

SOCIOLOGY



SOCIOLOGY



science

- **Science**:- systematic body of knowledge
- **Physical**(Natural) sciences : deals with natural inanimate objects-eg. Physics, chemistry
- **Social sciences**: deals with the forms & contents of man's interaction- eg. History, Sociology
- Sociology - Young science

introduction

- Sociology is one of the newer of the academic disciplines, tracing its origins no further back than the middle of the nineteenth century.
- It has a short history.
- Sociology, the science of society, is the **youngest** and it came to be established only in the **nineteenth century**.

introduction

- Origin of Sociology • The Word “Sociology” is derived from both Latin and Greek origins.
- • The **latin** word: **Socius** means “ Companion”
- and the Suffix “**logos**” means “the study of”
- from **Greek**.
- Four Factors led to the Development of Sociology
- • French Revolution(1789), • Industrial Revolution(1800) • Travel • Success of Natural Science

Auguste Comte



1798-1857

- ❖ Recognized as **father of sociology**
- ❖ Coined the Term “Sociology” in 1839
- ❖ in his book “Positive Philosophy”
- ❖ First given the name: ‘**Social physics**’
 - ❖ Believed social behavior had to be studied scientifically.

- ❖ Positivism: using scientific observation in the study of social behavior.
 - ❖ Applying the Scientific Method to Social World

- ❖ “Armchair Philosophy”
 - ❖ (drawing conclusions from informal observations of social life)

introduction

- The study of society, however, can be traced to the **Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle**.
- The philosophical basis of Plato and Aristotle characterised the observations of man for a very long period of time.
- The literature concerning society and its problems found place in the **Republic** of Plato (427-347 B.C.) and in the **Ethics & Politics** and of Aristotle (388-327 B.C.).

Definition

- A general definition of sociology is the systematic **study of human society**, culture, and relationships on a group level.
- 1}. **Auguste Comte**, the founding father of sociology, defines sociology as the science of social phenomena "subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation".

Definition....

- 2}. **Kingsley Davis** says that "Sociology is a general science of society".
- 3}. **Harry M. Johnson** opines that "sociology is the science that deals with social groups".
- 4}. **Emile Durkheim**: "Science of social institutions".
- 5}. **Park** regards sociology as "the science of collective behavior".
- 6}. **Small** defines sociology as "the science of social relationships".
- 7}. **Marshal Jones** defines sociology as "the study of man-in-relationship-to-men".

Definition.....

- 8}. **Ogburn and Nimkoff** : "Sociology is the scientific study of social life".
- 9}. **Giddings** defines sociology as "the science of social phenomena".
- 10}. Henry Fairchild: "Sociology is the study of man and his human environment in their relations to each other".
- 11}. **Max Weber** defines sociology as " the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a casual explanation of its course and effects".

Definition.....

- **Morris Ginsberg**: of the various definitions of sociology the one given by Morris Ginsberg seems to be more satisfactory and comprehensive.
- He defines sociology in the following way: "In the broadest sense, sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences".

Emergence of Sociology:

- Sociology has a long past, but only a short history.
- The study of human society in scientific way is said to have **begun with August Comte**.
- The emergence of sociology as a discipline of academic interest is of recent origin.
- Its emergence as a discipline can be attributed to the vast changes that took place in the nineteenth century.

- From 1817 to 1823 **Comte and Saint-Simon** collaborated and this collaboration was specially marked in the work '**Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the Reorganisation of the Society**'.
- In the latter years Comte called this work “the great discovery of the year 1822”. In 1822 when he (with Saint -Simon) conceived the necessity of the new science, he intended to name the new science '**social physics**'.

- There are **four men**, accepted as the central figures in the development of modern sociology.
- They are: **August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.**

Nature of Sociology

- The nature of a subject refers to its internal characteristics which help one to understand what kind of science it is.
- Every branch of knowledge has its own nature. Thus, Sociology as a branch of knowledge had its own nature or characteristic which distinguishes it from other social sciences and helps to understand what kind of science it is.

Nature.....

- **(1) Sociology is an independent science:**
- Sociology is not treated and studied as a branch of any other science like philosophy, history. Now it has emerged into an independent science.
- **As an independent science it has its own field of study.**

Nature.....

- **(2) Sociology is a social science and not a physical science:**
- All the sciences are divided into two categories: natural sciences and social sciences.
- Natural sciences study physical phenomena where as social sciences study social phenomena.
- Social sciences include Economics, Political Science, and Anthropology etc. Sociology belongs to the family of social sciences.
- As a social science **it concentrates its attention on man, his social behaviour, activities and social life. In other words, it studies man as a social being.**

Nature.....

- **3) Sociology is a pure science and not an applied science:**
- The aim of applied science is to apply the acquired knowledge into life and to put it to use.
- But **the aim of pure sciences is the acquisition of knowledge** and it is not bothered whether the acquired knowledge is useful or can be put to use.
- **Sociology is a pure science, because it aims at the acquisition of knowledge about human society, not the utilisation of the knowledge.**

Nature.....

- **(4) Sociology is an abstract science and not a concrete science:.**
- It refers that Sociology is not interested in concrete manifestations of human events.
- It is more concerned with the form of human events and their patterns.
- Similarly, Sociology does not confine itself to the study of this society or that particular society.
- It simply means that Sociology is an abstract science, not a concrete science.

Nature.....

- **(5) Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline:**
- Sociology "confines itself about what is, not what should be or ought to be."
- As a science it is silent about questions of value.
- It does not make any kind of value judgment.
- It only means Sociology as a discipline cannot deal with problems of good and evil, right and wrong.

Nature.....

- **(6) Sociology is a generalising and not a particularising science:**
- Sociology does not study each and every event that takes place in society.
- **It makes generalization on the basis of some selected events.**
- For example, not by studying or examining all the secondary groups but by observing a few secondary groups, a sociologist makes generalization of secondary groups.

Nature.....

- **7) Sociology is a general science and not a special social science:**
- The area of inquiry of Sociology is general and not specialised.
- Social sciences like Political Science, History, Economics, etc. study human interaction but not all about human interactions.
- But Sociology does not investigate special kind of phenomena in relation to human life, and activities but **it only studies human activities in a general way.**

Nature.....

- **(8) Sociology is both a rational and empirical science:**
- Empiricism is the approach that emphasizes experiences and the facts that result from observation and experimentation.
- On the other hand, rationalism stresses reason and theories that result from logical inference.
- The empiricist collects facts, the rationalist co-ordinates and arranges them. In sociological theory both are significant. Thus, Sociology is both a rational and empirical science.
- **Conclusion:**
- Thus, from the above discussion we come to know that the nature of Sociology is independent, social, a categorical, pure, abstract, and generalizing; both are a rational and an empirical social science.

The objections against sociology being called a science

- **1. Lack of experimentation:**
- The term science as used for physical sciences includes the **twin processes of experiment and prediction**.
- But it is argued that the universally accepted scientific method of observation and experiment **cannot be applied in the study of society**.
- It **does not possess the instruments** like the microscope and the thermometer to measure human behaviour.
- The physical sciences can have laboratory tests under specified conditions. In case of sociology such facility is completely lacking. **We cannot put human beings to laboratory tests**.

2. Lack of Objectivity:

- When a phenomenon is observed in its true form without being affected by researcher's own views it may be termed as objective observation.
- It is argued that objectivity is more difficult to be achieved in case of sociology.
- A sociologist cannot maintain complete objectivity with the objects of his experiment as does a physicist. Man has his own prejudice and bias.

3. Lack of Measurement:

- In physics or chemistry the subject matter is exhaustively measured by instruments.
- Sociology does not possess instruments to measure urbanisation, cultural assimilation quantitatively!

4. Unpredictability:

- In case of physical sciences a remarkable degree of predictability has been achieved.
- But it is not so in case of social phenomena.
- Social behaviour is sufficiently irregular and unpredictable.
- Hence, sociology cannot make predictions.

5. Problem of Generalisation:

- Sociologists have not been successful in arriving at law like generalization through their studies.
- The reason for this failure lies in the very nature of the subject matter of the sociology.
- Human behaviour does not follow recurrent patterns like physical objects.

reasons for regarding sociology as a Science

- Study of society by their very nature cannot be exact like natural and physical sciences.
- But it is not correct to say that there is no possibility of sociology becoming a science.

1. Investigation is possible:

- Sociology **conducts many experiments indirectly and employs scientific methods** such as scales of socio meter, schedules, questionnaire, interview and Case History etc.
- In these methods quantitative measures are used to measure social phenomenon.
- **Sociologists use statistical methods in their analyses.** For example, if we want to know about families with low incomes have more deaths, we collect data. The difficulty lies in getting the data for process are very costly.

2) Observation is possible:

- The whole social world is its laboratory.
- In laboratory, experiments are conducted to measure the relationship between two variables, keeping other factors constant.
- In sociology, we do the same, but not in a formal laboratory.

3) Comparison is possible:

- Sociologists use **comparisons between groups, communities and societies**. It is readily available with the sociologists.
- Comparative method is one of the important methods in scientific investigation

4) Generalisation is possible:

- Sociologists seek universal generalisations. For example, **incest taboo** (prohibition of sex relationship between mother and son, brother and sister, and father and daughter) **is a universal general truth**.
- **Sociology makes laws and attempts to predict**. It tries to discover laws that generally applicable in all the societies, irrespective of actual differences.
- A regulation of marriage in certain manner to prevent incest is one such example.
- There are the principles whose validity can be examined by anyone. They are universal.

5) Accurate measurement is possible:

- It is not always true to say that accurate measurement is not possible in sociology.
- It is possible to measure social relationships by employing statistical method, scales measurement and sociometry etc.

6) Prediction is possible:

- Critics opine that since human beings have their indulgence and free choice, this behavior is not predictable.
- Secondly, if individuals are not largely predictable, then so life is not possible.
- Thirdly, the concept of exact prediction is an outdated notion of science most scientific theories are now based on probability.
- In some areas of social life prediction to a limited extent is possible

7) Objectivity is possible:

- Every idea of man is subjective when as it originates from a person and belongs to him.
- A scientist while approaching his subject matter relies on his experience and knowledge to get the desired results.
- Moreover, no value judgment is personal. The statement the dowry is a social evil is a scientific judgment.
- Social surveys and careful studies confirm ill Social values are based on careful observation and analysis of social facts.
- They are product of scientific research as social issues.

8) Probability of cause and effect relationship:-

- Sociology tries to analyse cause and effect relationship.
- In its study of family, it has traced the relationship between family disorganisation and divorce, between urbanisation and family disorganisation as one of the causes of divorce.
- Thus sociology traces cause and effect relationship in social organisation.
- It tries to find out "how" and "why" of social relationships and social processes.

- Thank you