

UNIT 3 RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIOLOGY WITH ANTHROPOLOGY*

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- Introduce the relationship of sociology with social anthropology;
- To understand the nature of sociology and social anthropology;
- To locate the emergence and history of sociology and social anthropology;
- To examine similarities and differences of sociology and social anthropology; and
- To understand the nature of sociology and social anthropology in contemporary times.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Sociology and social anthropology are closely related in many aspects. Sometimes, it is rather difficult to differentiate sociology from social anthropology in some areas of enquiry and methodology. 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. Such differences although minor in essence, also becomes a matter of differentiation with the development of varying academic disciplines and departments in the university systems. John Beattie (1980) rightly points out that “sociology is social anthropology’s closest companion discipline, and the two subjects share a great many of their theoretical problems and interests. Social anthropologists are sociologists as well, but they are at once something less, because their actual field of investigation has on the whole, been more restricted, and something more, because although they are concerned with social relationships, they are concerned with other aspects of culture as well” (p.31).It is, therefore, necessary to go through the historical as well as the contemporary development of the two subjects to understand its relationship.

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3.2 NATURE OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Sociology is the youngest of the social sciences. It is also one of the fastest growing academic disciplines. The word ‘sociology’ is derived from the Latin word ‘*socius*’ (‘companion’ or ‘associate’) and the Greek word ‘*logie*’/ ‘*logos*’ (‘knowledge’). The term ‘sociology’ was coined by Auguste Comte in 1838. Sociology is a scientific study of human society which tries to explain the contexts of social phenomena. It emphasizes on the collective aspects of human behavior. The broad nature of the subject has resulted to overlap with many other social sciences disciplines, such as anthropology, political science, economics, psychology, geography, education, law and philosophy. Anthropology (derived from Greek words, ‘*anthropos*’ meaning ‘man’, and ‘*logia*’/ ‘*logos*’ meaning ‘study of’) is the only subject that surpasses the scope of sociology in the study of human society with its branches encompassing social/ Cultural anthropology (also called socio-cultural anthropology), physical anthropology, archaeological anthropology (also called pre-historic archaeology), and linguistic anthropology. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the “word ‘*anthropology*’ dates back to the late 16th century”. The anglicised word ‘anthropology’ is said to have appeared for the first time in the year 1805 (McGee and Warms, 2012; 6).

Social/Cultural anthropology has been historically very close to sociology from their beginnings as they both study human society. Although, anthropology has been regarded as the study of pre-literate societies (wrongly labeled as ‘primitive’ societies by early anthropologists and other scholars) and sociology as dealing with the more contemporary, urban and developed societies, this distinction is no longer true. The earlier trend in Anthropology being associated with micro studies (particularly exotic village studies) and sociology being identified with macro studies (particularly the modern societies) is no longer true in the contemporary times. In the same way, the study of the rural communities once identified mainly with anthropologists and the study of the urban communities mainly identified with sociologists in the initial stages of the development of the disciplines has also become blurred. Today, a trend has set in 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. There are ample examples of this emerging trend which is most obvious in the studies carried out by both sociologists and anthropologists in the developing countries. Hence, there has been much overlapping in the areas of enquiry and interest between sociologists and anthropology, particularly social anthropology and/or cultural anthropology.

3.3 EMERGENCE AND HISTORY OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology as a scientific study of society has a relatively short history of development. It emerged only in the early 19th century as an academic discipline. The study of society, although not specific to sociology, was for long of interest to the Greek philosophers such as Socrates as early as 5th century B.C., Plato and Aristotle in the 4th century B.C., and Marcus Tullius Cicero, the Roman philosopher, in the first century B.C. who made immense contribution to the

understanding of society in their times. They attempted a systematic study of human society, particularly on the general consideration of society, philosophy, politics, law and the state. By the 16th century A.D., the works of Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli on society and state have been impactful to the understanding of the concepts of society and the state. By 18th century A.D. after the experience and influence of the Renaissance in Europe, there were many eminent philosophers who made immense contributions to the understanding of society, including Rousseau, Vico and Baron de Montesquieu who dealt with the social phenomena of those times. 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 application of positivism to the study of human society transformed the conceptualization of society from a divine or God given condition to one that could be viewed as a product of human agency. This made the objectification of society possible and also introduced the notion of social transformation through human effort and action.

The most significant factors for the emergence of sociology 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. Although, Claude Henri Saint Simon used the idea of “the science of society”, it was August Comte (1798 – 1857), the French philosopher who is generally credited for laying the foundation of the emergence of sociology. The term ‘sociology’ is coined in 1838 by Auguste Comte in his book, *Positive Philosophy*. He considers sociology as a science based on systematic observation and classification of the social phenomenon. Herbert Spencer, an English social philosopher is one of the pioneers who laid the foundation of sociology. His book, *Principles of Sociology* (1876), based on organic analogy of human society, was an important contribution of those times. In America, social philosopher, Lester F. Ward, made a significant contribution to development of sociology through his book, *Dynamic Sociology* (1883) which engages with the concepts of social progress and social action. But the most significant contribution to the development of sociology using scientific methodology was made by Emile Durkheim in his works — *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895) and *Suicide* (1897). Max Weber, one of the pioneers of sociology, introduced a new kind of approach to the understanding of social phenomena. His well-known works include, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and *Economy and Society*. Karl Marx also made significant contribution to the development of sociology although his contributions go much beyond sociology itself. His most popular work related to sociology is *Das Kapital* (*Das Capital*). Some of the other pioneers include George Herbert Mead, **Vilfredo Pareto**, Georg Simmel and Ferdinand Tonnies. These pioneers were followed by many well-known modern sociologists including Charles Horton Cooley, Pitirim Sorokin, C. Wright Mills, Talcott Parsons, Robert K. Merton, Erving Goffman, George C. Homans, Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens.

3.4 EMERGENCE AND HISTORY OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology is a diverse and comprehensive field that studies humans and their culture society. In fact, it is considered as the broadest discipline that deals

with the study of human kind and its multiple aspects. The subject matter of anthropology and its academic profession began as an intersection of natural science and humanities. This trend is largely followed even today. The main reason behind this position is that the subject has been considered as a ‘holistic study of mankind’. It also emerged with the understanding that the humans as a species are evolved and follow the same natural laws as all other natural species and phenomenon. In view of the highly differentiated subject matter of anthropology, it is rather difficult to comprehensively locate the strands of intellectual development and the emergence of the discipline. Nevertheless, the hallmarks of the trends of the beginning and growth of the subject can be broadly situated. The historical delineation can be focused on socio-cultural anthropology (social anthropology as founded in Britain and cultural anthropology as used in the United States of America) as it is the closest branch of anthropology with sociology.

Like sociology, the emergence and development of anthropology is said to be directly linked to the scientific development in the western world. The foundation of anthropology has also been dated back to the Greco-Roman renaissance period, particularly beginning with the writings of Herodotus in the 5th Century B.C. According to Voget (1975:7), Herodotus “has been even cited as a likely forerunner, if not the “father,” of ethnography”. The Greek philosophers of the time, particularly, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle also influenced on the study of man and society. Later, the Roman philosopher Marcus Tullius Cicero also significantly contributed to the understanding of human society. After a gap of several centuries some philosophers began to take interest in the study of society and the state, particularly in the 16th century A.D. Some of these scholars include Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli. Prior to this, mention may be made of the significant contribution of Ibn Khaldun in the 14th century A.D. on the moral-historical philosophy and structural-functional analysis of social phenomena.

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 anthropology. The development of anthropology and social science which makes departure to the earlier philosophical and historical studies came in two phases. The first phase (1725 - 1840) “philosopher scientists succeeded in separating the study of man, society, and civilization from history and thereby formulated a general social science” (Voget, 1975:41). However, Hoebel (1958) is of the view that “anthropology stems primarily from natural science and carries a greater measure of the natural science tradition” (p.9) and not from history or philosophy. On the other hand, Marvin Harris (1979) opines that anthropology “began as the science of history” (p.1). The problem of its earlier association and the nature of anthropology are such that E.E. Evans-Pritchard even in the mid-20th century had to grapple with the situation in British Anthropology (particularly social anthropology). 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). An

important stimulus for the development of anthropology as a discipline was the spread of Europeans to other parts of the world for reasons of trade, travel and colonization. Anthropology also developed in an attempt to explain human diversity and variation. It was initially also referred to as the study of ‘Other Cultures’, thus differentiating it from sociology that was regarded by the western people as study of their own society.

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). With such a diverse field as anthropology, an attempt was made in the 1860s for integrating into a general anthropological discipline that would engage on the early history of man. By 1870 and after, “a distinctive character of anthropology began to manifest itself” by unifying physical anthropology, prehistory and ethnology (cf. *ibid.*). 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. According to Kuper (2018), the “modern discourse of anthropology crystallized in the 1860s, fired by advances in biology, philology, and prehistoric archaeology”. The division of Anthropology into distinct sub-disciplines (or specialized field areas), namely, Physical or Biological Anthropology, Archaeological Anthropology, Social or Cultural Anthropology (also called Socio-Cultural Anthropology), and Linguistic Anthropology—and some would still include Psychological Anthropology came about by the later part of the 19th century through the middle of the 20th century. Of these branches of anthropology, social or cultural anthropology (also called socio-cultural anthropology) has been the closest branch of anthropology to sociology.

The pioneers of anthropology (socio-cultural anthropology) among others include **Lewis Henry Morgan** (1818-1881), **John Ferguson McLennan** (1827-1881), **Sir Edward Burnett Tylor** (1832-1917), **Franz Boas** (1858-1942), Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941) and W.H.R. Rivers. Some decades later (since the 1920s), anthropology (socio-cultural anthropology) evolved into a ‘modern anthropology’, particularly with the works of two outstanding anthropologists, namely, Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. Malinowski’s book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) on one hand, and Radcliffe-Brown’s *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) were the earliest significant modern works which obviously mark the emergence of new modern phase of Anthropology. These works were primarily based on rigorous field works (ethnographic works) with theoretical orientations. The influence of the works of these two anthropologists soon spread beyond Britain, even to the extent of reaching North America, a region which was generally considered as the domain of cultural anthropology. There were also many anthropologists who contributed to the development of modern anthropology at that time and even later but they would not attain such stature as those of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown.

3.5 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Sociology is very close to social/cultural (Socio-Cultural) anthropology. The relationship between the two is so close that in the contemporary times the difference has become very bleak. 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 in his Inaugural Lecture as the first Professor of Social Anthropology in 1908 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 “[w]hen 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.). According to E.A. Hoebel, the relationship between sociology and social anthropology are, “in their broadest senses, one and the same. Both are the study of social interrelationships, i.e., the relations of men to men” (1958: 9). Lucy Mair (1965) and many other anthropologists also consider social anthropology as a ‘branch’ of sociology.

Although, anthropology (an integrated anthropology including physical anthropology) is said to have emerged earlier than sociology, from the very beginning it was very difficult to differentiate between the subject matters of the two, particularly with socio-cultural anthropology. 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”. Anthropology and sociology also founded with the significant elements from the natural sciences in one way or another although the subject matter of anthropology (integrated anthropology), particularly due to the components of physical anthropology and archaeological anthropology exceeds sociology in terms of its linkage with the physical 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. According to Fred W. Voget (1975), the difference between sociology and anthropology (particularly socio-cultural anthropology) is more on the application level rather than at the level of the scope, concept, and method. He states:

The procedural distinctions by which early sociologists sought to separate and to relate anthropology and sociology did not hold historic development of the disciplines. Both anthropology and sociology, following the model of science, combined description and generalization. The pragmatic distinction between these two disciplines came when their respective exponents began fieldwork (Voget, 1975:144).

In fact, there had been many universities and colleges where sociology and social anthropology existed in the same department in many universities of the world. It was only by the early 20th century that the distinction became more visible with the establishment of respective academic disciplines. The relationship has been growing even more in the contemporary times that it is becoming more difficult to distinguish between the two despite the maintenance of discipline-based barriers. The relationship of the two subjects is also due to the necessity of the cross-use of concepts and also the identical theoretical and research problems and their findings. This is for the fact that both the subjects need each other to strengthen their disciplines and also do justice to the scope of the study of society at large.

Since one significant difference between the two was, from the point of view of the western scholars, social anthropology was the study of the 'others', and sociology of their own society; when the 'others', that is the non-western scholars who were earlier only the subject matter of social anthropology, became scholars, the difference between the two disciplines became blurred. For example while western scholars would study caste as social anthropology, for the Indian scholars it could well be sociology.

In the non-European and non-Western regions, particularly in the context of 'Third World' countries, the distinction between "social anthropology and sociology at the level of theory and method is extremely tenuous" (Jain 1986:1). In the Indian context, it has become even more difficult to differentiate between sociology and social anthropology in many respects. The similarities include identical syllabi in Indian Universities, the methodology, theories and the universe of research studies. It is no wonder why many of the sociological well-known research works in India are village centric studies with a rural setting which otherwise is supposed to be the traditional domain of social anthropology. It is also true that some of the famous sociologists in India are trained social anthropologists. As a matter of fact, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), the apex nodal funding agency of the social sciences considers sociology and social anthropology in the same unit. At present, it is also noticeable where many social anthropologists are absorbed as faculties in Sociology departments and/or sociological research works.

3.6 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

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. The distinction between sociology and socio-cultural anthropology (which shall be focused hereafter) is however much limited.

A notable difference between sociology and anthropology can be traced through historical roots. Anthropology is generally considered to have “no roots in philosophy” while “the former has” (Sarana 1983:14). 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) (cfr. Eriksen et al 2001; Sarana 1983). On the existence of the According to Merriam Webster dictionary, the “word *anthropology* dates back to the late 16th century” (The anglicised word ‘anthropology’ is said to have appeared for the first time in the year 1805 (McGee and Warms, 2012; 6) while sociology was coined somewhat later in 1838.

The original focus of the areas of interest between sociology and anthropology (socio-cultural) has been one of the main factors of divergences. 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. It focuses on the study of industrialized societies (the western societies, particularly Europe) who are considered as modern societies. On the other hand, the initial focal interest of anthropology was the study of the ‘other’ exotic communities that are non-European and/or non-western societies. Hence, their focus and practice was on the study of simple, small-scale, and pre-literate societies situated outside Europe and western societies. The trend changed particularly from about the mid-20th century when anthropologists have expanded their field studies to modern and urban settings while sociologists have also ventured out to the studies of rural and simple societies.

The other distinction between sociology and socio-cultural anthropology can be located in its methodology, particularly methods and techniques of research. 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. The distinction of sociology and anthropology was also due to the historic development of the early exponents of the disciplines, particularly in the way they conducted their fieldworks. In this regard, Voget (1975:144) writes: At such time [early developmental stage] anthropologists and sociologists distinguished themselves and their disciplines not by what they said but what they did. Anthropologists entered the field to record the lifeways of Trobrianders, Zulus, and Zunis, while sociologists compiled information on urban life in the West from census data, interviews and questionnaires. The necessity for gathering firsthand facts about the beliefs, customs, ceremonial, art, technology, and social organization of pre-industrial peoples made an enduring impact on anthropology and emphasized a continuing collection of new data.”

The differences in the nature of sociology and social anthropology till mid-20th century or even later can be summed up from the statement of Hoebel (1958) which he opines are mainly due to the following historical reasons:

“Each field [sociology and social anthropology — even including social psychology] has had a different background, uses somewhat different methods of investigation, and has differing traditional attitudes and concepts. Anthropology tends more to work in terms of culture and whole societies. Sociology tends more to work in terms of aspects of complex Western society. Anthropology stems primarily from natural science and carries a greater measure of the natural science tradition. Still the methodological differences between these fields of study grow less with each passing year, as anthropology becomes more analytical and sociology more objective, so that today the measure of difference is one of convenience. The anthropologist concentrates chiefly on the societies of primitive[sic] people and the sociologist concentrates on our own [European and/or Western Societies’] contemporary civilization” (p.9).

The relationship between sociology and social anthropology has not been the same in different countries and contexts. The perception and consideration of “what is sociology?” and “what is social anthropology?” takes regional variations. In this regard, Beteille (1974) writes:

In the United Kingdom the objective condition to which the distinction between sociology and social anthropology corresponded was the distinction between society and culture in the metropolitan country, and in the colonies, particularly the United States it was the distinction between life in the industrial city and in the tribal reservation. No two worlds could be more sharply separated than the aggressive, expanding world of the American city and the stagnant, moribund world of the American reservation. Small wonder, therefore, that the distinction between sociology and social anthropology was more marked in the United States than in any other country. Again, it may not be an accident that in the United Kingdom the distinction between the two became

less marked after the loss of empire which reduced the sharpness of the distinction between the metropolitan country and the colonies (p.703).

There is also a general conception in Britain who makes “a simple distinction between themselves and the natives; when they studied themselves they were sociologists, when they studied the natives they became social anthropologists... [T] here is [also] a tendency for Americans to make a similar distinction, though not as explicitly. When they study the core of their own society and culture they are sociologists. When they study other societies and cultures, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America (or marginal groups in their own society), they tend to become ethno sociologists. The great pity is that some Indians are now inclined to feel that they ought to apply the same distinctions among themselves” (Beteille, 1974:704).

In the context of Third World countries, particularly India, the relationship of sociology and social anthropology is rather ambiguous. When sociology is introduced in India sometime in the 1920s, “sociology had already established its legitimacy; it had found a place for itself in some, though not in all, western universities, and it was relatively easy for Indian sociologists to claim a place for it in their universities” (Beteille, 2004:5). In fact, the “distinction between sociology and social anthropology that we find in the Indian university system was not devised by Indian scholars themselves, but was acquired from the West. In the West itself this distinction became most marked in the period between the two world wars which was precisely the time when the sciences of society and culture were beginning to take root in India. If many Indian social scientists are perplexed by this distinction today, it is because it does not correspond to their conditions of work, which in any case was not the main source from which it grew” (Beteille, 1974:703). This is for the fact that the “objective conditions of work in India are very different, although the old labels are still put to use. Almost all Indians — whether ‘sociologists’ or ‘social anthropologists’ — study one or another sector of Indian society which is, on the whole, neither too primitive nor too advanced. When an Indian studies a ‘tribal’ village he is an ‘anthropologist’ and when he studies a ‘nontribal’ village he is a ‘sociologist’; or, when he studies a village, tribal or non-tribal, he is an ‘anthropologist’, but when he studies a town or city, he is a ‘sociologist’” (Ibid:703-704). Therefore, Beteille is of the view that “the distinction between ‘tribal’ and ‘nontribal’ village, or between village and town in India is of a totally different kind from the distinction between city and reservation in the United States, or between metropolitan country and colony in the British Empire” (ibid:704).

3.7 LET US SUM UP

The relationship of sociology with social anthropology is very close indeed. The two disciplines are very close that it is difficult to differentiate, particularly in the scope, interest areas, theories, methodology, and practice. The tradition in which they were evolved also had much convergence in its thrust areas of enquiry. This is due to the fact that both sociology and social anthropology study human society and largely share their theoretical problems and interests. This is also the reason why social anthropology is considered by many scholars to be part of sociology or a branch of sociology. Despite its similarities, there are also certain differences between the two subjects which can be located from the early developmental phase to the later phases as well in terms of the areas and thrust

of enquiry, preference of the use of methodology, theories, and practice. Such differences although minor in essence, also becomes a matter for differentiation in view of the development of varying academic disciplines and departments in the university systems. Another important aspect that needs consideration is the ambiguity of the conception of sociology and social anthropology, particularly in the context of third world countries including India. As much as sociology and social anthropology is the invention of the West, the conception and perception of the same subjects and also the practitioners have been perplex and blur. The reality is that the western sociologists, particularly in America and Britain largely consider sociologists as 'social' or 'cultural' anthropologists when the research studies pertain to tribal and/or rural areas and also in the colonial countries at large. On the other hand, they would consider the sociologists as 'sociologists' when the same sociologists study 'urban' and/or 'advanced' societies. This is very true even in the context of Indian sociologists. Therefore, in the perspective of the western sociologists, all Indian sociologists are social anthropologists for the fact that the sociologists in India study both 'tribal' and 'rural' communities and also urban communities at one time or another. The other consideration is that many trained anthropologists in India have also professed sociology right from the early phases of the establishment of sociology in India. Moreover, the increasing trend of the use (or incorporation) of methods and techniques by both sociologists and social anthropologists which were otherwise traditionally the domain of either sociology or social anthropology as distinct disciplines have further led to the entrenched relationship between sociology and social anthropology in India. If the trend is any indication sociology and social anthropology, the close relationship of the two disciplines is likely to continue even in the future.

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Discuss the emergence of sociology and social anthropology.
- 2) Examine the similarities and differences of sociology and social anthropology.
- 3) Discuss the relationship of sociology and social anthropology with special reference to India.

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