

## Preface

With its grounding in the “guiding pillars of Access, Equity, Equality, Affordability and Accountability,” the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) envisions flexible curricular structures and creative combinations for studies across disciplines. Accordingly, the UGC has revised the CBCS with a new Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUP) to further empower the flexible choice based credit system with a multidisciplinary approach and multiple/ lateral entry-exit options. It is held that this entire exercise shall leverage the potential of higher education in three-fold ways - learner’s personal enlightenment; her/his constructive public engagement; productive social contribution. Cumulatively therefore, all academic endeavours taken up under the NEP 2020 framework are aimed at synergising individual attainments towards the enhancement of our national goals.

In this epochal moment of a paradigmatic transformation in the higher education scenario, the role of an Open University is crucial, not just in terms of improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) but also in upholding the qualitative parameters. It is time to acknowledge that the implementation of the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF), National Credit Framework (NCrF) and its syncing with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) are best optimised in the arena of Open and Distance Learning that is truly seamless in its horizons. As one of the largest Open Universities in Eastern India that has been accredited with ‘A’ grade by NAAC in 2021, has ranked second among Open Universities in the NIRF in 2024, and attained the much required UGC 12B status, Netaji Subhas Open University is committed to both quantity and quality in its mission to spread higher education. It was therefore imperative upon us to embrace NEP 2020, bring in dynamic revisions to our Undergraduate syllabi, and formulate these Self Learning Materials anew. Our new offering is synchronised with the CCFUP in integrating domain specific knowledge with multidisciplinary fields, honing of skills that are relevant to each domain, enhancement of abilities, and of course deep-diving into Indian Knowledge Systems.

Self Learning Materials (SLM’s) are the mainstay of Student Support Services (SSS) of an Open University. It is with a futuristic thought that we now offer our learners the choice of print or e-slm’s. From our mandate of offering quality higher education in the mother tongue, and from the logistic viewpoint of balancing scholastic needs, we strive to bring out learning materials in Bengali and English. All our faculty members are constantly engaged in this academic exercise that combines subject specific academic research with educational pedagogy. We are privileged in that the expertise of academics across institutions on a national level also comes together to augment our own faculty strength in developing these learning materials. We look forward to proactive feedback from all stakeholders whose participatory zeal in the teaching-learning process based on these study materials will enable us to only get better. On the whole it has been a very challenging task, and I congratulate everyone in the preparation of these SLM’s.

I wish the venture all success.

**Professor Indrajit Lahiri**  
*Vice Chancellor*

**Netaji Subhas Open University**  
**Four Year Undergraduate Degree Programme**  
**Under National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) &**  
**Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes**  
**Bachelor of Arts Honours in Sociology (NSO)**  
**Course Type: Discipline Specific Course (DSC- 01)**  
**Course Title: Introductory Sociology – 01**  
**Course Code: 5CC-SO-01**

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# Netaji Subhas Open University

## Four Year Undergraduate Degree Programme

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Course Type: Discipline Specific Course (DSC- 01)

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**Professor Soumyajit Patra**

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### • COURSE WRITERS •

#### Unit 6 & 14 :

**Deepa Moni Chauhan**

*Assistant Professor of Sociology*

*NEF College, Guwahati, Assam*

#### Unit 3, 8 :

**Anupam Roy**

*Assistant Professor of Sociology,*

*NSOU*

#### Units 11-13 :

**Ajit Kumar Mondal**

*Associate Professor of Sociology,*

*NSOU*

#### Units 1,2,7,9,10,15 :

**Dr. Kumkum Sarkar**

*Associate Professor of Sociology,*

*NSOU*

#### Units 4 & 5 :

**Dr Srabanti Choudhuri**

*Assistant Professor of Sociology,*

*NSOU*

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**Dr Srabanti Choudhuri**

Assistant Professor of Sociology, NSOU

**Units 3,4,5,6,8,11,12,13,14 :**

**Dr. Kumkum Sarkar**

Associate Professor of Sociology,  
NSOU

• FORMAT EDITOR •

**Ajit Kumar Mondal**

Associate Professor of Sociology, NSOU

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**Netaji Subhas  
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**UG : Sociology  
(NSO)**

**Course Title : Introductory Sociology – 01  
Course Code : 5CC-SO-01**

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# Unit 1 : Emergence of Sociology

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## Structure

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Intellectual and Social Forces in the Development of Sociology
  - 1.3.1 Intellectual Revolution
  - 1.3.2 The Enlightenment
  - 1.3.3 Political Revolutions
  - 1.3.4 Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Capitalism
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  - 1.3.6 Urbanization
  - 1.3.7 Religious Changes
  - 1.3.8 Growth of Science
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Questions
- 1.6 Suggested Readings

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## 1.1 Objectives

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This unit focuses upon the following points:

- To learn about the historical sketch of sociology
- To learn about the phases of development of sociology
- To learn about the factors for emergence of sociology
- To learn about the challenges to development and growth of sociology

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## 1.2 Introduction

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Presenting a history of sociological theory is an important task, according to **S. Turner** (1998). The theories and its related ideas treated in this discussion have a wide range of application, deal with centrally important social issues, and have stood the task of time. These criteria constitute our definition of sociological theory.

The focus is on the important theoretical works of sociologists, or the work done by those in other fields that has come to be defined as important in sociology. To put it succinctly, this is a book about the '**big ideas**' in sociology that have stood in the task of time, idea systems that deal with major social issues and that are far-reaching in scope.

One cannot establish the precise date and time when and where sociological theories began. People have been thinking about, and developing theories of, social life since early historical times of the Greek or Roman or even to the Middle Ages. But we will not go to the Seventeenth Century, although **Olson** (1993) has traced the sociological tradition to the mid-1600s and the work of James Harrington on the relationship between economy and polity. This is not because people in these epochs did not have sociologically relevant ideas, but the return on our investment in time would be small; we would spend a lot of time getting very ideas that are relevant to modern sociology. In any case, none of thinkers associated with those eras thought of themselves, and few are now thought of, as sociologists. It is only in the 1800s and we began to fight thinkers who can be clearly identified as sociologists. These are the classical sociological thinkers we shall be treated in and we began by examining the main social and intellectual forces that shaped their ideas.

He became the toast of Europe in 1830. He announced that he would now engage in "**cerebral hygiene**" and no longer read the works of those whom he felt were his intellectual inferiors. He proclaimed himself to be "**the Great Priest of Humanity**" and the founder of the "**Universal Religion**". The final volume of his great multivolume work- the same work that had made him famous in Europe in 1830- did not received a single review in the French press in 1842.

Who was this pathetic figure? He was none other than the titular founder of sociology, **Auguste Comte**. Perhaps it is somewhat embarrassing to have the founder of sociology be a person who clearly went a bit insane. Comte wanted to call this new discipline "**social physics**" because the term 'physics' in his time went to '**study the fundamental nature of phenomena**'; and so the new discipline would study the fundamental nature of social phenomena. To Comte's dismay, the label 'social physics' had been previously used by a Belgian statistician, with the result that he constructed the Latin and Greek hybrid: '**Sociology**'. He did not like this name, but he felt that he did not have a choice. Still, the first volume of his **Course in Positive Philosophy** (1830) - the volume that made him famous- was a brilliant analysis of how science had advanced to the point where the social universe could be systematically studied.

Sociology could not emerge, Comte argued, until the other sciences had

advanced and until science in general had become widely accepted as a legitimate mode of enquiry. With the pervasiveness of science today, it is perhaps hard to recognize that **science has to fight its way into the intellectual arena** because it represented a challenge to the dominance of religion. Indeed, early in the growth of science in Europe, even Galileo had to renounce his views and suffer legal persecution for the insight that the earth was not the centre of the universe, nor was the earth the centre of our solar system. It is because the science itself was still not on a secure footing at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century; and as the controversy over Charles Darwin's theory of biotic evolution documented, science still had to fight for its place as the final arbiter of knowledge about the natural world.

Thus, what Comte tried to accomplish in the first volume of *Course of Positive Philosophy* was monumental, and perhaps even risky. In giving the systematic study of social phenomena a name- albeit a second-choice name- and it legitimating a science of the social realm, Comte accomplished a great deal. Few read Comte today, but his arguments were hugely legitimating for a new discipline that had to fight its way into academia and science more generally. Long before Comte, of course, humans had thought about the universe around them, even the social universe built up from people activities of adapting to their environments. Indeed, people had always been "**folk sociologists**", just as most people are today when they make a pronouncement on the course of some social event, or when they assert what should be done to resolve some problematic social condition. So sociology has existed in one form or another for as long as we have been human, but Comte gave this activity a name and tried to make it a science like any other natural science.

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## 1.3 Intellectual and Social Forces in the Development of Sociology

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All intellectual fields are profoundly shaped by their social settings. This is particularly true of sociology, which is not only derived from that setting but takes the social setting as its basic subject matter. We will focus briefly on a few of the most important social conditions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conditions that were of the utmost significance in the development of sociology.

### 1.3.1 The Intellectual Revolution:

When the Roman Empire finally collapsed, there followed a period often termed **the dark ages**. Much of the learning of Romans and, more important, of Greeks, Arabs, Persians, and Egyptians was lost; only the faithful scribes of medieval monasteries kept the Eastern and Western intellectual traditions alive. The label, **the Enlightenment**, is

obviously mean to connote a lighting of the dark, but in fact, the Dark Ages were not stagnant; after the initial decline in Western civilization when the Roman Empire finally collapsed, living conditions for most people were miserable; and yet new inventions and new ideas were slowly accumulating, despite the oppressive poverty of the masses the constant warfare among the feudal lords; and the rigid dogma of religion. New forms and experiments in commerce, politics, economics, religion, arts, music, crafts, and thinking were slowly emerging. As these elements of '**the great awakening**' were accumulating between the fifth and thirteenth centuries, a critical threshold was finally reached. Change came more rapidly as these innovations fed off each other. As social structure and culture changed, so did human thinking about the world. Much of what had been lost from the Greeks and Romans, as well as from the civilization of the Middle East, was found, rediscovered, and often improved on. Nowhere is this more evident than in how scholars viewed science as a way of understanding the universe.

**Francis Bacon** (1561-1626) was the first to clearly articulate the new mode of enquiry: **Conceptualizations of the nature of the universe should always be viewed with scepticism and tested against observable facts.** Though this sound like scientific common sense today, but was a radical idea at the time. In the sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century astronomy, including Isaac Newton's famous laws of gravity were great achievements. Thinking about the universe was now becoming systematic, but equally important, **it was becoming abstract and yet empirical.** The goal was to articulate fundamental relationships in the universe that could explain the many varied ways that these relationships can be expressed in the empirical world. To explain events thus required systematic and abstract thinking- in a word, it required theory. And this way of thinking literally transformed the world. The Enlightenment was thus an intellectual revolution because **it changed how we are to explain the universe**, and increasingly, it held out the vision that knowledge about **how the universe operates can also be used to better the human condition.** In fact, progress was not only possible but inevitable once science and rational thinking dominate how to explain the world, including the social world of our own creation.

### 1.3.2 The Enlightenment:

It is the view of many observers that the Enlightenment constitutes a critical development in terms of the later evolution of sociology. The enlightenment was a period of remarkable intellectual development and change in philosophical thought. A numbers of long-standing ideas and beliefs- many of which related to social life- were overthrown and replaced during the enlightenment. The most prominent thinkers associated with the Enlightenment were the French Philosophers **Charles Montesquieu** (1689-1755) and **Jean Jacques Rousseau** (1712-1778). The influence of the Enlightenment on the sociological theory, however, was **more indirect and**

**negative than it was direct and positive.** As Irving Zeitlin puts it “**Early sociology developed as a reaction to the Enlightenment**” (1981:10). The seventeenth century philosophers such as Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, emphasized was on producing grand, general, and very abstract system ideas that made rational sense. But the later thinkers though did not reject the ideas system of rational sense, but they did greater effort to drive their ideas from the real world and to test them there. In other words, they wanted to **combine empirical research with reason**. The model for this was science, especially Newtonian physics. At this point, we see the emergence of application of the scientific method to social issues.

Substantially, the Enlightenment was characterised by the belief that people could **comprehend and control the universe by means of reason and empirical research**. The view was that because the physical world was dominated by natural laws, it was likely that the social world was too. Once they understand how the social world worked, the Enlightenment thinkers had a practical goal- the creation of a “**better**”, more rational world.

The world was no longer the province of the supernatural; it was the domain of the natural, and its complexity could now be understood by the combination of the reason and facts. And gradually, **the social universe was included in domains that science should explain**. This gradual inclusion was a radical break from the past where the social has been considered the domain of morals, ethnics, and religion. The goal was to emancipate social thought from any religious and traditional speculation. Their work was soon as a radical attack on established authority in both the state and the church. They found traditional beliefs, values, and institutions to be irrational and contrary to human nature and inhibitive of human growth and development. The Enlightenment was thus more than an intellectual revolution; its emergence was a response to changes in patterns of social organization generated by new political and economic formations.

### 1.3.3 Political Revolutions:

New ideas of thought do not appear only from heavy intellectual debates; new ideas almost always reflect more fundamental transformations in the organization of polity and production. The Enlightenment was thus more than an intellectual revolution; its emergence was a response to changes in patterns of social organization generated by new political and economic formations.

The long series of political revolutions ushered in by the **French Revolution** in 1789 and carrying over through the nineteenth century was the most immediate factor in the rise of sociological theorizing. The impact of these revolutions on many societies was enormous, many positive changes resulted. However, what attracted the attention of many early theories were not the positive responses, but

the negative effects of such changes. These writers were particularly **distributed by the resulting chaos and disorder**, especially in France. They were united in a desire to restore order to society. Some of the most extreme thinkers of this period **literally wanted a return to the peaceful and relatively orderly days** of the Middle Ages. The more sophisticated thinkers recognized that social change made such a return impossible. Thus, they sought instead to find new bases of order in societies that had been overturned by the political revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

### 1.3.4 Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Capitalism:

Industrial Revolution, as important as political revolution in the shaping the sociological theory, which swept through many Western societies, mainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The industrial revolution was not a single event but many inter-related developments that culminated in the transformation of the Western world from a largely **agricultural to an overwhelmingly industrial system**. Large numbers of people left farms and agricultural work for the industrial occupations. The factories themselves were transformed by a long series of technological improvements. In this economy, the ideal was **a free marketplace where the many products of an industrial system could be exchanged**. Within this system, a few profited greatly while the majority worked long hours for low wages. A reaction against the industrial system and against capitalism in general followed and led to the labour movement as well as to various radical movements aimed at overthrowing the capitalist system. Four major figures in the early history of sociological theory- **Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, and George Simmel**- were preoccupied. They spent their lives studying these problems, and in many cases, they endeavoured to develop programs that would help to solve them.

### 1.3.5 The Rise of Socialism:

One set of changes aimed at coping with the excesses of the industrial system and capitalism, can be combined under the heading "Socialism". Although some sociologists favoured socialism as a solution to industrial problems, most were personally and intellectually opposed to it. On the one side Karl Marx was an active supporter of **the overthrow of capitalist system and its replacement by a socialist system**. However, most of the early theorists, such as Weber, Durkheim, were opposed to socialism. They feared **socialism more than they did capitalism**. In fact, in many cases sociological theory developed in reaction against Marxism and, more generally, socialist theory.



### 1.3.6 Urbanization:

Partly as outcome of the Industrial Revolution, large numbers of people in nineteenth and twentieth centuries were **uprooted from their rural homes and move to urban settings**. This massive migration was caused largely by the jobs that created by the industrial system in urban areas. But it represented many difficulties for those who had to adjust to urban life, such as overcrowding, pollution, noise, traffic and so forth. The nature of urban life and its problem attracted to the attention of many early sociologists like, **Max Weber, Simmel**.

### 1.3.7 Religious Changes:

Social changes brought on by political revolutions, the industrial revolutions, and urbanization had a profound effect on religiosity. Many early sociologists came from religious backgrounds and were actively involved in religion. They brought to sociology the same objectives as they had in their religious lives. For some, thinkers, such as Comte, **sociology was transformed into a religion**. Durkheim wrote one of his major works on **religion**, a large portion of Weber's work devoted to **the religions of the world**, and Marx too had an imprint interest in **religiosity for critical analysis**.

### 1.3.8 Growth of Science:

As sociological theory was being developed, there was as increasing emphasis on science, not only in academic interests but in society as a whole. The technological products of science were permeating every sector of life, and science was acquiring enormous prestige. Sociologists like **Comte and Durkheim**, from the beginning were preoccupied with science. However, a debate soon developed between those who wholeheartedly accepted the scientific model and those such as Weber, who thought that **distinctive characteristics of social life made a wholesale adoption of a scientific model difficult and unwise**.

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## 1.4 Summary

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The emergence of sociology and, hence sociological theory was inevitable. If Comte had not been born, someone else would have articulated a name for the systematic and even scientific study of the social universe. Herbert Spencer's ***The Study of Sociology*** might have become the new manifesto for the discipline, but the only problem was that sociology's official arrival might have been delayed for decades. The emergence of sociology was the culmination of not only a very long history of human thinking about their creations- the social world- but of broader

social and intellectual movements that began to bring Europe out of the its “Dark Ages” after the collapse of the Roman Empire. This Renaissance also included new ways of thinking, which collectively are sometimes termed the Enlightenment. Once these new ways of thinking began to gain traction, it was inevitable that someone like Comte come along to give a name of new ways thinking about the social world. We should, therefore, briefly pause to see what the Enlightenment accomplished and why it set the stage for sociology to make it grand entrance before an often skeptical audience.

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## 1.5 Questions

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### 1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)

- (a) Elucidate briefly the key challenges to growth of sociology.
- (b) Briefly discuss about the influence of the Enlightenment on development of sociology.
- (c) Why sociology becomes inevitable to emerge?
- (d) Why intellectual revolution was crucial for the emergence of sociology.
- (e) What is sociology?
- (f) Who is the founding father of sociology?
- (g) Who are considered to be sociologists?
- (h) What is urbanization?

### 2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)

- (a) Discuss about the factors that are responsible for the emergence of sociology.
- (b) Explain in brief about the phases of development of sociology as a discipline.
- (c) Explain the challenges to development and growth of sociology as a subject.
- (d) Explain in brief about the historicity of sociology as a discipline.

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## 2.6 Suggested Readings

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- Haralambos, M.(1998). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*,OUP.
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## **Unit 2 : Emergence of Social Anthropology**

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### **Structure**

- 2.1 Objectives**
- 2.2 Introduction**
  - Objective and Purpose of the Unit**
- 2.3 What is Social Anthropology?**
- 2.4 Emergence of Anthropology**
- 2.5 Birth and Growth of Social Anthropology**
- 2.6 Growth of Social Anthropology in India**
  - 2.6.1 The Formative Phase (1774-1919)**
  - 2.6.2 The Constructive Phase (1920- 1949)**
  - 2.6.3 The Analytical Phase.**
  - 2.6.4 The Evaluative Phase (1990 - )**
- 2.7 Summary**
- 2.8 Questions**
- 2.9 Suggested Readings**

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### **2.1 Objectives**

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This unit focuses upon the following points:

- To understand the nature of Social anthropology
- To understand its emergence and scope
- To understand the various stages of its growth

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### **2.2 Introduction**

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Anthropology is the study of man. Though the discipline is not very old, originating only in the nineteenth century, the name of the discipline was coined by the great philosopher Aristotle who used the term ‘Anthropologist’ for the first time, though he used the word in somewhat different sense. The term ‘Anthropology’ is a combination of the two Greek words, ‘anthropos’ meaning humans and ‘logos’

meaning science. Thus, anthropology becomes the science of man. Over the years, the term ‘anthropology’ has acquired a number of definitions ; for example, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it the study of mankind especially of the societies and customs. The study of structure and evolution of man. According to Kroeber. Anthropology is the science of groups of men and their behavior and production. Therefore, it studies everything about man including human evolution and culture from the prehistoric stage to the present days from the physical, cultural, and social points of view. The subject-matter of anthropology can be divided broadly into four major branches, namely, Biological, or physical anthropology, Archeological anthropology, Linguistic anthropology, and Social-cultural anthropology. Man’s physical emergence, evolution and growth is studied by physical anthropology; his social evolution as a prehistoric person is studied by Pre-history and as a historic person is studied by cultural or social anthropology. However, there is a shift in interest in social anthropology in the last several decades and its dominant interest stands out to be the social and cultural life of simple, pre-literate, pre-urban people. To understand the relevance and significance of Social Anthropology we need to discuss the process of its emergence in detail.

**Objective and purpose of the unit:** The objective of this unit is to trace the emergence and growth of social anthropology as an important branch of Anthropology, to examine the historical relevance of social anthropology and how does it differ from sociology. Social anthropology, today, occupies a place of importance in the study of human society and culture; it has undergone several stages of development to reach its current status. Many serious and never-to-be –resolved debates have come up regarding the nature and scope of the discipline. Therefore, the unit also has the objective to know the history of the debates. Another important objective is to examine and understand the discipline’s relations with sociology; how the two differ and how do they share the same points of interests. By making students aware of such details, the unit attempts to give the students a wholesome knowledge about the emergence and nature of the twin discipline of sociology.

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## 2.3 What is Social Anthropology?

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As the name suggests, social anthropology is all about the social life of man. So, its study includes social organizations and social institutions. Man is a social animal, but his social nature depends on the cultural environment within which he lives and in different societies social and cultural norms vary. For example, social-cultural norms differ in primitive, rural and urban societies. Social anthropology examines all these aspects of human existence with reference to cultural, political and socio-economic aspects, religion, language, art, knowledge of the group under

the lenses. Firth has defined it broadly as the study of human social processes in a comparative manner. As a discipline, social anthropology means different things in different countries. In England and other European countries it refers to ethnology or sociology; whereas in the USA it has a much wider meaning to encourage the study of man as both social and cultural being. In the nineteenth century, during the heyday of the British colonialism social-cultural anthropology was known as 'ethnology'; it is a combination of two Greek words, 'ethos' and 'logia' meaning race and study respectively. Thus, ethnology means the study of races and their diverse behavior pattern. It also includes among other things, cultural diversity, cultural change, social relationships, family, kinship, age groups, law, political organizations, economic activities, etc. Social anthropologists, too, study all these things. However, the name 'social anthropology' came into use about sixty years ago to distinguish the subject from ethnology. Noted British anthropologist A. R. Radcliffe-Brown had omitted historical studies from the scope of anthropology, while ethnology is historical in outlook. Respecting Radcliffe-Brown's views, The British school of social anthropology has made social anthropology non-historical. Majumdar and Madan observe that following the British School, social anthropology is known as the study of social structure and social organization of man. The British social anthropologist Edmond Leach once (1982) described it as comparative micro-sociology. However, in the USA anthropologists give more emphasis on cultural orientations and practices while studying social aspects of man.

Social anthropology, over the years, has been defined in a number of ways. We need to look into these definitions to understand the scope of the discipline. According to Piddington, "Social anthropologists study cultures of contemporary primitive communities". This definition gives a narrow vision of the discipline because social anthropologists today study modern culture as well. In contrast, S.C. Dube has given a much more appropriate definition by saying, "Social anthropology is that part of cultural anthropology which devotes its primary attention to the study of social structure and religion rather than material aspects of culture." The definition given by M.N. Srinivas is quite comprehensive. He defines social anthropology as "... a comparative study of human societies. Ideally it includes all societies, primitive, civilized and historic." The discipline applies the inductive method of natural sciences to the study of human society, its evolution and social institutions. Social anthropology has changed its nature and scope to a great extent since the late-nineteenth century when it was concerned more with speculation over origins of religion and of various practices like exogamy, totemism and the likes. Today social anthropology is more concerned with experimental studies, observation and analysis of social systems, systematic comparison of different types of social system, and many such things. It also studies social behavior, social forms and institutions, in a systematic comparative manner.

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## 2.4 Emergence of Anthropology

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As the discipline of social anthropology has been recognized as an offshoot of Anthropology, we need to know about the origin of the mother discipline first. From a very ancient time, there was a concern about man and his surroundings; in fact, this concern has led to the birth of a number of distinct disciplines of knowledge. Since the fifth century B.C., classical Greek scholars like Herodotus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, and many others had expressed their concern about man and his affairs in the society. Herodotus is known as the ‘father of Anthropology’ because he not only recorded everything he saw what he heard from people about the distant shores of the Mediterranean, he also raised questions and issues which today have turned out to be the subject matter of social anthropology. Over centuries, such concerns from scholarly minds have contributed to the establishment of a systematic body of knowledge about man and universe. Compared to various scientific disciplines, anthropology has a late entry in the world of knowledge. Its emergence could be traced in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and most of its fields was formed by the late eighteenth century, though the real interests in the subject emerged in the nineteenth century only. It was not that the first anthropologists had to start from scratch, the pioneers could observe and record the traditions of social life with the help of various sources. Western political philosophers were eager to look out for evidence in support of their theory of ‘state of nature’, the social- political condition that prevailed before the formal emergence of state as a political agency. So these political thinkers and philosophers had studied primitive institutions with a political yet scholarly objective in mind. There were also chronicles of primitive social institutions and lifestyles of ‘exotic’ people in the writings of travelers and explorers, recorded out of curiosity in their untrained hands; therefore, these were not always fit as scientific materials. However, as a distinct discipline anthropology emerged in the nineteenth century only, though Sydney Slotkin has mentioned in his book *Readings in Early Anthropology* (1963) that some of its sub-divisions had started arrive in the seventeenth –eighteenth centuries. Though most of the subject –matter of the discipline was already there by the end of the eighteenth century, professional interested in the subject flourished only in the nineteenth century. Since the fifteenth century, naval exploration of unknown, distant shores became popular among the Europeans. The different culture practiced by the people of these unknown lands evoked huge interests among the explorers and In Paris, the union of naturalists and doctors established a society named as ‘Observers of Man’ in the year 1800 for the promotion of the study of natural history and to provide guidance to voyagers and explorers of distant shores. However due to Napoleonic wars and political turbulence the Society could not survive for long. In 1838, a society for the protection of aborigines was established in

London by eminent scholars; but the purpose of the society was primarily social and political and not scientific enough. As the need for scientific queries was being felt, the Ethnological Society came up in Berlin in 1839 under the leadership of the eminent naturalist, Milne-Edwards. Two years later, in 1841 The British Anthropological Society was established in London and in 1842 in New York the third Ethnological Society was born. The birth of three Ethnological Societies in quick succession heralded the emergence of anthropology. Thus, anthropology became the child of scientific inquisitiveness of men about the 'unusual people' of the unknown world. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859 to explain life's natural evolution through ages. His path-breaking explanation had boosted new researches in various scientific disciplines and encouraged socio-cultural studies of human species. Thinkers with scientific vision, like Herbert Spencer, Morgan and Tylor came to believe that evolution not only affected the physical appearance of mankind, but also the cultural life. Looking at these developments, the year 1859 can be counted as the year of birth of anthropology and it has been labeled as the 'child of Darwin' in 1912 by R.R.Marret. In the birth year of anthropology Paul Broca, an anatomist and human biologist, established an Anthropological Society in Paris. He believed that for securing a true understanding of man a discipline of general biology should be formed by combining all specialized studies together. Following Broca's recommendations anthropology made a significant progress in the US.

By the beginning of the 1860s the British Anthropological Society had started to face serious problems over policies and in 1863 James Hunt and several other dissenting members left it to form the Anthropological Society in London for the service of 'a whole science of man' and to enquire into the origin and development of humanity. In 1868, Thomas Huxley, the noted scientist and a member of the Ethnological Society, was elected the President of the Society ; soon, the two societies merged together for all practical purposes, though the difference was maintained in names. One interesting fact is that, starting from 1840 till 1870, the debate over the name of the science of man continued, whether it should be ethnology or anthropology that was the moot point. By that time anthropology earned a huge popularity all over Europe, especially in France, Germany and Italy. In three successive years of 1866, 1867 and 1868, International Congresses of Anthropology and Pre-historic Archeology were held in different parts of Europe. In 1871, the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland was established, but in 1873, the Institute saw a split to form a new organization named London Anthropological Society for making international communication, research and publications. It also started to publish the journal 'Anthropologia'. By this time of late nineteenth century, the related terms like ethnology, ethnography, archeology, prehistory, philology and linguistics had received wide recognition side by side with 'anthropology'.



Paul Broca, the noted French physician, anatomist and anthropologist, had said in his address on 'The Progress of Anthropology in 1869' that anatomy and biology together formed the base of anthropology and the core ideas of general anthropology could be found only with the synthesis of these two. Soon, within a few years, anthropology's synthetic character earned wide recognition in both Europe and America. In Europe, till this day, the subject is known by multiple names like anthropology, ethnology, pre-history and linguistics as each of these compliment the others to cover all aspects of man as the discipline's subject-matter. But in America and in many parts of area the name 'Anthropology' is sufficient to include various aspects of the study of man. It is often said that while the Europeans provided the tradition of scholarship, books and theories in anthropology, the Americans, with their aborigines, provided a laboratory for the discipline. Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881), the noted American ethnologist and one of the founders of scientific anthropology, had combined field work in a native culture with comparative work and general theory to produce a global perspective that was quite different from the observations of others like Christian missionaries of his time, who too published many papers on the aborigine life and culture of America. Through his comparative analysis of family and kinship structure emerged the branch of social -cultural anthropology of the discipline.

In the second half of the nineteenth century anthropologists had shown increasing interests in the study of racial stock and biological evolution of human species. As a consequence a good number of influences had enriched the subject; for example, France contributed largely in pre-history and physical anthropology whereas Germany's contribution was psychological and geographical traditions in cultural anthropology. Theodore Waitz initiated physical anthropology and Adolf Bastain, on the basis of his worldwide survey of people's culture, could infer about the basic psychological configuration in man. Friedrich Ratzel combined geography with anthropology to create a new branch of anthropogeography. But all these remained highly acclaimed book 'Primitive informal scholarly exercises until Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), the father of modern anthropology, established anthropology as an academic discipline in Europe. The two world wars brought in massive changes in the outlook of anthropology; Branislaw Malinowski (1884- 1942) broke the trend of arm-chair approach of the 19<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists who used to depend on the unverified data collected by non-anthropologists and introduced field-study to stop speculation about the primitive people. Post the Second world war, the discipline was enriched by contributions from scholars like Claude Levi-Strauss who put emphasis on the formal aspect of culture. Meanwhile, through the works of British anthropologists social anthropology earned global recognition.

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## 2.5 Birth and Growth of Social Anthropology

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As we have already noted, the discipline of anthropology has several branches and social anthropology is one of them. Social anthropology is intimately associated with man's inherent urge to know the unknown, to observe the life-style, habitats, dresses, food, language, cultural and religious rituals, etc. of the unknown people from distant lands. The white people of Europe, having knowledge of their own Christian lifestyle and values set the standard of behavior and culture for others. So, the travelers of the yore maintained diaries, notes and other accounts of their travels to tell others about the 'strangeness' of those people. In the sixteenth century, the French author Montaigne became interested in the differences between the customs of his people and of others. In general, there were theoretical questions on the lineage and heritage of the colored people who wore no clothes at all. Rousseau described the Indians as "noble savage", while the Spanish missionaries of the eighteenth century described them as people without souls. Hobbes, too, in the seventeenth century came to believe that the American Indian aborigines were living in a lawless 'state of nature' where man's life was chaotic, insecure and full of uncertainties. In such an environment, the chronicles of explorers and missionaries were not only treated as awe-inspiring tales of 'strange' people from 'strange' land, but also as basic data for knowing these people. In 1724, a Jesuit missionary, Lefebvre and several other writers together published a book on a comparative ethnographical analysis of American Indian customs and ancient Greek and Roman culture. During the same period, noted French writer Charles de Brosses made comparisons between ancient Egyptian religion and that of West Africa. In 1748, Montesquieu established himself as the first theorist of social anthropology when he published his famous book, *Spirit of the Laws* (*Esprit des Lois*) based on readings about different countries. Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson also based their theories of social and political evolution, following Darwin's theory of evolution of biological species. Before them, social philosophers and thinkers St. Simon, August Comte, and Herbert Spencer had discussed the concept of evolution from a philosophical point of view, without the support of any empirical evidence.

Many historians argue that the origin of social anthropology can be traced back to the philosophy of David Hume and Immanuel Kant; many others think Herodotus is the father of anthropology. At the same time, it is also believed that the systematic birth of social anthropology should be rightly counted from Henry Maine and Lewis Henry Morgan; and these two have formulated their deductions following the writings of travelers and missionaries. Darwin's ideas about the evolution of species had greatly influenced the thinkers of the nineteenth century and social anthropologists were no exceptions. Following the logic of Darwin, they

examined the origin of social institutions; for this reason, they became known as Social Darwinists. The foundation of social anthropology was laid by Henry Maine's *Ancient Law* (1861) and Lewis Henry Morgan's books like *Ancient Society* (1877). Maine was a senior imperial administrator posted in India. . He made a distinction between status-based or traditional societies and contractual or modern ,liberated societies like Britain .He observed that in traditional, status-based societies, one's status was to be determined by one's position within the kinship structure; whereas in a contract-based society the individual's personal achievements would determine his social positions. Morgan's contribution to early anthropology forms the background of evolutionary theory that suggests that human society has passed through the stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization, each stage characterized by certain type of economy. For example, savagery is supported by economy of subsistence based on livelihood through hunting and food gathering The stage of barbarism is characterized by the economy of agriculture and animal husbandry; and the stage of civilization has higher level of literacy, technology, industry and political organization like state. This theory of Morgan has encouraged other scholars to build their theories. Finnish philosopher and anthropologist Edward Westermarck presented *The History of Human Marriage* (1891) and Robert Briffault an English surgeon, anthropologist and author established that women ,in all animal species, determine the conditions of the animal family. Tylor produced the evolutionary theory of religion and other evolutionists like W.H.R.Rivers, Sir James Frazer, A.C.Haddon and Charles Seligman contributed immensely for the development of social anthropology as a science of social evolution.

It was not that evolutionary theory was the only line of thought in the field of social anthropology; there were other opposite schools of thought like the structural-functional school of anthropology presented by the British anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. There was also the Diffusionist School to reject the evolutionary ideas of unilineal progress and development of society because, society not only develops, but also degenerates. The diffusionists also believe that man is basically uninventive and so once an invention is made in any part of the world, it migrates to other parts through borrowing or initiation. The diffusionist ideas are shared by three distinct schools , the British, the German and the American ones, with supports from Smith, W.J.Perry, Rivers, Franz Boas, Clerk Wissler, Kroeber and others.

Franz Boa and Bronislaw Malinowski, the leading modern anthropologists had great regard for field-studies. Boa collected empirical data and did extensive field-research in the US to study American Indians in the 1880s.He initiated the study of modern cultural anthropology in America and studied the mutual connection between culture and personality. Among his fellow cultural anthropologists we can name Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Linton, Kardiner and Cora Du Bois.

The two branches of anthropology, one based on culture studies and another on the studies of society have developed side by side. Among the American anthropologists there is a trend of cultural analysis following Tylor, a British, on the other hand British anthropologists side with social anthropology of Morgan, an American. American anthropologists believe that there is not much difference between the two areas, only culture study has a much wider scope than the study of social life. In fact, they believe, social anthropology is contained within cultural anthropology. Yet, there are many who contest that view and claim that the two are completely different in concepts and methods. Radcliffe-Brown has commented that while doing fieldwork in any society, one apparently does not meet the culture, but experiences social relations. As all social relations are not equally important, they may be excluded from study. Only the relatively permanent and repetitive forms of social relations constitute social structure and by studying social structure the nature of social life and its continuity can be understood. Raymond Firth and Radcliffe-Brown have distinguished the concept of social organization from social structure. According to them, people make choices between alternatives within the broad framework of social structure. The social structure created by the choice-making persons is the social organization. With the help of these notions of social structure and social organizations,, British social anthropologists have made comparative analysis of human behavior in institutionalized form. Claude Levi-Strauss predicted that the future of social anthropology would be in communication studies; that is, in the study of inter-communications between persons and groups through words and symbols; and from this there would appear several other sub- branches of social anthropology. In this way, many new ideas are entering in the field of social anthropology and its scope is increasing day by day in terms of theory and practice.

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## **2.6 Growth of Social Anthropology in India**

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Anthropology in India has appeared much later compared to other countries of the world, it was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century when anthropological study via the ethnographic materials compiled by the colonial administrators. Andre Bettle (1996) has used the term 'Indian Anthropology' to mean the study of society and culture in India by anthropologists, irrespective of their race and nationality.

D.N. Dhanagare has rightly observed that the development of social sciences ,in general, is closely associated with the development of modern capitalism in the West. It was neither accidental nor coincidental that the growth of social sciences has remained linked to dynamics of power; the theories, researches and findings

have often been used to justify and sustain either to support the power- relations or to oppose them. Ideas. Concepts, ideas and theories of a given time are born and nurtured within the social environment of that period. This has happened to all areas of social science and more so in the field of sociology and social anthropology as academic disciplines and professions. In India both these two disciplines are children of British colonialism and both, in their initial years at least , reflected the colonial understanding of Indian social life.

British colonial rule had affected the social, political and economic life in India drastically. For the colonial administrators too, India was a unique experience. After the devastating mutiny of 1857 the representatives of the Imperial authority had started to conduct ethnographic surveys to collect even the minutest details about each and every aspect of people's life. The main objective of these surveys was to ensure more control and power over the people of this land. The caste system, the rituals and beliefs of the religious sects, the tribal communities, hundreds of languages and their innumerable dialects, the land tenurial system and village social structure, all these intrigued the British. Their initial failure to understand the intricacies of India's social and economic life had led to a number of problems like agrarian disturbances and revolts. To prevent further problems in future and also to impose the iron grip over the land and its people, methods of sociology and social anthropology were utilized as tool of colonial domination. Joan Vincent (1990) has revealed that from its very beginning, British anthropology was used as a power-tool of the colonizers. The same is also true for early-American anthropology. Talal Asad (1973) has categorically stated that 'anthropology is rooted in an unequal power encounter between the West and the Third World'. The ethnographic and historic knowledge of the colonized country had helped colonial authority to know and control those lands better. European missionaries who came to preach Christianity also collected some data with a religious motive. Colonial administrators like Risley, Dalton, Thurston, O'malley, Russel, Crook, Mills and many others had compiled huge data on tribes and castes of the land. Around this time, some trained British anthropologists like Rivers, Seligman, Radcliffe-Brown, Hutton came to India to conduct field-studies. Most of those scholar- administrators focused more on the cultural diversity of India and floated a 'mosaic theory' to describe India's culture and society, more than the nature of its unity. They also created certain categories based on foreign idioms, principles and western understanding of the country. In the process , they started indiscriminate use of western ideas, concepts and theories to describe India's social life and culture. Unfortunately, such efforts proved to be counterproductive. Borrowing ideas, frameworks and methodology from western anthropologists to practice self-study or study of indigenous culture instead of studying 'other culture'. The path of growth for Indian anthropology has been

scrutinized regularly by both Indian and foreign scholars and following Vidyarthi's and Sinha's observations it can be divided into four distinct phases, namely, the Formative phase, the Constructive phase, the Analytical Phase and the Evaluative phase. We need to discuss those phases more elaborately.

### **2.6.1. The Formative Phase (1774-1919)**

Many believe that, anthropology as the scientific study of man began in 1774 with the establishment of Asiatic Society in Bengal. Its founder –President Sir William Jones had initiated a good number of anthropological studies. The Society's journal regularly published scholarly papers on the diversity of Indian life and customs. Information on rural life and tribal culture, collected by British administrators, missionaries, travelers and others. Following the footsteps of that journal, other scholarly journals like the Journal of Indian Antiquary(1872), Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society (1915) and Man in India(1921) saw the light of the day. But there are other who think that the study of anthropology did start in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The journey of anthropology here thus began with anthropological mapping. The Imperial administrators made extensive use of their official machinery to collect information about social and economic conditions, religious beliefs and practices of the native Indians divided into castes and tribes. In its formative phase the inspirations were drawn from the British anthropologists who came to India to do their researches; as for example, W.H.R. Rivers studied the Todas of Nilgiri Hills, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown dealt with the Andaman Islanders, G.H. and B.H.Seligman collected information on the Veddas of Ceylon( present-day Srilanka).

### **2.6.2. The Constructive Phase (1920-1949)**

This phase can be described as the phase of institutionalization of anthropology as an academic discipline. In 1918, social anthropology started its formal academic journey as a subsidiary subject at the under graduate level, but it became part of the Post-Graduate curriculum of the University of Calcutta two years later in 1920. K.P.Chattopadhyay, trained at Cambridge University by the likes of W.H.R.Rivers and A.C.Haddon, was the first Professor in Anthropology at Calcutta University and R.P. Chanda was its first Lecturer. After independence, Universities of Delhi, Lucknow and Guwahati were established in 1947, 1950 and 1952 respectively. Within a short period, several other Universities like Saugarh, Madras, Puna, Ranchi, Dibrugarh, Utkal, Ravishankar (Raigarh, M.P/Chhatisgarh), Karnataka, North Bengal and North-East Hills started their departments of Anthropology.

### **2.6.3. The Analytical Phase (1950-1990)**

The end of Second World War and India's Independence happened in quick succession. Since then, contacts between Indian and American anthropologists started in an increasing manner. On the one hand, D. N. Majumdar, M.N. Srinibas and S, C, Dube made important contributions in village and community studies; on the other, American anthropologists like R. Redfield, M. Singer, M. Marriott and Bernard S Cohn studied different dimensions of Indian tradition. Redfield's ideas of 'Great traditions and Little traditions' and 'Folk-urban Continuum' were widely acclaimed; while K. Gough, E. Leach, N.K. Bose and A. Beteille dealt with the socio-economic basis of Indian society. The Anthropological Survey of India, too, conducted a number of surveys. This period also witnessed a tendency among Indian researchers to be free from western theoretical biases and number of in-depth, bias-free analytical studies on various communities were thus conducted. This phase has been enriched by the contributions of eminent social anthropologists like B.K.Roy Burman, A.K.Das, by publication of new journals and bulletins, proliferation of research centers till the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **2.6.4. The Evaluative Phase : (1990—)**

It was quite clear by this time that western anthropological ideas could not explain the complexities of Indian society; therefore a new approach was needed to fit the Indian situation. Therefore, Indian anthropologists developed and depended on indigenous models firstly to overcome the barriers of intellectual colonialism and neo-colonialism; and secondly to acquire an active, humanistic and critical outlook. Presently anthropology in India employs new types of data, concepts, approaches, methods and theories. The relationship between social anthropology and sociology was quite close quite close before; now they have come further closer as both the disciplines deal with tribal, agrarian and industrial socio-cultural issues. Renowned anthropologists like Srinivas and Dube have undertaken sociological investigations and thus have brought the two disciplines closer.

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## **2.7 Summary**

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From our discussion above it can be concluded that In India social-cultural anthropology is a major sub-division of anthropology. Due to its subject-matter it also has close affiliation with sociology, the difference between the is only artificial as once it was believed that sociology should study the society and culture of 'civilized' section of population and social anthropology should examine those of the 'primitive' people. Both the branched of knowledge have come out of such

narrow boundaries and expanded their scopes of analyses. Being nurtured in the cradle of the colonial ideology, for a prolonged period of time the subject –matter of social anthropology used to be affected by the colonial machinations of the west; India was no exception. However, after the end of the colonial rule, social anthropology in India has not only come out of that kind of influence, but Post-globalization, also built up an approach of its own to help in the task of nation-building. Post- globalization, social anthropology in India is focusing on the new challenges that are rocking the society in many ways.

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## 2.8 Questions

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### 1. Answer in Short.

**5 Marks.**

- (a) What is Social Anthropology?
- (b) Why did anthropology in India emerge in the colonial period?
- (c) Which period is known as the formative phase of social anthropology in India and Why?
- (d) What is the constructive phase of social anthropology in India?
- (e) Write a short note on the analytical phase of social anthropology.
- (f) Write a short note on the evaluative phase of social anthropology in India?

### 2. Answer in Detail.

**10 Marks.**

- (a) Critically examine the birth and path of growth for sociology in India.
- (b) What is social anthropology? Describe the emergence and growth of social anthropology in India.
- (c) Discuss the different phases of growth for social anthropology in India.

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## 2.9 Suggested Readings

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## Unit 3 : Sociology as a Science

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### Structure

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 What is Science?
- 3.4 Sociology as a Science
- 3.5 The Balance View
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Questions
- 3.9 Suggested Readings

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### 3.1 Objectives

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After reading this unit learners will be able to learn about:

- the conceptual understanding of sociology
- the conceptual understanding of science
- the scientific justification of sociology as a discipline

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### 3.2 Introduction

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There exists a great controversy about the exact nature of sociology, particularly about the question of **whether sociology is a science or not**. Perhaps due to these sociologists got divided among themselves into two opposite groups. As a result, two opposite views are available on the nature of sociology. For one group of sociologists, Sociology as a subject is a science because sociology adopts and applies the scientific methods. The founding fathers of sociology, Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and others subscribe to this view. Others hold different views and opine that sociology is not a science. German sociologists like Max Weber do not accept sociology as a science. Others also assert that sociology is as much a science like Political Science, Economics, and Psychology are. But before any decision on whether sociology is a science or not, we must understand first **what science does imply**.

And if sociology is a science then **how far or in what degree sociology does conform to the notion of science in our academic concern for it.**

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### 3.3 What is Science?

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Before we settle on the question whether sociology is a science or not, first we need to know what science is, otherwise the question does not make much sense. Science, to say it precisely, is nothing but the body of systematic knowledge. It relies on reason and evidences. A science is **a branch of knowledge** or study dealing with a body of facts that are **systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws**. Science collects facts and links them together in their causal sequence to draw valid inferences which are verifiable. A researcher or scholar, to make science, must adopt scientific methods and acquire scientific knowledge through the very process of observation, experimentation, generalization etc. The basis of science is objective knowledge and cause and effect relationship among facts.

Literally, current philosophical views on the nature of science are diverse, and largely liberalized from previous views. **Firstly**, they no longer accept strong criteria of **falsification as a scientific method**. There are several ways to formulate falsification. **Secondly**, new movements in philosophy attack the **notion of universal laws**. **Cartwright** (1983) argued that seemingly universal philosophical laws are not really universal in nature, from logical point of view. This and other reasons led Cartwright (1983) and Hacking (1983) to present a new view of science in which piecemeal “**models**”, instead of universal laws and theories, play the central role of scientific investigation. Here “models” means oversimplified mental pictures of structure.

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### 3.4 Sociology as a Science

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With the analysis of science in the previous discussion, let us turn to sociology as a concept itself. According to **James W. Woodard**, the conception of sociology is basically ‘the study of those **uniformities which are group-situational emergents**, that is, uniformities for which there is a necessity, or toward which there are tendencies, arising out of the nature of group situations, letting “group” represent here any social situation of more than one individual.’ He states ‘Out of the group-ness of this situation emerge vested interests; so also emerge of situational necessity group-wide uniformities of behaviour, and yet another tendency toward change. Sociology in the broad sense is **the study of all these uniformities**, uniformities which are the situational emergents (in the group situation) of the incidence upon

each other of men's nature (as it is made up), of the physical environment (as it is made up), and of the products (in culture cumulation) of the past incidence of these factors.'

Early sociologists tried to establish sociology as a science and their arguments are mainly on the methodology of sociology. **Comte** claimed that sociology uses four different kinds of methodologies, namely **observation, experiment, comparison and historical research** as a special case of companion. These are the methodology used in several other scientific fields, especially in biology. But actually, he never did empirical research, so we cannot take him at the face value.

But his argument influenced other sociologists, especially **Durkheim**. For him, sociology is a study of **social facts**. According to him, a social fact is "**a thing that is external to, and coercive of, the actor.**" Because they are external, social facts cannot be investigated by introspection. We should use empirical research. Durkheim used statistics on suicide rate to establish his arguments that suicide is a social phenomenon. This is an admirable attempt of empirical research on society, but there are several problems, especially his rigid rejection of introspection as a sociological method.

It was probably **Weber's** methodology that provides an answer to these concerning problems. His key word is '**verstehen**', a German term for '**understanding**' or '**interpretation**'. According to him, we can 'understand' other people's motivation through introspection of our own intentions, and this kind of knowledge is necessary for sociology. This is exactly what Durkheim denied as a method of sociology. But, of course, the problem would lie in the fact if this method is permissible as a scientific method of investigation, strong falsification of a theory has to become almost impossible by such 'interpreted' facts.

Before we proceed further, we will be urged to make a brief remark one would like to make a brief remark on the use of models in sociology as a discipline. One of the reason people may argue against sociology as a science is the lack of uniformities of the sociological theory. We have lots of theories in sociology such as Marxist theory, Durkheim's theory, Weberian theory and so on, but none of them are shared or taken as valid by all sociologists. This seems to make a strong contrast with other fields of science where scientists agree on the basic theories.

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### 3.5 The balance View

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According to **David V. McQueen**, when writing about a subject of a social-philosophical matter, it is absolutely essential to notify the reader of one's underlying

biases so that he may come to the piece with the appropriate mind-set. Such a notion is probably the first point of awareness that '**social sciences are, after all, not altogether similar to the so-called "hard" sciences**'. In reference to the question of whether sociology is a form of scientific pursuit or not, the conclusion is drawn that sociology barely meets any of the rigid criteria traditionally associated with the natural sciences. Social scientists look at problem much like engineers; they do not spend much time on theory.

As **Pitirim Sorokin (1931)** mentioned that sociology studies a set of **social phenomena either not studied systematically by any other social sciences or studied by sociology from a point of view different from that of the other social sciences**. And secondly, that the class of phenomena studied and the standpoints from which they are studied are basically consistent and scientifically important. The first standpoint is **individualizing**, that concerned predominantly with a description of the unique- unrepeated- phenomena and relationships. The second is **generalizing**, that is with a description of uniformities and formulations of laws, that is, the set of relationships repeated either in time-series, or in space or in both.

**Franklin H. Giddings (1927)**, in so far, a science is a distinct part of science viewed as an indivisible whole it has become such by concentrating inquiry and perfecting a technical method. Because of the distinctiveness of facts, sociology can be more than an assembling and ordering of checked observations- but it cannot become like chemistry or astronomy a prediction of certainties. It can become **a forecast and a measurement of possibilities**, including contingencies of kind and correlations of size, in the field of those human relations which constitute normal society. Here normal society indicates that society is made up of the most frequently recurring combinations of societal components and attributes.

### **The Debate between the objective and the subjective**

Sociologists, like all humans, have their own values, beliefs, and even pre-conceived notions of what they might do in their research. Even sociologists are not immune to the urge of making changes in the world, two approaches to sociological investigation have appeared. By far the most apparent is the *objective* approach advocated by Max Weber. Weber understood that social scientists have opinions, but vehemently argued against the expression of non-professional or non-scientific opinions in the analysis. Weber took this position for several reasons, but the major ones outlined in his discussion of *Science as Vocation* are many. He firmly believed it is wrong for a person in a position of authority (a professor) to compel his/her students to accept his/her opinions in order for them to qualify the exam. Weber argued that it was acceptable for social scientists to communicate wide ranging

opinions outside of the classroom. He advocated for social scientists to be involved in politics and other social activism. The *objective* approach to social science remains very popular in sociological research and academic journals because it refuses to pin down on social issues at the level of opinions only and instead focuses deeply on data and theories.

#### The Objective Approach:

The *objective* approach is contrasted with the *critical* approach, which has its origins in Karl Marx's work on economic structures. If you are familiar with Marxist theory, you will recognize that Marx went beyond describing society to advocating for change. Marx disliked capitalism and his analysis of that economic system included the initiation for change. This approach to sociology is often referred to today as *critical* sociology. Some sociological often focus on this branch of critical sociology and some sociological approaches are inherently critical for e.g., feminism, black feminist thought.

Building on these early prognosis, the rise of Feminist methods and theories in the 1970's called for an ongoing debate concerning critical as against the objective realities. Drawing on early Feminist writings by several social advocates which included Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Alice Paul, Ida Wells Barnett, Betty Friedan, and sociological theorists such as Dorothy Smith, Joan Acker, and Patricia Yancey Martin, Feminist sociologists argued that "objective" traditions are often unrealistic and unscientific in practice. Specifically, they - along with other critical theorists like Michel Foucault, Bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins debated that since all science was conducted and all data was mediated by human beings and all human beings have beliefs, values, and biases that they are often unaware of and that shape their conception of reality objectivity only existed within their gamut of beliefs and values of the people that presented it.

We can state it another way and claim that since human beings are responsible for scientific knowledge, this is despite the fact that human beings cannot be conscious of all the potential biases, beliefs, and values they use to do their science. That is to select their topics, construct measurements, and interpret data, "objective" or "value free" science are never possible. Rather, these theorists argued that the personal is often the political. This is because our personal decisions however small they are, are ultimately impacted by the political context of our lives and they will finally shape the personal and political realities of the. This happen irrespective of whether or not we are aware of these consequences. As a result, every scientist, regardless of their intentions or awareness - may often seek to follow Weber's recommendations concerning objective teaching and research. Though at the same

time he was aware that he will ultimately fail to achieve this ideal. Whether or not scientists explicitly express their personal opinions in their teaching and research, every decision scientists must make will ultimately rely upon – and to an extent demonstrate to varying degrees – their subjective realities. As a result, current debates that emerge, typically center around objective versus subjective interpretations of science. While scholars continue to debate the merits and limitations of subjective/objective versus critical approaches, science goes on taking its destined path.

Some examples from the subjective basis of both “objective” and “critical” sociology may help illustrate this point. First, we may examine the research process for both objective and critical sociologists while paying our attention to the many decisions people must make to inculcate in any study from either of the perspectives. These decisions include:

- The selection of a research topic (this selection reveals something the author believes is important whether or not it is)
- The selection of data (this selection reveals data the author believes is reliable whether or not it is)
- If the researcher decides to collect their own data, then they must:
  - Decide where to collect data
  - Decide who to collect data from
  - Decide what questions to ask (which ones they believe will answer the question) and how to ask these questions (which forms of talk they believe are best for getting the answers they want)
  - Decide how much data to collect
  - Decide how to analyze the data collected (if mathematically, which protocols will be used and which software program, and if qualitatively which themes will be looked for and / or what software program)
  - Decide how to measure or categorize the data (if mathematically, what set of parameters counts as a good measure, and if qualitatively what must a category contain)
  - Decide how to interpret the measurements or categories (if mathematically, what exactly do the numbers mean socially, and if qualitatively what do the categories say about society)
  - Decide how to discuss the interpretation (which theories should be used and which ones should be ignored)
- If the researcher decides to use secondary data, this becomes even more

complicated. While they will have to do the final four items listed above, they must also:

- Trust that the data collection occurred properly
- Trust that the data was organized properly
- Trust that the questions were answered properly
- Trust that the sample is appropriate

As you can understand, the research process itself is full of decisions that each researcher must make. As a result, while the researchers may try to conduct objective studies, attempting so may not be possible given the fact that doing research requires them to use their personal experiences and opinions. These may arise from personal life, the advice of the people that taught them to do research methods, or the books they must have read that were ultimately placed before the same subjective actions without trying to be fully objective throughout the process. As a result, researchers can attempt to be as objective as possible, but they can never actually reach the absolute level of objectivity. This same problem was seen in Weber's initial description of teaching. For someone to teach any course, for example, they must make a series of decisions including but not limited to:

- Deciding what subjects to cover within the overall course
- Deciding which readings to use to convey information
- Deciding what measures of learning will be used and what measures will be left out of the course
- Deciding what counts as an appropriate or inappropriate answer on any and all measures used in the course

As a result, we can say that Weber's objectivity is an ideal that can't be fully realized. Whether or not the teacher (or researcher) explicitly takes a political, religious, or social stance, he or she will ultimately present their personal stances, beliefs, values, and biases implicitly throughout the course.

Thus we recognize that all sciences are ultimately subjective to varying degrees, it is fairly well established at this point, the question of whether or not scientists should embrace this subjectivity remains an open question. Further, there are many scientists both in sociology and other sciences who propagate the idea that scholars should attempt to be as objective as possible, and often project this ideal in their teaching, research, and peer review activities. As a result, the argument within the field continues without any finality, and this will likely be an important part of scientific knowledge and scholarship for time to come<sup>1</sup>.



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### 3.6 Summary

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Auguste Comte, the founding father of sociology, has presented the discipline as a science; other eminent thinkers like Durkheim also consider it a science because the discipline adopts and applies scientific methods in the study of its subject-matter. Even without the use of any laboratory, it adopts scientific methods like case-study, interview, sociometry scales for examining and understanding social phenomena. It also makes use of the technique of scientific observation. Like disciplines of natural sciences, it adopts objective analysis, examines the cause-effect relationship of social phenomena, attempts to make accurate prediction, tries to measure social relationships accurately, tries to frame laws for objective analysis of issues and also tries to make generalization of the matters it studies. On the basis of all these we can come to the conclusion that sociology is science. However, there are several other sociologists like Max Weber who deny the status of science to it. The main reasons for their objection are: lack of pure objectivity in its study; lack of experimentation, failure to make accurate prediction, lack of flawless measurement, failure to make proper generalisation, etc. Considering its limitations to emerge as a 'pure' or natural science discipline due to the difference of its subject-matter with that of natural sciences, we can definitely identify sociology as a social science. It has brought in multiple new ways of examining and observing the society and its various aspects in as much positivist way as possible.

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### 3.7 Key Words

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Sociology. Science. Observation. Experimentation. Natural Science.

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### 3.8 Questions

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**1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)**

- (a) Demonstrate your opinion about the scientific justification of sociology as a discipline
- (b) Explain in brief about sociology as a subject.
- (c) Briefly explain the challenges to consider sociology as a science.
- (d) Explain in brief about the relationship between science and sociology.
- (e) Elucidate briefly the key challenges to sociology as a scientific discipline.
- (f) Briefly discuss about the influence of science on the emergence of sociology.
- (g) Discuss the nature of sociology.
- (h) Why sociology is a science?

**2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)**

- (a) What is sociology?
- (b) Who is science?
- (c) What are the subject matters of sociology?
- (d) What is social fact?

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**3.9 Suggested Readings**

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- Haralambos, M.(1998). *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, OUP.
- Jayaram, N.(1998). *Introductory Sociology*, Macmillan India.
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## **Unit 4 : Sociology and Common Sense**

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### **Structure**

- 4.1 Objectives**
- 4.2 Introduction**
- 4.3 Philosophical Roots of Common Sense**
- 4.4 Changing Meanings of the Common Sense**
- 4.5 Sociology and Common Sense**
  - 4.5.1 Nirmal Kumar Bose on Common Sense and Sociology**
- 4.6 Durkheim's Social Fact and Common Sense**
- 4.7 Max Weber's idea of Common Sense**
- 4.8 Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman's Everyday Life and Common Sense**
- 4.9 Interweaving Sociology and Common sense**
- 4.10 Conclusion**
- 4.11 Summary**
- 4.12 Questions**
- 4.13 Glossary**
- 4.14 Suggested Readings**
- 4.15 Endnotes**

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### **4.1 Objectives**

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To help students understand the following things:

- What is common sense?
- Distinguish 'generalized' knowledge from localized commonsensical knowledge.
- To understand the distinction between sociology and common sense.
- To understand the theoretical underpinnings of common sense.

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## 4.2 Introduction

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**Common sense** is usually taken as a sound practical judgment revolving around everyday matters. It may also be taken as a basic ability to cognize, perceive, understand, and accordingly judge that is shared by nearly all people. The first type of common sense or good sense can be described as the tendency for seeing things as they are, and doing things as they are supposedly done. This second kind is sometimes described as folk wisdom or collective knowledge, which is characteristic of signifying unreflective knowledge not reliant on specialized training or deliberative thought or action. The two types go together, as the person who has common sense is always in touch with common-sense ideas, which again emerge from the lived experiences of those who are commonsensical enough to cognize them. However, Aristotle warns us that ‘common sense’ has nothing to do with our notion of ‘plain and basic common sense’. Common sense, as we understand it, seems to be a primary ability of rational beings to follow their experience in interpreting some obvious things, making elementary connections between them, so as to avoid adjoining contradictions. Because this ability is so instinctual, it is usually shared by all rational beings around us. Therefore, it is called ‘common’. On the other hand, it is called ‘sense’ because it is developed naturally without any fabrication. So, its operations are intuitive, rather being perceptual (Gregoric:2007).

“Common sense” has at least two specifically philosophical meanings. Let us look at them. One is a capability of the animal soul as proposed by Aristotle. He described it as the ability of different individual senses to collectively perceive the characteristics of physical things such as movement and size, which all physical things have in different combinations. This allows people and other animals to distinguish and identify physical things. This common sense is somewhat different from basic sensory perception and from human rational thinking but combines both of them. The second special use of the term is Roman tinted and is used for the natural human sensitivity for other human beings and their community. Just like the first meaning, both of these refer to a type of basic awareness and power assigned to people to judge what most people are expected to share naturally, even if they cannot explain why.

All these meanings of “common sense”, that we discussed above including are interconnected in a complex history that has evolved during important political and philosophical debates in modern Western civilization. This again had a lot to do about science, politics, and economics. The interplay between the different meanings ascribed to the term has come to be particularly notable in English, as opposed to any other western European languages, such that the extensive use of the term has

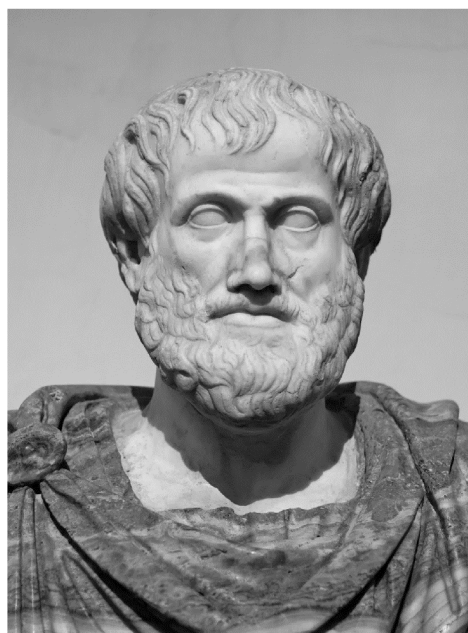
made this coinage almost international. The concept of “common sense” has deep philosophical roots which we shall explore before moving towards its in-depth analysis especially in its relation to sociology.

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### 4.3 The Philosophical Roots of Common Sense.

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The early roots of common-sense date back to Socrates who, it is believed, made a suggestive indication of the existence of “common sense” while being engaged in friendly interaction with one of his students. In this discussion, Socrates looks for a proper definition of knowledge with a talented young mathematician called Theaetetus. The first and longest part of the dialogue is devoted to Theaetetus’ first reply that knowledge is nothing but a perception. In order to show that perception alone cannot amount to knowledge, Plato gives an account of the senses. The aim of his account is to translate perception to the passive reception of basic sensible qualities such as for instance, white, salty, hot; by means of our five senses. This, in turn, results in the initiation of the active process in which the so-called ‘common features’ are understood. These are the features that characterize our varied basic sensible qualities, and they may include ‘being’, ‘difference’, ‘sameness’, ‘likeness’, and ‘unlikeness’.



Aristotle

Photo Credit: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle\\_Altemps\\_Inv8575.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aristotle_Altemps_Inv8575.jpg)

Plato too insists that the soul engages in this active process by means of its own resources, without being helped by the senses and the bodily parts in which the senses live. Since our knowledge requires a ready understanding of the common features, knowledge can only be found in this activity. This is the activity in which the soul engages independently. In the context of Aristotle’s psychology, the expression ‘common sense’ refers to a distinct perceptual capacity in which the five senses are integrated. It is called ‘common’ because it is shared by the five senses, and it is called a ‘sense’ because it is indeed a perceptual ability properly speaking. And because it is a perceptual ability, rather than a rational ability, it is shared by all animals, non-rational and rational alike. Obviously, what Aristotle calls the ‘common sense’ is very different from what we call ‘common sense’.

It is a strange linguistic coincidence that these two very different notions have the same name. The Aristotelian expression *κοινὴ λογική* is translated, quite literally, as *sensus communis* in Latin and as ‘common sense’ in English. Here the Latin *sensus* and the English ‘sense’ are used in their primary sense of a perceptual ability strictly speaking. But in our recent use of the expression ‘common sense’, the English word ‘sense’ has a deeper connotation which travels far beyond the zone of the perceptual abilities. This wider connotation echoes in the Latin word *sensus*, and those other modern European languages which became dominant over the Latin word—such as English, French, or Italian. These languages soon began borrowing the wider implications from the term *sensus communis* in Latin along with them.

For instance, the Greek word *κοινὴ λογική* or *Koini logiki* by contrast, does not permit this wider meaning. It is for this reason, that this Greek expression never refers to the same thing to which our corresponding English expression refers now. However, we are not saying that what we call ‘common sense’ is a modern invention. This is because many of the Latin classical writers, such as Cicero, Horace, and Seneca, used the expression *sensus communis* in a way quite similar to our notion of common sense (Gregoric:2007) . So undoubtedly these Latin classical writers can pretty well be taken as the early fathers of the notion of ‘common sense’.

#### **Do you know ?**

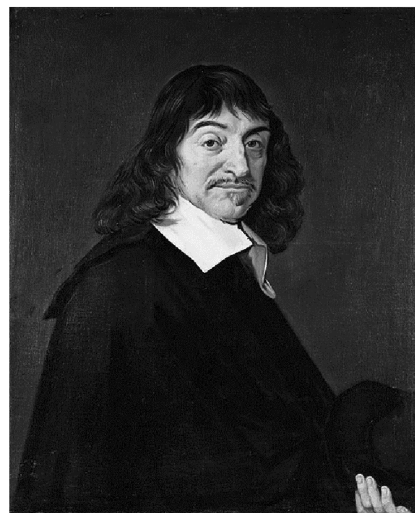
Do you have any idea about these classical Latin writers we just spoke of ? You must know them since they are usually taken as the early founders of the notion of common sense. Marcus Tullius Cicero was a Roman statesman, lawyer and a philosopher who wrote extensively on rhetoric, orations, philosophy, and politics. He was considered one of Rome’s greatest orators. Quintus Horatius Flaccus, on the other hand was known in the English-speaking world as Horace. He was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. Seneca, more famously known as the Younger, fully Lucius Annaeus Seneca and also known simply as Seneca, was a Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, dramatist of Latin literature. Seneca was born in Corduba in Hispania, and raised in Rome, where he was trained in rhetoric and philosophy.

## **4.4 Changing Meanings of the Common Sense**

Since the Age of Enlightenment, the term “common sense” has frequently changed its course and come to take on different moods and meanings at different stages. It had sometimes been used in a demeaning or pejorative sense while at times it appealed to positively, as a sense of authority. It can be negatively identified

with vulgar prejudice and blind superstition, it is often positively contrasted to them as a standard or benchmark for good taste and as the source of the most basic principles needed for science and logic. It was at the beginning of the eighteenth century that this old philosophical term first acquired its first modern English meaning. Common sense began to mean plain, simple and self-evident truths or conventional wit or wisdom that one needed. It came without sophistication for grasping complex or knotty concepts with the basic (common sense) intellectual capacities was easy and tenable.

This transition began with Descartes's criticism of common sense, and what came to be known as the dispute between "rationalism" and "empiricism". In the opening line of one of his most popular books, *Discourse on Method*<sup>1</sup>, Descartes established the most common modern meaning of common sense. He stated that everyone has a similar and sufficient amount of common sense (*bon sens*), but it is rarely used adequately. He said that Good Sense or Reason, is by nature equal in all the men; and that the diversity of our opinions, consequently, does not emerge from some being endowed with a larger share of Reason than others. This diversity arises because we conduct our thoughts along different ways, and do not concentrate our attention on the same objects. But Descartes used two different terms in his work, not only the Latin term "*sensus communis*", but at the same time, the French term *bon sens*, with which he opens his *Discourse on Method*. And this second concept survived much better. This work was written in French, and does not directly discuss the Aristotelian technical theory of perception. *Bon sens* is the equivalent of modern English "common sense" or "good sense". As the Aristotelian meaning of the Latin term began to be forgotten after Descartes, his discussion of *bon sens* gave a new way of defining *sensus communis* in various European languages (including Latin, even though Descartes himself did not translate *bon sens* as *sensus communis*, but treated them as two separate things). In this context, Thomas Paine's polemical pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776) has been described as the most influential political pamphlet of the 18th century, influencing both the American and French revolutions.



René Descartes

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frans\\_Hals\\_-\\_Portret\\_van\\_Ren%C3%A9\\_Descartes.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frans_Hals_-_Portret_van_Ren%C3%A9_Descartes.jpg)

However, common sense was slowly undergoing a change in its meaning

especially after Descartes gave a new meaning to it. Gradually, modern philosophy came to use the term common sense like Descartes, abandoning Aristotle's theory. Modern philosophers like John Locke, David Hume, George Berkeley and Vico agreed that common sense is entirely built up from our shared experience and shared interactions.

It comes out from our innate emotions, and therefore it is indeed imperfect as a basis for attempting to know the truth or to make the best possible decision. Therefore, common sense was slowly losing the moral legitimization and moving towards everyday routine knowledge.

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## 4.5 Sociology and Common Sense

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Till now we were looking at common sense from the lens of the philosophers, now let's wait for a while and see what sociology has to do with it. Sociology in contemporary India is seen as a loosely structured field of intellectual activity<sup>2</sup>. There are widespread disagreements about its aims, its nature and scope, its approach, methods, concepts as well as its very subject matter. Sociology it seems, is almost, every one's cup of tea. Therefore, sometimes sociology appears to us a little cloudy and misty. Part of the vagueness and uncertainty which is characteristic of the subject arises from the very fact that it touches the everyday experience of the ordinary person at so many points. As a result sociology often appears so close to common sense that there is an inevitable tendency to use the one in place of the other (Beteille:1996:2361). Though there is a tendency to equate sociology with common sense, it was never accepted by the sociologists. Sociology has a well-defined body of concepts, methods and data, no matter how loosely held together. In contrast to it, common sense knowledge of even the most acute and well-informed kind cannot make a firm footage. Common sense can never be taken as a substitute for sociology, not from any angle. There can be an innumerable number of distinctions between sociology and common sense. The very first distinction is that, sociological knowledge aims to be general if not universal, whereas common sense on the other hand is particular and localised. Educated, middle-class Bengalis, like other educated or uneducated people anywhere on the earth, presume that their common sense is common sense as such or the common sense of mankind. To make this distinction more prominent, sociologists have tried hard to bring out the subtle characteristics of sociology. An important contribution of sociology, therefore, has been to show that common sense is in fact highly variable which is subjected to the constraints of time and place, more specifically speaking, social constraints. When we claim that sociology is distinct from common sense, we are not suggesting that it should seek



deliberately to be mysterious and impenetrable. It is only because it is so difficult to detach oneself from common sense in the analysis of the human circumstances, and particularly in the study of our own society, professional sociologists often take recourse to tempting conceptual and verbal trickery. This tendency, Beteille thinks is an occupational hazard that must be kept under constant check<sup>3</sup>. An anthropologist as well as a sociologist who detailed us on the connections between sociology and common sense was definitely Nirmal Kumar Bose.

#### **4.5.1 Nirmal Kumar Bose on Common Sense and Sociology**

N K Bose used to say that there are two kinds of scientists, those who make difficult things simple and those who make our simple things more complex. Bose definitely preferred the former over the latter. We must surely avoid the unnecessary complication of the simple through the display of our technical expertise. Moreover, we must also accept the fact that applying common sense is not always successful unless we use it with in-depth sociological understanding, for it only ends up making simple things complex. There is no competition between sociology and common sense. Neither does sociology try bypassing common sense. Sociological writing often tends to be crowded with needless use of heavy academic terms. Thus, sociology often tries avoiding two things. One, it avoids being submerged in the common sense of the scholar's own surroundings for this commonsensical world often has a bearing over the scholar. Two, avoiding a temptation to absorb oneself in a narrow and self-satisfied technical mastery which is often unconnected with the core substance of social enquiry. Sociologists had therefore shown their concern for the inter-penetration of sociological knowledge and common sense. Of all those who showed such concern, special emphasis must be made of Nirmal Kmar Bose, about whom we have read before.

N.K Bose's contribution to the domain of Indian sociology had been in making a stark distinction between sociology and common sense. He discussed at length the common practices and rituals followed by the men found everywhere but he was careful to dispel the wrong notions surrounding them. In a way Bose definitely took a strong position in debunking the myths shrouding the hypothetical beliefs and ideas. Bose researched a lot to grab the real roots of the social problem and did not limit himself by just reaching at its superficial depth. He wanted to go afar and this probably drove him to the core of the problem. This in-depth analysis helped him to do away with the common sensual interpretations which often mislead us away from the true nature of the social facts.

Andre Beteille in his seminal book *Sociology: Essays on approach and methods*, writes a chapter on sociology and common sense. It was written to honor Nirmal

Kumar Bose who was endowed with robust common sense as well as a passionate belief in the value of scientific enquiry. It tries to place sociology as a particular branch of knowledge in the widest context of general ideas and beliefs. The point is not so much that sociology should set itself against common sense as that it should try to reach beyond it. Only a handful of individual sociologists have succeeded in changing the common sense of their time, but that, rather than success in a political cause, should be the aim of sociology as a discipline (Beteille:2002:9-10).

Bose had gone a long way in trying to reach beyond the common perceptions held by men. It is true that he respected the common men and observed their lives from very close quarters. He also vividly described their lifestyles and scientifically explained them as clearly as possible to remove any kind of mystifications enveloping it. In this way he showed how common wisdom contributed to the appropriate designing of the society where everything falls in place in spite of the absence of technological fortification. Thereby he showed the strength of common sense knowledge in encouraging and boosting the basis of sociological theories. Bose for example, while discussing the significance of rice as a cultural trait deliberates on the cultural features that have gathered round the principal foodstuff of the province. He explained succinctly how various activities are channelized centering on the nucleus of rice and which though seemed irrational from outside were brimming with common rationale. Thus while deliberating on the sociology of rice as a cultural trait he went beyond the scope of common sense to draw a bridge between the two (Choudhuri:2018:319). This is what is actually expected from sociology. Sociological knowledge bridges the gap between common wisdom and sound acumen carved out of a disciplined practice of a craft which often common sense alone cannot explain.

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## 4.6 Durkheim's Social Fact and Common Sense

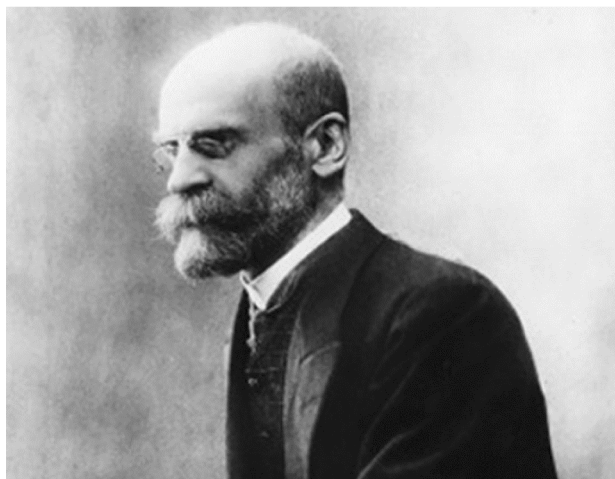
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Let us now see how common sense was conceptualized by yet another sociologist, who was taken as one of the precursors of sociology in the world. **David Émile Durkheim** was a renowned French sociologist who formally established the academic discipline of sociology and along with W. E. B. Du Bois, Karl Marx and Max Weber are commonly taken as the leading architects of modern social science. As the builders of our modern sociology, Emile Durkheim,

Max Weber and others, considered the whole of human society in its diverse and changing forms as their core subject of study, even though they were aware of the peculiar characteristics of their own society.

Durkheim believed that the rigorously disciplined application of the sociological method would

necessarily contribute much to our understanding of our own society. This understanding could be further deepened and broadened by drawing analytical comparisons between their societies and those of others. Durkheim was convinced that common sense understanding was not adequate to reach the deeper insight he wanted to gain. The understanding he sought required him to fashion new tools of enquiry and interpretation. The sociologist who definitely played a big role in demystifying sociological understanding from the



Emile Durkheim

Picture Credit: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Durkheim-vignette-png-9.png>

illusion of understanding created by common sense was definitely Emile Durkheim. He argued tirelessly that the systematic analysis of a subject was not possible unless the researcher freed himself from his presumptions of it. These preconceptions often moulded by his own narrow limited encounters shape the common sensical understanding of the society he inhabits. What is dangerous about such understanding is that not only are they often wrong, but they sometimes do play a deterrent role in exploring the appropriately relevant social facts. At the beginning of his career, Durkheim gave a brilliant demonstration of the excellence of his objective approach over that of common sense. This came out through his masterpiece work on suicide.

He argued that suicide was a social fact whose forms and patterns could not be understood by our common ideas of human psychology. It is Durkheim who made us aware of the idea of 'social facts' which are taken as pivotal facts behind the incidence of social happenings. It is very interesting that what were presumed to have been instigated by commonsensical understandings, were never the actual cause. Durkheim pointed the finger at commonsensical knowledge and took us to an objective and scientific understanding of social happenings. He attributed all commonsensical notions behind social occurrences as wrongful explanation. He instead led us to a more systematic and precise understanding of social experiences which were backed up by sufficient evidence and corroborations (Giddens:2008). Now that we have behind us Durkheim's pioneering study and the many others to

which it gave rise, this perhaps appears to be a generalized understanding now without much hitches. However, when it first appeared, it was obviously a remarkable admission that social causes were behind the social happenings and not private or individual acts as common sense might lead us to believe.

For instance, Durkheim chose to study suicide to prove his claim. Suicide is generally considered to be one of the most private and personal acts, a notion which he debunked. Durkheim believed that sociology had a big role to play while explaining such a seemingly individualistic act such as suicide. Sociology contributed in breaking myths created by common sense. As a sociologist, Durkheim was not bothered with studying why any particular individual committed suicide, which he happily left to the psychologists. Instead, Durkheim was more interested in explaining differing rate of suicide across the social groups. He felt that no amount of psychological or biological facts could explain why one group had a higher rate of suicide than did another. Further, he noted that while suicide rates were on the whole quite stable, they were often subjected to fluctuations due to the operation of various social and economic causes which he could identify. One of his notable findings was that suicide rates not only go up significantly after an economic crash but also after an economic boom. Durkheim had an important insight that strongly contradicted common sense (Beteille:2002). He, therefore, decided to systematically gather a large body of data from different parts of the world.

**Do you know?**

According to Emile Durkheim, the aspects of social life that shape our actions as individuals. Durkheim believed that social facts could be studied scientifically.

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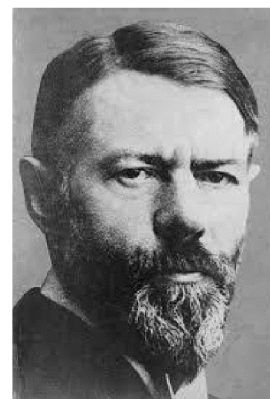
## 4.7 Max Weber's idea of Common Sense

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**Maximilian Karl Emil Weber** or Max Weber as he is commonly known (21 April 1864 – 14 June 1920) was a German sociologist, philosopher and political economist, who is taken today as one of the most important precursors of theoretical development of modern Western society.<sup>4</sup> As his ideas would profoundly impacted social theory as well as social research and methods,<sup>5</sup> Weber is often regarded as among the three pioneers of sociology, alongside Émile Durkheim and Karl Marx.

Weber was primarily focussed on the question of objectivity and subjectivity<sup>6</sup>. He went on to distinguish between social action from social behavior strictly noting that social action must be explained through how individuals subjectively relate to one another<sup>7,8</sup>. The study of social action through interpretive understanding was the basis of his methodology. For him, any explanation of human conduct must be

based upon understanding the subjective meaning and purpose that individuals attach to his actions. He maintained that consequences of human action are mostly the intentions of the actors, and that sometimes they may even be diametrically opposed to one another (Beteille :2002). The dominant view across the theoretical domain until Weber's time showed that whatever be its impact, religion had served as a vital source of social stability. stability was essential for social well-being. Weber's investigative and systematic study showed that deep seated changes had been brought about in economic life by the breakthrough in religion. Weber asserted that neither the commitment to a value system nor the demands of material existence, but it was the tug of war between the two that acted as the true agent of change in society. Weber's assertion went against the commonsensical idea about religion in the society held so far.



Max Weber

Picture Credit: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MaxWeber.jpg>

#### **Do you know what social action is?**

The concept of social action, assumes that humans vary their actions according to social contexts and how it will affect other people. Say, when a potential reaction is not desirable, the action is modified accordingly. Action can mean either a basic action (one that has a meaning) or an advanced social action, which not only has a meaning but is directed at other actors and causes action (or, perhaps, *inaction*).

*[Sociology is] ... the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action and thereby give a causal explanation of the way in which the action proceeds and the effects which it produces. By 'action' in this definition is meant the human behavior when and to the extent that the agent or agents see it as subjectively meaningful ... the meaning to which we refer may be either (a) the meaning actually intended either by an individual agent on a particular historical occasion or by a number of agents on an approximate average in a given set of cases, or (b) the meaning attributed to the agent or agents, as types, in a pure type constructed in the abstract. In neither case is the 'meaning' to be thought of as somehow objectively 'correct' or 'true' by some metaphysical criterion. This is the difference between the empirical sciences of action, such as sociology and history, and any kind of a priori discipline, such as jurisprudence, logic, ethics, or aesthetics whose aim is to extract from their subject-matter 'correct' or 'valid' meaning<sup>9</sup>.*

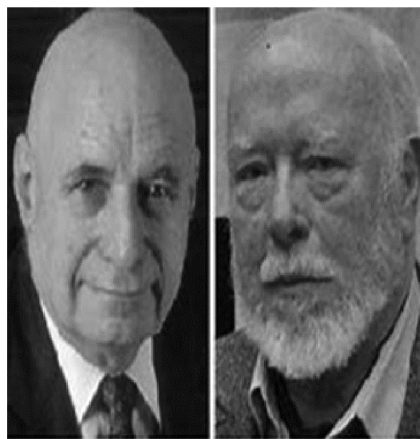
After Weber explained his theories, it is easy to see in retrospect how different regions of the world evolved different kinds of political and economic systems. These were, in turn, grounded on historic, religious and cultural factors (Bakker:1999). However, in order to arrive at his theory, Weber had to study rigorously and meticulously centuries upon centuries of social conditions and patterns. In other words, to arrive at this sociological understanding of which factors were pivotal in determining political and economic structures of modern societies, Weber had to work rigorously. He had to look way beyond 'common sense' explanations of status quo as is expressed in mainstream sources of theories. It would be appropriate to say that the sociological understanding of the social structures as explicated by the Weberian method of studying society is much more rich and profound than the simplistic, 'common sense' versions of the socio-political event available to mainstream channels of information. Therefore, any day, a sociological study of any situation, properly informed by historical facts and empirical evidence, is more likely to lead to a better understanding than what is attained through common sense<sup>10</sup>.

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## 4.8 Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman's Everyday Life and Common Sense

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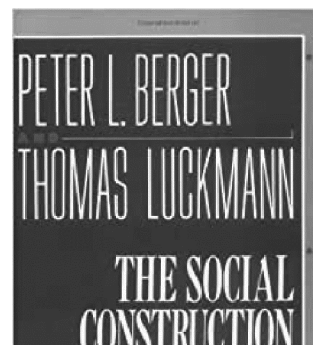
In their 1966 classic study, *The Social Construction of Reality*, sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann examined common-sense knowledge. Peter L. Berger (1929–2017) and Thomas Luckmann (1927–2016) were international sociologists who made significant contributions to the sociology of knowledge, especially by the composition of their highly acclaimed book *The Social Construction of Reality* (1966/1967). **Peter Ludwig Berger**<sup>11</sup> (1929–2017) was an Austrian-born American sociologist and Protestant theologian. Berger soon became well-known for his work in the sociology of knowledge and played a major role in the development of social constructionism. On the other hand, Thomas Luckmann was an American-Austrian sociologist of basically German and Slovene origin who taught mainly in Germany. His contributions were important to studies in sociology of communication, sociology of knowledge, sociology of religion, and the philosophy of science.



Peter Berger      Thomas Luckmann

Photo credit: <https://www.timetoast.com/timelines/historia-de-la-psicologia-social-e7726993-e3fc-4298-ba59-750c7ed6086c>

Their “new” sociology of knowledge that they try constructing takes as its starting point, the experience and actions of human beings. They believed that human activity does not take place only in an already given ordered world, it also produces and reproduces a “world of things”<sup>12</sup>. These are the things that individuals often take for granted as real. They emphasized that these ‘obvious’ facts of social reality may seem to differ among people across cultures, and even among different people within a cultural system. The task becomes an analysis of the processes by which individuals learn to perceive what they think is ‘real’. Social constructivists often apply the ideas of Berger and Luckmann to the investigation of social phenomena, to show the ways in which members of a society come to know and simultaneously build up what is real. Sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people ‘know’ as ‘reality’ in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives (Giddens:2008). In other words, common-sense ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘ideas’ should be taken as the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this ‘knowledge’ that forms the fabric of meanings without which no society could ground on its own. The sociology of knowledge, therefore, must be engaged with the social construction of reality. Berger and Luckman in his book, *Social Construction of Reality* (Picture at the bottom. Photo credit: <http://bonniesbooks.blogspot.com/2009/09/fifteen-books-11.htmzl>) maintain that sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people ‘know’ as ‘reality’ in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, common-sense ‘knowledge’ rather than ‘ideas’ must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this ‘knowledge’ that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could actually exist<sup>13</sup>.



The sociology of knowledge, therefore, must concern itself with the social construction of reality. Berger and Luckman owed their fundamental insight into the necessity for this redefinition to Alfred Schutz (Berger & Luckman:1966). Throughout his work<sup>14</sup>, both as philosopher and as sociologist, Schutz concentrated on the structure of the common-sense world of everyday life. Although he himself did not illustrate a sociology of knowledge, he clearly saw what this discipline should focus on.

He presumed that all typification of common-sense thinking are themselves integral elements of the concrete historical socio-cultural world. It is within this world that they take things as taken for granted and as socially approved. Their structure determines among other things the social distribution and pattern of knowledge. It also determines the relativity and relevance of that knowledge to the

concrete social environment of a concrete group in a particular historical situation. This world of everyday life and the knowledge it generates is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. Alongside, this is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions, and is manufactured and maintained as real by these.

**Do you know?**

**Alfred Schutz** (1899–1959) was an Austrian philosopher. Schutz is gradually being recognized as one of the twentieth century's leading philosophers of social science<sup>15</sup>. He was thoroughly influenced by Max Weber's legacy of philosophical foundations. One of his major work was *Phenomenology of the Social World*.<sup>16</sup>

## 4.9 Interweaving Sociology and Common sense

Now that we have studied the various theoretical vantage points, we must have learnt how they both theorize and do sociology by negotiating with common sense. It is time now we quickly go through the subtle interweaving that there is between sociology and common sense. We can conclude by drawing upon the Andre Beteille made some distinctions between sociology and common sense. Let us look into these distinctions. Common sense is not only localised and regionalised but at the same time constricted by time, place, class, community, gender, and so on. It is also less responsive and keeps meandering from one way to another such that it loses its focus. It is less objective and more ambiguous because it fails to question its own origins and basic suppositions. Even if it does, it does not do so methodologically and systematically. As a result, it often ends up being a little messy and cloudy. As an intellectual discipline, sociology cannot be an offshoot of common sense less because sociology is much more precise and

Objective and above all it does not suffer from the pitfalls that afflict common sense. However, that does not mean that it should turn its back on common sense. We cannot deny that our sociology is to an extent tinted by common sense which is very much a part of our social environment. True it is that even common sense in its turn is also influenced by sociology. Sociology as an intellectual discipline does not separate itself from common sense rather acts back upon it to contribute towards its growth and fulfillment.

Common sense is based on a small range of experience of particular persons or groups in given places and times. Where it comes to such mundane matters as family, marriage, kinship, work and worship, people develop a tendency to believe that their conduct is the most reasonable one. They acquire a confidence in their



ways of thinking and working. They start believing that whatever they believe or practise must be the standard benchmark across societies. Other ways of acting in these regards strike them as peculiar and uncommon. Whenever sociological reasoning acts upon common sense, it functions to level both the utopian and the fatalistic overtones found in it. A dangerous tendency often grows in the common sense, that is it easily constructs imaginary social patterns which bear no similarity with the ground realities. It tends to show that in which there is no inequality, oppression, conflict or tension much against the given current scenario. Here common sense can easily be contrasted against comparative sociology for the latter helps in acquiring and maintaining a sense of right proportion.

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## 4.10 Conclusion

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It is the distinct characteristic of sociology to deal with the similarities as well as the lurking differences among societies with both comparison as well as contrast. It is true, even historians have studied cross-sections of beliefs and practices at different societies over time. They have been doing this even longer than the sociologists. But their characteristic tendency has been to study this diversity in parts and parcels and not as a whole. It is only a few historians who practise comparative history whereas one has to do both comparison and contrast while doing sociology. Sociology not only engages itself with facts from the entire range of human societies, it at the same time observes and analyses them. The educated layman may find it difficult to master all the facts with which the sociologists have to deal. Instead what he often does is, select the method of apt illustration without maintaining any consistent rule of procedure for the selection and corresponding organization of facts (Beteille:2002). On the other hand, sociological practice has its own style of argument that scrutinizes facts before readily accepting them blindly. But it is not that we always maintain objective precision while doing sociology and sometimes do get carried away by hearsays and even by our own biases. It is important that we learn to handle our values and judgements with care lest we will fall prey to unreflected thoughts and faulty notions.

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## 4.11 Summary

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We started with introducing you to the idea of common sense and how its meanings changed over time. Starting from Aristotle to the social constructionists, you must now have a fairly good idea of the range of meanings that the concept went through. Next, we showed how various sociologists tooled their own concepts to combat the meandering nature of common sense. They did this with their own

objective concepts that they designed with aptness. After having studied the theoretical vantage points it became easier for us to look into the absorption of common sense into sociology as well as look for its peculiar distinctions between the two.

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## 4.12 Questions

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### 1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)

- (a) How will you define common sense?
- (b) Who was Peter Berger? Name a major book he penned?
- (c) What is social fact?

### 2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)

- (a) Bring out the essential differences between sociology and common sense.
- (b) What is Verstehen? Explain.
- (c) What is social action? What is its relation with common sense?

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## 4.13 Glossary

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**Rationalism** : In philosophy, rationalism is the epistemological view that “regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge” or “any view appealing to reason as a source of knowledge or justification”.

**Empiricism** : In philosophy, empiricism is a theory that states that knowledge comes only or primarily from sensory experience. It is one of several views of epistemology, along with rationalism and skepticism. Empiricism emphasises the role of empirical evidence in the formation of ideas, rather than innate ideas or traditions.

**Verstehen** : Verstehen, in the context of German philosophy and social sciences in general, has been used since the late 19th century – in English as in German – with the particular sense of the “interpretive or participatory” examination of social phenomena.

**Social Construction** : Social constructionism is a theory of knowledge in sociology and communication theory that examines the development of jointly-constructed understandings of the world that form the basis for shared assumptions about reality.

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## 4.14 Suggested Readings

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## 4.15 Endnotes

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## Unit 5 : Sociological Imagination

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### Structure

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 A Short Biographical Profile of C. Wright Mills
- 5.4 Sociological Imagination: The Promise it made
  - 5.4.1 The Three Basic Questions of Mills
  - 5.4.2 The Distinction between ‘Personal Troubles’ and ‘Public Issues’
  - 5.4.3 Some Illustrations
  - 5.4.4 Formulating the Issues and Troubles
- 5.5 The Task of the Social Scientists
- 5.6 Conclusion
- 5.7 Summary
- 5.8 Questions
- 5.9 Suggested Readings
- 5.10 Glossary

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### 5.1 Objectives

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After reading this unit learners will be able to learn about:

- To understand the concept of sociological imagination.
- To understand the difference between the public and the private
- To understand its scope in constituting the essence of sociology
- To understand its relevance in the present context.

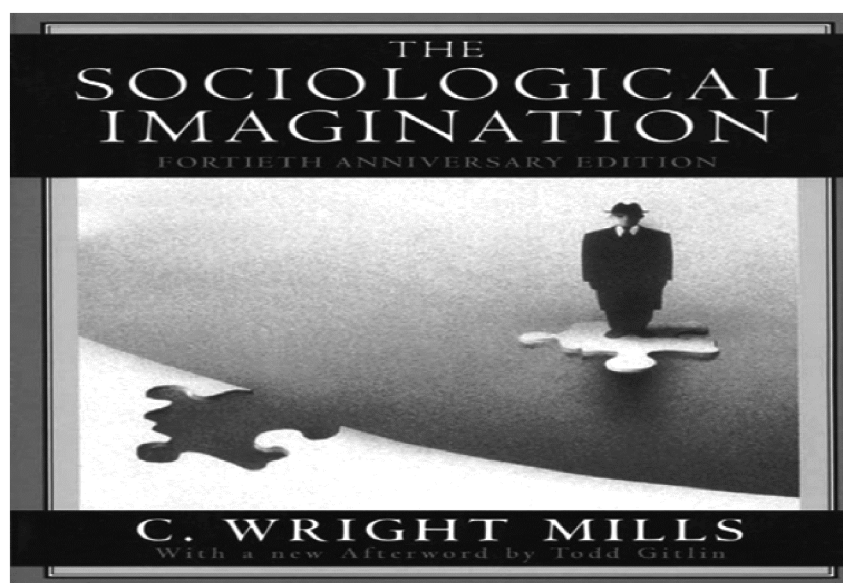
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### 5.2 Introduction

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The term “**sociological imagination**” was coined by the American sociologist C. Wright Mills in his 1959 book *The Sociological Imagination* to describe the type of insights and perspectives offered by the very discipline of sociology. The term is used in introductory textbooks in sociology to explain the nature of sociology and

its relevance in daily life. The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical background in terms of its meaning. This affects the inner life and the extraneous career of a variety of individuals. It enables us to take into account how individuals, as they go through their daily experience, misinterpret their social positions. Within this maze, the order of modern society is organized and it is within this framework that the mental makeup of a variety of men and women is also sketched. In this way, the personal troubles of individuals are focused upon their external troubles and therefore the indifference of the public is translated into their involvement with public issues.



<https://www.slideshare.net/trisnaalient/c-wright-mills-the-sociological-imagination-3sn>

Picture Credit:

Sociological imagination ensures that the individual can understand his own experience and evaluate his own fate by locating himself within his period. It is only by placing him in that context can he know his own chances in life and become aware of those of other individuals like him in similar circumstances. C. Wright Mills made it clear that the crux of social understanding can only develop if we get to bridge the gap between our personal troubles and public problems. Mills remained a very prominent sociologist of the 1960s and his ideas helped shape the substance of sociological imagination which remained crucial to our understanding of the

sociological perspective in general and the public-private ridge in particular.

Do you know who in real life, Mills was?



Picture : C. Wright Mills

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/dissenting-big-time-e.p.-thompson-c.-wright-mills-and-making-the-first-new> (Picture Credit)

C. Wright Mills was a formidable sociologist, social commentator, and critic. Both his writings and character aroused considerable debate. He had been described as an ‘American Utopian’ – committed to social change. He was quickly angered by the oppression he saw around him and immediately protested. He was very critical of what passed for contemporary sociology. He believed that knowledge when used properly, could bring about the desired society through social change. C. Wright Mills further argued that if the society that was desired was not yet here, it was primarily because of the fault of the intellectuals, i.e the people who possessed the knowledge. Therefore, the discipline, he felt, required a thorough make-over. Mills had spent his life in re-designing the discipline of sociology for he felt the subject would require a fine-tuning in the post-war years that must necessarily be accomplished. In the next section, we shall get a short biography of Mills to have a



clear idea of the sociological imagination and its under-currents. This will help us to better understand the concept of the sociological imagination and what propelled Mills to conceptualize such an idea. Probably a short peek into his biographical profile will better locate him and his vision of social science.

### 5.3 A Short Biographical Profile of C.Wright Mills

C. Wright Mills was born in Waco, a city in Central Texas on August 28th, 1916. His father was an insurance agent hailing from Florida and his mother – Frances Wright Mills – was a lady born and bred in Texas. In the 1920s, the family shifted to Dallas, with Mills graduating from Dallas High School in 1934. He then went on to Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College but soon changed his stream. He went over to the University of Texas at Austin (in 1935) to major in sociology. At the prime of his life he met and married (in 1937) Dorothy Helen Smith. Dorothy at that time was studying post-graduation in literature. However, she left her studies mid-way on getting married and was soon engaged with some work at Women's Residence Hall to eke out a decent living for both of them.



**Dorothy Helen Smith (Freya) at age eighteen, in Anadarko, Oklahoma, 1931, about five years before she met Mills, whom she would marry in Austin, Texas, in 1937. (Photo courtesy of Freya James.)**

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Picture and Text Credit)

At the University of Austin Mills quickly showed his ability to stand out. He soon turned out to be a daredevil and outspoken. This robustness went against him in the sociology department as he struggled hard to earn a graduate assistantship. He pursued his MA in philosophy and this brought him close to the work of George H. Mead, John Dewey and Charles Sanders Pierce (Tilman 1984: 7). In 1939 Mills left Austin for Madison where he had gained a scholarship to enroll himself in a Ph.D. program in sociology at the University of Wisconsin. After some time, the



relationship between Freya and C. Wright Mills became unsettled. They were finally divorced in 1940 and Mills remarried in 1941. In 1943 they had a baby girl – Pamela.

**Mills and Pam in Greenbelt, Maryland, in 1944, when Mills was an associate professor of sociology at the University of Maryland. (Mills family photo.)**

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Picture and Text Credit)

C. Wright Mills gained his Ph.D. in 1942 for his thesis ‘A Sociological Account of Pragmatism: An essay on the sociology of knowledge’ (which was published after his death in 1964). He gained a position in 1941 as an associate professor at the University of Maryland before moving very soon to Columbia University in 1945. Mill’s very first academic association was to work as a research associate in the Bureau of Applied Social Research and then the following year he served as an assistant professor of sociology (Mills and Mills 2000: 344). Freya and C. Wright divorced again in 1947 with Charles moving to a separate apartment on the outskirts of Greenwich Village in New York City. This kind of life to which Mills was getting accustomed was both light and enjoyable and therefore, he tried relaxing as much as possible.



**Freya and Mills in Madison, Wisconsin, in March 1941, when they remarried. (Photo courtesy Freya James.)**

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Photo and Text Credit)

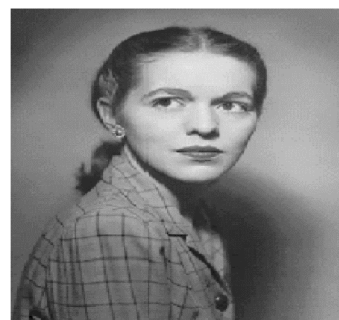
Like his personal life, he did not gel well with his colleagues in the department. The members of the Department of Sociology at Columbia of US sociology during the 1950s and 1950s consisted of many luminaries like Daniel Bell, Paul Lazarsfeld, Seymour Martin Lipset, and Robert Merton. It would be wrong to say that they did not, on the whole, get along with Mills. To an extent, it might be personal but it mainly flowed from his methodological and ideological orientations. The feeling appears to have been somewhat mutual. However, there were others whom he looked up with respect including Robert Lynd and a few others who however were not from his department like Jacques Barzun and Meyer Schapiro (an art historian and radical who had a particular thrust upon style as a craft – Horowitz 1983: 88).

**Do you know?**

Mills went to the University of Wisconsin in 1939. He was considered as extremely arrogant and overly ambitious. His professional relationships were intensely argumentative and unfavorable. At the oral defense of his dissertation, he declined to make the necessary revisions that his committee had clearly asked for. The defense was quietly accepted without ever being formally approved by the committee.

In 1947 C. Wright Mills married Ruth Harper (who was a researcher on the project that later on became *White Collar*). Around four years later, their daughter Kathryn was born (1955). Ruth and C. Wright Mills were separated in 1957.

**Ruth Harper at age twenty-four, in a photo she gave Mills several months before their marriage in July 1947. They met when Mills used some of his Guggenheim funding to hire her to do research for *White Collar*. (Photo by Blackstone Studios, New York, New York.)**



<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Photo and Text Credit)

In the mid-1950s Mills traveled extensively in Europe and he was, for a span of time, a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Copenhagen. He had begun to develop his interest in Marxism (which resulted in *The Marxist* published quite shortly after his death in 1962). He also developed acquaintance with a number of key UK figures on the left including Tom Bottomore (1920-92), Ralph Miliband (1924-94) and E. P. Thompson (1924-93). It was during these travels that he wrote much of *The Sociological Imagination* (1959). Irving Louis Horowitz (1983: 88) while commenting on this book said, “It helped to make possible the penetration of the field by a new generation of social scientists dedicated to problems of social change rather than system maintenance”. This book was also a way of giving an answer to all the strife he had with his fellow faculties in the department. In 1959 C. Wright Mills married Yaroslava Surmach and moved into a new home in Rockland County with Kathryn.



**Yaroslava and Wright Mills (in front) with Ralph and Marion Miliband in London, fall 1961. (Time-release photo set up by Yaroslava Mills.)**

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Photo and Text Credit).

Yaroslava and C. Wright Mills had a son Nikolas Charles in 1960 (Mills and Mills 2000: 346). In 1960 he had a major heart attack after which he was informed if he had another he would die (Mills and Mills 2000:321). On March 20, 1962, unfortunately, the nightmare came true and he died an untimely death at his home in West Nyack. He was only 46 years old when he was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery, Nyack, New York. Mills left behind his three children, Kate, Pam, and Nik, in New York to sustain his legacy. Along with him, we lost a sociological gem forever. Let us now have a look at one of his major works and how it influenced our discipline.



**Mills's children, Kate, Pam, and Nik, in New York, the week of Mills's funeral, late March 1962. (Photo by Yaroslava Mills.)**

<https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt7f59q5ms;chunk.id=0;doc.view=print> (Photo and Text Credit).

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## **5.4 Sociological Imagination: The Promise it made**

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Mills said that every individual, as they live from one generation to the next, in some society or the other; lives out a biography. He lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his unique living, he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society. He at the same time influences the course of its history, despite the fact that he is made by society and by its historical push and shoves. The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise that we will be talking about. To recognize this task and this promise is a huge mark for any social researcher. This was not absolutely novel but the traces of this imagination that we had been talking about was even found in classical thinkers like Herbert

Spencer, E. A. Ross, Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim, Karl Mannheim, Karl Marx, Thorstein Veblen, Joseph Schumpeter, W. E. H. Lecky and Max Weber. No social study could claim to have finished its intellectual journey unless it had addressed the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections and interminglings within a society. Mills was very clear that whatever might have been the typical problems of a social analyst, it should never stop to become as sociologically imaginative as possible. However limited or broad might be the features of social reality they have analyzed, those who have been imaginatively aware of the promise of their work must have consistently asked three sorts of questions, considered basic by Mills.

### 5.4.1 The Three Basic Questions of Mills

Let's have a look at these questions, often posed by Mills. These questions are:

- What is the structure of this particular society as a whole? What are its essential components, and how are they related to one another? How does it differ from other varieties of social order? Within it, what is the meaning of any particular feature for its continuance and for its change?
- Where does this society stand in human history? What are the mechanics by which it is changing? What is its place within and its meaning for the development of humanity as a whole? How does any particular feature we are examining effect, and how is it affected by, the historical period in which it moves? And this period—what are its essential features? How does it differ from other periods? What are its characteristic ways of history-making?
- What varieties of men and women now prevail in this society and in this period? And what varieties are coming to prevail? In what ways are they selected and formed, liberated and repressed, made sensitive and blunted? What kinds of human nature are revealed in the conduct and character we observe in this society in this period? And what is the meaning for human nature of each and every feature of the society we are examining?

Mills clarified that whether the point of interest is a great and powerful state or a minor literary mood, a family, a prison, a creed—these are the basic questions the best social analysts should always ask. They are the intellectual columns of classic studies of man in society—and they are also the questions inevitably raised by any being possessing the sociological imagination. We can easily understand that imagination is the capacity to shift very rapidly from one perspective to another—from the political to the psychological; from the examination of a single-family to

comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to the military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry and whatnot. It is this versatile capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self that constitutes the core of sociological imagination. It examines the relations between the two and looks for its easy intersection and unification. Back of its mind, there is always the urge to know the social and historical meaning of the individual in the society and in the period in which he has his quality and his being. That, in brief, is why it is by means of the sociological imagination that men now hope to grasp what is going on in the world and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within the larger society. In large part, contemporary man's self-conscious view of himself as at least an outsider, if not a permanent stranger, rests upon an absorbed realization of social relativity and of the transformative power of history. The sociological imagination is the most fruitful form of this self-consciousness. Older decisions that once appeared sound now seem to them products of a mind unaccountably dense and unsettled. Their capacity for astonishment is made lively again. They acquire a new way of thinking, they experience another kind of interpretation of values. We can say, in a word, that by their reflection and by their sensibility, they can easily realize the cultural meaning of the social sciences. For this to happen, one must learn to distinguish between the public issues and the private problems that we already spoke about in our introductory section. Let's study it in detail in our next section.

#### **5.4.2 The Distinction between 'Personal Troubles' and 'Public Issues'**

Perhaps the most fruitful distinction with which the sociological imagination works is between 'the personal troubles of milieu' and 'the public issues of the social structure'. This distinction is an essential tool of the sociological imagination and a feature of all seminal works in social science. Troubles often occur within the character of the individual and within the range of his immediate interactions with others. They have to do with his own self and with those limited areas of social life about which he is aware. Therefore, the enlistment and the resolution of troubles properly lie within the individual as a biographical entity and within the scope of his immediate surroundings. That is to say, the social setting that is directly open to his personal experience and to some extent his voluntary activities. Troubles are more of a private matter, for values cherished by an individual are felt by him to be threatened. Issues have to do with matters that surpass these local environments of the individual and the range of his inner and selfish Me. They have to do with the institutions and the structures of a historical society as a whole. They must do with

the ways in which various milieux overlap and interpenetrate to constitute the larger structure of social and historical life. An issue, on the other hand, is a public matter. Some values cherished by the public are felt to be threatened.

### 5.4.3 Some Illustrations

Let's try to understand private and public through proper illustrations. In these terms, consider unemployment. When, in a city of 100,000, only one man is Corona virus-infected, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief, we properly look to the profile of the man, his medical history, and his immediate exposures and travel history. Note currently the whole world is under the threat of Coronavirus, which has become a pandemic for the globe per se. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. You can protect yourself by washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding close contact (1 meter or 3 feet) with people who are unwell. But when in a nation of millions, thousands get infected, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of options open to any one individual. The very structure of global immunity is under threat. Both the correct proposal of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the social-economic and political institutions of the society.

Not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals matter, but the entire globe and its global health had become impaired. The nation must propose ways to save the civilization from the tentacles of the deadly Coronavirus before it gobbles up the whole human race. The virus attacking one or a handful of individuals does remain a personal problem whose resolution must be sought within that individual or his current peers but when the virus had taken a pandemic shape, it had stopped becoming personal trouble anymore. We must realize the situation is dark and gloomy and beyond the scope of an individual. It requires social intervention now for the social structure is at stake now. Similarly, the personal problem of war, when it occurs, maybe how to survive it or how to die during a war with honor; how to make money out of it; how to climb into the higher safety of the military apparatus; or how to contribute to the war's possible termination. In short, according to one's values, we have to find a set of milieux and within it to survive the war or make one's death meaningful. But the structural issues of war have to do with its causes such as, what types of men it throws up into command; what are its effects upon economic and political, family and religious institutions, with the unorganized irresponsibility of a world of nation-states.

Again, let's consider marriage. Inside a marriage, a man and a woman may experience personal troubles, but when the divorce rate during the first four years of marriage is 350 out of every 1,000 attempts, this is an indication of a structural issue having to do with the institutions of marriage and the family and other institutions that have a bearing upon them. Thus, we find that there is a sharp line of divide between the public and the private. What we experience in various and specific milieux, is often caused by structural changes. Accordingly, to understand the changes of many personal milieux we are required to look beyond them and their local conditions. And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more structured. They keep embracing one another and become more intricately connected with one another. To be aware of the idea of social structure and to use it with enough sensibility is a great task at hand for a sociologist. To be capable of tracing such linkages among a great variety of milieux is possible for a man. To be able to do who possesses sociological imagination.

#### **5.4.4 Formulating the Issues and Troubles**

To formulate issues and troubles, we must ask what values are cherished but threatened, and what values are cherished and encouraged, by the characteristic trends of our period. When people cherish some set of values and do not feel any threat or assault to them, they experience well-being. However, the opposite can also happen. When they cherish values but do feel them to be thwarted or threatened, they experience a crisis—either as a personal trouble or as a public issue. And if all their values seem involved, they may feel the total threat of panic or pandemic as is now the condition with Coronavirus. But suppose people are neither aware of any cherished values nor experience any harm to them? That is when we experience indifference, which, if it seems to involve all their cherished values, becomes a case of apathy. Suppose, finally, they are unaware of any cherished values, but still are very much aware of a threat? There is always a sense of danger looming over their minds, which is always haunting them, and what should you call that? That is the experience of uneasiness or of anxiety, which can create an absolutely deadly condition of morbidity. Ours is a time of uneasiness and indifference which often does not permit the work of reason and the play of sensibility. Instead of troubles—defined in terms of values and threats—there is often the misery of vague uneasiness, undefinable in words. Instead of explicit issues being spelled out, there is often the underlying feeling that all is somehow not right.

Neither the values threatened nor whatever threatens them had been stated in clear terms. There is always an embedded sense of ambiguity and vagueness hanging



in the air as if all is not well. In short, they have not been carried out to the point of decision. Much less have they been formulated as problems of social science. In the 'thirties, the situations were not so stark. Some men came forward to understand their personal troubles in these terms. The values threatened were plain to see and cherished by all. The structural contradictions that threatened them also seemed plain and simple. There were not much complications wrapping us. But unfortunately, the values threatened in the era after World War Two are often neither widely acknowledged as values nor widely felt to be threatened. Much private uneasiness goes unformulated and unspoken. Much public malaise and many decisions of enormous structural relevance never become public issues. For those who accept such inherited values as reason and freedom, it is the uneasiness itself that is giving us the trouble. It is the indifference itself that is the issue. And it is this condition, of uneasiness and indifference, that is the signal feature of our period. All this is so striking that it is often interpreted by observers as a shift in the very kinds of problems that need now to be formulated. We are frequently told that the problems of our decade or even the crises of our period now have to do with the quality of individual life. In fact, with the question of whether there is soon going to be anything that can properly be called individual life. Not child labor but comic books, not poverty but mass leisure, are at the center of concern. Many great public issues, as well as many private troubles, are described in terms of 'the psychiatric'. Often, it seems, that it is a pathetic attempt to avoid the large issues and problems of modern society.

It arbitrarily divorces the individual life from the larger institutions within which that life is enacted. Problems of leisure, for example, cannot even be stated without considering problems of work. Family troubles over comic books cannot be formulated as problems without considering the plight of the contemporary family in its new relations with the newer institutions of the social structure. Neither leisure nor its debilitating uses can be understood as problems without recognition of the extent to which malaise and indifference now form the social and personal climate of contemporary society. In this climate, no problems of 'the private life can be stated and solved without recognition of the crisis of ambition that is part of the very career of men at work in the incorporated economy. It is true, as psychoanalysts continually point out, that people do often have 'the increasing sense of being moved by obscure forces within themselves which they are unable to define. But it is not true, as Ernest Jones asserted, that 'man's chief enemy and danger is his own unruly nature and the dark forces pent up within him. On the contrary, 'Man's chief danger' today lies in the unruly forces of contemporary society itself and the reasons are many. With our alienating methods of production, enveloping techniques of political domination and its international anarchy, situations are unimaginably grave today. In a word, this has led us towards a pervasive transformation of the very 'nature' of

man and the conditions and aims of his life. It is now the social scientist's foremost political and intellectual to make clear the elements of contemporary uneasiness and indifference. It is the central demand made upon him by other cultural workmen—by physical scientists and artists, by the intellectual community in general. It is because of this task and these demands, Mills believed that the social sciences are becoming the common denominator of our cultural period, and the sociological imagination our most needed quality of mind.

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## 5.5 The Task of the Social Scientists

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The sociological imagination is becoming, I believe, the major common denominator of our cultural life and its signal feature. This quality of mind is found in the social and psychological sciences, but it goes far beyond these studies as we now know them. Its acquisition by individuals and by the cultural community at large is slow and often fumbling. Many social scientists are themselves quite unaware of it. They do not seem to know that the use of this imagination is central to the best work that they might do. By failing to develop and use it they are failing to meet the cultural expectations that are coming to be demanded of them. The classic traditions of their several disciplines make available to them this imagination which they have discarded with utmost callousness. Yet in factual and moral concerns, in literary work and in political analysis, the qualities of this imagination are regularly demanded. In a great variety of expressions, they have become central features of intellectual endeavor and cultural sensibility. Popular categories of criticism—high, middle, and low-brow, for example—are now at least as much sociological as aesthetic. Novelists—whose serious work embodies the most widespread definitions of human reality—frequently possess this imagination and do much to meet the demand for it. Although fashion is often revealed by attempts to use it, the sociological imagination is not merely a fashion. It is a quality of mind that seems most dramatically to promise an understanding of the intimate realities of ourselves in connection with larger social realities. It is not merely one quality of mind among the contemporary range of cultural sensibilities. Perhaps, it is the quality whose wider and more skilled use offers the promise that all such sensibilities, especially the human reason will come to play a greater role in shaping human affairs.

Among social scientists, there is widespread uneasiness, both intellectual and moral, about the direction their chosen studies seem to be driving them to. This uneasiness, as well as the unfortunate tendencies, are contributed by several factors, one of which is, part of a general malaise of contemporary intellectual life. Yet perhaps uneasiness is more acute among social scientists, if only because of the larger promise that had guided much earlier work in their fields. At the same time,

the nature of the subjects with which they deal and the urgent need for significant work today exert pressure upon them. Not everyone shares this uneasiness, but the fact that many do not is itself a grave cause for further uneasiness among those who are alert to the promise. They are honest enough to admit the pretentious mediocrity of much current effort. Mills seriously hoped that one day there will be a decline in this uneasiness. This should be possible for one shall define some of its sources to help transform it into specific desperation to realize the promise of social science. Of late the conception of social science Mills held had not been powerful enough. His conception stands opposed to social science as a set of bureaucratic techniques that inhibit social inquiry by 'methodological' pretensions. They congest such work by obscurantist conceptions, that is they hide things from the public sphere. The trivialize major public issues by unnecessarily putting them under the carpet. Thus public problems unconnected with publicly relevant issues often lose significance and become challenged. These inhibitions, obscurities, and trivialities have created a crisis in social studies today without suggesting, in the least, a way out of that crisis. Some social scientists stress the need for 'research teams of technicians/ others for the primacy of the individual scholar. Some expend great energy upon refinements of methods and techniques of investigation. Others think the scholarly ways of the intellectual craftsmen are being abandoned and ought now to be rehabilitated. Some go about their work in accordance with a rigid set of mechanical procedures; others seek to develop, to invite, and to use the sociological imagination.

There are different ways that scientist's study. Some scientists associate and disassociate concepts in what seems to others a curious manner while others narrowly study only small-scale milieus, in the hope of building up conceptions of larger structures. Others examine social structures in which they try 'to locate' many smaller milieus. Some, neglecting comparative studies altogether, study only one small community in one society at a time. Others can be seen in a fully comparative way work directly on the national social structures of the world. Some confine their exact research to very short-run sequences of human affairs while others are concerned with issues that are only apparent in long historical perspectives. Some specialize their work according to academic departments; others, drawing upon all departments, specialize according to topic or problem, regardless of where these lie academically. Some confront the variety of history, biography, society; others do not. But Mills also tried to state the cultural and political meanings of social science. He said only when the problem of social science as a public issue will be recognized, and fruitful discussion will become possible. Then there will be greater self-awareness all around—which is, of course, a pre-condition for objectivity in the enterprise of social science as a whole. Social imagination is just walking ahead to fructify all those dreams come true for a flowering and bright social science.

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## 5.6 Conclusion

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When Mills wrote *Sociological Imagination*, and especially through the 1960s, administrative research was on the verge of growth. Mills accordingly singled it out for special attention in *The Sociological Imagination*. This makes it all the more remarkable that, at the turn of the millennium, most of *The Sociological Imagination* remains as valid, and necessary, as ever. Forty years ago, Mills identified the main directions of sociology in terms largely valid even today. Sociological imagination remains even today a strategy to encounter “a set of bureaucratic techniques which discourage social inquiry by methodological pretensions. Such techniques congest work by imprecise and half-true conceptions and distract our attention from publicly relevant issues. Mills noted that one of the high purposes of sociology had been to bring intellectual clarity to social life and this is where other disciplines like literature, art and criticism largely fail. The sense of political indifference can clearly be taken as resulting from the grave absence of sociological imagination in decision making processes. For Mills, the frequent absence of engaging legitimation and the prevalence of mass apathy are surely two of the central political facts that culminate our social problems even more. “Prosperity,” however unequally distributed, should present itself as the all-purpose solution to all social questions.

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## 5.7 Summary

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We saw sociological imagination was largely developed by Mills as a perspective or social lens for both social observations, inquiry and research as well for policymaking. *The Sociological Imagination* describes the type of insights and perspectives offered by the very discipline of sociology. The term is used in introductory textbooks in sociology to explain the nature of sociology and its relevance in daily life. The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical background in terms of its meaning. This affects the inner life and the extraneous career of a variety of individuals. It enables us to take into account how individuals, as they go through their daily experience, misinterpret their social positions. Within this maze, the order of modern society is organized and it is within this framework that the mental makeup of a variety of men and women is also sketched. In this way, the personal troubles of individuals are focused upon their external troubles and therefore the indifference of the public is translated into their involvement with public issues. The book helped Mills, as we saw in his biography, was an assortment of the tide of experiences he have had, especially at his workplace. The book made possible the penetration of the field by a new generation of social scientists dedicated to problems of social change rather than

system maintenance. This book was also a way of giving an answer to all the strife he had with his fellow faculties in the department. Mills said that every individual, as they live from one generation to the next, in some society or the other; lives out a biography. He lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his unique living, he contributes, however minutely, to the shaping of this society. He at the same time influences the course of its history, despite the fact that he is made by society and by its historical push and shoves.

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## 5.8 Questions

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### 1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)

- (a) What is Sociological Imagination? Who proposed the term?
- (b) What is Biography?
- (c) When did Mills write the book, *Sociological Imagination*?

### 2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)

- (a) How will you distinguish between public and private?
- (b) What should be the task of a social scientist according to Mills?
- (c) Give illustrations to mark the sociologically imaginative insight.

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## 5.9 Suggested Readings

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Dawson, Matt, et al. *Stretching the Sociological Imagination: Essays in Honour of John Eldridge*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

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Ryder, Christina. *The Basics of Sociology: Developing and Applying the Sociological Imagination*. Cognella, Academic Publishing, 2019.

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## 5.10 Glossary

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1. Biography—At first, biographical writings were regarded merely as a subsection of history with a focus on a particular individual of historical importance. The independent genre of biography as distinct from general history writing began to emerge in the 18th century and reached its contemporary form at the turn of the 20th century. However, here we are referring to the life experiences of a particular individual and the events he went through.
2. Milieu—The social environment, social context, sociocultural context or milieu refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live or in which something happens or develops. It includes the culture that the individual was educated or lives in and the people and institutions with whom they interact.
3. Public—The name “public” originates with the Latin *publicus* (also *poplicus*), from *populus*, to the English word ‘populace’, and in general, denotes some mass population (“the people”) in association with some matter of common interest. So in political science and history, a public is a population of individuals in association with civic affairs or affairs of office or state. In social psychology, marketing, and public relations, a public has a more situational definition, John Dewey defined (Dewey 1927) public as a group of people who, in facing a similar problem, recognize it and organize themselves to address it. Dewey’s definition of a public is thus situational: people organized about a situation. Built upon this situational definition of a public is the situational theory of publics by James E. Grunig (Grunig 1983), which talks of *nonpublic* (who have no problem), *latent publics* (who have a problem), *aware publics* (who recognize that they have a problem), and *active publics* (who do something about their problem).

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## **Unit 6 : Thinking Sociologically**

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### **Structure**

- 6.1 Objectives**
- 6.2 Introduction**
- 6.3 The classical traditional perspectives of sociology**
- 6.4 The Sociological Imagination**
- 6.5 Emergence of Sociology**
  - 6.5.1 Background to the emergence of sociology**
  - 6.5.2 The Enlightenment Period**
  - 6.5.3 The French Revolution**
  - 6.5.4 The Industrial Revolution**
- 6.6 Emergence of social anthropology**
  - 6.6.1 First phase of development**
  - 6.6.2 Second phase of development**
  - 6.6.3 Emergence of modern anthropology**
- 6.7 Sociology and common sense**
- 6.8 Sociology as science**
- 6.9 Applied sociology**
- 6.10 Summary**
- 6.11 Questions**
- 6.12 Suggested Readings**

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### **6.1. Objectives**

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This unit focuses upon the following points:

- Sociological way of looking at reality of everyday life.
- It will give you an understanding of the classical ways of thinking about society
- Help us understand how these perspectives are being modified and challenged by arrival of new perspectives.

- This chapter will discuss the wide ranging and developing theories to help us make sense of this world.
- To understand various sociological methods.

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## 6.2 Introduction

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Sociology is best seen as multi-paradigmatic and suggests a range of perspectives. The key challenge for a sociology is to search for general ways of understanding and interpreting social life. Sociology helps to demonstrate the social forces that organize society in very, very different ways and demonstrate it in time and space. You are able to see the trajectory from the past societies to the present societies.

*“The first wisdom of sociology is this: things are not what they seem”*

—Peter Berger

The sociological perspective reminds us of the varied differences in the world. Various theoretical perspectives guide sociologists as they construct theories. Newer developments in sociological theory have highlighted how all sociology must work from perspectives or different voices. It is thus multi-paradigmatic. The emergence of sociology as a distinct discipline dates back to eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The multiple phases and changes during that period helped shaped this subject culminating into newer ideas from time to time which has been described exhaustively in this chapter.

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## 6.3 The classical traditional perspectives of sociology

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Broadly three perspectives dominated sociological thinking for a long while, which we will discuss in this segment. The three perspectives which will be briefly described are functionalism, conflict and action theory.

**(a) The functionalist perspective :** Functionalism is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together and interconnect, often to promote solidarity and stability. This perspective implies that our lives are guided by social structure which means stable patterns of social behaviour. Secondly this perspective leads us to understand social structure in terms of its social functions, or consequences for the operation of society. Functionalism owes much to the ideas of August Comte, Herbert Spencer, etc.



**(b) The conflict perspective :** The conflict perspective is a framework for building theory that sees society as an arena of differences and inequalities that generate conflict and change. This approach complements the functional perspective by highlighting not solidarity but division based on different interest and potential inequality. Karl Marx whose ideas underlie the conflict perspective.

**(c) The social action perspective :** Action theory starts with the ways in which people (or actors) orient themselves to each other, and how they do so on the basis of meanings. This provides a micro-level orientation, meaning a focus on the emerging meanings of social interaction in specific situations. The major proponent of this approach is highly influential Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist who emphasized the need to understand a setting from the point of view of the people in it.

**(d) Contemporary perspectives in sociology :** Although functionalism, conflict theory and action sociology are important and common positions in sociology, there are multiple other perspectives for looking at social life that have emerged over the past decades. As society changes, so do different approaches are adopted within it. For instance, conversational analysis is an approach that focus on different aspects of action, such as language and conversation.

‘There is no absolutely ‘objective’ scientific analysis of culture or ...of ‘social phenomena’ independent of social and ‘one-sided’ viewpoints according to which...they are selected, analyzed and organized.’ – (Weber,1949:72)

Different perspectives, different cultures, points of view or standpoints from which analysis proceeds has become more and more important for modern sociology.

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## 6.4 The sociological imagination

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*Sociological imagination is “the vivid awareness of the relationship between experience and the wider society”*  
—C. Wright Mills

The sociological imagination is the ability to see things socially and how they interact and influence each other. To have a sociological imagination, a person must be able to pull away from the situation and think from an alternative point of view. This ability is central to one’s development of a sociological perspective on the world.

As sociology is a discipline of broad scope: virtually no topic be it gender, race, religion, politics, education, health care, drug abuse, pornography, group behavior, conformity—is taboo for sociological examination and interpretation. Sociologists typically focus their studies on how people and society influence other people, because

external, or social, forces shape most personal experiences. These social forces exist in the form of interpersonal relationships among family and friends, as well as among the people encountered in academic, religious, political, economic, and other types of social institutions. In 1959, sociologist C. Wright Mills defined *sociological imagination* as the ability to see the impact of social forces on individuals' private and public lives. Sociological imagination, then, plays a central role in the sociological perspective. His book "The Sociological Imagination" covers the history of sociology as a field of study relating to society and people's lives in it.

For now, Mills outlines three types of questions that sociologists tend to ask. First, what is the structure of society? This question wants to know how different groups in a society are related. Second, what is the place of society in history? This question wants to figure out how societies change across time and how our society today is related to societies of the past. Third, what kinds of people does society produce? This question seeks to describe how people's personalities and moods—their beliefs and values—are also shaped by the social world in which they live.

Mills details the "promise" of this imagination: why he thinks it's important to ask these questions and what he thinks they help us understand. For a lay man person, a sociological imagination is able to shuttle between the personal and historical. In the case of the contemporary man who feels trapped and powerless, sociological study explains how these feelings are produced by something larger than an individual's life. Such study can show him how his personal life is also shaped by the society in which he lives and the historical period to which he belongs. Sociology connects the personal and the historical by recasting personal problems as historical ones and historical problems as personal ones. Personally, an individual feels trapped; sociology asks, what is going on in history that produces this feeling? Or, historically, the world is in a Cold War; sociology asks, how does this global situation get played out in how people feel and think in their private lives?

Another aspect to the sociological imagination on which Mills laid the most emphasis was our possibilities for the future. He argued that sociology not only helps us to analyze current and existing patterns of social life, but it also helps us to see some of the possible future open to us. Through the sociological imagination, we can see not only what *is* real, but also what could *become* real that we should desire to make it that way.

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## 6.5 Emergence of Sociology

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In this segment we will trace the relationship between the emergence of

sociology and the social and intellectual conditions of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The reason we need to discuss this is because sociology as a subject or discipline that we study today, emerged first in Europe. Two very important events of the period, the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution which followed the Commercial Revolution and the Scientific Revolution in Europe leaving a lasting impact on the main themes of sociology.

### **6.5.1 Background to the emergence of sociology**

There is always a connection between the social conditions of a period and the ideas, which arise and are dominant in that period. During the British raj, the Indian middle class emerged as a product of the economic policies of colonialism. Disturbed by the ongoing exploitation of colonialism, they started writing, campaigning, building movements for free India. Culture, theater, songs, literature etc was also later serialized in television which depicts changes of that time and how that ideas are normally rooted in their social context.

Now we shall study the different phases and important factors which led to the emergence of sociology.

### **6.5.2 The Enlightenment Period**

The emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline dates back to that period of European history, which saw such tremendous social, political and economic changes as embodied in the French revolution and Industrial revolution as it embodies the spirit of new awakening in the eighteenth century. This period marked radical changes and introduced the new way of thinking and looking at reality. Individuals started questioning each and every aspect of life. Classes were recognized, old classes were overthrown, new classes arose, religion was questioned, position of women changed, etc. Sociology emerged as a distinct science in nineteenth century Europe, when the, passed through immense changes set in the French and Industrial revolutions. Therefore it can be said that sociology is a science of the new industrial society.

### **6.5.3 The French Revolution**

The French revolution started in 1789 which marked a turning point in the history of human struggle for freedom and equality. It ushered new order of society and an end to feudalism, bring about far reaching changes throughout not only Europe but also in other countries like India. Ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality were the ideas generated during this period which now form a part of the preamble to the constitution of India.

### **Basic feature of French society**

The French society was divided into feudal 'estates'. Estates are defined as a system of stratification found in feudal European societies whereby one section or estate is distinguished from the other in terms of status, privileges and restrictions accorded to that estate.

The First Estate consisted of the clergy, which was stratified into higher clergy who lived a life of luxury and gave little attention to religion.

The Second Estate consisted of the nobility, nobles of the sword( big landlords) and nobles of the robe(not by birth by title such as magistrates and judges).

The Third Estate comprised the rest of the society and included the peasants, the merchants, the artisans, and others.

France like some other European countries during the eighteenth century, had entered into the age of reason and rationalism. Some of the major philosophers, whose ideas influenced the French people, were rationalists, like Montesquieu (1689-1755), Locke (1632-1704).

### **6.5.4 The Industrial Revolution**

The industrial revolution began around 1760 A.D. in England. It brought about great changes in the social and economic life of the people first in England then in the other continents. During Industrial revolution, new tools and techniques were invented, which could produce goods on a larger scale. A change in the economy from feudal to capitalist system of production developed. Due to this revolution society moved from the old age of hand made goods to the new age of machine made goods. This shift heralded the emergence of industrial revolution. The traditional emphasis on land lost its value while money or capital became important during this period. Urbanization was a necessary corollary of the industrial revolution. Technology and the factory system has been the subject of countless writings in the nineteenth century. In the Marxist terms the worker became alienated from the product of his/her labour.

Thus we can infer that sociology emerged as a response to the forces of change, which took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. The ideas and the sociological writings that we discuss today are essentially ideas of that period. A scientific approach to the study of society dates back to the tradition of Enlightenment. All of the intellectual influences such as the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and surveys of social conditions, which affected the emergence of sociology in Europe.

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## 6.6 Emergence of social anthropology

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The subject matter of anthropology and its academic profession began as an intersection of natural science and humanities. Social anthropology being part of anthropology, its emergence has been historically linked with the development of other components of anthropology. The emergence of social anthropology has also been closely linked with other disciplines of the social sciences, such as sociology, philosophy, ethno-history, history, psychology (social psychology), political science, and economics. But the closest discipline of social anthropology is sociology.

Like sociology, the emergence and development of anthropology is said to be directly linked to the scientific development in the western world. Anthropology is a word which the ancient Greeks had also used. To them *Anthropologia* occurs in 1595. Immanuel Kant published a book in 1798 entitled *Anthropologie in Pragmatischer Hinsicht* (Sarana 1983:3).

### 6.6.1 First phase of development

By 18th century A.D. after the experience and influence of the renaissance in Europe, there were many eminent philosophers who have made immense contributions to the understanding of society, including Rousseau, Vico, Baron de Montesquieu and John Locke who dealt with the social phenomena of the time. These earlier works certainly laid the philosophical foundation for the development of the social sciences and the science of human society including sociology and anthropology. The contribution of the earlier philosophers and scholars have certainly contributed to the emergence and development of anthropology although they cannot be called anthropology per se.

On the nature of social anthropology, he states that “there is a broad division of opinion between those who regard social anthropology as a natural science and those, like myself [Evans-Pritchard], who regards it as one of the humanities. This division is perhaps at its sharpest when relations between anthropology and history are being discussed” (Evans-Pritchard, 1951:7).

### 6.6.2 Second Phase of development

In the second phase (1840-1890) there was “transition in the natural sciences from a static equilibrium model to a dynamic model. Its culmination came with the introduction of thermodynamic and Darwinian evolutionary theory” (Voget, 1975:42).

This period marks the emergence of anthropology into an academic discipline. It is through the inspiration of the “triumphs of the scientific method in the physical

and organic domain, nineteenth-century anthropologists believed that socio-cultural phenomena were discoverable lawful principles. This conviction joined their interests with the aspiration of a still earlier period, extending back before the social sciences had been named, to the epochal stirrings of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the vision of a universal history of mankind” (Harris 1979:1).

However, it emerged as an academic discipline only in the nineteenth century. The significant factors for the emergence of the discipline is however attributed to the various intellectual and socio-political changes taking place in the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. Some of the important influences include the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution in Europe. Historic and evolutionary processes had been at work in the emergence of the anthropological scientific institution” (Voget 1975:89). Marvin Harris, a historian of anthropological development, also views that anthropology “began as the science of history” (1979:1).

### 6.6.3 Emergence of modern anthropology

The emergence of modern social anthropology emerged mainly with the contribution of Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliff-Brown. Marcel Mauss is also generally considered as the pioneer of modern social anthropology in France. Bronislaw Malinowski is one of the most well-known social anthropologists. In fact, he is generally regarded as the founder of modern social anthropology. His main contributions to modern social anthropology was the introduction of ethnographic method with participant method and/or technique, and founding of the theory of functionalism departing from the earlier approaches, particularly, evolutionary, and historical approaches. His significant works include *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (1926), *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (1944).

Along these pioneers in social anthropology in varied areas, one can include Levi Strauss into the list for founding the theory of structuralism and structural anthropology. He is also regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th century about myth, culture, religion, and social organization. His significant works include *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1949), *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), and *Structural Anthropology* (1963). There are also many anthropologists who contributed to the development of modern social anthropology, but they come either later or of lower stature.

The emergence of anthropology (social anthropology) as a discipline can also be reckoned through the formation of professional associations. The aborigines Protection Society formed in 1837 was the first anthropological association to be established (cf. Sarana 1983:4).

In the Indian context, there is no consensus that the emergence of anthropology (including social anthropology) coincides with the formation of Asiatic Society of Bengal as some would claim. Saranais of the view that Indian anthropology did not emerge in the 18th century. The generally recognized anthropological works in India were written by the British administrators like Blunt, Crook, Dalton, Grierson, Ibbetson, Mills, Nesfield, O'Malley, Risley, Russel, Senart and Thurston.

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## 6.7 Sociology and common sense

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Common sense knowledge refers to that knowledge which is routinely used in the conduct of everyday life. It is practical, experimental and critical but also fragmentary and incoherent in nature. Common sense views rely on perceptions formed without any reference to scientific methods of causality. On the other hand natural sciences and social sciences give more attention to the underlying causality rather than superficial resemblances or lack of resemblances.

However according to Andre Beteille, sociology is distinct from common sense. Sociological knowledge aims to be general, if not universal, whereas common sense is particular and localized.

An important contribution of sociology has been to show that common sense is highly variable, subject to constraints of time and place, as well as others, more specifically social constraints.

Interpretative sociologists like Dilthey, Max Weber and Symbolic interactionists like G.H Mead and G.Cooley use common sense knowledge to some extent. The concept of common sense knowledge is central to Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological approach. Common sense knowledge also forms the basis of Peter Berger and Gluckman's general theory of society in the book, "Social construction of Reality". Ethnomethodologists like Harold Garfinkle, make use of common sense knowledge in their study of people's method in the construction of social reality. Anthony Giddens has also focused on common sense knowledge in his theory "theory of structuration".

"Sociology is anti-utopian in its central preoccupation with the disjunction between ideal and reality, between what human beings consider right, proper and desirable, and their actual conditions of existence, not in this or that particular society, but in human societies as such. Sociology is also anti-fatalistic in its orientation. It does not accept the particular constraints taken for granted by common sense as eternal or immutable. It provides a clearer awareness than common sense of the range of alternative arrangements that have been or may be devised for the attainment of broadly the same ends". (Beteille: 1996)

Common sense is unreflective since it does not question its own origins or ask itself ‘why do I hold this view? Sociologists on the other hand, must be ready to ask, “Is this really so?”. Both the systematic and questioning approach of sociology is derived from a broader tradition of scientific investigation. In this way sociology is more rigorous than common sense.

Sociology has to be distinguished from common sense which is limited in its reach, and uses many unexamined assumptions for interpreting and explaining everyday phenomena. Sociology should not go against common sense but must go beyond it to reach a broader and deeper view of the operation of society. The subject matter of sociology is such that it is far more difficult to insulate it from the assumptions and judgments of common sense than, say, particle physics or molecular biology. Again, while current affairs may be grist to the sociologist’s mill, the sociologist differs in his orientation to current affairs from the journalist. (vocation betellei)

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## 6.8 Sociology as Science

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Sociology can be termed a science because it fulfills the basic requirements of objective and rational knowledge of social reality. Sociologists apply science to their study in the same way that natural scientists investigate the natural world.

To analyze whether sociology is a science following points needs to be understood:

- Sociology can be considered as a science to the extent that it uses scientific methods to study from selecting a topic to choosing a research method and analyzing the results.
- Sociologists can make generalizations on the basis of micro studies and also these sociological studies are based on evidence, observations and explanations.

Sociological theories are built upon one another, extending and refining the older ones and producing new ones. Comte concentrated his efforts to determine the nature of human society and the laws and principles underlying its growth and development. He also tried to establish the methods to be employed in studying social phenomena. Comte argued that social phenomena can be like physical phenomena copying the methods of natural sciences. He thought that it was time for inquiries into social problems and social phenomena to enter into this last stage. So, he recommended that the study of society be called the science of society, i. e. ‘sociology’.



### **Positivist approach**

Positivists believe that sociology can and should use the same methods and approaches to study the social world that “natural” sciences such as biology and physics use to investigate the physical world.

By adopting “scientific” techniques sociologists should be able, eventually, to uncover the laws that govern societies and social behaviour just as scientists have discovered the laws that govern the physical world.

Positivists believe that good, scientific research should reveal objective truths about the causes of social action – science tells us that water boils at 100 degrees and this is true irrespective of what the researcher thinks – good social research should tell us similar things about social action. Because positivists want to uncover the general laws that shape human behaviour, they are interested in looking at society as a whole. They are interested in explaining patterns of human behaviour or general social trends. In other words, they are interested in getting to the ‘bigger picture’.

To do this, positivists use quantitative methods such as official statistics, structured questionnaires and social surveys. Statistical, numerical data is crucial to Positivist research. Positivists need to collect statistical information in order to make comparisons. And in order to uncover general social trends. It is much more difficult to make comparisons and uncover social trends with qualitative data.

These methods also allow the researcher to remain relatively detached from the research process – this way, the values of the researcher should not interfere with the results of the research and knowledge should be objective

While Durkheim rejected much of the details of Comte’s philosophy “positivism”, he retained and refined its method. Durkheim believed that sociology should be able to predict accurately the effect of particular changes in social organisation such as an increase in unemployment or a change in the education system.

Durkheim believed the primary means of researching society should be the Comparative Method which involves comparing groups and looking for correlations or relationships between 2 or more variables. This method essentially seeks to establish the cause and effect relationships in society by comparing variables.

Durkheim chose to study suicide because he thought that if he could prove that suicide, a very personal act, could be explained through social factors, then surely any action could be examined in such a way. The starting-point for Durkheim was a close analysis of the available official statistics, which showed that rates of suicide varied.

Robert Bierstedt in his book *The Social Order* mentioned the following characteristics of the nature of sociology:

- Sociology is a social science, not a natural science
- Sociology is a categorical or positive and not a normative science.
- Sociology is a pure or theoretical science and not an applied science.
- Sociology is an abstract science and not a concrete one.
- Sociology is a generalizing science and not a particularizing science.
- Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science.

One of the key debates in the study of sociological theory is whether sociology could be considered to be a science or not. The founding fathers of sociology, Like Auguste Comte, and other sociologists like Emile Durkheim, certainly saw their subject as scientific. These positivists believed that sociology could use scientific method to establish social facts and prove universal laws, exactly like the natural sciences.

However, interpretative sociologists argue that sociology is not a science and nor should it attempt to be, as humans have agency and will not simply conform to universal laws or predictable patterns and developments like natural phenomena.

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## 6.9 Applied Sociology

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The term ‘applied sociology’ refers to a diverse group of practitioners all using sociology to ‘understand, intervene, or enhance human social life’. Many different approaches to sociological application exist. We use the term ‘sociological practice’ or ‘practitioner’ to inclusively refer to applied, clinical, and public sociologists, as well as those who identify more with methods used across the social sciences: community-based researchers, participatory-action researchers, and translational researchers. With their work, all of these sociologists intend to impact groups of people in the present day.

Applied sociology is using the sociological tools to “understand, intervene, or enhance human social life” (Steele and Price, 2004: p. 4). People apply sociology when they use sociological methods, theories, concepts, or perspectives (tools) to address a social problem or issue (Steele and Price, 2008). Lots of social scientists ‘use’ sociological tools in their teaching or in their research. But only a subset uses those tools to plan or engage in direct, concurrent social intervention or enhancement. We generally refer to those that do as applied sociologists. Many different approaches to sociological application exist. We use the term ‘sociological practice’ or

‘practitioner’ to inclusively refer to applied, clinical, and public sociologists, as well as those who identify more with methodology used across the social sciences: community-based researchers, participatory-action researchers, and translational researchers (Weinstein and Goldman Schuyler, 2008).

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## 6.10 Summary

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As discussed in this chapter, it is now easy to decipher the vast broad discipline of sociology. Sociology is therefore multi-paradigmatic with wide range of perspectives, ideas and theories. The origin of sociology trace back to the early nineteenth century Western Europe. Revolutionary changes in preceeding three centuries paved the way for sociology that initiated the process of thinking about society and the consequences of revolutionary happenings.

Sociology as a subject helps us look at varied issues from a different perspective, what Mills defined a sociological imagination, i.e, the ability to see things socially and how they interact and influence each other. Usage of various methods and techniques in the research area makes no less or different from natural sciences. It uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in the field. Sociology is also related to other social sciences which shall be discussed in the later chapters.

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## 6.11 Questions

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### 1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)

- (a) Discuss the Positivist approach in sociology?
- (b) What is Sociological imagination? Give examples.
- (c) Describe sociology as a science?
- (d) What is Applied sociology?
- (e) How is sociology and common sense related?

### 2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)

- (a) Discuss the emergence of Sociology as a distinct discipline.
- (b) Elucidate the classical traditional perspectives of sociology.
- (c) Discuss the emergence of social anthropology.
- (d) Elaborate modern social anthropology.
- (e) Can sociology be considered as a science? Discuss.

- (f) Sociology and common sense
- (g) Origin of Sociology
- (h) Perspectives of Sociology

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## 6.12 Suggested Readings

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- 1) Berger, P. 1963, *Invitation to Sociology A Humanistic Perspective*, Anchor Books Double Day & Company, Inc.: New York
- 2) Bottomore, T. B. 1962, *Sociology A Guide to Problems and Literature*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd: London
- 3) Inkeles, A. 1975, *What is Sociology?* Prentice-Hall: New Delhi
- 4) Gerth, H. and Mills, C.W. (eds) (1970). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- 5) Giddens, A. (2001). *Sociology*, fourth edn Cambridge: Polity.
- 6) <https://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/the-vocation-of-sociology-%E2%80%93-a-pragmatic-view/>
- 7) Mills, C.W. (1970). *The Sociological Imagination*. Harmondsworth: Penguin; originally published in 1959.
- 8) Williams, M. (2000). *Science and Social Science: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.

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## **Unit 7 : Applied Sociology**

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### **Structure**

- 7.1 Objectives**
- 7.2 Introduction**
- 7.3 What is Applied Sociology?**
- 7.4 Difference between Applied Sociology and Basic Sociology**
- 7.5 Purpose of Applied Sociology**
- 7.6 Origin and Growth of Applied Sociology**
  - 7.6.1. The Second Phase**
  - 7.6.2. The Third phase**
  - 7.6.3. Modern Trends in Applied Sociology**
- 7.7 Forms of Applied Sociology**
  - 7.7.1. Programme Evaluation**
  - 7.7.2. Needs Assessment**
  - 7.7.3. Social Impact Assessment**
  - 7.7.4. Social Indicator Development**
  - 7.7.5. Cost-Benefit Analysis**
- 7.8 Variations of Applied Sociology**
- 7.9 Summary**
- 7.10 Questions**
- 7.11 Suggested Readings**

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### **7.1 Objectives**

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To help students understand the following things:

- To understand what is Applied Sociology?
- To understand the difference between Applied Sociology and Basic Sociology.
- To understand the Origin and Growth of Applied Sociology.

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## 7.2 Introduction

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Applied Sociology is one form of Sociology. The discipline of sociology, in general, can be defined as the scientific study of society including critical analysis of all types of social connections and social structures. It also includes the study of social institutions like the media, economy, education, family, etc. that shape social action. Sociology helps us understand human behavior in a broader context, with reference to power relationship, social change, patterns of social construction, etc. According to Dr. Zuleyka Zevallos, sociology is often perceived as an academic profession, but outside academic premises it can be used extensively to enhance personal and professional development. In such spheres applied sociology comes in handy to bring in positive social changes through active intervention. In applied sociology we see the use of sociological theory, methods, skills and research to handle particular issues and problems in real-life settings; that means, it puts sociology in practice within a multidisciplinary setting.

**Objective and Purpose of the Unit:** The Main objective of this unit is to trace the origin and growth of this newly emerged branch of sociology. So, it discusses the meaning and definition of applied sociology, its history and subject matter, its relationship with general or basic sociology and the recent trends in this area of application. Sociology, as a modern social science discipline, originated with focus on both acquiring of knowledge and on aspects of application. Applied sociology focuses primarily on decision-making and development. In the continuum between pure research and pure practice, applied sociology occupies a middle position. The purpose of this unit is to give the students some clear idea about the nature and scope of this specialized branch of sociology.

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## 7.3 What is Applied Sociology?

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Applied sociology is sociology in use. It originated in the USA in the first decade of the twentieth century. The term applied sociology is used to describe practices of using sociological theories and methods outside of academic settings with the aim to bring in positive social changes through active intervention. It is policy-oriented, action-driven and it intends to train people and groups about the ways of attaining better or more viable social forms to adjust with the changing external and internal conditions. As it has been said earlier, applied sociology occupies a middle position in between pure research and pure practice because it uses theoretical explanations, develops causal models for predicting the likely impact of different policies and programs. To define applied sociology Lester F. Ward had mentioned in 1903 that it was the means and methods for the artificial improvement of social conditions by

man and society as conscious and intelligent agents. The oldest and most general name of those means and methods of social change is applied sociology. According to Harry Perlstad, applied sociology uses sociological knowledge and research skills to gain empirical knowledge to inform policymakers, clients and common people about various social problems, issues, processes, and conditions to help them make informed choices and to improve the quality of life. Broadly speaking, applied sociology involves evaluation research, needs assessment, market research, social indicators, and demographics. It also includes sociological research in specialized fields like medicine, mental health, complex organizations, work, education, military and the likes. Such research will produce descriptions, analyses, and findings that can be translated into ideas, lessons and programs to be used by action groups and government. Applied sociologists use sociological theory, methods and skills to collect and analyze data and to understand and resolve social problems.

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## **7.4 Difference between Applied Sociology and Basic Sociology**

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The discipline of sociology has several offshoots of its own; basic and applied are only two of them. Basic sociology or professional sociology is primarily concerned with research on social life, social change and human behavior. It puts emphasis on research for production of knowledge and considers empirical insight as an end in itself. Basic sociology is also referred to as ‘academic’ sociology as it advocates the pursuit of knowledge as a goal in and of itself without any concern to find any practical use of them in the larger world. On the other hand, applied sociology uses the findings of basic sociology to prepare and implement action-oriented plans for development. Due to its concern with using sociological knowledge and research skill to resolve social problems it is also known as pragmatic or practical sociology for the purpose of understanding and resolving social problems applied sociologists work with a variety of government and non- government organizations. Instead of production of pure knowledge, applied sociologists employ sociological tools and insights to help people, communities, groups, organizations and institutions or social structures in general, for their overall improvement. Applied Sociology has been greatly influenced by the Chicago School sociologists and their practical approach and as a practical form of sociology it requires theorists and researchers to combine their academic work with material realities and practical concerns beyond academic settings.

Both basic or academic sociology and applied sociology remain research based and both follow the same research methods. But applied sociologists have developed a special set of techniques for observations and making useful recommendations to

their clients. Moreover, applied sociologists care less for publishing in academic journals; so, they prefer to present their work before specialized non-academic audience. Academics rely more on peer-evaluation, publish papers in academic journals; but, applied sociologists are judged by their sponsors on the basis of their clients' satisfaction.

Freeman and Rossi argue that applied sociologists are constrained by time and demands of their work output; but academic sociologists have more freedom to choose their research topic. Then, academic sociologists, usually, have a longtime frame for developing their scholarship. But applied sociologists aspire for scholarship only for getting usable results. On many occasions, they may experience a swift turnover in their applied research.

Applied sociologists remain concerned with the external validity of their conclusions in direct relations to their clients' necessities; on the other hand, academic sociologists are concerned with their contribution to the academic literature as well as by reviews from their fellow academicians.

Finally, applied sociologists judge the success of their work on the basis of the extent of the adoption of their suggestions and solutions by their clients, and their ability to influence the process of their clients' decision-making. But the conclusions drawn by the academic sociologists do not always lead to any specific actions. All these clearly indicate that there are several points of difference between the two branches of sociology; but it is also true that these differences are not absolute.

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## 7.5 Purpose of Applied Sociology

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Applied sociology has a very wide scope as it includes many important issues within its domain to put sociology in practice. The main task of applied sociology is to use sociological theory, methods, skills and research for resolving particular issues in real-world settings. a) Therefore,

- a) It evaluates programs undertaken for bettering them in the interest of the clients or users.
- b) While working with a hospital or community health center it strives to improve access to health service for illiterate or semi-literate people.
- c) It designs surveys and collects data to measure public opinion; creates profiles for various populations like ethnic and other groups, measures changes in social indicators like fertility, cohabitation, poverty, educational achievements, racism, happiness etc.



- d) During or after any crisis applied sociologists study the social impact of emergency communications for the betterment of communication procedure in future.
- e) Applied sociologists work with community organizations to establish sound evidence- based program for backward youths.
- f) They also conduct participatory action research in association with a community to decide what kind of economic development would suit that community.
- g) Applied sociology tries to understand and resolve group and organizational issues within an institute.
- h) It also works to ensure equity by initiating creation of organizational and public policy.

As applied sociology is interdisciplinary in nature, it attracts people from various related disciplines like urban planning, community development, communications, criminology, social work, women's studies. Gender studies, critical race studies, indigenous studies, religion, demography, anthropology and many others. Both independent researchers and formal organizations can join the field of applied sociological studies. At present, in the USA there are innumerable organizations of various sizes, funded by either public or private agencies, engaged in research to develop socio-engineering projects, management decision systems and practical recommendations with help from variously qualified researchers, including scientists. Applied sociology has earned so much popularity among sociologists that since the 1990s about 60% of them pursue academic sociology, while about 40% of them do applied sociology. Applied sociology training courses use field studies, independent studies, books, films, role games, computer, audiotapes, self-study, oral presentations, television demonstrations of courses, modules, programming, textbooks, examinations, etc. Knowledge accumulated from all these sources are used outside university settings to provide the clients with a deeper understanding of some specific areas of social life. The main clients of applied sociologists are private business organizations, government agencies and non- profit voluntary organizations.

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## **7.6 Origin and growth of Applied Sociology (1850–1920)**

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Sociology originated as a discipline with an applied and public focus. Auguste Comte, the father of sociology had divided it into social statics and social dynamics, that is, the study of social order and the study of human progress and evolution respectively. Comte envisioned those sociologists would impart scientific knowledge

and social advice in every aspect of social life. Karl Marx, too, wanted to understand the social ills of his time for improving the conditions of the socially disadvantaged class. Applied and public sociology emerged and developed out of such advocacy for improving existing social conditions. When sociology reached the shores of America, its emphasis was on sociological practice for social improvement because America, then, was suffering from problems of rapidly urbanizing society. To handle the problems associated with urbanization, sociologists in America developed a scientific approach for studying and resolving the issues like race relations, poverty, immigration, and urban development. Lester F. Ward (1841-1913) was the first thinker who introduced the term applied sociology into the discipline with his work *Dynamic Sociology or Applied Social Science* was published in 1883. Ward refuted the arguments of Spencer and Sumner in support of Laissez-faire individualism and lent his support for assisted welfare of the people. Ward was a 'meliorist' who believed that by educating the government and the people much could be accomplished. Ward was the first President of American Sociological Association (1865) and used the term 'applied sociology' for the first time in 1896-97. By the early 1890s, he came to know that several European sociologists were using the term 'pure sociology'; and in 1897 he used the terms pure and applied sociology in the titles of two summer school courses in 1897. Then in 1903 he published *Pure Sociology* and in 1906 *Applied Sociology*. In the USA, there was an alliance between social reform and early sociology; out of that alliance emerged the social survey movement. At that time, several women reformers and activists like Jane Addams, Florence Kelley and several others were convinced that documentation of and publicizing the inhuman sufferings of the poor would surely bring in effective social reform processes. In 1892 and 1893, Kelley, on the initiative of a number of government agencies, had conducted surveys on Chicago garment industry and door to door survey in the Hull House district of Chicago to assess the extent of poverty and slums in the urban areas. Pauline Young has described the surveys and from her account we can see the range of topics had covered a very wide scope like wages, housing conditions, social relations in the family, etc. Kelley also prepared maps showing the nationality, wages and employment history of each resident. In 1912, a Department of Surveys and Information was established by the Russel Sage Foundation and by 1928, this department was able to review more than two thousand social surveys, some national level and others local level surveys. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, sociology was being applied in social welfare and social policy but also in industry. By the end of the World War I, several sociologists had appeared in the scenario, some with their experiences in social-survey movement and some with trainings in formal academic sociology.

### 7.6.1. The Second Phase (1920 – 1940)

This phase is less well documented than the first one; but its beginning can be traced at the time of creation of Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in 1923 in New York. It established a committee on methods; the committee was created to identify the distinct characteristics of the social sciences so that they could be differentiated with and mutually related to each other. The history of applied sociology in this post—World War I period can be traced in Stuart Rice's book *Methods in Social Sciences* (1931). The book contains 52 contributions from as many writers to reveal the methods used by the social scientists. The central focus of the book was on methodology, temporal sequences, relations between measured and unmeasured factors, definition of objects, establishment of scales, etc.

In 1932, the SSRC started a new wave of methodological concerns with Thomas and Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant* and its review by Herbert Blumer. In this essay the study was based on the diaries and letters. Two other SSRC bulletins put their focus on the value of using personal documents or qualitative material like detailed open-ended interviews. Side by side of this qualitative procedures, a new type of quantitative study began to be popular. Previously most of the quantitative techniques were borrowed from England; for example, the sampling technique used in Booth's social survey. In the USA this techniques were used in market research, consumer surveys, opinion surveys on politics and public issues, techniques of measurements, etc. Tests, classifications, public opinion research, Gallup poll, etc. started to enter into social science researches. The technical sophistication of these research methods raised the academic status of the social scientists and separated their professional domain from those of the reformers. Throughout the 1920s the agencies of the US government had sought help from the sociologists and social researchers to look into the burning issues of the day. Sociologist Ogburn, as the President of the ASS in 1929 wanted to ensure applied research to be based on scientific methods and not at all on ethics, religion, journalism and propaganda. He encouraged sociologists to collect whatever data they could lay their hands on regarding all sorts of social issues and institutions. By 1932, sociometric system or sociometry was developed by J.L. Moreno. Ogburn made a distinction between sociologists as research scientists and social engineers, who are not scientists but apply reliable scientific procedures and more or less exact knowledge for reorganization and development of the existing social conditions. The term 'social engineering' means the applied research activities for using in planning and for dealing with the real world. However, during the socialist regime of Stalin in the former USSR, the term 'social engineering' earned notoriety and disrepute.

In the middle of the 1930s a debate over the relationship between academic sociology and applied sociology raged within the American Sociological Society; while stalwarts like Robert MacIver, Pitrim Sorokin, Maurice Parmelee and many others were of the view that sociologists should engage themselves with sociological research, writing and teaching, others held the view that sociology should be concerned with social reconstruction. In 1934, the ASA's Scope of Research Committee recommended a closer connection of sociologists with the US government's work in social planning and within two years, in 1936, the need for promotion of professional, not disciplinary, interests of sociologists was highlighted. But the ASA did not pay any heed to that recommendation, and academics preferred a narrow disciplinary approach and the reformers joined various administrative positions in new deal agencies created under the Roosevelt government.

### **7.6.2 The Third Phase: Federal Funding For Applied Sociology (1940–1980)**

World War II broke out in 1939; by then social research became overwhelmingly associated with governmental activities. Applied sociology received substantial support first from the Second World War and then from the War on Poverty. Research and observations collected in natural settings for applied purposes had generated new knowledge and contributed to sociological theories and concepts. To assess the spirit of that period, in 1980, Peter Rossi had commented in his ASA Presidential address that a good number of client-initiated applied –work would be considered as basic research in future in sociological literature. During the war time the US War Department, too, created a division of research and information. That division acted with assistance from more than one hundred sociologists and had conducted over 200 surveys with soldiers during the war time. They used all the available techniques of social science research such as content analysis, sampling surveys, detailed interviews, laboratory experiments, group dynamics, etc. Such applied research efforts had made an impact on sociological theory and methods. In the fall of 1941 the Office of War Information (OWI) At the initiative of that office Henry Field, Hadley Cantril, Paul Lazarsfeld and Samuel Stouffer together established the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Denver to conduct civilian surveys as simple fact-finding measures; but it also conducted some path-breaking surveys on first national measurement of racial attitudes.

The convergence of sociological research and pursuit of knowledge on the one hand, and problems of governmental and private organizations on the other became a permanent affair in the post-war America. This had already begun to happen in the pre-WW II period under the 'action research' initiative of Kurt Lewin, an eminent

German psychologist who migrated to the USA. He studied the role of the group in determining individual attitudes and decisions. Lewin used the term 'action research' and wanted to help in the solution of social problems with the results of his research. Thus he was instrumental in reducing the gap between social science knowledge and the use of that knowledge. The formal recognition of applied sociology came in 1948 at a conference held by the Social Science Research Council. According to Rossi, applied sociology has witnessed phenomenal popularity from 1960 to 1980. Dentler has estimated that from 1960 to 1975 about 2100 social research and development firms were established in America. Several specialized applied social research centers were also created. A number of American government departments had commissioned skilled researchers to prepare reports on the state of affairs in the society to enable the government to take appropriate decisions. Rossi, in 1980, has pointed out that applied research may be used in policy formation.

### **7.6.3. Modern Trends in Applied Sociology**

**Professionalism and Training: 1980 – To present:** The period between 1950 – 1980 has witnessed an increase in the number of people with Masters and doctoral degrees in sociology though vacancies in teaching positions were few and far between. So, a good number of new sociologists joined jobs in professional schools and research units in various government and non-government organizations. The first graduate program in applied sociology was started at Kent State University in the late 1960s and in 1978 the Society for Applied Sociology (SAS) was established. In 1980 and 1981 Peter Rossi and W. F. Whyte respectively became the presidents of the ASA, and academic and applied sociologies came closer. In 1989 ASA started a journal, *The Sociological Practice Review* to provide a common platform for applied, clinical and practical sociologists though it could not survive for long. In 1994, SAS prepared a code of ethics for Applied Sociologists. Applied research, is presently actively engaged with sociologists, psychologists, economists, and political scientists. Today in the USA there are innumerable big and small, public and private agencies are involved in research in socio-engineering projects, management-decision systems and practical recommendations. Since the 1990s the number of academic sociologists in America is decreasing while the number of applied sociologists is increasing. Courses in applied sociology are also becoming increasingly popular in American Universities.

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## **7.7 Forms of Applied Sociology**

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The keystone of Applied Sociology is research. Therefore, it not only shares the principles of scientific methods with the basic sociology, but also has developed

its own techniques for making observations and recommendations. These applied sociological techniques include program evaluation, needs assessment, cost-benefit Analysis and Social Indicator Development. Let us discuss these techniques one by one.

### **7.7.1 Program Evaluation**

Program evaluation is a very common technique practiced in applied sociology. Program evaluation refers to the application of sociological methods like surveys, observational techniques, statistical analysis of records, interviews, etc. to ascertain the status of a particular program evaluation, that is, to understand whether a social program or practice can meet its goals. Both business organizations and non-profit organizations develop programs to suit their needs and promote their services; therefore it is important to know whether such programs fulfill their purpose. It becomes the duty of the applied sociologists to assess whether certain program is appropriate for a given task, efficient enough to produce the targeted results, and / or is useful within a given context in relation to specific audiences.

Program evaluation has two primary forms; one is summative and the other is formative. Summative evaluation seeks to understand whether or not a given program serves its purpose. This requires defining and measuring a specific outcome and to do all these sociologists need to (a) examine the probable outcome of the program (outcome variable) either before its initiation or when it is necessary; and (b) establish the outcome variable in the midst of the program operation. In both the cases sociologists apply quantitative or observational methods to measure changes in the outcome of interests over a given period of time. If the changes fulfill the expectations of the outcome, then the program is satisfactory. The next task of the sociologists, then, is to determine how well it worked and suggest ways to make it work better. If, on the contrary, there are no changes in the expected outcome or the outcomes do not match expectations, then the programs should be amended or abandoned altogether. The summative evaluation methods depend purely on the skill to assess whether organizational programs like procedures, activities, marketing campaign, interventions etc. work or not.

If a program does not work according to expectations, then sociologists are given the task of doing formative program evaluations or analyses conducted for ascertaining new programs that would serve the purposes of the organization in a better way. Thus, the evaluation studies are used to 'form' new programs. While working with clients a sociologist may gauge the needs of the organization with the help of focus groups and surveys, the already existing programs in use by the organization, the budget sanctioned for development and implementation of the

program and the problems detected in the previous practices. By comparing and contrasting the existing elements in the organization, sociologists will be able to prepare most fitting programs and practices for the organization. Program evaluation is the most widely used technique in applied research. In the last fifty years many social programs and practices designed for eradication of several social problems have been evaluated for their effectiveness; such evaluation is specially needed for government –funded programs and practices for development. Thus, program evaluation has emerged as an important career option for sociologists.

### **7.7.2 Needs Assessment**

Needs assessment research is aimed at collection of data for determining how many people in a community need particular services, or products or facilities for a period of time. While providing facilities for the people of an area or for a period of time periodic assessment of need is essential for continuing the service and/ or for changing the nature of service. For example, a needs assessment research question may ask: How many BPL card holders are there in the locality?

### **7.7.3 Social Impact Assessment**

This refers to the estimation of the likely consequences of the proposed programs on the target groups, individuals, neighborhoods, communities, regions and other social entities. An example of Social Impact Assessment may include a question like — Does an increase in the number of BPL cardholders would create additional facilities for the people of a locality?

### **7.7.4 Social Indicator Development**

Social indicators are the scales or quantitative measures of important social phenomena like trafficking or drug addiction. Social indicator development aims at providing useful measures for such phenomena. For example, if there is a sudden rise in the rate of trafficking in a state, that is useful information. At the same time, it is also useful to know the ratio of the number of persons trafficked in relation to the total number of persons in a state.

### **7.7.5 Cost-Benefit Analysis**

Cost-Benefit analysis quantitatively compares the cost and benefit of a program or practice to assess whether the program should be altered or abandoned. For example, a cost –benefit analysis may investigate whether there is a less expensive way to combat the problem of human trafficking.

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## 7.8 Variations of Applied Sociological Practices

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Joseph R. DeMartini suggests that applied sociology can be of two variations; one that uses basic empirical methods for collecting information to take informed decisions like social policy formation. In doing this, sociologists directly work either within government agencies or with private organizations. While working for government or private organizations applied sociologists employ theories and concepts along with application of sociological practices. In the other, applied sociologists use their sociological knowledge to help their clients understand an issue (any issue like demographic changes, causes of crime, shifts in social movements, etc.) in a much better way. To explain the two variations in a better way DeMartini has used the example of social policy. In the first case, where methods are given more importance, applied sociological research techniques are used for creating new social policies. But in the other case, where theories and concepts have greater relevance to the clients, applied sociological knowledge is employed to evaluate existing social policies. DeMartini has admitted that these two variations are not earmarked in two water-tight compartments, but they run along a continuum in between the two. Both theories and practices are used in tandem with one another, but some job may give more importance to one than the other.

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## 7.9 Summary

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Sociology emerged in Europe as a theoretical tool for understanding the nuances of social life. But when it reached the American shore it became an instrument of social improvement. So parallel to academic sociology, in the writings of some American sociologists and scholars from other disciplines, emerged the urge to resolve the problems that were troubling the American social life. To satisfy that urge a number of academic and non-academic persons and organizations started to apply sociology in practice in the early years of the last century though its intellectual roots can be traced in 1883 in the publication of Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology: or Applied Social Science*. In due course of time applied sociology became the point of convergence for disciplines like sociology, urban planning, community development, communications, criminology, social work, women's studies, gender studies, critical race studies, religion, population studies or demography, anthropology and many others. Applied sociologists are usually based in various locations like the governments, the private sector, community organizations, international agencies, academic institutions, and many others. Independent researchers associated with any of these fields have also shown interests in applied sociology and it has blossomed in every area of sociological endeavor. In this area of sociology theory and methods



,both, are driven by problems and when existing theories fail to explain problems, new assumptions are given shape.

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## 7.10 Questions

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### 1. Answer in Brief.

**5 Marks**

- (a) What is applied sociology?
- (b) What is meant by basic and applied sociology?
- (c) How did applied sociology emerge?
- (d) How do applied sociologists work?
- (e) What is Program Evaluation?
- (f) What is Needs Assessment?
- (g) Discuss, in brief, the modern trends in applied sociology.

### 2. Answer in Detail.

**10 Marks**

- (a) Discuss, in detail, the origin and growth of applied sociology from 1850 to 1940.
- (b) Examine the growth of applied sociology from the 1940s to the recent years.
- (c) Discuss the different forms of applied sociology.
- (d) Critically examine the differences between applied sociology and academic sociology.

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## 7.11 Suggested Readings

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- [http:// digitalcommons.wayne.edu/socprac](http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/socprac). Digital Commons—@WAYNSTATE-Volume 7 Issue 1 The Development of Clinical and Applied Sociology. January 1989. Article 6. History of Applied Sociology. Art. By Lazarsfeld, Paul F. and Reitz, Jeffery G. Reitz.

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## **Unit 8 : Nature and Scope of Sociology**

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### **Structure**

- 8.1 Objectives**
- 8.2 Introduction**
- 8.3 Meaning of Sociology**
- 8.4 Emergence of Sociology**
  - 8.4.1 Emergence of sociology as a social science**
- 8.5 Nature of Sociology**
- 8.6 Sociology and Common Sense**
- 8.7 Sociology as Science**
- 8.8 Scope of Sociology**
- 8.9 Understanding sociological theory**
  - 7.9.1 Sociology in recent times**
- 8.11 Lets sum up**
- 8.12 Check your Progress**
- 8.13 Suggested readings and references**

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### **8.1 Objectives**

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In this unit, we will discuss and look at:-

- Sociology as a relatively young academic field within the social sciences.
- To understand the nature, scope and significance of sociology as an important academic discipline.
- To explore various sub fields of sociology and sociological theories.

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### **8.2 Introduction**

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Sociology is best seen as multi-paradigmatic and suggests a range of perspectives. The key challenge for a sociology is to search for general ways of understanding and interpreting social life. Sociology helps to demonstrate the social forces that

organize society in very, very different ways and demonstrate it in time and space. You are able to see the trajectory from the past societies to the present societies.

*"The first wisdom of sociology is this: things are not what they seem"*

*- Peter Berger*

Sociology is a relatively new field of study, a young discipline, as compared to other social sciences like political science, history and economics. It may be said to be hundred and fifty years old, although it has advanced more quickly.

This stems in part from a desire to learn more about how people behave in social settings, especially after the Second World War. While human behaviour is a common theme across all social science courses, their examinations vary in specific ways. However, the field of sociology focuses on social interactions in general and social groups, social organizations in particular.

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## 8.3 MEANING OF SOCIOLOGY

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The term sociology is composed of two words, i.e., the latin word socius (companion) and the Greek word logy (the study of). It literally means the study of processes of companionship. In this context, sociology may be defined as the analysis of the structure of social relationship constituted by social interaction. The term sociology is coined by August Comte in 1839. He is considered as the Father of Sociology.

### **Popular Definitions of Sociology :**

"The sociologist...is someone concerned with understanding society in a disciplined way. The nature of this discipline is scientific." —Peter Berger

"Sociology is the science of social institutions, their genesis and development."

—Emile Durkheim

"Sociology is about relationship, the network of relationship, we called society".

—Mac Iver and Page

"Sociology is the study of systems of social action and of their interrelations."

—Alex Inkeler

"Sociology is...first and foremost a way of thinking about the human world...(It asks how) does it matter that humans live always (and cannot but live)in the company of, in communication with, in an exchange with, in competition with , in co-operation with other human beings...its questions defamiliarize the familiar."

—Zygmunt Bauman

"The science of social relations." —Albion Small

"Sociology is the science that deals with social groups." —Harry M. Johnson

As sociology is a discipline of broad scope: virtually no topic be it gender, race, religion, politics, education, health care, drug abuse, pornography, group behavior, conformity-is taboo for sociological examination and interpretation. Sociologists typically focus their studies on how people and society influence other people, because external, or social, forces shape most personal experiences. These social forces exist in the form of interpersonal relationships among family and friends, as well as among the people encountered in academic, religious, political, economic, and other types of social institutions. In 1959, sociologist C. Wright Mills defined sociological imagination as the ability to see the impact of social forces on individuals' private and public lives. Sociological imagination, then, plays a central role in the sociological perspective. His book "The Sociological Imagination" covers the history of sociology as a field of study relating to society and people's lives in it.

It is helpful to become familiar with the common definitions used by experts in the subject of sociology in order to comprehend the various subfields within it. Sociology is defined by the American Sociological Association (ASA) as the study of "social life, social change, and the social causes and consequences of human behavior." Sociologists investigate human behavior in a variety of settings, from the individual to the collective. (Or, on micro, meso, and macro levels, as the discipline would say.)

Sociological subfields allow for more in-depth analyses of particular social processes by using diverse lenses to investigate various people, groups, and their social effects. The following are major branches of sociology, common sub-fields that one likely come across:

**Rural Sociology :** Given that the population of rural areas is higher than that of metropolitan areas, this area of sociology focuses on the lifestyles of these people. This section examines life patterns that are completely different from those of urban dwellers, such as behavior, belief, culture, traditional standards, values, and so forth. Thus, it conducts a scientific study of rural society. It also examines rural life, social structures, institutions, social dynamics, and other aspects of rural society.

**Urban Sociology :** This area of sociology aids in understanding urban dwellers' lifestyles. It provides information on the social structures and interactions that urban residents experienced, as well as the social institutions that make up urban society. The social pathologies of urban society, including prostitution, unemployment, robbery, theft, beggary, crime, corruption, and environmental pollution, are also studied.

**Political Sociology :** This area of sociology examines various social political contexts. It covers the analysis of various political ideologies held by individuals, as well as their history, evolution, and purposes. Political parties are regarded as social

institutions in this study. This area studies the actions and demeanor of political parties. Understanding the variables that influence political decisions is beneficial.

**Sociology of Law:** The legal system and the sociology of law are regarded as essential components of society. One of the most crucial tools for social control is the law. The law is interconnected with various subsystems of society. Since this area of sociology deals with the creation and application of laws and regulations, moral order in society is related to it.

**Industrial Sociology:** Human industrial relationships are the focus of this area of sociology. It investigates various industrial entities and groups, as well as their connections to and relationships with other diverse societal institutions. Individual relationships with regard to the industrial area are examined.

**Sociology of Religion:** This area of sociology contributes to the understanding of how religion functions within social structures. Since religion permeates all societies, it has a significant influence on them. In addition to studying religious constitutions and their function in society, it examines how people behave socially toward religion and their faith.

**Criminology:** This area of sociology examines an individual's or a group's criminal behavior. It provides answers to a lot of questions, including where crimes originated, what kinds of crimes they are, why they happen, and about the law, the police, and punishments. The enhancement initiatives are also examined. Its study also covers the functions of several organizations created to combat crime in order to provide a deeper understanding.

Hence again, there are many more subfields in sociology outside the ones listed above, which are only some of the most popular. The arts, social anthropology, medicine, the military, immigration, race, gender, conflict, cyberspace, social change, and children are just a few more fields that fall under this umbrella. Furthermore, a lot of these fields are frequently blended.

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## **8.4 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY**

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In this segment we will trace the relationship between the emergence of sociology and the social and intellectual conditions of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. The reason we need to discuss this is because sociology as a subject or discipline that we study today, emerged first in Europe. The two key historical events that left a lasting impression on the central issues of sociology were the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, which occurred in Europe after the Commercial and Scientific Revolutions.

The emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline dates back to that period

of European history, which saw such tremendous social, political and economic changes as embodied in the French revolution and Industrial revolution as it embodies the spirit of new awakening in the eighteenth century. Sociology emerged as a distinct science in nineteenth century Europe, when the, passed through immense changes set in the French and Industrial revolutions. Therefore it can be said that sociology is a science of the new industrial society. The French revolution started in 1789 which marked a turning point in the history of human struggle for freedom and equality. It ushered new order of society and an end to feudalism, bring about far reaching changes throughout not only Europe but also in other countries like India. Ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality were the ideas generated during this period which now form a part of the preamble to the constitution of India.

The industrial revolution began around 1760 A.D. in England. It brought about great changes in the social and economic life of the people first in England then in the other continents. During Industrial revolution, new tools and techniques were invented, which could produce goods on a larger scale. Technology and the factory system has been the subject of countless writings in the nineteenth century. In the Marxist terms the worker became alienated from the product of his/her labour.

Thus we can infer that sociology emerged as a response to the forces of change, which took place during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. The ideas and the sociological writings that we discuss today are essentially ideas of that period. A scientific approach to the study of society dates back to the tradition of Enlightenment. All of the intellectual influences such as the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and surveys of social conditions, which affected the emergence of sociology in Europe.

#### **8.4.1 EMERGENCE OF SOCIOLOGY AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE:**

Sociology, which has its roots in the 19th century, developed in response to the significant social transformations wrought by the Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and political revolutions. The goal of this field was to methodically investigate and evaluate the complex dynamics of interpersonal relationships, societal structures, and institutions.

Emphasizing reason, individual liberties, and the quest of knowledge, the Enlightenment age laid the foundation. For a scientific understanding of society, thinkers such as Auguste Comte-often referred to as the father of sociology-saw the necessity. To characterize this new discipline of study, Comte coined the term "sociology" and promoted the use of scientific techniques to social phenomena.

The formalization of sociology is attributed to the French philosopher Auguste Comte. The foundations of positivism were laid forth by Comte in his work "Course

in Positive Philosophy" (1830-1842), which emphasized the use of scientific techniques in the study of society. He believed that sociology was a science that could reveal the rules guiding societal advancement and order. Comte's categorization of the disciplines and focus on empirical observation established the groundwork for the methodical investigation of society.

One of the major contributors to the early development of sociology, Emile Durkheim, concentrated on comprehending societal stability and order. Durkheim examined the idea of social solidarity in his landmark work "The Division of Labor in Society" (1893), contending that various social structures have unique forms of solidarity that keep them together. The development of sociology as a discipline was aided by Durkheim's emphasis on the function of social institutions in upholding social cohesiveness.

Another significant sociologist, Max Weber, expanded the field of sociology by studying the meanings people ascribe to their behavior. Weber presented the idea of *verstehen* in "Economy and Society" (1922), highlighting the comprehension of social acts from the actor's point of view. Weber's multifaceted method, which took into account social, economic, and cultural aspects, enhanced the field and promoted a more complex comprehension of how people behave in social settings.

With its maturation, sociology divided into specialized subfields that mirrored the complexity of modern society. To study certain facets of social life, sub-disciplines such as urban sociology, gender sociology, and sociology of education were developed. Sociologists were able to explore specific social concerns and phenomena in greater detail as a result of this diversification, which enhanced our grasp of the complex workings of human society. Globalization has further changed the social landscape in the 21st century, posing new questions and opening up new avenues for sociological research. In modern sociology, topics like ethnic diversity, transnationalism, and the effect of technology on social relationships have taken center stage. The field is still evolving and adapting, proving that it is still relevant for dealing with the complexity of a world that is changing quickly.

The significant societal shifts of the 18th and 19th centuries led to the development of sociology as a field within social science. Sociology, which was founded by intellectuals such as Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber, has developed into a dynamic and diversified science that includes many viewpoints and subfields. Sociology is still a crucial instrument for comprehending, evaluating, and dealing with the intricate dynamics of interpersonal relationships and social structures as societies develop further.



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## 8.5 NATURE OF SOCIOLOGY:

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Sociology is a distinct field of study with unique attributes. In society, sociology has a distinct nature. In certain ways, it differs from other sciences. The primary features of sociology mentioned by Robert Bierstadt in his book "The Social Order" are as follows:-

1) Sociology is an independent science: It is neither studied or regarded like a subfield of any other subject, such as political philosophy, philosophy, or history.

2) Sociology is the social science and not a physical science: As a social science, it focuses on the human condition-his social behaviour, social interactions, and social life.

3) Sociology is the categorical and not a normative discipline: The field of sociology "Confines itself to statement about what is not what should be or ought to be". Sociology is a social science; hence it must remain impartial and silent on matters of morality.

4) Sociology is the pure science and not an applied science: The primary goal of pure science is knowledge acquisition; it makes no difference whether or not the knowledge is applicable or beneficial.

5) Sociology is relatively an abstract science and not a concrete science: Sociology is a broad field that encompasses the study of social structures, marriage, groups, religion, and other related topics. In this straightforward meaning, sociology is neither a tangible nor an abstract science.

6) Sociology is the generalizing and not a particularizing or individualizing science: Sociology seeks to understand the general rules or principles governing human association and interaction as well as the composition, origins, and structure of human groups and civilizations. It attempts to draw broad conclusions from the analysis of a few chosen occurrences.

7) Sociology is the general science and not a special science: Sociology is a general, not a specific field of study. It is focused on human relationships and life in general. It just looks at human behaviour in a broad sense. Social psychology and anthropology sometimes identify as general social sciences.

8) Sociology is both rational and an empirical science: There are two main approaches to understanding scientific knowledge. Empiricism is a method that prioritizes experience and data gathered via investigation and observation. Rationalism emphasizes reason and the hypotheses that follow from logical deduction.

The characteristics of sociology mentioned above aid in understanding the nature of the discipline. Thus we can say that sociology is a science of general nature and falls in the category of social sciences.

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## 8.6 SOCIOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE

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Common sense knowledge refers to that knowledge which is routinely used in the conduct of everyday life. It is practical, experimental and critical but also fragmentary and incoherent in nature. Common sense views rely on perceptions formed without any reference to scientific methods of causality. On the other hand natural sciences and social sciences give more attention to the underlying causality rather than superficial resemblances or lack of resemblances.

However according to Andre Beteille, sociology is distinct from common sense. Sociological knowledge aims to be general, if not universal, whereas common sense is particular and localized.

An important contribution of sociology has been to show that common sense is highly variable, subject to constraints of time and place, as well as others, more specifically social constraints.

Interpretative sociologists like Dilthey, Max Weber and Symbolic interactionists like G.H Mead and G. Cooley use common sense knowledge to some extent. The concept of common sense knowledge is central to Alfred Schutz's Phenomenological approach. Common sense knowledge also forms the basis of Peter Berger and Gluckman's general theory of society in the book, "Social construction of Reality". Ethnomethodologists like Harold Garfinkle, make use of common sense knowledge in their study of people's method in the construction of social reality. Anthony Giddens has also focused on common sense knowledge in his theory "theory of structuration".

"Sociology is anti-utopian in its central preoccupation with the disjunction between ideal and reality, between what human beings consider right, proper and desirable, and their actual conditions of existence, not in this or that particular society, but in human societies as such. Sociology is also anti-fatalistic in its orientation. It does not accept the particular constraints taken for granted by common sense as eternal or immutable. It provides a clearer awareness than common sense of the range of alternative arrangements that have been or may be devised for the attainment of broadly the same ends". ( Beteille: 1996)

Common sense is unreflective since it does not question its own origins or ask itself 'why do I hold this view?'. Sociologists on the other hand, must be ready to ask "Is this really so?". Both the systematic and questioning approach of sociology is derived from a broader tradition of scientific investigation. In this way sociology is more rigorous than common sense.

Sociology has to be distinguished from common sense which is limited in its reach, and uses many unexamined assumptions for interpreting and explaining everyday phenomena. Sociology should not go against common sense but must go

beyond it to reach a broader and deeper view of the operation of society. The subject matter of sociology is such that it is far more difficult to insulate it from the assumptions and judgments of common sense than, say, particle physics or molecular biology.

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## 8.7 SOCIOLOGY AS SCIENCE

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Sociology can be termed a science because it fulfills the basic requirements of objective and rational knowledge of social reality. Sociologists apply science to their study in the same way that natural scientists investigate the natural world.

To analyze whether sociology is a science following points needs to be understood:

- Sociology can be considered as a science to the extent that it uses scientific methods to study from selecting a topic to choosing a research method and analyzing the results.
- Sociologists can make generalizations on the basis of micro studies and also these sociological studies are based on evidence, observations and explanations.

Sociological theories are built upon one another, extending and refining the older ones and producing new ones. Comte concentrated his efforts to determine the nature of human society and the laws and principles underlying its growth and development. He also tried to establish the methods to be employed in studying social phenomena. Comte argued that social phenomena can be like physical phenomena copying the methods of natural sciences. He thought that it was time for inquiries into social problems and social phenomena to enter into this last stage. So, he recommended that the study of society be called the science of society, i. e. 'sociology'.

### **Positivist approach:**

Positivists believe that sociology can and should use the same methods and approaches to study the social world that "natural" sciences such as biology and physics use to investigate the physical world.

By adopting "scientific" techniques sociologists should be able, eventually, to uncover the laws that govern societies and social behaviour just as scientists have discovered the laws that govern the physical world.

Positivists believe that good, scientific research should reveal objective truths about the causes of social action - science tells us that water boils at 100 degrees and this is true irrespective of what the researcher thinks - good social research

should tell us similar things about social action. Because positivists want to uncover the general laws that shape human behaviour, they are interested in looking at society as a whole. They are interested in explaining patterns of human behaviour or general social trends. In other words, they are interested in getting to the 'bigger picture'.

To do this, positivists use quantitative methods such as official statistics, structured questionnaires and social surveys. Statistical, numerical data is crucial to Positivist research. Positivists need to collect statistical information in order to make comparisons. And in order to uncover general social trends. It is much more difficult to make comparisons and uncover social trends with qualitative data.

These methods also allow the researcher to remain relatively detached from the research process - this way, the values of the researcher should not interfere with the results of the research and knowledge should be objective

While Durkheim rejected much of the details of Comte's philosophy "positivism", he retained and refined its method. Durkheim believed that sociology should be able to predict accurately the effect of particular changes in social organisation such as an increase in unemployment or a change in the education system.

Durkheim believed the primary means of researching society should be the Comparative Method which involves comparing groups and looking for correlations or relationships between 2 or more variables. This method essentially seeks to establish the cause and effect relationships in society by comparing variables.

Durkheim chose to study suicide because he thought that if he could prove that suicide, a very personal act, could be explained through social factors, then surely any action could be examined in such a way. The starting-point for Durkheim was a close analysis of the available official statistics, which showed that rates of suicide varied.

However, interpretative sociologists argue that sociology is not a science and nor should it attempt to be, as humans have agency and will not simply conform to universal laws or predictable patterns and developments like natural phenomena.

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## 8.8 SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

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Scope means an area of study, field of enquiry or the subject matter. The study of sociology is organized within a specific boundary which is known as the scope of sociology. The scope of sociology is extremely wide, encompassing the analysis of all facets of social life, from individual interactions to the evolution of entire societies. The field is divided into two main schools of thought: the formalistic school and the synthetic school.

### **Formal or Specialist School**

The major proponents of this school of thought are Ferdinand Tonnies, Leopold Vonwiese, Max Weber, Alfred Vierkandt and George Simmel. Park and Burgess, E.A Ross, Albion Small are other important supporters of this school. German sociologists George Simmel is considered as one of the founder of formal approach. According to this school of thought the subject matter of sociology is a distinct, pure and independent of social science. It classifies and analyses patterns of social interactions. It differentiates between their form and contents. The field of sociology is relatively constrained and limited. It examines particular types of human relationships. Below is an explanation of some of the main perspectives held by influential sociologists.

**George Simmel:** The contrast that George Simmel draws between the forms and contents of social interactions is that sociology should focus on understanding the various forms of social relationships and study them in an abstract manner, leaving other social sciences to handle the contents. Diverse social interactions include those based on cooperation, competitiveness, subordination, division of labour, etc.

**Max Weber:** According to Max Weber, the goal of sociology is to make an effort at categorizing and interpreting social conduct and social action. The behaviour that is connected to other people's behaviour is known as social behaviour. The field of sociology has a fairly narrow scope because social behaviour does not encompass all human relationships.

### **Criticism of Formal School:**

The formal school has drawn criticism for ignoring the more practical aspects of social life in favour of an exclusive focus on abstract forms. Abstract forms that have been cut off from tangible relations cannot be studied. Ginsberg believed that without a comprehensive understanding of the terminology used in the field, research on social relationships would never be finished. There are other social science disciplines that concentrate on the different kinds of social relationships besides sociology.

The same topics are studied by political science and international law. The idea of pure sociology is unrealistic since social sciences cannot be studied in isolation from other sciences.

### **Synthetic School:**

The major proponents of this school of thought are Morris Ginsberg, Emile Durkheim, August Comte, P.A Sorokin, Spencer, L.T Hobhouse and many others. According to this school of thought, the scope of sociology has a very broad and extensive scope. The various facets of social life are interconnected. Sociology should

aim to investigate social life as a whole because we cannot comprehend society by studying its individual components. It is a social science synthesis. There is a close relationship between sociology and other social sciences. Some of the main points of view of notable sociologists are described below.

Emile Durkheim: The main advocate of synthetic school opines that the scope of sociology has three main divisions or field of study i.e. i) Social Morphology ii) Social Physiology iii) General Sociology

P.A Sorokin: General and particular sociology are the two divisions made by P.A. Sorokin into the field of sociology. General sociology examines the characteristics and patterns shared by all socio-cultural phenomena in both their dynamic and structural dimensions. The numerous kinds of sociocultural phenomena and the recurrent links between biological and sociocultural phenomena are studied by special sociology.

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## 8.9 UNDERSTANDING SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

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Sociology, as the study of social structures and relationships, offers a wealth of theories that can help better improve our comprehension of and ability to engage with our surrounding world. This covers hypotheses covering an extraordinarily wide spectrum of various social systems and issues, as well as rival theories that are trying to explain the same phenomenon.

Examining a few examples of sociological theory can help one have a better understanding of the variety of concepts that sociology covers and will prepare one to delve deeper into some of the more complex concepts.

Sociological theories give us a framework for understanding the social world around us, much like other scientific theories do. The nature of social order and the kinds of processes that impact social change are two possible topics for their inquiries. Numerous sociological theories exist as well, examining a broad spectrum of social themes and problems. For further in-depth investigation, it is therefore a great idea to begin with some of the fundamental viewpoints in sociological theory. The three major sociological theories are interactionist perspective, the conflict perspective and the functionalist perspective. And each explains different facets of society and how people behave it in a unique way.

One useful illustration of micro-sociology is the interactionist perspective. This view, which contends that definitions and symbolic meanings have a significant impact on human behaviour, is sometimes referred to as the symbolic interactionist perspective. And those definitions and meanings are produced by our symbolic relationships with other community members. The labels people choose to give us

also have an impact on our sense of self, which is shaped by social interactions. Since the labels we receive from others help us see ourselves in a different light.

Because of this, the interactionist perspective stresses that people respond to how they see their situations rather than providing what could be considered and unbiased assessment. Therefore, even if our ideas are false, the things we take for granted may nevertheless turn out to be real in the end.

In contrast, a more conventional example of macro sociology is the functionalist perspective. It places a strong focus on how different social systems are related to one another. To put it differently, its focus is mostly on the relationship between the part and the whole. And for society to remain in a balanced state, those components must collaborate.

Instilling values in young people is mostly dependent on family values, culture, and knowledge. According to this perspective, every part of a society is either functional or dysfunctional depending on whether it contributes to or takes away from social stability. Additionally certain situations are harder to pinpoint than others; in fact, certain facets of society can both exacerbate and alleviate social instability simultaneously. For example, societal instability is linked to crime. However it can also be useful in fostering moral unity, social cohesiveness, and sometimes even in readjusting social standards.

While functionalism portrays society as cooperative, the conflict perspective sees society as made up of groups with different and unique interests. Karl Marx is credited with developing this idea. According to Marx, human society goes through several stages of economic development.

Two distinct social classes emerge during the industrialization stage: the proletariat, who earn wages, and the bourgeoisie, who own the modes and means of production. Subsequently the bourgeoisie, maintain power differentials by rearranging society to suit their interests through the employment of their disproportionate influence over social institutions. Some proponents of conflict perspective theory would argue that advancement is a zero-sum game and that it can only benefit one group at the expense of another. Some theorists don't agree.

Crucially class concepts are not the exclusive domain of conflict theory. Groups can be categorized according to a variety of factors such as politics, gender, race, or religion. Members of those groups will typically act in the best interests of their respective groupings in each scenario. Furthermore, conflict theory requires one to consider which groups are now in positions of power and who stands to gain from the prevailing social structures in each situation.

There are number of additional sociological theories that explore a variety of facets of the social world like socialization, which is the means by which human

infants acquire the abilities required to operate and engage as functioning members of their society. There is labeling theory that holds that words used to categorize or characterize people can have an impact on how they behave and how they perceive themselves. The foundation of social exchange theory is the idea that a cost benefit analysis process is what builds a relationship between two individuals. On the other hand, in social learning theory people pick up social skills by watching and copying the actions and behaviour of others.

### **8.9.1 SOCIOLOGY IN RECENT TIMES**

Sociology, as a discipline, is continuously evolving to take into account new concerns and reflect societal shifts. In recent years, a number of newly developed areas of sociology have gained prominence.

**Environmental sociology :** The link between society and the environment is the main focus of environmental sociology. This field of study looks at how cultural beliefs, institutions, and social structures affect people's attitudes, behaviors, and policies about the environment. Topics covered by environmental sociologists include resource usage and conservation from a social perspective, sustainability, climate change, and environmental justice.

**Medical sociology :** The social aspects of health, illness, and healthcare systems are investigated by medical sociology. Researchers in this domain examine the ways in which socioeconomic determinants, including race, class, gender, and ethnicity, impact health outcomes, healthcare accessibility, and medical institution structure. Along with these topics, medical sociology looks at how healthcare is delivered, how patients and providers interact, and how illness and disability are viewed in society.

**Intersectionality :** The concept of intersectionality highlights how social categories including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability are interrelated. Sociologists analyze how these interlocking systems of privilege and oppression affect people's lives and societal consequences by applying an intersectional perspective. In order to comprehend social inequalities and further social justice goals, intersectionality has grown in importance.

**Digital sociology :** As digital technologies spread, scholars are looking more closely at how social media, digital platforms, and online communities affect identities, power dynamics, and social interactions. Digital sociology delves at subjects including virtual communities, digital inequality, online activism, and how technology affects interpersonal interactions.

**Feminist Sociology :** Feminist Sociology is an approach that applies feminist principles and perspectives to the study of society. It focuses on the issues and



experiences of women and other marginalized groups in society. It also challenges the male-dominated assumptions and biases in sociology.

**Postmodern Sociology :** Postmodern Sociology is an approach that questions the validity and objectivity of sociology in the context of contemporary society. It focuses on the diversity, complexity, and uncertainty of social reality. It also criticizes the grand narratives and meta theories of sociology.

The discipline's continued attempts to address current social challenges and comprehend the intricacies of social life in the modern world are reflected in these recently established sociological fields. Sociology will probably keep adapting and creating new fields of study to examine and assess these changes as society keeps changing and evolving.

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## 8.11 LETS SUM UP

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Among the social sciences, which also include psychology, anthropology, history, political science, and economics, sociology is a relatively new academic discipline. Beginning in the early 19th century, sociology evolved as a scientific subject, representing a fundamentally new sort of society founded on novel ideals of enlightenment and novel principles of social organisation. Sociology is the study of human interactions, their conditions, and their outcomes on a larger scale. It is a type of science that uses methodical, objective research approaches. Studying human society methodically and objectively is the focus of sociology. Its goal is to provide classified forms of relationships in organisations, associations, and society. One could think of sociology as an objective research methodology that entails comparing beliefs to the available data. There is a substantial distinction between common sense and sociology, despite the latter's seeming similarity. Common sense perspectives provide an erroneous impression of society since they are based on people's limited experiences. Sociological viewpoints, however, are supported by extensive qualitative or quantitative data and study. Sociology, thus, is social, pure, categorical and abstract in nature. It is both a rational and empirical science.

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## 8.12 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS:

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1. Multiple choice questions :

- a) Who is considered as father of sociology?
- |                   |               |
|-------------------|---------------|
| i) Emile Durkheim | ii) Max Weber |
| iii) August Comte | iv) Karl Marx |

2. Answer the following questions briefly:

- Discuss the nature and scope of sociology.
- What are the factors that contributed to the development of sociology as a discipline?
- How is sociology related to common sense?
- Name the two schools of thought that had different perspectives with respect to the scope and theme of sociology.

### 8.13 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES :

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## **Unit 9 : Relationship between Sociology and Anthropology**

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### **Structure**

- 9.1 Objectives**
- 9.2 Introduction**
  - 9.2.1 Anthropology : A Social Science Discipline**
  - 9.2.2 Social Anthropology : A Branch of Anthropology**
- 9.3 Relationship between Sociology and Anthropology**
  - 9.3.1 Similarities between the two**
  - 9.3.2 Differences between the two**
- 9.4 Sociology and Anthropology in India**
- 9.5 Summary**
- 9.6 Questions**
- 9.7 Suggested Readings**

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### **9.1 Objectives**

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To help students understand the following things:

- The unit will help the students:
- To learn about the distinct identities of the two disciplines;
- To understand their similarities;
- To understand their differences;
- To know how close they are to be known as ‘twin disciplines’;
- How anthropology/social anthropology has nurtured sociology in India.

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### **9.2 Introduction**

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Sociology and anthropology both are important branches of social science. Though they have their own distinct identities, both have many things in common. As branches of social science these two are comparatively modern in origin, the subject-matter of both the disciplines cover similar areas of interest like aspects

of human society, but each of them analyse those areas from different perspectives. Due to the similarity in their subject matters sociology and anthropology are viewed as very close; so much so, that in many universities of the west sociology and social anthropology, a branch of anthropology, are taught under the same department. Anthropology studies ‘anthropos’ or man in general; but it focuses more on primitive man, his life, physical growth and changes, the culture of primitive communities including language, religion and rituals etc.; whereas sociology studies society, groups, associations, institutions, various social processes, language, culture and rituals of modern man. Even though the two academic disciplines appear so similar, they have their own independent and distinct paths of growth, different types of problem to sort out and different research methods to pursue. Therefore, it is quite interesting to compare these two disciplines and to examine their separate areas of study for a clear understanding of the relationship they share. For this, we need to start with a brief discussion of the scope and subject-matter of anthropology.

### **9.2.1 Anthropology : A Social Science Discipline**

Anthropology, as it has already been mentioned, is the study of man, his origin and bio-cultural evolution in different phases of civilisation and his society, evolution of beliefs, social-religious customs and rituals. The discipline has got its name ‘anthropology’ from a combination of two Greek terms – ‘anthropos’ meaning human and ‘logos’ meaning discourse or science. Thus anthropology stands for the science or discourse of human beings. Famous Greek scholar Aristotle first coined and used the term ‘anthropologist’ to mean ‘the gossip who talks about himself’.(Majumdar & Madan.1956)

#### **a) Definitions**

Anthropology has been defined in various ways to identify its different aspects. For example, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it as ‘the study of mankind especially of its societies and customs; study of structure and evolution of man as an animal’.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary has given the definition of anthropology as the science of human beings. It further defines it as the study of human beings and their ancestors through time and space and in relation to physical character, environmental and social relations, and culture.

According to anthropologist Kroeber, “Anthropology is the science of groups of men and their behavior and production.”

In the opinion of Herskovits, “Anthropology may be defined as the measurement

of human beings.”

Jacobs and Stern define it as the scientific study of the physical, social and cultural development and behavior of human beings since their appearance on earth.

From these definitions it becomes quite clear that anthropology is not concerned with any single or particular individual, but with men in groups and races or ethnic communities and their activities. Anthropology has emerged much later than many other social sciences, it has progressed well and, therefore, has gone ahead of many of them. Sociology has been immensely enriched by anthropological studies and research methods; anthropology, too, has borrowed analytical methods from sociology.

### **9.2.2 Divisions of Anthropology:- Social Anthropology: A Branch of Anthropology**

As anthropology studies both the physical and cultural aspects of man, it has earmarked two distinct areas of study; one is Organic or Physical Anthropology and the other is Social or Cultural Anthropology. These two broad divisions have been further divided into several other areas of analysis. Anthropologists like Piddington believe that social anthropology is a sub-division of cultural anthropology. It studies the working of simpler, pre-literate and pre-urban cultures from a functionalist point of view.

Ancient Greek and Roman thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Herodotus and many other pioneer social thinkers expressed their humanistic interests in man's affairs. But their postulates were more in the line of philosophy than social scientific. As an independent discipline anthropology had originated only in the nineteenth century. Though there were traces of some early thoughts on several sub-disciplines of the subject, real professional interests started to emerge in the nineteenth century only when European explorers, seafarers and traders came into close contacts with unknown (to them) people and their cultures. Charles Darwin's landmark book *Origin of Species* had far reaching influences on the emergence of new disciplines like zoology, anatomy, physiology, palaeontology, archeology and geology. Scholars like Herbert Spencer, Morgan and Tylor had come to believe that evolution did not limit itself to the physical aspects of mankind only, but also extended to cultural life. Out of this belief the discipline of anthropology was born in the year 1859. Soon after its birth it earned huge popularity throughout Europe where it is still known by its multiple names like anthropology, ethnology, prehistory and linguistics to connote the discipline in its entirety.

The discipline of anthropology or the science of man and his work has a very wide scope to include physical anthropology, prehistoric archeology, cultural anthropology, ethnology, linguistics, and symbology (study of symbols), genetics,

thought and art of primitive man, economic anthropology, social anthropology, etc. and mostly belong to the science faculty of universities, whereas sociology belongs to the arts faculty. Through its many branches anthropology gives us an understanding of man and his life in society, past and present and also to appreciate his limitless physical and cultural variety. With scientific study of humanity and human society it has emerged as a leading social science discipline; however, it also builds upon knowledge from natural sciences. Therefore, when we seek to find any similarity or close proximity between sociology and anthropology, we should select the part of social (cultural) anthropology only and exclude other areas from comparison.

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### **9.3 Relationship between Sociology and Anthropology**

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Both sociology and anthropology are comparatively young branches of modern social science; both cover wide number of subjects within their scopes. Most importantly, both of them are very close to each other because of the similarities in their subject matters. For this reason, it is quite difficult to differentiate between the scope, subject-matter and objectives of these two disciplines. T. B. Bottomore has opined that in spite of difference in origin, these two have become almost indistinguishable in character. The history of their relations prove that at the initial stage these two remained very close, then came a period of great divergence, and then again a state of convergence brought them together. To support his statement Bottomore has cited the writings of many famous scholars like Spencer, Tylor, and Westermarck. E. A. Hoebel argues in his book, *The Law of Primitive Man* (2006, Harvard Univ. Press), that in their broadest sense sociology and social anthropology are one and the same. Anthropologist Kroeber considers sociology and anthropology as twin sisters. We should discuss the relations between the two in this light.

A very important task of sociology is to find out the link or continuity between the past and present forms of human society and to compare them for better understanding of the state of affairs. For this, sociologists collect information from other sources of knowledge like history and anthropology – both explain the march of civilization from the primitive age to the modern period. As sociologists often have to relate the contemporary society to its past forms they have to depend on the works of anthropologists to a large extent; this makes sociology indebted to anthropology and anthropologists in general. European and American sociologists, in the recent years, are increasingly using anthropology's research methods and observations in their own areas of study. The focus of anthropology's analysis is undoubtedly Man; sociology's main area of interest is society created by men. Thus

sociology and anthropology enjoy a close relationship and mutual support. According to Vidyabhushan and Sachdev, (2014. *An Introduction to Sociology*. Kitab Mahal) sociology greatly depends on the material supplied by anthropology and the historical part of sociology is identical with cultural anthropology. Thus anthropology has contributed substantially to the study of sociology. They have further stated that the research done by Malinowski has proved quite valuable to sociology.

But this dependence is never one sided because anthropology is also indebted to sociology. Many of sociology's concepts and ideas have benefitted anthropologists and their research. For example, the functionalist approach proposed by Durkheim was adopted in anthropology by Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski. Morgan and many others have built their ideas of primitive egalitarian system of society with help from the sociological analysis of property system in modern societies. As both the disciplines focus on the common subject of man and his group, anthropology has to depend on sociology in many ways.

### **9.3.1 Similarities between the two**

Anthropology, like sociology, is a general science; to many, it is the broadest of all the social sciences. Socio-cultural anthropology or more popularly known as social anthropology – a branch of the general science of anthropology- has come the closest to sociology. The disciplines share concepts like cultural area, cultural traits, cultural lag, family, kinship, marriage, religion and private property. Participant observation, a very popular and common research method adopted by anthropologists has also become valuable in sociological research.

As a discipline the two are so closely related that they often become indistinguishable. In the past, these two disciplines used to maintain their well designated areas of study, like modern society for sociology and primitive or pre-literate, pre-industrialised society for anthropology. But, over the years the line of distinction has almost disappeared and at present sociologists do not feel shy to examine tribal society or anthropologists to look into various aspects of modern society. Both the disciplines are growing fast and in many universities sociology and anthropology are taught under the same department. While anthropology studies human behavior at the micro-level of an individual as a part of the larger culture, sociology, on the other hand, looks at the bigger picture of society taken as a whole. At present there does not exist any distinction of subject matter and the line between sociology and social –cultural anthropology is neither firm, nor fixed.

### 9.3.2 Differences between Sociology and Anthropology

In spite of many similarities and close interactions between the two disciplines, we cannot deny that there exist a good number of differences between them. The reasons behind these differences are many.

- a) As Bottomore has observed, the initial intimacy of the two waned after the adoption of functional approach in anthropology and the primary reason behind the differences is related to the differences in their objects of study. Sociology studies the modern, advanced and complex societies, while anthropology concerns itself with the simple, pre-industrial, primitive or pre-literate societies.
- b) Secondly, the scopes of the two disciplines are also different. Anthropologists engage themselves in the general analysis and observations on a specific society. In social anthropology, particular aspects of culture and civilizations are examined with reference to the community or country as a whole, for example, Melanesia, Meghalaya, or Nagaland. On the contrary, sociologists today are more interested in particular social institution like family, marriage, etc. or processes like social change, social mobility or problems like divorce or crime trends in a certain society.
- c) Sociology and anthropology both have adopted different research methods. Anthropologists generally use methods of direct examination and participant observation; they may employ data from history, but do not use historical method in their research. Sociologists, on the other hand, depend on historical method, interview technique, questionnaire and statistical method for their research on a regular basis.
- d) Sociology and anthropology differ from each other in the scope of their research, too. Anthropologists usually do research on small but self-sufficient communities and groups like tribes with the help of direct participation in the group activities, ethnography, observation- both participant and non-participant types, etc. In sociological research the more favoured methods of data-collection are non-participant observation, case-study, interview, questionnaire etc.
- e) Anthropologists are more concerned with the past or primitive civilizations; on the other hand, sociologists are more concerned with the modern society. Vidyabhushan and Sachdev have observed that sociology concerns itself with both social philosophy and social planning whereas anthropology remains more with social planning only and, therefore, does not make any suggestion for future.



- f) Sociologists and anthropologists may study the same topics and may follow similar research methods, anthropology in India is administratively classified as an extension of biological sciences with its conventional four-fold model of pre-history and archeology, linguistics and social and cultural anthropology. Of these, the fourth fold often overlaps with sociology.

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## 9.4 Sociology and Social Anthropology in India

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In India sociology has emerged as a child of anthropology during the colonial period. In their journey towards maturity as two independent social sciences, the two disciplines appear to be closely linked and overlapping. M.N. Srinivas and Panini have pointed out that sociology is a relatively young discipline; having centuries old roots, it finally appeared as an important social science to study all societies systematically in the nineteenth century in Europe and America. Here, in India, the origin of sociology can be traced back to the days when colonial administrators had undertaken ethnographical studies for gathering information on the life and society of the people in this country. Through such studies they had gathered minute details on religion, sect, caste, tribe, region, language and such other things and such ethnographical exercises by the British government officials had inspired the Indian nationalist scholars to delve into both anthropological and sociological analyses of the indigenous society. The growth of sociology and anthropology can be divided into three distinct phases: 1) covering the period between 1773-1900, 2) 1901-1950 and 3) the post-independence period.

In 1769, Henry Verelst, the then Governor of undivided Bengal and Bihar encouraged revenue supervisors to collect information on the leading families and their customs. Since then, many British officials and missionaries had strived to collect data and record information on almost all aspects of life and culture of the Indian people. Sir Francis Buchanan undertook ethnographic survey as a part of nature. Abbe Dubois, a French missionary in Mysore wrote a very important book entitled *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* in 1816 to narrate the life, customs and rituals he witnessed there. He was also one of the first to study caste and inter-caste relationships. Walter Hamilton's *Gazetteer- A Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and Adjacent Countries* (1820) accurately located many places in India in terms of longitude and latitude, narrated the history of various towns and estimated the population of India to be 123 million. By the later part of the nineteenth century more systematic attempts to collect information on almost all aspects of indigenous life for enabling the Raj to control its subjects were made. The first all-India census was undertaken in 1871 and in 1901 Sir Herbert Risley established an ethnographic survey as part of the census for collecting and

recording important data before they could disappear due to larger social and cultural changes and also for the purposes of legislation, famine relief, sanitation, control of epidemics, judicial procedure and many such other administrative operations. However, on many occasions facts were misinterpreted either to serve colonial administrative purposes or due to lack of basic understanding of India's culture and social system.

British scholars and officials were involved in Indological studies as well to become familiar with the life and culture of Indians. In 1776, a treatise on Hindu law was prepared with help from Indian pundits for the use of British judges. Help from Arabic scholars was also sought during the early period of British rule to decide cases involving Muslim laws and practices. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was established by the great Orientalist Sir William Jones in 1787; it published many articles on antiquarian and anthropological interests in its esteemed journal regularly. Indian scholars too benefitted much from these articles and from the new-found interest in Sanskrit texts aroused by Jones and Max Mueller. The discovery of India's past and the richness of its heritage through those Indological and Orientalist effort had gradually awakened the nationalist spirit among the educated sections of Indians and provided the necessary stimulus for both sociology and social anthropology in India. As the educated elites witnessed the criticism of Hinduism by European missionaries, and their bids to convert the poor and lowly Hindus to Christianity, they increasingly felt the need of social-religious reformation, a reinterpretation of the past and an examination of their contemporary society in India. They were inspired by the spirit of nationalism and their analyses of Indian society and the impact of foreign rule on it laid the foundation of sociology in India.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, professional sociologists and social anthropologists shifted their focus on India. Sociology was more advanced and better established on the continent, i.e. in European countries like France and Germany than in England. In American universities, too, it had taken strong roots by then and till today it has maintained its stronghold. Alongside sociology, anthropology had also been developing in Indian Universities; the main difference between the two here remains in the use of methodology. At one point of time each had its own well defined areas like urban-industrial groups for sociology and tribes, caste, communities for social anthropology but over the years, the two have come so close that many suggest, the duo should be known as 'ethno-sociology'. Ethno-sociologists generally combine documentary and literary data with oral traditions and field data. Tribe, caste and religion have emerged as the common topics for discussion in both the disciplines. Both of them deal with aggregates of people in a number of locales like

village, town and city. In the colonial period, too, Sir Henry Maine and W.H. Baden-Powell wrote extensively on the village community in India. Besides, the many district gazetteers prepared by the colonial administrators provided ethnographic and economic data pertaining to Indian society. Sociologists like G.S. Ghurye have often drawn upon these documents prepared for helping the schemes of the Raj.

Eminent Indian and foreign scholars like Brajendra Nath Seal, Patrick Geddes, W.H.R. Rivers, L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and Sharat Chandra Roy contributed generously to the fields of both sociology and social anthropology. B. N. Seal, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Calcutta had taken the pioneering role to introduce sociology at the masters level. A nationalist to the core, Seal refuted Spencer's unilinear evolutionary theory to explain society's march from a simple to an increasingly complex form and also opposed the European conclusion of India's placement at the lower run of the evolution ladder. Uberoi, et al in the introduction to the book edited by them, *Anthropology in the East*, (2010) observe that most of the prominent Indian-born sociologists and anthropologists had taken pride in their role and responsibility of studying Indian society; and very few of the post-independence, India-based sociologists and social anthropologists have studied societies outside the Indian subcontinent.

Most of India's eminent sociologists/anthropologists were English educated nationalists and contributed generously to the development of both sociology and social anthropology here in this country. As members of the educated middle class they remained engaged "in the production and dissemination of scientific and useful knowledge." (Uberoi et al. p.32).

In India, sociology and social anthropologists both drew upon Indology and Sanskrit texts for understanding not only the past but also the contemporary phenomena like costume, architecture, sexuality, urbanism, family and kinship, Indian tribal cultures, human rights, citizenship, cultural survival, social reform and national integration. However, it is argued that sociology is a social or moral science and anthropology is, in the words of N.K. Bose, a field-science.

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## 9.5 Summary

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Many Scholars, especially sociologists in India, believe that there is hardly any difference between the practices of the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. M.N. Srinivas was one of the first scholars to make such a claim in 1952 in an article in the very first issue of *Sociological Bulletin*. This claim of unity and inseparability of the two later swayed the opinions of other thinkers. In fact, since

the time sociology has received the official status of an academic discipline, the two have not been separated or segregated as different. Commentators like Andre Beteille (2006) and Uberoi et al. and Oommen after him argue that the division between the two disciplines is the brainchild of the West.

From the above discussion we can definitely draw the conclusion that sociology and (social) anthropology have come and are increasingly coming closer. Bottomore believes that in the recent years these disciplines have renewed their intimacy afresh. As the world is going through rapid changes even long before globalization, the pre-literate, primitive communities are fast losing their culture, language, lifestyle, occupation and their abode. Under such circumstances, anthropology too is losing its own exclusive subjects to study and anthropologists are entering the domain of sociology in increasing number. It is, therefore, argued that social anthropology may soon become a part of sociology itself.

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## 9.6 Questions

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### 1. Answer in Brief :

**5 Marks.**

- (a) What is anthropology?
- (b) What is social anthropology?
- (c) What are the similarities between sociology and anthropology?
- (d) What are the differences between sociology and anthropology?
- (e) How did colonialism influence sociology and anthropology in India?
- (f) Which two disciplines are known as 'twin sisters'? Why are they known as such?

### 2. Answer in Detail :

**10 Marks.**

- (a) Do you agree that sociology and social anthropology grew together in India? Give reasons in favour of your answer.
- (b) Examine the relationship between sociology and anthropology in detail.

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## 9.7 Suggested Readings

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- Bhattacharyya, D.C. Sociology.1987. Calcutta.Vijaya Publishing House.
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- Srinivas,M.N..’Sociology and Social Anthropology’, Sociological Bulletin,1952, 1(1):28-37.
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- Uberoi, Patricia et al. (ed).Anthropology in the East.2007. Delhi. Permanent Black.
- Vidyabhushan and Sachdev. An Introduction to Sociology.2014. Kitab Mahal.
- চৌধুরী, চট্টোপাধ্যায়, ঘোষ। সাম্প্রতিক সমাজতত্ত্ব ২০০৩। চ্যাটার্জী পাবলিশার্স, কলকাতা
- মহাপাত্র, অনাদিকুমার। বিষয় সমাজতত্ত্ব ১৯৯৪। সুহ্রিদ পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।

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## **Unit 10 : Sociology and Psychology**

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### **Structure**

#### **10.1 Objectives**

#### **10.2 Introduction**

#### **10.3 Emergence of Psychology**

#### **10.4 Relation between Sociology and Psychology**

##### **10.4.1 Social Psychology**

#### **10.5 Differences between Sociology and Psychology**

#### **10.6 Similarities between Psychology and Sociology**

#### **10.7 The Two Disciplines in Brief**

#### **10.8 Summary**

#### **10.9 Questions**

#### **10.10 Suggested Readings**

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### **10.1 Objectives**

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From this unit students will come to know about :

- The similarities between sociology and psychology.
- How the two disciplines examine man and his conducts from different angles.
- The differences between the two disciplines.
- In spite of differences how the two disciplines help and compliment each other.

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### **10.2 Introduction**

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Society is an expression of complex inter-personal relations and exchanges between men. Such relations and exchanges not only impact man's physical and social-cultural existence, but also influence his thoughts, attitudes, and behavior. So, to understand the relations between man and society, one needs to understand the patterns of human behavior. For this, an understanding of psychology or the

science of human behavior becomes essential. Sociology, too, is concerned with man's activities in society and therefore it is closely related to psychology. Though both the disciplines primarily share the same subject-matter their approaches and methods to study human behavior are quite different; the focus of their interests is also different. Psychology explores the mind of an individual or small group to understand different aspects of human behavior and man's social and emotional reactions. Sociology does not limit itself to any single individual or his role but examines social groups and associations like family, neighbourhood, gender, race, ethnicity, social class or religion. Bottomore has commented that the relation between sociology and psychology is rather "difficult and unsettled. There are two extreme views." (Sociology, 1962. p. 67). One view is held by John Stuart Mill and the other by Emile Durkheim. While Mill was of the opinion that sociology or a general social science could be firmly established only when it would be logically deducible from the laws of the mind. On the other hand, Durkheim was firmly in favour of keeping the two branches of social science separate. However, it has been found that sociology and psychology come the closest in the field of social psychology.

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### 10.3 Emergence of Psychology

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Psychology is the science of behavior and mind. It includes the study of conscious and unconscious phenomenon as well as feeling and thought. It is an academic discipline of immense scope. Psychologists seek an understanding of the emergent properties of brains, and all the variety of phenomena linked to those emergent properties, joining this way the broader neuro scientific group of researches for understanding the whole range of human emotions that guide and govern man's behavior.. As a social science it aims to understand the finer details of the psyche of individual and groups by establishing general principles and researching specific cases. In this field, a professional practitioner or researcher is called a psychologist and can be classified as a social behaviouralist, or cognitive scientist. Psychologists attempt to understand the dynamic role of state of mind behind the social behavior of man and of group, while also exploring the hidden psychological and biological processes that influence those cognitive functions and behaviors.

The word psychology is derived from Greek roots, firstly, to mean study of the psyche, or the soul. The second part of the word comes from another Greek word 'Logos' meaning discourse or science. Thus, psychology is recognized as the science of mind. Until the 1860s psychology was treated as a branch of philosophy, afterwards it began to develop as an independent science in Germany. The earliest known reference to the word psychology in English was by Steven Blankaart in

1694 in the physical Dictionary which makes a clear-cut distinction between anatomy as the study of the Body, and psychology as the study of Soul or Mind. In 1890 William James defined psychology as “the science of mental life, both of its phenomena and their conditions” This definition enjoyed widespread currency for decades. However, this meaning was contested, notably by radical behaviorists such as John B. Satson, who in his 1913 manifesto defined the discipline of psychology as the acquisitions of information useful to the control of behavior. Also since James defined it, the term more strongly connotes techniques of scientific experimentation. Folk psychology refers to the understanding of ordinary people, as contrasted with that of psychology professional.

The ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece, China, India, and Persia were engaged in the philosophical study of psychology. In ancient Egypt the Ebers Papyrus (book written on papyrus) mentioned depression and thought disorders much in the same way as physical disorder. Historians note that Greek philosophers, including Thales, Plato and Aristotle (especially in his *De Anima* treatise) addressed the workings of the mind. As early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C, Greek physician Hippocrates theorized that mental disorders had physical rather than supernatural causes. In India a central idea of the Upanishads is the distinction between a person’s transient mundane self and their eternal unchanging soul. Divergent Hindu doctrines and Buddhist literature have challenged this hierarchy of selves, but have all emphasized the importance of reaching higher awareness.

Psychology was quite popular in Philosophy during Enlightenment in Germany. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 - 1716) applied his principles of calculus to the mind. Christian Wolf identified psychology as its own science, writing *Psychologia Empirica* in 1732 and *Psychologia Nationalize* in 1734. This notion advanced further under Immanuel Kant, who established the idea of anthropology, with psychology as an important subdivision. However, Kant explicitly and notoriously rejected the idea of experimental psychology.

Gustav Fechner began conducting research in psychophysics in Leipzig in the 1830s, articulating the principle (Weber- Fechner law) that human perception of stimulus varies logarithmically according to its intensity. Fechner’s 1860 *Elements of Psychophysics* challenged Kant’s stricture against qualitative study of the mind. Psychologists in Germany, Denmark, Austria, England, and the United States soon followed Wundt in setting up laboratories. G. Stanley Hall who studied with Wundt, formed a psychology lab at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, which became internationally influential. Hall, in turn, trained Yujiro Motora, who brought experimental psychology, emphasizing psychophysics, to the imperial University of Tokyo. Wundt’s assistant, Hugo Munsterberg, taught psychology at Harvard to



students such as Narendra Nath Sen Gupta- who in 1905 founded a psychology department and laboratory at the University of Calcutta.

Edward Tifchener, created the psychology program at Cornell University and advanced a doctrine of “Structuralist” psychology. Structuralism sought to analyze and classify different aspects of the mind, primarily through the method of introspection. William James, John Dewey and Harvey Carr advanced a more expansive doctrine called functionalism, attuned more to human – environment actions. In 1890, James wrote an influential book. The principles of psychology, which expanded on the realism of structuralism, memorably described the human “stream of consciousness” and interested many American studies in the emerging discipline. Dewey integrated psychology with social issues, most notably by promoting the cause progressive education to assimilate immigrants and inculcate moral values in children.

During the second world war and in the cold war period after that, the U.S. military and intelligence agencies established themselves as leading funders of psychology – through the armed forces and the new office of strategic services intelligence agency. University of Michigan psychologist Dorwin Cartwright reported that University research in 1939 - 1941, and in the last few months of the war had been used to determine the week-by week propaganda policy for the United states Government. Cartwright also concluded that psychologists had significant roles to play in managing the domestic economy. The Army had extensively used its new General Classification Test and engaged in massive studies of troop morale. In the 1950s the Rockefeller foundation and Ford Foundation collaborated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to fund research on psychological warfare. In 1965, public controversy called attention to the Army’s project” of social science an effort which enlisted psychologists and anthropologists to analyze foreign countries for strategic purpose. After the war, some new institutions were created, and some psychologists were discredited due to Nazi affiliation. Alexander Mitscherlich founded a prominent applied psychoanalysis journal called *Psyche* and with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation established the first clinical psychosomatic medicine division at Heidelberg University. In 1973 psychology was integrated into the required studies of medical students.

Medical facilities increasingly employ psychologist to perform various roles. A prominent aspect of health psychology is the psycho education of patients: instructing them in how to follow a medical regimen. Health psychologists can also educate doctors and conduct research on patient compliance. Psychologists in the field of public health use a wide variety of interventions to influence human behavior. These range from public relations campaigns and outreach to governmental laws and

policies. Psychologists study the composite influence of all these different tools in an effort to influence whole populations of people. Positive psychology is the study of factors which contribute to human happiness and well-being, focusing more on people who are currently healthy. In 2010 *Clinical Psychological Review* published a special issue devoted to positive psychological interventions, such as gratitude journaling and the physical expressions of gratitude. Positive psychological interventions have been limited in scope, but their effects are thought to be superior to that of placebos, especially with regards to helping people with body image problems.

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## **10.4 Relation between Sociology and Psychology**

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Sociology, as we all know, discusses man as a social being. Psychology, on the other hand, deals with his mental and emotional world. As social beings' men are tied to each other with the ties of various social relationships; the love and respect, hatred and enmity, cooperation and distance, empathy, and antipathy – all these feelings, the social and cultural values they support – belong to their mental world. It is the task of psychology to discuss and analyse all the mental feelings and emotions that compel men to behave in a particular way within his social setting. Eminent sociologist, R.M. MacIver believes, all the activities of a living human being, all that are recorded in history and are etched in our experiences are nothing but psychological occurrences. By analyzing these occurrences psychology examines the status of man's mental strength. The primary emphasis of psychology is on the mind of man, and not on man as such, whereas sociology deals with the whole social existence of man. In this way, psychology becomes a part of sociology.

The mind of man is dynamic and complex. It reflects itself through various social exchanges between men and groups. Since time immemorial, homo-sapiens have created and sustained society with the bonds of love and care, support and assistance to each other. All these are also parts of man's mental faculties. Psychology discusses, examines and analyses these faculties while the task of sociology is to look into their social context. Both the disciplines often share the same subject matter but deal with them differently. Durkheim has categorically mentioned that sociology should study 'social fact' and not psychological facts. Social fact, as Durkheim has mentioned, is external to the individual and exercises external constraint on him; whereas psychology's domain involves everything that is internal to individual and controls him internally. But other sociologists like Ginsberg believe that sociological explanations can be made more valuable if they are related to psychological explanations. According to Peter Worsley, the main area of interest

for a psychologist is in the way the individual's behaviour is organized to constitute his personality; but the sociologist examines the manner in which a person relates to others. Thus, in spite of their inherent differences both sociology and psychology enrich themselves with interdisciplinary exchanges of facts, ideas, theoretical approaches and mutually assisted investigations. Therefore, the sociologist must take into account the perceptions of individuals on various issues; but should leave the study of that perception as such to the psychologist.

Social psychology deals with the mental processes of man as a social being. It studies particularly the influence of group life on the mental development of the individual; the effect to the individual mind on the group, and the development of the mental life of the groups within themselves and in their relations with one another. R.W. Pickford observes that social psychology analyses the framework of social relationships firstly, to examine the interaction of individuals and groups, past and present, and secondly, to study the dynamics of these interactions to understand the personality patterns of individual members in the society.

#### **10.4.1 Social Psychology**

Social psychology, as a branch of Psychology, studies inter-personal behaviour patterns and examines how such interactions affect people's thoughts, feelings, emotions and habits. For this, it has to depend on sociology which provides the necessary material regarding the structure, organization and culture of societies to which individuals belong. Lapiere and Fransworth write that social psychology is to sociology and psychology what biochemistry is to biology and Chemistry. Many others also believe that social psychology acts as a link between psychology and sociology. As a result of such close relationship between the two, thinkers like Karl Pearson have not accepted the two as separate sciences.

Moreover, if in the combination of sociological and psychological factors the stress is placed on the psychological then we have social psychology, but if the sociological factors or approach are stressed, we shall have what is called psychosociology. Social psychology, therefore, has to depend on both sociology and psychology to draw its data and concepts to analyse man's attitudes, aspirations and behavior in society and also to understand the interplay of individual character and social structure within a given period of time. This is essential for understanding how, through the process of socialization, man learns to respond to the social-psychological stimuli in various phases of life. To assess the role of an individual we need to understand his perception of other members of society, his ideas on

various social issues, his values, convictions, prejudices that may affect his decisions and behavioural pattern. Here social psychology comes in handy as a study of mental and behavior mechanism. In the opinion of Kimball Young, social psychology is rooted both in psychology and sociology. It studies the individual with reference to a group in particular and society, in general.

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## **10.5 Differences between Sociology and Psychology**

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The problem of the relation between psychology and sociology, and of the status of social psychology in relation to both, is difficult and unsettled. There are two extreme views. J.S. Mill believes that psychology is concerned with the laws of mental functioning of individuals and seeks to establish primacy of psychology over not only sociology, but all other social sciences. As both the disciplines are concerned with neighbouring areas of knowledge, but in different ways, the nature of their relationship still remains debatable and unsettled.

Durkheim, on the other hand, makes a radical distinction between the phenomena studied by psychology and sociology. For him, sociology is to study social facts, defined as being external to individual minds and exercising certain constraints upon them; the explanation of social facts can only be in terms of other social facts, not in terms of psychological facts. Society is not a simple aggregate of individuals, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality possessing its own characteristics. Consequently, whenever a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon one can be sure the explanation is invalid.

The opposite views of Mill and Durkheim still have their supporters today, but most sociologists seem to have adopted various intermediate positions. Some, like Ginsberg, would hold that many sociological generalizations can be more firmly established by being related to general psychological laws. Under Dilthey's influence, many German sociologists, including Max Weber, are of the view that even where strictly sociological explanation is possible, the sociologists gain an additional satisfaction or conviction in being able to understand the meaning of social actions that can be explained in causal terms. Such understanding was conceived in terms of 'common sense psychology' but neither Dilthey nor Weber was hostile to the development of a scientific psychology in the broad sense and Weber was sympathetic to some of Freud's ideas. Bottomore is of the opinion that psychology and sociology have their own distinct areas of study yet they may continue their enquiry together. Gerth and Mills suggest that the gap between the two disciplines are bridgeable.

The key differences between the two disciplines are these :

1. Psychology studies the mind of an individual in the context of the larger society or culture.

But sociology looks beyond individuals to examine societies with reference to specific association and institution like gender, race, religion, family, marriage, social class, culture and so on.

2. Psychology usually studies one person or group at a time to understand the subject's thoughts, ideas, values, principles and perceptions about life.

Sociology, on the other hand, raises questions about issues, past and present.

3. Psychology focuses on emotional and social reactions, such as stress, memory, grief, anger, intelligence and aging.

Sociology studies the social processes like cooperation, and conflict, accommodation and assimilation, mobility and change etc. and their repercussions on small and big groups in society.

4. Psychology, as a social science, deals with the behavior and thinking of living beings and focuses primarily on individual behavior and not on group behavior. It also depends more on the findings of the natural sciences.

On the contrary, sociology studies human society and social behavior.

5. Psychology examines and analyses issues related to human emotions and behaviours associated with intelligence, stress, memory, grief, mental health, addiction and trauma.

Sociology, on the other hand, deals with topics ranging from economics, consumerism, education, inequities and stratification, social problems and their redressal.

Freud's psychology, although it emphasized the role of individual and biological factors in social life, nevertheless recognized that the innate impulses were transformed in various ways before they became manifest in social behavior. However, in the work of the post – Freudian school – especially in the writings of Karen Horney and Erich Fromm – the influence of society in shaping and reshaping individual behavior is given greater prominence. Fromm's concept of social character is intended precisely to relate individual psychological characteristic to the characteristics of a particular social group or social system.

In spite of this wide recognition that sociological and psychological explanation may complement each other, the two disciplines are not, in practice, closely associated, and the place of social psychology, which ought to be specially close to sociology, is still disputed. It is easy to say that social psychology is that part of

general psychology which has a particular relevance to social phenomena, or which deals with the psychological aspects of social life. In fact, all psychology may be considered 'social' in some degree, since all psychic phenomena occur in a social context which affects them to some extent, and it becomes difficult to mark out even roughly the boundaries of social psychology. This means that social psychologists have usually felt a closer association with general psychology than with sociology, have been bound to a particular method and have often ignored the structural feature of the social milieu in which their investigations are conducted.

This difference between sociology and social psychology can be illustrated from many angles. In the study of conflict and war there have been mutually exclusive sociological and psychological explanations. In studies of social stratification, the psychological approach seems to have produced a particular account of class and status in subjective terms, which is contrasted with the sociological account in terms of objective factors, rather than systematic investigation of the psychological aspects of a significant element in the social structure. The 'psychology of politics hardly deserves to be mentioned so remote does much of the writing appear to be from the most obvious. In almost every field of enquiry it could be shown that psychology and sociology constitute for the most part two separate universes of discourse.

This is quite similar to Fromm's view which mentioned above and Garth and Mills, like Fromm, take up again the fundamental problem of the relation between the individual and society, which was earlier examined by Ginsberg in an illuminating study dealing with the respective influence to instinct and reason in social life, with theories of the 'group mind' and with problems of public opinion and organized group behavior. Later social psychology has for the most part abandoned this line of study in favor of statistical and experimental enquires which are for too much concerned with the individual or with simple aggregates of individuals; and it has therefore lost contact with sociology.

Finally, we should reconsider one objection to the possibility of a close association between sociology and psychology. Durkheim wished to exclude psychological explanation from sociology, though he often resorted to it implicitly. More recently, Radcliffe – Brown argued that sociology and psychology study two entirely different systems, one a social system, the other a mental system; and claimed that these two levels of explanation could not be combined. This seems an extreme view and one unlikely to be sound at a time when much of the fruitful research even in natural science is taking place on the frontiers of difficult sciences. Yet we should acknowledge the genuine difficulties. Sociology and psychology do offer alternative account of behavior, and if they are to be brought closer together it will

be necessary to work out more rigorously than has yet been done the conceptual and theoretical links between them.

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## 10.6 Similarities between Psychology and Sociology

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Primarily, the subject-matter of both the disciplines are almost similar because both are concerned with human beings and determine the existence of humanity. The two disciplines are mutually dependent, interconnected and interrelated; and this dependence is necessary for their own deeper understanding. Since long, these two disciplines have remained dependent on each other.

Renowned psychologists like Sigmund Freud, MacDougal and others have enriched sociology in multiple ways with the help of their novel ideas. They believe that the whole social life is reducible to psychological forces. Examining social phenomena and social problems and finding their solutions are important tasks of sociology. As each and every social issue has a psychological basis, to resolve the problems associated with them sociology often requires help from psychology. But it is no one way journey, because psychology, too, depends on sociology for its full comprehension. As human mind and personality is the product of its surrounding social environment, culture, customs and traditions, psychology, too, has to take help from sociology.

The overlapping features of the two disciplines create their similarities. Both of them study patterns of recurring behavior characteristics. The study of these patterns better understanding of the subjects. Sociology studies individual as a being with choices, who has the capability to take decisions; now, this ability to take decisions is, no doubt, influenced by both social circumstances and human psychology. Social psychology studies attributes like prejudice, attitudes, aggression and other such elements that often determine the grouping and social acceptance of an individual.

## 10.7 The two Disciplines in Brief

<b>SOCIOLOGY</b>	<b>PSYCHOLOGY</b>
1. Sociology studies group behavior.	1. Psychology studies the behavior of an individual in society.
2. It studies social processes, social laws or values related to attitudes	2. It studies the mental processes of the individual.
3. Sociology discusses concrete form of society, its structure and functions.	3. Psychology is the study of individual attitude towards cultural and social values and the laws related to these attitude
4. It studies the interaction of the human being with the environment	4. It analysis the framework of social relationship.
5. It studies society from the community point of view	5. It studies behavior from the view-point of psychological factors
6. Sociology pertains to learning human behavior in the society	6. Psychology pertains to the study of human mind
7. Sociology is an observation process	7. Psychology can be termed as an experimental process
8. Sociology is considered a soft science due to its holistic nature and its attempt to look at the bigger picture	8. This is definitely considered a science as it has a scientific emphasis in that psychologists will infer cause and effect.
9. According to the American Sociological Association, sociology is the scientific study and evaluation of society.	9. According to the American Psychological Association social psychology is the study of how people are shaped and affected by their social environments.
10. Sociology majors participate in internships that are related to a broader community, such as international aid organization and community centers.	10. Psychology majors have more face-to face interaction with people during their internships in clinical settings.



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## 10.8 Summary

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As branches of social science both sociology and psychology have enriched the spheres of our knowledge. They generally share much of the same subject-matter but apply different methods of analyses and understanding. Psychology focuses on behavior of individual influenced by both internal and external factors like nature and nurture; whereas sociology studies collectives like culture, groups and other social circles. Sociologists, thus, look beyond individuals and study society as a whole. Though different, they are always interdependent, interlinked and interrelated. Giddings observes that psychology studies the mind, mental faculties and emotions of man living within a social environment in a scientific manner, whereas sociology studies the social roles and interactions of man. Naturally, then, these two branches of social science become very closely related and interdependent.

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## 10.9 Questions

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### 1. Answer in brief:

**5 Marks each.**

- (a) Mention the similarities between sociology and psychology.
- (b) Discuss in brief the differences between sociology and psychology.
- (c) What is social psychology? How does it connect sociology and psychology?

### 2. Answer in detail:

**10 Marks each.**

- (a) Examine, in detail, the relationship between sociology and psychology.
- (b) Discuss the similarities and differences between sociology and social psychology.

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## 10.10 Suggested Readings

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- Bhattacharyya, D.C. Sociology. 1987. Vijaya Publishing House. Calcutta.
- Bottomore, T.B. Sociology A Guide to Problems and Literature. 1979. Blackie & Son (India). Ltd.
- Ginsberg, Morris. The Psychology of Society. 1921. Methuen. London.
- Gisbert, P. Fundamentals of Sociology. 1957. Orient Blackswan. Hyderabad.
- Rao, C.N. Shankar. Sociology. 2006. S. Chand, Mangalore.
- টৌধুরী, চট্টোপাধ্যায়, ঘোষ। সাম্প্রতিক সমাজতত্ত্ব ২০০৩। চ্যাটার্জী পাবলিশার্স, কলকাতা
- মহাপাত্র, অনাদিকুমার। বিষয় সমাজতত্ত্ব ১৯৯৪। সুহৃদ পাবলিকেশন, কলকাতা।

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## **Unit 11 : Sociology and History**

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### **Structure**

- 11.1 Objectives**
- 11.2 Introduction**
- 11.3 The meaning of Sociology**
- 11.4 The meaning of the term History**
- 11.5 Interrelation between Sociology and History**
- 11.6 Similarities between Sociology and History**
- 11.7 Sociology and History Differences**
- 11.8 Historical Sociology**
- 11.9 Comparative Historical Research**
- 11.10 Conclusion**
- 11.11 Summary**
- 11.12 Questions**
- 11.13 Suggested Readings**

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### **11.1 Objectives**

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand:

- Definition of Sociology and history as Social Sciences
- Contribution of history to sociology
- Interrelation between Sociology and history

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### **11.2 Introduction**

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As one of the important parts of social sciences Sociology has close relationship with other social sciences. Accordingly, sociology is intimately related with history. Sociology studies man's social relationship including social, economic, political, religious, legal, aesthetic aspects and so on. The life of man is many sided. But social life is so complex that it is a problem to isolate social issues from the whole range of human activities and behaviour. As a matter of fact Sociology can understand

social life as a whole by taking help from other social sciences. Sociology is not the only science which deals with man in organized society. There are also other disciplines which are also concerned with man and his activities in organized society. But that does not mean that sociology only borrows from other social sciences and gives them nothing. The various social sciences are very much dependent on sociology taking help from Sociology. It is thus obvious that the different social sciences cannot have their existence independent of others. As they have a common subject-human social behaviour, it is but natural that they should be interrelated. As remarked by Prof. Simpson, "Social science is a unity, but it is not a fictitious unity, it is a dynamic unity of operating parts, and each part is indispensable to each and all of the others." Sociology and other social sciences have much in common and yet they are distinct from each other. An attempt to be made to explain the connection and distinction between sociology and some of the important social sciences. Now relationship between sociology and history to be discussed.

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### **11.3 The Meaning of Sociology**

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Sociology is one of the important branches of social sciences. The term sociology was coined by the eminent French sociologist, Auguste Comte, in 1939. Sociology is the youngest discipline of the social sciences. Sociology is derived from the Greek word 'logos' meaning 'study or science'. The etymological meaning of 'sociology' is thus the 'science of society'. Prof. Ginsberg accordingly defines sociology as 'the study of society, that is, of the web or tissue of human interactions and interrelations.' It is the study of the development, structure, and function of human society. Sociology is concerned with the studies of man's behaviour in groups, social institutions, and social relationships. Sociology examines the dynamic of constituent parts of the society like community, population, gender, race, age group etc. Social stratification, social movements, social change, and social disorders like crime, deviance, and revolution are also studied under sociology. Historical sociology, Medical sociology, Comparative sociology are some sub-divisions of Sociology. Sociological history based on both the sciences.

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### **11.4 The Meaning of the Term History**

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The word History has originated from the Greek word 'Historia' meaning 'knowledge acquired by investigation'. The events that occurred before writing was invented are 'pre-historic'. History is studied from written records and focuses on the society and social affairs of the past. History is something that helps us make sense of the current society by relating to the past. History is the study of past

events. It also includes a survey of conditions and developments in economic, religious, and social affairs as well as the study of States, their growth and organization and their relationship with one another. History is primarily concerned with the records of the past. The historians want to describe as accurately as possible, what actually happened and to man during a given time. History presents a chronological account of past events of the human societies. Prof. Gettell rightly remarked, "History is the record of the past events and movements, their causes and interrelations." History gives us an idea about the humans who lived in the past and their societies, culture, and arts, which help us realize human development. History includes the academic disciplines to analyze a sequence of past events, investigate the patterns of cause and effect, that are related to them.

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## **11.5 Interrelationship between Sociology and History**

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It is essential to know the history or past of any society to understand its present status. It may be mentioned that the emergence of sociology has been shaped up in the historical developments like French and industrial revolutions, growth of cities, institutions, and growth of individual rights and liberties. Many earlier scholars or founding fathers of sociology like A. Comte, Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx and even the contemporary sociologists like Habermas, Mannheim, Wallenstein gave importance to history or historical perspectives in their analysis of social structure, changes, and dynamics.

They used historical dimension in their sociological analysis. Further it may be pointed out that A. Comte's conception of Sociology includes history in his analysis for the growth of sociology and society. He explains causes and reasons of developments of humanity through historical stages. Besides, Karl Marx's *Capital*, Max Weber's *Economy and Society*, and elaboration of ideal type, Ferdinand Tonnies's *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* have used historical dimension to enrich their sociological analysis. Furthermore, history has many things to offer to Sociology. For instance, historical sources that are available provide a large amount of data to sociologists for the analysis on society, its growth, and dynamics. The development of sociological theories in 19th and 20th century have been product of intellectual, social, cultural, and political climate within which they were developed. Some of the important ideas and social thought emerged in enlightenment period. By French Revolution (1789), new ideas such as liberty, equality, and fraternity took shape.

Present society bears symbols of past relationship between the two is so close and intimate that scholars like G. von Bülow have refused to acknowledge sociology

as a science distinct from history. History studies the important past events and incidents. It records men's past life and life of societies in a systematic and chronological order. It also tries to find out the causes of past events. It also studies the past political, social, and — events of the world. So, history is often defined as study of past. History not only studies the past but also establishes relations with present and future. That is why it is said that history is the microscope of the past, the horoscope of the present, and telescope of the future.

History is the store house of knowledge from which sociology collected a lot. History helps and enriches sociology. Different thinkers describe history as the study of human's past based on archeological evidence. Sociologists have been benefited by the book written by A. Toynbee and other historians. To know the impact of a particular past event sociology depends on history.

Sociology provides social background of the study of history. History is now being studied from the sociological viewpoint. The historians need social background for writing and analyzing history and this provided by the sociologists. The study of history would be meaningless without the appreciation of sociological significance. History becomes meaningful in the social content<sup>4</sup>.

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## **11.6 Similarities between Sociology with History**

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Both sociology and history are closely related to each other. There are some similarities between sociology and history. The following points may be discussed.

- i. The study of society is common in case of both sociology and history. Sociology is the study of society while history seeks to establish the sequence in which events.
- ii. Both are social science disciplines and are concerned with human activities and events.
- iii. Sociology and history- both are concerned with human activities and events.
- iv. History is concerned primarily with the record of the past. The historians want to describe as accurately as possible, what actually happened to man during a given time. The sociologists use to all intents and purposes the same record to the past.
- v. Apart from philosophy today the historian is considerably depending upon sociological concepts and narrations. We may say that modern historiography and modern sociology have been influenced by each other.
- vi. Both sociology and history are interested in contemporary events of the recent past.

- vii. History is the branch of social sciences while historical sociology concerns studying the past's social phenomenon. The study of history would be insignificant without the appreciation of sociology are interdependent and interrelated with each other.
- viii. Both history and sociology seek information to study human and their world and interpret it correctly.

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## 11.7 Sociology and History-Differences

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“History without sociology has no fruit, sociology without history has no root”. Thus, both Sociology and History are closely related. In spite of their interrelationship and interdependence both the social sciences differ from each other from the following angles:

- i. Sociology is concerned with present and to some extent with future events. But history deals with the past events and society. Prof. G. E. Howard rightly remarked,” History is the past sociology and sociology is the present history”. T.B. Bottomore says,” Sociology and history may overlap in one area, but diverge widely in another”.
- ii. Sociology is an analytical discipline whereas history is a descriptive discipline. Sociology generalized about society, history is a particularizing or individualizing discipline.
- iii. Sociology emphasizes on the regular and the recurrent whereas history investigate the unique and the individual.
- iv. Generally, history occupies itself with differences in similar events and sociology deals with the similarities in different events.
- v. Sociology is a general science whereas history is a special science. Sociology can be defined as a general science of human society as it uses various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop a body of knowledge. History includes the academic discipline to analyse a sequence of past events, investigate the pattern of cause and effect that are related to them.
- vi. The study of history is based on a collection of facts evidence which may have been fabricated or exaggerated. Sociology uses all types of techniques used in the sciences such as sampling statistics which are available during and after the study is conducted.
- vii. The modern study of history is wide ranging and includes the study of specific regions the study of certain elements of historical investigation. In

case of sociology, the range of methods used has led to the development of philosophic and interpretative approaches to the analysis of society.

- viii. Sociology said to be abstract and theoretical science of society. Many schools called history as concrete and descriptive science of society.
- ix. The scope of sociology is very wide while the scope of history is limited.
- x. Sociology is a modern or new subject whereas history is an older social science.
- xi. A deeper distinction between these two sciences lies in the fact that history deals with human events in so far as they are correlated in time, while sociology studies them from the viewpoint of the social relationships involved.

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## 11.8 Historical Sociology

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As time has passed, history and sociology have formed into two different specific academic disciplines. Historical data was used and is used aplenty today in mainly these three ways. The first one is: Investigating a theory through a Parallel investigation. To negotiate with the natural-science conceptions of laws, and to look at, or apply various historical material where you can collect your resources in order to prove the theory that is applied. Or on the other hand, sociologists for the parallel investigation theory could aptly apply the theory to certain cases of investigation but of course, in a different modalities of a more widely used process. The second theory that sociologists mainly use is applying and contrasting certain events or policies. Analysed by their specific characteristics, or what makes them unique, certain events may be used by the sociologist for comparative data can be contrasted and compared. For interpretive sociologists it is very common for them to use the 'Verstehen' tradition<sup>1</sup>.

Do you know what Verstehen mean? *Verstehen* means to understand, in the context of German philosophy and social sciences in general. It has been used since the late 19th century in English as in the German. It is used with the particular sense of the "interpretive or participatory" examination of social phenomena. The term is closely connected with the work of the German sociologist, Max Weber. These are rooted in the analysis of social action, a theory of human action mediated by contextual understanding. In anthropology, *verstehen* has come to mean a systematic and well-planned interpretive process in which an outside observer of another culture attempts to relate to it and understand others' actions<sup>2</sup>.

*Verstehen* is now seen as a concept and a method central to a rejection of

positivist social science. *Verstehen* refers to understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view. It is entering into the shoes of the other, and adopting this research stance requires treating the actor as a subject, rather than an object of your observations. It also implies that unlike objects in the natural world human actors are not simply the product of the pulls and pushes of external forces. Individuals are seen to create the world by organizing their own understanding of it and giving it meaning. To do research on actors without taking into account the meanings they attribute to their actions or environment is to treat them like objects.

And lastly, the third way sociologists typically relate is by taking a look at the causalities from a macro point of view. This is Mill's method: " a) principle of difference: a case with effect and cause present is contrasted with a case with effect and cause absent; and b) principle of agreement: cases with same effects are compared in terms of their (ideally identical) causes. There is an important debate on the usefulness of Mill's method for sociological research, which relates to the fact that historical research is often based on only few cases and that many sociological theories are probabilistic, not deterministic. Today, historical sociology is applied richly in social theories. Major theorists in this area include Randall Collins, Emile Durkheim, Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, Karl Marx, Karl Polanyi, Immanuel Wallerstein and most importantly Max Weber. The theories bank upon comparative historical research as one of their strategies too. This brings us to the question of comparative historical research<sup>1</sup>.

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## 11.9 Comparative historical research

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It is a method of social science that examines historical events in order to create such explanations that remain valid beyond a particular time and place. This may be either by direct comparison to other historical events, theory building, or reference to the present day.<sup>[1]</sup> Generally, it involves relative comparisons of social processes across times and places. It overlaps with historical sociology. While the disciplines of history and sociology have always been associated, they have connected in different ways at different times. This form of research may be used in any of several theoretical orientations. It is usually distinguished by the types of questions it asks, not by the theoretical framework it employs<sup>3</sup>.

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## 11.10 Conclusion

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Sociology and history are the two important branches of social sciences. Both disciplines are very much interrelated. Sociology is concerned with the study of the



science of society. History is the study of past events and humans who lived in the past and their societies, culture, and art which helps us realize human developments. History is a record of past social matters, social customs, and information about different stages of life. Sociology is a science of social groups and social institutions. History provides materials to sociologists and sociology also provides help to history and enriches it. Historians greatly benefitted from the research conducted by sociologists. To understand any society, group, or institutions, one needs to appreciate its past to comprehend its present status. It may be noted that the emergence of sociology itself has been formed in the historical development such as French and industrial revolution, growth of cities and social institutions, and growth of individual rights and liberties. History provides a frame of reference and contextual tool to examine and analyze change. Both sociology and history thus depend on each other to take complete stoke of reality. Sociology depends on history to understand past events, movements, and social institutions.

Since the 1960's globalization, the emergence of interconnected world, network, society, information, revolution, and cultural studies have transformed the context of sociology. Modernity became subject of past. But emergence of past came into existence. Such as post industrialization, post colonialism, post positivism, post modernity, or post structuralism. A lot of sociologists like Habermas (communicate action and public sphere), Foucault (Modernity and prison system), Anthony Giddens (Modernity) and others have worked as used historical perspective to elaborate their sociological analysis. Sociology and history differ in their methods, approaches, and purposes. History is seen as concrete and descriptive science of society. Sociology is abstract and theoretical science of society. Scape of sociology is broader than the history.

Historical sociology is a branch or subdiscipline of sociology. It emerged as a result of intersection between sociology and history. Similarly sociological history is another specialized subject which based on both the sciences. Historical sociology uses the method of historical comparative research to make comparisons between phenomenon, institutions and agencies.

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## 11.11 Summary

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As the two branches of social sciences sociology and history are intimately related with all other social sciences. Sociology provides social backgrounds for the study of history. History helps and enriches sociology in many ways. Thus, both the sciences are closely interrelated and interdependent to each other. Sociology cannot be separated from history and history cannot be isolated from sociology. Both sociology and history depend upon each other and can influence one another.

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## 11.12 Questions

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### 1. Answer in brief:

(5 marks each)

- (a) Define sociology.
- (b) Define history.
- (c) What do you mean by Historical sociology?
- (d) What are the similarities between sociology and history?
- (e) What is the conclusion of the relation between sociology and history?

### 2. Answer in detail:

(10 marks each)

- (a) Write a note on the relationships between sociology and history.
- (b) How does history influence on history?
- (c) What is the role of history to study the relationship between sociology and history?

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## 11.13 Suggested Readings

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- 1. Ginsberg, M. (1932): History and Sociology. Philosophy Vol. 7, no. 28
- 2. Carr, E.H. (1967): What is History? London, Vintage
- 3. Griffin, L.J. (1995): How is Sociology Informed by History? Social Forces, Vol.73, no. 4
- 4. Tilly Charles (2001): Historical Sociology: International Encyclopedia of the Behavioural and Social Sciences. Amsterdam: Elsevier Vol. 10
- 5. Bottore, T.B. Sociology. George Allen Sunwin Ltd 1962
- 6. Bhattacharya, D.C.” Sociology. Vijoya Publishing House, Calcutta-6
- 7. Gisbert, P.: Fundamentals of Society (2015), Oriental Black Swan Pvt Ltd, India
- 8. Bhushan, V. and Sachdeva, D.R.: An Introduction to Sociology (1987), Kitab Mahal, India.

### Endnote

- 1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_sociology#:~:text=Historical%20sociology%20is%20a%20branch,how%20societies%20develop%20through%20history.&text=Contemporary%20historical%20sociology%20is%20primarily,classes%2C%20economic%20and%20political%20systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_sociology#:~:text=Historical%20sociology%20is%20a%20branch,how%20societies%20develop%20through%20history.&text=Contemporary%20historical%20sociology%20is%20primarily,classes%2C%20economic%20and%20political%20systems).
- 2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verstehen>.
- 3. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative\\_historical\\_research](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative_historical_research)
- 4. <http://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/65232/1/Unit-4.pdf>

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## **Unit 12 : Relationship between Sociology and Political Science**

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### **Structure**

**12.1 Objectives**

**12.2 Introduction**

**12.3 Contribution of Political Science to Sociology**

**12.4 Contribution of Sociology to Political Science**

**12.5 Common issues of Sociology and Political Science**

**12.6 Differences between Sociology and Political Science**

**12.7 New Concepts**

**12.8 Conclusion**

**12.9 Summary**

**12.10 Question**

**11211 Suggested Readings**

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### **12.1 Objectives**

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After reading this unit, you will be able to understand-

- Definition of sociology and political science as disciplines of social sciences
- Contribution of sociology to political science
- Contribution of political science to sociology
- Common areas of sociology and political science
- Differences between the two disciplines

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### **12.2 Introduction**

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Both sociology and political science are branches of social sciences that deal with the study of overall human society. The two terms understand human behaviour and the fundamental aspect of human life in a community. It is called that sociology is the science of society i.e., social relations. It deals with the origin, evolution,

organization, purpose, ends, and nature of the society. Society is the oldest organization of human beings, “Sociology is also the science of society or of social phenomena.”, says Prof. Ward. Since political and social behaviour of man cannot be separated, there is a close relation between sociology and political science. “Political science and Sociology”, remarks Prof. Catlin, “are inseparable and in fact these are two sides of the same picture.”

Sociology as a science and particularly as a separate discipline did not come into existence until about the middle of the nineteenth century. Sociology is the youngest of the social sciences. Regarding the emergence of sociology there is a great contribution by the eminent thinkers. More than thousands of thinkers’ names are enlisted in Prof. P.A. Sorokin’s book ‘Contemporary Sociological **Theories**’, 1928. Besides, ‘Social Thought, from Lore to Science’, 1952 by Howard Becker and Harry Elmer Barnes wrote in favour of the emergence of sociology. However, the eminent thinkers are A. Comte and Emile Durkheim of France, Herbert Spencer from England, Max Weber and George Simmel from Germany, and Lester F. Ward from America. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century were controlled by them. And that mentioned period was the epoch of emergence and creation of sociology. They were the representatives of their countries- France, Germany, UK, USA, etc. They played vital role for the emergence of sociology and in its evolutionary process. In the words of Morris Ginsberg, “Historically sociology has its main roots in politics and philosophy of history.” Sociology greatly benefitted by the books written by political scientists like Plato, Aristotle, and Koutilya such as Republic, The Politics, and *Arthashastra* respectively.

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## 12.3 Contribution of Political Science to Sociology

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On the other hand, political science made its roots into the Macedonian Empire where the great philosopher Aristotle had first coined the term about 2400 years ago and that is why he is known as the ‘Father of Political Science’. The focus of political science is understanding the function of political systems (i.e., Government) in society. Political science is concerned with the Government, power, and politics from domestic to international perspectives. In the words of Paul Janet, “Political science is that part of social science which treats the foundation of the state and principles of government.” Political Science deals with the social groups organized under the sovereign of the state. Without the sociological background the study of political science will be incomplete. The forms of government, the nature of governmental organs, the laws and the sphere of the state activity are determined by

the social processes. Prof. Barnes rightly said, “The most significant thing about Sociology and modern political theory is that most of the changes which have taken place in the political theory in the last thirty years have been along the line of development suggested and marked out by sociology.

### **Contribution of Political Science to Sociology**

#### **a) Political science supply - materials about the state**

Man is not only a social animal, but he is also a political one, and state is his supreme political institution. State influences the social life and sociology gets knowledge about state from political science.

#### **b) State always tries to eradicate social evils**

State always tries to finish all the social evils through its laws and this way clears the social life. In this way, sociology depends upon political science. The state and the government make laws for the welfare of the society. The government removes social evils like poverty, unemployment, dowry, and so on from the society. The undesirable customs are uprooted from the society by the government.

#### **c) State regulates social organizations**

All the social organizations in the state are regulated by the laws of the state. All famous sociologists like Morris Ginsberg, A. Comte, Ward, and others consider the study of state as a part of the study of sociology. They always take a keen interest in the activities of the state.

#### **d) Each and every social problem has a political cause**

To understand different political events sociology takes help from Political Science. Any change in the political system or nature of power structure brings changes in society. Hence, sociology takes the help of political science to understand the changes in society. So, sociology to draw its conclusion depends on political science.

Moreover, Political Science examines government power and politics from domestic to international perspectives. Political Science entails studying the policies, laws, diplomacy, and processes of a government institutions as well as the behaviour of political parties and the people groups. A Political Science course might cover the causes and prevention of war or impacts of race and ethnicity on policy debates. Like sociology, political science relies on a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures to inform its research and analysis.

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## 12.4 Contribution of Sociology to Political Science

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Political science also depends on Sociology. Political Science is like a part of sociology, it is regarded. To understand the part, it is necessary to understand the whole. Almost all political problems have a social cause and for the solution of these political problems Political Science takes the help of sociology. State frames its rules and regulations, laws on the basis of social customs, traditions, and social values. Without sociological background the study of political science will be incomplete. Political science is largely benefitted by the researchers and research methods of the sociologists. Some thinkers consider political science as a branch of sociology. State is considered as a social group, there is a subject of sociology. A politician is basically a sociologist and uses sociological concepts. Society acts as a mirror of the political life of the country.

The contribution of Sociology to Political Science can be discussed under the following points:

**a) The highest political organisation originated in society**

We live in society which is the oldest organization. State has grown out of it. In order to know the origin, development and nature of the state, Political Science has to seek the help of sociology, the science of society.

**b) Social conditions influence political organizations**

Social conditions of a particular time influence the nature and working of political institutions of that time. In under-developed countries/societies political institutions are also under-developed and in developed societies, political institutions are also developed. This shows the deterministic influence of sociology on political science.

**c) Social customs influence the laws of the state**

Social traditions, customs, and conventions are the important sources of the laws of the state. The laws which are formed by the government are based on the social customs, traditions, mores, norms etc. of the society. Most of the changes which have been taken place in the political theory during the past times have been possible due to Sociology. For understanding the political problems, some knowledge about sociology is very essential because all political problems are mainly corrected with a social aspect.

**d) Sociology provides materials to political science**

The study of the state - its origin, development, nature, functions - constitutes the central focus in political science. State is the highest political institution and at the same time the state influences the social life and sociology gets knowledge about state from political science.

Social relations are the determinants of all political relation. All political institutions are conditioned by social relations. All political activity is the result of the social nature of man. Sociology contributes to political science the knowledge of society. Political science depends upon sociology and sociology provides materials to political science that is the political life of the people.

**e) Political science relies heavily upon sociology for its basic theories and methods.**

For example, in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Michigan social psychologists and Parsonians at Harvard significantly shaped political science agendas in political behaviour and political development, respectively.

**f)** Central specialties in both the discipline borrowed from similar third-party disciplines such as economics, history, anthropology, and psychology.

**g)** A large number of scholars such as Marx, Weber, Gramsci, Pareto, Parsons and Mosca etc. equally have contributed to the growth and development of both the disciplines.

In the same way Harold Lasswell's treatise, "Politics: Who Gets What, When, and How." (1936) was an important work from which both sociologist and political scientist get inspired and take lead to work in an inter-disciplinary framework (Lipset, 1964). It may be pointed out that given for changing societal need and aspirations in contemporary globalized world an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the existing social problems and find solutions to the problems of modern society.

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## 12.5 Common Issues

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We have discussed the contribution of sociology to political science and contribution of political science to sociology in details and separately. Besides, there are some common issues which are being studied by both the disciplines. These topics are war, propaganda, authority, lockdown, vaccination, communal riots, law etc. With the help of both political science and sociology, a new subject comes into

existence which is known as Political Sociology. Political Sociology is the study of power and relationship between societies, states, and political conflict. It is the combination of political science and sociology. Political sociology deals with the relationship between state and society on the basis of mutual interaction and with power as the ultimate aim of all political processes. Political sociology is a discipline which is mainly concerned with the analysis of the interaction between politics and society. Despite the contributions of Pareto, Hobhouse, it is Max Weber who is known as the father of political sociology because of his special contributions in this field.

Sociology studies groups of people based on identity factors such as ethnicity, race, age, gender, education, and social clans. Intro level coursework will cover the basics of human behaviours and theories on social development before launching into a more refined study of specific people groups and how they interact within society as a whole. Sociology can study reform issues including poverty, crime, and economic inequality as well as large scale demographics like population and migration. Sociology relies primarily on quantitative research like surveys, polls, and census data for its analysis and research conclusions but also utilizes qualitative methods like case studies and ethnography.

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## 12.6 Differences between Sociology and Political Science

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Although both Sociology and Political Science contribute to each other, but in spite of their inter-relationship and interdependence both the subjects differ from each other on the following grounds:

- a) Sociology is one of the vital branches of social sciences. It is the scientific study of human society. It is a science of society and social relationship. On the other hand, political science is a science of state, government, and international bodies. Political science emphasizes the use of political power in the national and international level.
- b) The scope of sociology is very wide, but the scope of political science is limited. Sociology takes into account every aspect of behaviour, interaction, and functioning of human society. In sociology, due to having a broader scope, studies are done in sociological, political and even psychological manner. Political science deals with a narrow field of interests. It is concerned with the functioning, theory and analysis of political systems in a society.



- c) Sociology is a general science, but political science is a special science. According to A. Comte and Durkheim, sociology is a science because it adopts and applies the scientific method. Sociology is not a real science and has no real applications. Sociology is not a real science because it does not have a universal consistency. People and society are too unpredictable to study, document, and infer and based on past data.
- d) Sociology studies organized, unorganized, and disorganized society whereas political science studies only politically organized society.
- e) Political science studies only the political aspects of social relationship in a particular way. Sociology studies all kinds of social relationship in a general way. Sociology is concerned with the social activities of man whereas political science studies political activities of man.
- f) Sociology is the youngest of the social sciences. It is not even two centuries old. On the other hand, political science is an older science. It has centuries of history of its own.
- g) Sociology is concerned with both formal and informal relations while political science studies only formal relations.
- h) Sociology studies man as a social animal whereas political science studies man as political man and analyses man as a political animal. Morris Ginsberg rightly opines, "Historically, sociology has its main roots in politics and philosophy of history".
- i) Sociology analyses both conscious and unconscious activities of man whereas political science analyses only conscious activities of man.
- j) Sociology analyses all forms of associations while political science is concerned with only one form of association such as State. That is why Prof. Garner remarks, "Political science is concerned with only human form of association, such as State., Sociology deals with all forms of associations."
- k) The main difference between sociology and political science is that sociology is the scientific study of human society while political science is the study of politics and their impact on society as a whole. Hence, unlike sociology political science emphasizes the use of political power in the national and international level.
- l) The approach of sociology is sociological. It follows its own methods in addition to the scientific methods in its investigation. On the other hand, the approach of political science is political. It has its own methods of study like the historical, philosophical, comparative etc.

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## **12.7 New Concept- Political Sociology, Political Culture, Political Socialization, and Comparative Political Studies**

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Political Sociology which is basically an outcome of intersection between sociology and political science is relatively a newer branch of sociology studies various political institutions, associations, organizations, interest groups, and multitude of power dynamics in society. Political sociology also studies interest groups, political parties, administrative and bureaucratic behaviour, social legislations, state policies, reforms, and political ideologies as its areas of the study. Political sociology often sees as a new, growing, and burgeoning sub-field within the discipline of sociology. It is considered as a connecting bridge between sociology and political science. Sociologists see two-way relationships between the two (Rathore, 1986). Both have a give and take relationship. Various other scholars see political sociology as a marriage between sociology and political science. Like political sociology, sociology of politics is a sub-field of sociology. Sociology of politics also throws light on sociological appraisals of political processes and institutional mechanisms. Political culture, political socialization are the most used and frequently mentioned concepts in political sociology.

Within political science we have a branch called ‘comparative political studies’ which deals with comparing different political system to judge in which method do people function better, and uphold the values of equality, freedom, and justice.

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## **12.8 Conclusion**

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From the above discussion it is clear that sociology and political science are mutually contributory. A politician basically is a sociologist and uses sociological concepts. Without the sociological background the study of political science will be incomplete. Society acts as a mirror of the political life of the country. So, it is better to say that both political science and sociology are the two sides of the same coin. “Political Sociology”, remarks Catlin, “are inseparable and in fact these are two sides of the same picture.”

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## **12.9 Summary**

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From the above discussion we may conclude that we have pointed out the meaning of sociology and its relationship with political science. We have described how both the disciplines are closely related and interwoven and how both the disciplines have borrowed, refined, and enriched their terms and conditions over the

period of time. We understood how sociology has got intersected with political science in developing an interdisciplinary framework to understand society and its issues.

We have described the sub-field called Political Sociology and Sociology of Politics within the discipline of sociology, and within political science we have a branch called ‘Comparative Political Studies.’

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## 12.10 Questions

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### 1. Answers in short.

**5 marks each**

- (a) Define Sociology.
- (b) Define Political Science.
- (c) Briefly discuss the emergence of Political Sociology .
- (d) Point out the common issues of Sociology and Political Science.
- (e) What are the contributions of Sociology to Political Science?
- (f) What are the contributions of Political Science to Sociology?

### 2. Answer in detail:

**10 marks each**

- (a) Discuss the relationship between Sociology and Political Science.
- (b) Point out the differences between Sociology and Political Science.
- (c) Write a note on the role of Sociology with the help of Political Science.

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## 12.11 Suggested Readings

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## **Unit 13 : Relationship of Sociology with Economics**

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### **Structure**

- 13.1 Objectives**
- 13.2 Introduction**
- 13.3 Definition of Sociology**
- 13.4 Definition of Economics**
- 13.5 Main characteristics of Sociology**
- 13.6 Main characteristics of Economics**
- 13.7 Relationship between Sociology and Economics**
- 13.8 Differences between Sociology and Economics**
- 13.9 Common issues between the two disciplines**
- 13.10 Summary**
- 13.11 Questions**
- 13.12 Suggested Readings**

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### **13.1 Objectives**

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After reading this unit you will be able to understand :

- Definition of sociology and Economics;
- Relation between sociology and Economics
- Characteristics of Sociology and Economics
- Role of Economics in the society.

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### **13.2 Introduction**

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Sociology and Economics are the two important disciplines of social sciences. Generally Economics is regarded as the science of wealth in its three phases production, distribution and consumption. As the economic process develops in society, so it influences and is influenced by the social life of man. Sociology primarily studies about society, social relationships. Economics welfare is only a Part of human welfare. The relation between these two sciences is very intimate.

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### 13.3 Definition of Sociology

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Sociology is the youngest branch of social sciences. The term 'sociology' is derived from the Latin word '*societus*' meaning society and the Greek word 'logos' meaning 'study or science'. The etymological meaning of 'sociology' is the 'science of society'. Sociology is usually defined as the science of society. This definition has two terms to be pointed out clearly: a) Science and b) Society. Most of the scholars described science as a body of knowledge. This type of knowledge is acquired by systematic observation, experience and study of the facts which have been coordinated and classified. In this way science adds to our knowledge by describing actual reality. Hence scientific knowledge is enduring.

Sociology is also a body of knowledge about society which has been empirically tested and found to be valid. Society may be defined as the complicated network and ever changing pattern of social relationships. These relationships are varied and complex. They may be economic, political, or religious but they are at the same time 'social'.

Sociology is the study of social relationships. In order to be a distinct and separate science, sociology must confine itself to the study of social relationships for no other science that takes that subject for its central concern.

The only field of study which remains for sociology is the field of social relationships. Sociology can be truly a separate science when its focus is not identical with those of other sciences. That is why sociology is concerned with the study of social relationships. Since all parts of social life are intimately related and interwoven, society should be studied as a whole and the nature of the interactions between its various elements should be understood.

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### 13.4 Definition of Economics

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Economics is one of the most important branches of social sciences. It can be defined as the branch of knowledge that deals with a human life's economic aspects.

Wealth related activities of man are the main subject matter of economics. So, economics is called the science of wealth in its three phases of production, distribution, and consumption. In general, wealth means money, property, expensive goods etc. But in economics, wealth means that kind of goods which fulfil our demand directly or indirectly and its supply is limited (not sufficient). To collect wealth, to create wealth, wealth distribution and utilization of wealth, to determinate the policy for total development of the society and to research for the proper implementation of the policies- these are the subject matter of economics.

Moreover, economics is a social science that deals with wants and their satisfaction. Classical economics assumes that people have unlimited wants and to satisfy these wants there are limited resources. At that time people always had to engage in work to secure the things they needed for the satisfaction of their wants. Almost all types of individuals are working to earn money/income with which they satisfy their wants. To fulfil the basic needs i.e., food, cloth, shelter, and other needs such as better education, better drinking water, better health facilities etc are very urgent. According to one perspective, it is assumed that there is no limit for human wants. When one wants to get satisfied, another new want automatically takes place and so on in an endless succession. Hence, we say that it is impossible to fulfil one's wants. Sociologist Seligman says the starting point of all economic activity is the existence of human wants. Wants give rise to efforts and efforts secure satisfaction. The things which directly satisfy human wants are called consumption goods. A few consumption goods like air, sunshine etc are abundant. They are available free of cost. But most goods are scarce. They are available only by paying a price. And therefore, they are called economic goods. They do not exist in sufficient quantity to satisfy all wants.

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### 13.5 Main Characteristics of Sociology

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Sociology is an important discipline. It deals with the social aspect of man. It studies the different parts of Society as a whole. In Sociology, all the concepts and principles concerning human beings as societies are covered. Sociology studies all the rules and regulations concerning and dividing people all over the world. All activities fall under this branch, hence Sociology drastically growing and expanding for creativity and learning infinite knowledge. Sociology deals with the diverse patterns of relationships and interactions between people across the globe. One can say that primarily it tries to answer three basic questions-

- (1) How and why do societies emerge?
- (2) How and why do societies persist? And,
- (3) How and why do societies change?

Most of the sociologists are in favour of the following:

- (a) Sociology is an independent discipline. It is no longer treated as a branch of any other social sciences like political science, history, philosophy, anthropology, psychology etc. It is considered to be the newest of all social sciences.
- (b) Sociology is a social science and not a physical science. Sociology belongs

to the network of social sciences and not to the physical sciences like physics, chemistry, or biology.

- (c) As a science of society, sociology is highly concerned with the institutions and associations of human beings. Sociology is the scientific studies of human interactions and interrelations, their conditions and consequences.
- (d) The main focus of sociology is to give attention to the study of primary social institutions like family and maintenance of social order.
- (e) Sociology focuses on evolution, transformation and functioning of social life.
- (f) Sociology deals with social processes like cooperation and competition, accommodation and assimilation, social conflict, communication in society, social differentiation, and social stratification.
- (g) Sociology has its own methodology and is based on empirical data collection and inductive reasoning but also has deductive aspects at the level of generalisations.
- (h) The study of sociology is done by quantitative and qualitative measures and the means employed for gathering data are different.

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## 13.6 Main Characteristics of Economics

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Economics can be defined as the branch of knowledge that deals with human's life's economic aspects. It deals with how goods and services are provided, produced, and manufactured. Economics deals with economic relations concerning individuals. Factors like supply, demand, price, goods and services, and the elasticity of various products and these factors contributing to the fluctuation of products and services of the market are basic knowledge needed for knowledge. The vital characteristics of economics are the following:

- (i) Economics is basically a science of wealth, choice and economic activities of man living in society.
- (ii) According to Professor Robbins, "Economics is a social science which studies human behaviour in relation to his unlimited ends and scarce means which have alternative uses."
- (iii) Economics largely focuses on the activities of man such as production, consumption, distribution, exchange, and resource management. It also studies the structure and functions of different economic organisations like banks, markets etc. From this, it is obvious that economics is concerned with the material needs of humans as well as their material welfare.

- (iv) Economics is divided into two: (a) Micro-economics and (b) Macro-economics. The term 'micro' seems to have derived from Greek word 'mikros' meaning small. **Micro-economics**- study of small economic unit such as individuals, firms, industries, competitive market, labour market, personal decision making, price of a commodity, out of individual firm and so on.

**Macro-economics** deals with the study of the Nation's economy as a whole. The scope of macro-economics is wide. It is concerned with the study of aggregates. It is concerned with the concept such as Aggregate demand, Aggregate supply, Total output, General price level, National income, National economic growth, Government spending, Inflation, Unemployment etc.

- (v) Positive and Normative Economics:

**Positive economics** is the branch of economics that concerns the description, quantification, and explanation of economic phenomena. It focuses on facts and cause and effect behavioural relationships and notes that economic theories must be consistent with existing observations.

**Normative economics/statements**- The beliefs of individuals expressed in the form of value judgements based on moral and ethical considerations are termed as normative statements. These statements that describe what ought to be on the basis of ethical considerations are the subject matter of normative economics.

According to Prof Samuelson and Prof Nordhaus, "Economics is the study of how societies use scarce resources to produce valuable commodities and distribute them among many different people." To explain the statement two vital thinking come into existence: (1) Scarcity of the commodity and (2) Skilful distribution of the valuable commodity in society. In fact, in these circumstances, economics played a vital role in the implementation of the inadequacy of commodities.

If the desired commodities are easily available and every demand is fulfilled, then man is unworried. The Government is not in a position to collect tax. Only economics as a science of society can take decision with the insufficient commodity and unlimited demands. Economics is divided into two categories: (a) Micro-economics and (b) Macro-economics.

Eminent British economist Adam Smith is called the father of Micro-economics. Micro-economics is the study of small economic units such as individuals, firms, industries etc.

Macro-economics deals with the study of nations economy as a whole. The scope of macro-economics is wide. National income, National economic growth, Inflation, Unemployment etc.



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## 13.7 Relationship between Sociology and Economics

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Now we proceed to show the inter-relationship between these two (sociology and economics) important branches of social sciences. Both are interdependent and interrelated. Because of this interrelationship, Prof Thomas opines that economics is, in fact, but one branch of Sociology. Similarly, Silverman opines that economics is regarded as an offshoot of sociology which studies the general principles of all social relations. Economic welfare is a part of social welfare. When there are economic problems in society such as inflation, poverty, unemployment etc economists usually take help of sociology. For getting common welfare, economics receives help from all social sciences and preferably sociology. Economics depends on sociology. Economics can not go far ahead without the help of sociology and other sciences. It is very difficult to understand economics completely. As a result, economics is regarded as a part of sociology. Classical sociologists like Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto etc have done extensive and rigorous research on economy and society which was later great beneficial for economic. Some economists also consider economic change as an aspect of social change.

On the other hand, sociology also is influenced and enriched by the economic factors in many ways. Social problems like suicide, dowry, etc will be analysed and minimized with the help of economic procedure because the root of these problems is deep rooted in the economic factors. So, we may come to the point that such kind of problems will be solved with the help of economic contribution to the field of sociological knowledge and research. The famous social scientist Karl Marx suggested that economic relations constitute the foundation of society. So, economic factors greatly influence every aspect of our social life. So, sociologists like Spencer, Max Weber, E. Durkheim, and others have given importance on economics in their analysis and research of social relationships. According to A.C. Pigou, “Economics studies that part of social welfare which can be brought directly or indirectly into relationship with the measuring rod of money.” Here he suggests that social relations are formed due to the pressure of wealth which is the domain of economics. According to Alfred Marshall, who was a neoclassical economist, “Economics is the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life, it examines that part of individual and social action which is most closely connected with the use and attainment of material requisites of well-being.” This shows that economics is concerned with their activities in the social setup.

It is clear from the aforesaid discussion that the relation between sociology and economics is widening. Economists are more and more making use of the

sociological concepts in the study of economic problems. They work with sociologists in their study of the problems of economic development in underdeveloped countries. Combined efforts of both the experts may be of great practical help in meeting the challenges.

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### **13.8 Differences between Sociology and Economics**

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Despite the interdependence of these two sciences, they are quite distinct from each other. The main differences between them are given below:

- a) Sociology as an important branch of social sciences is concerned with society and social relationships whereas economics deals with wealth and its production, distribution, consumption, and exchange, and choice. Economics is concerned with the material welfare of the human beings. Economic welfare is only a part of human welfare.
- b) Sociology emerged as a science of society and it is the youngest branch of social sciences. On the other hand, economics is comparatively older science.
- c) Sociology is regarded as an abstract science whereas economics is considered as a concrete science in the region of social science. Economic variables can be measured and quantified more easily and accurately. Social variables are very distinct to measure and quantify.
- d) Sociology is generally concerned with all aspects of social science whereas economics studies the specific aspects of social science.
- e) The scope of sociology is wider and has comprehensive viewpoints. The scope of economics is extremely limited and narrow.
- f) Sociology deals with the social activities of individuals, on the other hand, economics is concerned with their economic activities. It is also called the science of bread and butter.
- g) Both sociology and economics differ from each other regarding the methods and techniques they use for their study.
- h) In sociology, society is the main theme as a unit whereas in economics individual is the central theme as a unit.
- i) Sociology is a general part of social science, but economics is the special branch of social sciences.
- j) In sociology, man is studied as a social animal. In economics, man is studied as an economic being.

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## **13.9 Common Issues Concerning both Sociology and Economics**

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Both sociology and economics are the vital branch of social sciences which deal with the study of overall human development. Both of them use scientific methods for studying their respective areas of interest. They are closely related and dependent on each other for their study yet there are some common problems which stay in the border line. The problems of population growth, environmental pollution, slum, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, child labour, inequality etc have both social and economic implication.

### **Economic Sociology as a Sub-discipline of Sociology**

Economic sociology emerged as a systematic academic subdivision of sociology in less than a century ago. It has made a remarkable contribution in analysing society from an economic perspective. The birth of economic sociology was found in the writings of Karl Marx. N.J. Smelser and R. Swedberg point out that the first use of the term ‘economic sociology’ seems to have been in 1879.

In recent times, especially after 1980’s economic sociology experienced remarkable revival. Some sociologists were doing rigorous research on the relationship between the market and society. In contemporary economic sociology, markets are considered as networks of producers watching each other and trying to carve out niches. Hence, we can say that such networks are the core area of concern in contemporary economic sociology. Karl Polanyi, a renowned contributor to economic sociology, argued that the birth of the free market was an institutional transformation necessarily promoted by the state. This got a general acceptance in the domain of economic sociology. Economic sociology is the application of sociological methods to understand the production, distribution, exchange and consumption of goods and services. Economic sociology is particularly attentive to the relationships between economic activity, the rest of the society, and changes in the institutions that contextualize and condition economic activity.

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## **13.10 Summary**

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In this unit, we have tried to understand the relationships of sociology with economics. Sociology is the youngest branch of social sciences whereas economics is older than sociology. Sociology is the science of society. The relation of sociology with economics has been extensively proved in this unit by showing how society is greatly influenced by economic factors and how economic processes are determined

by the social environment. Classical sociologists have done extensive research on the economy. Karl Marx suggested that economic factors influence every aspect of our social life. It is the economic factor which influences the individual's lifestyle and needs. The economic needs of society are generally met through social institutions. Thus, the two subjects are complementary to each other and it is difficult, rather impossible to study one subject by leaving the other. Despite the dependence, these two social sciences are quite distinct from each other. Besides, there are some common issues like unemployment, over-population, poverty, pollution, child labour etc.

**Keywords :**

Sociology, economics, macro-economics, micro-economics, society, economy, positive economics, normative economics.

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## 13.11 Questions

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**1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)**

- (a) Analyse common issues concerning both sociology and economics.
- (b) Point out the reciprocal relationship between sociology and economics.
- (c) Point out Economic Sociology as a sub-Discipline of sociology.
- (d) Define economics.
- (e) Define sociology.
- (f) Point out the differences between Micro-economics and Macro-economics.
- (g) Define the concepts of Supply and Demand.
- (h) What do you mean by positive economics and normative economics.

**2. Answer in detail: (10 marks)**

- (a) Write a note on the relationship of sociology with economics.
- (b) What are the main characteristics of sociology?
- (c) Show differences between Sociology and Economics.

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## 13.12 Suggested Readings

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## **Unit 14 : Sociology and Cultural Studies**

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### **Structure**

- 14.1 Objectives**
- 14.2 Introduction**
- 14.3 Sociology and other social sciences**
- 14.4 Sociology and Social Anthropology**
- 14.5 Sociology and Psychology**
- 14.6 Sociology and History**
- 14.7 Sociology and Political science**
- 14.8 Sociology and Economics**
- 14.9 Cultural studies**
- 14.10 Summary**
- 14.11 Questions**
- 14.12 Suggested Readings**

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### **14.1 Objectives**

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In this unit we will focus upon the following points:

- The interrelationship between Sociology and other social sciences such as social anthropology, psychology, history, political science and economics.
- We will try to understand the similarities and dissimilarities of these above different disciplines with sociology in terms of approaches and methods used.
- To have a brief idea about Cultural Studies.

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### **14.2 Introduction**

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Sociology is the study of human social life. Because of the expanded human social life, sociology has many sub-sections of study, ranging from the analysis of conversations to the development of theories, which help us to understand how the entire world works. Sociology being a vast dynamic field, it thus becomes difficult to limit its definition to a few words would be an injustice to it. It is one of the

several social sciences which deal with man and his activities in society; while the other sciences being history, geography, philosophy, political science, economics or even anthropology.

In other words, it won't be wrong to say that sociology is the basic social science which encompasses all other sciences in it. Man's life is multifaceted. It has the economic aspect, political aspect, religious aspect and so on and so forth. This chapter will introduce you to the vastness of the discipline sociology and explain the related other disciplines which play an equally important role in understanding and examining societal realities.

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### **14.3 Sociology and other social sciences**

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Social sciences concern people's relationships and interactions with one another. Sociology, with its emphasis on social life, falls into this category. A multidisciplinary field, sociology draws from a variety of other social sciences, including anthropology, political science, psychology, and economics. It is necessary to understand other social sciences to study society and the others should also study sociology. To understand social life in a particular aspect one must know society. Therefore sociology and other social sciences are interdependent.

Sociology not only borrows from other social sciences but also has given a lot to them by paving a new path and dimension to other social sciences. As mentioned in the beginning Sociology makes it possible to talk and inculcate various characteristics while studying about it, unlike other social sciences which aim at one particular aspect. However, sociology could be distinguished from other social sciences related to its contents and the emphasis is given on them. There are many parallels amongst almost all fields of sciences. In order to study these parallels, one must know to what extent and on what terms do they differ.

The social sciences comprise the application of scientific methods to the study of the human aspects of the world. Psychology studies the human mind and micro-level (or individual) behavior; sociology examines human society; political science studies the governing of groups and countries; communication studies the flow of discourse via various media; economics concerns itself with the production and allocation of wealth in society; and social work is the application of social scientific knowledge in society. Social sciences diverge from the humanities in that many in the social sciences emphasize the scientific method or other rigorous standards of evidence in the study of humanity.

In the upcoming sections we will study these interrelationships of sociology with other social sciences and an exhaustive manner.

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## 14.4 Sociology and anthropology

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Sociology and social anthropology are closely related in many aspects. There are also certain differences that can also be observed between the two subjects in terms of the areas and thrust of enquiry, methodology, practice and tradition

Social/Cultural anthropology has been historically very close to sociology from the beginning itself as they both study human society. Although, anthropology has been regarded as the study of pre-literate societies and sociology as dealing with the more contemporary, urban and developed societies, this distinction rather becomes blurred. The earlier trend in Anthropology being associated with micro studies particularly with the study of rural communities and sociology being identified with macro studies particularly the modern or urban communities is no longer true in the contemporary times. Today, we see a trend where sociologists have carried out much studies on rural communities, villages and micro settings, while anthropologists have also ventured on the urban settings and macro studies. Hence, there has been much overlapping in the areas of enquiry and interest between sociologists and anthropology, particularly social anthropology and/or cultural anthropology

The relationship between the two is so close that in the contemporary times the difference has become very bleak as discussed above. There are many eminent anthropologists who have opined the close relationship between Sociology and anthropology, particularly socio-cultural anthropology. For instance, Frazer is, perhaps, the first anthropologist who defined “social anthropology as that branch of sociology that deals with primitive societies” (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952:2; cf. Voget, 1975:143). According to Frazer, sociology “should be viewed as the most general science of society. Social anthropology would be a part of sociology, restricted to the “origin, or rather the rudimentary phases, the infancy and childhood of human society” By limiting social anthropology to a study of savage life, Frazer echoed the ideas of Waitz and of Tylor in placing the anthropological emphasis on the early history and institutions of mankind” (Voget, 1975:143). According to Radcliffe-Brown (1983) social anthropology is a ‘comparative sociology’. By the term ‘comparative sociology’, he would mean “a science that applies the generalizing method of the natural sciences to the phenomena of the social life of man and to everything that we include under the term culture or civilisation” (p.55). Thus, he is of a considered view that social anthropology should look for ‘nomothetic’ approach (search for general laws of society) rather than the idiographic approach (search for particular scientific facts and processes, as distinct from general laws). It is a method to demonstrate “a particular phenomenon or event” to establish a “general law” (ibid.). There are also



many other anthropologists who concur to his view. For instance, Evans-Pritchard, another well-known anthropologist considers social anthropology as “a branch of sociological studies, that branch which chiefly devotes itself to primitive societies” (1951:11). He opines that “when people speak of sociology they generally have in mind studies of particular problems in civilized societies. If we give this sense to the word, then the difference between social anthropology and sociology is a difference of field (*ibid.*). While anthropology was formulated as a holistic study of mankind and related aspects, Auguste Comte also considered that sociology would be the overarching study of human society, and therefore, sociology should be the “queen of all sciences”. Even when the discipline of sociology and socio-cultural anthropology were established their relationship still existed. The relationship is mainly because of the similarity in the subject matter and methodology.

Although the subject matter, interests, theories and methodology overlap between sociology and Anthropology, there are also certain differences. The first and foremost difference lies in the definition of the scope of the subjects itself. Sociology is the study (or science) of society, whereas anthropology (integrated anthropology) is the study of man and everything that concerns man, including the physical and socio-cultural aspects. While the emergence of sociology can be mainly attributed to the attempt to bring about social order in the society (in the European social context) after the great social transformation brought about by industrial revolution and French revolution, its influence on the emergence of anthropology was not as direct as with sociology or other social sciences; rather it was an indirect influence through the opening up of intellectual and geographical spaces to enable the European scholars to go outside the European society and study the pre-literate societies (the ‘other’ non-European societies) (*cff.* Eriksen et al 2001; Sarana 1983).

Sociology began with the focal interest with the study of society-as a generalizing social science, particularly with a focus on a larger societal context to explain social phenomena. Sociologists largely employ quantitative methods like questionnaires to collect data and subsequent analysis of the data with the help of statistical techniques. Anthropology began as a field-based science. Anthropologists largely use qualitative methods, particularly ‘participant observation’ along with other methods and techniques. Anthropologists go out to the field and live with the people for several months or even for years and learn their culture as one of the insiders. However, over a period of time, the differences in the use of research methods and techniques have changed as sociologists began to extensively employ qualitative methods, while anthropologists also began to profusely use quantitative methods along with qualitative methods.

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## 14.5 Sociology and Psychology

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The term psychology is derived from two Greek words; *Psyche* means “soul or breath” and *Logos* means “knowledge or study” (study or investigation of something). Psychology developed as an independent academic discipline in 1879, when a German Professor named Wilhelm Wundt established the first laboratory for psychology at the University of Leipzig in Germany. Initially, psychology was defined as ‘science of consciousness’. In the simple words, we can define psychology as the systematic study of human behavior and experience. Sociology and psychology together form the core of the social sciences. Right from their inception as separate academic disciplines, sociology and psychology have studied different aspects of human life. Most of the other species, work on instincts in the physical environment for their survival. While the survival of humans depends upon the learned behaviour patterns. An instinct involves a genetically programmed directive which informs behaviour in a particular way. It also involves specific instruction to perform a particular action (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). It is through socialization that humans learn specific behaviour patterns to suit them best in the physical environment. Humans process the information provided by the social context to make sense of their living conditions. Sociology’s basic unit of analysis is the social system such as family, social groups, cultures etc.

The main subject matter of psychology is to study human mind to analyse attitude, behaviour emotions, perceptions and values which lead to the formation of individual personality living in the social environment. While sociology deals with the study of the social environment, social collectives which include family, communities and other social institutions psychology deals with the individual. For instance, while studying group dynamism, sociologist and psychologist initially share common interests in various types of groups, and their structures which are affected by the degree of cooperation, cohesion, conflict, information flow, the power of decision making and status hierarchies. This initial similarity of interest, takes on different focus, both the disciplines use different theoretical positions to explain the group phenomena. The quest to study human behaviour on scientific principles started with the emergence and establishment of natural sciences during the nineteenth century. Comte thought that society could be studied using the scientific methods of natural sciences. Comte argued careful observation of the entities that are known directly to experience could be used to explain the relationship between the observed phenomena. By understanding the causal relationship between various events it is possible to predict future events. He also held the belief that once the rules governing the social life are identified, the social scientist can work towards the betterment of

the society. This quest to produce knowledge about the society and place of the individual within it, on the basis evidence and observation is central to the origin of Social psychology. The ideas of early and later sociologist helped to shape the sociological social psychology. Mead studied the effect of social conditions on our sense of self. Other influence contributors in the development of sociological social psychology include Georg Simmel (1858-1918), Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929), and Ervin Goffman. The emergence of modern social psychology could be traced from the nineteenth century onwards. Social psychology could be defined as the study of the “interface between these two sets of phenomena, the nature and cause of human social behaviour” (Michener & Delamater, 1999 cf. Delamater, 2006:11). G.W Allport (1954:5) defines social psychology with its emphasis on “the thought, feeling, and behaviour of individual as shaped by actual, imagined, or implied the presence of others”. To sum up we can say that social psychology is the systematic study of people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviour in the social context.

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## 14.6 Sociology and History

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Sociology and history are interrelated to each other. Sociology study society and focuses on current issues by looking their historical background. Both present and past come closer in such analysis. Sociologists often refer to history to explain social changes, developments and changing face of society over period of time. Similarly history also needs social aspects (sociological concepts) to explain past. The boundaries between the two disciplines get blurred and entangled which do entails a context to explain complex webs of social reality.

Both sociology and history thus depends on each other to take complete stoke of reality. Sociology depends on history to understand past events, movements and social institutions. Needless to say that sociology is also concerned with the study of historical developments of society. Sociologist studies ancients or old traditions, culture, growth of civilisations, groups and institutions through historical analysis and interpretations.

Auguste Comte’s conception of sociology includes history in his analyses of growth of sociology and society. He dwells into causes and reasons of developments of humanity through various historical stages. Furthermore, as Tilly (2001) notes, Karl Marx’s Capital, Max Weber’s Economy and Society or Ferdinand Tonnies’ Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft have elaborately used historical dimension to enrich their sociological analysis. Such analysis demonstrate that sociology takes help of history (for instance Weber’s elaboration of ideal type is an example of how sociologist have drawn to develop their sociological interpretations) to locate an

issue and examine its significance. Furthermore, history has many things to offer to sociology. Even though both sociology and history are two different intellectual disciplines in the domain of social sciences, both the disciplines differ in their methods, approaches and purposes. Historians emphasise their findings as time-space localised whereas sociologists believe their understanding transcends space-time dimension. Thus, the major difference between sociology and history is with regard to the nature of data or evidences put for analysis. Sociologists much concern with the past and primary data whereas historians are concerned with the past and look for secondary data in archives or past events. For a richer sociological analysis, it is often argued that the sociologists should be historically aware- they should be aware of historical setting and limits which should inform their analysis of social issues. It is said that history interprets whereas natural science explains. Historians collect the concrete and interpret it as unique phenomenon whereas sociologists work on hypotheses, classify and arrange data in relevant and different categories to explore and formulate the typical propositions.

It is a fact that sociology and history do not speak same language. The two professions diverge on many counts. notably, one need not to see only just two different professions but structures with distinct languages, style of thinking and values shaped by differences in education and training. It is said that sociologists have crave for numbers, historian for dates and words; sociologists recognise rules and ignore variations whereas historians stress on the individuals and specific. Furthermore, sociology differ from history in the sense that the sociologists seek generalized uniformities and processes to form typology of concepts which differ from the exact data sets proposed in a particular case by the historians. Many scholars called history as concrete and descriptive science of society. History attempts to construct a picture of social past. On the other side, sociology said to be abstract and theoretical science of society. Scope of sociology in this respect considered broader than the history. Sociology is not only concerned with the social present, but with the social past too. Sociology thus covers a wider range of issues; often go with broad purpose and transcend time and space limits to produce generalisation grounded in theoretical propositions.

Sociology and history are two different disciplines in the domain of social sciences differ in their methods, approaches and purposes. Sociologists have crave for numbers, historian for dates and words. Sociologists recognise rules and ignore variations whereas historians stress on the individuals and specific. Sociologists seek generalised uniformities and processes to form typology of concepts which differ from the exact data sets proposed in a particular case by the historians. History is seen as concrete and descriptive science of society. History attempts to construct a

picture of social past. On the other side, sociology said to be abstract and theoretical science of society. Scope of sociology in this respect considered broader than the history.

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## 14.7 Political Science and Sociology

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Sociology being the study of society and social life touches various political aspects of human life. Both the disciplines together intersecting with each other helps us to understand various issues and concerns of everyday life and policy matters, also issues concerning the functioning of various political institutions and its functions in maintaining the order of the society. Issues such as governance, civil society, voting behaviour, power relations among groups, etc are some of the examples that are of vital importance. Thus these issues brings disciplines of sociology and political science closer.

Both sociology and political science share common interests, but at the same time the approaches of both the discipline also differs. In this segment we will try to understand the interrelationship of sociology and political science and how both the disciplines share and differ when comes to understanding the social realities.

Political science is generally defined as a scientific study of state, government and politics. Here, probably, the most frequently used concepts are politics, state, power, political socialisation, leadership, governance, decision taking, policy making and its impacts. The concept of politics is central to political science

Sociology and political science are closely related to each other in various respects. It has been stated that both the disciplines are closely interwoven when it comes to the analysis of power, authority structures, administration and governance (Lipset 1964). The similarities between the two can be seen in many factors. Political science relies heavily upon sociology for its basic theories and methods. The focal specialities in both the discipline are borrowed from other social science disciplines such as economics, history, anthropology and psychology. The major proponents like LKarl Mae\rx, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, etc have equally contributed in the growth and development of both the disciplines.

Sociology is often defined as scientific study of society. We may also note that society is nothing but a complex network of various groups, institutions, communities, associations, people and their everyday life activities. Politics and power dynamics forms integral to all of these conceptions of human lives. Notably, polity or political formations has always been the essential components of any human society. In modern times, no society can be imagined without polity, political institutions or, so to say,

any form of political life. State and governance are basic to any society both in terms of its function, development and meeting essential needs of social life such as law and order, security and development. Sociology too essentially reflect on status of social world with a focus on social issues and on the condition of human society, the network of social relationships in an increasingly globalised interconnected world, the growing variety of political traditions, caste and politics, ethnicity, cultural background, economic conditions and linguistic affiliations. Sociology examines various aspects of political behaviour with special focus on their social implications. This in fact indicates deeper intersection between sociology and political science. However both the disciplines differ in their approach. Political scientists investigate into rise, fall and changes of governments and their leaders whereas sociologists see governments as social institutions, political behaviour as outcome of social dynamics and leadership as social phenomena having multifarious implications for social developments.

Both sociology and political science intersect at multitude of points and provide a broader analysis of the social reality. Thus, the similarities, between the two, are well appreciated by scholars. However, both the disciplines have differences too which also need to be critically assessed. Sociologist most importantly talk of interaction system, be it within groups, institutions or organisations, whereas political science talk about control mechanism within such groups or organisations. Hence, the frame of reference or perspectives of sociology and political science differ. The former primarily concerned about interactionist views, whereas later focuses on power structure, order and control mechanisms. Scholars argued that when sociological perspective of interaction system is applied to the analysis of political phenomena it tends to become political sociology.

Political sociology often sees as a new, growing and burgeoning sub-field within the discipline of sociology. It is considered as a connecting bridge between sociology and political science. Sociologists see two way relationships between the two (Rathore 1986). Both have a give and take relationship. Various other scholars see political sociology as a marriage between sociology and political science which studies and brings critically important and newer areas as mentioned earlier which touches both sociology and political science, but could not be adequately studied by either one.

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## **14.8 Sociology and Economics**

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Economics is a social science that deals with human wants and their satisfaction. Classical economics assumes that people have unlimited wants and the resources to satisfy these wants are limited. They are always engaged in work to secure the

things they need for the satisfaction of their wants. The farmer in the field, the worker in the factory, the clerk in the office, and the teacher in the school are all at work. The basic question that arises here is: Why different people undertake these activities? The answer is that they are working to earn income with which they satisfy their wants. However, there exists a great deal of inter-relationship between these two important branches of social sciences. Both are interdependent and inter-related. Because of this inter-relationship, Thomas opines that, "Economics is, in fact, but one branch of Sociology." Similarly Silverman opines that Economics is regarded as an offshoot of sociology which studies the general principles of all social relations.

Economics is concerned with material welfare of individuals which in turn is the basis for common welfare. In order to achieve common welfare, Economics takes help from all social sciences and mostly from sociology. For its own comprehension, economics takes help of sociology and depends on it. Economics is a part of sociology hence without the help from sociology; it is very difficult to understand economics completely.

Similarly, Sociology too takes help from economics. Economics greatly enriches sociological knowledge. Economic factors greatly influence each and every aspects of social life. Some of the important social problems like dowry, suicide etc. cannot be sociologically analyzed without the help of economics because these social problems are mainly of economic crisis. Hence, we can say that economics is a part of sociology and without the help of economics; sociologists will not be able to find solutions for many social problems. Economics greatly contribute to the field of sociological knowledge and research. The well-known social scientist Karl Marx said that economic relations constitute the foundation of society. Economic factors plays vital role in every aspect of our social life and so, Sociologists are concerned with economic institutions. For this reason, Sociologists like Spencer, Weber, Durkheim and others have relied on economics in their analysis of social relationships.

Economists are more and more making use of the sociological concepts in the study of economic problems. Economists work with sociologists in their study of the problems of economic development in underdeveloped countries. Combined efforts of both the experts may be of great practical help in meeting the challenges. Despite the above discussed interrelationship between sociology and economics, both the sciences have certain differences as well. Sociology primarily studies about society and social relationships whereas economics studies about wealth and choice. Sociology emerged as a science of society very recently whereas economics is comparatively an older science. Sociology is considered as an abstract science whereas economics is considered as a concrete science in the domain of social sciences.

Sociology generally deals with all aspects of social science whereas economics deals specific aspects of social science. Sociology has a very wide scope whereas economics scope is very limited. Sociology is concerned with the social activities of individuals whereas economics is concerned with their economic activities. Society is studied as a unit of study in Sociology whereas individual is taken as a unit of study in economics. Both Sociology and economics differ from each other in respect of the methods and techniques they use for their study.

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## 14.9 Cultural studies

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**Cultural studies** is an interdisciplinary field concerned with the role of social institutions in the shaping of culture. Cultural studies emerged in Britain in the late 1950s and subsequently spread internationally, notably to the United States and Australia. Originally identified with the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (founded 1964) and with such scholars as Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams, cultural studies later became a well-established field in many academic institutions, and it has since had broad influence in sociology, anthropology, historiography, literary criticism, philosophy, and art criticism. Among its central concerns are the place of race or ethnicity, class, and gender in the production of cultural knowledge which are studied in the discipline of sociology too.

Nearly half a century ago, Raymond Williams (1961: 10) wrote that there was no academic subject which allowed him to ask the questions in which he was interested: questions of how culture and society, democracy and the individual voice, interrelate. The early tradition of cultural studies emerged into this gap, drawing in part on the resources of sociology. Looking back, the historical parallel between Williams and the critical sociology of C. Wright Mills was not accidental, since that too privileged the role of power in culture and cultural analysis (1959: 33, quoted Hall, Neitz and Battani 2003: 2). From the beginning, then, the robustness of cultural studies' relationship with sociology was crucial to cultural studies' possibilities of success.

The first substantive strand of cultural studies that we might identify for this purpose focused on to the forms and dynamics of contemporary popular culture. There are sociological problems with isolating the 'popular' as the focus of cultural studies in this way. For one thing, this excludes many important areas of taste and cultural consumption, for example the cultural experience of the old (Tulloch 1991; Riggs 1998), 'middlebrow' culture (Frith 1986), the cultural experience of elites (Lamont 1991), indeed any cultural experience that is not 'spectacular' or 'resistant'



( Couldry 2000; 58-62). Finally, an exclusive emphasis on ‘the popular’ ignores the need to deconstruct the relation between what is designated ‘popular’ and everyday ‘experience’ (Hall 1981).

The second strand within early cultural studies that we might identify as a potential contact point with sociology is the strand that prioritised ways of reading culture, especially those derived from semiotics and versions of post-structuralism. This is the strand most frequently emphasised in histories of cultural studies (Turner 1990; Barker 2003; Tudor 1999). But here too there are difficulties. On the one hand it becomes, in some versions, an attempt to read all culture as, indeed only as, text, an approach which is resolutely non-sociological and so inadequate to understand the multilayered but structured complexity of culture (Hannerz 1992). On the other hand, the use of semiotics and post-structuralist approaches to reading culture has largely been absorbed across all cultural sociology and humanities work (Hall, Heizert and Bettani 2003), so no longer comprises a distinct strand of its own. The third strand within early cultural studies that tried to focus cultural analysis on the particular question, and problem, is of democratic culture. It is this strand that develops furthest the concern for hidden power relations within culture, both inclusions and exclusions, that marked off cultural studies from the start. The early work of Raymond Williams did so by identifying a culturally-embedded democratic deficit at the heart of societies such as late 1950s Britain (Williams 1958, 1961).

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## 14.10 Summary

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From the above discussion it can be inferred that sociology as a discipline can be studied in relation to other social sciences such as social anthropology, psychology, history, political science and economics. Together they help us to examine the social realities of our society through the culmination of various approaches and methods used by the respective disciplines.

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## 14.11 Questions

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**1. Answer the following questions briefly: (5 marks)**

- (a) Describe the trends of cultural studies in relation with sociology?
- (b) Write a short note on Political Sociology?
- (c) Explain the scope and nature of Social Psychology?
- (d) Discuss the relationship between sociology and history?
- (e) Discuss the relationship between sociology and economics?

**2. Answer in detail:****(10 marks)**

- (a) Discuss the relationship of sociology with the other social sciences?
- (b) Elucidate the approaches and methods used by various disciplines in understanding society ?
- (c) “Sociology is the basic social science which encompasses all other sciences in it.” Explain.
- (d) Discuss the emergence of social anthropology in relation to sociology?

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**14.12 Suggested Readings**

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## **Unit 15 : Criminology, Penology and Legal Studies.**

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### **Structure**

- 15.1 Objective**
- 15.1 Introduction**
- 15.2 Meaning of Criminology**
- 15.3 Origin of Criminology**
- 15.4 Schools of Criminology**
  - 15.4.1 Pre-Classical School of Criminology**
  - 15.4.2 Classical School**
  - 15.4.3 Neo-classical School**
  - 15.4.4 Positivist School**
    - 15.4.4.1 Contribution of Cesare Lombroso**
    - 15.4.4.2 Enrico Ferri**
    - 15.4.4.3 Raffael Garofalo**
  - 15.4.5 Clinical School of Criminology**
  - 15.4.6 Sociological School of Criminology**
  - 15.4.7 Labeling Theory of Crime**
- 15.5 Penology**
  - 15.5.1. Meaning of Penology**
  - 15.5.2 Objective of Penology**
  - 15.5.3 Scope of Penology**
  - 15.5.4 Scope of Penology**
  - 15.5.5 Impact of Penology**
- 15.6 Theories of Punishment**
- 15.7 Legal Studies**
- 15.8 Summing Up**
- 15.9 Conclusion**

**15.10 Model Questions****15.11 Reference**

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**15.0 Objectives**

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In this unit, we shall come to understand the following points

- The objective of this unit is manifold as it attempts to enlightens the learners about some preliminary ideas regarding criminology and different ways of crime management among other things. There, its main objective is to:
- Examine the progress of criminology since the nineteenth century till the recent time;
- Explain the theories of punishment for better understanding of meaning, objective and impact of penology in real life;
- Critically examine the nature and scope of legal studies and appreciate its utility in society.

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**15.1 Introduction**

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Sociology is known as the scientific study of society and within its scope it includes all kinds of social institutions, processes, beliefs, practices, and problems related to them and all the causes and consequences associated with them. From understanding these problems the need for a very specialized area of study of crime has emerged and gradually spread its wings as a modern scientific discipline which came to be known as criminology. Criminology, in short, can be defined as a scientific study of crime, its causes and consequences, nature, forms, magnitude, management and prevention. Though it is known as a comparatively modern area of research in both anthropology and sociology, it has acquired significance with its unique contribution in both understanding and solving crimes and related problems. The discipline is believed to be a branch of sociology and is consisted of sub-areas like penology, victimology, etc.

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**15.2 Meaning of Criminology**

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The English term 'criminology' is the product of two words of which one is Latin and the other is Greek ; the Latin word is 'crimius' and 'logy' comes from Greek. Together the word literally means the study of crime or criminal behavior of man. Sociologists like Sutherland and Cressey describe it as a body of knowledge about crime as a social phenomenon whose scope includes the process of law-making,

violation of law and community's reaction towards such violations. Many others believe that it is the study of crime and criminal behavior, informed by principles of sociology and other non-legal fields like psychology, economics, statistics and anthropology. The primary objective of criminology is to develop a body of general and verified principles and other types of knowledge regarding the process of law, criminal behavior and related tendencies, correctional measures, functioning of correctional institutions, etc. For this reason, its subject matter examines the characteristics of people who commit crime, factors behind crime, impacts of crime on individual and community, methods for prevention of crime, etc.

As an academic discipline criminology deals with the scientific study of crime and criminal behavior; for this purpose contemporary criminology has adopted a multidisciplinary approach, taking help from disciplines like anthropology, biology, forensic medicine, statistics, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, economics, political science, law and history. Of all these, the influence of sociology is the most dominant in criminology.

The purpose of criminology is to study criminality both from theoretical and practical points of view. It observes crime related facts minutely and with greatest possible exactitude; in the process it tries to unearth the causes behind crime. Thus it emerges as an inductive science that examines both crime and criminality, i.e. both the act and the perpetrators of the act. As criminology is primarily about crime, criminal and criminality, we should also understand the essence of these three basic elements of criminology.

**(a) Crime :** Crime is an action or omission which constitutes an offence that is punishable by law and there hardly is any society in history which is crime-free. For this reason Emile Durkheim argues that crime is not only a normal social phenomenon, it is also necessary for the society. Noted English jurist William Blackstone has defined crime as an act committed in the violation of any public law. Though crime is common in every society and is considered an unlawful act punishable by the state or other authority, it has no simple or universally accepted definition. But it has generally been accepted that crime is harmful not only for the victim, but also for the community as a whole. In the past crime was seen as a manifestation of evil, but modern criminal theories do not accept that stand. Though the issue of morality still generally remains associated with crime, it is actually a violation of law that also goes against the interests of the community irrespective of it being on the right side of morality or not. However, the concept of crime changes in almost every stage of social evolution; for example, in the early medieval period only an offence against the state or the king was regarded as crime but murder was

not treated as a crime. During this period recourse to legal remedy was not essential as there always was the option for self-redress by offering 'bot' or financial compensation to the victim. If 'bot' was refused then the victim had the liberty to take revenge on the culprit with application of force. There were some 'botless' crimes as well, such as, hose-breaking, breach of peace, harbouring the outlaws, refusal to serve in the army, etc. and such offences would be punished with death, mutilation, forfeiture of property to the king etc.

Though crime is common and its concept is known to all, establishing its universally acceptable definition is difficult. Even a sociologist like Roscoe Pound finds a final definition of crime is impossible because law is evolving always, sometimes on the basis of a sovereign's will, at other times on the basis of juristic science; which may be uniform or based on judicial discretion which again can be general or specific.

Acts of crime can be classified into many types such as, violent crime, property crime, white collar crime, organized crime, victimless crime or consensual crime, cyber-crime etc. Crime can also be categorized as personal crime, property crime, statutory crime, hate crime, crime against humanity, organized crime, etc.

**(b) Criminal :** Criminal is the perpetrator of the act of crime, usually with some intent in mind; but there may be accidental or unintentional violation of law amounting to crime, too; the very act makes the perpetrator a criminal. A criminal violator of law deserves punishment by the state or any other recognized authority.

**(c) Criminality :** Criminality is behavior that is forbidden under the criminal laws of a country. The term also refers to the actual criminal characteristics of a person and the term is often used to refer to the extent to which a person's outer appearance triggers stereotypes about criminals.

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### 15.3 Origin of Criminology

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The history of criminology is not very old as it has emerged only in the 18th century, its roots can be traced back in the thoughts of ancient Greek philosophers like Hippocrates, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who offered naturalistic explanations of crime and proclaimed that going against reason would bring in sin. There was also the belief that crime was the product of a corrupted soul resulting from the physical deformities of the criminal. This supposition was so powerful that it continued till the Middle Ages and in 1586, Della Porta's book on crime linked crime with individual nature aided by the visible physical deformities of the person concerned. Such association of crime and physical deformity has also been supported

by philosophers like De La Chambre and Darwin. Some other thinkers used to link criminality with planetary positions or satanic possession of human souls. Though there were many wild assumptions regarding crime and its causes, there was no scientific study of crime or its prevention. In Europe, for very long period covering about five hundred years, criminal law was extremely repressive and inhuman and extremely torturous punishments were meted out to free the human body and soul from satanic possession. On a regular basis arbitrary and exemplary corporal and capital punishments were handed down to criminals with much spectacle and fanfare without any rational understanding of the cases for the sole purpose of prevention of crime in future. Penal laws were vague and their formulation ambiguous; criminal procedure was inquisitorial without any humane feeling for the suspect. Criminal proceedings were done in secret on the basis of the documentary evidence provided by the state only and cases were concluded on the basis of confessionary statement of the suspect which was often extracted with the help of all kinds of abominable torture.

Things began to change when the early-18th century era French thinkers like Montesquieu (1689- 1755), Rousseau (1712-1778), Voltaire (1694-1778) and others started to voice their displeasure against the arbitrariness and severity of the punishments. Montesquieu, in his *Spirit of the Laws* (1748) critically attacked the system and argued in favor of making the Rights of Man available to the criminals as well. In Italy, Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794) joined the bandwagon of opposition against the then existing criminal laws and arbitrary penal measures with support from his contemporaries like G. Filangieri (1752-1778). Beccaria's book "On Crime and Punishment" was published in 1764 where his suggestion was to make punishment aptly fitting to the severity of crime. During that time, in England Jeremy Bentham was of the view that punishment should outweigh the crime; he also prepared the plan for a new kind of prison called Panopticon or the New Inspection House in 1791. Their ideas later became known as the old style or Classical School of Criminology. Thus, criminological ideas germinated in Europe the late 18th century in the hands of classical school of criminologists and philosophers who spoke about crime and punishment from a new angle. Both Beccaria and Bentham are of the opinion that crime is the product of free will of individuals who commit crime being fully aware of what they are doing; they engage themselves in a process of rational calculative decision making by choosing the best way to commit a crime. Therefore their deeds should be treated with penal measures harsher than their criminal gains and that can have some deterrent effects on others.

The classical criminological thinkers felt the need for improving and modernizing the criminological system, as till that time of late 18th century- early



19th century, criminal justice actually meant brutal torture over the body of the accused. So their first priority became elimination of torture on the body in the name of disciplining an individual, criminal or not. As focus was gradually shifted on crime as a legal entity the road to highly improved criminal justice system started to open up. The neo- classical school of thought followed the classical school and brought a few changes in the system by accepting the fact that the world is full of imperfection and mistakes always occur. This school also was also positive about a person's right to self-defense. Gabriel Tarde and Raymond Saleilles are two important neo- classical criminologists.

It has been generally accepted that a systematic study of criminology started first in the writings of the eminent Italian scholar Cesare Beccaria when pioneered the trend of studying criminals scientifically and drew conclusions which would help prepare methods suitable for handling crime and criminals in future. For this, he is recognized all over the world as the founder of criminology. Once scientific analyses of crime and criminality gained ground, theories of criminology and various schools of thought following those theories started to emerge and over the years a large number of theories has come up as explanations of criminal activities, their causes and consequences in social life. The process of criminology's theoretical evolution has not ended, it is continuing as newer aspects of criminal behavior of men are coming before us and criminologists and other social scientists are trying to find a solution to those problems.

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## 15.4 Schools of Criminology

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The schools of criminology, based on various theories and approaches to examine man's criminal behavior can be classified in various ways; for example, as pre-classical school, classical school, neo-classical school, positivist school, psychological school, sociological school, Labelling theory of crime, and so on.

We should discuss the issues and contributions of these schools and their advocates one by one.

### 15.4.1. Pre-classical School of Criminology :

The spirit of the pre-classical school of criminology remained active in Europe in the 17th-18th period mainly. It was the period when the divine right of the monarch was held supreme, hence monarch was considered the supreme authority in a state. The concept of crime was, then, not very clear or scientific. There was general belief that man was simple by nature and his behavior was controlled by some external

'super' power, good or evil; crime or any other kind of wrong-doing by man was nothing but the product of such influence of some evil or demonic spirit. Thus described, crime was not the product of man's free will, but that of some evil force which could control man's actions. This school also accepted the omnipotence of spirit as a source of great power; crime occurred when individual was possessed by the spirit of devil or of a demon. To pacify that evil spirit worship, sacrifice and ordeals by water or fire was needed, trial by battle was also a common mode of pacification of the super power. The offender, an innately depraved person, could be cured only through the ordeal of torture and pain. Hobbes was of the opinion that the fear of punishment from the Monarch used to act as a deterrent against any possibility of a sinful act amounting to crime. Thus, the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas, Machiavelli, Jean Bodin, Martin Luther and some others practically prepared the ground for future humanitarian approach to examine crime and criminal behavior. Pre-classical approach to crime faced a natural death with advancement in scientific knowledge about crime.

#### **15.4.2. Classical School :**

The Classical School of criminology appeared when in the middle of the eighteenth century Cesare Beccaria, the father of modern criminology, rejected the concept of omnipotence of evil spirit behind crime and countered it with the naturalistic spirit of criminality. With influence from the utilitarian philosophy of his time to advocate 'hedonism' or 'pain and pleasure' principle, Beccaria attributed crime to the 'free will' of the individuals. This implied that, men are by nature rational and they always critically judge what gives them pleasure and what gives them pain and they finally choose what gives them maximum gain. Thus, crime becomes a matter of free choice between pleasure and pain for rational men. We can say, Bentham also was a great influence because classical school chose his utilitarian principle of 'maximum pleasure to maximum people' as its main guideline.

The key principles of the classical school of criminology are rationality, hedonism, punishment, human rights and due process principles. These should be discussed one by one.

(a) Rationality : The protagonists of the classical school believe that people have free will and they consciously choose crime as a means to fulfill their desired goal. Behind every crime there is a rational thought to provoke a plan for the act.

(b) Hedonism : With influence from the utilitarian school of thought, the classical school assume that people always seek pleasure and avoid pain. This calculation between pleasure and gain in the one hand and pain and loss on the

other, compel men to make a choice; people, therefore, commit crime in the pursuit of pleasure in the form of material gain. Therefore Beccaria suggested that the pain of punishment should always be greater than the potential pleasure of crime.

(c) **Punishment** : Punishment acts as a deterrent to crime as it brings in pain for the criminal. A criminal will like to avoid the path of crime as the thought of punishment like imprisonment will give him a sense of unhappiness and pain. Both Beccaria and Bentham argued that punishment should be proportional to the harm it caused to the society. Beccaria further argued that three aspects of punishment make a major difference in deterrence. These are: the swiftness, certainty and severity of punishment. Punishment should be swift, or carried out as soon as possible following a criminal act, otherwise its deterrent effect would be lost as people would fail to connect the two, i.e., criminal act and penal sentence. He believed that the goal of punishment is prevention of crime in future, not infliction of physical pain or mental agony on the criminal. He also opposed capital punishment because the state has no authority to counter the violence of crime with greater violence; moreover, death sentence has only a temporary effect. For him, life or long term imprisonment would have more deterrent effect as convicts would have to suffer pain for a longer period of time.

(d) **Human Rights** : Human rights are norms that protect and preserve the essential rights of all people irrespective of their status. Human rights legislations require government to take certain steps and to forbid some others and its advocates believe that penal sanctions, too, should respect the human rights of the victims and the perpetrators alike. In the pre-classical school period punishment meant torture and brutality; an accused could be tortured to death without any verification of facts. In the absence of proper law, inhuman torture used to be inflicted on a suspect for extraction of a confession that could be suitably applied against him. So the proponents of the classical school argued in favor of protecting human rights of all citizens including the criminals, and that they should be given a proper hearing to establish their points.

**Due Process Principles** : Due process means that legal matters should be resolved following rules and established principles and fair treatment of law and justice should be meted out to all. By condemning the torture of the suspect Beccaria brought into notice certain essential issues. To stop the ordeal of the accused he gave emphasis on solid proof of the act of crime, statements of the witnesses including women. He did not consider women as weak and unable to stand the ordeal of court proceedings. He was, also, a great advocate for public trials and spoke vehemently against secret hearings away from public eye. Crime should be

measured with the parameter of harm done to the society or individual or state and not on the basis of the perpetrator's intention and every person should be held innocent until proven guilty.

In this way, classical criminology introduced a more rational approach to punishment; it believed that crime takes place out of the short-term gratification tendencies of people. Though the approach paved the path for improvisation in corrective measures, it had some serious weaknesses as, firstly, it overstated the impact of free will on human conduct and thereby ignored the state of mind of the criminal or the pressure of the situation. Secondly, it prescribed equal punishment for equal offences without any concern for the mental challenges of the accused; it also failed to make any distinction between the first offenders and habitual criminals, or between degrees of offence.

However, the importance of the classical school of criminology lies in the fact that it paved the path for a clear system of justice where people would know the exact sentence for a crime, which would match the severity of the offence and would be delivered swiftly; and at the same time, the judges would act uniformly and fairly to rule out wild variations in sentencing in different courts. It was expected that all these would successfully deter people from committing crime.

#### **15.4.3 Neo-Classical School :**

The Neo-classical school of criminology emerged in the 19th century as a critical response to the classical school under the initiative of French thinkers Henry Joly and Rene Garrud, though on the whole it followed the footsteps of the classical school, it wanted to change a few things. The main objection of the neo-classicists was that the former had ignored firstly the individual differences under certain situations and secondly between first offenders and habitual criminals. The supporters of this school advocated for distinguishing between these above mentioned categories to make criminal justice more rational.

The main tenets of neo-classical school of criminology needs careful examination.

(i) The neo-classical school of criminology followed a scientific approach by distinguishing persons with mental disorders or under extenuating situations to commit acts of criminal nature from a criminal with normal intelligence and mental ability. With this distinction the school raised opposition against the severity of classical view of equal punishment for all for the same offence. The neo-classicists argument is that persons with mental depravity should be treated differently from the responsible

offenders.

(ii) The neo-classical school was also against similar punishment for the first offender and the hardened criminals. They favored individualization of offenders and their correctional treatment measures by taking into account the factor of mentality indirectly.

(iii) At the same time, the neo-classicists believed that all criminals, irrespective of the level of their mental faculty and sense of responsibility, should be kept away from the society.

(iv) It is important to note that due to the differentiation made between the sane, responsible persons with the mentally unstable ones who lack sense of responsibility, by the neo-classicists thoughts about different categories of correctional institutes like parole, probation, reformatories, open prisons, etc. started to take shape.

(v) In short, the neo-classical school suggests that a person's 'free will' may not remain active always and he/she may commit crime under the pressure of certain extenuating circumstances which should be taken into consideration at the time of awarding sentence.

#### **15.4.4 Positivist School :**

The real challenges against the classical school came from the Positivist school as it sought the reason for a crime beyond the person who committed it. Nineteenth century Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso introduced the positivist approach to criminology by rejecting the classical school's claim free will and selfishness could lead to crime. Lombroso's explanations of crime put emphasis on factors beyond a person's control like his anthropological features and led us to the process of crime control. The positivist school, introduced by Italian physician Cesare Lombroso, thrived under the influence of two other Italian criminologists, namely, Raffaele Garofalo and Enrico Ferri; for this reason, this school is also known as the Italian School of Criminology.

##### **15.4.4.1 Contribution of Cesare Lombroso (1836-1909)**

Lombroso, the father of modern criminology, was a doctor with specialization in psychiatry who worked in the Italian military to assess the mentally afflicted soldiers. He conducted very detailed study of people's bodies, took measurements and recorded all the details. His book 'The Criminal Man' was first published in 1876 in which he explained criminal behavior and shifted the emphasis from crime to criminal. He made an intensive study the physical characteristics of thousands of

his patients including criminals and concluded that criminals had inferior and defective physical stature with a tendency for inferior acts; they are less sensitive to pain and little regard for the sufferings of others. Like Darwin he too believed in the principle of biological determinism for criminal behavior. He classified criminals into three main categories: atavistic, insane and criminaloids or occasional criminals.

(a) Atavistic criminals : Atavistic criminals are also known as born-criminals; they commit crime because they are born with a criminal instinct. They are believed to be born with a reversion to an early or more primitive stage of mankind when human beings were both physically and intellectually inferior, resembling more the characteristics of apes. Lombroso believed physical characteristics contained the indications of criminality and identified as many as sixteen physical abnormalities of a criminal like peculiar size and shape of head, asymmetric face, prominent jaw, high cheek bones, fleshy lips, abnormal teeth, long or flat chin, retreating forehead, dark skin, twisted nose, large amount of body hair, extra-long arms, epilepsy and so on. He revised his theory of atavism in 1906 by saying that though not all, at least one third of criminals were born criminals, and finally concluded that even they were occasional criminals only. He also took factors like poverty, alcoholism and gang membership in consideration and found the criminals were remorseless, cynical or impulsive.

Insane Criminals : The second type criminals is composed of insane people, who, as Lombroso believes, commit crime on account of their mental disorder.

Criminaloids or Occasional Criminals : A criminaloid is a person who conceals his criminal personality by projecting a respectable, upright image. Because of the cover they maintain, the criminaloids enjoy respect from the society; they can also successfully build connections with the important quarters and law which help them conceal their criminal intentions and personality.

Lombroso had made several additions and changes to his theory of biological determinism and converted it to social and economic determinism; this shows his positivist method and objective approach that helped create the path for a multi-causation theory of crime.

#### **15.4.4.2 Enrico Ferri (1856-1928)**

Ferri, though belonged to the positive school of criminology, challenged Lombroso's biological stand on criminality and replaced it with a focus on external factors like social and geographical conditions, culture and emotions on criminal behavior; for this reason mainly, Ferri is also known as the founder of 'criminal

sociology'. As he argued in favor of complete reform of classical criminal justice system by challenging the classical concept of 'free will' of criminals, uniformity of sentencing and retributive punishment, he is also known as the founder of Social Defence Theory (1884). His book *Criminal Sociology* was published in 1917. His important conclusion was that criminal behavior was the combined product of multiple factors like geographical environment, anthropological characteristics and social or psychological elements. He believes, as social change is inevitable, so is resulting disharmony that may breakdown the traditional patterns of social control mechanisms; as a consequence, a fertile ground for crime and criminality may emerge. In his opinion, crime prevention programs should aim at removing the conditions that cause crime.

Like Lombroso, Ferri also classified criminals into several types, such as, born or instinctive criminals, occasional criminals, passionate criminals, insane criminals and habitual criminals.

1. Born/Instinctive criminals are persons born with criminal instincts which they inherit from their progenitors.

2. Occasional criminals constitute the majority of law-breakers and they turn to crime because of their familial or social environment and not due to any psychological or physiological issues.

3. Passionate Criminals are burdened with either passion (chronic mental state) or emotion (i.e. explosive or unexpected mental state).

4. Insane criminals suffer from clinically identified/certified mental disease/s or neuro-psychopathic conditions. To put it simply, they suffer from insanity and may commit crime under delusion.

5. Habitual criminals are those who acquire criminal habits. By beginning as occasional offenders in the early years, they gradually adopt crime as a part of their life. They are usually the products of their family and social surroundings like abandonment by family, poverty, bad company, lack of education, etc.

Ferri believes that punishment's sole purpose is to defend society from the problems of crime, and not deterrence or rehabilitation of the criminals. He also hoped that with a well-balanced penal measure criminals could be reformed. So he suggested an intensive crime-prevention program as well as a series of treatment for offenders.

#### **15.4.4.3 Raffael Garofalo (1852-1934)**

Raffael Garofalo was another prominent protagonist of the positive school of criminology. He stressed on a closer study to understand the circumstances that led to crime; for him, the living conditions of the criminals are important, because he firmly believed that a criminal is always influenced by his environment.

As an eminent jurist, a senator and a professor of criminal law Garofalo had ample theoretical knowledge and practical experience to formulate ideas regarding crime and criminals that were far different from other thinkers of his time. Rejecting the classical theory of free will as a cause of crime, he sought to establish a natural theory of crime by stating that crime was rooted in Human nature. So he explained crime as an act that offends the sense of pity and/or probity of the people in general. By pity he meant a sense of compassion or sympathy for fellow human beings, and probity, to him, contained a sense of honesty and integrity. He believed that while absence of pity could cause crime against a person, absence of probity would lead to crime against property. Unlike Ferri, he classified criminals into four categories such as:

- 1) Endemic' criminals or murderers;
- 2) violent criminals who are influenced by factors like prejudices of honor, politics and religion;
- 3) deficient criminals who lack sentiment of probity; and
- 4) lascivious or lustful criminals who commit sex crimes or crime against chastity.

He also rejected the classical concept of punishment being fit for the crime and tweaked the concept to say that punishment should fit the criminal. He preferred to give sole importance to the assessment of how much danger would a criminal cause with his/her characteristic risk factors or 'peculiarities'. Following the Law of Adaption Garofalo argued that punishment should be awarded to eliminate the deficiency of pity and probity causing crime with sentences of death or imprisonment and isolation and reparation.

#### **15.4.5 Clinical School of Criminology**

The clinical school of criminology seeks to examine criminal behavior in connection with his biological inheritance, his experiences in life since early childhood to the time when he turns to crime, and such other factors. The advocates of clinical school suggest that if criminals show signs of recidivism and cannot be reformed by



using tougher correctional methods, then they must face imprisonment or transportation for life. But, if the criminals are mere victims of their social conditions and are not hardened enough then they should be subjected to probation, parole, reformatories, open prisons and other humanitarian correctional measures. Clinical school lays stress on both internal factors and external factors surrounding a criminal, makes punishment individualized and introduces the correctional trend of reformation.

#### **15.4.6 Sociological School of Criminology**

The sociological school of criminology is much younger than the other schools and its main emphasis lies on the social environment of criminals. Gabriel Tarde (1843-'94) was one of the first thinkers to attach more importance to the social environmental factors by challenging the anthropological ideas of the positivist school; following his footsteps the supporters of the sociological school also attempted to connect variations in crime rate with shifting conditions in social organization such as mobility, culture, religion, economy, political ideology, demography, employment data, etc. in a given society. For example, Edwin Sutherland, in his theory of Differential Association, has shown how a person gets drawn towards crime because of the association he keeps and learns the tricks of the trade. The sociological school is also known as the rational school of criminology that supports application of humanitarian method for treatment of offenders. It argues for replacement of traditional penal sanctions with persuasive methods of treatment for the recidivists. The advocates of school do not pinpoint on any particular cause of crime, but suggest that there are multiple factors at play behind any act of crime.

Since the second half of the last century, we find the advent of more modern concepts regarding crime, criminality and its management. Modern criminological approach believes in multiple causation of crime, so it does not harp on any one single cause. This theory is applied more to discuss individual cases of crime and sometimes in the discussion of variations of crime rates. This approach finds crime as an outcome of a combination of various causes and consequences and there cannot be any hard and fast distinction between the so-called 'criminal' and 'non-criminal' types as crime is the product of social and economic inequalities, social power and life chances.

#### **15.4.7 Labeling Theory of Crime**

Labeling theory, also known as Social Reaction Theory, earned popularity in the 1960s. Its main assumption is though deviant behavior may stem out of various causes and conditions, once individuals are labelled as deviants, they almost always lose the chance of settling down in life with dignity, as they face new challenges

stemming out of the negative stereotypes or stigma linked to the labels and weakened sense of self-esteem. This theory assumes that people tend to act according to the label thrust upon them and this leads them to behave in a more deviant way.

Labeling theory had started with Tannenbaum in 1938 in a more positive way because he believed in tagging, defining, identifying, segregating and describing offenders with labels under different heads would be beneficial for their treatment. After him Lemert (1951), too, recommended grading and labeling of offenders as primary and secondary deviants. But it was with Howard Becker (1963) labelling theory took a new turn when he suggested that labelling might ruin the life chances for the victims of deviant labelling. Becker's theory is based on the assumption that in a society there are law-makers and law-abiders as well as law-breakers. He 'labels' the law-breakers as 'outsiders' and explains that as they accept the label they start to perceive themselves as different from the mainstream population; such a perception allows them to continue their deviant acts from primary to secondary levels and finally may learn new tricks of deviance through differential association by joining a organized group. Becker has categorized people with four different types of labels such as conforming (law-abiding), falsely accused (labeled as deviants without breaking any law), secret deviants (deviants who can avoid labeling), and pure deviants (exhibit law-breaking behavior).

Though at one time the labelling theory of Becker created a stir, it has faced a lot of flak from many quarters in the later decades. Many believe that without any empirical basis it has only a theoretical approach towards crime, while some others believe that it has declined due to lack of empirical support. But, no doubt, it helps us understand the problem of juvenile delinquency better by examining how labelling affects a person's self-esteem.

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## 15.5 Penology

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### 15.5.1 Meaning of Penology

Penology is a sub-category of both criminology and sociology. It studies the philosophies, objectives and purposes of punishment, types of prisons and other penal and correctional institutions. Modern penology started its journey in 1764 when Cesare Beccaria's pamphlet on Crime and Punishment was published. However, the term 'penology' was first used by Francis Lieber, an American political scientist, in 1838 to describe the then emerging science of prisons and punishments. As an important modern discipline it studies penal administration, purposes and effects of punishment on the convicts, rehabilitation of offenders and suggests ways to improve

the whole penal system. As a multi-disciplinary field it draws majorly from sociology, psychology, law and philosophy to develop and enrich its subject-matter.

The English word 'penology' has originated from the Latin word 'poena' meaning pain or suffering, therefore, penology becomes the study of penal measures on the offenders for their criminal acts, as well as of the forms, structures and functioning of penal or modern-day correctional institutions. Probation, medical treatment and education to correct the offenders and their rehabilitation in society are also studied in penology. Penology has thus acquired a wholesome character today. It is rooted in the new humanitarian impulse of the 18th century. The persons who study penology are known as penologists. In short, penology is all about punishment, its forms, effectiveness and gradual evolution in a changing world.

### **15.5.2 Objective of Penology**

Penology primarily focuses on two aspects of society - firstly, on the study of punishments related to various crimes and secondly, it also focuses on the prisons and other correctional institutions. Prisoners' rights, their appropriate treatment and the rehabilitation programs they face have attracted the attention of this branch of criminology. Some other objectives of penology are to define crime and to examine the prison management system; it aims to ensure that offenders are punished in a manner that is consistent with the law of the land and ethical principles. It's another important objective is deterrence of crime and protection of society by imposing sanctions on the offenders.

### **15.5.3 Scope of Penology**

Penology has a vast scope to encompass a wide range of issues like purpose of punishment, impact of imprisonment on the convicts and the effectiveness of various other types of punishment.

As a sub-section of both criminology and sociology it studies the theory and practice of punishment and rehabilitation of offenders; examination of the ways to control, prevent and respond to crime in society also falls within its scope. It also focuses on the penal measures that are consistent with the law and ethical principles.

Penology studies criminal justice system, the role of the court, the role of the police and the role of various correctional institutions.

Penologists work to develop policies and practices that are effective in preventing and responding to crime.

Its subject matter also includes debates, principle and theories of philosophy, ethics, law, political science, sociology, psychology and human rights. For this reason, penology has acquired great importance in modern society.

#### **15.5.5 Impact of Penology**

Penology's primary task is to seek the ways to keep society safe and secure by deterring crime and protecting society by penalizing criminals in a legally appropriate manner. So penologists work on various aspects of punishment and suggest better and improved, humanitarian measures to ensure justice for all.

Penology plays important role in the lives of the law-breakers also, as it determines their future prospects, and their post-conviction restoration and rehabilitation with dignity in life.

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### **15.6 Theories of Punishment.**

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Theories of punishment advocate policies regarding the management of crimes and criminals, these theories suggest principles on which punishments are awarded to the offenders and suggest protective measures for safeguarding a society from dangers of major and minor violations of law and order. The theories of punishment can be classified under four heads namely, Deterrent theory, Retributive theory, Preventive theory and Reformatory theory.

Let us examine the theories here.

(a) Deterrent Theory of Punishment: Founded by Jeremy Bentham, this theory speaks of the principle of hedonism and advocates for swift, certain, severe penal sanctions that will be able to deter men not only from committing crime, but also from repeating the same crime in future. The supporters of this theory believe that punishment should be severe enough to create a sense of fear in the minds of the probable offenders. This theory further argues that punishment should be based on three considerations like the seriousness of a crime, the gravity of punishment and its impact on the general public. The gravity of punishment should match the seriousness of crime; therefore it is not prudent to award death sentence against a simple offence of pickpocketing, nor can murder be dealt with lightly. Side by side with the gravity of the offence, the victim's satisfaction with the verdict should also be taken into consideration. Apart from the two parties like the perpetrator and the victim connected directly with a crime, the third party of spectators or the general public too should learn a lesson of deterrence from the system of punishment.

In the past, deterrence was believed to be the main objective of punishment; therefore this theory used to be appreciated by many. But it has also faced many criticisms from many quarters as it has failed to keep up its promise of keeping the society free of crime. Excessive use of harsh punishment has only aroused public sympathy for the convicts and defeated its purpose. Moreover, deterrent penal sanction like death sentence fail to give the criminals any chance of reforming themselves.

**Retributive Theory:** This age old theory is based on the principle of vengeance and its motto becomes vindictive justice in the name of 'tit for tat' or 'an eye for an eye'; thus it supports an offence to oppose another. It attaches prime importance to the concept of revenge by the whole society on behalf of the victim. In the distant past, the victim or his kinsmen used to enjoy the freedom of taking revenge themselves, but later the responsibility fell on the state. This theory has a harsh approach towards both crime and criminals and lacks balance between the aggravating and mitigating factors involved in the offence.

Retributive theory of penal justice had to take a backseat when the modern, humanitarian approach towards crime gained popularity. The theory has largely been rejected on the ground that it is difficult to determine the real proportion of revenge in terms of pain in punishment. The other reason behind its rejection is the thought that vengeful punishment will sponsor violence, disharmony, intolerance and anger in the society. Moreover, if every aggrieved party starts to take revenge against the real or suspected offenders then that will cause a collapse of the natural justice system.

**Preventive theory:** The principle on which the Preventive theory is based, speaks of prevention of crime, by disabling the criminals either by lifelong captivity or by death. At one point of time, transportation of criminals permanently to distant shores also received popularity among the policy planners. Late eighteenth-early nineteenth century English Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Austin supported the principle of this theory for its humanizing nature and its prospect of acting as a real deterrent against crime.

Preventive theory believes in prevention of crime by disabling the criminals; this disablement may be of various nature. Before the arrival of humanitarian approach in punishment disablement or incapacitation meant mutilation of bodyparts, then the idea of transportation of ship full of criminals from England to distant Australia became popular. Mutilation, transportation and capital punishment- all signify a permanent closure of criminal career. Forfeiture of property of the accused is another way to prevent crime in future. But prevention of crime through these means started to get severe criticism from jurists, policy makers and social thinkers alike, use of

prisons as a means of prevention became immensely popular, though it provided prevention of crime for a temporary period only.

Preventive punishment creates fear of punishment among people, it disables the criminals permanently or temporarily from committing any further crime at least for a fixed period of time. It also gives the convicts a fair chance for a fresh beginning either after release or in a new country.

**Reformative Theory:** The name of the theory suggests that it attaches great importance to the principle of reformation of criminals by transforming them into law-abiding citizens, trained to be useful to the society. With the entry of modern, liberal, democratic approach in the field of penal justice, the issue of individualized treatment of criminals for the better interests of the society received maximum appreciation from all concerned and it found an expression in the reformative theory of punishment. The advocates of reformative theory include thinkers like Bentham (*Rationale of Punishment*, 1830), Ewing (*The Morality of Punishment*, 1929) and Hart (*Punishment and Responsibility*, 1968). This theory appreciates the fact that nobody is a criminal by birth; in most of the cases people commit crime under the pressure of situational or accidental circumstances. Punishment should be a tool to restore the offender back to the society with respect and not to torture or humiliate him. Therefore, Reformative theory condemns all kinds of corporal punishments used against the accused and recommends adoption of rehabilitative measures through peno-correctional institutions once they are convicted. It also advocates humane treatment of inmates in prisons, recommends therapeutic use of art and culture, calls for vocational training to make them ready for a life with dignity after release, use of halfway house, systems of parole and probation, open prison system and such other innovative measures. Thus, the reformative theory puts more importance on criminals, not on crime itself, and considers criminals as victims of social circumstances like lack of opportunities, problematic social and familial environment, defective social structure etc.

However, critics of the theory believe that though it can work for juveniles and first time offenders, it may not see success with sociopaths or hardened criminals. It is also considered not justifiable for the aggrieved party.

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## 15.7 Legal Studies

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Legal studies is a broad, multidisciplinary field that provides a general understanding of the legal system, formation of regulation and identification of the main stake-holders involved in the legal process. It may also be known as the study

of jurisprudence or juridical science. It is aided by perspectives of other disciplines like Political Science, Economics, History, Sociology, International Relations and Philosophy. It enquires into important issues like the relationship between citizens and state, individual liberty and privacy, social equality or justice in the distribution of resources. Within its wide scope legal studies includes laws for various areas of interaction like Commercial Law, Environmental Law, International Law, Theories of Law and Criminal Justice.

As an interdisciplinary subject it also engages in the study of the meanings, values, practices and institutions of law and legality. Legal studies is very relevant for both criminology and penology as it helps examine the interaction between phenomena of crime and law, working of police, judiciary and the correctional system. It also raises questions about the working of the criminal justice system. When studied with reference to criminology it helps us understand and analyze critically the criminological and socio-legal concepts and theories. It also examines and critically analyses the provisions for crime prevention, law enforcement and resolution of criminal cases. Another of its important aspects is recognition and analysis of ethical dilemmas and issues of diversity broadly defined in the criminal justice and legal systems. It also helps us understand the theoretical perspectives on law and society, forms of regulation and their effects on society, law, crime and economy. When studied as a part of criminology, legal studies lends us an insight into issues like welfare of weakened sections of society, human trafficking, law, justice and social policy, international and transnational issues and so on.

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## 15.8 Summing Up

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This unit has a vast scope as it encompasses several important concepts to understand matters like crime and its management in society. It gives us an insight into how society's approach towards criminals have changed due to the intervention of influential thinkers since the nineteenth century and how punishment, too, has changed its character from time to time on the influence of the dominant philosophy of the time and gradually has followed a more humanitarian course. From this unit we come to know about the meaning and definition of crime, criminal, criminality and criminology; it has further elaborated on the roles of different schools of criminology and the contributions of their protagonists as well.

This unit also consists a brief discussion on the meaning, objective and scope of penology, a sub-field of criminology under sociology. It also includes a discussion of the theories of punishment, namely, the deterrent theory, the retributive theory, the preventive theory and the reformatory theory. Lastly, the unit has a very short but

meaningful discussion on the meaning, nature, subject matter and significance of legal studies.

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## 15.9 Conclusion

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The unit, as we find, makes our learners aware of certain basic concepts like criminology, penology and legal studies; this discussion will help them to know about the trajectory of criminology and penology and the essentiality of these two for the welfare of the society. In fact, the birth of these two sub-disciplines of sociology has ushered in humanitarian approaches towards criminals and their correction. However, there is no terminal point in the growth of such approaches and ideas and they continue to bestow us with better designs of correction for the ultimate objective of a recidivism free, if not a crime-free world. An introduction to legal studies, too, will make the learners aware about the world of law and justice.

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## 15.10 Questions

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### A. Answer in brief : (5 Marks each)

1. What is criminology?
2. Write a brief note on the origin of criminology.
3. What do you mean by Neo-classical School of criminology?
4. What is penology?
5. Identify the main contributions of Cesare Lombroso in criminology.
6. Write a brief note on the contribution of Enrico Ferri.
7. Spell out the chief contributions of Raffael Garofalo in criminology.
8. Write a brief note on the meaning of penology.
9. What is the central issue of deterrent theory?
10. What do you mean by retributive theory?
11. How do you describe the reformatory theory of punishment?
12. Write a short note on the subject-matter of legal studies.
13. What is the central issue of sociological school of criminology?



**B. Answer in detail : (10 Marks each)**

1. Make a critical assessment of the Classical School of criminology.
2. Discuss, in detail, the contribution of the Positivist School in the field of criminology.
3. Make a comparative assessment of the theories of punishment.
4. Critically examine the central issues of Labelling theory of crime.
5. Discuss the objective, scope and impact of penology in society.

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**15.11 Suggested Readings:**


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