

Chapter I

Social Thought :

Definition And Development

In the broadest sense a concept, an idea or a set of concepts relating to social problems and their conceivable solutions lie in the domain of social thought. Distinction is often made between an organized body of social thought and the casual ideas which may be momentary or prevalent among the people. Explaining the term social thought E.S. Bogardus writes:

"As far as the past and the present are concerned, social thought amounts, as a rule, to the thought about social questions by individual persons. In this sense, social thought is thinking about societal problems by one or few persons here and there in human history or at present."

(Bogardus, p. 3)

The implications of his definition are twofold; firstly, thinking of individuals about social problems, past and present, towards understanding, definition and identification of issues involved in such problems go to make up a body of social thought, and secondly, the body of such thought develops in a systematic manner mainly by concerned individuals, professionals and scholars who devote their serious attention and energies in enhancing the comprehension of social organization and problems arising in social set up but confronting both individuals and groups. An examination of literature on social thought will invariably suggest its highly systematic, scientific and sophisticated nature which at once distinguishes it from thoughts or ideas of common persons who may be equally affected and concerned with contemporary social problems.