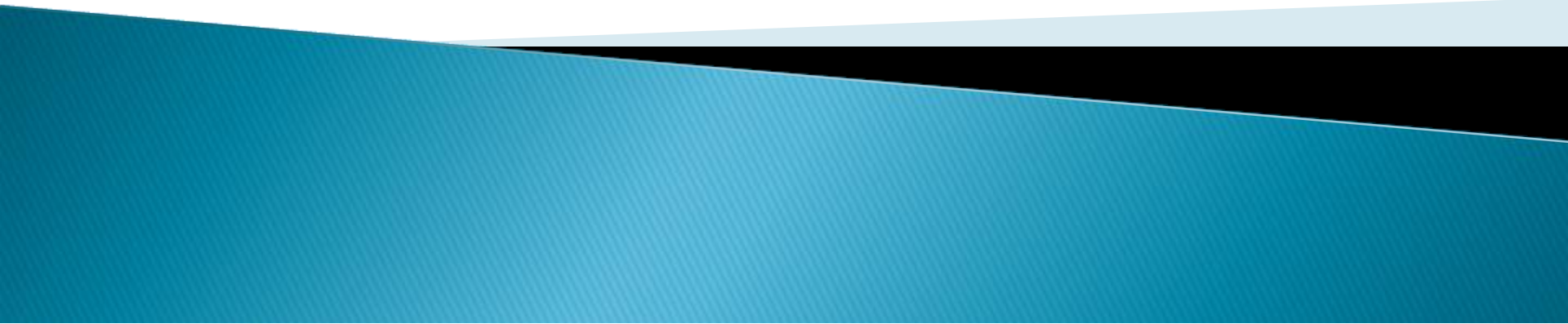
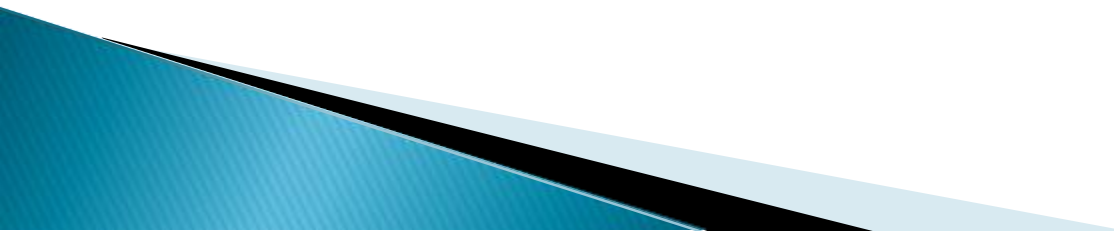


INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY



Sociology has a long past but only a short history. It is known as the science of society and it is one of the youngest as well as one of the oldest of social sciences. It is one of the youngest sciences because only recently it came to be established as a distinct branch of knowledge with its own distinct set of concepts and its own methods of inquiry.

The term “Sociology” was coined by Auguste Comte, a French philosopher, in 1839. The teaching of sociology as a separate discipline started in 1876 in United States, after World War I in Poland and India.

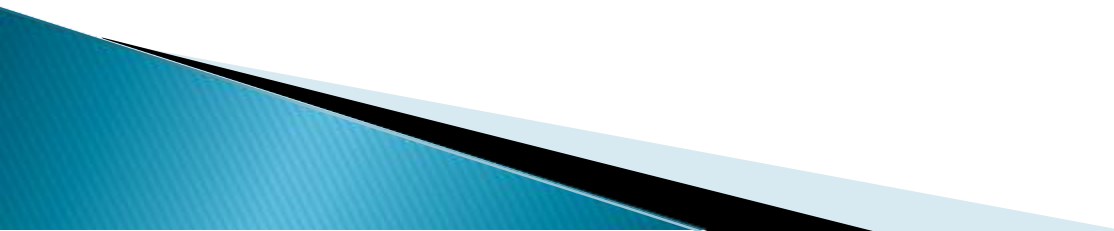


Sociology is the youngest of the social sciences. The word “Sociology” is derived from the Latin word “Societius” meaning “Society” and the Greek word “logos” meaning “study or science”. The etomological meaning of “Sociology” is thus the “science of society”. In other words, sociology is the study of man’s behavior in groups or of the inter-action among human beings, of social relationships and the process by which human group activity takes place.

However, the purpose of sociological study is not simply to describe social relationships, but also to analyse them and to discriminate between their specific forms, varieties and patterns.



Though sociology came to be established as a separate discipline in the 19th century due to the efforts of the French philosopher, Auguste Comte, it is wrong to suppose that there existed no social thought before him. For thousands of years men have reflected upon societies in which they lived. Sociology essentially and fundamentally deals with the network of social relationship which we call society. No other science takes that subject for its central concern.



Sociology is not only a science with its own subject matter but the mother of all social sciences. It has been said surprisingly enough by some critics that sociology does not have a subject matter of its own and that it is hotch-potch of different social sciences.

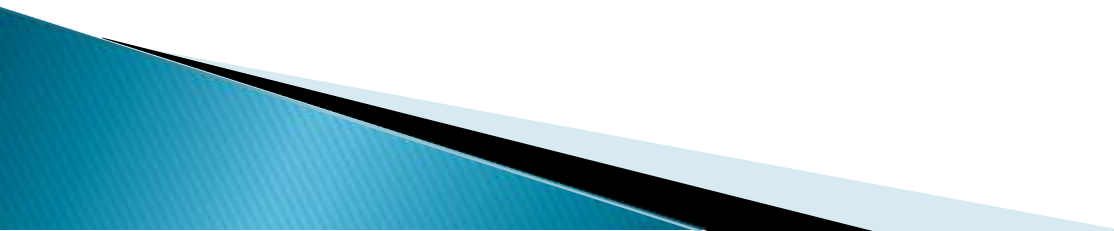


Defination of Sociology

The main idea of sociology is to study human society. Its emphasis is on the 'social' aspect of these human relationships.

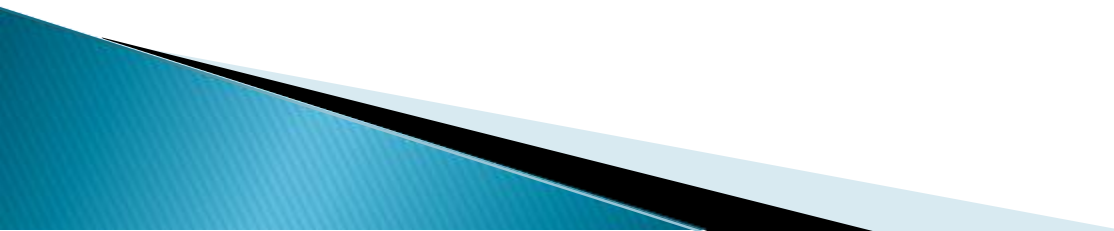
According to Auguste Comte, the Father of Sociology, "the subject matter of sociology is social system". Sociology concern itself with an analysis and explanation of social phenomenon.

According to Max Weber, the German philosopher, "Sociology is the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a casual explanation of its cause and effects."



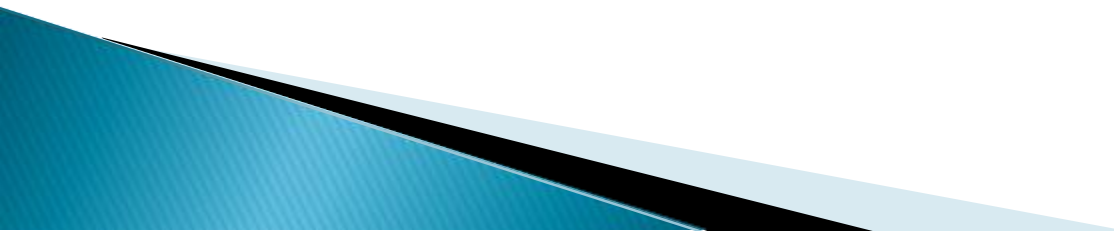
According to Weber, 'Action' refers to any human behaviour when the person who performs the action attributes certain subjective meaning to that particular action. Such an action becomes a 'social action' when it interprets the behaviour of other individuals on the strength of the subjective meaning already attached to an actor's action.

American sociologist Mac Iver and Page has clarified that 'Society is the web of social relationships. According to him 'society is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever changing complex system, we call society, it is the web of social relationship. Therefore, he clarified that the real subject-matter of sociology is 'social relationship'.



If we include social processes or any other matter within the subject matter of sociology, their study can be carried only in the context of social relationships. The different aspects of social life, viz, political or economic are but the expressions of social relationships. Therefore, in studying sociology, we are infact studying social relationships in one form. According to Morris Ginsberg, the England Sociologist, “sociology is the study of human interaction and interrelationships, their conditions and consequences.”

According to American Sociologist, H.M. Johnson, “sociology is the science that deals with social groups, their internal forms or modes of organization, the processes that tend to maintain or change these forms of organization and relation between groups.”

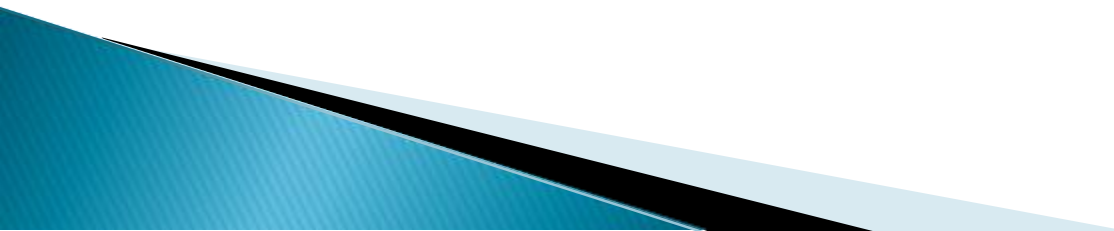


L.T. Hobhouse of England and Ward of America, had viewed sociology as “sociology is the study of human interaction of human mind”.

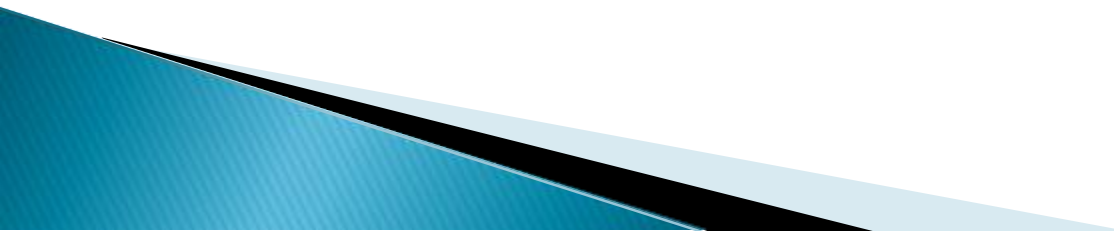
According to P.A. Sorokin, “sociology is generalizing science of Socio-cultural phenomenon viewed in their generic form, types and manifold interconnections.”

Arnold Green has defined sociology as the Synthesizing and generalizing science of man in all his social relationships.

R.E. Park, F.W. Burgess, Kimball Young has pointed out that sociology is the science which deals with the behaviour of men in groups and it is the science of collective behaviour.

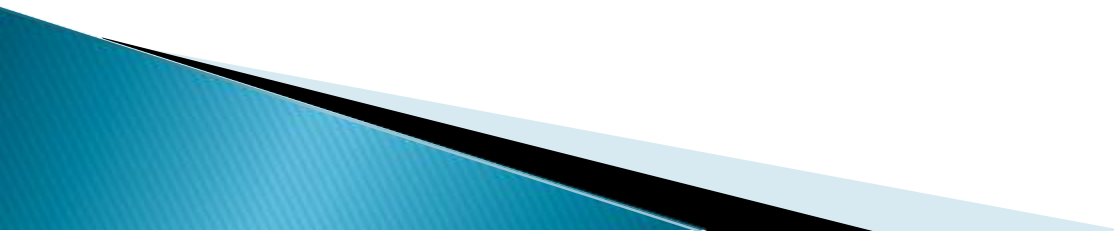


A persual of these definitions shows that sociologist differ in the opinions about the subject matter of sociology. We find the following views :

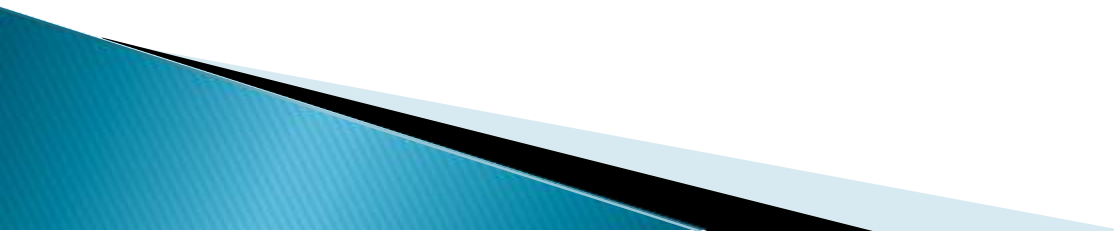
1. Sociology is a science of society.
 2. Sociology is a science of social relationships
 3. Sociology is the study of social life
 4. Sociology is the study oh human behaviour in groups.
 5. Sociology is the study of social action.
 6. Sociology is the study of forms of social relationships.
 7. Sociology is the study of social groups or social systems.
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Birth & Development of Sociology


Sociology came to be established as an independent and a separate social science in the middle of the 19th century. Various factors paved the way for its emergence. There are three main factors that hastened the process of the establishment of sociology as a separate science. They may be briefed here:

- i. Industrial Revolution of England & the Social and the Political Revolution of French
 - ii. Inspiration from the growth of Natural Sciences
 - iii. Inspiration provided by the radically diverse societies and cultures of the colonial empires.
- 


Since the dawn of civilization, man has been concerned with his life among his associates. Both the problems and promises of common living excited him and agitated his restless and inquisitive mind. Various social science gradually evolved in response to the varied needs of common living. All such enquires were once a part of philosophy. Philosophy embraced all fields in an undifferentiated and amorphous fashion. With the passage of time, however, one by one the various social science 'Cut the apron strings' as it were and began to pursue separate and independent paths of their own.



During the second half of the 18th century a few far reaching changes has occurred in Western Europe. These changes agitated the minds of the people and made them Keenly conscious of what had happened around them. To begin with, the Industrial Revolution, England was one such event of tremendous social significance. Never before in history did social changes takes place on such a massive scale before this revolution. It is not only revolutionized the method of production; it also brought about far reaching social changes. Industrialization changed the direction of civilization. It destroyed or radically altered, the medieval customs, beliefs and ideals. All of sudden, the people were brought face to face with problems which they or their forefathers had never experienced before. These challenges stirred deeply in the minds of men and they began to ponder over ways of combating social evils which emerged as an off-shot of Industrial Revolution. New ideals and philosophies were propagated and hotly debated. New ideals and ideologies were born. These captured the imagination of the people which provided a spur to social action.

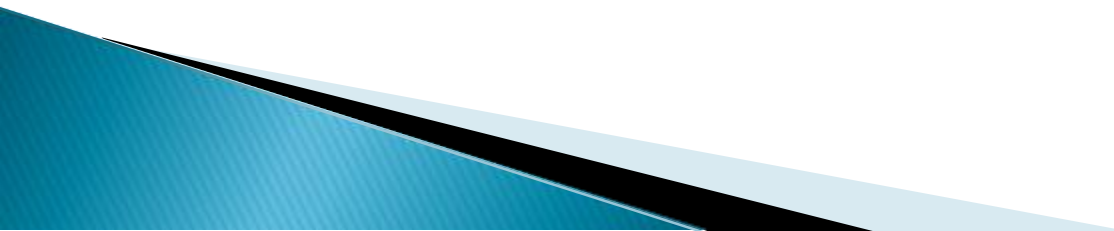


The cumulative effect of such stirrings in the minds of men found expression in the clarion call for liberty, equality and fraternity in the mouths of the votaries of the French Revolution. There was a radical transformation in the attitude of the people to the problems which besets them. Social surveys were undertaken with a view to assessing the nature of the problems and exploring ways of meeting the same. Social thinkers like Comte, Spencer and others argued that there was an urgent need to establish a separate science of society. They believed that such a science would be of great help in understanding the nature and problems of society and to find solutions for the same.



19th century was a period in which natural sciences had made much progress. The success attained by the natural scientists inspired and even tempted good number of social thinkers to evaluate their examples. If their methods could be successful in the physical world to understand physical or natural phenomena, could they not be applied successfully to the social world to understand social phenomena. As an answer to this questions Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber and others successfully demonstrated to the world there methods could be used to study the social world.

An interest in social welfare and social reform was mainly responsible for rapid development of the discipline in the 20th century. The new science of society called “Sociology” had emerged as an independent science in an attempt to find convincing answers to the questions of the society.



The credit for having established sociology into an independent and a separate science and to obtain for sociology a respectable position in the family of social science goes to Comte and Spencer. Both of them championed the cause of sociology. In addition to Comte and Spencer, other thinkers such as Durkheim, Marx and Weber also took a leading role in making sociology a science. Hence, these five thinkers are often called the “Pioneers” or “Founding Fathers of Sociology”.

