PREFACE

Towards the end of 1920s the first ever study on values has been conducted by the Polish Sociologists William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki who made pioneering efforts in their study on *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (1918). Since then there have been many changes taking place in sociology in general and in the study of values in the discipline in particular. This research study addresses the historical roots, philosophical, ideological and epistemological foundations of the study of values through structural, functional, conflict and critical approaches with reference to both western and Indian sociological traditions. Values have been also understood through the integrative approach in Indian sociological tradition. For the data and interpretations, this study draws upon diverse sources of literature contributed by different scholars in the field of history, indology, anthropology and sociology.

The insights provided in this work illuminate the study of values in sociology at a critical juncture of human history that strewn with the wreckage of social problems like terrorism, increasing violence and corruption, loss of life and property due to the promotion of wars and arm race among the different countries based on border disputes and cross border terrorism. Needless to mention the magnitude and persistent poverty and hunger that majority of the population suffer till today in different subcontinents and such infectious dreaded diseases like HIV, which poses a threat to the very survival of the human civilization on this earth. With the hope of economic growth and sustainable livelihood, human excessive intervention and dependence on nature in the name of recent trend of development has subsequently become responsible for the increase of pollution and global warming which is frequently causing natural disaster damaging large scale property as well as life in this world.

In such a critical period, there has been seen the loss of faith, morality, social harmony, lack of collective consciousness among different countries and groups for their common cause etc. which deteriorates the collective psyche of the people and erodes the century old established values that was responsible for maintaining the humane social order. Thus, it becomes essential to have an understanding about the values in the study of sociology which deals with the individual relationship with the society and studies the social aspects of human behaviour. In fact, the study of values
Initially began with the narrow technical meanings to determine the price, durability and exchange of money in the branch of economics by the utilitarians. Originally the study of values began with the work of William I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki in 1918 in the discipline of sociology but it came to the centre stage only during the 1960s. The more radical intellectual movements emerged during this period in many advanced countries especially in Europe and American subcontinent whether their political regimes were capitalist or socialist, and in some countries which were making the transition from an agrarian to an industrial economy. The socio-economic conditions in a particular cultural environment along with the political developments had a greater influence on the formation of values in different subcontinents. As a result, values have not been developed homogenously in the different parts of the world.

An attempt has been made here to argue that value formation is an interactive process which takes place through the influence of culture, polity and economy in a particular surroundings along with the impact of science and technology. In this study, values have been broadly divided into two types i.e., positive and negative values or consensus and discontent. The meaning of values has been defined and further attempt has been made so as to classify them and locate them in the discourses on modernity, post-modernity and globalization. In the study of values in sociology, rather than employing integrative approaches, values have been understood through structural functional approaches as well as conflict approaches by following both Western and Indian sociological traditions. Besides this values have been also studied from the Western critical theories and integrative approach in Indian sociological tradition. These theorists have been discussed with regard to values both in positive as well as negative meanings attached to the broader framework of values as socio-cultural phenomenon.

Besides understanding values in a theoretical framework, Chapter-IV and Chapter-V mainly concentrate on some of the Indian sociologists, who have contributed in major and minor ways to the literature on values in the study of sociology. Attempts have been made to highlight their views very specifically and to establish co-relation with the ideas of other sociologists and find out their similarities as well as dissimilarities in the study of values. These similarities and dissimilarities provide an
insight into the diversified heterogeneous character and multiple traditions of Indian society. The concern with tradition is a common problem in the context of rapid, contemporary change, the specific content of traditions is naturally different in different societies. Tradition as a phenomenon suggests certain kind of communion with the past, a continuing dialogue which reinterprets the past and also the present. This aspect of tradition is fundamental to the awareness of values. Thus, tradition plays an important role in social life of every society. Tradition, thus, tends to become either an organic or an historical memory of the past. The technological and material advancement are identified with the prime value and all social and educational institutions are sought to be reconditioned in its light which are said to have resulted in a serious spiritual crisis for mankind in today’s society. The present study seeks to argue that tradition and modernity confuses different contexts in the era of globalization with reference to socio-cultural and economic changes in value premises in such a progressive society. Historically speaking, the notion of “progress” was developed in the 18th century, and continued in terms of its uses with the concept of “development” even in the recent years. All human societies are concerned about and aspire for progress and development. During the 1960s the concept of ‘modernity’ entered into academic discourse as an alternative to the notion of development. Modernity becomes an idealization of the specific, historic character of western society and culture which is gradually being realized in the twentieth century.

Post modernism is a loose term used to describe the new aesthetics, cultural and intellectual forms and practices, which emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. During those days large section of people in rural Indian society were entangled with poverty, hunger, poor health and weak economic conditions. As a technologically backward society, India was struggling with lack of infrastructural facilities to keep up with the pace of modern development programmes vis-à-vis its rapidly increasing population. However, some metropolitan cities of today’s Indian Society and some urban centres have witnessed the impact of post modern culture. As the terms suggests, postmodernism rapidly replaces modernism - the term used to describe the culture styles and movements of the 20th century. Such type of post-modern conditions has resulted in capital expansion creating groups of consumers with specialized tastes and interests for their ever growing range of different productions. This trend of
consumerism has gradually percolated to rural areas. According to Jameson, there is nothing stable in post-modern society. Basically, the post modern society is a capitalist society. (S.L. Doshi: 2003: 343) Though there are attributes of capitalist tendencies of development in Indian society, it is not considered as a capitalist society. The deeply rooted strong hold of tradition still continues to exist among Indians in various spheres of their social lives.

The study of values in Indian Sociology will not get its perfection without referring to globalization. Globalization as a phenomenon refers to a process of transformation of social varieties beyond the nation states. But there is an irony which is that, as a result of globalization geographic, cultural, and political frontiers have progressively declined and disappeared. In the process of recent trend of globalization, global transformation sees a growing level of risk across countries and endeavor to understand the various fact that this ‘new world’ is reshaping global human society. Science and Technology driven society in this era of globalization has become complex with this fast moving life. People all over the world are now increasingly getting connected with the wider world but have lost their network with their own family, friends and neighborhood. They have no time to think of others because there is barely any time to think about themselves: their health, their work, their clothes, their diet, their short-term and long-term goals and their recreation, etc. There is never enough time for the people what they want to do. Somewhere along the line, people have mortgaged many of their values to the tyrant demands of their time. When many old people talk about their good old days or in other words ‘tradition’, what exactly those old people remember with such nostalgia and affection? What amidst all the comforts of technological advancements available today in this modern period are the senses of something lost forever? Of course, the pace of life was much slower than what it is today. People had more time to interact with each other, process events and to reflect on their emotional responses. But in the technology driven society, consumerism plays vital role in all sphere of social lives. Human life becomes hectic; the pressure to achieve something, which was once merely local or regional and easy, has become not just ‘national’ but positively ‘global’ and difficult today.

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