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Agrarian Society

The invention of plough marked the beginning of agrarian societies 6000 years back. According to Collins dictionary of Sociology Agrarian society refer to any form of society especially so traditional societies primarily based on agricultural and craft production rather than industrial production.

Wallace and Wallace describe agrarian societies as employing animal drawn ploughs to cultivate the land. The mode of production of the agrarian society that is cultivation distinguishes it from the hunter-gatherer society which produces none of its food. The theories of Redfield and Tonnies are considered important.

Robert Redfield talks about folk-urban continuum and little tradition and great tradition as his paramount focus in rural studies. Tonnies on the other hand discuss concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesselschaft.

Characteristics of Agricultural Societies

Cultivation of land through the plough as this invention enabled the people to make a great leap forward in food production. It increased the productivity of land through the use of animals and bringing to the surface the nutrients of the soil.

Combining irrigation techniques with the use of the plough increased the productivity and the crop yield. It also brought fallow land under cultivation. The size of the agricultural societies increased as it lessened the burden of large number of people who engaged themselves in other activities. Agricultural societies lead to the establishment of more elaborate political institutions like formalized government bureaucracy assisted by the legal system.

It also leads to the evolution of distinct social classes-those who own the land and those who work on the others land. Land is the major source of wealth and is individually owned. This creates major difference between the social strata. Agricultural societies provide the basis for the establishment of economic institutions.

Trade becomes more elaborate and money is medium of exchange. It also demands the maintenance of records of transaction, crop harvest, taxation, governmental rules and regulations. Religion becomes separate institution with elaborate rituals and traditions. The

agricultural societies support the emergence of arts and cultural artifacts due to surplus food production people tend to divert their attention to other recreational activities. There is far more complex social structure.

According to Ian Robertson the number of statuses multiplies, population size increases, cities appear, new institutions emerge, social classes arise, political and economic inequality becomes inbuilt into the social structure and culture becomes much more diversified and heterogeneous.

Industrial Society

The Industrial mode of production began some 250 years ago in Britain and from there it spread to the entire world. In the simplest sense an industrial society is a social system whose mode of production focuses primarily on finished goods manufactured with the aid of machinery.

According to Wallace and Wallace in industrial societies the largest portion of the labour force is involved in mechanized production of goods and services. The term industrial societies originated from Saint Simon who chose it to reflect the emerging central role of manufacturing industry in the 18th century Europe in contrast with previous pre-industrial and agrarian society.

Post-Industrial Society

The concept of Post-Industrial society was first formulated in 1962 by D Bell, and subsequently elaborated in his seminal work *Coming of Post Industrial Society* (1974) It describes the economic and social changes in the late twentieth century.

According to Bell in modern societies theoretical knowledge forms the axial principle of society and is the source of innovation and policy formulation. In economy this is reflected in the decline of goods production and manufacturing as the main form of economic activity, to be replaced by services.

With regard to the class structure, the new axial principle fosters the supremacy of professional and technical occupations which constitute a new class, in all spheres economic, political and social decision making is influenced by new intellectual technologies and the new intellectual class.

Other writers have also commented on the growing power of technocrats in economic and political life. G. K. Galbraith (1967) believes that power in the United states economy and therefore in American society as a whole lies in the hands of a technical bureaucracy of the techno-structure of large corporations, A Jouraine (1969) suggests similar technocratic control of French economic and political life.