

Student 10 – Social Science Answer Sheet

Question 1

Explain the differences between sociology, anthropology, and political science within the field of social science. Provide examples of research topics for each discipline.

Answer:

Sociology focuses on the study of human relationships, social institutions, and the patterns that shape society. It explores how people interact, how groups are organized, and what cultural norms exist. Research in sociology might cover topics like family structures, social hierarchies, urbanization, or crime.

Anthropology examines humans both in the past and present, with an emphasis on cultural, social, and biological development. Anthropologists often use ethnographic methods to understand different cultures and societies. Their research can include kinship systems, rituals, language changes, and the origins of humanity.

Political science analyzes how societies are governed, looking at political activities, government structures, public policy, and international relations. Topics in political science include electoral systems, the functioning of democracies, policy analysis, and global conflicts.

In summary, sociology investigates social patterns and institutions, anthropology explores human diversity and cultural practices, and political science studies systems of power and governance.

Question 2

Describe the structure and function of a typical social survey. Why are surveys important in social science research?

Answer:

A social survey is a methodical way to collect data from a population, usually using questionnaires or interviews.

Key components:

- **Sampling:** Choosing a group that accurately represents the larger population.
- **Questionnaire:** Creating a set of structured or semi-structured questions.
- **Data Collection:** Gathering responses through interviews, phone, online, or mail.

- **Analysis:** Examining the data to find trends, correlations, or patterns.

Surveys are important because they allow researchers to collect quantitative information about attitudes, behaviors, and demographics from large groups. This helps in understanding social trends, shaping public policy, and testing sociological theories.

Question 3

Discuss the ethical considerations and societal impacts of conducting social science research with human participants.

Answer:

Ethical considerations in social science research include:

- **Informed Consent:** Making sure participants fully understand the study's purpose and agree to join voluntarily.
- **Confidentiality:** Protecting the privacy and identity of participants.
- **Non-maleficence:** Ensuring that no harm or distress comes to participants.
- **Right to Withdraw:** Allowing participants to leave the study at any time.

Social science research can inform policy, improve social welfare, and deepen understanding of social issues. However, unethical practices or misuse of data can lead to mistrust, reinforce stereotypes, or harm vulnerable groups. Ethical oversight and open communication are essential for responsible research.

Question 4

Explain the concept of social stratification and discuss its advantages and limitations in understanding society.

Answer:

Social stratification is the hierarchical ranking of individuals or groups in society according to factors like wealth, power, education, or social status.

Advantages:

- Helps explain patterns of inequality and mobility.
- Provides a framework for analyzing class, gender, race, and other divisions.

- Aids in understanding how resources and opportunities are distributed.

Limitations:

- May oversimplify complex social realities.
- Can reinforce stereotypes or justify inequalities.
- Does not always account for individual choices or cultural differences.

Ongoing research seeks to refine these theories to better address intersectionality and social change.

Question 5

Describe the principles of qualitative research and how interviews are used to explore social phenomena.

Answer:

Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena through detailed, non-numerical data.

Principles include:

- Gaining contextual understanding of participants' experiences.
- Using flexible, open-ended data collection methods.
- Emphasizing meaning, interpretation, and social processes.

Interviews are a key qualitative method, allowing researchers to explore participants' perspectives, motivations, and experiences in depth. These can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, and are used to collect rich, descriptive data on topics like identity, beliefs, social change, and group dynamics.