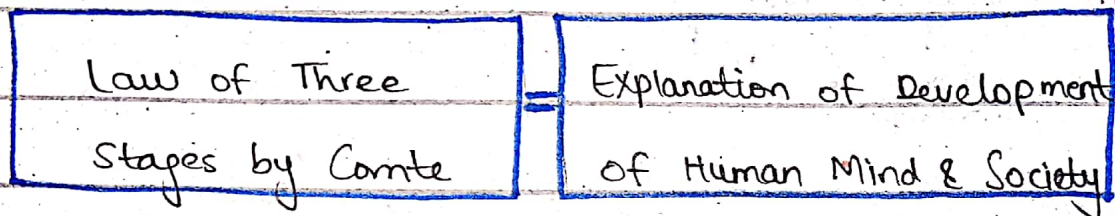


Q21. Auguste Comte gives three evolutionary dimensions of society; Theological, metaphysic and positivistic. Explain each step with cogent examples. (CSS-2019)

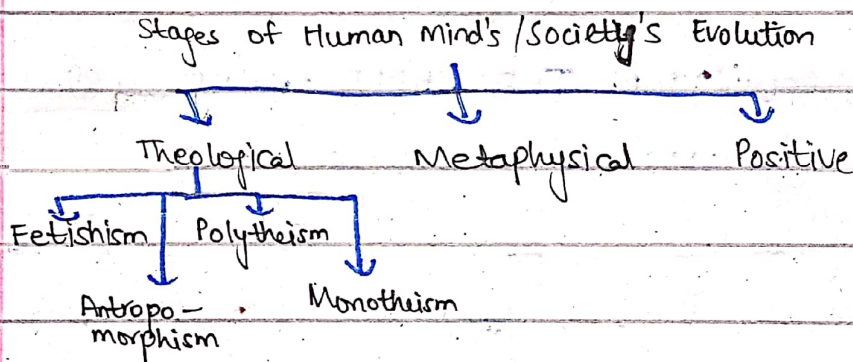
## I - INTRODUCTION: THE THREE EVOLUTIONARY DIMENSIONS OF SOCIETY BY AUGUSTE COMTE



Auguste Comte, the father of Sociology, was the first person to proclaim the law of Three stages. The law states that human thought as well as social progress pass through three important stages: theological, metaphysical and scientific. Each stage has a different source of explanation and understanding i.e. supernatural in the theological stage,

abstract forces in the metaphysical stage and science in the positive stage. According to Comte, the evolution of human mind goes hand in hand with a typical form of organization of society. Thus, the law of Three Stages not only talks about the progressive transformation of society but also explain the transformation in minds of the people.

## II - THE LAW OF THREE STAGES



### a) Auguste Comte

August Comte was a nineteenth century French philosopher. He is known as the founder of Sociology and Positivism.

#### i) Notable Work

August Comte gave 'Sociology' its name and laid its foundation. He also developed Positive Philosophy and the famous Law of Three Stages.

## ii) Famous Books

1. A General View of Positivism
2. System of Positive Polity
3. The Philosophy of Mathematics

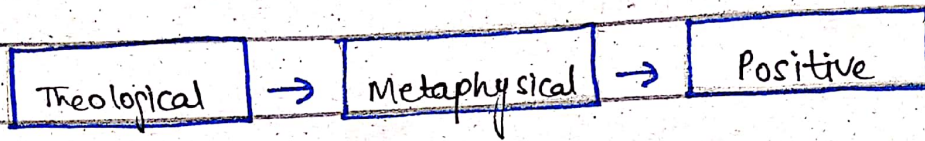
## b) The Theory of Human Progress/ The law of Three stages

Comte is best known for his law of human progress. This law states that there are three intellectual stages through which the world has gone throughout its history. These stages are:

1. Theological or Fictitious Stage
2. Metaphysical or Abstract stage
3. Positive or Scientific Stage

Comte also stated that a similar development takes place in case of human society. and as there has been an evolution in the human thinking so that each succeeding stage is superior to and more evolved than the preceding stage.

### III - THE THREE STAGES



#### a) The Theological / Fictitious Stage

In this first stage, the primitive men and children have no scientific outlook. Everything is explained and understood through the supernatural. The family is the prototypical social unit and political dominance is held by priests and military personnel. It has four sub-stages:

##### i) Fetishism

During this period, primitive people believed that there is a living spirit in the non-living objects (animism). Thus, people worshipped fetish objects like trees, stones, etc.

##### ii) Anthropomorphism

At this stage, man developed doubt about the existence of gods in all living organisms and began to clear his doubts.

##### iii) Polytheism

In this stage, primitive people believed that different Gods control different natural forces. Thus, there existed God of water,

God of fire, etc.

#### iv) Monotheism

Monotheism is believing in one God and it is the last and the most developed form of theological thinking.

Example:

1. Primitive people believed that excess or deficiency of rain is due to Godly wrath.
2. Early people believed that Malaria is caused due to bad air.

Comte's View: Comte disapproved this stage due to the absence of human reasoning and experience. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the theological conceptions as they were necessary in the beginning of the developing primitive mind.

#### b) Metaphysical / Abstract stage

Metaphysical stage is an extension of theological stage. In this stage, reason replaced imagination. Rationalism states that God does not stand directly behind every phenomenon. Under metaphysical thinking it is believed that an abstract power or

force guides and determines the events in the world. It discards belief in concrete God. Thus, abstract forces are assumed to be the source of explanation and understanding. The state replaces the family as the prototypical social unit, and the political dominance is held by the clergy and lawyers.

Example:

1. In this stage, people began to question that what is the reason behind excessive or no rain, even if they all perform good deeds.
2. In case of the spread of malaria due to bad air, people began to question in this stage that why people sleeping near fire do not get malaria.

Comte's View: Since it is a transitional stage, Comte deemed it the least important of the three stages and was only necessary because the human mind cannot make the jump from the theological to the positive stage on its own.

### C) Positive/Scientific stage

This stage is characterized by scientific knowledge and the dawn of 19<sup>th</sup>.

century marked its beginning. At this stage, human mind tried to establish the cause and effect relationship. It is the highest of the three stages, the laws of the universe are studied through observation, experimentation, and comparison. The whole human race replaces the state as the operative social unit, and the political dominance is held by industrial administrators and scientific moral guides.

Example:

1. In this stage, people found the reason behind excessive or no rain i.e. atmospheric conditions such as climate change, oceans, etc.
2. In the scientific stage, people found that malaria is caused by plasmodium parasite, which is spread through the bites of ~~fern~~ infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.

**Comte's View:** Comte stated that the idea of humanity's ability to govern itself makes this stage inherently different from the rest, and believed that this stage will fix the problems faced by humanity, allowing progression and peace.

#### IV- CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Comte is known as the founder of Sociology and is also best known for his law of human progress. This law states that human mind and societies evolve through three stages: theological, metaphysical and scientific. This law contributed greatly to the scientific explanation of social phenomenon. However, Comte was also criticized for being failed to postulate a fourth mode of thinking (socialized thinking) which explains the reasons behind the construction of harmonious and just societies. According to critiques, this law emphasized on rationality, which is not a universal as different societies have different concepts of rationality. Thus, the humans in order to prosper need to move ahead through questioning and logical reasoning.

#### V- CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, the father of Sociology, <sup>Dr.</sup> August Comte gave the Law of Three Stages comprising of theological, metaphy-



sical and scientific stages. According to him, human mind evolved in the three stages mentioned above. This evolution of human mind is also paralleled by societies.

Q22. Ibn-e-Khaldun but not August Comte is the founder of Sociology? Make your argument in favour or against this thought with logic and examples from the historical development of sociology. (CSS-2018)

Ans. I - INTRODUCTION : THE FOUNDER OF SOCIOLOGY:  
IBN-E-KHALDUN OR AUGUST COMTE?

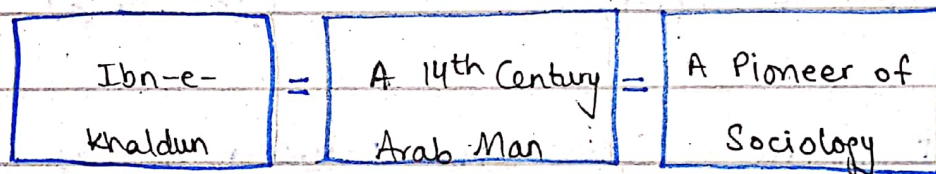
Khaldun Developed General Sociological Theories	↔	Comte gave 'Sociology' its Name (laid its Foundation)
---	---	---

Ibn-e-Khaldun was a 14<sup>th</sup> century Arab historian and statesman who developed many general theories which later became a cornerstone of today's Sociology. August Comte was a 19<sup>th</sup> century French philosopher who gave 'Sociology' its name and laid its foundation so that it could develop into an

independent and separate science. He regarded sociology as the Queen's Science. Thus, it is due to these reasons that Auguste Comte is termed as the "Father/Founder of Sociology."

STANCE: AUGUST COMTE IS THE FOUNDER OF SOCIOLOGY.

## II - IBN-E-KHALDUN AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS



### a) Ibn-e-Khaldun

Ibn-e-Khaldun was a 14th century Arab sociologist, historian, statesman and economist. He is one of the pioneers of the field of Sociology.

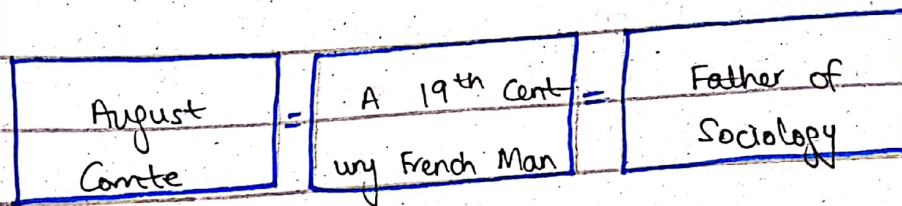
### b) Contributions

Ibn-e-Khaldun was a renaissance man, he defined the foundations of sociology more than 4 centuries before August Comte compiled them. Some of Khaldun's famous

contributions are:

1. The concept of "Asabiyyah" meaning "to bind". It is the fundamental bond of human society and the basic motive force of history.
2. The Cyclic Theory of Asabiyyah which states that societies are living organisms that experience cyclic birth, growth, maturity, decline and death due to universal causes.
3. Khaldun identified the impact of climate and available resources on migrations and social changes.
4. He also identified the impact of governmental policy and taxation on social change.
5. The Muqaddimah (Prolegomena) is one of the ~~more~~ six important monographic works in general sociology.
6. He introduced a scientific approach in the historical domain because of his criticism "idle superstition and uncritical acceptance of historical data."
7. He was also a forerunner in terms of <sup>his</sup> economic theory, paving the way for economics we know today.

### III - AUGUST COMTE AND HIS CONTRIBUTIONS



#### a) August Comte

August Comte was a nineteenth century French philosopher. He is known as the founder of Sociology and Positivism.

#### b) Contributions

Comte's significant contributions are:

1. Comte developed the philosophy of "Positivism" which asserts that the social world can be studied with the same scientific accuracy and assurance as to the natural world.
2. His law of Three stages according to which human minds and societies followed three developmental stages: theological, metaphysical and scientific.
3. Comte gave 'Sociology' its name and its foundation into a separate and independent science.
4. He developed hierarchy of Sciences with increasing level of complexity and regarded

Sociology as the Queen's Science because it binds all sciences into a coherent relationship.

5. He argued that sociology was not just a "pure" science, but an "applied" science also.

This led to the development of "Pure Sociology" for "Theoretical Purposes" and "Applied Sociology" for "Practical Purposes".

6. August <sup>first</sup> applied the scientific method to study society.

#### IV - PROOF OF THE STANCE

In light of the above-mentioned contributions of Khaldun and Comte, the services of Ibn-e-Khaldun cannot be overlooked in forming the basis of Sociology, but August Comte is regarded as the founder of Sociology because of the following reasons:

1. Ibn-e-Khaldun, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and others all developed their theories and philosophies on the basis of their intellect without giving them a particular direction (head).

2. It was Comte who first realized that the individual progress of sciences like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc., has not yet been combined

- into a coherent group/discipline.
3. Comte also realized that all these sciences have not been applied to study the evolution of societies (a collection of human minds).

Thus, it was August Comte who first coined the term "Sociology" and laid its foundation so that it could develop as a separate science.

#### V- CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Sociology is the study of human companionship or society. All the philosophers, statesmen, historians, etc. of all the eras contributed in laying the foundations of sociology. Ibn-e-Khaldun is <sup>also</sup> one of the pioneers of this field. But the works of them were scattered and unidentified as a separate group. It was August Comte who first realized this deficiency and put efforts into gathering and compiling the discipline of 'Sociology'. It is due to this reason that he is termed as the founder of sociology. The sociology has a revolutionary potential to fix the problems

faced by humanity, allowing progression and peace.

## VI - CONCLUSION

To conclude, Ibn-i-Khalikan was a 14<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, statesman, historian, economist who contributed much in the development of foundational theories of sociology. August Comte was the first to coin the term 'sociology' by compiling all the materials. Thus, August Comte is the founder of sociology due to his significant contributions and identification of a separate discipline "sociology".