



SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In lesson 26 you learnt about the changes that came with colonial expansion and capitalist industrialization in the 19th century. In this lesson we will carry over the discussion into the 20th century, which saw the acceleration and deepening of the social processes that characterized the 19th century: some of them quite irreversible and profound in their impact on human life.

The last decades of the 20th century saw the collapse of the socialist societies in Europe and the collapse of the capitalist welfare state as well. It saw increasing inequalities between the capitalist countries and within the capitalist countries. We will point towards some of these and the differences in social transformation between capitalist and socialist societies as well.



OBJECTIVES

After studying the lesson, you will be able to:

- discuss how development of industrialisation to large parts of the world contributed to fundamental changes in society everywhere;
- recognise that there were differences in these processes between the advanced countries and those that won their freedom from colonialism in the 20th century;
- note some of the social changes over time even within the advanced countries and
- identify the differences between capitalist and socialist countries.

27.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

The pattern of demographic changes noticed in the 19th century continued into the 20th century. In the 1990s the world contained five or six billion human beings, perhaps three times as many people as at the outbreak of World War I: this is despite an estimated 187 million deaths during the century due to various causes, including natural deaths.

There was a sustained growth in world population throughout the 20th century. In Western Europe and North America this was mainly due to better health facilities and decline in infant mortality, and expansion of social security systems which allowed for longer lives. In Eastern Europe and on the other continents the increase was because birth rates continued to be high.



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But from 1930 we find a downward trend in Eastern Europe as well, and by 1960s almost the whole of Europe had low fertility, but this was offset by low mortality rates. So over all there was growth of population throughout the developed world.

However, population growth in Europe was negatively effected by the two world wars of the 20th century. This was mainly due to the huge numbers killed, but also because of delayed marriages and disruption of family lives.

The developing societies experienced rapid population growth after 1945, at rates greater than the West. Here better medical facilities became available in the 20th century, but at the same time older structures of society dominated by agriculture (where more children meant more family labour and security for parents) meant a more rapid demographic growth.

A comparison therefore shows that at the end of the century what we call the western world contained just 1/6 of the world population.

Demographic changes involved changes in patterns of human settlements and in distribution of population as well. For example, continued migrations remained an important factor affecting population distribution in the twentieth century. 1901 to 1915 saw the most intensive out-migration from Europe. Southern and Eastern Europe were especially areas of out migration, north Europe both sent out and received migrants, while western Europe received people rather than have them move out. These migration patterns were due to push and pull of labour demand and of political factors. For example, Nazi policies resulted in forced migrations of Jews, minorities and political prisoners from Germany, while post war reconstruction led to migration into Germany of Turkish workers. Civil wars in Russia and Spain similarly resulted in out migrations.

Thus we can see that population growth and population shifts were a result of many factors. Today there is a migration to the western world from poorer countries, but mostly of skilled and qualified middle classes, while those who are poor have no chances to migrate there because of strict restrictions by these countries. Some migrations of poorer population do take place to the Middle East, however.

Son preference has destroyed the gender balance in countries like India and China, and has become a matter of great concern.

27.2 URBANIZATION

Modern urban life is specifically connected with capitalist industrialization. Urbanization means growth of towns and a faster growth of town population as compared with rural population. Urbanization is therefore a result of not just natural growth in population, but also of shift of population from countryside to towns because of industrialization and greater economic opportunities in towns. You have read something about these processes in Unit 1. This process was not uniform throughout the world, and not even throughout Europe, or within a country, and did not come about all of a sudden.

There was a great divergence in rhythm of change between industrial and non-industrial areas, and areas where agriculture had become mechanized and not become mechanized. With industrialization most people came to be employed in the production of manufactured goods and services, both of which were concentrated in towns and cities.

In 1900 UK, the country that industrialized first, was still the most urbanized country with a 77% urban population, while Germany, which by then had a faster pace of



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industrialization, had about 56% living in urban areas. Other countries still had less than half its people living in urban centres. And if we take the world into account, at the beginning of this century about 70% of the population still lived in rural areas.

During the course of the 20th century, with significant shifts in production due to science and technological changes, we find urbanization becoming more widespread. In UK and USA, by the mid 1970s more than 95 % of the employed population was engaged in manufacturing and services and less than 5% in agriculture; in Europe (excluding Russia) by mid 1980s more than 70% lived in urban areas; in Japan, more than 80% were in manufacturing and services and less than 20% in agriculture.

In countries like Russia even in 1917 the majority of its population was linked with villages, although the 1930s and the latter half of the century saw rapid urbanization. In many countries of Asia and Africa, including India, agriculture is still a much bigger sector in terms of people engaged in it.

Urbanization has meant growth of very large cities of course but also small towns in developing countries like ours. In 1900 there were 16 cities with more than one million inhabitants; in 1950 there were 67; and in 1985 more than 250. In the world as a whole, by 1980 at least 40% of people lived in cities, and it could well be 50% today. You can see the trend in our own country: thousands of people come to big cities in search of jobs and livelihood. In fact the developing countries have some of the largest cities in the world: Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Cairo, Shanghai, Nairobi, Seoul, Bangkok etc



INTEXT QUESTIONS 27.1

1. In what way was population growth affected by the two world wars?

2. How did political factors in Germany effect the migration of population?

3. What do you mean by urbanization?

4. Name some of the big cities in the developing countries.

27.3 MODERN CLASS SOCIETY

Capitalist industrialization resulted in the growth of modern class society, by which we mean that social classes which existed before it were transformed and integrated into the capitalist economy and society, and two new social classes also emerged, the bourgeoisie and working class. Pre-capitalist societies were dominated by landed wealth and the landed aristocracy. They were crucially affected by capitalist industrialization, as and when it emerged in different parts of the world. As with changes in population and urbanization, changes in social structures were not uniform all over the world and not sudden.

For much of Europe the 19th century was the crucial period when the landed aristocracy found their lives changed. In England they became modern **landlords** deriving



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their wealth from rent in land and other capitalist ventures, such as commerce, mines, railways etc. The continental nobilities retained their dominance well into the twentieth century.

Peasants continued to be an important component of societies even after capitalist industrialization, and growth of capitalism in agriculture. However, as the capitalist economy penetrated their lives, peasantry itself became divided into classes—the rich, the poor and middle peasants—and began to look at property, criminality and state authority differently. There also emerged a class of landless agricultural labourers. The absolute numbers of those engaged in agriculture did not decline even in Europe till the mechanization of agriculture in the 1940s. The relationship with the landlord continued to be the crucial aspect of their social and political experience.

The second half of the 20th century has, however, seen the disappearance of the peasantry almost throughout the western world, and a dramatic fall in countries like Japan and South East Asia in general. Only Sub-Saharan Africa, India and China continue to have very large peasantries.

The capitulation by many governments of the Third World—particularly in Asia and Africa - has resulted in agrarian crises and a very desperate situation for the peasantry in these areas. Landlessness is increasing, and enclaves of corporate agriculture have meant a shift to export crops. The demand for export crops from advanced capitalist countries of the west has resulted in decline of food crop production and consequent decline in food consumption by the majority of the peasantry. This has led to thousands of suicides by farmers, and also movements of the peasantry for support prices, lower costs of inputs, and water and electricity for irrigation. China has been able to integrate its peasantry very well into its political system, but the market reforms of the last two decades are leading to discontent there as well, as there is a demand on agricultural land for industrial purposes.

The **bourgeoisie** emerged as the growing and finally the dominant social class in the 20th century. From late 19th century onwards, throughout Western Europe the wealthiest and most influential sections among the bourgeoisie were the capitalists: industrialists, the factory owners, the bankers and mine owners. The **middle class** also included shopkeepers, managers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers and those in services. With the expansion of education there was an expansion of this class. During the 20th century it began to include a significant component of **lower middle classes** who manned the lower paid rung of services. This section was most insecure and worst affected by the ups and downs in the market, particularly the Depressions in economy.

The formation of the **working class**, dependent on wage labour, is linked directly with the growth of capitalist industry. Throughout Europe the working class remained stratified and differentiated well into the 20th century as mechanization did not come all of a sudden and not to all the industries at the same time. Some skilled crafts died out with emergence of big factories, but new skills were required and new skilled workers were associated with metal working and electrical industries, and later electronics. But at any given period skilled craftsmen, domestic workers, tailors, laundrymen, print workers, masons and construction workers, post and telegraph workers, railway men in a variety of jobs, miners, and skilled and unskilled factory workers co-existed in all cities. Women formed an important component of these workers, both in terms of their numbers and also through entry into jobs earlier not open to them. All this is equally true of the working classes in the colonized world—Asia, Africa, Latin America—and later when they became independent.

**Notes****27.4 CITY AND SOCIAL LIFE**

The city and the social life have reflected the strong division of the rich and the poor. They had different spaces in the city to live in, and the amenities and facilities were quite different. Multistoried apartments, huge stores and shopping malls, parks and boulevards have changed the landscape of most modern cities, but these co-exist with pollution, bad sewage, slums, one room dwellings shared by two or three families and even homelessness. This continues to be the face of modern cities even today, anywhere in the world. Unemployment has become a dreaded reality.

27.5 FAMILY

Significant changes came about in both nuclear and joint families with the penetration of capitalist industrialization. Prior to this economic revolution, the household was characterized by the inseparability of family functions and labour, though different tasks may be performed unequally by men and women.

With capitalist industrialisation the family no longer remained the unit of production, though it continued to be one unit in terms of consumption. The growth of manufactures and factories meant wage labour; each person in the family earned separately. With bourgeois values predominating, a man's wage began to be considered the "family wage" i.e. a whole family was meant to survive on it, and women's work ideally was home and nurturing of children. This was, however, a middle class value that better off working class families could aspire to, but was hardly the norm for most working class people.

Women of the working class were as much wage workers as men were. In fact many industries preferred women or children as employees because they could get away with paying them less. In practice the concept of equal pay for equal work did not apply to women.

In Practices

In the modern world women usually bear the double burden of earning a wage and primarily doing the domestic work as well. It is a situation all of you must be familiar with.

**INTEXT QUESTION 27.2**

1. Which are the two new classes which emerged with capitalist industrialization?

2. Who are the people included in the middle class?

3. In what way did the emergence of big factories affect workers?

4. What impact did capitalist industrialization have on employment of women?

27.6 WOMEN'S EQUALITY AND FEMINISM

The expansion of economy in the twentieth century, along with literacy, opened new avenues for women, both of the working class and the middle class. Apart from domes-



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tic service women now worked in shops and offices, and as nurses and school teachers: these came to be seen as primarily feminine jobs. The two world wars opened new possibilities for women as they manned many jobs left vacant by men mobilized for war. All this brought a change in the social position and expectations of women.

Middle class women demanded the vote, and the suffragette movements became an important aspect of their assertions for equality. The real fillip for women's emancipation in the western world came from the rise of labour and socialist movements, which spoke for all oppressed, and called for the transformation of the whole society along lines that would ensure equality for all, including women. Women saw this as more realistic. Women formed a good percentage of union members and also of socialist organizations, although they were not so visible in leadership roles. It was not easy for women to assert equality even in these organizations, and demands for equal pay came only when women or enlightened socialist leaderships stressed on it.

Roza Luxemburg and Beatrice Webb were celebrated socialist leaders, Colette and Selma Lagerlof were important writers, and women were already participating in tennis tournaments like Wimbledon, French and US Open in the early twentieth century. Women took up journalism and photography as professionals, and became doctors and engineers. Soviet Union had a large percentage of women in its mass organizations and in the central parliament, and in scientific establishments.

In Russia the working class movement had a significant component of women, and peasant women were part of the general revolutionary movement. In Russia and in the anti-colonial movements they found a much more favourable environment for mass participation. In countries like India and China, questions of women's education, and opposition to backward social practices were part and parcel of the national liberation struggles, and both men and women expressed them very boldly, with the result that in India and China women won their vote as free citizens along with men. The same was true for women in Russia after the Russian revolution of 1917.

By 1990 women were or had been heads of government in sixteen states. Their numbers in the workforce grew dramatically in the Asian, African and Latin American countries. Mauritius is a significant example. In China and in Eastern Europe there has been almost 100% employment of women.

All this is not to say that women's battle for equality is over; it is not so anywhere in the world. The neo-liberal economic policies from the 1990s have led to increase in unemployment. Women have borne the brunt of it all over the world, including in the former socialist countries. In the Third World countries, women have been pushed into the unorganized sector, with least protection of worker rights and no guarantee of minimum wage. Domestic service is still a major source of employment for women.

In India female infanticide and female foeticide have increased in the last decade of the 20th century. Dowry deaths in India, and domestic violence in general have also been on the increase all over the world.

27.7 CHANGES IN WORK PATTERNS

As and when the factory system developed, work patterns changed. In Europe this was in the 19th century, but in much of the rest of the world only in the 20th century. The workplace of the worker became the factory; he/she had to follow set hours of work; women and children also went out to work and had to follow the rhythm of the factory; there was an elaborate system of factory discipline, rules and regulations;

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and now it was not the worker, but the machine which decided the form and pace of work. Introduction of new technology sometimes rendered one set of workers redundant and therefore caused distress and unemployment; at others times they had to learn new skills in order to adapt themselves to new machinery.

In the latter part of the century, another set of changes have taken place in work patterns. Some of the big firms in the western countries have found that with computers it is possible to work from home and cheaper for them because they need not spend on office maintenance. These changes were presented as benefiting employees, but in fact have meant that employees never fully get off the job; they cannot claim “leave” and other benefits that employees can get because they do not work in an office; and no opportunity to form trade unions or share grievances with other employees.

New types of software allow employers to more closely monitor the work and work time of the employee through the computer networks. You would have read in the newspapers, about the working conditions of the people who work in BPOs and call centres that are mushrooming in our country today.

Another set of changes has come from what is called out-sourcing. Big trans-national companies have found it easier to shift some of their functions to Third World countries, where wages are low, and where they can bully governments to ensure that those enterprises remain “trouble free” and enjoy tax benefits. This has meant unemployment for workers in the western countries, and some jobs for people in Third World countries, but on extremely unfavourable terms.

Big multinational companies have also brought back the era of sweat shops, where they contract jobs to small enterprises, which means production often takes place at home. Here the pay scales are lowest and the workers most exploited. This section of workers has increased in third world countries, with mostly women having to perform these jobs.

**INTEXT QUESTION 27.3**

1. What were the new jobs that women took up in the 20th century?

2. How have neo-liberal economic policies of the 1990s affected women?

3. How did the factory system change work patterns?

4. Explain the changes brought about by “out – sourcing”?

27.8 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

The range of social and political organizations has expanded phenomenally in the twentieth century. Apart from political parties and trade unions among various sections of employees, and women’s and students and writers organizations, we now



have all kinds of viewpoints and aspirations reflected organizationally: on education, public health, minority rights, human rights, peace movements, culture, gay rights, environment and conservation, credit and self-help groups. Almost no area of life remains unrepresented. Many of these organizations have demands and aspirations that present a critique of how their societies are organized, and many of them are supportive of the way things are.

27.9 CAPITALISM, SOCIALISM AND INEQUALITY

The technological and scientific achievements of the 20th century made possible great progress and benefits for mankind. Possibilities are there for sustaining the entire world population and for improving the standards of life for all people. Yet globalization and economies of scale have only widened the gaps between the haves and the have-nots.

Socialist societies, with all their drawbacks, had been able to create more equal societies, without the huge gaps that we see between the rich and the poor in capitalist countries.

After the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe the capitalist states everywhere have unleashed massive cuts in welfare. The consequences have been disastrous for the majority of the people of this world.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson you would have learnt how the social processes that began in the 19th century were deepened and accelerated during the 20th century. Among these were the demographic changes, the growth of urbanization and changes in city life. The spread of capitalist industrialization led to the emergence of modern class society all over the world and changes in family and work patterns. It also gave rise to popular movements and growth of social and political organizations representing different sections of society.

Capitalist industrialization creates expansion during the 20th century which made possible great progress but also led to increasing inequalities in the world.



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Give the main reasons for population growth in Western Europe and North America.
2. What do we mean by modern class society?
3. Describe the impact of agrarian crises in the third world countries.
4. How do cities reflect the different lives of the rich and the poor?
5. How did the labour and socialist movements affected women?
6. Describe the changes in work patterns brought about by computers.
7. Give some examples of how science and technological advances have improved human life.
8. Is the gap between the rich and the poor increasing/decreasing today? Discuss it thoroughly.

**ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTION****Notes****27.1**

1. Huge numbers killed, delayed marriages, disruption of family lives.
2. Nazi policies resulted in forced migrations of Jews, minorities and political prisoners from Germany, post war reconstruction led to migration into Germany of Turkish workers.
3. Shift of population from countryside to towns because of industrialization and greater economic opportunities in towns.
4. Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Cairo, Shanghai, Nairobi, Seoul, Bangkok etc.

27.2

1. Bourgeoisie (middle class), working class.
2. Industrialists, bankers, lawyers, teachers and other professionals in service sector.
3. Employment of some increased, others faced unemployment, wage labour in factory, composition of workers changed.
4. Employment outside home, unequal pay, factory discipline.

27.3

1. Factory work, teachers, offices and shops.
2. Increase in unemployment, pushed into unorganized sector and domestic work.
3. Place, pattern, hours of work, discipline norms.
4. Big trans-national companies shift some of their functions to third world countries, where wages are low, and where they can bully governments to ensure that those enterprises remain “trouble free” and enjoy tax benefits.

HINTS TO TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. See 27.1 para 2.
2. See 27.3 para 1.
3. See 27.3 para 5.
4. See 27.4.
5. See 27.6 para 2.
6. See 27.7 paras 2 and 3.
7. Think about the answer.
8. Write what you think.