

Unit – 1

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition and Evolution of Sociology:

- Auguste Comte has accepted sociology as a study of society in **1838**.
- Along with Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber is said to be the founding fathers of sociology.

1.2. History of Sociology

The term sociology was coined by French philosopher Auguste Comte in 1838, who for this reason is known as the “Father of Sociology.” Comte felt that science could be used to study the social world. Just as there are testable facts regarding gravity and other natural laws, Comte thought that scientific analyses could also discover the laws governing our social lives.

It was in this context that Comte introduced the concept of positivism to sociology—a way to understand the social world based on scientific facts. He believed that, with this new understanding, people could build a better future. He envisioned a process of social change in which sociologists played crucial roles in guiding society.

Other events of that time period also influenced the development of sociology. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries were times of many social upheavals and changes in the social order that interested the early sociologists. The political revolutions sweeping Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to a focus on social change and the establishment of social order that still concerns sociologists today. Many early sociologists were also concerned with the Industrial Revolution and rise of capitalism and socialism. Additionally, the growth of cities and religious transformations were causing many changes in people’s lives.

Other classical theorists of sociology from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, W.E.B. DuBois, and Harriet Martineau. As pioneers in sociology, most of the early sociological thinkers were trained in other academic disciplines, including history, philosophy, and economics. The diversity of their trainings is reflected in the topics they researched, including religion, education, economics, inequality, psychology, ethics, philosophy, and theology.

These pioneers of sociology all had a vision of using sociology to call attention to social concerns and bring about social change.

In Europe, for example, Karl Marx teamed with wealthy industrialist Friedrich Engels to address class inequality. Writing during the Industrial Revolution, when many factory owners were lavishly wealthy and many factory workers despairingly poor, they attacked the rampant inequalities of the day and focused on the role of capitalist economic structures in perpetuating these inequalities. In Germany, Max Weber was active in politics while in France, Emile

Durkheim advocated for educational reform. In Britain, Harriet Martineau advocated for the rights of girls and women, and in the US, W.E.B. DuBois focused on the problem of racism.

1.3. What Is Sociology?

The word “sociology” is derived from the Latin word *socius* (companion) and the Greek word *logos* (study of), meaning “the study of companionship.” While this is a starting point for the discipline, sociology is actually much more complex.

However, almost all sociologists differ in their views regarding the exact definition of the term. They generally define sociology as study of:

- Social action- Max Weber
- Interactions- John Lewis Gillin and John Philip. Gillin
- Social relationships- Maclver and Page, A.W. Green
- Social groups- M. Johnson
- Social institutions- Durkheim
- Society- Giddings and Ward

Sociology is the systematic study of society and social interaction. In order to carry out their studies, sociologists identify cultural patterns and social forces and determine how they affect individuals and groups. They also develop ways to apply their findings to the real world.

1.4. Definitions of Sociology by Famous Sociologists:

- **Auguste Comte:** Comte defines Sociology as the science of social phenomena “subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation”.
- Kingsley Davis: “Sociology is a general science of society”.
- Morris Ginsberg: “In the broadest sense, Sociology is the study of human interactions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences”.
- Anthony Giddens: “Sociology is the study of human social life, groups and societies”.
- **Emile Durkheim:** “Sociology is the systematic description and explanation of society as a whole”.
- **Max Weber:** “Sociology is the science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action”.
- **Herbert Spencer:** “Sociology is the study of interrelations between different parts of society”.

Thus, in general, Sociology is concerned with man or woman, his or her social relations and his or her society.

1.5. Why Study Sociology?

Studying sociology is beneficial both for the individual and for society. By studying sociology people learn how to think critically about social issues and problems that confront our society. The study of sociology enriches students’ lives and prepares them for careers in an increasingly

diverse world. Society benefits because people with sociological training are better prepared to make informed decisions about social issues and take effective action to deal with them.

1.6. Nature/Characteristics of Sociology:

Sociology is the branch of knowledge and it has its own characteristics. Sociology has different nature in society. It is different from other sciences in certain respects. The following are the main characteristics of sociology as enlisted by Robert Bierstedt in his book "The Social Order" and they are as follows: -

i. Sociology is an independent science:

It is not treated and studies as a branch of any other science like philosophy or political philosophy or history.

ii. Sociology is a social science not a physical science:

Social sciences focus on various aspect of human society while physical sciences deal with natural phenomena. Thus, as a social science it concentrates its attention on man, his social behavior, social activities and social life.

Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline: Sociology is value-free. It is only interested in 'what is' and not 'what should be' or 'ought to be'.

iii. Sociology is pure science and not an applied science:

As a Pure science it is only interested in acquisition of knowledge, it has nothing to do with application of that knowledge. Like Physics is a pure science while engineering is its application.

iv. Sociology is relatively an abstract science and not a concrete science:

It studies the society in an abstract (Theoretical not physical) way. Like, Sociology is not interested in particular families but in family as a social institution that exists in all societies.

v. Sociology is a generalizing science and not a particularizing science:

Sociology is not interested in particular events rather it studies events in a general way. Example: History study French Revolution but Sociology will be interested in revolutions in general.

vi. Sociology is a general science and not a special social science:

Like Economy or Political Science, Sociology does not focus on only one aspect of human activity. As it has to deal with society it includes all aspects of human life in a general way.

vii. Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science:

It studies the social phenomena in scientific way. It is based on reason (logic), observation and experimentation.

1.7. Scope of Sociology:

Scope means the subject matter or the areas of study or the boundaries of a subject. Sociology as a social science has its own scope or boundaries. But there is no one opinion about the scope of sociology. However, there are two main schools of thought regarding the scope of sociology.

A. Specialistic school:

The supporters of this school of thought are George Simmel, Vierkandt, Max Weber, Von Wiese, Small and F. Tonnies. They believe that Sociology is a specific, pure and independent science and thus its scope should be limited. The main views of the school regarding the scope of Sociology are –

- Scope of Sociology is very narrow and limited. It need not study all the events connected with social science.
- Sociology studies the social relationships. Furthermore, only forms of social relationships are to be studied and not its content.
- Sociology also focuses on the mental and psychic relationship which links men together in society.
- Aim of sociology is to interpret and understand social behavior.

B. Synthetic school:

The supporters of synthetic school are the sociologists like Durkheim, Ginsberg, Comte, Sorokin, Spencer, F. Ward, and L.T. Hobhouse. According to this School Sociology is closely related with other social sciences. It is a synthesis of social sciences. Thus, its scope is very vast. According to this school Sociology should deal with following areas of study:

- Social Morphology: deals with population (social structure, social groups and institutions)
- Social Control: deals with formal and informal means of social control such as customs, traditions, morals, religion, law, court etc.
- Social Process: different modes of social interaction (conflict, cooperation, isolation, integration etc.)
- Social Pathology: social mal-adjustment and social problems like poverty, beggary, unemployment, overpopulation etc.
- General Sociology: philosophical part of sociology. Its function is formulation of general social laws.

Specialistic/ Formalistic School	Synthetic School
Thinkers Associated: George Simmel, Vierkandt, Max Weber, Vonwise, Small and F. Tonnies.	Thinkers Associated: Ginsberg, Durkheim, Comte, Sorokin, Spencer, F. Ward, and L.T. Hobhouse.
About Sociology: Sociology is a pure and independent and special science. It has a limited scope.	About Sociology: Sociology is a general science. It is synthesis of various sciences. It has a vast Scope.
Scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms of social relationships • Mental and psychic relationships • Social Behaviour 	Scope: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Morphology (Population) • Social Control • Social Processes (Social interaction) • Social Pathology (Social Problems) • General Sociology

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, we come to know that formalistic school believes in the study of the parts, which makes up the society and synthetic school advocates the study of the whole society. However, both the schools complement to each other. They are not opposed to each other. Thus, sociology is a general science of society and specialized discipline. Sociology is a growing science. Therefore, it is neither possible nor desirable to restrict its scope.

1.8. Relationship of sociology with economics, political science and computer science:

1.8.1. Relationship of sociology and Computer Science:

Sociology and computer science have more in common than one might think. Human Computer Interaction, Machine Learning, UI design are just a few of the areas that attempt to mimic / use information about the way humans thinks, understand and interact.

Sociology may be a little harder, but there are social aspects to computing, especially involving the Internet, primarily with respect to communication. Technology has had a significant impact on society and how people communicate and share culture.

i. Computer Applications in Sociology

The practice of computing in sociology has evolved rapidly. Computers have been applied to practically every research task, including such unlikely ones as field note-taking, interviewing, and hundreds of other tasks. The many diverse uses of

computing technology in social research are difficult to categorize because applications overlap and evolve unpredictably.

ii. Electronic communication (e.g., Email)

Network for computer-mediated communication continue to expand internationally following the traditional logistic diffusion curve. Electronic networks now supplement most other forms of social communication Email, which is common form of electronic iteration. Electronic Networks are also used to communicate the E-governance and their rules which may use to take days to implement.

iii. Sociology and webs

The internet may be one of the largest and probably the most rapidly growing peaceful social movements in history. It is not just a technology or a family of technologies, but a rapidly evolving socio-cultural phenomenon often called “cyberspace” or “cyber culture”. No matter how this phenomenon is defined, it is changing the way sociologists work.

iv. Assessing, Retrieving and managing social data

While years ago, students and researchers had to use a library or similar institution to gain access to bibliographic data files, now such services are available from one's desktop. Large bibliographic databases including sociological abstracts and psychological abstracts are in vast amount of data in the form of statistical tables and maps on the web or external storage of DVD's.

v. Partnership between human and technology

We are living in incredibly interesting times when digital transformation is revolutionizing the human landscape. The advancement of capabilities of today's emerging technology are diving many academics, entrepreneurs and enterprises to envision futures in which their impact on society will be nothing short of transformative. The collaboration of man and machine also supports the relation between social and computer science.

vi. Different languages transmitting/transferring software's

One can Truly communicate to others in their unknown voice fluently, making their relations better without having the devotion of time to learn new languages. The word is just one part of what a person is saying,” and to truly convey all the information in a person's speech, translation systems preserve voices and much more. For a monolingual (is the condition of being able to speak only a single language) speaker traveling in a foreign country, speech recognition does that followed by translation. The technique could also be used to help students learn a language.

vii. Teaching and Learning

During the 1970s long before the microcomputer, a small group of social science instructors began to explore how to utilize computer technology in teaching. Now it has become quite common, and several sociologically-oriented instructional packages are widely used. The most popular have been Chipendale, designed by James Davis (1990), and MicroCase, developed by Roberts and Stark (cf. Roberts and Corbett 1996). These two packages have served as the basis for the exercises contained in at least a dozen published textbooks and workbooks.

1.8.1. Relationship between sociology and Economics:

Economics deals with the economic activities of man or woman. It deals with production, consumption and distribution of wealth. The economic factors play a vital role in the very aspect of our social life. Total development of individual depends very much on economic factors. Without economic conditions, the study of society is quite impossible. All the social problems are directly connected with the economic conditions of the people. That is why Marshall defines Economics as "on one side the study of wealth and on the other and more important side a part of the study of man." In the same way Economics is influenced by Sociology. Without the social background the study of Economics is quite impossible. Sociologists have contributed to the study of different aspects of economic organization. Property system, division of labor, occupations etc. are provided by a sociologist to an economist.

The area of co-operation between Sociology and Economics is widening. Economists are more and more making use of the sociological concepts in the study of economic problems. Economists are working with the sociologists in their study of the problems of economic development in underdeveloped countries. Combined efforts of both the experts may be of great practical help in meeting the challenges.

i. Use of capital for social welfare

To evaluate alternative economic situations, we need some criteria of social welfare or well-being. The measure of social welfare requires some ethical standard and interpersonal comparisons, both of which involve subjective value judgments.

ii. Increase of PCI to achieve quality of life

Per capita income or average income measures the average income earned per person in a given area (city, region, country, etc.) in a specified year. It is calculated by dividing the area's total income by its total population. A country that produces a

lot will be able to pay higher wages. That means its residents can afford to buy more of its plentiful production. In fact, nearly 70 percent of the U.S. GDP is consumer spending. The other three components of GDP are business investment, government spending, and net exports.

iii. Use of economy for social security

Economics view social security differently than does the public. Many journalists and politicians speak of social security as if it were a defined contribution pension plan. They speak as if the benefits that someone receives from social security reflect that person's contribution to program. Economists instead view social security as an ongoing intergenerational transfer mechanism.

iv. Human needs/ wants fulfillment through the mobilization of economic resources

Economic development is one of the most important concerns of not only economists but also any individual in a society. In order to understand how and economy develops, we may look at when an economy serves. We should examine human needs in order to find out the level of economy. An individual can satisfy a need in a higher category only after having satisfies the needs designated in its preceding categories.

v. (Un)employment brings social/cultural change

Employment or the lack thereof, i.e., unemployment, as a widespread immediate occurrence which has its own implications, has always been known and important to people. Getting employed is considered as a prerequisite to a productive, socially recognized and complete realization of human labor; it is an existential basis upon which people build their financial and social security and confirms their integral social status. This, by all means, does not define all of the crucial values that unemployment bears for people, but it is important to point out that in the case of unemployment there are always negative implications being drawn. The most immediate repercussion of unemployment is the loss of income. Unemployment is first and foremost an economic and social problem since it brings about costs for the unemployed as well as the society as a whole. Labor not used for production purposes means permanent output loss and decrease of consumption. On the other hand, society needs to pay attention to the costs it bears for the provision of the necessary existential minimum in the form of social transfers, lost taxes, increased health service costs and increased crime costs.

1.8.1. Relationship between sociology and political science

Sociology is the fundamental social science, which studies man's social life as a whole and attempts to discover **the facts and the laws of life as a whole**. Political science, on the other hand, is concerned with the **political life of a man**, which is one part of his total life. Sociology is the **science of society** where as the political science is mainly concerned with the **state and government**. These two social sciences are very common in certain spheres. Political science is a branch of sociology, which deals with the principles of organization and government of human society. The subject matter of political science thus comes within the field of sociology.

Sociology depends very much on political science in every respect. The state and governments make laws for the welfare of the society; the government removes social evils such as poverty, unemployment, dowry and so on from the society. The undesirable customs are uprooted from the society by the government. The government gives financial assistance to people at the time of natural calamities such as floods, famine, cyclone and drought. Social institutions and social organizations are regulated by the state and government. Sociology studies various aspects of political activities through the help of political science. The government can bring about changes in the society with the help of laws.

Differences between Sociology and Political Science:

In spite of the above relationship, both sociology and political science are however different from each other in certain respects,

- i. Sociology is the science of political science; on the other hand, it is the science of state and government. Sociology studies society as a whole and man as a social being where as political science deals with a particular aspect of society, which is regarded as a politically organized unit. Therefore, political science is a more specialized science than sociology.
- ii. Sociology has wider scope than that of political science. Sociology deals with social, political, economic, cultural and other aspects of society and studies will be the social institutions such as family, marriage, religion, kinship, caste and so on. But political science deals with political aspect and studies a specific political institution like **state and government** only. Thus, sociology is regarded as a general science while political science is viewed as a specialized social science.
- iii. Sociology studies forms of associations and institutions where as political science deals with the state and government which are known as specific forms of association. That is why professor Garner remarks "Political science is concerned

with only human form association such as state, sociology deals with all forms of association.

- iv. Sociology studies all kinds of social relationship in a general way. But political science studies only the political aspect of social relationship in a particular way.
- v. Sociology studies both organized and disorganized societies. But political science studies only the politically organized societies.
- vi. Sociology is the study of all means of social control. Political science, on the other hand, is the study of only government-recognized means of control.

1.9. Applications of sociology

- i. Education and research
- ii. Trade and business – consumers behavior
- iii. Governance and politics
- iv. Social Welfare (Social Security)
- v. Socialization and civilization
- vi. Population planning
- vii. Social planning, Policies and development
- viii. Mass communication and awareness
- ix. Heritages, culture and rituals
- x. Social economics