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Evolution of Human Societies

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Abstract:

Often we happen to come across this term that “human beings are social animal”. Here, social means being friendly with other people’s presence around us. In a very simple language, society refers to the member of specific groups who live and communicate together. But today we all are living in a fascinating, challenging and morally deteriorating world. Modern society is torn apart with discords and contradictions. As we live together the problems of relationships and interaction will certainly emerge. We want to do one thing and end up doing another. Personal problems, family problems and community problems even appear on the horizon of everyday living. Doubts, discords and difficulties are constantly overpowering us. Are we preparing ourselves for leaving behind a legacy of hatred and destruction for our coming generation? Just think minutely what our society need at this crucial moment. The root cause of this problem is the degradation of intrinsic human qualities. There is no necessity for despair because the spirit is within us. The morals and the values which we — the human beings inculcate in their lifetime can solve many such problems occurring in their life. It also helps them in leading a peaceful life by guiding them at various levels, sometimes in day to day issues as well. In this paper, we will discuss the society in the present scenario while it is necessary to create meaningful relationships in the society so that people will be able to genuinely enjoy their lives with helping each other.

Keywords: Community, social life, society, human relationships

1. Introduction

1.1. What is Society?

“The aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community with shared laws, traditions, language, culture and values within a particular geographical area”

The society in which we live today did not evolved overnight; rather the human societies have its origin and evaluation over many millennia. As per the sociologists, a society consists of two or more people or group of people within a common territory, culture, geographic boundaries and language barriers where they can interact and identify with one another. However, throughout the history the advancement in the field of education, knowledge, science and technology have sometimes brought about the dramatic change which further has propelled human society into its next era of enlightenment.

The sustainability of human society remains incomplete without the moral and ethical values. These values bind us together and also set us apart from others in a group; moreover it helps the individual in forming his/her own distinctive identity. These values are intrinsically linked to an individual and it is vitally important to focus upon. With the cultivation of these values one can solve various global and national problems. Human values are the key to solve several problems related to mankind. These ethical and moral values are the principle that guides people’s life and have varying significance. Values can be understood as the essence of our personality which affects us to make decisions, trust people and arrange our time and energy in the social life.

From the very beginning of human civilization, the various experts who study early and tribal cultures like the historicists, sociologist and anthropologists have studied the evolution of society. They have established many different types of societies where each society is defined by its advancement in knowledge, science and technology. So, they usually refer to six such types of societies. They are as follows:

- 1) Foraging Societies or Hunting and Gathering Societies
- 2) Horticultural Societies
- 3) Pastoral Societies
- 4) Agrarian Societies
- 5) Industrial Societies
- 6) Post-industrial Societies

These different types of societies which have already been distinguished and shaped by the sociologists and the anthropologists in the history and can also be divided into three parts. They are—

- 1) Pre Industrial Societies
- 2) Industrial Societies
- 3) Post Industrial societies

This classification is based on the process of advancement and development of human beings as a society. The first four types of societies fall under pre industrial societies as they are based on their cultural accumulation, social structure and the advancement in terms of their level of technologies. The industrial and post industrial societies are shaped after the industrial revolution which took its form in 1790. After this revolution many scientific methods as well as advanced tools were used for livelihood. These are discussed below in details.

2. Pre Industrial Societies

2.1. Foraging Societies or Hunting and Gathering Societies

From the time of Stone Age, when human beings did not know how to cultivate land and domesticate the animals for their livelihood, the members of the hunting and gathering societies primarily survived on hunting animals, fishing and gathering plants. They used to live together, share their work, and settle in the environment where there is an abundance of animals and water as well as green pastures and plants. It is so because only then they can easily find their food and water. In case if anything went unfavorable and wrong for example, if rivers dried up, the plants dried or they run out of animals, then they used to migrate and relocate gregariously from one place to another where the resources were in plenty for living. For their survival early human societies were completely depended on their environment where usually men were the hunters and the women were the gatherers. They used to live in caves with limited members and because of their typically small group they were quite mobile.

There are certain basic characteristics of hunting and gathering societies. These are as follows:

- i) They happened to live in small groups, with less than sixty members.
- ii) They used to have their own tribal leader who provided protection to its people, but the decisions the leader took was decided with the satisfaction of all its members.
- iii) The members of the society display a high level of interdependence.
- iv) The people of foraging societies were nomadic as they moved from one place to another in search of food.
- v) Labor in hunting and gathering societies was divided on the basis of physical strength: men hunt and women gather.

2.2. Horticultural Society

Horticultural societies appeared around 10,000 to 12,000 years ago and used some hand tools to cultivate the fertile lands. The first horticultural societies sprang up in the areas of Latin America, Middle East and Asia. Even then the members of these societies used to live like hunting and gathering societies, that is in a small group and were mobile. These societies used to cultivate fruits, vegetables and edible plants. The tools which they used were simple such as, sticks or likewise instruments which helped them to punch hole in the ground so that they can grow their plants. Since the technology was not advance enough to produce surplus amount of crops they used to leave the place when the land resources and the water supplies starts to deplete.

2.3. Pastoral Societies

The first social revolution led the domestication of plants and animals which further gave birth to two different types of societies that are, horticultural societies and pastoral societies. For approximately 10,000 years ago, certain peoples started domesticating and breeding animals for food and transportation. Even today there are some societies which exist and survive on domesticating animals. Such types of societies primarily exists in deserted lands of North Africa, Latin American countries like Somalia, Ethiopia, parts of Asia and some other geographic regions where manufacturing and horticulture are not possible because of the unfavorable lands, soil and climate condition.

This new formation of society paved way for many other things for human beings. It helped in holding together the members of the pastoral societies as they learned to manage their food supplies. Hence, the pastoral societies people were able to cultivate surplus crops, which further enabled them to store it for future use incase if they run out of their supplies. Therefore storing food permitted them with the hope and desire to make settlements at one single place for much longer periods of time leaving behind their nomadic lifestyle. This stability came only because pastoral societies allowed its members to get involved in various survival activities such as trade of goods, animals, tools, clothing and many more, and so the stable and secured way of living.

2.4. Agrarian Societies

One of the major revolution in the lives of human beings happened was the Agricultural Revolution which took place for approximately 8,500 to 7000 years ago. Agricultural Revolution is a term used by sociologists to mark the inventions and technological changes which occurred at that time and led to the cultivation of crops and raising of farm animals with the help of plow. The use of plow in different way eventually led to the increase in surplus food supplies which furthermore came handy in the greater degrees of social stratification with development of towns, cities, traders, merchants, educators, and etcetera. So as the foundation for this basic structure of modern societies were being laid certain other elements showed its way in between. In these

societies only for the first time happened to pave way to the concepts of inequality, enmity, warriors, cast system, ownership and slavery.

Therefore, we can say that the development in agrarian societies had the following consequences:

- Plows were used for the first time to pull animals
- The yielding of larger areas of land were cultivated for a longer period of time
- There was a tremendous increase in the productivity of surplus food for its people, thus it brought an end to the nomadic living of the people by paving a way for stable livelihood.
- Growth of population and formation of towns and cities happened
- Job specialization increased
- The roots of gender inequality was sowed

3. Industrial Societies

The advancement in the technologies and the invention of steam engine as well as various machines to produce goods took the human societies to one more level of advancement. The period during the 18th and 19th century is embarked as Industrial Revolution. It first began in the Great Britain and gradually covered the European countries like Asia, Africa and America, quickly spreading to the rest of the world. The inventions and new manufacturing processes in between 1820 to 1840 dominated the world trade.

The members of the societies were divided into two parts as working class and non working class. Many theorists like Karl Marx and Terry Eagleton came in the limelight by providing their views on this division of society. One of the most prominent theories which happens to influence me are Marxist theory where the non-workers or the capitalist are the ruling class holding all the money and they set up all the rules for the working class that is the division of society between the “haves and have not”. Gradually towns became the most significant place to live in because of its opportunities and so villages lost all its significance.

Industrialization brought about changes in every aspect of life within the society. The industrial revolution brought about drastic changes in the societies, these are as follows:

- Increased life expectancy as health were improved
- Better education system
- Villages and rural areas lost its importance because of the growth opportunities available in town
- More employment options for as factories needed workers
- With innovation of wheels and steam engine people and goods traversed longer distances
- Urbanized societies with all the modern facilities
- With social mobility, cultural diversity increased
- The bureaucratic forms of organizations with laid rules and regulations and hierarchical methods were developed.

4. Post Industrial Societies

By the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of twentieth century the impact of enlightenment was so powerful that every field was dominated by science, its logic and reason. The post industrial countries like Britain, Asia, America, France and Japan, and many other countries with the advancement of science and technologies developed computers, microchips, satellites and other machines which reduced the need of human labor. The industrial revolution spread within no time expanding its area and at the same time developing the modes of education, science and technology. So the post industrial society transformed Western societies in an unexpected way and was based on information, logic, reason, its services and knowledge. So computer technology and science played an eminent role in day to day life of the people. In fact apart from factories and wealth and power of the ruling class the hold of economies in post industrial societies shifted in the hands of technologies.

Over the past few decades, the post industrial societies focused on three major characteristics for its economic development. They are:

1. The focus shifted from views and opinions to the ideas, logic and reason.
2. Now that information and technology became the need of the day so, higher education was the most important thing as the new machines required advanced training and knowledge.
3. The new and advanced communication technology led more and more towns to come into existence as people shifted from rural areas to urban areas.

In fact, to certain extent in the post industrial society there is neither social inequality nor classification. It is only because in these societies people's differences are caused by their success in their work, and they are free to work hard to raise themselves. So social divisions are now limited only up to the education.

5. Conclusion

Thus to conclude this paper, I can say that the society in which we live today did not evolved over night. Instead these societies which we discussed above are the result of many levels of changes and developments over a longer period of time. Furthermore, we can say that all of the above societies still exist today but they are handled and governed as per the advancement in science and technology. In today's society there is an intermingling of various cultures as the modes of transport helped them to reach any destination within no time. So we can say that the society is a place where a group of people live together within a certain domain according to their moral values and culture, and these societies even after globalization differs from place to place.

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