

CUET · SOCIOLOGY · CLASS XI · CODE 326

# Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society

CUET unit: Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban

Society  
By UniDrill · NCERT-grounded study material

[WWW.UNIDRILL.IN](http://WWW.UNIDRILL.IN)

UniDrill

## Snapshot

- Constant, rapid change is a recent phenomenon — civilisations are ~6,000 years old, but accelerated change has happened only in the last 400 (and especially the last 100) years.
- **Social change** is change that is significant, intensive and extensive (it alters the underlying structure of society) and is distinct from evolutionary and revolutionary change.
- Identifies five broad sources of social change — **environmental, technological, economic, political, cultural** — with worked examples (tsunami, oil, steam engine, plantation economy, universal franchise, religion, sport).
- Frames **social order** as the counterpart of change: stability sustained via **socialisation, power, domination, legitimation, authority and law** (Weber).
- Applies the change/order pair to **village, town and city**, contrasting rural conservatism (dominant castes, agrarian relations, land reforms, MGNREGA) with urban issues (slums, gated communities, gentrification, mass transit, ghettoisation).

## Detailed Notes

### 2.1 Core concepts

- **Recency of rapid change:** It is often said that change is the only unchanging aspect of society — sociology itself emerged as an effort to make sense of the rapid changes in 17th–19th century Western Europe. But sociologically, constant rapid change is comparatively new: humans have existed for about **500,000 years**, civilised existence is only about **6,000 years** old, and constant rapid change is only about **400 years** old — and within that, the pace has accelerated only in the **last 100 years** (NCERT §intro, p. 21).
- **The Clock of Human History box (Giddens 2004:40):** if the whole span of human existence is imagined as a single day (midnight to midnight), agriculture appears at **11:56 pm**, civilisations at **11:57 pm**, and the development of modern societies gets underway only at **11:59:30 pm** — yet as much change has taken place in the last thirty seconds of this "human day" as in all the time leading up to it (NCERT Box, p. 21).

- **Defining social change** (Giddens 2005:42): sociologists have had to limit the broad meaning of "social change" to make it useful for social theory. At the most basic level, social change refers to changes that are **significant** — changes that alter the "underlying structure of an object or situation over a period of time." The "bigness" of change is measured both by how much it brings about (intensive) and by how large a section of society it affects (extensive); change must be both intensive and extensive to qualify as social change (NCERT §Social Change, p. 22).
- **Evolutionary change:** slow change over long periods; the term was made famous by Charles Darwin's biological theory of "**survival of the fittest**" — only life forms best adapted to their environment survive. Darwin's theory was soon adapted to the social world and termed '**Social Darwinism**', a theory that emphasised the importance of adaptive change (NCERT §Social Change, p. 22).
- **Revolutionary change:** comparatively quick, even sudden; used mainly in the political context — sudden overthrow of a ruling class by its challengers, e.g., the **French Revolution (1789–93)** and the **Soviet/Russian Revolution of 1917**. The term has also been used for sharp non-political transformations such as the "industrial revolution" or "telecommunications revolution" (NCERT §Social Change, p. 23).
- **Structural change vs change in ideas/values:** Types of change identified by nature/impact include **structural change** — transformation in the institutions of society or the rules by which they are run (e.g., emergence of paper money replaced precious-metal coin currencies, reshaping banking, finance and the credit market). Changes in values and beliefs can also lead to social change — e.g., the modern concept of childhood as a special stage of life (19th–early 20th centuries) led to laws banning child labour and making schooling compulsory; some industries (carpet weaving, small tea shops, match-stick making) still depend on illegal child labour (NCERT §Social Change, pp. 23–24).
- **Five sources of social change:** the most common classification is by **source/cause** — sometimes pre-classified into **internal (endogenous)** vs **external (exogenous)** causes. Five broad types: **environmental, technological, economic, political and cultural** (NCERT §Social Change, p. 24).
- **Environment:** nature, ecology and physical environment have always influenced the structure and shape of society — desert vs plains, port towns, river valleys produced different food, clothing and social interaction patterns. Technology has reduced the differences (and altered nature in new ways), so nature's effect on society is changing rather than declining. Sudden catastrophic events — earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, the **2004 tsunami** that hit Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Andaman Islands and parts of Tamil Nadu — can change societies drastically and often irreversibly. Environmental factors can also be **constructive:** discovery of **oil in the West Asian/Middle East deserts** (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE), discovery of **gold in 19th-century California** (NCERT §Environment, pp. 25–26).

- **Technology and economy:** the combination of technological and economic change has been responsible for immense social changes; the most famous instance is the **Industrial Revolution**. The discovery of **steam power** enabled the steam ship and the railway, transforming the social geography of the world; **Indian Railways from 1853** shaped India's economy in the first century after introduction. Steamships speeded up ocean voyages, changing international trade and migration. Sometimes social impact becomes visible only retrospectively — **gunpowder and writing paper in China** had limited impact for centuries until inserted into modernising Western Europe, where gunpowder transformed warfare and the paper-print revolution changed society forever. British **spinning and weaving machines** plus market forces and imperial power destroyed the Indian handloom industry, which had been the largest and most advanced in the world. **Plantation agriculture** (sugarcane, tea, cotton) created mass demand for labour, fuelling **slavery and the slave trade between Africa, Europe and the Americas (17th–19th centuries)** and the forced migration of **Adivasis from Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to Assam tea plantations**. Today, **WTO tariff changes** can wipe out entire industries (NCERT §Technology and Economy, pp. 27–28).
- **Politics:** old historiography centred on kings and queens, but they were representatives of larger forces. Political forces have been among the most important causes of social change. Warfare and conquest are the clearest cases — sometimes the conquerors plant change, sometimes the conquered transform the conquerors. After **WWII the US occupied Japan** and brought land reform; by the **1970s–90s Japanese industrial technique** had decisively overtaken American steel/automobile/heavy engineering and pioneered electronics — Japan "turned the tables" through economic-technological rather than military means (NCERT §Politics, pp. 28–29).
- **Universal adult franchise** — "one person, one vote" — is "**probably the single biggest political change in history**"; previously kings claimed to rule by divine right, the vote was restricted to high-status men of property and excluded women, lower classes and subordinated ethnicities; universal franchise was won by long struggle and now forces governments to seek the people's approval to be considered legitimate. Indian independence reshaped Indian society, and **Nepal's 2006 rejection of monarchy** is a recent instance of political-cum-social change (NCERT §Politics, pp. 29–30).
- **Culture:** culture is a short label for the wide field of ideas, values and beliefs. **Religion** is the commonest example of a socio-cultural institution producing change — **Buddhism in ancient India**, the **Bhakti Movement** on medieval caste system. **Max Weber's "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism"** showed how the religious beliefs of some Christian Protestant sects helped establish the capitalist social system. **Women's struggle for equality:** during WWII women in Western countries took factory jobs operating heavy machinery and manufacturing armaments — establishing claims to equality that had to be fought for much longer absent the war. Advertising now targets women as household decision-makers.

**Cricket** began as a British aristocratic pastime, spread to middle/working classes and to British colonies; outside Britain it became a symbol of national/racial pride — the England–Australia rivalry expressed colonial subordination, **West Indies' world dominance in the 1970s–80s** expressed racial pride of a colonised people, and beating England at cricket was always special in pre-Independence India; today the commercial profile of cricket is driven by South Asian fans (NCERT §Culture, pp. 30–31).

- **Causes are interrelated:** no single factor or theory accounts for social change; causes may be internal or external, deliberate or accidental, and are often interrelated — economic/technological causes may have a cultural component, politics may be influenced by environment. Change is generally better understood retrospectively but must be anticipated as well (NCERT §Culture, p. 31).
- **Social order** = the tendency within established social systems to resist and regulate change; change makes sense only against the backdrop of continuity. Every society must reproduce itself over time and maintain stability — things must continue more or less as they are, similar actions producing similar results, with individuals and institutions behaving in a fairly predictable manner (NCERT §Social Order, p. 32).
- **Why societies resist change:** societies are stratified; strata differ in command over economic resources, social status and political power. The **ruling/dominant groups generally resist** social change that may alter their status because they have a **vested interest in stability**, while subordinated/oppressed groups have a **vested interest in change**. 'Normal' conditions usually favour the rich and powerful (NCERT §Social Order, p. 33).
- **Two routes to social order:** broadly, social order is achieved either through **spontaneous consent** — when people willingly abide by rules and norms internalised through **socialisation** — or through **compulsion** in various forms; every society employs a combination. Socialisation, however efficient, can never completely erase the will of the individual — so most modern societies depend on some form of power/coercion to ensure conformity (NCERT §Social Order, p. 33).
- **Power, domination, authority, legitimation, law (Weber):** **Power** is usually defined as the ability to make others do what you want regardless of what they themselves want. When a relationship of power is stable, settled and habitual, we have a situation of **domination** — a dominant institution/group exercises decisive influence in normal times. **Legitimation** refers to the degree of acceptance involved in power relations — something that is legitimate is accepted as proper, just and fitting. **Authority**, defined by Max Weber, is **legitimate power** — power considered justified or proper; police officers, judges and school teachers exercise different kinds of authority explicitly provided by their job descriptions. Less-formal authority exists too — religious leaders, reputed scholars, even criminal gang leaders may wield enormous authority without formal specification. **Law** is an explicitly codified norm or rule, usually written down; in a modern democracy laws are made by an elected legislature in the name of the people and bind all citizens regardless of

personal belief. Domination works through power, much of which is legitimate power codified in law (NCERT §Domination, Authority and Law, pp. 33–35).

- **Contestation, crime, violence:** dominance and law do not always meet with conformity. **Contestation** includes broad forms of insistent disagreement — 'counter cultures', youth rebellion against prevalent norms, elections (form of political competition), and dissent against laws or authorities. **Crime** is strictly derived from law — "an act that violates an existing law, nothing more, nothing less"; the moral worth of the act is not determined by violating the law. **Mahatma Gandhi broke the salt law at Dandi** deliberately and proudly as part of the Civil Disobedience movement — a crime in legal terms but morally celebrated. The modern state is defined by its claim to a **monopoly over legitimate violence** within its jurisdiction — only the state may lawfully use violence; all other instances are by definition illegal (exceptions like self-defence aside) (NCERT §Contestation, Crime and Violence, pp. 35–37).
- **Village vs town vs city:** villages emerged with the transition from nomadic life to sedentary agriculture, which made surplus and occupational specialisation possible. The distinction between rural and urban is made on the basis of **(i) population density and (ii) proportion of agriculture-related economic activities** — size alone is not decisive (large villages can exceed small towns in population). The distinction between **town and city** is a matter of **administrative definition**, differentiated essentially by size; an '**urban agglomeration**' is a city along with surrounding sub-urban areas and satellite settlements; a '**metropolitan area**' includes more than one city or a continuous urban settlement many times the size of a single city (NCERT §Social Order and Change in Village, Town and City, pp. 37–38).
- **Urbanisation in India:** the share of population living in urban areas rose from **<11% (1901) to a little more than 17% (1951), 28% (2001 Census), and 37.7% (2011 Census)**. World urban share is **54% (UN 2014 World Population Prospects)**, projected to **66% by 2050** (NCERT p. 38).
- **Rural social order/change:** villages permit personalised relationships (members usually know all others by sight); social structure follows a more traditional pattern with stronger caste, religion and customary practice; change is slower and more resilient. Anonymity and distance are absent, so dissent can be identified and "taught a lesson" by dominant sections, who control most employment and resources. New communication (telephone, television) and improved road/rail have reduced rural isolation and accelerated change (NCERT §Social Order and Change in Rural Areas, pp. 38–39).
- **Land reform & dominant castes:** the first phase of post-Independence land reform took away proprietary rights from absentee landlords and gave them to the groups actually managing land — often **intermediate castes**. Acquiring rights over land, combined with their numbers, increased their social status and political power because their votes mattered for elections. **M.N. Srinivas named these groups the 'dominant castes'**. In recent times, dominant castes themselves face opposition

from assertive uprisings of the lowest and most backward castes in states like **Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** (NCERT §Rural Areas, p. 39).

- **Rural change drivers:** new labour-saving machinery and new cropping patterns alter labour demand and bargaining strength. Sudden price fluctuations, droughts or floods (recent **farmer suicides**) can cause havoc. Large-scale development programmes aimed at the rural poor have enormous impact — the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005** is the prime example (NCERT §Rural Areas, pp. 39–40).
- **Urban social order/change:** cities are ancient (Tezpur on the Brahmaputra, Kozhikode/Calicut on the Arabian Sea, Ajmer, Varanasi/Kashi, Madurai) but **urbanism as a way of life is modern**. Cities offer the individual boundless possibilities for fulfilment (anonymity + amenities + institutions only large numbers can support), but freedom and opportunity are available only to a "socially and economically privileged minority". Group identities (race, religion, ethnicity, caste, region, class) intensify in dense urban space (NCERT §Urban Areas, pp. 40–41).
- **Urban problems centred on space:** housing/residential patterns, mass transit, land-use zoning, public health, sanitation, policing. Housing shortage breeds homelessness, '**street people**' and **slums** — congested, no civic facilities, and breeding ground for criminal 'dadas'. Affluent **gated communities** seal themselves with walls/fences/gates and provide private civic facilities; **ghettoisation** is the concentration of a single community in a neighbourhood; **gentrification** is the conversion of a low-class neighbourhood into a middle/upper-class one. Commuter sub-cultures (Mumbai's suburban "locals") develop in transit-heavy cities (NCERT §Urban Areas, pp. 41–46).
- **Mass transit & change:** affordable, safe public transport shapes city life — contrast transit-based London/New York with car-based Los Angeles; whether the Delhi Metro changes social life is an open question. India's main urban-change challenge is coping with migration-driven population growth (NCERT §Urban Areas, p. 47).

## 2.2 Definitions to memorise

Term	Definition	Page
Social change (Giddens)	Changes that alter the underlying structure of an object or situation over time; must be intensive and extensive.	22
Evolutionary change	Slow change over long periods; from Darwin, extended as "Social Darwinism".	22
Revolutionary change	Quick, sudden, far-reaching change, mainly political (French 1789-93, Russian 1917).	23
Structural change	Transformation in society's institutions or the rules by which they are run.	23

Term	Definition	Page
Endogenous / exogenous causes	Internal vs external causes of social change.	24
Social Darwinism	Application of Darwin's "survival of the fittest" to social adaptation and change.	22
Customs duties / tariffs	Taxes on goods entering/leaving a country, raising price relative to domestic goods.	47 (Glossary)
Dominant castes (M.N. Srinivas)	Landowning intermediate castes that are numerically large and enjoy political dominance in a region.	39, 47
Gated communities	Affluent urban localities sealed off by walls, fences and gates, with controlled entry/exit.	47 (Glossary)
Gentrification	Conversion of a low-class urban neighbourhood into a middle/upper-class one.	47 (Glossary)
Ghetto / ghettoisation	Neighbourhood concentrated by single religion, ethnicity, caste; ghettoisation = conversion of mixed neighbourhoods into single-community ones.	48 (Glossary)
Legitimation	The process of making legitimate; the grounds on which something is considered just/right.	48 (Glossary)
Mass transit	Modes of fast city transport for large numbers of people.	48 (Glossary)
Power (Weber)	Ability to make others do what you want regardless of what they themselves want.	33
Domination	Stable, habitual situation of a person/group routinely in a position of power.	33
Authority (Weber)	Legitimate power — power considered justified or proper.	34
Law	Explicitly codified norm or rule, usually written down.	35
Crime	An act that violates an existing law — "nothing more, nothing less".	36
Urban agglomeration	A city along with its surrounding sub-urban areas and satellite settlements.	38
Metropolitan area	More than one city or a continuous urban settlement many times the size of a single city.	38
Social order	Tendency within established social systems to resist and regulate change.	32
Slums	Congested urban neighbourhoods with no civic facilities; breeding ground for crime.	42
Counter cultures	Youth rebellion or protest refusing to conform to prevalent social norms.	36
Civil disobedience		36

Term	Definition	Page
	Deliberate violation of an unjust law on moral grounds, as in Gandhi's salt satyagraha at Dandi.	
Monopoly of legitimate violence	Defining feature of the modern state — only the state may lawfully use violence in its jurisdiction.	36

### 2.3 Diagrams / processes to remember

- **"Clock of Human History" box** (p. 21): if all human existence = one day, agriculture appears at 11:56 pm, civilisations at 11:57 pm, modern societies at 11:59:30 pm.
- **Five sources sequence:** Environment → Technology & Economy → Politics → Culture (pp. 24–31). NTA loves match-the-source.
- **Social-order ladder:** Socialisation → Power → Domination → Legitimation → Authority → Law → Contestation/Crime/Violence (pp. 33–37).
- **Urbanisation timeline** (p. 38): 1901 (~11%) → 1951 (~17%) → 2001 (28%) → 2011 (37.7%); world 54% (2014) → projected 66% (2050).
- **Two-criteria rural-urban distinction:** density + agricultural share of activity (p. 37) — NOT size alone.
- **Three urban-settlement tiers:** village vs town/city (administrative) → urban agglomeration → metropolitan area (p. 38).
- **Land reform → dominant castes chain** (p. 39): land transferred to intermediate castes → wealth + numbers → political dominance → opposition from lowest/most-backward castes.
- **Photographs:** Students in classroom (p. 24), Vocational Training Lab (p. 25), Earth caves in after floods (p. 26), Doctor checking patient (p. 41), Slum/child-care scene (p. 42), Commercial centre + cotton field (p. 43), Urban transport (p. 44), Shopping in a city (p. 45) — used by NTA for image-based prompts.

### 2.4 Common confusions / NTA trap points

- **Evolutionary vs revolutionary:** evolutionary = slow/Darwinian; revolutionary = sudden/political. Don't conflate.
- **Power vs Authority vs Domination:** power = raw ability to compel; domination = habitual/stable power; authority = legitimate power (Weber).
- **"Dominant castes" = M.N. Srinivas's term** for landowning **intermediate** castes — NOT the highest ritual castes.
- **Village/town/city:** distinction is **density + agriculture share**, NOT size alone; town vs city is essentially administrative.
- **Gentrification ≠ Ghettoisation:** gentrification = class upgrade; ghettoisation = community concentration.
- **MGNREGA = 2005**, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA — full form often tested.

- **State's monopoly on violence** is over **legitimate** violence — self-defence is an exception.
- **Indian Railways from 1853** — date often tested.
- **Tsunami of 2004** hit Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Andaman Islands, parts of Tamil Nadu — NOT all of India.
- **C. Wright Mills vs J.S. Mill vs Max Weber**: Mills (American sociologist) — sociological imagination (mentioned in kesy201); Mill — competition (kesy201); Weber — authority, legitimation, Protestant Ethic (this chapter).
- **2011 urban share** = 37.7% (not 28% — that is 2001).
- **Universal adult franchise** is the "single biggest political change in history" — NOT industrial revolution or any single technology.
- **"Crime" definition**: strictly the violation of an existing law — moral worth of the act is irrelevant to the legal definition.

## 2.5 Thinkers & theories

Name	Concept	Key Idea	NCERT page
Anthony Giddens	Definition of social change	Changes that alter the underlying structure of an object/situation, both intensive and extensive.	22
Anthony Giddens	Clock of Human History	Imagining all human time as one day — agriculture at 11:56, modern societies at 11:59:30.	21
Charles Darwin	Evolutionary/Social Darwinism	"Survival of the fittest" extended as a social theory of adaptive change.	22
Max Weber	Power, authority, legitimation	Power is raw ability; authority is legitimate power; legitimation is the acceptance of power as just.	33–34
Max Weber	Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism	Protestant religious beliefs helped establish capitalism — cultural causation of economic change.	30
Karl Marx (background)	Structure + agency	Stratified societies see dominant groups resist change; subordinated groups demand it.	33
M.N. Srinivas	Dominant castes	Intermediate landowning castes that gained land + numbers + political power post-Independence.	39, 47
Mahatma Gandhi	Civil disobedience	Salt satyagraha at Dandi — deliberate crime on moral grounds, illustrating law-vs-justice contrast.	36

Name	Concept	Key Idea	NCERT page
French Revolution (1789-93)	Revolutionary change	Sudden overthrow of monarchical-aristocratic order.	23
Russian Revolution (1917)	Revolutionary change	Overthrow of Tsarist regime; classic political revolution.	23
Industrial Revolution	Tech-economic change	Steam power, railway, factory system — most famous tech-driven social change.	27
WWII / US-Japan	Political change via warfare	US occupation brought land reform to Japan; Japan reversed dominance via industry.	28–29
Universal Adult Franchise	"Single biggest political change in history"	"One person, one vote" forces governments to seek popular legitimacy.	29
Bhakti Movement / Buddhism	Cultural-religious change	Religion reshaping caste and social life in India.	30
MGNREGA (2005)	Large-scale rural development	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act — major rural change driver.	40

## Practice MCQs

## PYQ Alignment

This chapter is a high-yield CUET source: questions appear almost every year, especially on definitions (social change vs evolutionary vs revolutionary), Weber's power/authority/legitimation triad, M.N. Srinivas's "dominant castes", MGNREGA-2005, Census urbanisation numbers, and urban concepts (gated communities, gentrification, ghettoisation, urban agglomeration). Expect 1–2 statement-based and 1 assertion-reason MCQ in addition to direct factual recall.