Indira Gandhi National Open University
Elective Course in Sociology
ESO-13 : Sociological Thought
Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA)

Maximum Marks: 100 **Programme Code: BDP**
Weightage: 30% **Course Code: ESO-13**
Assignment Code: ESO-13/AST/TMA/2026-2027

Answer all the questions

Section – I

Answer the following in about 500 words each. **Marks**

1. Analyse Max Weber's approach towards the understanding of Capitalism. 20
2. Discuss central ideas of August Comte. 20

Section – II

Answer the following questions in about 250 words each.

3. Discuss the concept of social solidarity. 12
4. Discuss Parsons' pattern variables. 12
5. Discuss Marx's 'modes of production'. 12
6. Explain the concept of social structure in Radcliffe-Brown's work. 12

Section – III

Answer the following questions in about 100 words each.

7. Did Durkheim consider crime as pathological in society? Explain. 06
8. What do you understand by 'dysfunction'? 06

1. Analyse Max Weber’s approach towards the understanding of Capitalism.

Answer

Max Weber studied capitalism as more than a system of buying and selling or the private ownership of factories. His main question was why a particular kind of modern, rational capitalism developed so powerfully in the West. He agreed that economic conditions mattered, but he also examined religious beliefs, ways of organising work, law, authority and the habits of individuals. This made his approach different from an explanation based only on property and class relations.

Meaning of modern capitalism

For Weber, the desire to make money is not unique to capitalism. Merchants, rulers and traders in many societies have pursued profit. What makes modern capitalism distinctive is the regular and rational organisation of production for a market, using capital accounting, predictable rules and disciplined wage labour. Enterprises calculate costs, organise investment and expect profits through continuing business activity rather than occasional speculation or plunder. The separation of the household from the business enterprise, formal bookkeeping and relatively free markets support this process.

The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism

In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber investigated an important connection between religious ideas and economic conduct. He observed an affinity between certain forms of ascetic Protestantism, especially Calvinist traditions, and the disciplined attitude associated with the capitalist spirit. This spirit involved treating work as a duty, avoiding wasteful luxury, keeping accounts and reinvesting earnings in productive activity.

The notion of a *calling* gave ordinary worldly occupations a religious significance. Some Calvinist believers faced uncertainty about salvation because of the teaching of predestination. Systematic work, disciplined conduct and a restrained lifestyle could become signs of belonging to the community of the saved, even though success could not itself earn salvation. Earnings were therefore more likely to be saved and invested than spent on display. Weber did not claim that Protestants invented commerce or that every businessman was religious. His argument concerned a historical relationship between beliefs and particular patterns of action.

Over time, the economic discipline encouraged by religious conviction could survive even when its religious foundation weakened. Weber described how the pursuit of a vocation, once tied to moral duty, became an external demand of