

## **Sociology and Ideal Society**

**\*Dr Duggappa Kajekar**

\*Co-ordinator, P G Department of Social Work, Govt. First Grade College and Centre for P G Studies, Thenkanidiyur, Udupi

Sociology is defined as the scientific study of social behavior, its origin, development, organization and institutions. It uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop a body of knowledge about social order, social disorder and social change. There are two goals for the theoretical study of sociology, the first group believes in the application of theory and the second aims at better understanding of the working of the changing society.

Pure social sciences suffer a lot due to Globalisation. Sociology has two approaches to society – Reformist and Interventionist. Sociology as a theory is getting weaker day by day. But theoretical sociology is necessary for reformation of society. There is a kind of thinkers who believe that sociology creates ideal society. But the question is how far it is true and how viable it is. This paper is based on the secondary sources like Encyclopedia of social sciences and books on Sociological thought and theories.

### **Meaning of Ideal Society**

If we understand ideal society as a perfect society, for many years, treating a perfect society has been a wish of everyone all over the world, but it is a difficult task to do. Sociology and Ideal society will not go together, because sociology uses an idealistic approach to deal with the society, whereas idealistic society is materialistic one. Ideal society means:

- 1) Utopia – a society without problems
- 2) Interrogating the meaning of Utopia

### **Different Perspectives**

There are various definitions on Ideal society given by different thinkers from the beginning of society. Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed Pigambar and other saints and seers taught the ideal way of living. For these social reformers social values, human values and religious values become important.

### **Buddhist Philosophy**

Want is the sole reason for all misery of man for Buddha. Buddha did not attempt to gain political control, but he had the ideas about how rulers should govern. He taught that they had an obligation to the people they ruled. He taught that in the ideal society rulers would be fair and obey their own laws, and would freely provide grants to their subjects so that they could set up businesses.

### **Plato's Ideal Society**

Plato argued that societies are invariably formed for a particular purpose. Individual human beings are not self-sufficient; no one, by working alone, can acquire all of the genuine necessities of life. Therefore, we gather together into communities for the mutual achievement of our common goals.

In Plato's ideal state there are three major classes, corresponding to the three parts of the soul. The guardians, who are philosophers, govern the city; the auxiliaries are soldiers who defend it; and the lowest class comprises the producers (farmers, artisans, etc). The guardians and auxiliaries have the same education, which

begins with music and literature and ends with gymnastics. The arts are censored for educational purposes.

Plato did not believe in money because he understood its power to corrupt. He believed that a society would be happier without it.

Plato's oligarchy is rule-ridden and conventional.

### **Confucianism**

Confucianism is often characterized as a system of social and ethical philosophy rather than a religion. In fact, Confucianism built on an ancient religious foundation to establish the social values, institutions, and transcendent ideals of traditional Chinese society. It is alternatively called a "diffused religion"; its institutions were not a separate church, but those of society, family, school, and state; its priests were not separate liturgical specialists, but parents, teachers, and officials. Confucianism was part of the Chinese social fabric and way of life; to Confucians, everyday life was the arena of religion.

### **Weber's ideal Type**

Weber's methodological discussion refers to the construction of certain elements of reality into a logically precise conception. The term 'ideal' has nothing to do with evaluations of any sort. For analytical purposes, one may construct ideal types of prostitution as well as of religious leaders. The term does not mean that either prophets or harlots are exemplary or should be imitated as representatives of an ideal way of life."

Hence, Weber's ideal type is an analytical construct.

### **Marxian egalitarianism**

Karl Marx's communist society is supposed to be populated by fully equal citizens. For him the citizens who love one another intimately and for whom the principle "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" governs the realm. However, people forget that Karl Marx imagined a communist society as populated not by men and women such as we are but by what he called "the new man," a different kind of being from us. Those "human" beings would love the society above all; love everyone as only intimate friends do now. Marx realized that an egalitarian society couldn't be the home to ordinary, normal human beings but only to those who fit his idea of the new man.

Egalitarianism is a protean doctrine, because there are several different types of equality, or ways in which people might be treated the same, that might be thought desirable. In modern democratic societies, the term "egalitarian" is often used to refer to a position that favors, for any of a wide array of reasons, a greater degree of equality of income and wealth across persons than currently exists.

Hence Marxian egalitarian society is materialistic and interpretative.

### **Capitalist Idealism**

People of honest and understanding believed in eventual progress and liberty. Capitalist society believed in ideal society of free and fair opportunities. But racial problems and gender issues remain as they are. Most of the time when we speak about Ideal society the idea of ideal is the reflection of this capitalist idealism.

Ideal today means *Modern* (not primitive) *developed* (not technologically backward), more accurately related to material production.

The relation between society and sociology is misinterpreted, because for a sociologist an ideal society does not exist. Today a sociologist should make sense of the positivist society. To understand this we have to go to a little history of sociology itself to reconstruct the modern globalised society. Therefore we are supposed to construct a new method of analysis.

### **Enlightenment period**

After the enlightenment in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and its result of Industrial revolution not only new sciences have emerged but also the ways of looking at the society and the thoughts of earlier thinkers have changed. Hence the concept of ideal society has also changed.

Secondly, the earlier thinkers like Buddha, Plato and Confucius were interpreted to suit the new meaning of ideal society. Buddha's preaching about harmonious living without caste discriminations is not as lightened as his preaching 'want is the source of all miseries'. The idealism of Buddha or Confucius considered society holistically, whereas during the age of enlightenment, ignoring social harmony, Buddha and Confucius were interpreted in a partisan manner.

### **Post-enlightenment period**

Sociology was a new science and a pure science to begin with during the post-enlightenment period. It has tried to interpret man with all his relationships – social, cultural, economic, religious and political. It was then the Sociology was rightly called the mother of all social sciences. Ram Manohar Lohia, Dr B R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi were actually not the Sociologists but they had their own meaning of Ideal society.

### **The modern Industrial society**

The industrialized enlightened society has grown as strongly utilitarian one. It celebrates freedom but freedom and individual are unitized as utilitarian entities. Therefore the modern nation state is formed. The most important duty of the government is seen as offering equal economic opportunity to everyone.

**Laissez faire policy:** Non-interference in economic activities and government should support the economic activities. Both utilitarian and non-interference principles redefine the role of state in society.

Therefore, the meaning of Ideal society changes from time to time. The modern concept of ideal society consist of -

- A strong Nation
- Freedom of choice, preferably economic choice to people
- Economic prosperity
- Legal system for security, investors and market security

All these may conflict sometimes with the religious values lived with people. Yet state should confine with its economic development.

So England justifies its rule over India by saying that in fact colonisation is an effort to uncivilized country like India.

There are two dominant trends in analyzing the society-

1. To get solutions for the problems cropped up due to industrialization
2. For theoretical change. i.e. to redefine the earlier theories.

The paradoxes in Modern states policy is very clear when the welfare state concept of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in the West is compared with the welfare state in their colony. E.g. English was not studied in England as a separate subject until 1920's. Even in America the racial differences are still practiced in a strong manner.

The ideal society of modern era is Global presence with a military back up and is able to engulf all the different smaller marginal societies within its strive for economic prosperity.

Sociology is institutionalized and introduced to the curriculum of the universities like all other sciences. ICSSR is formed in 1960 and good number of research reports has come out academically. The welfare society project is aided by social researchers' e.g. through census. But the sociological findings and ideas are not considered seriously by the planners and policy makers.

### **Conclusion:**

Idealism has many aspects. The first point that makes a perfect society is peace. Actually, in a country where there is no conflict or disagreement people generally live contently. Another factor is good security system. If there are no crimes such as murder, burglary, arson, robbery and fraud in a society, people need to live in fear. In addition, good security system will attract more investors, which helps to improve the country's economy. Moreover, a perfect society must consist of sociable and kind people, who help and support each other when they are in some kinds of terrible situations.

In order to create an ideal community, there are a number of things to be achieved. Firstly, those who live in society have to get on well with each other. If there is an argument, they have to settle it by having a peaceful talk or discussion, so as to avoid conflict. Additionally, every person must obey laws and rules, which were created by the government. Furthermore, everyone in society should get to know each other and learn to forgive and forget. For instance, if a person does something wrong, other people in the community have to correct that person's mistake by telling him or her with kind words. Also, solidarity within a country is significant because it can lead people to success in doing everything.

It is the time for alternative sociology, not as a smaller part of societal study. It is an ideal time to study the displacement with the theoretical background of sociology. However, if every one reads sociology we can make society better by improving social ties. In modern Industrial world Imperialism spread all over, ideal society means a strong nation with economic prosperity and military existence having internal peace, where sociology is not necessary. The modern state should restructure the disciplines according to its needs. Sociology should be studied with the need based braches like Criminology and social psychology.

The most important to deal with is Tribal sociology. Tribal society is considered backward in all spheres. The government and Non-governmental agencies try to bring them to Ideal society. The basic precept of sociology that every social group/ community has its own identity is thrown to the winds. Hence these societies lose their identities and sustainability. Community identity is turning to communalism. Modernity paves the ground for all violence. Dominance - political, economic, community and caste must be dealt with scientifically. De-settlement of beliefs and practices should be studied in a different way. Today, in India, the concentration must be on 1.Cleanation ( swach Bharath), 2. Plastics (sociology of plastics), 3. Sociology of sustainability, 4. Welfare Sociology, 5. Role of sociologists in policy making. Moreover teaching Sociology for all would build a better society though not ideal society

**References**

- Abraham Francis M. 1982, **Modern sociological Theory:** Bombay, Oxford University Press.
- Coser Lewis A. 1996, **Masters of Sociological Thought:** (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) Jaipur, Rawat Publications.
- Giddens Antony. 2001, **Sociology, Cambridge:** Polity Press and Blackwell Publishers Ltd
- Merton Robert K. 1968, **Social Theory and Social Structure:** New Delhi, Amerind Publishers, Pvt ltd.
- Raymond Aron, 1982. **Main Currents in Sociological Thought:** (vol, 1 and 2,) New York, Penguin Books.
- Sharma R.N. and Sharma R.K. **History of Social Thought,** Bombay, Media Promoters and Publishers Pvt Ltd.
- Srivastava R.S. 1991, **Traditions in Sociological Theory,** Jaipur, Rawat Publications.
- Turner, Jonathan H. 1987, **the structure of Sociological Theory,** Jaipur, Rawat Publications.