Division of Labour

- Durkheim's "Theory of Division of Labour" is often regarded as his major contribution to the field of sociological thought.
- Durkheim's doctoral thesis, "Division of Labour in Society" – 1893
- The theme of this book is the relationship between individuals and society or the collectivity.
- It is indeed a classic study of social solidarity. In this book he reacted against the view that modern industrial society could be based simply upon agreement between individuals motivated by self-interest and without any prior consensus.
- He agreed that the kind of consensus in modern society was different from that in simpler social systems. But he saw both of these as two types of social solidarity.

- In his famous work "The Division of Labour in Society" Durkheim tried to determine the social consequences of the division of labour in modern societies.

- A major theme in all Durkheim's writings is the importance of shared social norms and values in maintaining social cohesion and solidarity.

- He argued that the nature of this social solidarity depends on the extent of the division of labour.

Meaning of Division of Labour:

- The concept of "Division of Labour" has been used in three ways:
- (i) in the sense of the technical division of labour, it describes the production process;
- ii) as the sexual division of labour, it describes social divisions between men and women;
- (iii) as the social division of labour, it refers to differentiation in society as a whole. [It is in the third sense that Durkheim uses this term.]
- In a general sense, the term division of labour involves the assignment to each unit or group a specific share of a common task.

Two Main Types of Social Solidarity:

- As it is made clear that the main theme of the book "Division of Labour in Society" by Durkheim is the relationship between the individual and society.

- The nature of this relationship could be stated in the form of two questions:

- **(i) How can a large number of individuals make up a society-?**

- **(ii) How can these individuals achieve 'consensus' which is the basic condition of social existence?**

- **In his attempts to answer these vital questions Durkheim drew up a distinction between two forms of solidarity namely:**

- **(i) mechanical solidarity and (ii) organic solidarity**

- **These two types of solidarity were found in the traditional tribal societies and in the modern complex urban societies.**

The Link between Division of Labour and Social Solidarity Meaning of the Concept of Solidarity:

- "Social solidarity" is synonymous with social cohesion or social integration.

- ii. Social solidarity refers to "the integration and degree or type of integration, manifest by a society or group.

- iii. Social solidarity refers to "the condition within a group in which there is social cohesion plus co-operative, collective action directed towards the achievement of group goals

- The basis of social solidarity is different in simple societies and complex societies. Durkheim made comparisons between the primitive and the civilised societies in terms of his concept of solidarity.

- According to him, the primitive society is characterised by "mechanical solidarity" based on the "conscience collective"; and the advanced society is characterised by "organic solidarity" based on the "division of labour."

1. Mechanical Solidarity:

- Mechanical solidarity refers to "social solidarity based upon homogeneity of values and behaviour, strong social constraint, and loyalty to tradition and kinship.

- The term applied to small, non-literate societies characterised by a simple division of labour, very little specialisation of function, only a few social roles and very little tolerance of individuality.

- **Mechanical solidarity is solidarity of resemblance.**

- It is rooted in the similarity of the individual members of a society. In the society where this kind of solidarity prevails individuals do not differ from one another much.

- They are the members of the same collectivity and resemble one another because "they feel the same emotions, cherish the same values, and hold the same things sacred.

- The society is coherent because the individuals are not yet differentiated." Here we find the strong states of the "Collective Conscience."

- Collective conscience refers "to the sum total of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of the society."

- This prevails mostly in primitive societies. The common conscience completely covers individual mentality and morality.

- "Here social constraint is expressed most decisively in repressive, severe criminal law which serves to maintain mechanical solidarity."

. Organic Solidarity:

- **Organic solidarity refers to "a type of societal solidarity typical of modern industrial society, in which unity is based on the interdependence of a very large number of highly specialised roles in a system involving a complex division of labour that requires the co-operation of almost all the groups and individuals of the society**.

- This type of solidarity is called organic because it is similar to the unity of a biological organism in which highly specialised parts or organs, must work in coordination if the organism is to survive"^

- Organic solidarity is almost the opposite of mechanical solidarity.

- According to Durkheim, increasing density of population is the major key to the development of division of labour.

- Organic solidarity emerges with the growth of the division of labour. This especially is witnessed in the modern industrial societies.

- Division of labour and the consequent dissimilarities among men bring about increasing interdependence in society.
- The interdependence is reflected in human mentality and morality and in the fact of organic solidarity itself. In organic solidarity, consensus results from differentiation itself.
- The individuals are no longer similar, but different. It is precisely because the individuals are different that consensus is achieved.
- With the increase in division of labour the collective conscience lessens.
- Thus, criminal law tends to be replaced by civil and administrative law.
- Here the stress is on restitution of rights rather than on punishment
- **RESTITUTIVE LAW**
- An increase in organic solidarity would represent moral progress stressing the higher values of equality, liberty, fraternity, and justice. Even here, the social constraints in the form of contracts and laws continue to play a major role.

Durkheim

Mechanical Solidarity

- Primitive society
- Based on resemblance
- Minimal division of labor based on sex and age
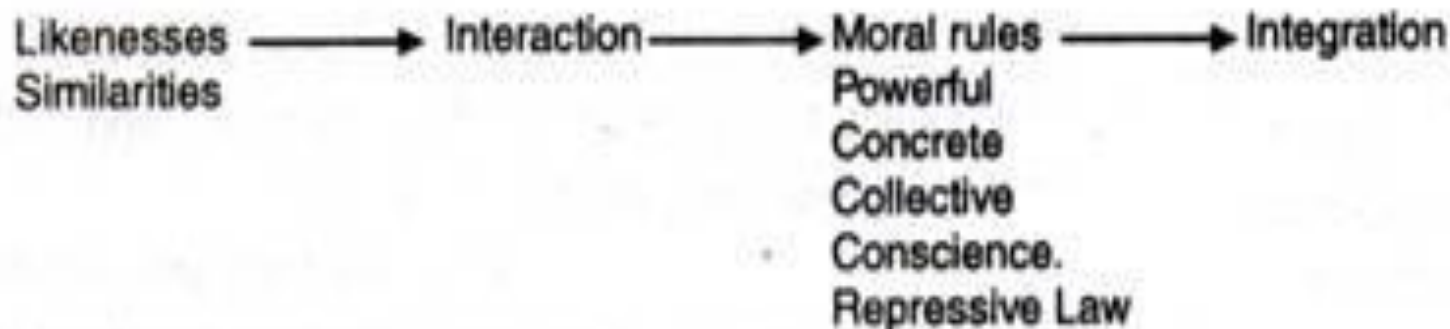- Little interdependence between social units

Organic Solidarity

- Modern society
- Protect by dividing
- Based on division of labor
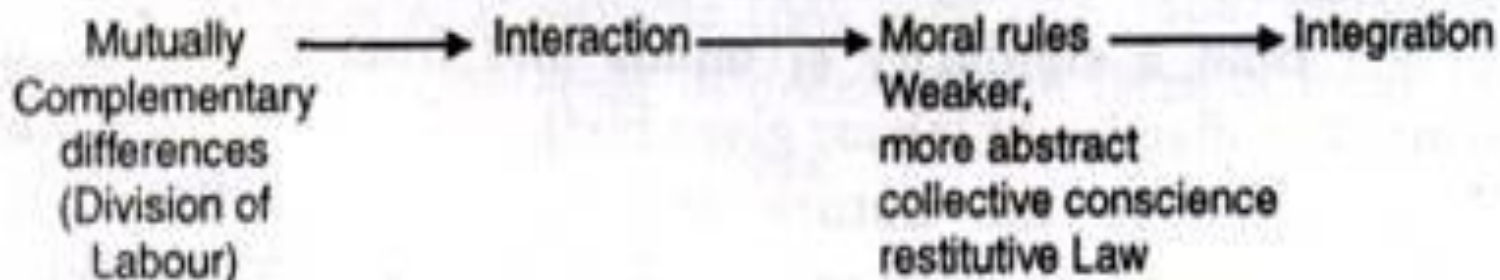- Interdependence between social units
- Consensus

Division of Labour and Anomie:

- Division of labour, though an essential element of society can do great harm to the society if carried to the extreme. Durkheim was quite aware of this and hence had cautioned against the adverse consequences of unregulated division of labour. "Anomie" is one such adverse consequence. In fact, Durkheim was the first to use this concept.

- The Greek term "Anomie" literally means "without norms " or "normlessness." "Anomie" is the outcome of clash in one's own values and those of the society and one is not clear in what way to go, how to behave and how to come upto the expectations of the society and also how to mould the environment to suit his expectations.

- "Anomie is the strict counterpart of the idea of social solidarity. Just as solidarity is a state of collective ideological integration, anomie is a state of confusion, insecurity, normlessness. The collective representations are in a state of decay.

Mechanical Solidarity

Likenesses Similarities ⟶ Interaction ⟶ Moral rules Powerful Concrete Collective Conscience. Repressive Law ⟶ Integration

Organic Solidarity

Mutually Complementary differences (Division of Labour) ⟶ Interaction ⟶ Moral rules Weaker, more abstract collective conscience restitutive Law ⟶ Integration

Social solidarity

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                    Social solidarity
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          |                               |
     Mechanical                        Organic
     Solidarity                        solidarity
          |                               |
     Repressive Law                   Restitutive Law
          |                               |
(Involves violent sactions and aims   (Involves a jugement in terms of
to punish ordestray the rule violator) damages done by the rule violator
                                      and a fine that "restores" the loss of
                                      the innocent victims)
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