

# 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