

Classical Sociological Theory
Professor R Santhosh
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras
Lecture 60
Conclusion

(Refer Slide Time: 00:11)



Conclusion



Welcome back to the last class of our course. I have just kept a PPT with a title conclusion, there are no more slides. I just want to share some concluding thoughts with you. We know, we started these classes quite some time back, and this was a very unique experience that I am talking to a group of people whom I have not seen, I have no idea about who they are, their background, it includes obviously students, teachers and then people who prepare for competitive examinations and it could also others who really want to listen to some of these courses.

This has been a very challenging as well as interesting journey for me to introduce a classical sociological theory, right from its very formative period to its concluding time, and discussing an array of important theorists and their arguments, their contributions and critically evaluating quite a lot of them and towards the end of the course we had also spend time some time trying to understand the later developments of sociological theory applying to look at three major theoretical orientations, the connection between methodology and the theory and so on.

I genuinely hope that you would have benefited from these classes, because sociology as a discipline is an extremely fascinating subject for me and as I remarked in the very introductory

video for this course that studying sociology is not only for say clearing a subject or getting or clearing a course or getting or succeeding in a particular competitive examination, but it offers very interesting, fascinating insights about your own personal life.

I have found that extremely fascinating and enriching, and I am sure that you must have experienced the same. If you look into the context in which sociology emerged, if you look into divergent or diverse theoretical arguments and positions adopted by different people. They are very aim of sociology to develop a sense of critical thinking and to keep ourselves, I am inviting your attention to the very first class or the very first section about sociological imagination, the difference between common sense and sociology.

It actually offers you a very interesting understanding about one's own life, it helps you to locate oneself in a particular historical episode, in a historical scale. You will be able to position yourself and then make sense of things that are going around you. That is a very revealing and significant insightful experience.

All the scholars whom we discussed so far, starting from Saint Simon, Montesquieu, I am not counting the names, all these scholars in one way or the other help you to appreciate this question; how are we living in a society and what are the ways in which we are constrained? What are the ways in which we are constrained? What are the alternative ways in which we can live?

There are multiple answers within the sociology about the whole question of freedom and unfreedom. But somebody who understands sociology properly, somebody who has ability to appreciate sociology properly. I am sure that you would have found out the answer that the possibilities of freedom for a person to live in a society is endless, the possibility to live freely in alternative ways is endless because only our imagination is something limiting us.

And without breaking any laws, without going against the whole lot of other things you will be able to live very interesting and fruitful life. And sociological theory starting from Marx or then came on Weber or Mead, they offers very interesting insights about societies that existed then and societies that existed now. So now you realize why that certain ideologies are important.

You understand why certain theorizations were important, how we as a society that was colonized, how we began the process of studying ourselves. So in that sense, understanding

about sociology, and especially classical sociology is something very important because classical sociology is the body of knowledge that lays foundation to the subsequent development for the theory as well as methodology of the discipline.

Anybody who takes sociology seriously for your undergraduate studies or your postgraduate studies or your higher education today will find that classical sociological theorists are extremely important and relevant. It does not matter that they have lived died about a century back and it does not matter because they were the people who laid foundation. And even now their writings are extremely important for us.

You realize how subsequent theorization emerged and which were built on the foundational stones of these people, how different sociological methodologies evolved and how, they again reflect back how these foundational stones laid by these scholars. So you cannot really be a student of sociologies without understanding and appreciating the classical sociology theory. You cannot be a practicing sociologist just by looking into the current literature of sociology, then that you are completely mistaken.

If you know there are certain disciplines which are moving in the direction but without understanding the historical trajectory, without understanding the historical and political and intellectual trajectory of a discipline, you will not be able to appreciate its current affairs, you will not be able to understand its current status, current scenario. So that is why I could honestly advice you or request you to develop deeper interest in studying sociological theory.

It might look abstract, it might look dry, it might look confusing, but essentially they were all talking about our own society, they were all talking about very concrete realities, maybe through slightly difficult terminologies. But then it is only a particular way of theorization and once you master that language, once you understand that approach, then field the theory is something very, very interesting, it is extremely rewarding.

You will realize that how a solid theoretical grounding is important. And that is an extremely important resource that you need to develop. But a very fact that somebody studies a discipline is it enables a person to develop a kind of a particular perspective. And let me assure you that this perspective is quite different from the knowledge that you amass through various other means.

You are living in the era of information revolution. Just on the click of a computer, any kind of information is available for you. But the crucial question is what do you do with the information? How do you make the sense of the information? How do you develop certain kind of perspectives on that? And in such scenarios a discipline like sociology comes as an extremely important resource, because sociology has a very unique perspective, theoretical perspective.

It offers a particular way of looking at society and in understanding how things are so interconnected, how history plays an important role in deciding the contemporary relevance of certain things. And once you acquire that particular mastery of looking at things through a perspective of sociology, that is extremely important for you, whether you are listening to this course as a part of your regular class or through, for some competitive examination, or I do not know what are your purposes are.

But if you develop that kind of sociological imagination, that I referred to in the very first week, or sociological consciousness, then that is an extremely important resource for anybody and that provides extremely valuable insights to your own personal life, your own personal life, the understanding about society around you, and that offers you quite a lot of flexibility in order to live in the society, much more clearer understanding of the kind of things that are unfolding around you.

I also genuinely believe that it will also make you better human beings, you get far better clarity on society, you get better clarity on how different kind of power structures fashion society in different ways and there is nothing inevitable or there is nothing original, or there is nothing divine about all these things, things can be changed. And you develop a kind of a critical perspective to make sense of all these things.

I genuinely hope that it makes you better people along with your knowledge about the discipline. So I do not have anything more to say, I hope you found the classes useful, I hope you appreciate the class, I hope you found the classes interesting. I could not incorporate some more different pedagogical methods because of various other reasons, most of the time it was, we had only one discussion with one of the professors, we had planned some more but we could not do that.

Otherwise I have tried to incorporate most of the important themes that are usually covered under the title classical sociological theory, and hope you would have done your assessments

properly. I hope you would have, you have understood and then make sense of the subject matter. I genuinely believe that you would have developed some liking and fascination for the subject and that is my ultimate goal.

Of course your marks do matter, your scores do matter for me as well as for you. But more importantly, I would be extremely happy, it will be very rewarding for me if I understand that you begin to develop a likeness or you begin to develop a fascination for the subject and that will encourage you to read further, read independently, look for more material, develop or identify certain scholars or things which are more interesting.

This sociological imagination will really help your future growth as a student or as an academic or as a better teacher, I hope that there could be some teachers in this group, so you will find that teaching will be more rewarding the moment you begin to love the subject and develop a real interest in the whole theme. So I also hope that as I mentioned it makes all of us better human beings in this very difficult times. So I do not have anything more to say, I wish you all the very best of luck, I wish you all the very best and see you later. Thank you.