

COURSE NO SOC:101

INTRODUCTION TO
SOCIOLOGY

UNIT:1 SOCIOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE

- A. MEANING, ORIGIN AND GROWTH
- B. NATURE, SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIOLOGY

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

- Sociology is the scientific study of society and human behaviour.
- The word “sociology” was coined in 1839 by Auguste comte, French philosopher who is traditionally considered to be the father of sociology.

MEANING OF SOCIOLOGY

- SOCIOLOGY is derived from two words:
- latin word ‘socius’ meaning friend, companion or associate and
- Greek word ‘logos’ meaning ‘study’ or ‘science’.
- The etymological meaning of sociology is thus “the science of society”
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- It means the study of social interaction and its resultant relationship that exists between companions and groups.

DEFINITION OF SOCIOLOGY

Auguste Comte: “sociology is the science of social phenomena subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation.”

Harry M Johnson: “sociology is the science that deals with social groups”

Kingsley Davis: “sociology is a general science of society”.

Alex Ankeles: “sociology is the study of systems of action and their interactions”.

Ogburn and Nimkoff: “sociology is concerned with the study of the social life of man”.

Emile Durkheim: defines sociology as the “science of social institutions”

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF SOCIOLOGY

- Sociology has a long past but a short history.
- Though the roots of sociological writings go back to the Greek and the Roman philosophy, SOCIOLOGY emerged as a distinct discipline only in the 19th century. It emerged in European society corresponding to its socio-historical background which had its origin in the **Enlightenment period**.
- FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
- **Growth of Natural Sciences** inspired many social thinkers to emulate the examples of using the scientific method (systematic observation, objectivity) in studying the human society.
- **Commercial Revolution** following the discovery of America and new routes to many lands.
- **Industrial Revolution and Industrialisation** which took place in England during 18th century brought a tremendous change such as the introduction of the factory system and the consequent mechanization, industrialization and urbanization brought turmoil in the society.

- Diversities in societies, cultures and exposure of the colonial empires provided intellectual challenge for the social scientists to compare the rate of social change in different societies.
- **The French Revolution of 1789** marked a turning point in the history of human struggle. The long series of political revolutions that were ushered in by the French Revolution brought in considerable social disorder and was the most immediate factor in the rise of sociological theorizing
- Generally sociology has had four **Intellectual influences** as precursors of sociology- The Enlightenment, the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and the surveys of social research.

Several early sociologists have shaped and influenced the direction of the discipline.

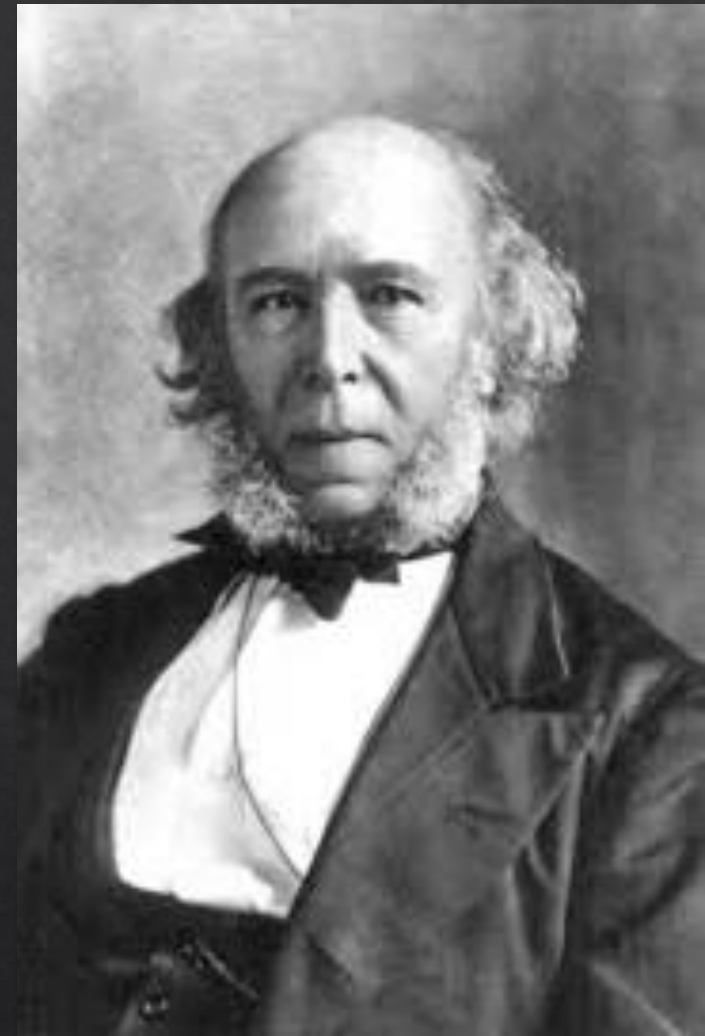
AUGUSTE COMTE (1798-1857)

- Responsible for coining the word “sociology” and is known as the founder of **positivism**.
- Set out to develop the “science of man” that would be based on empirical observation .
- He divided sociology into two aspects:
- Social statics- forces which produces order and stability
- Social dynamics- forces which contribute to social change.



HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903)

- Pioneer of sociology in England.
- Stressed upon the interdependence of different parts of society.
- Known for introducing Darwin's theory of scientific evolution in sociology.
- His main sociological ideas are the evolutionary doctrine and the organic analogy.
- Major work: *Principles of sociology* 1877



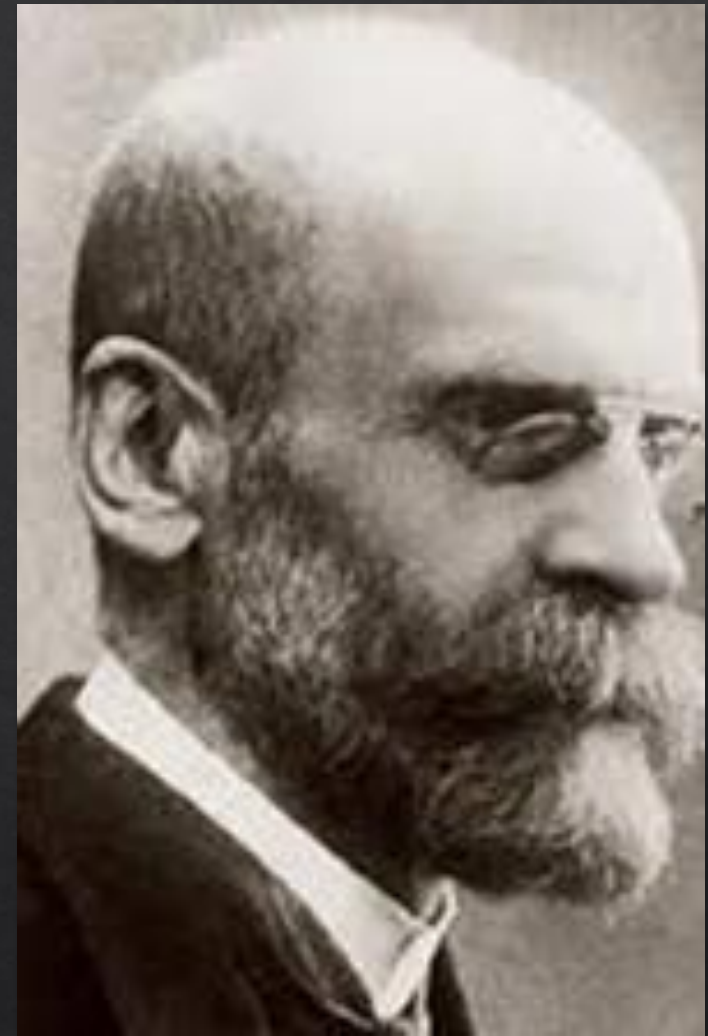
KARL MARX (1818-1883)

- Major figure in sociological thought.
- His major works: *The communist manifesto 1848* is one of the most influential political manuscripts in history.
- *Das Capital* 1867
- His ideas about social conflict leading to change in society is still relevant today.



EMILE DURKHIEM (1858-1917)

- Widely known as the founding father of modern sociology
- Established the 1st European dept of sociology in 1895 at the university of Bordeaux
- One of his most famous pieces of work includes *Suicide (1897)*- a study in sociology.
- Another important work of his that deals with question of social order is the *Division of Labour (1893)* where he elaborated the concept of social solidarity.



MAX WEBER (1864-1920)

- He laid the foundation of German sociological society in 1910.
- Max Weber defines sociology as “the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects.”
- He is known for his thesis of *The Protestant ethics* as well as his ideas on *Bureaucracy*.
- His influence on contemporary sociology especially those of the analytical school is rapidly growing.



- By the beginning of the 20th century, sociology came to be known as an academic subject in most of the countries of the west most notably in France, Germany, the United States and England.
- Contemporary sociologists like G.H Mead, C.H Cooley, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton have developed new insights which have helped to better understand the workings of society
- The 20th century thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Jacques Derrida and Anthony Giddens amply influenced the course of sociology especially the methods of investigation.

- Sociologists of the 21st century have extended the subject matter of sociology to interpersonal relations, rural and urban life, marriage and family, stratification and inequality, gender, demography etc. this gave rise to new branches of sociology such as economic sociology, political sociology, phenomenology, sociology of religion etc.
- The first department of sociology in India started in Bombay University in 1919
- Some prominent Indian sociologists like G.S Ghurye, R.K Mukherjee, H.T Majumdar have also made original contribution to sociological studies pertaining to Indian village, caste system, marriage, kinship, family and social disorganisation.