

# TYBA SOCIOLOGY V

FORDISM

The term Fordism was coined in 1936 by Gramsci.

- Fordism is named after Henry Ford, the American car manufacturer who pioneered mass production.
- Fordism started from the moment in 1914 when Henry Ford introduced the 8 hour, 5 dollar day for the workers on his new car assembly line in Michigan, USA.
- Fordism involves the use of assembly line which controls the pace of work where workers perform repetitive assembly tasks which require little skill or training.


It was an extension of Taylor's principles of scientific management, used to designate the system of mass production tied to the cultivation of mass markets.



**Features:**



a)The assembly line replaced craft production in workshop with mechanised production on the factory floor. It is a shift from manual and craft production to automated production.



Increased mechanisation involves changes in the labour process as product was organised into distinct tasks along the assembly line.

The technical division of labour simplified and routinized work as the production process was broken down into parts and distributed between different workers performing specific functions. This allows for greater supervision of the labour process.

Ease of large number of products produced, overheads and capital costs, such as machinery costs, are relatively low



It is a system of mass production i.e. production of standardised goods on an expanding scale. Products made using this system tend to be cheaper.

Labour costs are held down  
because there is little need to  
employ skilled labour.

# Critique of Fordism




- Fordism ensured that the workers were dominated by the capitalist through control over wages and also over the labour process.

It proved that extensive physical labour **is** not needed to increase production. A worker can be physically more productive not by increasing energy level but by preserving them

- Fordism revolutionised production and also ensured that there was greater discipline in the work force.


It also rewarded workers for doing good work

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- The assembly line changed the nature of work through the division of labour. The worker was engaged in just one act of production and had little connection with the end product.



- Under assembly line production, the workers were no longer specialists since their specialisation lay in taking orders from superiors and translating the into work

- From Braverman's point of view, such production method combined with scientific management deskilled work and made it easier for management to control the labour process.



.The work was done so fast that the workers performed their work mechanically which increased the frustration of the workers.



Work became more mechanical  
and involved only physical labour.

**BRACE YOURSELVES**



**POST-FORDISM IS COMING**

# Post Fordism



The phrase was popularised by Michael Piore and Charles Sabel in the second industrial divide 1984 and describes a new era of capitalist economic production in which flexibility and innovation are maximised to meet market demands for diversified customised products.



An economic system  
based on flexible  
specialisation and tailor  
made goods.

# Features



- It is based on **flexible production** **and** **flexible specialisation**. Flexibility is in terms of functional flexibility (ability of managers to redeploy workers between different tasks), numerical flexibility (ability of firms to reduce or increase the size of their labour force) and financial flexibility (in terms of payment systems).

Flexible specialisation and flexible  
production implies small  
**decentralised firms** oriented  
towards niche market rather than like  
Fordism where one finds large  
centralised mass production firms.

- Flexible specialisation **increases** **skills** needed by the workforce and unlike industries where scientific management techniques are used, workers may cooperate with management in organising the labour our process.

- The theory of flexible specialisation also implies move away from the concentration of capital in giant corporations and **increase** in the number and importance of small businesses.

- Small groups of **highly skilled workers** come together using innovative techniques to produce smaller quantity goods that are more individualised than mass production goods.

- **Group production** is used with automation as a means of reorganising work.

Workers work in teams.

- Group production and team work help individual workers to learn new skills and become **multi skilled**.



- Multi skilling is related to employee skilling and reskilling. Employees are trained while on the job.

# Fordism

- √ Mass production of homogeneous products
- √ Use of inflexible technologies, such as assembly line
- √ Standardized work routines
- √ Economies of scale, de-skilling and intensification and homo- genization of labour
- √ Bureaucratized unions
- √ Unions negotiate uniform wages tied to increases in profits and productivity
- √ Rise in wages, due to unioni- zation, leading to growing demand for mass-produced products

## Post-Fordism

- Specialized products, esp. those high in style & quality
- Shorter production runs due to specialized products
- More flexible production made profitable by new technologies (e.g., computers)
- Workers have more diverse skills, more responsibility, and greater autonomy
- Bureaucratized unions no longer represent the interests of the new, highly differentiated labour force
- Decentralized collective bargaining replaces centralized negotiations
- Relentless pressure to increase productivity and reduce costs