

Man mind. the  
thought that they  
have



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Man with the help of his more evolved brain and greater intelligence has been thinking about a number of things. The physical world itself posed a big puzzle for him.

In the beginning, various natural phenomena such as birth and death, day and night, health and ill-health, rotation of seasons, etc.... constituted the content of his thinking process. In course of time, he shifted his attention towards various non-physical things. It is impossible to prepare an exhaustive list of things which man's mind today is pre-occupied with. No such attempt is made in this book either. Social Thought as a By-product of Social Interaction: Man does not live in isolation. He is social in nature and always prefers to live in the company of other men.

Sociality or sociability has become an essential and inextricable aspect of his life. The individual and society are hence inseparable. Man's life is interwoven with society. Sociality or sociability has been the central problem in sociological discussions. " Why man depends on society?" — is a pertinent question for which we have different and even contradictory explanations. Each aspect of man's social life must have been the result of at least some people's experiences, mutual adjustments, and experiments. People must have been directly or indirectly, and explicitly or implicitly thinking about the ways in which they could share their feelings and emotions, problems and challenges, miseries and maladies, etc., from the very beginning.

They must have also tried on their own the ways of facing the problems and challenges of life, to secure some amount of stability for their social life and contentment for their individual mind. The thought that they have

entertained in this regard, no matter how irrational and unscientific it is, could be referred to as “ social thought.” Definition of the term “ Social Thought”: In simple words, it can be said that “ social thought” essentially refers to the thought concerning the social life and activities of man.

Sociologists have given their own definitions of social thought among which the following may be cited.

i. Bogardus: “ Social thought is thinking about social problems by one or a few persons here and there in human history or at the present.” ii. Rollin Chambliss: “ Social thought is concerned with human beings in their relations with their fellows.” iii. H. E.

Jenson: Social thought is “ the totality of man’s thought about his relationship and obligations to his fellowmen.” iv. William P. Scott: “ Social thought refers to any relatively systematic attempt to theorise about society and social life, whether it be classical or modern, scientific or unscientific.

” Characteristics of Social Thought 1. Social Thought is Societal Thought: Social thought is basically the thought regarding societal issues or matters. It is concerned with the ways in which people live together and face collectively their problems and challenges. These thoughts may themselves have solutions to these problems. 2. Social Thought is Not the Sum Total of the Thoughts of all the Members of Society: Social thought has evolved out of the capacity for critical and analytical thinking of a few scholars, rationalists, scientists and philosophers. People of average intelligence can hardly enrich the existing social thought.

Only a handful of people can delve deep into the social matters, events, and problems and form opinions and theories about them. Bogardus thus comments: " However, the developing and perfecting of new ideologies are usually the work of scholars, somewhat removed from the turmoil of the hour. Social thought thus is the product of social crisis and of scholarly analysis and synthesis. 3. Social Thought need not necessarily be Scientific Always: Social thought touches upon various aspects of our social life, experiences, conclusions, opinions, assessments, valuations, etc.

All these cannot be put to scientific tests to assess their validity and dependability. In spite of this deficiency they have their own practical importance. 4. Social Thought is not the same everywhere: Social thought has been immensely influenced by factors such as time, place, environment and conditions.

Social thought normally arises in part from the nature of the prevailing social conditions. To understand it properly the student must know the times which furnish the setting for it. " A thorough going knowledge of the culture and of the social, economic, political and religious standards of a people is a minimum essential for a social thought.

" 5. Every Human Community has given its Own Contribution to the Development of Social Thought: Social thought is not the monopoly of any particular community. At the same time all the nations or communities have not contributed equally to its enrichment.

For example, the ancient Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian, and Hebrew civilisations of the East and the ancient Greek and the Roman civilisations of

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the West, have given commendable contributions to the realm of social thought. The rural and the tribal people also have played their role in the enrichment of social thought. 6. Social Thought is Continuous in its Development: Social thought has been found to be consistent in its development. As Bogardus has pointed out, “ the history of social thought rises out of the beginnings of human struggle on earth and with jogged edges extends along the full sweep of the changing historical horizons.” 7.

Social Crises or Hardships have always provided Motivation for the General Social Thought: Social thought usually finds its initial expression during social crises. When “ prosperity” reigns and people are, in general, satisfied, new social thought is at ebb tide. But when social conditions are marked by gross injustices or when social changes come rapidly due to inventions, wars, or other basic disturbances, the thinking about social life and problems is highly stimulated and new ideas or systems of ideas, that is, ideologies, are originated. 8. Other Characteristics: (i) Social thought though continuous is very slow and gradual in its development. We do not find fast developments taking place in this field as in the realm of physical sciences.

(ii) Major portion of the social thought is not found to be preserved in the form of books but in the unwritten forms such as folklores, folksongs, legends, myths, folktales and so on. (iii) “ Social thought is abstract” - says Bogardus. All thinking is abstract and social thought is no exception to this general rule.

(iv) Social thought has not always been utilitarian and beneficial to mankind. It has been, at times, abused by some people to subserve their own ends.

Ex: (i) The theory of inborn superiority of the Aryan Race advocated by Nazis of Germany, (ii) The ideologies such as Gandhianism, socialism, secularism, etc. are being abused by different people in India today for different purposes.