Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences  
Course No. 3: Economy and Society  

M.A. (Total Credits: 04)

Course Teacher: Ravi Kumar (ravi@soc.sau.ac.in)

Course Description

Economy and society are inseparable. Debates have been going on regarding what determines what but their influences on each other is a well known fact. Both economy and society are constituted through and by a host of institutions and structures. How these institutions interact with each other becomes an interesting area to be explored. The concepts and categories that may be helpful to understand this relationship will be taken up in this course. It will also introduce students to the different types of economies and societies. Reading through some of the classic works it will take students to more concrete forms of realities, which represent the interaction of society and economy. It will give an idea of (1) how economic institutions work, and (2) how economic institutions are influenced by different aspects of social life. A critical perspective of the concepts of structure, culture, institutions, and power, makes the discussion of economic issues possible.

The readings given below are suggestive. The teacher concerned will pick up some of the basic texts from the list and take it up for discussion within the classroom. The list also allows students to get an idea of how one may have different entry points to a course on economy and society. For instance, the discussion on economy and society cannot elude the ‘state’, which in a certain sense constitutes the continuum, but traditionally courses like this have not looked at it. Our effort will be to constantly make conceptual innovations like that.

Out of the four units that we have, three are dedicated to developing a good understanding of the concepts and the fourth unit will look at the context of South Asia in the light of concepts discussed earlier. While getting to know and understand the concepts the classroom transaction will also be simultaneously reflecting on them as tools for understanding society.

1. (a) Doing Economic Sociology: meaning; teaching ‘economy’ in ‘sociology’ classrooms; Can economy and society be separable? Where and how does the interaction of social and economic institutions take place?

    (b) Notions of Value, labour, money, property, exchange and consumption: what is value; value as money; value and exchange; use-value and exchange value; significance of money; property as economics and as indicator of social equality; consumption embedded in economy and society; who is a labour; is labour a social or economic category
(c) **Tribal, Peasant, Ethnic, Industrial and Post-industrial societies**: understanding the different types of societies; changes experienced by them; characterization of different societies

**Suggested Readings:**


Marcuse, Herbert (March-April 1965) ‘Industrialization and Capitalism’, *New Left Review*, I/30, pp.3-17


Commodities)

phenomenon?; cultural


2. (a) Production, Commodification and Consumption: understanding production, commodification and consumption; is commodification a recent phenomenon?; Production of consumption; modes of consumption is consumption cultural or economic?; is gift also a commodity?; commodities and consumption; our everyday life as reflected in commodities and consumption

(b) Modes of production: feudalism to capitalism: mode of production as a way to create of framework where society and economy constitute each other; characterising different modes of production; debates on modes of production

Suggested Readings:


3. (a) **Globalisation, Neoliberalism and cultural and economic changes**: defining globalization; defining neoliberalism; nature of changes that occur during globalization and neoliberalism; increasing social differentiation; creating and consuming new dreams

(b) **Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction**: reproduction of economy, culture and society; what does reproduction achieve?; cultural reproduction and social reproduction

*Suggested Readings:*


4. Some Contexts of Economic Change in South Asian Region: economy and society as processual; socio-cultural change in South Asia

Suggested Readings:


Modes of Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated through internal evaluation spread across the semester as well as through a mid-semester examination and an end-semester examination. The distribution for marks will be as follows:

Mid-semester examination: 20 marks (One question; One and half hours)
End-semester examination: 40 marks (Two questions; Two and half hours)
Internal evaluation: 40 marks (Non-examination Assignments)