

## **Dynamics of Macro-Sociological Theories: A Critical Reflection in Indian Context.**

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**Abstract:** *The structural-functional and conflict theories have been the most dominating macro-sociological theories since the conception of the subject "Sociology" in the western world. Addition to their intellectual par excellence the emergence of neo-functionalism and critical theory has been exceptional in the academic world. Now all four macro-sociological theories epitomise a store house of knowledge by which the sociologists can comprehend the social reality more easily, appropriately and objectively than before. However, coming of neo-functionalism and critical theory has reshaped the inherent limitations built in the structural-functional and conflict perspectives in sociology. In fact, the protagonists of each theory in sociology have processed and promoted the macro-sociology differently suspecting and criticizing to one another. However, actualising the sociological imagination, investigation, application and evaluation (IIAE) gone through these macro theoretical perspectives has been a daunting task for the sociologists in particular and other social scientists in general. Unfortunately, the sociologists have largely neglected the latter two dimensions emphasising the former two. As a result, the twin objectives of sociology such as endeavouring positivism and promoting social activism have been largely detached, and rather, the former has displaced the latter making sociology as if an one-dimensional objective science. Our study reveals that without analysing the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) of the sociological theories we cannot capture the predicament and prospects of the macro-theories in sociology. We have also given a critical reflection to it in the context of Indian sociology. In this article, we have developed a creative cross-Figure Format using IIAE analysis and SWOT analysis of macro-sociological theories in detail.*

**Key Words:** *Macro Sociological Imagination, Structural Functionalism, Neo-Functionalism, Conflict Theory, Critical Theory*

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### **I. Introduction**

Human beings are social beings because they cannot help having their sociality and sociability living in the societies. Further, their social characters go beyond their biological and spiritual beings. Addressing such dynamics the macro-sociological theories go deep into societal contents and contexts beyond philosophical connotation and theological speculation prevailing over the times. For such academic insights the contribution of the macro-theories likes structural-functionalism, conflict perspective, neo-functionalism and critical theorem is few and far between (see, Garada, 2013; Turner, 2013; Ritzer, 1996; Singhi, 1996; Nadel, 1957). For instance, the basic terms and concepts such as structure, function, social systems, equilibrium, etc, conceived in structural-functional perspectives continue to be unique intellectual resources in comprehending the social phenomena worldwide. Parsons' action frame of reference, functional prerequisites of AGIL (adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency), pattern variables and Merton's paradigms of function, manifest function, dysfunctions, latent function and equilibrium help formulating the structural functional perspective in sociology (see, Garada, 2015; Turner, 2013; Allan, 2013; Garada, 2013; Nisbet and Bottomore 2004; Ritzer & Smart, 2001 and Turner, 1999; Haralumbus, 1980; Parsons, 1937). However, the knowledge and understanding of the social phenomena through these perspectives could not be realised effectively so far. It is really because the functionalists fail to describe what the appropriate definitions of these terms are, and why society needs to change in the context. On the other hand the conflict theories with its basic terms like materialism, dialecticalism, class, power, economic exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, economic oppression, etc help developing their perspectives for the knowledge and objective comprehension of social phenomena. However, it fails to develop the adequate concepts and terms appropriate alternatives to structural functional terms and concepts. To their divergence, sociologists assume that how society is possible- the answer is social equilibrium among the societal parts for structural functional theorists whereas it is contradiction and conflict between them for the conflict theorists. The later is contrasting the values what the former emphasize for the possibility of society (ibid). However, these two theories provide the ontological, epistemological and methodological resources for human' prospect and predicaments of living in the society. The ontological questions of what is reality that is society which brings social cohesion, social order and social solidarity and continuity without much radical disruption for the functionalists whilst it is a fact comparing conflicting groups

and their changing social patterns for the conflict theorists in sociology. The structural-functionalists explain how the function- positive consequences contrary to the dysfunction- the negative consequences bring about social order in any society. They explain how the function contrary to the dysfunction brings about social stability and order through repeated structural patterns of social behaviours. But to conflict theorists because of the repetition of structural patterns there will be dysfunctional consequences for some groups who are exploited thereby in the process of functional consequences. Therefore, the conflict and change are there as internal dynamics in society as per the conflict theorists. Nevertheless, it tries to reconstruct the society through an appropriate political integration for a vision of classless society. Further, it helps us not just to unravel the knowledge of society but in addition how structural inequality, exploitation and oppression will be dealt with revolutionary strategy for a better society to live in. However, it suspects the procedure of consensus and the equilibrium of interdependent parts which is essential goal of macro-functional sociology since its conceptualisation in the western world. In fact, the protagonists of structural-functional theory and conflict theory in sociology have processed and promoted the macro-sociology differently suspecting and criticizing to one another. However, coming of neo-functionalism and critical theory has reshaped the inherent limitations built in the structural-functional theory and conflict theory in sociology respectively. The contributions of the neo-functionalists like J. C. Alexander, Luhmann, and P.Colomy and of the critical theorists like T.Adorno, M.Horkheimer, H.Marcuse, E.Fromm and J. Habermass are quite phenomenal in this regard (ibid). Reasoning their essence the sociologists belief that addition to structural-functional and conflict theories the neo-functional and critical theories have been exceptional in the academic world. With pragmatic resurrection of the macro-sociological theories through these newcomers for knowing knowledge and studying the social realities have been significant. And with these new theoretical insights the sociologists now feel more judicious, more practical and more objective to understand the world than before. Thus, no doubt the insights of sociological imagination and investigation are acknowledged worldwide but its application and evaluation have not been up to the mark. Unfortunately, the sociologists have largely neglected the application and evaluation of macro-sociological theories emphasising their imagination and investigation. The former dimensions have made and proved the sociology as objective science like economy, psychology, anthropology and host of other social sciences. But neglecting the latter dimensions the macro sociologists have grossly sidelined the prospect of social activism in the making of sociology worldwide. In fact, the twin objectives of the subject sociology were positivism and social activism in the beginning. The bi-dimensional prospect of sociology was got reduced into unidimensional making the sociology an impractical subject. It largely happened due to dominating character of macro-sociological theories whose ontology, epistemology and methodology have been objective and positivistic in nature over the centuries. In this backdrop, we have modestly attempted to analyse the dimensions such as imagination, investigation, application and evaluation (IIAE) as well as their strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) persisting in the macro-sociological theories for a better prospect of sociology. In this article, we have developed a creative cross-Figure Format using IIAE and SWOT analysis of macro-theories in detail. Our overall objectives include comparing and contrasting macro-sociological theories and assessing their strength through the IIAE and SWOT analysis. We have also given a critical reflection to it in the context of Indian sociology. The analysis is largely based on our critical overviews of major macro sociological theories which have been dominating the discourses of sociology since long.

## **II. Structural Functionalism: IIAE and SWOT Analysis**

The Figure-1 reveals that sociological imagination, investigation, application and evaluation of structural-functional theorising generate the dynamics of disciplinary strength and opportunity as well as weakness and threat to sociology. The sociological imagination has been deconstructed in some general sociological realms such as seeing the general in the particular, seeing the strange in the familiar, seeing the society within our everyday lives and seeing sociologically marginality and crisis (see, Berger, 2008; Macionis,2006). This deconstruction enriches the macro logic and analogy that are inbuilt in structural-functionalism. Such functional analogy was greatly reflected in the field studies undertaken by the social anthropologists who developed unique structural –functional theories applying their in-depth studies. In this context, the research conducted by Durkheim, Brown and Malinowski are par excellence. In fact, the social pattern over individual motivation is primary but not vice versa. But seeing general specifically professed by this perspectives suffer legitimatisation crisis perpetuating general pattern of stratification, power and domination (see, Garada, 2015; Garada, 2013, Macionis, 2006; Giddens, 1975; Mills, 1959). Similarly just in case of seeing the strange in the familiar as for instance, one marries another who is not otherwise unfit although may be with strange reasons but socially acceptable. Thus, even our personal choice is socially affected in the circumstances of marriage. In case there is seeing society within our everyday lives as how we ought to behave in the context of society that shapes our personal choice although not vice versa. In case of sociological imagination of seeing sociologically marginality and crisis the macro theoretical arguments complement the conception of structure and function.

**Figure 1: IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Structural Functionalism**

Sl. No.	IIAE Analysis	SWOT Analysis			
		Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1	Imagination	Holistic Analogy	Status Quo Tendency	Self Regulating System	Foundationalism
2	Investigation	Objective	Logical Positivism Over Empirical Positivism	Macro- Approach	Grand Narrative
3	Application	Village Studies	Stereotypes Understanding	In-Depth Study	Over Generalization
4	Evaluation	Objective Epistemology	Eurocentric Knowledge	Objective Ontology	Non-Ethical

**Source: Our Own**

However, these realms of sociological imaginations largely revolve around the teleology and tautology of system regulatory mechanism where there is no exception and choice for individual action (see, Garada, 2013, Turner, 1999). The blind assertion of illegitimate teleology as end justifies the means without corresponding to the particular needs of the society perpetuates the status quo and domination of elitism (ibid). What a socially assumed legitimate teleology to be empirically and theoretically fit may not be fixed for a harmonious relationship between means and ends of society. Similarly, the circular reasoning of tautology as parts are defined in relation to the whole and whole is defined in relation to the parts- the parts-whole relationships is so far and so good if there is legitimate link otherwise the so called whole get imposed its load over parts and parts remain only passive receiver of former’s perpetual domination (see, Garada, 2013; Ritzer, 1996). The format also reveals that this perspective visualises the society as something comprising harmonic parts using its self regulating mechanism as stated earlier. Thus, its strength as its holistic analogy and self regulating system remain intact for the prospect of sociological imagination. In fact, notion of globalisation and ecology has been rejuvenated in this perspective. But the detainment of status quoism and foundationalism in this perspective promote weakness and threat as well. Although the regional and historical particulars and even our respective individual thinking is perceived in a more substantial societal context but that may not be true always in the our real life situation. The stereotype concepts and over generalised assumptions in regards to the society promoted by the functional theory therefore, have been redundant in these days (Garada, 2013). Even, its positivistic projection is not free from criticism.

The Figure-1 clears that the scientific study of society has been greatly heralded by the functionalists by whom the sociology probably remains as a scientific discipline in the world otherwise it would have been a common sense subject (see, Turner, 2013; Garada, 2013, Merton, 1949; Parsons; 1937). However, the over imposition of positivism and grand narratives of foundationalism spoils the beauty of the twin objectives of scientific study in addition to progressive activism in early functionalism as discussed earlier. The Figure-1 reveals this perspective giving more focus on objective investigation with particular research design; tools and technique neglect the prospects of interpretivism in the sociological analysis. Thus this perspective prioritising logical positivism over empirical positivism and grand narratives over micro reality perpetuates its weakness and threat respectively in the sociology. The Figure-1 also reveals that although the structural functional theory energises its objective epistemological strength however its dependency remains rooted in the Eurocentric knowledge that cannot be challenged and unavoidable in international level. Thus, it has been proved non-ethical and ethnocentric in actual practice. Further, it is also visualised that the structural functionalism with positivism but unlike of empiricism remains pro-theoretical, teleological and tautological in practice. The positivistic investigation and anthropological way of field studies are largely proved to be the one way self systemic evaluation which is inherent weakness of structural functional methods.

### **III. IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Neo-Functionalism**

The structural functional perspectives by neglecting the forces of history, change and conflicts usually tend to neglect other important social issues and areas including that of gender, structural inequalities, etc in the society (see, Turner, 2013; Garada, 2013; Ritzer, 1996; Gouldner, 1970 and 1976; Mills, 1959). Rather, it perpetuates status quoism and elitism as stated earlier (Garada,2013; Doshi,2003). Since the structural functionalists prioritise the structure over agency, system over parts, order over action, consensus over conflicts and idealism over realism this perspective has been reduced into a conservative ideology. But the neo-functionalists liberalises the over imposing tendency and conservative ideology. In this connection, N.Luhmann argues that there is inherent trouble with the idea of value consensus justified in the Parsonsian functionalism where structure provides limited options to the existence of individualism. Therefore, he argues for the individuals’ movement out of the rigid social systems into a more complex and less restrictive society- societal environment where individual can have more freedom imbibing good social relationships and social behaviours without much problems (see, Turner, 2013; Allan, 2013; Garada, 2013; Luhmann, 1984).

**Figure2: IIAE Analysis and SWOT Analysis of Neo-Functionalism**

Sl.No.	IIAE Analysis	SWOT Analysis			
		Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1	Imagination	Reconstruction Tendency	Revivalism	New theoretical logic	Parsonianism
2	Investigation	Post-Positivism	Methodological Dualism	Theoretical and Empirical Approach	Continuity with Positivism
3	Application	Study of Civil Society	Yet to be co comfortably applied everywhere	Theoretical Inclusiveness	Spoils The Theoretical Distinctiveness of Functionalism
4	Evaluation	Multi-dimensionalism	No substantive Epistemological ground	connection between action and order	The questions of Ethic yet to be proved

**Source: Our Own**

J.Alexander in America develops similar reaction on Parsons's structural-functionalism by rejecting the narrow and monocausal determinism as how Parsons's cultural system determines other personality and social systems mono-causally. Indeed he extends it to an open-ended and pluralistic theory in sociology. It develops descriptive model of society in which the parts are symbolically connected not determined by over arching force of the core (see, Turner, 2013; Ritzer, 1996). Thus, no doubt liberalising initiatives of neo-functionalists generate a promising future for sociology but to what extent they could eradicate the inherent structural inequality, exploitation and oppression perpetuated by structural functionalism is unresolved query. In this connection the great neo-functionalists like Jeffrey Alexander and Paul Colomy have attempted to revive and reconstruct the core value of structural functionalism (see,Turner, 2013; Garada, 2013; Doshi, 2003; Alexander, 1998). Therefore, for instance, in the context of India, Garada (2013) argues that beyond structural functionalism there has been a critical heart searching for the people like dalit, tribe and women who have been oppressed, depressed and exploited remaining in the mercy of collectivism- the core of structural-functional perspective in Indian society. The possibility of macro and micro approaches and of post-positivism is greatly signified in the Alexander's theory of neo-functionalism. However, it is neither having any epistemological background nor substantive ontological grounds. Thus, the questions of ethics in neo-functionalism are yet to proved. Now it is worthwhile to see the not only how distinct is the neo-functionalism but in addition what it continues from the structural functionalism. In the Figure-2 we could visualise that sociological imagination, investigation, application and evaluation of the neo-functional theorising in sociology generate the strength and opportunity as well as weakness and threat in sociology. Jeffrey C. Alexander (1982&1998) revived the functionalism with a reconstructive mission and vision in neo- functionalism. The reconstruction and synthetic dimensions of neo-functionalism have greatly reorganised the American structural functionalism at present. However, its revival tendency of structural functionalism perpetuates the same thing but differently like old wine in new bottle (Garada, 2013; Doshi, 2003). In a procedure of neo-functionalism he argued that sociological theory and research should be reconstructed with multi-dimensional lines (Ritzier, 2004). However, without application of neo-functionalism or not enough study of its kind has been proved highly abstract generalisation in sociology. Further, in term of its application and evaluation it can be extended to the study of civil society and multi-dimensional social facts including integration of action and order there in.

However, the extension of stereotypes conceptualization and methodological dualism in neo-functionalism reveal a pessimistic tendency in this regard. Therefore, to what extent the neo-functionalism overcomes this above substantive limitation of structural functionalism is a perspective question. Thus, turning the structural functionalism into a fruitful or ambitious theoretical perspective was difficult task in sociology. Further, to what extend structural functionalism gets shifted in this direction is just a matter of scrutiny. In fact, Parsons's understanding of cultural system, social system and personality system in his early theoretical work on social action reflects their integration as an integrated whole to which the neo-functionalists acknowledge for the reorganisation of structural functionalism. But in the later part of Parsons' life when he became more deterministic as he assigned the cultural system that determines other systems was criticised by the neo-functionalists. And instead, they attempted hard to replace it with the earlier synthetic core. This is actually not just a new theory but a theoretical tendency as Alexander himself acknowledges it openly. Thus, simply riving the core invites criticism as old wine in new bottle (see, Garada, 2013; Colomy.2008; Doshi, 2003).

**IV. IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Conflict Theorizing**

Like functionalists Marxists also ask how social order is possible but unlike formers the latter argue that commonly held value and beliefs are there in the interest of elites. The value consensus of functional theory is rejected by the Marxists since it produces inequality, domination and oppression. Thus, to them social order is possible not because of social equilibrium/ value consensus but because of the result of constraints and conflict. The European critique blames the functionalists as conservative, no-changer and status quoists (Turner, 2013, Allan, 2013; Doshi, 2003). They challenge the intellectual hegemony of functionalism not because the latter is pre-occupied with positivism but because it largely failed to explain the inequality, exploitation, conflict and

change that occurred in the European society in the past. It is also true that conflict theory could not abolish the hegemony of functional theorizing in the Europe. Thus, the contrast between functional theory and conflict theory is not simply a contrast between consensus and conflict theorizing but also a clear contradiction of over imposed integration theory versus over imposed conflict theory. In conflict theorizing the sociological imagination- seeing the general in the particular, seeing the strange in the familiar, seeing society in our everyday lives and seeing sociologically marginality and crisis explains the sociology as if functionalism and functionalism as if sociology.

**Figure3: IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Conflict Theorizing**

SLNo.	IIAE Analysis	SWOT Analysis			
		Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1	Imagination	Processual Understanding	Political Tendency	Dialectical Thinking	Reductionism
2	Investigation	Positivism	Logical Positivism over Empirical Positivism	Historical and Dialectical Materialism	Grand Narrative
3	Application	Class Conflict	Stereotypes Understanding	Possibility of Socialism / Communism	Revolutionary Conflict
4	Evaluation	Political Economy	Eurocentric Knowledge	Protest/Movements against Authoritarian Regimes	Non-Ethical

**Source: Our Own**

Of course, Marxism also aims at collectivism but it believes that the societal structure in the name of collectivism perpetuates inequality and exploitation. The conflict theorizing brings forth the active and processual understanding of social realities against static frame work of thinking and project dialectical thinking against closed mind. Thus, the active understanding of social realities with dialectical mind sets explains its strength and opportunity in the development of sociology. The political economy and economic reductionism becomes its weakness and threat to the prospect of sociological theorizing. The Figure-3 reflects the Marxists' methods of positivism and historical and dialectical materialism as strength and opportunity in strengthening the sociological investigation. The narratives of Marxian philosophy and lack of empirical positivism in conflict theorizing remain as both threat and weakness in the sociological investigation. However, comparison to functional theorizing it has been better applied to enriching the sociological imagination and social activism- the possibility of socialism and communism. But its emphasis on Marxian stereotype concepts and revolutionary conflict has been the weakness as well as the threat in the process of sociological application. In case of sociological evaluation it has outstanding contribution such as political economy and protest/movements in the society. Unlike functional and conflict theorists who explain how society operates and how social order is possible, the critical theorists uncover the ways of social oppression the society perpetuates over the time. The critical thought germinated by some radical intellectuals (T.Adorno, M.Horkheimer, H.Marcuse, E.Fromm and J. Habermass) financed by Felix Weil in the Institute of Social Research called Frankfort school in the 1920s at University of Frankfort in Germany. The purpose was to take the Marxist perspective beyond middle-class academia and communist party (Allan, 2013; Turner, 2013).

### V. IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Critical Theorizing

Like Marx the critical theorists tried a critical evaluation of capitalism and state but unlike Marx they re-introduced Hegel's concern with ideas and culture. Along with economy they incorporate culture, knowledge for the comprehension of capitalistic society. Though they explore the limitation of Marxism but could not achieve alternative projects of human emancipation and liberation from the clutches of exploitative capitalism. Further they hardly extend the Marxism beyond Marxists, feminist intellectuals and their political allies. The critical theorists had two purposes one- explain why the socialistic revolution could not occur and two- to reconstruct the logic and methods of Marxism to be relevant in the twentieth century capitalism. The Marxism could not trigger the strategy of class revolution in Europe because, the critical theorists explains – other responsible factors- economic, culture and ideology as visualised by the Hungarian Marxists- Lukacs. The late capitalism has survived because it is rational and inevitable for economic growth. Thus, the commodity fetishism explained by Marx and reification explained by Lukacs cannot sustain the false class consciousness. It rather uses them because of its survival. The ideology of consumerism and mass culture could not promote class polarization. In reality, the positivism as new form of ideology supported the explanation for modern capitalism. According to Adorno and Horkhimer the new ideology of positivism in modern capitalism are not new but it is backed to the ideology of Enlightenment of the Europe (see, Allan 2013; Connerton, 1976; Horkheimer, 1974; Adorno and Horkheimer, 1932).The critical theorist argues that there has been no change nonetheless it continues the structures of objectivity, cause and effect analysis and status quoits. It generally does not allow reviewing other fact such as for instance gender, race, etc. Marx was truly followed the epoch of enlightenment

by demystifying religion and mythology. The Marxists after Marx studied society following the axis of dialecticalism along with positivist materialism. Marxism fails because it did not link the causal positivistic knowledge with interpretative knowledge for the socialistic revolution. In order to reconstruct the limitation of Marxism Habermass argues that we have to shift from the paradigm of consciousness to the paradigm of communication although it is based on theoretical and empirical insights developed in traditional Marxism, and Parsonsian functionalism (Connerton, 1980; Agger, 1979).

**Figure-4: IIAE and SWOT Analysis of Critical Theorizing**

Sl.No.	IIAE Analysis	SWOT Analysis			
		Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
1	Imagination	reconstruct the logic and methods of Marxism	Political Tendency	Interdisciplinary insights	Radical criticism
2	Investigation	link the causal positivistic knowledge with interpretative knowledge	Anti-positivism	Hegelian Idealism, Weberian rationality & Freudian psychoanalysis	Meta Narrative
3	Application	Discursive/ argumentative tendency	Stereotypes understanding	Emancipating /liberative tendency	Pessimistic tendency regarding Revolutionary conflict
4	Evaluation	Critical Epistemology	Eurocentric knowledge	Critical Ontology	Lacks Marxian concept like Praxis

**Source: Our Own**

The European critical theorists could not provide an alternative paradigmatic resolution to the issues of reconstruction of Marxism in the Europe. In fact, the society did not expose too much of oppression and exploitation, and only after that exposition there would be human emancipation. In the dialectic of Enlightenment Horkheimer and Adorno argued that what enlightenment was supposed to offer - the freedom with use of reason, rationality and scientific methods as visualised by Marx could not provide rather perpetuate the human oppression in new incarnation. They view that the sociologists 'emphasis on positivism having based enlightenment spirit devalued the human questions of ethics, aesthetic, beauty, emotion and religious life. In reality, they argue enlightenment created a fresh sort of unfreedom because self actualisation is not possible. The technology has isolated the people say for example, technologies of travel; communication (phones and computers) and management (bureaucracy) as how make people like that. He technically manages time, space and relationship however, not humanly. The self help will be there however, not self-actualisation. The enlightenment as supposed to create light to our blindness as Marx analysis of false class consciousness is going to be scanned through it (ibid). But unfortunately, this was not happened. The critical theorists' tendency of reconstruction and interdisciplinary insights is the greatest contribution toward building the sociological imagination whereas its political tendency and radical criticism bring forth weakness and threat to the sociological imagination. Similarly in case of sociological investigation it links the causal positivistic knowledge with interpretative knowledge along with the ideas of Hegel, Weber and Freud. However its anti-positivistic stand and Meta narrative methods remain weakness and threat to sociological investigation. In sociological application its discursive/ argumentative tendency and Emancipating /liberative tendency have been the strength and opportunity in sociology. In case of sociological evaluation it has been critical epistemology and critical ontology as its strength and opportunity respectively. However, stereotypes understanding and Eurocentric knowledge and pessimistic tendency for revolutionary conflict and lack of praxis are the weakness and threat in case of sociological application and evaluation respectively.

## **VI. Macro-Sociological Theory: A Critical Reflection on Indian Sociology**

Structural-functional approach came to Indian sociology through anthropological traditions. But unlike purely ethnographic type its approach has been thoroughly changed. The anthropological study of tribal society was supposed to be a descriptive one. However, early functionalist in India like A.R. Brown who studied the tribal society greatly influenced by the positivistic approach of sociologist E.Durkheim. This probably made Brown to become a sociologist. The sociological concepts were used by the Brown for ethnological understanding of Andaman Islander in India during 1906-08 (see, Garada, 2103; Turner, 2013; Nagla, 2008; Eden,1990; Brown, 1952). Thus, using Durkheimian approach and ethnographic village study tradition Brown became very famous among the sociological and anthropological intellectuals at that time. Brown turned himself from his status ethnographer to sociologist following Durkheimian sociological methods whereas the Srinivas remains sociologist even having followed Brown's empirical ethnography (see, Nagla, 2008; Singh, 2004; Srinivas,1997; Cohn, 1997; Ritzer,1996; Singhi,1996). It was Srinivas who fused Brown's mind and ethnographic approach in his field study. Srinivas's theory is assumed to be highly qualitative as his sources of social data were regional folklore, fictions, etc and his methods of data collection were personal questionnaire and participant observations (see Garada, 2013; Lynch, 1977 and Singhi, 1996). R. Brown coming from outside

did not know the subjects he studied but Srinivas what studied he knew it before. Brown as foreigner did not have any presupposition about the Andaman Islanders but Srinivas was aware of the caste village in India. R. Brown inspired his student especially M.N. Srinivas to study the village differently (Garada, 2013). Srinivas's field study brought more sociological insights into the process of village study. Anthropological tradition of intensive village study with empirical approach developed by them, through sociological approach and anthropological field study traditions the concept "social anthropology" was evolved to inspire the sociologists to study the non-tribal communities in Indian society. M.N. Srinivas's monograph on caste village was that kind of study (see, Srinivas and Shah; 1960). Thus, the sociological imagination of seeing strange in familiar in case of Srinivas study is debatable. In fact, he was highly criticised that as a Brahmin, he argued for Brahminization as a change agent in his early explanation to explain the process of change among lower castes in Rampura village and as a south Indian, he was preoccupied with the ideas of purity and pollutions. Other two important sociological imagination – seeing general in particular and individual in general was also contested in Srinivas study. The social marginal- weak gender, lower class, poor, disabled people and emerging subaltern dalits are neglected in his studies. It is really strange that how gender, untouchable and religious minorities were not treated as functional units of his village study. Structural functional study was an inclusive study not exclusive one. Garada (2013) argued that therefore why functional inquiry on dalit, gender, tribe and caste did not go together? Caste is heterogeneous and pan Indian concept whereas tribe as homogenous but a unique concept. Thus, without undertaking diverse sample/survey studies from all India level we cannot generalise these concepts. This probably perpetuates the inherent weakness in Srinivas field study and its consequent unpopularity of this approach in Indian sociology. Though, the structural functionalists come out from the text to context and from book views to field views of Indian society, they are not free from their conservatism and status quoism. And remaining so, they cannot explain the tendencies of many conflicting and contradictory elements of Indian society. However, comparison to the application of social anthropology in India, Parsons' analytical functionalism and Merton's empirical functionalism are hardly visualised in the village studies conducted by Indian sociologists. Thus, the sociological imagination and investigation developed through the structural-functional perspective are largely resulted of social anthropology in practice. The functional concepts such as parochialization and universalization developed by R. Redfield and sanskritisation and dominant caste developed by M.N. Srinivas though exemplify the processual aspects of Indian social systems but are largely tilted toward core structure of Indian values (Upadhyaya and Pandey, 1993). In case of sanskritisation one can though achieve his high status by imitating other caste way of life but cannot get elevated into higher caste structure from his lower one. Thus, a dominant caste may dominate even higher caste but he cannot be equal with the latter in social hierarchy. To that extent it is worthwhile to mention that by the process of universalization, little tradition like that of tribal's may have been merged with that of great tradition over the time but it is not vice versa. As for instance, nowhere it is visible that the little tradition could parochialise the great tradition by which latter's identity has been missing. Further, of course the term sankritization not necessarily assumed to be brahminization as argued by Srinivas but hardly the sudraization or nowhere is it tolerated that the untouchable become as dominant caste (Garada, 2013). Even, the other cultural processes like modernization and westernization could hardly ever destroy the core –structural values of Indian society. Alexander's revivalism of functionalism, and in his thinking if we go back to our counter social and revival movements in India it could not radically change someone's status quo. Today's concerns are secularism, liberalism and democracy that are for the civil society as discussed by Alexander in neo-functionalism. The neo-functionalists' focus on such concern and social change in the processes of differentiation within systems - the social, cultural, and personality which are hardly being applied in Indian sociology so far. But such form of analogical understanding was visualized in Indian society differently. The difference is that what westerners thought today that has been happened in India much before but differently. And what India think today westerners thought much before differently. In this context, the thinkers those who consider Indian society on the basis of Varna model and divine origin of people are organic analogists. They in fact, are Indologists but indological functionalists. The gun-theory justified the Varna division of labour that is just functional division of labour in an even more rigid specialization. What Durkheim found the organic solidarity in the modern world emphasising the specialization in division of labour the indological functionalists found it as Varna division of order for occupational socialization in Indian ancient society. Vivekananda, Gandhi and Arjya Samajists therefore, think about the vitality of Varna paradigm. The organic origin of Varna /caste as God Brahma (Purushasukta theory) from whom's head, arm, thigh and leg the four social categories such as Brahmin, Kshetriya, Vashya and Sudra originated respectively. Thus, the religious ontology of Indological functionalism and civil ontology of sociological functionalism explain the relevance of organic analogy of Indian society at present. Thus, Durkheimian analysis of mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity might be comparable to that of divine solidarity in four Varna comes from four organs of Lord Brahma and organic solidarity of Gun karma origin of four Varna as explained by Samkhya school of Hinduism respectively (Sharma, 1994). However, since the functional divisions of Indian society on Varna model perpetuated inequality, domination, hierarchy and

oppression the Buddhism emerged as reactionary social movement against it in ancient India. Equality of all Varna or caste was the vision of Buddhism. Almost any structural inequalities were out rightly denied in Buddhism. The counter movements to this development such as *Shudhi (purification)* movement organised by Sankaracharyas, neo-Vedic movement promoted by Vivekananda, Dayananda, Saraswati and others were visualised in India (see, Koenraad, 2001; Heimsath, 1964).

### **VII. Conflict Theorizing on Indian Sociology: A Critical Reflection**

The after-effect of conflict theorizing on Indian sociology can be traced back to the writings of D.P. Mukherjee, A.R.Desai and R. K. Mukherjee which has been identified in UGC syllabus as Marxian perspectives. Besides them the social scientists namely Irfan Habib, D.D.Kosambi, P.C.Joshi, M.N.Dutta and R.S.Sharma followed the Marxian perspectives for their studies (see, Garada, 2013; Nagla, 2008; Madan, T. N. 1994; Dhanaghe, 1993). The Indian Marxian perspective compared to that of Western Marxism and conflict theory are found to be an alternative Marxian version. The very first Indian conflict theorists in sociology are broadly split into the orthodox Marxists and Marxologist. R. K. Mukherjee and A.R .Desai belong to the former category whereas D.P. Mukherjee belongs to the latter. The sociological imagination stemming from Indian Marxian perspective is historical materialistic interpretation (A.R. Desai) and dialectical materialism (R. K. Mukherjee and D.P. Mukherjee) (see Garada, 2013; Nagla, 2008; Madan, 1994; Dhanaghe, 1993; Mukharjee, 1958). The Marxists argue that historical knowledge of Indian society either suppress the material basis of history or treats it secondary to other non-material factors (Garada, 2013). Thus, a sociological imagination on Indian social reality is a confluence of historical interpretation, materialistic history and dialectical materialism. In India till today mythology is more crucial than the history, idealism is more valued than materialism and the philosophical dialecticalism is more visible than dialectical materialism in real life situation. Thus, the Marxian think tank has been became a huge failure in India. R. K. Mukherjee and D.P. Mukherjee nowhere mentioned that they are true disciples of Marx. However, somewhat their thinking is like that of critical theorists those who do not hesitate to criticise Marx even. The techniques of sociological investigation promoted in Indian Marxian perspective range from the empirical investigations, bibliographical and field research (A.R. Desai), Empiricist/ social critics (D.P. Mukherjee) and inductive inferential and diagnostic mode of investigation (R. K. Mukherjee). In case of application of Marxian tradition on Indian situation has been the studying of social movements (A.R. Desai), emerging dialectics of tradition (D.P. Mukherjee) with modernity and diagnostic research (R. K. Mukherjee). But except A.R. Desai, the Marxist methodology of D.P. Mukherjee and R. K. Mukherjee has been complicated. In the evaluation of sociological imagination, investigation and application promoted in Indian Marxists perspectives involves the conflicting situation that emerging between individuals those who are organising protest movements and the capitalists, the rural rich and their state apparatus (bureaucracy, media, police) those who make their nexus (A.R. Desai). The Marxologist, D.P. Mukherjee professes both conflict and its synthesis whereas the synthesis of Marxian theory, ideology and praxis get rezones in case of R. K. Mukherjee. Comparing to D.P. Mukherjee and R. K. Mukherjee A.R. Desai was true Marxist in his ideology and practice. For example, A.R .Desai's writing explains that Indian development as a capitalist path of development has been the fact since the pre Independence India (Desai, 1948). His historical materialistic interpretation of past, present and future exemplifies the relevance of Marxian analysis of Indian society. His analysis of past Indian nationalism against colonial British administration was purely predicated on Marxian interpretation. He argues so that it was not superstructure factors such as polity, caste, religions, language, etc nevertheless the economic factor responsible for emergence of Indian nationalism at that time. The factors like commercialisation of agriculture, deindustrialisation of small scale Indian industries, industrialization, urbanisation, modernization, capitalist path of development, political economy of exploitative trade, business, finance and industry, growth of colonial capitalism and Indian economic drains to the British government, and even the economic exploitation due to the zamindary system, money lending systems, etc are largely in a mess of polarising the Indians as anti-colonial administration at that time. Thus, it has been the inherent contradiction which developed in the growth of colonial capitalism that led to the liberation of Indians. After independence if India could develop then, it have had been as a result of capitalistic path of development. His studies on community development programmes, urban slums, peasant movements, village structure, state and society, etc remain as the best exemplary of historical-dialectical materialism. Besides, the Marxist theories the critical theory is not being visibly present in Indian sociology so far. The entire brahminic ritualism, status quoism and elitism were liberalized to some extent during neo-Vedanta movements. This is developed like some sort of neo-functionalism. Further many social reform movements raised many questions that critical sociologists argue today. The Mahabharata War fought between Kurabo and Pandava in Indian epic period where lord Krishna was revealing the gospel of Hindu religious text *Gita* was just conflict functionalism like Lewis A. Closer's analysis, Marxian knowledge of revolution for communism- "classless society" and Simmel's understanding that if you would like peace choose war can be like the thing that was told by Lord Krishna in Mahabharata. The descriptive and dialectical analogy as synthesizing analogy of functionalism-neo-



functionalism and conflict-critical theory are revealed in Indian society. But its temporal situation alike their counterpart- European was not happened.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

Thus, we can conclude that the IIAE dimensions of macro-sociological theories reflected through SWOT analysis explicate the advantage and disadvantage tendencies in sociology. The holistic analogy and self regulating system in structural-functionalism remain intact for the prospect of sociological imagination worldwide. In fact, the notion of globalisation and ecology has been proliferated and rejuvenated in this macro sociology. However, the blind assertion of illegitimate teleology as end justifies the means and the circular reasoning of tautology as parts are defined in relation to the whole and whole is defined in relation to the parts help imposing the load of whole over parts and parts remain only passive receiver of former's perpetual domination. Thus, the detainment of teleological and tautological logic, status quoism and foundationalism in functional perspective promote weakness as well as threat to sociology. The over imposition of positivism and grand narratives of foundationalism spoil the beauty of the twin objectives of scientific study in addition to progressive activism in sociology. In this context, no doubt liberalising initiatives of neo-functionalists generate a promising future for sociology but to what extent they could eradicate the inherent structural inequality, exploitation and oppression perpetuated by structural functionalism is unresolved query. In Indian sociology the sociological imagination and investigation are largely resulted of social anthropology in practice. The functional concepts such as sanskritisation and dominant caste developed by M.N.Srinivas and parochialization and universalization developed by R.Redfield though exemplify the processual aspects of Indian social systems but are largely tilted toward core structure of Indian values. Though, the structural functionalists come out from the text to context and from book views to field views of Indian society, they are not free from their conservatism and status quoism. As a result, they cannot explain the tendencies of many conflicting and contradictory elements of Indian society. Though the application of social anthropology in India is phenomenal but Parsons' analytical functionalism and Merton's empirical functionalism are hardly visualised in the village studies conducted by Indian sociologists. The western critique blames functionalists' the static analysis of social order as conservative, no-changer and status quoists. To conflict theorists the social order is possible not because of social equilibrium/ value consensus but because of the result of constraints and conflict. However, it is also true that conflict theory could not abolish the hegemony of functional theorizing in the western world. The narratives of Marxian philosophy and lack of empirical positivism in conflict theorizing remain as both threat and weakness in the sociological investigation. However, comparison to functional theorizing the conflict and critical theories has been better applied to enriching the sociological imagination and social activism- the possibility of socialism and communism worldwide. In case of sociological evaluation it has outstanding contribution such as political economy and protest/movements are activated largely following Marxism in the society. Addition to it the critical theorists' Reconstructionism and interdisciplinary insights are the greatest contribution toward building the sociological imagination whereas their political tendency and radicalism bring forth weakness and threat to the sociological imagination. In case of sociological investigation the critical theorists link the causal positivistic knowledge with interpretative understanding along with the ideas of Hegel, Weber and Freud. However, its anti-positivistic stand and Meta narrative methods remain weakness and threat to sociological investigation. The after-effect of conflict theorizing on Indian sociology can be traced back to the writings of D.P. Mukherjee, A.R.Desai and R. K. Mukherjee as Marxian perspectives. The sociological imagination on Indian social reality is a confluence of historical interpretation, materialistic history and dialectical materialism. The techniques of sociological investigation promoted in Indian Marxian perspective range from the empirical investigations, bibliographical and field research (A.R. Desai), Empiricist/ social critics (D.P. Mukherjee) and inductive inferential and diagnostic mode of investigation (R. K. Mukherjee). In case of application of Marxian tradition on Indian situation has been the studying of social movements (A.R. Desai), emerging dialectics of tradition (D.P. Mukherjee) with modernity and diagnostic research (R. K. Mukherjee). However, in Indian real life situation till today mythology is more crucial than the history, idealism is more valued than materialism and the philosophical dialecticalism is more visible than dialectical materialism. Thus, confronting such priomordialism any conflict or critical theorist, and for that matter the Marxian think-tank have been a big failure in the Indian context.

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