

Social change subject

Seven lecture

"Types of societies"

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A- Introduction

Macro sociology - It refers to the study of large scale social systems, which makes comparative analysis of societies.

The classical sociologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries made great efforts in developing “master social types”.

B- Classification System

1- Morgan’s Classification

Morgan in his last major work “Ancient Society” divided all societies into three groups- **savage, barbarian** and **civilized**. His argument was that human societies progressed from savagery through barbarism to civilization.

2- Comte’s Classification

French philosopher Auguste Comte assumption was that “ all societies passed through distinct stages of belief or ideology, evolving from the lower to the higher stages.

His scheme consisted of types of societies namely,

- Military society
- Legal Society
- Industrial Society

3- Spencer’s Classification

Herbert Spencer also constructed two extremely dissimilar types to classify societies into two categories namely:

- Militant Societies
- Industrial Societies

According to him, in the 1st the regulating system was dominant and in the 2nd the sustaining system was emphasised.

Classification of Societies based on the Mode of Subsistence or the types of Technology.

1- Hunting & Gathering Societies.

2- Pastoral Societies.

3- Horticultural Societies.

4- Agricultural Societies.

5- Industrial Societies.

1- Hunting & Gathering Societies

Gerhard Lenski pointed out in his “Human Societies”, that it is the oldest and the simplest type of society is the Hunting and Gathering Society.

Hunting gathering society relies heavily on hunting wild animals and gathering food for Example:-

- San people of Kalahari desert in Southern Africa gathering food for its survival.
- Bushmen of Southwestern Africa.

(Characteristics)

1- Small in Size

These societies consist of very small but scattered groups. The environment in which they live cannot support a large number of people. So, their numbers do not exceed 40-50 members.

2- Nomadic In Nature

These people are constantly on the move because they have to leave one area as soon as they have exhausted its food resources.

3- Not Desire To Acquire Wealth

For two reasons, firstly, no individual can acquire because there is no wealth. secondly, their basic norm was sharing.

4- Family And Kinship

They are only defined Institutions the only 2 interconnected were family and kinship. Family is all and all for them. Kinship was the basis of these groups as they were related by ancestry and marriage.

2- Pastoral Societies

Herding society refers to any form of society whose main subsistence comes from tending flocks and herds of domesticated animals. In practice, subsistence needs are often met by a combination of herding with hunting and gathering and other forms of agriculture.

(Characteristics)

1-Beginning of Inequality

Since pastoralism contributes to the accumulation of surplus resources, some individual who have better access to surplus, become more powerful than others.

2-Nomadism Coupled With Trading

Herding people, like the hunters and gathers, are nomadic because of their seasonal need to find sufficient grazing areas for their herds. Their nomadic way of life often brings pastoralists into contact with their groups. This helps them to develop trading.

3- Relatively Larger In Size

In comparison with the hunting and gathering societies, herding, societies, are larger in size .

4- Herding Technology Leads To Several Changes

Herding Technology has led to several social changes such as the herding society tends to place a higher value, Slavery.

3- Horticultural Societies

A horticultural society is a social system based on horticulture, a mode of production in which digging sticks are used to cultivate small gardens”. Came into existence about 4000BC today in sub- Saharan Africa ,examples for horticultural societies: Gururumba Tribe in New Guinea. (ii)Masai people of Kenya.

(Characteristics)

1- Domestication Of Plants

Horticulturists specialize in the domestication of plants such as wheat, rice etc.

2-Slash And Burn Technology

The subsistence strategy of the horticulturists is “slash and burn” technology.this people

clear areas of land, burn the trees and plants they have cut down, raise crops for 2 or 3 years until the soil is exhausted and then repeat the process.

3- Horticulturalists Are Better Settled Than Pastoralists

4- Emergence Of Political Institutions

The surplus production allows some wealthy individuals to become more powerful than others.

5- Agricultural Societies

An agricultural society focuses on mode of production primarily on agriculture and production primarily on agriculture and production of large fields.

Based on the invention of the plough around 3000B.C., the agrarian revolution marked its beginning. Use of plough increases the productivity of the land.

(Characteristics)

1- Combining Irrigation Techniques with the use of Plough increased production and ability to renew the soil.

2- Size of the agricultural societies is much greater than that of horticultural and pastoral communities.

3- Appearance of cities:

The specialists who engage themselves in non agricultural activities tend to concentrate in some compact places which ultimately led to the birth of the cities.

4- Emergence Of Elaborate Political Institutions

5- Evolution Of Distinct Social Classes

6- Religion Becomes A Separate Institution

7- Enrichment Of Culture

8- Revolutionary Transition In The Social Structure

5- Industrial Societies

Industrial mode of production began in England about 250 years ago.

Industry literal meaning is a classification that refers to a group of companies that are related in terms of their primary business activities.

An industrial society is a system in which large number of labor and machinery is involved in production of goods and services.

(Characteristics)

1- Industrial Society Is Associated With Industrial Revolution And Industrialism.

2-Technology Initiating Vast And Rapid Social Changes

New technologies such as steam engine, atomic energy tend to bring about social changes as the economic and other institutions constantly adjust to altered conditions.

3-Larger Societies With Huge Populations

The high level of productivity of industrial societies further stimulates population growth with increasing members living in cities and metropolitan areas.

4- Large Scale Division Of Labor

Industrial society creates thousands of new specialized jobs. In this society statuses of politicians, teachers, doctors etc could be achieved.

5-Losing Importance Of Family And Kinship

Family loses many of its functions, it loses main responsibility of educating the younger ones. Kinship ties are also weakened. It does not play an important role in unifying and controlling people.

6- Widening Gap Between The Rich And The Poor

According to Karl Marx, the rich class which is known as the exploiting class, and poor class as exploited class. So, there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor.

The questions

1- Define the following items:-

- Macro sociology
- horticultural society
- Hunting gathering society
- Pastoral Societies
- Agricultural Societies

- Industrial Societies

2- The classical sociologists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries made great efforts in developing master social types and made classification system according to those sociologists (mention to 2 of these).

3- There are 5 types of societies in sociology (mention to these types and explain one of them).

4- Explain the Characteristics of the following societies:-

A- Hunting & Gathering Societies.

B- Pastoral Societies.

C- Horticultural Societies.

D- Agricultural Societies.

E- Industrial Societies.

