
SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Principles of Sociology

Syllabi	Mapping in Book
Unit I Introduction to Sociology: Origin and Development, Nature and scope, as a science, Importance, Methods.	Unit 1: Introduction to Sociology (Pages 3-17)
Unit II Individual and Society: Theories about the origin of human society, Importance of society for individuals, The role of heredity and environment in the life of individuals.	Unit 2: Individual and Society (Pages 19-33)
Unit III Culture: Characteristics, Functions, Types, Cultural lag, Culture and Personality, Culture and Civilization.	Unit 3: Culture (Pages 35-50)
Unit IV Social Interaction and Socialization Social Interaction: Forms, Associative: Cooperation, Accommodation and Assimilation. Dissociative: Competition and Conflict. Socialization: Importance, Stages, Processes, Agencies, Theories.	Unit 4: Social Interaction and Socialization (Pages 51-69)
Unit V Social Institutions and Social Control Social Institutions: Features, Functions, Forms: Family, Marriage, Economy, Education, Polity and Religion. Social Control: Importance, Types: Formal and Informal agencies.	Unit 5: Social Institutions and Social Control (Pages 71-95)

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INTRODUCTION

Sociology is a science based on the study of humans and their culture. It is a combination of the organized study of the growth, architecture, relationships and attitudes of systematic groups of human beings. Sociology paves the way for scientists, social thinkers and activist in understanding the society. It also helps them in improving the quality of life, of the people living in the society.

The basic principles of sociology are:

- The behaviour of individuals in social groups is different than that when they are independent.
- Individuals, who are part of a social group, follow the rules of that social group.
- These rules are created and implemented socially.
- Some people have more authority in the creation of rules, than others.
- Those who follow the rules are awarded and those who break them are penalized.
- The rules of social groups have a scientific base.

In a society, culture is responsible for giving an identity to the individual. Culture is imbibed in an individual at the time of his birth and persists till his death. The book focuses on the behaviour of individuals in societies, effects of culture on the human personality, characteristics, types and functions of culture. It also analyses the relationship between social interaction and socialization. It familiarizes the reader with the basic concepts in sociology, such as customs, competition and conflict, social institutions, roles, social control, formal and informal agencies of social control, polity and religion, social conflict and social change.

Each unit begins with an introduction to the main topic, followed by an outline of unit objectives. The topic is then explained in detail, in a way that is easy to understand. The units comprise of 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the understanding of the reader. Each unit has a summary, a glossary of key terms, answers to 'Check Your Progress' and questions and exercises. At the end of each unit, 'Further Reading' lists the names of other books which are related to the topic.

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UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociology is one of the first social sciences to be acknowledged. The word 'sociology', owes its origin to the Latin word, *socius* (companion) and the Greek word, *logy* (study of). Sociology incorporates the study of social phenomena, social life, groups, institutions, associations and societies. Sociology focuses on society from a scientific point of view. Sociology has a vast scope. It ranges from individual to grouped social systems. The principles of sociology explain the behaviour of human beings and their existence with respect to their mutual interaction.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the origin, development and nature of sociology
- Define sociology as a science
- Elaborate on the scope and importance of sociology
- Explain the sociological method

1.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology is a relatively new academic discipline among the social sciences, which include economics, political science, anthropology, history and psychology.

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The ideas behind it, however, have a long history and can trace their origins to a mixture of common human knowledge and philosophy.

Sociology emerged as a scientific discipline in the early 19th century, as a fundamentally new type of society based on new principles of social organization and new ideas of enlightenment. This led to a change in the mindset of people. Sociologists hoped not only to understand what held social groups together, but also to develop an antidote to the social breakdown. In terms of science, sociology pertains to social groups, their hierarchies or forms of organization. It combines functions which are inclined to maintain or modify these forms of organization and their inter-group network. Sociology is concerned with interaction itself. A social group is a system of social interaction. Sociology is interested in social relationships, not because they are economic, political, religious, legal or educational, but because they are social at the same time. Further, in sociology we do not study everything that happens in a society or under social conditions, but we study culture, social relationships, their specific forms, varieties and patterns. We study the combination of relations, how they build up smaller or greater systems and how they respond to changes and changing demands or needs.

Auguste Comte invented the term 'sociology' in the year 1838. He was a French philosopher and sociologist. Comte attempted to combine all the faculties of mankind, including history, psychology and economics. His own pattern of sociology was typical of the 19th century; he put across the theory that every man had experienced the same distinct historical stages and that the success of this progress was the solution to every social ill. Sociology would lead social sciences in future. Comte defined sociology as the science of social phenomena, subject to natural invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation. He advocated for sociology to be used as a positive method as in natural sciences. He further believed that social evolution went hand in hand with progress, in accordance with the law of three stages. These three stages are: the theological-military, the metaphysical-legalistic and the positive-industrial laws. According to Comte's hierarchy of sciences, sociology occupies the summit. This is because it is considered to be the most complex of sciences, as it deals with humanity.

The systematic study of society gained prominence due to the upheavals caused by the French and industrial revolutions. The intellectual community of that time attempted to analyse and establish reasons for these rapid changes. So the study of sociology emerged as a distinct discipline dealing with social order and change. Although all social sciences study different aspects of social life, but the approach of sociology is distinct. It is a more detailed picture explaining why things are the way they are. Sociology has also been labelled as a 'debunking science' because a sociologist is interested in looking beyond the commonly accepted meaning of social phenomenon and understands reality as a social construction; that is how reality gets established is the way we understand it. Peter Berger argued that 'sociology is a distinctive way of thinking, a particular awareness of the nature of social life, an unwillingness to accept the superficial and the apparently obvious'.

Emile Durkheim was a pioneer in demonstrating scientific methodology in sociology. In his most acclaimed work, *Rules of Sociological Method* (1897), he emphasized on the methodology that he has described in his study, *Suicide* (1897).

The discipline of sociology appeared in many universities in the 1890s. Urbanization and industrialization were posing several social issues and the sociologists of those times were trying hard to find a scientific solution. However, they did not succeed. It was their strong belief that sociology was the key to the scientific growth of the society. Later, sociology emerged as a branch of scientific knowledge with theories resulting from scientific inferences, rather than mere guesswork or comments that were based on impressions.

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1.3 NATURE OF SOCIOLOGY

On a broader platform, sociology is the study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences. It is a type of science that comprises investigative techniques which are objective and systematic. It gives rise to the evolution of the social truth that is based on empirical evidence and interpretation. However, it cannot be directly based on natural sciences, since human behaviour is a unique phenomenon. It also differs from natural sciences such that the contents of natural sciences are constant while human behaviour exhibits variations and flexibility.

Sociology as a branch of knowledge has its own unique characteristics. It is different from other sciences in certain respects. An analysis of internal logical characteristics helps one to understand its main characteristics:

- (i) **Sociology is an independent science:** It is not treated and studied as a branch of any other science. As an independent science, it has its own field of study, boundary and method.
- (ii) **Sociology is a social science and not a physical science:** As a social science it focuses its attention on man, his social behaviour, social activities and social life. It is related to other social sciences like history, political science, economics, etc.
- (iii) **Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline:** Sociology does not make any kind of value judgments. Its approach is neither moral nor immoral but amoral. It is ethically neutral. It makes no recommendations on matters of social policy or legislation or programme. Sociology cannot deal with problems of good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral.
- (iv) **Sociology is a pure science and not an applied science:** The main aim of pure science is acquisition of knowledge, irrespective of whether the acquired knowledge is useful or can be put to use. On the other hand, applied science applies acquired knowledge into life.
- (v) **Sociology is relatively abstract and not concrete science:** It is not interested in concrete manifestation of human events. It is more

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concerned with the form of human events and their patterns. For instance, sociology is not specifically concerned with wars and revolutions but in the general social phenomena, as types of social conflict.

(vi) Sociology is not based on particular subjects or individuals, but is a general science: Sociology tries to find out general laws or principles about human interaction and associations about the nature, forms, content and structure of human groups and societies. It adopts a general approach on the basis of a study of some selected events.

(vii) Sociology is a rational and empirical science: There are two broad ways of approach to scientific knowledge, one is empiricism and the other is rationalism. Empiricism emphasizes experiences and facts that result from observation and experiment. Rationalism stresses reason and theories that result from logical inference. In sociological inquiry, both are significant.

1.4 SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

According to Morris Ginsberg, the scope of sociology includes a broad study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences. Some writers would restrict its scope to the relations arising out of acts of will, but this is an unjustifiable and unworkable limitation. Many interactions between individuals are not consciously determined or apprehended. One of the most interesting problems confronting the student of society is to determine the respective roles of reason or rational purpose and of impulse and the unconsciousness in social life.

In this case, sociology must be capable of dealing with the complete issue or network of social relationships. Since these relationships are assumed to be dependent on the nature of individuals; (i) to one another, (ii) to the community, (iii) to the external environment. This can be explained if every social event can be traced back to its origin, as influenced by complex interactions. A combination of these interactions is comprised within a community, with respect to external influences. But this ideal, if generously conceived, is clearly too ambitious.

Sociology involves a systematic and objective study of human society. Sociologists study individuals' social actions. Social relationships, for instance, those between a husband and a wife, a teacher and a student, a buyer and a seller and social processes, namely, co-operation, competition, conflict and organizations, communities and nations and social structures (family, class and state), give rise to sociological queries. Explanations that are derived from norms and values result in the formation of social institutions. Thus, sociology can be defined as the study of social life. Sociology comprises a variety of apprehensions and interests. It is aimed at providing classified forms of relationships within societies, institutions and associations. These relationships pertain to economic, political, moral, religious and social aspects of human life. Though, so far no collective agreement has been

reached on the essence of sociology, yet it is established that sociology deals with the study of interaction systems, which shape social institutions, the state and the non-native order. Therefore, in sociology we study about social organization, social structure, institutions and culture.

Sociology was defined differently by two schools of thought, pertaining to its range and theme:

- (i) Formal school
- (ii) Synthetic school

Formal school

The formal school defined sociology as a social science that has definite characteristics. This school was advocated by George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopold Von Wiese. On the other hand, the synthetic school with Durkheim, Hobhouse and Sorokin attempted to bring together a type of coordination among all social sciences.

The formal school supported the idea of giving sociology a suitable subject matter to make it a distinct discipline. It stressed on the study of forms of social relationships and considered sociology as independent. Simmel defined sociology as a specific social science that describes, organizes, analyses and visually explains the forms of social relationships. To put it in a different way, social interactions should be classified into various forms or types and analysed. Simmel argued that social interactions have various forms. He conducted researches on formal relationships like cooperation, competition, sub and super ordinate relationships, etc. He said, 'however diverse the interests are that give rise to these sociations, the forms in which the interests are realized may yet be identical.' His main emphasis was to conceptualize these forms from human relationships which are not affected by different scenarios. Vierkandt believed that sociology should pertain to people being extremely attached mentally or psychically. Von Wiese believed in the existence of two types of basic social processes in a human society:

- (i) Associative processes that are related to contact, approach, adaptation, etc.
- (ii) Disassociate processes like competition and conflict.

Additionally, a blend of associative and disassociative processes also exists. Each of these processes can be further segregated into subclasses. These subclasses result in 650 categories of human relationships. Sociology should concentrate on discovering a basic force of change and consistency and should be influenced by the history of concrete societies. Tonnies suggested two types of societies, namely Gemeinschaft (community) and Gesellschaft (association). These were based on the level of closeness between members of the society. Based on the types of relationships, he attempted to differ between community and society. Max Weber outlined a particular field for sociology. He recommended that the aim of sociology was to identify or explain social behaviour. But social behaviour does cover all aspects human relations, since all exchanges between human beings cannot be

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called social. Sociology deals with learning and identifying the different types of social relationships.

Criticism of formal school

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The formal school has come under criticism because it has focused only on abstract forms and ignored the more feasible parts of social life. It is not possible to study abstract forms that have been alienated from concrete relations. According to Ginsberg, the study of social relationships would never be complete if it is carried out in isolation, without a thorough knowledge of the terms that are associated with it. Sociology is not the only branch of social sciences that focuses on the types of social relationships. Political science and international law also study the same. Since it is not possible to study social sciences as a separate entity from other sciences, the concept of pure sociology is not practical.

Synthetic school of sociology

The synthetic school defines sociology as a combination of social sciences. It stresses on widening the range of sociology. Durkheim divided sociology into three main sections, these were, social morphology, social physiology and general sociology. Social morphology pertains to the lifestyle of people on the basis of their location or region. It comprises of factors like population, density, distribution, etc. One can further divide this into two categories, (i) analysis of density and type of population that influences social relationships and social groups and (ii) learning about social hierarchy or details related to the main categories of social groups and institutions, along with their operation. Social physiology deals with the origin and character of different social institutions, namely religion, morals, law, economic institutions, etc. The prime objective of general sociology is to frame general social laws. Efforts are still on to find out links between different types of institutions that are treated independently in social physiology and the possibilities of emergence of general social laws as a byproduct. Hobhouse, a British sociologist, defined sociology as a field of science which focuses on the whole social life of man. It relates to other social sciences in a way that can be regarded as a blend of mutual exchange and stimulation. Karl Mannheim has explained sociology in terms of two key divisions, systematic and general sociology and historical sociology. Systematic sociology provides a methodical review of the main factors of coexistence, such that they are evident in every kind of society. Historical sociology deals with the historical array and existence of general forms of the society. This can be divided into two sectors, comparative sociology and social dynamics. Comparative sociology basically deals with identical historical changes and tries to highlight the general features by comparing them. It also separates general features from industrial features. Social dynamics is concerned with the interrelations that exist among different social factors and institutions in a given society, for example in an ancient society. Ginsberg has combined the main features of sociology in a way that they classify the different types and structures of social relations, specifically those that are clearly specified as institutions and associations. He tried to find connectivity

between various parameters of social life, for example, economic, political, moral and legal, intellectual and social elements. It attempts to make the basic conditions of social change and persistence simpler and evaluates the sociological principles that influence social life.

Thus, on the basis of the viewpoints of many sociologists, the scope of sociology can be generally defined. To begin with, sociology should be concerned with the analysis of various institutions, associations and social groups, which have resulted from social relationships of individuals. The second step is an understanding of the different links between various sections of the society. This objective is catered to by the functionalist school of sociology, as required. The Marxist school also exhibits the same opinion. Thus, the main area of discussion of sociology pertains to social structure. Sociology should also focus on aspects which are important in bringing about social stability and social change. Finally, sociology should also tackle issues related to the changes in pattern and the consequences of societal changes.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. In which century did sociology emerge as a scientific discipline?
2. How did Comte define sociology?
3. What is the scope of sociology according to Morris Ginsberg?

1.5 SOCIOLOGY AS A SCIENCE

The nature of sociology as a science has become a controversial issue. Some critics do not support the ideology of sociology being regarded as a science like all other social sciences. Sociology can be regarded as a science since it comprises objective and systematic methodologies of examination and assessment. It can also be evaluated as a social reality, on the basis of empirical data and explanation. However, it cannot be directly compared to natural sciences, since human behaviour is not similar to natural sciences. A science may be defined in at least two ways:

- (i) A body of organized, verified knowledge which has been secured through scientific investigation
- (ii) A method of study whereby a body of organized and verified knowledge is discovered

However, if the first definition is accepted, then sociology can be termed a science, based on the theory that it creates a body of organized and verified knowledge, after scientific investigation. To the extent that sociology forsakes myth, folklore and wishful thinking and bases its conclusions on scientific evidence, it is a science. If science is defined as methods of study, then sociology can be defined as a science because it uses scientific techniques of study.

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In the history of human thinking, few of our actions have been based on verified knowledge, for people through the ages have been guided mainly by folklore, norms, values and anticipations. Recently, very few people accepted the idea of systematic observations and analysis. W.F. Ogburn, an American sociologist, opines that sociology is a science. According to him, science is to be judged by three criteria:

- (i) The reliability of its body of knowledge
- (ii) Its organization
- (iii) Its method

Sociology depends on reliable knowledge. Thus, sociological studies of population, families, group behaviour, evolution of institutions, the process of social change, are regarded as considerably reliable. Secondly, disjointed collection of facts cannot be a science. Science should be organized and the organization of science rests upon relationships. Sociology provides a scope for inter-relationships, which is enough to encourage more discoveries. Moreover, with reference to method, a branch of knowledge can be called a science if it follows a scientific method in its studies and investigations. Sociological studies employ various methods like the historical method, case study method, social survey method, functional method, statistical method, etc.

Though sociology can be considered a science, its scientific character cannot be established because it is not as accurate as natural sciences. There is no denying of the fact that sociology cannot experiment and predict in the same way in which physical sciences do because human behaviour and relationships are peculiar and uncertain. Objectivity in sociology is not possible as man has his own prejudices and bias. Social phenomena cannot be exact as it is too vast and human motivations are complex and it is difficult to make predictions about human behaviour.

But such objectives raised against sociology as a science are refutable. Sociology does make use of scientific methods in the study of its subject matter. Though sociology does not support laboratory experiments, yet it does employ the techniques of science, such as the measures of sociometry, schedule, questionnaire, interview and case history. These relate measures of quantity with social phenomenon. Moreover, a sociologist also uses observation and comparison. Sociology delineates cause-effect relationship. So sociology is a scientific discipline which obeys the demands of validity that are implied by the word science. It classifies the form of social relationships and determines the connectivity between different sectors of social life. Robert Bierstedt in his book, *The Social Order*, considered sociology as a social and not a natural science.

Thus it can be said that science is a way to find out the truth and if sociology involves application of a range of techniques and methods in the right manner, then it will achieve a scientific character.

Human social activities can be observed through scientific exploration just like any other natural phenomenon. This exploration uses scientific techniques such as: scales of sociometry, schedule, questionnaire, interview and case history. These, in turn, apply quantitative measurements to social phenomenon. Hence, they can be compared to the technique of experimentation. Sociology attempts to identify the types and forms of social relationships, especially of institutions and associations. It tries to establish the relations between different factors of social life. It also involves the deduction of general laws through a systematic study of its material. The outcome of the study of sociological principles is used as a means to resolve social problems. Consequently, sociology can be compared to a science like social psychology, clinical psychology and other sciences that relate to the existence of mankind. A sociologist can also make optimum use of two other fundamental techniques of scientific reasoning, which are observation and comparison. Sociology can also be used in the building of laws and for futuristic calculations. These laws are usually relevant and are independent of cultural changes. Sociology also explains cause-effect relationships by the analysis of social procedures and relationships.

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1.6 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIOLOGY

The discipline of sociology is recognized widely today. Nowadays, there is growing realization about the importance of the scientific study of social phenomena and means of promoting what Giddings calls 'human adequacy'. It is of great value in modern complex society.

- (i) **Sociology makes a scientific study of society:** Sociology has made it possible to study society in a systematic and scientific manner. Scientific knowledge about human society is needed in order to achieve progress in various fields.
- (ii) **Sociology throws more light on the social nature of man:** Sociology delves deep into the social nature of man. It tells us why man is a social animal, why he lives in groups, etc. It examines relationships between individuals and the society.
- (iii) **Sociology improves our understanding of society and increases the power of social action:** The science of society assists an individual to understand himself, his capacities, talents and limitations. It enables him to adjust to the environment. Knowledge of society, social groups, etc., helps us to lead an effective social life.
- (iv) **Sociology has contributed generously to enhance the value of human culture:** Sociology has trained us in building a rational approach to questions that concern ourselves, our religion, customs, etc. It teaches one to have an object-oriented and balanced approach. It emphasizes the importance of ignoring petty personal prejudices, ambitions that are influenced by ego and envy.

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- (v) **Sociology studies the role of institutions in the development of the individual:** The home and family, school and education, church and religion, states and government, marriage and family, etc., are important institutions through which a society functions. Furthermore, they are conditioners of an individual's knowledge of sociology.
- (vi) **Sociological knowledge is indispensable for understanding and planning of the society:** Sociological planning has been made easier by sociology. Sociology is often considered a vehicle of social reform and social organization. It plays an important role in reconstruction of the society.
- (vii) **The need for sociology in underdeveloped countries:** Sociologists have drawn the attention of economists regarding the social factors that have contributed to the economic backwardness of a few countries. Economists has now realized the importance of sociological knowledge in analysing the economic affairs of a country.
- (viii) **Study of society has helped several governments promote the welfare of tribal people:** It is not only civilized societies, also tribal societies have several socio-economic problems. Studies conducted by sociologists and anthropologists regarding tribal societies have helped many governments in undertaking various social measures to promote the welfare of tribal people.

1.7 SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS

Sociology has emerged as a distinct intellectual endeavour with the development of modern societies and the study of such societies is its principal concern. However, sociologists are also preoccupied with a broad range of issues about the nature of social interaction and human societies in general. Sociology also enables us to see the world from others' perspective rather than our own.

Comte and Spencer were, for the most part, the first sociologists. Their concerns were with the means and paths of societal development and the conditions for harmony and continued development. They presented quite different views on these issues and a comparison of their work set the stage for discussion by the three famous personalities, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber.

Emile Durkheim stressed on the practical existence of a society. He emphasized on social realities and saw sociology from a different point of view, as compared to that of psychology. Social realities restrict the freedom of members of the society to act, think and feel differently, with respect to the society. Beliefs and moral codes are transferred from one generation to the next and are imbibed by the individuals who form a society. One way of explaining social realities involves focusing on the cause of a social reality to explain its origin. The decisive cause of a social reality should be looked for among the facts that precede it. It should not depend on an individual's level of consciousness. Nevertheless, this social reality

can be explained in a better way after a detailed study of its functions in the society, its role in contributing to the general needs of the social beings and its utility in establishing a social order. Durkheim believed that this social reality still survives because it is useful to the society. They owe their existence to their contributions to the maintenance of a society, in one or more ways.

Durkheim is more inclined to find harmony and he attempts to uncover the essential features of collective life which are responsible for producing it. He determines that there is a realm of 'social facts', ways of thinking, acting and feeling, which are produced by group existence, which tend to produce an integrated society. Modern society is the product of the development of the division of labour and its recent complexity presents some problems for integration. However, Durkheim is confident that he has found the essential features of harmonious, collective life which will allow sociology to intervene.

Weber views the development of modern society as a much less orderly affair and is rather pessimistic about the possibility of discovering some means of harmonizing its present condition. He attempts to understand various institutions and states of society, in terms of the actions of individuals. His central concept for this purpose is 'social action'. He analyses the organizations of individuals in different positions on the basis of their levels of motivation. These, in turn, rest on subjective meanings which persons attach to the things and other persons in their environment. On this basis, he examines the relation between different forms of authority, social organizations and economic distribution of rewards. He is pessimistic about the bureaucratic form of domination that is found in modern society. In his view, it is a very stable form of domination of powerful interests.

Sociology differs from most of the natural sciences in dealing with a phenomenon, which is often difficult and sometimes impossible to measure or calculate, or to subsume under relations of causality. However, this does not involve a total divergence in the methods of inquiry. It involves considering the limits of sociological enquiry and assessing what can be practically achieved. In sociology, five important methods or approaches can be distinguished, they are as follows:

- (i) The historic
- (ii) The comparative
- (iii) The functionalist
- (iv) The formal or systematic
- (v) The structural

(i) **The historical method:** This method has taken two principal forms. The first is that of early sociologists, influenced by the philosophy of history and afterwards by biological theory of evolution. This approach involves a certain order of priorities in the problems for research and theory. It concentrates on problems of the origin of development and transformation of social institutions, societies and civilization. It is concerned with the whole span of

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human history and with all major institutions of society, as in the work of Comte, Spencer, etc. In Marx's view, the most important thing about people is their practical activity. The way people produce for themselves, gives shape to other aspects of their society and culture. In this way, they relate to nature and to one another in society. These are the most fundamental sets of relations. These sets of relations change and develop over the course of history. They change from one 'mode of production' to another.

- (ii) **The comparative method.** This method was considered the method par excellence of sociology for long. It was first used by evolutionist sociologists, but its use did not involve a necessary commitment to an evolutionary approach. Durkheim, in the *Rules of Sociological Method*, clearly explained the significance of the method. After claiming that sociological explanation consists entirely of the establishment of causal connections, he observes that the only way to demonstrate that one phenomenon is the cause of another is to examine cases in which the two phenomena are simultaneously present or absent. Thus it is to be established whether one does depend on the other, or not. In many natural sciences the establishment of causal connections is facilitated by experiment, but since experiment is impossible in sociology, Durkheim suggests the use of the method of indirect experiment, i.e., the comparative method.
- (iii) **The functionalist method.** In sociology, this method first emerged in the form of a response against the approach and assertions of evolutionists. It criticized the immature and outward application of the comparative method and the methods of 'conjectural history'. These methods used data that was neither verified nor systematic, on ancient societies, for the reconstruction of early stages of human social life. The functionalist method also criticized the objective or claim made by evolutionists to present the complete social history of mankind in scientific terms. The notion of social function was formulated by Herbert Spencer in the 19th century. Durkheim defined the function of a social institution as the correspondence between it and the needs of social organism.
- (iv) **The formal or systematic method.** Formal or systematic sociology represented a reaction against the evolutionary and encyclopedic science of early sociologists. Its originator was George Simmel and it remained largely a German approach to sociology. Simmel argues that sociology is a new method, a new way of looking at facts which are already treated by other social sciences. According to him, this new approach consists of considering the 'forms' of sociation or interaction, as distinguished from the historical content. Sociology is therefore also concerned with forms of interaction which have not been studied at all by traditional social sciences. These forms appear not in major institutions, such as the state, the economic system and so on, but in minor and fleeting relationships between individuals.

- (v) **The structural method.** Claude Levi-Strauss proposed the structural method. Levi-Strauss offered new insights of analysis. According to Edmund Leach, 'Levi-Strauss has provided us with a new set of hypotheses about familiar material. We can look again at what we thought was understood and begin to gain entirely new insights'. The structural method began to have a certain influence, particularly in renewing the discussion of the concept of social structure.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. What are the three criteria based on which W.F. Ogburn opined that sociology is a science?
5. Why is objectivity not possible in sociology?
6. How does Weber view the development of modern society?

1.8 SUMMARY

- Sociology is a field of science that emerged in the initial period of the 19th century. It came into existence as an academic response to modernism. Since transportation and communication facilities have become increasingly advanced, it is easier for people in different parts of the world to stay connected.
- Sociology should cover the complete network of social relationships. It is presumed that these relationships depend on the position of individuals in the hierarchy of relations, with respect (i) to one another, (ii) to the community and (iii) to the external environment.
- For achieving a perfect sociological rationalization, it is important to reach the roots of every social event with respect to the vital and psychological capacities of individuals. These capacities may be influenced by complex interactions which are a vital constituent of the community, which is connected to the external environment. If this ideal is generously conceived, it is too ambitious.
- W.F. Ogburn opines that sociology is a science. According to him, science is to be judged by three criteria:
 - (i) The reliability of its body of knowledge
 - (ii) Its organization
 - (iii) Its method
- Sociology differs from most of the natural sciences in dealing with phenomena, which are often difficult and sometimes impossible to measure or calculate, or to subsume under relations of causality. However, this does

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not involve a total divergence in the methods of inquiry. It involves considering the limits upon sociological enquiry and assessing more realistically what it can achieve.

- In sociology, five important methods or approaches can be distinguished, they are as follows:
 - (i) The historical method
 - (ii) The comparative method
 - (iii) The functionalist method
 - (iv) The formal or systematic method
 - (v) The structural method

1.9 KEY TERMS

- **Anthropology:** The study of the human race, especially of its origins, development, customs and beliefs
- **Psychology:** The scientific study of the mind and its influences on behaviour
- **Antidote:** Anything that takes away the effects of something unpleasant
- **Debunk:** To show that an idea, a belief, etc., is false
- **Urbanization:** The movement of people from rural areas to towns and cities
- **Industrialization:** The rapid development of industries

1.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Sociology emerged as a scientific discipline in the 19th century.
2. Comte defined sociology as the science of social phenomena, subject to natural invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation.
3. According to Morris Ginsberg, the scope of sociology is a broad study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences.
4. In the opinion of W.F. Ogburn, an American sociologist, sociology was categorized as a discipline of science because it fulfilled the following three criteria:
 - (i) The reliability of its body of knowledge
 - (ii) Its organization
 - (iii) Its method
5. Objectivity is not possible in sociology as man has his own prejudices and bias.
6. Weber views the development of modern society as a much less orderly affair and is rather pessimistic about the possibility of discovering some means of harmonizing its present condition.

1.11 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did the word sociology originate?
2. Who wrote Rules of Sociological Method?
3. Name the two schools of thought that had different perspectives with respect to the scope and theme of sociology.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write an essay on the development of sociology.
2. Discuss the nature and scope of sociology.
3. Discuss the different sociological methods.

1.12 FURTHER READING

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1.1. QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did the word psychology originate?
2. Who wrote Rules of Psychological Method?
3. Name the two schools of thought that had different views on what would be the scientific theme of psychology.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write an essay on the development of psychology.
2. Discuss the nature and scope of psychology.
3. Discuss the different psychological schools.

1.2. FURTHER READING

Borror, T.H. 2002. *Psychology: A Guide to Problems and Processes*. Delhi: S. Chand.

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UNIT 2 INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 Theories About the Origin of Human Society
 - 2.2.1 Social Contract Theory
 - 2.2.2 Organismic Theory
- 2.3 Importance of Society for Individuals
 - 2.3.1 Individual Dependence on Social Heritage
 - 2.3.2 Individual and Society
- 2.4 Life of Individuals—Heredity and Environment
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Key Terms
- 2.7 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 2.8 Questions and Exercises
- 2.9 Further Reading

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociology is the study of human society or societies. But such a simple initial definition of the subject poses the question, ‘What is human society?’ There is a difference of emphasis between the singular form of a society and its plural form. Society, as a singular term, appears general and unlimited. The plural term, societies, sounds more like a set of container units distinct from each other, such that you can take them one by one to inspect their contents.

In fact, sociology has always studied societies, both, taken separately and together, as ‘human societies’. The balance between the two aspects may vary, but at the end, the study of the one absolutely requires study of the other. Neither of them makes sense independently. For instance, considering India as a society, one can think of it in terms of cities, factories, schools, farms or prisons. One can also think of it in terms of politics, media or divinity. It is simple to connect all these factors. They can also be visualized as confined within the boundaries of the Indian states and referred under the general heading of Indian society.

Human society in general extends to all human beings, the total number of members of animal species, homo sapiens. But we should not equate all human species with the human society. As with other animals, the qualities of the species are distributed among individual members. In total they make up humankind. It is through their social relations that they constitute societies. The total set of relations at any time makes up the world society. For any animal species, the essential requirements for survival include genetic inheritance, functioning organisms, a favourable environment and social relations. Society, as such is not especially human. If we take our closest animal relatives, chimpanzees, in their natural habitat

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in Africa they constantly form and reform social relations based on the practices of fission-fusion, theirs are male-dominated societies within larger territorially based exclusive communities. In captivity, female coalitions develop to reduce male dominance. But both, in the wild and in captivity, chimpanzees exhibit a diversity and adaptability in their social behaviour which permits wide variation in prevalent social relations.

This adaptability, which is also possessed by human beings, makes it impossible to show that any particular type of society is determined by biology. Individuals, during their lives, are capable of sustaining and experimenting with vastly differing types of social relations. Societies can undergo total social transformation as the history of revolutions shows. In evolutionary terms, the human organism has not just adapted, it has evolved adaptability. It provides for versatility and a collective freedom to draw on a vast repertoire of possible social behaviour, in different conditions. The range of social relations which human behaviour can support, extends from individual freedom of choice to the arbitrary rule of a few over others. Hence, the variations in human society are vast even while the biology remains stable. Explaining the sources of these variations is a distinct field of inquiry in its own right.

The development of culture, ways of acting, thinking and feeling makes human society a special case as compared with the societies of other species. These features are transmitted from one generation to the next and across societies through learning, not through inheritance. Culture includes language and technology, both of which involve the communication of ideas and the possibility of sophisticated coordination of action. This vastly enhances adaptability.

Other animals also possess culture, for instance chimpanzees exhibit learning and transmission of culture over time in groups. But the culture of human societies everywhere has been much more developed for such a long time that it may have exercised an evolutionary influence on the human organism. This is what Edward Wilson calls gene-culture coevolution. Culture confers selective advantages for the organism with larger brains, specialized larynx and prolonged period of maturation to adulthood. These organisms have evolved over a period of perhaps five or six million years.

But there is no evidence that the recent incremental development of culture, since historical records began, has required biological change. It has depended on increases in the scale and intensity of human social relations, which it also helps to promote. Culture provides the repertoire of activities from which we choose and it creates the resources that we need to pursue them. It is both a product of collective effort and a means for individual expression. Language has both these features, but so do art, science, education, religion and sport. We are able to perceive their abstract qualities as values.

Human efforts are channeled by values in certain directions and the outcomes of those efforts become the basis for future efforts. This reflexive relation between