



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: BALLB

Semeste: IV

SUBJECT: SOCIOLOGY –

III

SUBJECT CODE: BAL-401

NAME OF FACULTY: DR

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Lecture- 36



Parochialisation

The word 'parochialism' means being provincial and narrow in one's scope of thinking. When used in a negative sense, it signifies the opposite of what is known as universalism. The term originates from the Latin word, *parochia*, meaning a parish, that is, one of the smaller divisions within a church. Events, groups and decisions within a parish were often made locally, taking little heed of what was good for the church as a whole. Thus, a parish could sometimes be excessively focused at the local level, showing little interest in a more universal approach. This term is sometimes used in politics, when for instance; a State Government takes a decision based on solely local interests that do not take into account the effect of the decision on the entire country. Thus, the government of the State of Texas may take a decision or pass a law which is beneficial to the citizens of that State, but not necessarily so to other citizens of USA as a whole. Parochialism is to be found all over the world and has sometimes been acknowledged openly by local institutions. For example, when the Harvard University changed its curriculum in February, 2007, it openly said that one of the main purposes of the major curriculum overhaul (the first in thirty long years) was to overcome "American parochialisms". If parochialism is found to exist in excess, it can cause hindrance to the formation of a strong state, nation or country. India is particularly susceptible to this evil. If an inefficient peon is suspended, the debate is why an employee of a particular caste or community was suspended – and not why an efficient employee was given this punishment. Likewise, when a cricketer is excluded from the Indian team on account of his recent performance, the debate is not whether he was in good form or otherwise, but as to why a player from West Bengal or Maharashtra was dropped from the team! One can find several sects and sub-sects of the Protestant and Roman Catholic groups within India. Indian Christians are heavily influenced by the caste system and social stratification of India. Parochialization brought with it Christian ideals of faith, hope, charity and equality before God. These ideologies facilitated social mobility and brought about social change in India. McKim Marriott, a researcher and a disciple of Robert Redfield of the Chicago University in USA visited India and studied a village by the name of Kishangarhi in U. P. In the course of his research, he has advocated two useful concepts which are always to be kept in mind when studying Indian civilization: universalisation and parochialization. Universalisation is a process by which cultural traits of a relatively small tradition are absorbed into a great tradition. In other words, a local phenomenon becomes universalised. Parochialization is the process which is the opposite of universalisation. According to him, these twin concepts are operating simultaneously in the socio-religious system of Indian villages. The two processes are complimentary to each other, and the study of either one of them in isolation will never enable a person to understand Indian civilization as a whole. He strongly feels that our civilization can be understood only with the help of these processes. Difference between Parochialisation and Universalisation! Parochialisation and universalisation are supplementary to the concepts of little and great traditions. These are processes of cultural change. When the great tradition, i.e., the tradition of epics and sacred books undergoes change at the local or village level, it is parochialisation or localisation of great tradition or civilisation. Parochialisation, therefore, is the cultural change made at the village level. Universalisation, on the other hand, is a cultural change from little tradition to great tradition. Both these processes are related to the interaction between little tradition and great tradition. Interpreting the process of universalisation, Yogendra Singh observes that when the little tradition moves upward to the great tradition, it is the process of universalisation. And, when the great tradition moves downward to the local or village level, it is parochialisation. His interpretation runs as below: Elements of the little tradition, indigenous customs, duties and rites circulate upward to the level of the great tradition and are identified with its legitimate forms. This process Marriott calls 'universalisation'. Likewise, some elements of the great tradition also circulate downward to become organic part of the little tradition, and lose much of their original form in the process. He (McKim Marriott) used the term 'parochialisation' to denote this kind of transaction between the two traditions. In the process of parochialisation, obviously, there is some loss of the elements of great tradition. Whatever is laid down as elements of great tradition is reduced at village level or interpreted differently by local leaders of priestly castes. In this process there is desanskritisation. Modernization Modernization, in

sociology, the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society. Modern society is industrial society. To modernize a society is, first of all, to industrialize it. Historically, the rise of modern society has been inextricably linked with the emergence of industrial society. All the features that are associated with modernity can be shown to be related to the set of changes that, no more than two centuries ago, brought into being the industrial type of society. This suggests that the terms industrialism and industrial society imply far more than the economic and technological components that make up their core. Industrialism is a way of life that encompasses profound economic, social, political, and cultural changes. It is by undergoing the comprehensive transformation of industrialization that societies become modern. Modernization is a continuous and open-ended process. Historically, the span of time over which it has occurred must be measured in centuries, although there are examples of accelerated modernization. In either case, modernization is not a once-and-for-all-time achievement. There seems to be a dynamic principle built into the very fabric of modern societies that does not allow them to settle, or to achieve equilibrium. Their development is always irregular and uneven. Whatever the level of development, there are always “backward” regions and “peripheral” groups. This is a persistent source of strain and conflict in modern societies. Such a condition is not confined to the internal development of individual states. It can be seen on a global scale, as modernization extends outward from its original Western base to take in the whole world. The existence of unevenly and unequally developed nations introduces a fundamental element of instability into the world system of states. Modernization seems to have two main phases. Up to a certain point in its course, it carries the institutions and values of society along with it, in what is generally regarded as a progressive, upward movement. Initial resistance to modernization may be sharp and prolonged, but it is generally doomed to failure. Beyond some point, however, modernization begins to breed discontent on an increasing scale. This is due in part to rising expectations provoked by the early successes and dynamism of modern society. Groups tend to make escalating demands on the community, and these demands become increasingly difficult to meet. More seriously, modernization on an intensified level and on a world scale brings new social and material strains that may threaten the very growth and expansion on which modern society is founded. In this second phase, modern societies find themselves faced with an array of new problems whose solutions often seem beyond the competence of the traditional nation-state. At the same time, the world remains dominated by a system of just such sovereign nation-states of unequal strengths and conflicting interests. Yet challenge and response are the essence of modern society. In considering its nature and development, what stands out initially at least is not so much the difficulties and dangers as the extraordinary success with which modern society has mastered the most profound and far-reaching revolution in human history. This article discusses the processes of modernization and industrialization from a very general and primarily sociological point of view. It does so also, it should be remembered, from a position within the very processes it describes. The phenomena of industrialization and modernization that are taken to have begun some two centuries ago and that were not until much later identified as distinct and novel concepts have not yet arrived at any recognizable closure. The end of the story, if there is one, is thus not in sight, and the question of an ultimate judgment on the nature and value of this vast historical movement is unanswerable.

Becoming Modern The revolution of modernity If one imagines all of human social evolution charted on a 12-hour clock, then the modern industrial epoch represents the last five minutes, no more. For more than half a million years, small bands of what we may agree were human beings roamed the earth as hunters and gatherers. With simple stone tools and a social order based on kinship ties they successfully preserved the human species against predators and natural calamities. In observing contemporary Australian Aborigines, the San (Bushmen) of southern Africa, the Eskimo, the Negritos in Malaysia and the Philippines, and Pygmy groups in Africa, a glimpse may be had of the social life of the Paleolithic period (Old Stone Age)—the oldest and most enduring type of human society. About 10,000 BC some of these hunters and gatherers took to cultivating the earth and domesticating animals. It is this process that is somewhat misleadingly called the Neolithic revolution, implying that new stone tools were at the root of this vast change. It is now generally accepted that the new technology was not the principal factor. Nevertheless what took place was undoubtedly a revolution. Mobile bands became settled village communities. The development of the

plow raised the productivity of the land a thousandfold, and in response the human population of the planet increased dramatically. More significantly, herding and agriculture for the first time created a surplus of food. This allowed some members of the population to abandon subsistence activities and become artisans, merchants, priests, and bureaucrats. This division of labour took place in a newly concentrated physical environment. In the 4th millennium BC cities arose, and with them trade, markets, government, laws, and armies. The technology and social organization of the Neolithic revolution remained the basis of all civilization until the coming of industrialism. With remarkably few additions—the invention of the stirrup was an important one—what served ancient Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt of the third and second millennia BC served as the foundation of all the states and empires of the ancient world, from China and India to Greece and Rome. And it served equally the European Middle Ages, which in some respects, notably in technology, actually fell back from the achievements of the ancient world. Not until the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe did humankind make another leap comparable to that of the Neolithic revolution. It is against this very slowly evolutionary background that the revolution that underlay modernity must be seen. It is one of just two quantum jumps that human social evolution has made since the primal hunting and gathering stage of early Homo sapiens. The Neolithic or agricultural revolution produced, paradoxically, urban civilization; the Industrial Revolution lifted humankind onto a new plane of technological development that vastly increased the scope for transforming the material environment. In its speed and scale the change brought about by the Industrial Revolution has had, indeed, a greater impact on human life than the Neolithic revolution. Neolithic civilization remained throughout confined by a sharply limited technical and economic base; industrial civilization knows no such limits. Nevertheless, an understanding of agrarian society is essential to the analysis of industrial society, for it is largely through the contrast with its agrarian past that modern society stands out