutely because gathering fuel and fetching water are generally women's tasks but they do not control these resources.
- Different relationships between environment and society also reflect different social values and norms, as well as knowledge systems.
- The multiple cultural meanings of a river – its ecological, utilitarian, spiritual, and aesthetic significance, are stripped down to a single set of calculations about profit and loss from the sale of water for an entrepreneur.
- There are different perspectives of the environment and its relationship to society. These differences include the of 'nature-nurture' debate.
- Theories and data about environment and society are influenced by the social conditions under which they emerge. Thus the notions that women are intrinsically less able than men, and the Black naturally less able than the White, were challenged as ideas of equality became more widespread during the 18th century's social and political revolutions.



- Geology, geography, botany, zoology, forestry and hydraulic engineering are among the many disciplines that were created and institutionalized to facilitate the management of natural resources for colonial purposes.
- Complex industrial technologies and modes of organization require sophisticated management systems which are often fragile and vulnerable to error.

Major Environment Problems and Risks:

Resource Depletion

- While fossil fuels and specially petroleum hog the headlines, the depletion and destruction of water and land is probably even more rapid.
- Aquifers which have accumulated water over hundreds and thousands of years are being emptied in a few decades to meet the growing demands of intensive agriculture, industry and urban centres.
- Biodiversity habitats such as forests, grasslands and wetlands are the other major resources facing rapid depletion, largely due to the expansion of areas under agriculture.

Air Pollution

- Air pollution is considered to be a major environmental problem in urban and rural areas, causing respiratory and other problems.
- Indoor pollution from cooking fires is also a serious source of risk. Water pollution is also a very serious issue affecting surface as well as groundwater.
- Cities also suffer from noise pollution, which has been the subject of court orders in many cities.

Global Warming

- The release of particular gases (carbon dioxide, methane and others) creates a 'greenhouse' effect by trapping the sun's heat and not allowing it to dissipate.
- This has caused a small but significant rise in global temperatures.
- Global warming is likely to result in greater fluctuations and uncertainty in climates across the world.



- China and India are increasingly significant contributors to world carbon and green house gas emissions.

Genetically Modified Organisms .

- New techniques of gene-splicing allow scientists to import genes from one species into another, introducing new characteristics.
- Genetic modification may also be done to shorten growing time, increasing size and the shelf-life of crops. Little is known about the long term effects of genetic modification on those who eat these foods or on ecological systems.

Natural and Man-made Environmental Disasters

The Bhopal disaster of 1984 killed about 4,000 people when a toxic gas leaked from the Union Carbide factory and the tsunami of 2004 killed thousands of people are the most recent examples of man-made and natural environmental disasters.

Why Environmental Problems are also Social Problems?:

Social status and power determine the extent to which people can insulate themselves from environmental crises or overcome it.

A sociological analysis shows how public priorities are set and how they are pursued may not be universally beneficial. Securing the public interest may actually serve the interests of politically and economically powerful groups, or hurt the interests of the poor and politically weak.

The school of social ecology points out that social relations, in particular the organization of property and production, shapes environmental perceptions and practices.

Important terms:

- **Deforestation:** The loss of forest area due to cutting down of trees and/or taking over the land for other purposes, usually cultivation.
- **Emissions:** Waste gases given off by human-initiated process, usually in the context of industries or vehicles.
- **Ecology:** The web of physical and biological systems and processes of which the humans are one element.
- **Effluents:** Waste materials in fluid form produced from industrial process.



- **Hydrology:** The source of water and its flows; or the broad structure of water resources in a country or region.
- **Urban community:** Human beings living in the environment of the urban areas.
- **Metropolis:** When a city is socially and economically linked with its suburbs, neighboring towns and rural areas, it becomes a Metropolis.
- **Primitive city:** Large urban centers of the industrial cities having large population with high density are called primitive cities.
- **Magnet cities:** Cities which attract a large population of rural people for better economic opportunities.
- **Suburb:** A community situated just on the outskirts of a city having low population density and smaller population.
- **Environment:** Means both biological and geographical conditions.
- **Aquifers:** Natural underground formations in the geology of a region where water gets stored.
- **Monoculture:** When the plant life in a locality or region is reduced to a single variety.
- **Urban ecology:** Branch of urban sociology that deals with the relationships between man and environment of the urban areas.

Chapter 4 - Introducing Western Sociologists

Sociology is sometimes called the child of the 'age of revolution'.

- Three revolutions paved the way for the emergence of sociology: the Enlightenment, or the scientific revolution; the French Revolution; and the Industrial Revolution.
- The modern era in Europe and the conditions of modernity were brought about by three major processes. These were:
- The Enlightenment or dawning of the age of reason.
- The quest for political sovereignty embodied in the French Revolution.



- The system of mass manufacture inaugurated by the Industrial Revolution.

The Enlightenment:

- The ability to think rationally and critically transformed the individual human being into both the producer and the user of all knowledge, the '**knowing subject**'.
- Only persons who could think and reason could be considered as a complete human being.
- For reason to become the defining feature of the human world, it was necessary to displace nature, religion and the divine acts of gods from the central position.
- The Enlightenment was made possible by, and in turn helped to develop, attitudes of mind that we refer to today as secular, scientific and humanistic.

The French Revolution:

- French Revolution (1789) announced the arrival of political sovereignty at the level of individuals as well as nation-states.
- **Declaration of Human Rights** asserted the equality of all citizens and questioned the legitimacy of privileges inherited by birth.
- Peasants, most of whom were serfs (or bonded labourers) tied to landed estates owned by members of the aristocracy, were freed of their bonds.
- Numerous taxes paid by the peasants to the feudal lords and to the churches were cancelled.
- A separation was built between the public realm of the state and a private realm of the household.
- Religion and the family became more 'private' while education (specially schooling) became more 'public'.
- Nation-state itself was also redefined as a sovereign entity with a centralized government.
- Ideals of the French Revolution—**liberty, equality and fraternity** became the watchwords of the modern state.

The Industrial Revolution:

Foundations of modern industry had two major aspects.



1. First was the systematic application of science and technology to industrial production, particularly the invention of new machines and the harnessing of new sources of power.
 2. Secondly, the industrial revolution also evolved new ways of organizing labour and markets on a scale larger than anything in the past.
- Changes in the production system also resulted in major changes in social life. The factories set up in urban areas were manned by workers who were uprooted from the rural areas and came to the cities in search of work.
 - Low wages at the factory meant that men, women and even children had to work long hours in hazardous circumstances to make out a living.
 - Modern forms of governance, with the state assuming control of health, sanitation, crime control and general 'development' created the demand for new kinds of knowledge.
 - **Karl Marx** was from Germany but spent most of his intellectually productive years in exile in Britain.
 - Marx had studied philosophy but he was not a philosopher. He was a social thinker who advocated an end to oppression and exploitation.
 - He believed that scientific socialism would achieve this goal.
 - Marx argued that human society had progressed through different stages. These were:
 - Primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and capitalism.
 - Capitalist society was marked by an ever intensifying process of alienation operating at several levels.
1. First, modern capitalist society is one where humans are more alienated from nature than ever before.
 2. Second, human beings are alienated from each other as capitalism individualizes previously collective forms of social organization, and relationships get more and more market mediated.
 3. Third, a large mass of working people is alienated from the fruits of its labour because workers do not own the products they produce.

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- Marx believed that capitalism was nevertheless a necessary and progressive stage of human history because it created the preconditions for an egalitarian future free from both exploitation and poverty.
- Capitalist society would be transformed by its victims, i.e. the working class, who would unite to collectively bring about a revolution to overthrow it and establish a free and equal socialist society.
- In order to understand the working of capitalism, Marx undertook an elaborate study of its political, social and specially its economic aspects.
- Marx's conception of the economy was based on the notion of a mode of production.
- The economic base is primarily economic and includes the productive forces and production relations.
- Productive forces refer to all the means or factors of production such as land, labour, technology, sources of energy (such as electricity, coal, petroleum and so on).
- Production relations refer to all the economic relationships and forms of labour organization which are involved in production.
- Production relations are also property relations, or relationships based on the ownership or control of the means of production.
- Marx argued that people's ideas and beliefs originated from the economic system of which they were part.
- How human beings earned their livelihood determined how they thought – material life shaped ideas, ideas did not shape material life.
- Marx laid great emphasis on economic structures and processes because he believed that they formed the foundations of every social system throughout human history.

Class Struggle:

- For Marx, the most important method of classifying people into social groups was with reference to the production process, rather than religion, language, nationality or similar identities.



- He argued that people who occupy the same position in the social production process will eventually form a class.

As the mode of production – i.e., the production technology and the social relations of production changes, conflicts develop between different classes which result in struggles.

- The capitalist mode of production creates the working class, which is a new urban, property less group created by the destruction of the feudal agricultural system.
- Serfs and small peasants were thrown off their lands and deprived of their earlier sources of livelihood.
- A new social group was created consisting of property-less people who were forced to work for their living. This shared location within the production process makes workers into a class.
- Marx was a leader of class struggle. He believed that class struggle was the major driving force of change in society.
- Marx and Engle presented their views in a clear and concise manner. Its opening lines declare, 'The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle'.
- The working class lost all the means of production that it owned (or had access to) in the past. Thus, in the capitalist social system, workers had no choice but to sell their labour for wages in order to survive, because they had nothing else.
- Even when two classes are objectively opposed to each other, they do not automatically engage in conflict. For conflict to occur it is necessary for them to become subjectively conscious of their class interests and identities, and therefore also of their rivals' interests and identities.
- '**Class consciousness**' is developed through political mobilisation where class conflicts occur.
- Such conflicts can lead to the overthrow of a dominant or ruling class (or coalition of classes) by the previously dominated or subordinated classes – this is called a revolution.
- In Marx's theory, economic process created contradictions which in turn generated class conflict.



- Economic processes did not automatically lead to revolution. Social and political processes were also needed to bring about a total transformation in society.
- This dominant ideology, or way of seeing the world, tends to justify the domination of the ruling class and the existing social order. For example, dominant ideologies may encourage poor people to believe that they are poor not because they are exploited by the rich but because of fate, or because of bad deeds in a previous life, and so on.
- Dominant ideologies are not always successful, and they can also be challenged by alternative worldviews or rival ideologies.
- According to Marx, economic processes generally tend to generate class conflicts, though it also depends on political and social conditions. In given favourable conditions, class conflicts culminate in revolutions.
- **Emile Durkheim** may be considered as the Founder of Sociology. He was the first to become a Professor of Sociology in Paris in 1913.
- Durkheim was sent to Rabbinical school (a Jewish religious school) for his early education.
- He entered the Ecole Normale Supérieure in 1876. He broke with his religious orientation and declared himself an agnostic.
- His moral upbringing had an enduring influence on his sociological thinking.
- The moral codes were the key characteristics of a society that determined the behavior patterns of individuals.
- Coming from a religious family, Durkheim cherished the idea of developing a secular understanding of religion. It was in his last book, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* that he was finally able to fulfill this wish.
- For Durkheim, the social class was to be found in the codes of conduct imposed on individuals by collective agreement. It was evident in the practices of everyday life.
- 'Moral facts are phenomena like others; they consist of rules of action recognizable by certain distinctive characteristics, it



must then be possible to observe them, describe them, classify them and look for certain laws explaining.

- The morality appropriate for one society was inappropriate for another. So for Durkheim, the prevailing social conditions could be deduced from the moral codes.
- This made sociology akin to the natural sciences and was in keeping with his larger objective of establishing sociology as a rigorous scientific discipline.
- Durkheim's vision of sociology as a new scientific discipline was characterised by two defining features.
- The subject matter of sociology – the study of social facts – was different from the other sciences:
- Sociology concerned itself exclusively with what he called the 'emergent' level, i.e., the level of complex collective life where social phenomena can emerge. These phenomena are social institutions like religion or the family, or social values like friendship or patriotism etc.
- Social entities like teams, political parties, street gangs, religious communities, nations and so on belong to a different level of reality than the level of individuals. It is this 'emergent' level that sociology studies.

The second defining feature of Durkheim's vision of sociology was like most of the natural sciences.

It was to be an empirical discipline:

- One of Durkheim's most significant achievements is his demonstration that sociology, a discipline that dealt with abstract entities like social facts, could nevertheless be a science founded on observable, empirically verifiable evidence.
- Social facts are like things. They are external to the individual but constrain their behavior.
- Institutions like law, education and religion constitute social facts.
- Social facts are collective representations which emerge from the association of people.
- They are not particular to a person but of a general nature, independent of the individual.



- Attributes like beliefs, feelings or collective practices are its example.

Division of Labour in Society:

- In his first book, Division of Labour in Society, Durkheim demonstrated his method of analysis to explain the evolution of society from the primitive to the modern.
- He classified a society by the nature of social solidarity which existed in that society.
- He argued that while a primitive society was organised according to 'mechanical' solidarity, modern society was based on 'organic' solidarity.
- Mechanical solidarity is founded on the similarity of its individual members and is found in societies with small populations.
- It typically involves a collection of different self-sufficient groups where each person within a particular group is engaged in similar activities or functions.
- Mechanical solidarity based societies have repressive laws designed to prevent deviation from community norms.
- This was because the individual and the community were so tightly integrated that it was feared that any violation of codes of conduct could result in the disintegration of the community.
- Organic solidarity characterizes modern society and is based on the heterogeneity of its members.
- Interdependence is the essence of organic solidarity. It celebrates individuals and allows for their need to be different from each other and recognizes their multiple roles and organic ties.
- The laws of modern society are 'restitutive' in nature rather than 'repressive'. This means that in modern societies, the law aims to repair or correct the wrong that is being done by a criminal act.
- In primitive societies the law sought to punish wrong doers and enforced a sort of collective revenge for their acts.



- In modern society the individual was given some autonomy, whereas in primitive societies the individual was totally submerged in the collectivity.
- Individuals have different identities in different contexts. This enables individuals to emerge from the shadow of the community and establish their distinct identity in terms of the functions they perform and the roles they play.
- The Division of Labour in Society provides a good preview of Durkheim's enduring concerns.
- His objective and secular analysis of the social ties which underline different types of society laid the foundation of sociology as the new science of society.

Max Weber:

- Max Weber was one of the leading German social thinkers of his time.
- He wrote extensively on many subjects but focused on developing an interpretive sociology of social action and of power and domination.
- Another major concern of Weber was the process of rationalisation in modern society and the relationship of the various religions of the world with this process.
- Weber argued that the overall objective of the social sciences was to develop an 'interpretive understanding of social action'.
- For Weber, 'social action' included all human behaviour that was meaningful, that is, action to which actors attached a meaning.
- Sociology is a systematic form of 'empathetic understanding', that is, an understanding based not on 'feeling for' (sympathy) but 'feeling with' (empathy).
- Weber was among the first to discuss the special and complex kind of 'objectivity' that the social sciences had to cultivate.
- The social world was founded on subjective human meanings, values, feelings, prejudices, ideals and so on.
- Social sciences inevitably had to deal with these subjective meanings.



- In order to capture these meanings and describe them accurately, social scientists had to constantly practise 'empathetic understanding' by putting themselves (imaginatively) in the
- place of the people whose actions they were studying.
- 'Empathetic understanding' required the sociologist to faithfully record the subjective meanings and motivations of social actors without allowing his/her own personal beliefs and opinions to influence this process in any way.
- Weber called this kind of objectivity 'value neutrality'.
- The sociologist must neutrally record subjective values.
- Weber recognized that this was very difficult to do because social scientists were also members of society and always had their own subjective beliefs and prejudice.
- However, they had to practice great self discipline, exercise an 'iron will' as he puts it in order to remain 'value neutral' when describing the values and worldviews of others.
- Weber suggested another methodological tool for doing sociology – the '**ideal type**'.
- An ideal type is a logically consistent model of a social phenomenon that highlights its most significant characteristics. Being a conceptual tool designed to help analysis, it is not meant to be an exact reproduction of reality.
- Ideal types may exaggerate some features of phenomenon that are considered to be analytically important, and ignore or downplay others.
- An ideal type is to be judged by how helpful it is for analysis and understanding, not by how accurate or detailed a description it provides.
- The ideal type was used by Weber to analyse the relationship between the ethics of 'world religions' and the rationalization of the social world in different civilisations.
- Weber used the ideal type to illustrate three types of authority that he defined as traditional, charismatic and rational – legal.
- While the source of traditional authority was custom and precedence, charismatic authority derived from divine



sources or the 'gift of grace', and rational-legal demarcation of authority.

- Rational-legal authority which prevailed in modern times was epitomised in the bureaucracy.
- It was a mode of organization which was premised on the separation of the public from the domestic world.

Bureaucracy restricted the power of the officials in regard to their responsibilities and did not provide absolute power to them.

Bureaucratic authority is characterised by these features:

Functioning of Officials

Hierarchical Ordering of Positions

Reliance on Written Document

Office Management; and

Conduct in Office

Functioning of Officials:

Within the bureaucracy officials have fixed areas of 'official jurisdiction' governed by rules, laws and administrative regulations. The regular activities of the bureaucratic organisation are distributed in a fixed way as official duties. Commands are issued by higher authorities for implementation by subordinates in a stable way, but the responsibilities of officials are strictly delimited by the authority available to them.

Hierarchical Ordering of Positions:

- Authority and office are placed on a graded hierarchy where the higher officials supervise the lower ones.

Reliance on Written Document:

- The management of a bureaucratic organization is carried out on the basis of written documents (the files) which are preserved as records.

Office Management:

- As office management is a specialized and modern activity it requires trained and skilled personnel to conduct operations.

Conduct in Office:



- As official activity demands the full-time attention of officials irrespective of her/his delimited hours in office, hence an official's conduct in office is governed by exhaustive rules and regulations.

Weber's characterization of bureaucracy as a modern form of political authority demonstrated how an individual actor was both recognized for her/his skills and training and given responsibilities with the requisite authority to implement them.

According to Weber, bureaucracy is a type of social organisation in hierarchical order. In this order each person has some power and authority.

Its aim is to run the administration of the state.

An ideal type of bureaucracy has following features:

Specified spheres for workers and officials.

- Hierarchy of official position.
- Functioning of officers in modern bureaucracy.
- Office management.

Important terms:

- **Alienation:** A condition in which men are dominated by forces of their own creations, which confront them as other powers. It is a process in capitalist society by which human beings are separated from nature, other humans, their self and their work. According to Marx, it is a condition of self-estrangement.
- **Charismatic authority:** Based on charismatic legitimacy which depends on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary behavior.
- **Surplus value:** It refers to the quality of value produced by the worker beyond the necessary labour time.
- **Office:** A public post or position of impersonal and formal authority with specified powers and responsibilities.
- **Enlightenment:** A period in 18th century when philosophers rejected the supremacy of religious doctrines, established reason as the means of truth and the human beings as the sole bearer of reason.

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- **Bureaucracy:** A mode of organisation which was premised on the separation of the public from the domestic world. Regulated by explicit rules and regulations.
- **Productive forces:** All the means or factors of production such as land, labour, technology, source of energy etc.

Chapter 5 - Indian Sociologists

- One of the earliest pioneers of social anthropology in India, L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer (1861- 1937), began his career as a clerk, moved on to become a school teacher and later a college teacher in Cochin state in present day Kerala.
- In 1902, he was asked by the Dewan of Cochin to assist with an ethnographic survey of the state.
- Anantha Krishna Iyer was probably the first self-taught anthropologist to receive national and international recognition as a scholar and an academician.
- He was invited to lecture at the University of Madras, and was appointed as Reader at the University of Calcutta, where he helped in setting up the first post-graduate anthropology department in India.
- He remained at the University of Calcutta from 1917 to 1932. He had no formal qualification in anthropology.
- He was elected President of the Ethnology section of the Indian Science Congress.
- He was awarded an honorary doctorate by German university during his lecture tour of European universities.
- The lawyer Sarat Chandra Roy (1871-1942) was another 'accidental anthropologist' and pioneer of the discipline in India.
- Before taking his law degree in Calcutta's Ripon College, Roy had begun practicing law, he decided to go to Ranchi in 1898 to take up a job as an English teacher at a Christian missionary school.
- He became the leading authority on the culture and society of the tribal peoples of the Chhotanagpur region (presently in Jharkhand).
- Roy's interest in anthropological matters began when he gave up his school job and began practicing law at the Ranchi



courts, eventually being appointed as official interpreter in the court.

- Roy became deeply interested in tribal society as a by-product of his professional need to interpret tribal customs and laws to the court. He travelled extensively among tribal communities and did intensive field work among them.
- Roy published more than one hundred articles in leading Indian and British academic journals in addition to his famous monographs on the Oraon, the Mundas and the Kharias.
- He founded the journal *Man in India* in 1922, the earliest journal of its kind in India that is still published.
- G.S. Ghurye can be considered the founder of institutionalized sociology in India.
- He headed India's very first post-graduate teaching department of Sociology at Bombay

University for thirty-five years.

- He founded the Indian Sociological Society as well as its journal *Sociological Bulletin*.
- Ghurye managed to nurture sociology as an increasingly Indian discipline. Ghurye was first to implement successfully two of the features.
- The active combining of teaching and research within the same institution.
- The merger of social anthropology and sociology into a composite discipline.
- Ghurye wrote on caste, race and themes including tribes, kinship, family and marriage; culture, civilization and the historic role of cities, religion and the sociology of conflict and integration.
- Ghurye, was influenced by diffusionism, Orientalist scholarship on Hindu religion and thought, nationalism, and the cultural aspects of Hindu identity.
- Ghurye worked on 'tribal', his writings on this subject, and specially his debate with Verrier Elwin which first made him known outside sociology and the academic world.
- Many British administrator-anthropologists were specially interested in the tribes of India and believed them to be



primitive people with a distinctive culture far from the mainstream of Hinduism.

- They also believed that the innocent and simple tribals would suffer exploitation and cultural degradation through contact with Hindu culture and society.
- For this reason, they felt that the state had a duty to protect the tribes and to help them sustain their way of life and culture, which were facing constant pressure to assimilate with mainstream of Hindu culture.
- flhurye became the best-known exponent of the nationalist view and insisted on characterizing the tribes of India as 'backward Hindus' rather than distinct cultural groups.
- The 'protectionists' believed that assimilation would result in the severe exploitation and cultural extinction of the tribals.
- Ghurye and the nationalists, on the other hand, argued that these ill-effects were not specific to tribal cultures, but were common to all the backward and downtrodden sections of Indian society.

Ghurye on Caste and Race:

- G.S. Ghurye's academic reputation was built on the basis of his doctoral dissertation at Cambridge, which was later published as Caste and Race in India (1932).
- Ghurye provides a detailed critique of the then dominant theories about the relationship between race and caste.
- Herbert Risley, a British colonial official who was deeply interested in anthropological matters, was the main proponent of the dominant view.
- This view held that human beings can be divided into distinct and separate races on the basis of their physical characteristics such as the circumference of the skull, the length of the nose, or the volume (size) of the cranium or the part of the skull where the brain is located.
- Risley and others believed that India was a unique 'laboratory' for studying the evolution of racial types because caste strictly prohibits intermarriage among different groups, and had done so for centuries.



- In general, the higher castes approximated Indo-Aryan racial traits, while the lower castes seemed to belong to non-Aryan aboriginal, Mongoloid or other racial groups.
- Risley and others suggested that the lower castes were the aboriginal inhabitants of India.
- They had been subjugated by an Aryan people who had come from elsewhere and settled in India.
- Ghurye did not disagree with the basic argument put forward by Risley but believed it to be only partially correct. He pointed out the problem with using averages alone without considering the variation in the distribution of a particular measurement for a given community.
- Ghurye believed that Risley's thesis of the upper castes being Aryan and the lower castes being non-Aryan was broadly true only for northern India.
- In other parts of India, the inter group differences in the anthropometric measurements were not very large or systematic.
- This suggested that, in most of India except the Indo-Gangetic plain, different racial groups had been mixing with each other for a very long time.
- Thus, 'racial purity' had been preserved due to the prohibition on inter-marriage only in 'Hindustan proper' (north India). In the rest of the country, the practice of endogamy (marrying only within a particular caste group) may have been introduced into groups that were already racially varied.

Ghurye is also known for offering a comprehensive definition of caste. His definition emphasises the following features :

Caste is an institution based on segmental division:

This means that society is divided into a number of closed, mutually exclusive segments or compartments. Each caste is one such compartment.

- It is closed because caste is decided by birth – the children born to parents of a particular caste will always belong to that caste.
- There is no way other than birth of acquiring caste membership. In short, a person's caste is decided by birth; it can neither be avoided nor changed.

Caste society is based on hierarchical division:



- Each caste is strictly unequal to other caste, that is, every caste is either higher or lower than other one. In theory (though not in practice), no two castes are ever equal.
- The institution of caste necessarily involves restrictions on social interaction, specially the sharing of food.
- There are elaborate rules prescribing what kind of food may be shared between which groups. These rules are governed by ideas of purity and pollution.
- Caste also involves differential rights and duties for different castes.
- These rights and duties pertain not only to religious practices but also extend to the secular world.
- Caste restricts the choice of occupation, which, like caste itself, is decided by birth and is hereditary.
- At the level of society, caste functions as a rigid form of the division of labour with specific occupations being allocated to specific castes.
- Caste involves strict restrictions on marriage. Caste 'endogamy', or marriage only within the caste, is often accompanied by rules about 'exogamy', or whom one may not marry.

D.P. Mukerji on Tradition and Change:

- D.P. Mukerji felt very strongly that the distinctive feature of India was its social system, and that, therefore, it was important for each social science to be rooted in this context.
- For Mr. Mukerji, this study of tradition was not oriented only towards the past, but also included sensitivity to change. Thus, tradition was a living tradition, maintaining its links with the past, but also adapting to the present and thus evolving over time.
- He believed that sociologists should learn and be familiar with both 'high' and 'low' languages and cultures – not only Sanskrit, Persian or Arabic, but also local dialects.
- Mr. Mukerji argued that Indian culture and society are not individualistic in the western sense.
- Indian social system is basically oriented towards groups, sect, or caste-action, not 'voluntaristic' individual action.



Although 'voluntarism' was beginning to influence the urban middle classes.

- Mr. Mukerji pointed out that the root meaning of the word 'tradition' is to transmit. Its Sanskrit equivalents are either parampara, that is, succession: or aitihiya, which comes from the same root as itihas or history.
- The most commonly cited internal source of change in western societies is the economy, but this source has not been as effective in India. Class conflict, D.P. believed, had been "smoothed and covered by caste traditions" in the Indian context, where new class relations had not yet emerged very sharply.
- He concluded that one of the first tasks for a dynamic Indian sociology would be to provide an account of the internal, non-economic causes of change.
- Mr. Mukerji believed that there were three principles of change recognized in Indian traditions, namely; shruti, smriti and anubhava.
- The most important principle of change in Indian society was generalized anubhava, or the collective experience of groups.
- Mr. Mukerji emphasized that this was true not only of Hindu but also of Muslim culture in India.
- In Indian Islam, the Sufis have stressed love and experience rather than holy texts, and have been important in bringing about change.
- Indian context is not only where discursive reason (buddhi-vichar) is the dominant force for change; anubhava and prem (experience and love) have been historically superior as agents of change.
- Mr. Mukerji's views on tradition and change led him to criticise all instances of unthinking borrowing from western intellectual traditions, including in such contexts as development planning.
- Tradition was neither to be worshiped nor ignored, just as modernity was needed but not to be blindly adopted.
- A.R. Desai is one of the rare Indian sociologists who was directly involved in politics as a formal member of political parties.



- Desai was a life-long Marxist and became involved in Marxist politics during his undergraduate days at Baroda, though he later resigned from his membership of the Communist Party of India.
- Desai joined the Bombay department of sociology to study under Ghurye. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Social aspects of Indian nationalism and was awarded the degree in 1946.
- His thesis was published in 1948 as the Social Background of Indian Nationalism, which is probably his best known work.

A.R. Desai on the State:

In an essay called "The Myth of the Welfare State", Desai provides a detailed critique of this notion and points to its many shortcomings.

Desai identifies the following unique features of the welfare state :

A welfare state is a positive state. This means that, unlike the 'laissez faire' of classical liberal political theory, the welfare state does not seek to do only the minimum necessary to maintain law and order.

The welfare state is an interventionist state and actively uses its considerable powers to design and implement social policies for the betterment of society.

The welfare state is a democratic state. Democracy was considered an essential condition for the emergence of the welfare state.

- Formal democratic institutions, specially multi-party elections, were thought to be a defining feature of the welfare state. A welfare state involves a mixed economy. A 'mixed economy' means an economy where both private capitalist enterprises and state or publicly owned enterprises co-exist.
- A welfare state does not seek to eliminate the capitalist market, nor does it prevent public investment in industry and other fields.

The state sector concentrates on basic goods and social infrastructure, while private industry dominates the consumer goods sector.

Performance of the welfare state can be measured.

Does welfare state provide employment to all?:

Even developed countries are unable to reduce economic inequality and often seem to encourage it.

The so-called welfare states have also been unsuccessful at enabling stable development free from market fluctuations.



The presence of excess economic capacity and high levels of unemployment are yet another failure.

Based on these arguments, Desai concludes that the notion of the welfare state is something of a myth.

Emphasized the importance of democracy even under communism, arguing strongly that political liberties and the rule of law must be upheld in all genuinely socialist states.

M.N. Srinivas:

- The best known Indian sociologist of the post-independence era, M.N. Srinivas earned two doctoral degrees, one from Bombay university and other, from Oxford.
- Srinivas was a student of Ghurye's at Bombay. Sriniva's intellectual orientation was transformed by the years he spent at the Department of Social Anthropology in Oxford.
- Srinivas' doctoral dissertation was published as Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India. This book established Srinivas' international reputation with its detailed ethnographic application of the structural-functional perspective dominant in British social anthropology.

M.N. Srinivas on the Village:

- First of all ethnographic accounts of fieldwork done in villages or discussions of such accounts.
- A second kind of writing included historical and conceptual discussions about the Indian village as a unit of social analysis.
- In the latter kind of writing, Srinivas was involved in a debate about the usefulness of the village as a concept.
- Arguing against village studies, some social anthropologists like Louis Dumont thought that social institutions like caste were more important than something like a village, which was after all only a collection of people living in a particular place.
- Villages may live or die, and people may move from one village to another, but their social institutions, like caste or religion, follow them and go with them wherever they go.

Important terms:



Notes

- **Assimilation:** A process by which one culture, usually the large or more dominant one gradually absorbs another.
- **Anthropometry:** The branch of anthropology that studies human racial types by measuring the human body, particularly the volume of cranium (skull), the circumference of the head and the length of the nose.
- **Endogamy:** A social institution that defines the boundary of a social or kin group within which marriage relations are permissible; marriage outside this defined groups are prohibited.
- **Exogamy:** A social institution that defines the boundary of a social or kin group with . which or within which marriage relations are prohibited. Marriage must be contracted outside these prohibited groups e.g. marriage, with blood relatives (Sapind exogamy), members of same lineage (Sagotra exogamy) or residents of same village or region (village/region exogamy). ‘
- **Laissez-Faire:** A French phrase (Literally ‘let be’ or ‘leave alone’) that stands for a political and economic doctrine that advocates minimum state intervention in the economy and economic relations; usually associated with belief in the regulative powers and efficiency of the free market.
- **Traditions:** Totality of values and beliefs, experience, knowledge and wisdom of the previous generations which is transmitted to the succeeding generations.
- **Purusha:** According to D.P. Mukerji, Purusha is an active actor which fulfils his responsibilities by establishing contacts with other persons.
- **Living Traditions:** Tradition which maintains links with the past by retaining something from it and at the same time incorporates new things.

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