

**Classical Sociology Theory**  
**Professor R. Santosh**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**  
**Lecture – 42**  
**Comparative Religion and Disenchantment**

(Refer Slide Time: 0:12)



## Comparative Religion and Disenchantment



Welcome back to the next class. In today's class, we are discussing Weber's take on comparative religions, and his very important concept of disenchantment, and by this time, I hope you would have got some idea about Max Weber's overall approach, towards the study of religion and his seminal contributions to the development of this particular field, for any student of sociology of religion, who is approaching the subject matter of sociology and religion from the perspective of anthropology or sociology or political science or even psychology.

Max Weber and his theory of secularization, really assumes paramount space. Even now his work on secularization, his argument about secularization are considered to be some of the important arguments with which you are supposed to have very important and interesting reflections. We discussed in one of the previous lectures on his take on protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.

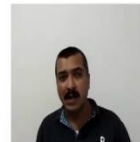
I am not going to repeat that lecture, I am not going to sum up the lecture, but just to highlight the fact that he was interested in the influence of religion in every society, be it modern society

or traditional society, and he very firmly believed that these religious rituals and belief systems do have significant impact on the lives of the people.

In that sense, he did not agree with my Marxian position, which subsumed religion under that of the economy, he was not ready to accept such a position, rather, he argued that religion is an important institution and it is capable of molding people's orientations, people's, inclinations to certain things and sociologist must be able to study that in its complete sense.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:18)

- Weber studies particular religious traditions in depth, writing on the religions of India, China, ancient Judaism and Islam, in addition to the Protestant ethic in Western Europe
- Weber is interested in the social implications of religion, the interaction of religious ideas, rituals, and organizations with economic, cultural, and political life, in particular capitalism.
- Weber examines religions in the context of his theory of rationalization based on two criteria
- First concerns the elimination of magic from religious beliefs and rituals;
- the second is the development of an internally consistent and universally applicable theodicy.
- Ascetic Protestantism is the highest religious tradition on both counts, and therefore the most rationalized.



Weber studied particular religious traditions in depth, writing on the religions of India, China, ancient Judaism and Islam, in addition to that of Protestant ethic in Western Europe. Unlike Marx and to a large extent like Durkheim, Weber was a student of sociology of religion, we can say that Durkheim and Weber both of them can be really considered as the sociologists of religion or they have, though they had identified religion, as a prime subject matter of their point of inquiry.

While the objective as well as the methodology as well as the analytical lens of both, Durkheim and Weber buried significantly, I hope you remember our discussion about Durkheim's arguments or Durkheim's thesis on the elementary forms of religious life, Weber has a completely different intention. Weber has a completely different take on religion, but both of them were non believers, they did not believe in God and they looked at religion purely as human construction.

But Weber studied particular religious traditions in depth. So, that is why we are looking at Weber as a scholar of comparative religion. He looked at the traditions of religions in India, Hinduism, China, ancient Judaism and Islam, in addition to that of the Protestant ethic in Western Europe, that we already discussed, where he talks about the Protestant ethic as a peculiar kind of worldview, a particular kind of disposition that played significant role in the emergence of the spirit of capitalism.

Now, Weber is interested in the social implications of religion, the interactions of religious ideas, rituals and organizations with economic, cultural and political life, in particular capitalism. This is a point I do not think that, it is very hard for you to understand, because we have mentioned several times that a sociologist of religion, a sociologist who is interested in the study of religion is inevitably interested in the question of the social implication of religion.

As I told you, sociologists do not really get into the question of whether a particular religious faith or ritual is right or wrong, or a particular conception of God is right or wrong. These questions are strictly beyond the purview of sociology, first of all sociologists are not capable of addressing these questions.

Secondly, the ultimate aim of sociological analysis, does not lie in asking these questions rather, sociologists, focus is always on the consequences or the implications of a particular type of belief, what are the implications of a particular type of belief, what are the implications of a particular type of non belief, what are the consequences of a particular kind of arrangement, different forms of religiosity.

These are some of the central concerns of sociologists. He was interested in the social implications of religion, the interaction of religious ideas, rituals and organizations with economic, cultural and political life, in particular capitalism and his work on Protestant ethic is the testimony to this particular way of looking at the implications of religion.

As any sociologist for that matter, he would be interested to understand how a particular religiosity, a particular religious worldview, religious ideals and religious values affect the social, economic and political realms of the society. Weber examines religion in the context of his theory of rationalization based on two criteria. So, again, at the risk of repeating, I am saying it again that, this thesis of rationalization is the central dominant theme of Weber.

His analysis of religion revolves around his intellectual quest to understand the forms of rationalization that is taking place in different religious traditions. There are two criteria, first concerns the elimination of magic from the religious beliefs and rituals and he was interested to understand how far religious traditions in each of these places are we able to move away from the world of the magic.

Because he specifically connected magic with that of a pre modern or a traditional society. He argued that as society become more progress, as society become more modern, people undergo a process of disenchantment, which we are going to discuss towards the end of this session, where the ideas of, or the relevance for Magic or metaphysical ideas and abstract ideas, superstitions, these things will not have any place in a modern rationalist understanding.

Still religion can be rationalized, religion undergoes the process of rationalization, and religion assumes a kind of a rational character. But he was arguing that this rationalization of religion happens on two criteria. One is to what extent a religious tradition is able to eliminate the influence of magic and superstitions and such kind of arguments.

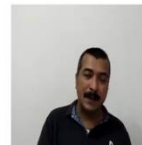
Second one is the development of an internally consistent and universally applicable theodicy. Theodicy is a system that tries to explain and justify the existence of God as well as the existence of the evil. Here, he would argue that this development of an internally consistent and universally applicable theodicy. These two elements, how you have a more consistent and elaborate theological explanation for the existence of God as well as that of the enemy of God that is the evil, because many times it is seen as inherently contradictory and also to what extent you have been able to come out of the influence of magic.

Ascetic Protestantism is the highest religious tradition on both counts, and therefore the most rationalized. Thus, Weber is of the very firm opinion and he has taught treating all or every religion on the equal scale, and he wants to look at the kind of transformations that have happened in each of these religious traditions.

Then he argues that, the ascetic Protestantism, the Protestantism that we discussed earlier, that of Calvinism and the divisions within Protestant Christianity, they represent some of the most advanced forms of religion because as they fulfill these two criteria.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:33)

- Every religion contributes to the rationalization of the world by systematically explaining suffering, fortune, and the cosmos and by positing their path to salvation as universal. Because a religious worldview makes the cosmos meaningful and categorizes reality according to religious criteria, it promotes rationalization. It advances methodical, systematic conduct in everyday life.
- Religious rationalization is also furthered by the hierarchy of intellectuals in churches who cure souls through acting as intermediaries of God, providing counsel to sinners and allowing such acts as the confession of sins.



Now, let us see how he expands his analysis to other religions. So every religion contributes to the rationalization of the world, by systematically explaining suffering, fortune and the cosmos and by positing their path to salvation as universal. Because a religious worldview makes the cosmos meaningful and characterizes reality according to religious criteria. It promotes rationalization. It advances methodical systematic conduct in everyday life.

Religious rationalization is also furthered by the hierarchy of intellectuals in churches who cure souls through acting as intermediaries of God, providing counsel to sinners and allowing such acts of confession of sins. So, in this section, Weber is arguing that there is a kind of rationality for every religion, or every religion there is a kind of an internal consistent form of rationality.

This rationality is something different from the rationality that Weber talks about as the modern rationality, or rationality that he attributes to that of the Protestant Christianity. Here, he is saying that, irrespective of the religion that you take, whether it could be the most elementary form of religion like a totemism, or an animism or an animatism, or a tribal religion, or that of old traditions like Hinduism, or Christianity or Islam, in each of these religions, they have their own consistent and very stable set of ideas, a stable set of rationality.

Because without this set of rationality, a religion simply cannot survive. He argues that every religion contributes to the rationalization of the world by systematically explaining suffering,

fortune and the cosmos and by positing their path to salvation as universal. Every religion offers you explanation for everything.

You must be knowing that if you speak to religious priests or gurus, asking their opinion on everything, or opinion on anything, they would be very confident, or they would give you very categorical answers to every kind of questions. Each and every of your doubts will be clarified with utmost confidence by these religious leaders, because religion has this capacity to explain everything and anything.

Whether it is questions about the universe or whether it is the questions about the purpose of life, or the question of what happens to your soul? Or what happens or what is the process of death? Or what is the process of birth? Or what is the purpose of the human life? Starting from philosophical questions, to theological questions to questions about the universe, questions on the largest scheme of affairs, religion does not shy away from answering any question.

Religion also can provide explanation for your own fortune, your own suffering, because many times these sufferings are quite inexplicable to us, you see that even some of the most pious people, look at the people who are extremely devout, extremely pious people, they come across some of the most serious painful tragedies in their life and it goes completely against a kind of a common sensical argument, but religion will have explanation for that.

If somebody dies, somebody very close to you dies unexpectedly, then the immediate words of solace, he or she is somebody who is very close to God, so that God has called him, God has taken him to his presence. So, very, seemingly contradictory argument, seemingly contradictory explanations can be given but religion has an explanation for everything. So, such explanations and also path to salvation are considered as universal.

Because the religious worldview makes the cosmos meaningful and characterizes reality according to religious criteria. It promotes a kind of a rationalization, because religion helps an ordinary person to make sense of this whole world. It helps an ordinary person to make sense of his or her own life.

In that sense it has an ability to rationalize, it advances methodical systematic conduct in everyday life. This methodical and systematic conduct could be of varied nature, it could be

involving of rituals consisting of sacrifice, or it could be involving of rituals as we see in a modern society through, maybe through online poojas or online darshan and other things.

But whatever be that, there are a set of methodical, systematic methodical procedures in the life which actually provides with a kind of a systematic form of life. Religious rationalization is also furthered by the hierarchy of intellectuals in churches, who cure souls through acting as intermediaries of Gods, providing counsel to sinners and allowing such acts as the confession of the sins.

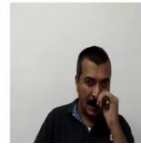
Here he is basically talking about the Christianity, the Catholicism, because religion also provides you this hierarchy of intellectuals, especially the priests, priests who are considered as the intermediates between you and the God. So, in Hinduism you have the Brahmin priests, who conduct various religious sacrifices, various religious rituals for the king or for everybody.

You invite a Brahmin because you think that Brahmin is best endowed to conduct the ritual, a priest in a temple is highly respected, or a priest in a catholic Church alone has the power to atone your sins, even if you commit some of the most heinous types of sins, a thorough and sincere confession in front of a priest can wash away all the sins, it can atone you, it can give you a rebirth.

Because the church according to Roman Catholic Church, or the priest according to the Roman Catholic Church are divinely ordained, they are divinely ordained and they have this special ability, special privilege to atone to wash away the sinners of their sins and make them pure as early.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:21)

- Weber views Islam as a religion with elements of ascetic and mystical traditions. But it did not produce necessary conditions for the emergence of capitalism.
- In China, science and Western-style modernity did not develop, despite extensive Chinese technological capacity in the early modern era. The Chinese state remained a traditional bureaucracy, ruled by an emperor and a cultural elite, the Mandarins, who based their authority on literary rather than scientific knowledge.
- Confucianism revolved around the idea that the social and individual worlds had to exist in an ordered harmony. Its social ethic emphasized devotion to family and ancestors, literary study, and service for the community. It was not appropriate for Confucian intellectuals to practice economic activity.
- In sum, Confucianism, combined with the patrimonial bureaucratic rule of the emperor and traditional village life, inhibited social change as it occurred in the West, and China remained a static society.



Weber views this kind of rationalism as something very evident in every religion. But Weber is talking about a different kind of rationality, a kind of a modern rationality, Weber views Islam as a religion with elements of aesthetic and mystical tradition, but he did not produce necessary condition for the emergence of capitalism.

Now, I hope you remember his discussion on Protestant ethic where he talks about this aesthetic orientation as something very important for the emergence of capitalism and which do not indulge in so much of extravaganza, you do not conduct your personal life in an extremely luxurious manner. You do not consume too much of whatever you produce.

You maintain a kind of an aesthetic quality, aesthetic outlook and Weber argues that Islam has both this mystical as well as aesthetic character, but it did not give rise to the emergence of capitalism. I am not going into the details of his analysis, because he has written voluminously on each of these traditions.

In China, science and western style modernity did not develop either. Despite extensive Chinese technological capacity in the early modern era, the Chinese state remained a traditional bureaucracy, ruled by an emperor and a cultural elite, the mandarins, who base their authority on literary rather than scientific knowledge. So, this is his argument or verdict or conclusion about the Chinese society.



They had quite a lot of technological knowhow, we are familiar with the technological advancements of Chinese civilization. But he argues that, that was not translated into scientific thinking, rather, it was, it remained as a traditional bureaucracy ruled by an emperor and democracy did not emerge in China. And even now, you know that it is not there, and a cultural elite, the mandarins who based their authority on literary rather than scientific knowledge.

Then Confucianism revolved around the idea that social and individual worlds had to exist in an ordered harmony. Its social ethic, emphasized devotion to family and ancestors, literary studies and service for the community. It was not appropriate for Confucian intellectuals to practice economic activity. Weber's yardstick is to what extent, a religion underwent the process of disenchantment, and provided an atmosphere for the emergence of radical changes including that of capitalism.

Weber argues that Confucianism revolved around the idea that the social and individual worlds have to exist in an ordered harmony, and if social ethic emphasized devotion to family and ancestors, the commitment to tradition was something very strong, and literary study and service to the community. It was not appropriate for Confucian intellectuals to practice economic activity,

The ascetic orientation, that mystic orientation turned, evade Confucianism from engaging more directly with the worldly aspects of society, or the material conditions of society was not seen as the active field of their engagement, rather, they turn their attention to more mystical as well as ascetic fields of life. In some Confucianism, combined with the patrimonial bureaucratic rule of the emperor and traditional village life inhibited social change, as it occurred in the West and China remained a static society.

This is his conclusion that Confucianism combined with the patrimonial bureaucratic rule of the Emperor, because the traditional political system of China was never disturbed in that sense until more recently, and traditional village life inhibited social change, as it occurred in the West and China remained a static society. And now, it must be clear for you that he is comparing every other traditions based on the experience of the Europe and then he is also about to give you the kind of verdict.

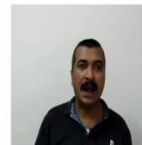
(Refer Slide Time: 20:37)

- Indian Hinduism, too, was a contemplative religion that inhibited the formation of Western ideals. Hinduism is based on the transmigration of souls and karma, the idea of compensation in the next life. Weber ties Hinduism to the Indian caste system, which prevents people from moving from one social category to another.



- Only through successive incarnations can members of the lower castes aspire to reach the divine. Ideas of progress are not possible in such a social order. The caste system also prevents the rationalization of the economic realm, as it emphasizes traditional skills and the making of beautiful objects rather than profit.

*'other worldly'*



Similar kind of analysis is evident, when it comes to Hinduism as well. Indeed Hinduism, too, was a contemplative religion that inhibited the formation of the Western ideas. Hinduism is based on the transmigration of souls and karma, the idea of compensation in the next life. Weber ties Hinduism to the Indian caste system, which prevents people from moving from one social category to another.

This is extremely important observation, you can agree with it, you can disagree with it. This again follows a larger portrayal of Hinduism as a religion of the otherworldly in nature, Hinduism as more concerned with the other world. Weber uses this term other worldly religion, when he talks about Chinese religion, and he talks about Hinduism as other world religion, because they were more concerned with the other world and it was based on the transmigration of souls and karma.

You know that according to the Brahminical Hinduism, you take a particular birth as human being, because of your past karma and you are supposed to follow your dharma. There are cycles of rebirth and finally, somebody attains Moksha, this Moksha is an eternal phase, the world in which you are living is momentary.

Such ideas Weber argues, is something not conducive to look into this particular world and when try to change it, you are seeped in fatalism and you do not change and as I told you, this also goes along with the larger depiction of Hinduism or Indians as more spiritual rather than the

material people. But that these are extremely problematic statement, we had Hindu tradition Hindu, traditionally so complicated, so complex and rich, that such a portrayal becomes very problematic.

Especially, it is a portrayal of this Brahminical Hinduism, we, India is a land where you had KamaSutra, India is a land where you had an established tradition of people who did not believe in God. India is a land of so much of contradictions and so much of diversity, but Weber as a theoretician, he is trying to make certain kind of a larger observations about that.

Another very important point, which is even more valid is that he connected Hinduism with caste system and caste system we know, did not allow people to move beyond their traditionally ordained occupation. Every caste was supposed to be having such an occupation, and moving away from the caste, especially, trying to do the job of more privileged caste was never encouraged, it was actively prevented. This a host of historians and sociologists have argued that, really prevented the kind of mobility that otherwise would have happened.

Now, only through successive incarnations can members of the lower caste aspire to reach the divine and ideas of progress are not possible in such a social order. Again, how, even a lower caste person, who is experiencing everyday humiliations and everyday discrimination, cannot complain or cannot try to change it, because they are told time and again that your suffering is because of your karma.

In the previous karma, you must have done something very terrible, that is why you are born into a lower caste and you are supposed to tolerate that, you are supposed to suffer that. So, this suffering was made normal, suffering was made acceptable according to Weber. The caste system also prevents the rationalization of the economic realm, as it emphasize traditional skills and the making of beautiful objects rather than profit.

He is talking about the kind of very specific contributions of, or the advancements of Indian craftsmen about how, that we made crafts, but did not try to develop it as a profit. But I must remind you that, like almost every other Western scholar, Weber also is not talking about the enormous damage, made by the colonial expansion in India, the way in which they completely destroyed Indian traditional artisan system, Indian traditional economic system and completely crumbled which resulted in the complete destruction of Indian economic system.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:35)



- Ancient Judaism, on the other hand, is a prophetic religion, arising on the outskirts of great empires. The Jewish prophets urged believers to follow the moral law against earthly powers. This law can be understood rationally, rather than mystically. Thus, Judaic religion is free of magic and irrationality in its quest for salvation, and it is oriented to action in this world.



Ancient Judaism, Weber argues, on the other hand, is a prophetic religion arising on the outskirts of great empires. The Jewish prophets urged believers to follow the moral law against earthly powers. This law can be understood rationally, rather than mystically. Thus, Judaic religion is free of magical and irrationality in its quest for salvation, and it is oriented to action in this world.

So, he is talking about Judaism as a religion, which is a prophetic religion, and which has an orientation towards this world. It is not oriented towards the other worldly affairs as in the case of Hinduism and Confucianism. Jewish prophets urged believers to follow the moral law against earthly powers. This law can be understood rationally, rather than mystically. Thus, Judaic religion is free of magic and irrationality in its quest for salvation, and it is oriented to action in this world.

Now, this Judaic religion, especially Weber argues is a precursor to Christianity. Within Christianity, as we discussed in the previous class, we are talking about the disenchantment, we are talking about the emergence of rationality, which really encourages people to use and apply rationality to make sense of the religion, so that is what he argued that people were able to come out of the influence of magic, and come out of the influence of blind beliefs, irrational beliefs and then understand religion in a more rational manner.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:21)

### The Disenchantment of the World



- The pre-modern world view conceives the world as consisting of a multitude of magical, spiritual, and supernatural powers, both good and evil. The enchanted world is a meaningful world, filled with purpose, significance, and mystery.
- On the other hand, Science construes the world differently, perceiving it simply as an object of knowledge, nothing more than a "causal mechanism." In the passage from the pre-modern to the modern era, the "world's processes become disenchanting," Weber observes; they "lose their magical significance, and henceforth simply 'are' and 'happen' but no longer signify anything."
- The disenchantment of the world means "there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation."



The process that Protestantism underwent in Europe, or in Christianity, in general, Weber argues can be understood by understanding this part or exploring this process of the disenchantment. The term of disenchantment, it is an extremely important one. This has become extremely popular among sociologists, who try to explain the process of secularization in Weberian scheme of affairs.

The pre-modern world views it as consisting of a multitude of magical, spiritual and supernatural powers, both good and evil. The Enchanted world is a meaningful world filled with purpose, significance and mystery. He is talking about the pre-modern religion or the traditional religion, which is completely inhabited by all kind of spirits.

We know that, when we talk about totemism, when we talk about say a primitive religion, they identify quite a lot of potent powers in their surrounding and these powers could be the natural forces, these powers could be the people who are already dead, their ancestors, this powers could be some unknown forces, it could be a thunder, it could be lightning, it could be an animal, it could be their forefathers who have died and gone.

But these supernatural powers are extremely influential in their everyday life. There is a system of belief which comprises of elements of magic, elements of spiritual importance and a host of other things, supernatural powers, both good and evil. The enchanted world is a meaningful world, filled with purpose, significance and mystery. So, something, anything that happens to that particular society is always seen as the handiwork of this particular supernatural power.

So, that is why, they try their level best or they try everything in their capacity to propitiate the God, if a pandemic comes, you know that in Indian tradition as well, you had Goddesses for smallpox, you had Goddesses for different kind of element, ailments, you had, so you try to propitiate the God, you try to make the God happy, so that this pandemic is not unleashed into your society.

So, such a society, whatever happens is a happening as per the whims and decisions of the supernatural power. On the other hand, Weber argues, science construes the world differently, perceiving it simply as an object of knowledge, nothing more than a causal mechanism. So, on the other hand, the scientific explanation of the world is completely different.

When lightning happens you know why it happens, when thunder happens you know why it happens, when some pestilence, some pandemic takes place, there is scientific explanation to that, no scientists would say that the COVID-19, the pandemic that is sweeping across the world is a handiwork of a particular God as there are scientific explanations.

These explanations, Weber argues takes away all these mystical elements, it takes away all the magical elements, and it takes away all the motives that is otherwise attached to these kind of elements. So, nothing is more than a causal mechanisms and everything is explained on the basis of certain kind of causes, the causal mechanism, the cause and effect situation is been established.

In the passage from the pre modern to the modern era, the world processes become disenchanting. This is an extremely important argument. When society moves from a traditional society to a modern society, the world becomes more disenchanting, Weber observes, that they lose their magical significance, and henceforth simply are and happen, but no longer signify anything. When you watch a magician practicing, we are all enchanted, we do not know why it is happening.

We see all kinds of crazy things going on the screen or on the stage, and we do not know what is happening, we are completely enchanted, we are mesmerized, but Weber argues that in a modern world, you are no longer mesmerized, we know why it is happening. All the other kind of explanation that used to provide explanation for our sense of 'awe' have been eliminated. Whether it is natural calamities, or medical issues or some kind of accidents or your personal

loss, or whatever is happening, you have kind of convincing scientific variable explanation for that.

This has taken away all the mystical and magical elements from our life. In a sense, we can say that the life has become more boring, life as low stole, it is all, it is kind of, other kinds of ideas, and it is become very dry, they lost their magical significance, and henceforth, simply they are and they happen, but no longer signify anything.

The disenchantment of the world means, “there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation.” Disenchantment tells you that, there are no more mystical elements, there are no more mystical forces that are controlling the world. There is no divine purpose.

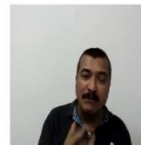
There is no divine intention, which you do not understand or you can influence or you cannot influence, you are no longer at the mercy of this unknown divine intent. On the other hand, you can understand, you can calculate and you can master things, and science and technology is supposed to have help you to master this particular ability. This particular process, Weber argues, is this process of disenchantment.

(Refer Slide Time: 33:43)

- The process of intellectualization and disenchantment relegates religion to the realm of the subjective and the irrational and, by transforming the world into a neutral object of empirical science, it divests it of any cosmic significance. But while science dethrones religion, it cannot perform the same function the latter once served: it cannot give meaning to the world or to people's lives. Nor can scientists legitimately adopt the role of secular prophets or priests.

- In the modern era, as a consequence, individuals in search of meaning are thrown back on their own resources. This is the existential predicament of the modern individual: those who aspire to a meaningful life must somehow create it themselves.

→ SECULARISATION



Now, he elaborates further, the process of intellectualization and disenchantment relegates religion to the realm of subjective and irrational and by transforming the world into a neutral object of empirical science, it divests it of any cosmic significance. But why science dethrones religion? it cannot perform the same function of the later once served, it cannot give meaning to the world or to people's lives nor can scientist legitimately adopt the role of secular prophets or priests.

So, what happens and now this is exactly the process what Weber calls it as secularization, the process whereby religion losing its significance, religion becoming a part of your personal life, and religion is becoming insignificant in the public affairs. The process of intellectualization and disenchantment relegates religion to the realm of the subjective, religion becomes meaningful only to your own personal life.

Remember, we also discussed about the process of differentiation, where more and more distinct fields of social life are becoming independent of the influence of religion, of the subjective and the irrational. We are transforming the world into a neutral object of empirical science, it divests it of any cosmic significance. What is happening to the world is something that can be explained by science, there is nothing more than that.



But why science dethrones religion, it cannot perform the same function, the latter one served. Now, we know that science can replace religion, it can provide explanation, but it cannot give meaning to the world or to people's lives. I found it is extremely important point.

Especially in modern world, why that religion has made a comeback, why that, there is a religious revivalism across the globe in maybe, after 1970s. I think, this answer is something extremely important. Science cannot give meanings to people. It cannot give meanings to people's lives. It is a very dry, plain and clinical explanation of certain things.

It does not really offer any solace to individuals, it does not really comfort the individual. It does not try to address individual's agonies, it tries to pretend as if it can at least understand, nor can scientists legitimately adopt the role of secular prophets and priests. In the modern era, as a consequence, individuals in search of meaning are thrown back to their own resources. This is the existential predicament of the modern individual, those who aspire to a meaningful life must somehow create it by themselves.

You do not have anybody to turn to, as people who can give certain kind of meaning to your own life, as people who can offer you some sort of explanation, especially for somebody who met with a major tragedy in their personal life, you know that this happened because of that, you give that kind of explanation, but they are very dry insensitive information.

This information will not be sufficient for somebody, whereas, people require certain kind of assurance, certain kind of explanation that is sensitive to their psychological trauma. Weber argues that in such a situation, people have no other source, but to create their own resources. This is an existential predicament of the modern world, modern individual, those who aspire to a meaningful life must somehow create it for themselves.

If you want to find some meaning or larger logic in this world, you must create that, there is no religion out there which actually provides you that and that is why there are a lot of individual figures, new forms of spirituality emerging across the globe, which really looks into that.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:18)

- Weberian theory of secularization
  - Increasing rationalization of religion
  - Followed by increasing disenchantment relegates religion into the less dominant sphere of society
  - Major debates about secularism, secularity, and secularization
  - Re-enchantment of religion
- Private*
- 



If you try to evaluate Weberian argument, this point of Weber's theory of secularization is one of the most central themes of discussion even now, almost 120 years after Weber's arguments about religion and secularization, this theme, this phrase, even now reverberates in the academic circles of sociology of reach.

Now, there was a period at least, 1960s and 70s there was kind of a consensus among sociologists that, the world is going through a process of secularization, that every society will become like the European societies, people will be free for religion, but from 1970s onwards, you see a religious revivalism taking place across, sweeping across Muslim societies, sweeping across what is happening in India, there is a revival of Hindu religious nationalism.

Similar process is happening across the globe. Increasing rationalization of religion is taking on one side, but religion is coming back. That is what I have mentioned here, there is a re-enchantment of religion. So, followed by increasing disenchantment that relegates religion into the less dominant sphere of society. When he elaborates secularization process, it is an increase in the rationalization of religion, you tend to provide rational explanation of religion.

This is followed by increasing disenchantment that relegates religion into the less dominant spheres of society, it becomes private and religion is pushed back to the private realm, education, law, sports, judiciary, then political system, economic activity, all these important spheres of society are kept isolated, they are kept detached from the influence of religion. This has created

major debates about secularism, secularity, secularization and those who are interested in sociology of religion will find these terms extremely important. Secularism is a principle, it is a state principle, about how to deal with religion, when India says that we are a secular state, this meaning of secularism is completely different from a French understanding of secularism, or earlier Turkish understanding of seculars.

Secularism has a political principle, about how do you deal with religion, it is not the separation between the church and state as in the classical understanding in the European context. In India, secularism is understood as a kind of an equidistance, maintaining same distance from every religion and secularity, whether what are the specific spheres of life that we can say as separate from the spheres of religion.

Because you do not have religion without a notion of secularity, or there is a, they are mutually constitutive very important arguments of (( ))(41:36) and a host of others. This process of secularization, what is happening in the world, is the world moving towards the direction of secularization.

There are very interesting arguments about how some of this Nordic, how many of the world, many countries are increasingly undergoing this process of secularization, especially the Nordic countries, the Western European countries, including even Japan, and USA, where increasing number of people are declaring themselves to be either atheist, or irreligious people, or people who simply do not care about religion.

The field of religion is something very interesting and this whole debate about re enchantment of religion, increasing influence of religion, and its impact on the political atmosphere, citizenship is being increasingly defined on the basis of religious affiliation, and a host of other situations.

So, I will end the class now, but let me just reiterate that this field of sociology of religion is personally, my field of interest, I specialize in sociology of religion and is a very fascinating field, extremely fascinating field. Weber is one of the founding fathers of that field, through his analysis of, his comparative analysis of religion, and also through his work on protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. Let us stop here and we will meet in the next class. Thank you.