

1. Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	Sociology
Course Name	Sociology 01 (Class XI, Semester - 1)
Module Name/Title	Understanding Social Institutions: Economic-Work & Division of Labour – Part 2
Module Id	kesy_10302
Pre-requisites	Concept of Sociology and Economics
Objectives	<p>After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to understand the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To understand the importance of economic institutions and its correlation with social institutions• The concept and importance of work• Difference between work and occupation.• To know the various stages of economic development and the role of work in these various stages.• Difference between economic and non-economic activities• The concept and growing importance of the service sector.• Concept and meaning of Division of Labour and work.• Durkheim and Karl Marx's views on Division of Labour
Keywords	Economy, Primitive communalism, Subsistence, Agrarian, Kinship, Consumption, Distribution, Exchange, Division of Labor, Barter, Jajmani, Specialization, Work, Assembly Line

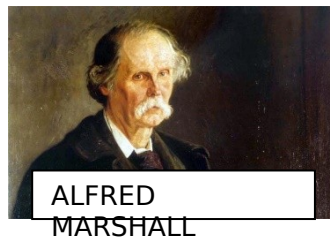
2. Development Team

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Introduction:

Having understood what is Marriage? how it brings forth the concept of family (composition & types) and the need for understanding and maintaining Kinship ties/relations (all of which constitutes a Social Institution,). Let us now look at the Economic Life/Institution which is very important, and closely interconnected with family. Man is not only a social animal but also an economic being. He/she is always engaged in some economic pursuits or activities always. These economic activities are so varied and complex that they constitute an economy. The economy is a system which is a part of the wider social system.

Now, let us first understand the **meaning of 'economic'**. It is an English word which is derived from the ancient Greek word 'oikonomia'—meaning the management of a family or a household. According to Dictionary.com, it is something “pertaining to the production, distribution, and use of income, wealth, and commodities.” It also refers to a “system of organization or operation, especially of the process of production.” Economics, as a study of wealth, received great support from the Father of economics, Adam Smith, in the late eighteenth century.



Defining the concept of economy Alfred Marshall says, “Economics is on the one side a study of wealth; and on the other and more important side, a part of the study of man.” According to Marshall, wealth is not an end as was thought by classical authors;(such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx etc) it is a means to an end—the end of human welfare.

Marshallian definition has the following key features: --

- i. **Economics is a social science** since it studies the actions of human beings.
- ii. **Economics studies the 'ordinary business of life'** since it takes into account the money-earning and money-spending activities of man.
- iii. **Economics studies only the 'material' part of human welfare** which is measurable in terms of the measuring rod of money. It neglects other activities of human welfare not quantifiable in terms of money
- iv. **Economics is not concerned with “the nature and causes of the Wealth of Nations.”** Welfare of mankind, rather than the acquisition of wealth, is the object of primary importance.

Members of society procure the means through a systematic method of production consumption, exchange and distribution, for the fulfilment of various types of material needs of its members.

Features of Economic Activity:

- a) Production
- b) Consumption
- c) Exchange
- d) Distribution

a) Production is a process of combining various material inputs and non-material inputs (plans, know-how) to make something for consumption (the output). It is the act of creating [output](#), a [good or service](#) which has [value](#) and contributes to the [utility](#) of individuals.(Wikipedia) Economic well-being is created in a production process, which means-- all economic activities that aim directly or indirectly to satisfy human wants and [needs](#). The satisfaction of needs originates from the use of the commodities which are produced. To generate this production “work” is important.

Very often work and occupation are used interchangeably. In fact, occupation is work but it essentially refers to specialised and established kind of work. It refers to a kind of work that an individual completely gets engaged such as a craft, trade, profession etc. It takes up much of the time and attention of the individual. In modern times, it is a means of livelihood, it is usually associated with one or other organisation such as agriculture, industry, etc.

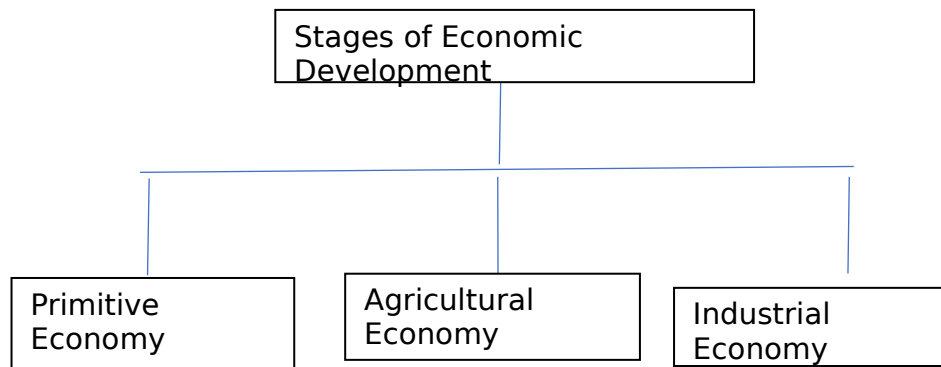
Agriculture is the backbone of our Indian Economy. ... The word *agriculture* comes from the Latin words “ager”, means the soil & “cultura”, means cultivation. It is the science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool, and other products.

Industry It is an economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories.

All these involve the concept of work.

In fact, a branch of sociology called “**Sociology of Work**” has emerged to examine the social implications of work. It also deals with the economic and psychological aspects of work.

Now, let us understand the role of work in various stages of economic development starting from, pre-modern to Modern times.



From the very beginning, human beings began economic activities to manage food for themselves. Early men were only food gatherers. Later, he invented diverse types of implements which enabled him to hunt for his food apart from learning how to use animals especially cattle. In pre-modern forms of society thus most people worked in the field or cared for the livestock.

(I) Primitive Economy:

The key features of a “Primitive Economy” was thus---

a) The subsistence type: Primitive economic organisations were of **the subsistence type**. That is, they were production-consumption economies. One important reason for this was the absence of technological aids in their attempts to exploit nature, as in the case of shifting cultivation.

What is shifting cultivation? Shifting cultivation means that the same plots of land are not cultivated for long and that cultivator’s move from one plot to another. The decreasing yield of land as a result of continuous cultivation was a reason for it.

b) Barter: In the absence of money as a store and measurement of value and a medium of exchange, economic transactions were always based on exchange. There were various forms of exchange prevalent in a primitive society. **Barter** is a direct form of exchange. It involves bargaining and haggling unless it is regulated by customs or norms. Barter is an exchange of (a) service for service, (b) goods for service and (c) goods for goods. Money does not figure in the barter transactions.

c) Jajmani system: Akin to the barter system another type of exchange was the Jajmani system. The word ‘Jajmani’ is derived from the Vedic term for a patron who employs a Brahmin to perform a sacrifice for the community. It is a relation between a ‘Jajman’ and ‘Kamin’.

In its original meaning, therefore, jajmani economic relations involved the exchange of gifts for Service rendered or to be rendered in future. This meaning has not changed even today. Today, Jajmani has come to mean all the basic reciprocal relations of patronage. It was a privilege and a responsibility for a family to patronize not only the family priest, but also all other specialists in the village. The system ensures the services of specialists like cobblers, washer men, barbers, potters, blacksmiths, etc. to the patrons on the one hand, and, on the other, it also ensures subsistence for the specialists who render the service.

Mandelbaum cites an interesting example in this regard:

“A principal ceremonial role is taken by the associated family of the barber jati. The barber’s wife cleans and refurbishes the house; she massages the bride, helps her bathe and dress. She joins in the wedding songs and in the stylized derisions with which the groom’s party is met. The barber himself accompanies the marriage party in the commercial round, doing for the members of the wedding whatever tasks need to be done. He is present through all the ritual, helping the priest, performing such bits as the formal tying of the groom’s shirt to the corner of the bride’s dress. In return, the barber and his wife are given a sum of money..... when they perform some special service in the course of the rite.”

These Examples clearly indicate that more than economic exchange is involved in jajmani relationships.

- The **profit motive** that is generally associated with economic transactions is generally **absent in a primitive economy**. A sense of mutual obligation, sharing and solidarity provide the necessary incentive in all economic pursuits.
- **The rate of innovation** in simple societies is **very low**, giving the appearance of an unchanging social structure over a period of time. Stability and uniformity of social structure are also the outcome of simple and uniform techniques of production used in these societies.

d) Communal economies: Primitive societies show strongly developed features of **communal economies**. All activities starting from construction of shelters to production of primary consumption goods are carried on through co-operative and collective efforts of the members of the community. There is virtually **no division of labour** except **specialisation based on sex**. While men generally participate in activities outside home, women take care of the infants and of preparation of food. These activities naturally force women to stay longer at home.

e) No concept of property: Finally, in a food-gathering society, there was **no concept of property** or any type of an economic surplus like cattle wealth. There was no ownership of land. Pastures were held jointly, similarly, cultivators very often owned their lands jointly.

This was followed by an **agrarian economy** when man began to lead a settled life on the banks of river valleys and a civilisation began. Such as Indus Valley civilisation, Egyptian etc. An agrarian economy is rural rather than urban-based. It is centered upon the production, consumption, trade, and sale of agricultural commodities, including plants and livestock.

(II) Agrarian Economy:

The key features were:

a) Subsistence agriculture, as it is called, first emerged from the transition from hunting and gathering, around 12,000 to 10,000 years ago, to settled agriculture. This taming of nature--or 'domestication'--allowed people to settle in one place because now there was a sufficient and reliable food source. Tractors were used for cultivation

Tube wells and canals were available for irrigation.

Science and Technology promoted rural economy. In 1960 Green revolution was introduced.

The main features of Green Revolution in India during the 1960s were:

1. Introduction of new and high yielding variety of seeds.
2. Increased use of fertilizers, pesticides and weedicides in order to reduce agricultural losses.
3. Increased application of fertilizers to enhance agricultural productivity.
4. Use of latest agricultural machinery like tractor, seed drills, threshers and harvester.
5. Use of high disease resistance varieties so that production will enhance.

Today the farmers apart from farming are taking to other jobs. Agricultural economy is not isolated from urban centres. Most villages are connected to urban centres through good transport and communication.

The present form of agriculture is capitalistic. Farmers are growing crops for the market, those which are beneficial to them.

(III) Industrial Economy:

The **third stage of development** an **Industrial economy** emerged. In this industrially developed society only a tiny proportion of the population works in agriculture, and farming itself has become

industrialised —it is carried on largely by means of machines rather than by human hand. In a country like India, the larger share of the population continues to be rural and agricultural or involved in other rural based occupations.

In most cases, the objective of an industrial economy is the **mass production** of goods, which is the fast and efficient manufacturing of standardized products. For example, if you've ever purchased a car, there is a high likelihood that your car was mass produced because it operates similarly to other models, and its parts can be replaced with other parts because they are identical.

The industrialization of societies and cultures began in mid-18th century England when British manufacturers began to look for new ways to increase production of goods in their factories. Prior to this shift in economic structure, products and resources were all made by craftsmen who would create each item by hand or by farmers who would have to plant and harvest using only manual labor.

By harnessing the power of natural elements, like water or steam, manufacturers were able to increase the speed of production by incorporating the use of machines driven by the elements but still operated by human hands. The increased use of new tools and machinery meant that manufacturing jobs no longer required expert skills or brute strength. This created a wealth of new jobs, first in the textile industry, such as boot mills and shirt factories, and eventually spreading into other areas of manufacturing.

Because most factories were in urban areas, the **new jobs created** by the industrialization of manufacturing drove up the population of Western cities and raised the standard of living by providing **employment opportunities** to lower social classes who had previously lacked the skills necessary to obtain such employment.

By the mid-point of the 19th century, advances in science and technology had led to even greater changes in industrial labour, which is often referred to as the **Second Industrial Revolution**. This era is characterized by the introduction of the steam engine, which led to the boom of the railroad industry and other industrial operations, such as mining and factory farming.

Importance of Service Sector

There were other noticeable trends in India, for instance an **expansion of the service sector**. The **service sector**, also called tertiary **sector**, is the third of the three traditional economic **sectors**. The other two are the primary **sector**, which covers areas such as farming, mining and fishing; and the secondary **sector** which covers manufacturing and making things.

India's services sector covers a wide variety of activities such as trade, hotel and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financing, insurance, real estate, business services, community, social and **personal** services, and services **associated** with construction.

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the economic system of modern societies is the **existence of a highly complex division of labour**. Division of labor and specialisation are hallmarks of modern complex societies.

What is Work? As children and young students, we imagine what kind of 'work' we will do when we grow up. **'Work' here quite clearly refers to paid employment**. This is the most widely understood sense of 'work' in modern times. Many types of work do not conform to the idea of paid employment. Much of the work done in the informal economy, for example, is not recorded in any direct way in the official employment statistics. The term **informal economy** refers to transactions outside the sphere of regular employment, sometimes involving the exchange of cash for services provided, but also often involving the direct exchange of goods or services. We can also define work, whether paid or unpaid, as the carrying out of tasks requiring the outflow of mental and physical effort, in which the main objective is the production of goods and services that cater to human needs. Economists speak of work as "one of the major factors of production consisting of manual or mental exertion for which wages, salaries or professional fees are received" Work has been divided into an enormous number of different occupations in which people specialise. For example, the principal, teachers, clerks, librarians etc do specific tasks assigned to them and yet contribute to the fulfilment of the common purpose of running the school and promoting education. In traditional societies, non-agricultural work entailed the mastery of a craft. Craft skills were learned through a lengthy period of apprenticeship, and the worker normally carried out all aspects of the production process from beginning to end.

Modern society has also witnessed a **shift in the location of work**. Before industrialisation, most work took place at home and was completed collectively by all the members of the household. Advances in industrial technology, such as machinery operating on electricity and coal, contributed to the **separation of work and home**. Factories owned by capitalist entrepreneurs became the focal point of industrial development.

People seeking jobs in factories were trained to perform a specialised task and receive a wage for this work. Managers supervised the work, for their task was to enhance worker productivity and discipline.

One of the key features of modern societies is an enormous expansion of **economic interdependence**. We are all dependent on an immense number of other workers—stretching right

across the world- for the products and services that sustain our lives. With few exceptions, the vast majority of people in modern societies do not produce the food they eat, the houses they live in or the material goods they consume.

(i) Transformation of Work: Now, there has been a total Transformation of Work Industrial processes have been broken down into simple operations that could be precisely timed, organised and monitored. Mass production demands mass markets. One of the most significant innovations was the **construction of a moving assembly line**.

(ii) Assembly line: Modern industrial production needed expensive equipment and continuous monitoring of employees through monitoring or surveillance systems. Over the last decades there has been a shift to what is often called 'flexible production' and '**decentralisation of work**'.

(iii) Decentralisation of work In this period of globalisation, it is the growing competition between firms and countries that makes it essential for firms to organise production suiting the changing market conditions. To illustrate how this new system operates and what implications it may have for the workers, an example has been given from a study of the garment industry in Bangalore. — The industry is essentially part of a long supply chain, and the freedom of manufacturers is to that extent extremely limited. There are, in fact more than a hundred operations between the designer and the final consumer. In this chain, only 15 are in the hands of the manufacturer. Any serious agitation for a rise in wages would lead manufacturers to shift their operations to other localities, beyond the reach of unionists... whether it is the payment of the existing minimum wage, or its substantial revision upwards, what is important is to enlist the support of the retailer in order to create the necessary pressure upon the government and local agencies for a higher wage structure and its effective implementation. Thus the vision here is that of the creation of an international opinion forum (Roy Choudhury 2005:2254).

Conclusion

Finally, to conclude it was **Durkheim** who developed the theory of 'Division of Labour' from a functional point of view in his famous book "Division of Labour in Society. Both , Durkheim and Marx, held different opinions about Capitalism, specifically the modern division of labor. **Marx was a conflict theorist** and argued that the division of labor resulted in alienation, bringing social

inequalities between social groups. On the other hand, Durkheim claimed that the division of labor was not necessarily bad for the individual or society.

Unlike Marx who claimed economic specialization produced alienation, Durkheim who was a functionalist, believed the division of labor was beneficial for society because it increases the worker's skill and created a feeling of solidarity between people. He claimed the division of labor creates a certain balance and unites social systems, essentially making them more efficient. Although Marx and Durkheim were essentially basing their theories from the 19th century and the rise of industrialization, the division of labor theory can still be applied in today's society.