

## Paper I

### Unit VI – Work and Economic Life

#### Work in Post-Industrial Societies

##### Definition

According to *Blackwell Dictionary of Sociology*, A postindustrial society is a social system in which most economic activity is concerned with providing services based on knowledge (such as banking, legal work, and travel) more than with producing goods such as steel, radios, and automobiles.

According to *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, postindustrial societies are characterized by the following features:

- Economically, a move from a goods-producing to a service economy
- Occupationally, the decline of the manual working class and the rise of a professional, managerial, and technical class
- Culturally, the growing importance of universities and other research institutions as the source of innovation and growth in politics and decision-making,
- The creation of a new “intellectual technology” involving computer-simulations, game theory, scientific forecasting etc.

American Sociologist Daniel Bell was the initial proponent of the idea of the post-industrial society promoting the idea through his much cited work *The Coming of Post Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1973). Another influential thinker in this respect is famous French sociologist Alain Touraine (*The Post-Industrial Society: Towards Social History*, 1971).

On the basis of experiencing and analyzing the radical societal changes brought on by the 1960s, Bell argued that a radical transformation of economic and political structures was underway in societies like the United States.

It was argued by Bell and others that under post-industrialism, people’s primary involvement is with other people rather than with raw materials or machinery. As a consequence, this leads to a change in economic relations, with more resources devoted to working out human problems such as disputes between workers and management over the conditions, rewards, and organization of work.

He argued that the post-industrial society will be characterized by a major historical shift from manufacturing goods to the production of services. In this respect he talked about “an

intellectualization of technology, the rise of a scientific knowledge class, and a renewed communalism in politics”.

As per Bell’s understanding, the post-industrial society in its well-established form will mark the end of ideology.

Rather than a strong reliance on agrarian components or manufacturing, the post industrialist workforce places an emphasis on subjective well-being and quality-of-life.

### Work in Post-Industrial Societies

According to researchers, work in the post-industrial world has dramatically changed the face of the organized work structure. Some of the important points with respect to work in post-industrial societies are:

- It has been pointed out that paid work is increasingly dominating people’s lives and far from the rise in leisure (once predicted from the technological revolution) many people are now working longer and more intensively than ever.
- Questions such as whether it is possible to ‘succeed’ in occupational life without sacrificing personal life have acquired more significance. This suggests that in post-industrial societies people have been urged to ask critical questions vis-à-vis work and the rest of life.
- The blurring of the lines between work and leisure with the overwhelming presence global 24-hour marketplace. Boundaries between paid work and personal life are increasingly non-existent in the post-industrial world.
- One of the main characteristics of post-industrial work is home-based “teleworking.” Home-based “teleworking” further blurs the boundaries between work and non-work and is characterized by work’s intrusion into leisure time.
- In *Should We Worry About Family Change* (2003), Jane Lewis argues that many forms of post-industrial work, which dominate people’s lives, are becoming the new leisure. She described post industrial work as “what people choose to spend their time on and enjoy doing”.

In post-industrial societies, statistically speaking, while both genders are impacted by blurred work boundaries, women often feel bounded by family commitments and are less able to work long hours. Thus, the autonomy to use flexible working arrangements to prioritize work is gendered. So

in post-industrial society too, gender related issues between men and women continue to influence women's professional work lives.

While Bell and others, while talking about post-industrial societies, asserted that they suggest the arrival of a new principle of society, the driving forces of the postindustrial society appear to be similar to what we had in industrial society: capital accumulation, technical innovation, and rationalization.

