

## **Chapter-1**

### **Introducing Indian Society**

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#### **Facts that Matter**

- Prior knowledge or familiarity with society is both an advantage and a disadvantage for sociology, the discipline that studies society. The advantage is that students are generally not afraid of Sociology-they feel that it can't be a very hard subject to learn.
- The disadvantage is that this prior knowledge can be a problem. In order to learn Sociology, we need to "unlearn" what we already know about society.
- Sociology offers to teach us how to see the world from many vantage points - not just our own, but also that of others unlike ourselves.
- Understanding Indian society and its structure provides a sort of social map on which you could locate yourself, like with a geographical map, locating oneself on a social map.
- Sociology can do more than simply help to locate you or others in this simple sense of describing the places of different social groups.
- Sociology can help to map the links and connections between "personal troubles" and "social issues". By personal troubles Mills means the kinds of individual worries, problems or concerns that everyone has.
- The "generation gap" or friction between older and younger generations is a social phenomenon, common to many societies and many time periods. Unemployment or the effects of a changing occupational structure is also a societal issue, that concerns millions of different kinds of people.
- A sociological perspective teaches you how to draw social maps.
- The economic, political and administrative unification of India under colonial rule was achieved at great expense. Colonial exploitation and domination scared Indian society in many ways. But paradoxically, colonialism also gave birth to its own enemy-nationalism.
- Historically, an Indian nationalism took shape under British colonialism. The shared experience of colonial domination helped unify and energise different sections of the

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community.

- Colonialism created new classes and communities which came to play significant roles in subsequent history.
- Indian society is a pluralistic society. Full of diversities of language, region, religion, caste and customs, Indian society is moving towards the modernization.
- The main values of Indian modernization model are-Socialism, Imperialism, Nationalism, Secularism, Industrialism, Democracy, Individual Freedom and Fundamental Rights.
- The establishment of democracy in India that rests on the principles of equality, freedom and universal franchise, changed the traditional structure of Indian society.
- A new awareness had emerged during the colonial period itself. During this period while all Indians came together for a common cause, various social, economic, political and administrative changes took place as a result of modernization and capitalistic forces.
- Various processes of change got activated during the British period. Some of these processes were completely external while some were internal. The external processes include Westernization, Modernization, Secularization, Industrialization and others; while Sanskritization and Urbanization were internal processes. The inception of modernization and westernization is the consequence of our contact with Britain.
- Mechanical techniques in production, market system in trade, development of means of transport and communication, concept of civil service based on bureaucracy, formal and written law, modern military organization and trained separate legal system and modern formal education system were important steps that prepared the background for modernization.
- British colonialists were taking steps to protect their own interests.
- Tradition and modernity in the Indian society caused various problems for Indian society.
- Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshav Chandra Sen, Dayanand Saraswati, Ranade, Tilak and Gandhi are some of the prominent names associated with the reform movement to eradicate social evils like Sati System, Restrictions of Widow Remarriage, and Untouchability.
- Since sociology in India had not developed systematically at that time, they portrayed the Indian villages from the British point of view of British policies.

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- Villages are the pillars of Indian society and Indian culture. For the same reason even the East India Company had considered the study of Indian villages.
  - The first study of Indian society was presented by B H Baden Powell in 1892 in his book.
  - The Indian Village Community. After World War I, the poverty in Indian villages and the Indian national movement for freedom also attracted the attention of many scholars towards the villages.
  - Sir Charles Metcalfe, Sir George Woodward, Baden Powell and Francis Buchanan prepared a detailed report after conducting a study and survey of various villages and cities of Madras, Mysore, Bihar etc. on behalf of the East India Company. Subsequently, Herbert Risley, D Abbatson, C B Lucas, W George Briggs and William Crook tried to understand the Indian rural problems.
  - The middle class emerged after receiving western education and the same middle class challenged the colonial rule.
  - Various social and cultural communities were organized at the regional and national levels that tried to save the Indian culture and traditions. Because of colonialism new classes and communities emerged that played an important role in history later on. The urban middle class sounded the bugle of nationalism and initiated the movement of India's freedom.
  - Sociology teaches self reflexivity viz. an ability to reflect upon yourself to turn-back or do introspection. It should be quick to criticize and slow to praise oneself.
  - A comparable social map understood through introspection tells one's location in the society.
  - Sociology tells kinds of groups or groupings existed in the society in its wider import i.e. nation, relationships to each-other and its meaning in terms of one's own life.
  - Sociology helps in mapping the links and connections between personal troubles and social issues. Personal troubles consist of individual worries, problems or concerns while social issues consist generation gap, unemployment. Communalism, casteism, gender inequalities etc.