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Sociology – The Discipline

CSE –MAINS Syllabus:
- ✓ *Modernity and social changes in Europe and Emergence of sociology.*
- ✓ *Sociology and common sense.*
- ✓ *Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences.*

Sociology is **THE SYSTEMATIC AND SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, SOCIAL GROUPS, AND SOCIETY. Sociology is a discipline that examines how humans interact with each other and how human** behaviour, values, & Norms is shaped by **STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FORCES and look at how we help create those social structures and institutions. ANCIENT PEOPLES** tried to figure out how social life works. They asked questions about WHY WAR EXISTS, WHY SOME PEOPLE BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN OTHERS, AND WHY SOME ARE RICH BUT OTHERS ARE POOR. **HOWEVER**, **they often based their answers on superstition, myth, or even the positions of the stars,** (**Tradition**) and **THEY DID NOT TEST THEIR ASSUMPTIONS.**

SCIENCE*, in contrast, requires theories that can be tested by research.* **Measured by this standard, sociology emerged about the middle of the 1800s, when social observers began to use scientific methods to test their ideas.** The result was the **uncovering of many secrets that had been concealed in nature.** With traditional answers failing, the logical step was to apply the scientific method to questions about social life. The result was the birth of sociology

Sociology has a Long Past But Only a Short History

During the ancient age Social Thought was there. 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.

Sociology which is known as **the science of society** is one of the youngest as well as one of the oldest of the 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**.

SOCIOLOGY IS ALSO ONE OF THE OLDEST OF THE SCIENCES. Since the dawn of civilisation **society has been the subject for speculation and inquiry along with other phenomena** which have agitated the restless and inquisitive mind of man. Even centuries ago men were thinking about society and how it should be organised, and held views on man and his destiny, the rise and fall of peoples and civilizations. **Though they were thinking in sociological terms they were called philosophers, historians, thinkers, law-givers or seers.** For thousands of years men have reflected upon societies in which they lived. In the writings of philosophers, thinkers and law-givers of various countries of various epochs we find ideas that are sociological. **For instance,** in the writings o**f Plato, Aristotle, Manu, Kautilya, Confucius, Cicero and others we find major attempts to deal methodically with the nature of society, law, religion, philosophy etc: Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics, Kautilya Arthashastra, the Smriti of Manu, Cicero's "On Justice" are some of the ancient sources of social thought.**

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES **and early modem times** the teachings of the church dominated the human mind and hence most part of **the human thinking remained as metaphysical speculation** far away from the scientific inquiry. **INTELLECTUALS BECAME MORE ACTIVE SINCE THE 16TH CENTURY ONWARDS.** Their quest for an understanding human society, its nature, socio-political system and its problems now received new impetus. The literary works of some prominent intellectuals of this period clearly reveals this urge to understand and interpret man's socio-political system. **Machiavelli's** *"The Prince",* **Thomas Hobbe's** *'Leviathan"* **Rousseau's**

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"Social Contract **Montesquieu's** *"The Spirit of Laws",* **Adam Smith's** *"Wealth of Nations",* serve as examples of such literary works. Thinkers like **Sir Thomas More** in his *"Utopia",* **H.G.Wells** in his *"A Modern Utopia"* - *had made attempts to project a picture of an ideal society free from all shortcomings.*

However, it was only in the 19th century, with The **MODERNITY AND SOCIAL CHANGES IN EUROPE** *that systematic attempts were made by Auguste Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber and others to study society and to establish a science of society called "sociology".*

:Understanding Modernity And Modernization:

Modernity is associated with the sweeping changes that took place in the society-particularly social, economic and cultural changes. Modernity involves *values and norms that are universal in nature.* This is the outcome of the **Process of Modernization.** It represents substantial break with traditional society.

Modernity and Modernization represents substantial breaks with traditional society. Modernization is an idea before it is a process. As it is an idea, there is no agreement among social scientists on its meaning and interpretation. **The concept of modernization emerged as an explanation of how Western countries/ societies developed through enlightenment, industrialisation and capitalism.**

According to this approach, modernization depends primarily on *introduction of technology and the knowledge required making use of it*. Besides, several social and political prerequisites have been identified to make modernization possible. Some of these prerequisites are:
✓ *Inventions and Discoveries & Innovation.*
✓ *Industrialization and urbanization.*
✓ *Capitalism*
✓ *Free Market*
✓ *Optimism*
✓ *The search for absolute knowledge in science, technology, society and politics.*
✓ *The idea that gaining knowledge of the true self was the only foundation for all other knowledge.*
✓ *Rationality.*
✓ *Increased levels of education.*
✓ *Development of mass media.*
✓ *Accessible transport and communication.*
✓ *Democratic political institutions.*
✓ *More urban and mobile population.*
✓ *Nuclear family in place of extended family.*
✓ *Complex division of labour.*
✓ *Declining public influence of religion, and;*
✓ *Developed markets for exchange of goods and services in place of traditional ways of meeting such needs.*

Modernization is, thus, supposed to be the result of the presence of these prerequisites in the social system.

MODERNITY AND SOCIAL CHANGES IN EUROPE

The Emergence of Sociology as a scientific Discipline is traced to the period of European History characterised by tremendous **Social, Political, Economic and Cultural changes**. **These changes were result of Modernity** embodied in **French revolution and Industrial Revolution** *influenced* by **Commercial Revolution and Scientific Revolution**. Modernity received ideological content from these

revolutions. These revolutions came up with **IDEOLOGY OF PROFITEERING, MASS PRODUCTION-NEW MARKETS, DESIRE FOR BUILDING CAPITAL EMPIRES IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND INDUSTRIALISM-DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY, RATIONALITY, CAPITALISM AND PROGRESS.** *This period of Modernity and change in European society is known as* **ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD**. *It embodies the spirit of new awakening in the French philosophers of the Eighteenth century.*

THE ENLIGHTENMENT PERIOD

The roots of the ideas developed by the early sociologists are grounded in the social conditions that prevailed in Europe. The emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline can be traced to that period of European history, which saw such tremendous social, political and economic changes as embodied in the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution.

The Enlightenment Period marked a radical change from the traditional thinking of feudal Europe. It introduced the new way of thinking and looking at reality. Individuals started questioning each and every aspect of life and nothing was considered sacrosanct - from the church to the state to the authority of the monarch and so on.

The roots of the ideas, such as THE BELIEF THAT BOTH NATURE AND SOCIETY CAN BE STUDIED SCIENTIFICALLY, THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE ESSENTIALLY RATIONAL AND THAT A SOCIETY BUILT ON RATIONAL PRINCIPLES WILL MAKE HUMAN BEINGS REALIZE THEIR INFINITE POTENTIALS, CAN BE TRACED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND COMMERCE IN EUROPE. THE NEW OUTLOOK DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION AND CRYSTALLIZED DURING THE FRENCH AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTIONS GAVE BIRTH TO SOCIOLOGY AS A DISCIPLINE.

OLD EUROPE was traditional. Land was central to its economic system. There were owners of land, the feudal lords and the peasants who worked on the lands. The classes were distinct and clearly demarcated. Religion formed the corner stone of society. The religious heads decided what was moral, what was not. Family and kinship were central to the lives of the people. Monarchy was firmly rooted in society. The king was believed to be divinely ordained to rule over his people. **THE NEW EUROPE** ushered in by the two Revolutions, the French and the industrial, challenged each and every central feature of old Europe. Classes

THE COMMERCIAL REVOLUTION AND MODERNITY &SOCIAL CHANGE IN EUROPE

The "Commercial Revolution" refers to a series of events between 1450 to approximately 1800. These events signaled to a shift from the largely subsistence and stagnant economy of medieval Europe to a more dynamic and worldwide system. The Commercial Revolution in this sense, signified the expansion of trade and commerce that took place from the fifteenth century onwards. It was of such a large scale and organised manner that we call it a Revolution. This expansion was as a result of the initiative taken by certain European countries to develop and consolidate their economic and political power. These countries were Portugal, Spain, Holland and England.

Europe's trade with the Oriental or Eastern countries like India and China was transacted by land routes. The northern Italian cities of Venice and Genoa were the major centers of trade. The result of the Italian monopoly was that the prices of goods like spices and silks imported from the East were extremely high. Portugal and Spain therefore, wanted to discover a route to the Orient that would be independent of Italian control.

THUS BEGAN A SHIFT FROM LAND ROUTES TO SEA-ROUTES. The Portuguese were the pioneers in adventurous navigation and exploration, you probably know of the historic voyage of Vasco da

Gama who, in 1498 landed on the Indian coast after having sailed around the southern tip of Africa. **Christopher Columbus, an Italian under the patronage of the Spanish King and Queen, set sail for India. However, he landed on the shores of North America.** This accidental discovery of America was to prove very beneficial to Spain. It laid the foundations of what was to become a Spanish empire in America. **Britain, France and Holland soon followed Spain and Portugal.** The parts of India and Africa, Malacca, the Spice Islands, West Indies and South America came under the economic control of Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland. Commerce expanded into a world enterprise. The monopoly of the Italian cities was destroyed. **EUROPEAN MARKETS WERE FLOODED WITH NEW COMMODITIES; SPICES AND TEXTILES FROM THE EAST, TOBACCO FROM N. AMERICA, COCOA, CHOCOLATE AND QUININE FROM S. AMERICA, IVORY AND, ABOVE ALL, HUMAN SLAVES FROM AFRICA.** With the discovery of the Americas, the range of trade widened. Formerly, the items sought for were spices and cloth, later, gold and silver were added to the list. As the Commercial Revolution progressed, the position of Portugal and Spain declined. England, Holland and France came to dominate Europe and the world.

EXPANSION OF BANKING: One of the important features of the Commercial Revolution was the growth of banking. Credit facilities were expanded, making it easy for merchants all over Europe to do business. The "cheque" was invented in the eighteenth century. Paper money came to replace gold and silver coins.

GROWTH OF COMPANIES: As trade and commerce expanded, new kinds of business organizations had to be devised to cope with this growth. "Regulated companies" arose in the 16th century. These were associations of merchants who bonded together to cooperate for a common venture. "Joint-stock" companies emerged in the 17th century. In this set-up, shares of capital were distributed to a large number of investors. Some of these were also "chartered companies", their governments gave them a charter or a contract which guaranteed them a monopoly of the trade in a particular region. Examples of these companies include the British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company.

RISE OF A NEW CLASS: As hinted at earlier in this section, one of the most distinctive characteristics of this period was the rise of the middle class to economic power. By the end of the 17th century, the middle class had become an influential group in nearly every western European country. It included merchants, bankers, ship-owners and investors. Their power, at this stage, was mainly economic. But later in the unit, we shall see how they became politically powerful in the 19th century.

STRENGTHENING OF MONARCHY: This period saw the strengthening of monarchy, THE DECLINE OF THE CHURCH AND THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS. It marked the beginning of the process of "Europeanisation", which was to reach a peak with colonialism.

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION AND MODERNITY &SOCIAL CHANGE IN EUROPE

Europe produced a "scientific revolution" in the Renaissance period of fourteenth to sixteenth century A.D. The impact of the scientific revolution was crucial not just in changing material life, but also people's ideas about Nature and Society.

Science does not develop independent of society, rather, it develops in response to human needs e.g. various vaccines were not developed just out of the blue, but out of the necessity to cure diseases.

APART FROM INFLUENCING THE PHYSICAL OR MATERIAL LIFE OF SOCIETY, SCIENCE IS INTIMATELY CONNECTED WITH IDEAS. *The general intellectual atmosphere existing in society influences the development of science. Similarly,* **NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE CAN CHANGE THE ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS IN OTHER AREAS AS WELL.** It is important to keep this fact in

mind. **The emergence of sociology in Europe owes a great deal to the ideas and discoveries contributed by science**.

Science in the Medieval Period & The Renaissance period:

MEDIEVAL SOCIETY was characterized by the feudal system. The Church was the epicenter of power authority and learning. Learning was mostly of the religious variety. Nothing could challenge the 'dogmas' or rigid beliefs of the Church. New, daring ideas could not flower in such an atmosphere. *Thus the development of science was restricted mainly to improvements in techniques of production.*

THE 'RENAISSANCE' PERIOD saw the beginning of the 'Scientific Revolution'. It marked an area of description and criticism in the field of science. IT WAS A CLEAR BREAK FROM THE PAST, A CHALLENGE TO OLD AUTHORITY. Art, literature and science all flourished. A scientific approach to Nature and the human body became prevalent. We can see this in the paintings of that period, which explored the smallest details of Nature and the human body. **In the field of Medicine,** dissection the human body became acceptable. Doctors and physiologists directly observed how the human body was constructed. The fields of anatomy, physiology and pathology thus benefited greatly. **In the field of chemistry,** a general theory of chemistry was developed. Chemical processes like oxidation, reduction, distillation, amalgamation etc. were studied. **In the field of navigation and astronomy,** Vasco da Gama reached the Indian shores in 1498. Columbus discovered America in 1492. Remember, this was the era of expansion of trade and the beginnings of colonialism. A strong interest in astronomy, important for successful navigation also grew. **The first major break from the entire system of ancient thought came with the work of the Dutchman, Nicholas Copernicus.** It was generally believed that the earth was fixed or stationary and the sun and other heavenly bodies moved around it. (This is known as a **'geocentric' theory**.) Copernicus however thought otherwise. With the help of detailed explanations, he demonstrated that the earth moved around a fixed sun. **(This is a 'heliocentric' theory.)** The work of Copernicus is considered revolutionary because it drastically altered patterns of thought about the universe. Human being was not at the center of the universe, but a small part of a vast system.

In a nutshell, science in the Renaissance period was marked by a new attitude towards man and nature. Natural objects became the subject of close observation and experiment. The Copernican revolution shattered the very foundations on which the old world rested.

Other Post-Renaissance Developments: The work of physicists and mathematicians like Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and subsequently, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) revolutionized science. It brought to the forefront **THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD**. *Old ideas were challenged and alternatives were suggested. If these alternative ideas could be proved and repeatedly verified and checked out, they were accepted. If not, new solutions were sought. SCIENTIFIC METHODS THUS CAME TO BE REGARDED AS THE MOST ACCURATE, THE MOST OBJECTIVE.* (The use of the 'scientific method' to study society wlas recommended by pioneer sociologists.)

DISSECTION OF THE HUMAN BODY HELPED PEOPLE GAIN A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ITS WORKING. Circulation of blood was discovered by William Harvey (1578-1657). *This led to a lot of rethinking. The human organism came to be viewed in terms of interrelated parts and interconnected systems. This had its impact on social thought of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, to name a few.* The British naturalist *Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published the Origin of Species in 1859.* It was based on the observations made whilst traveling for five years all over the world. Darwin put forward the theory that various living organisms compete for the limited resources the earth has to offer. Thus "survival of the fittest" is the natural law. Some species evolve or develop certain traits, which make their survival possible, other species die out. Darwin studied 'human evolution', tracing it in his work, *Descent of Man* (1863). He traced the origins of

the human species to some ape-like ancestors, which, over the centuries, evolved into modern human beings. *This book created an uproar. It was believed that 'God' made humans "in his own image" and conservatives were not willing to accept that they were descended from the monkey. Darwin's evolutionary theory did, however, gain wide acceptance. It was applied to the social world by 'evolutionary' thinkers, notably Herbert Spencer. Not just organisms, but societies were seen as constantly 'evolving' or developing from a lower to a higher stage*.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND MODERNITY &SOCIAL CHANGE IN EUROPE

The French Revolution, which erupted in 1789 marked a turning point in the history of human struggle for freedom and equality. It put an end to the age of feudalism and ushered in a new order of society. This revolution brought about far reaching changes in not only French society but in societies throughout Europe. Even countries in other continents such as, India, were influenced by the ideas generated during this revolution. **Ideas like liberty, fraternity and equality, which now form a part of the preamble to the Constitution of India, owe their origin to the French Revolution.**

Social Aspect of French Society: Division into Feudal Estates: The French society was divided into feudal 'estates'. *The structure of the feudal French society comprised the 'Three Estates'*. Estates are defined as a system of stratification found in feudal European societies whereby one section or estate is distinguished from the other in terms of status, privileges and restrictions accorded to that estate.

   a) **The First Estate** consisted of the clergy, which was stratified into higher clergy, such as the cardinal, the archbishops, the bishops and the abbots. They lived a life of luxury and gave very little attention to religion. In fact, some of them preferred the life of politics to religion. They spent much of their time in wasteful activities like drinking, gambling, etc. In comparison to the higher clergy, the lower parish priests were over worked and poverty-stricken.

   b) **The Second Estate** consisted of the nobility. There were two kinds of nobles, the nobles of the sword and the nobles of the robe. The nobles of the sword were big landlords. They were the protectors of the people in principle but in reality they led a life of a parasite, living off the hard work of the peasants. They led the life of pomp and show and were nothing more than 'high born wastrels'; that is, they spent extravagantly and did not work themselves. They can be compared to the erstwhile zamindars in India. The nobles of the robe were nobles not by birth by title. They were the magistrates and judges. Among these nobles, some were very progressive and liberal as they had moved in their positions from common citizens who belonged to the third estate.

   c) **The Third Estate** comprised the rest of the society and included the peasants, the merchants, the artisans, and others. There was a vast difference between the condition of the peasants and that of the clergy and the nobility. The peasants worked day and night but were overloaded with so many taxes that they lived a hand to mouth existence. They produced the food on which the whole society depended. Yet they could barely survive due to failure of any kind of protection from the government. The King, in order to maintain the good will of the other two estates, the clergy and the nobility, continued to exploit the poor. The poor peasants had no power against him. While the clergy and the nobility kept on pampering and flattering the King.

As compared to the peasants, the condition of the middle classes, also known as the bourgeoisie comparising the merchants, bankers, lawyers, manufacturers, etc. was much better. These classes too belonged to the third estate. But the poverty of the state, which led to a price rise during 1720-1789,

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instead of adversely affecting them, helped them. They derived profit from this rise and the fact that French trade had improved enormously also helped the commercial classes to a great extent. Thus, this class was rich and secure. But it had no social prestige as compared with the high prestige of the members of the first and the second estates. In spite of controlling trade, industries, banking etc. the bourgeoisie had no power to influence the court or administration. The other two estates looked them down upon and the King paid very little attention to them. Thus, gaining political power became a necessity for them.

The clergy and the nobility both constituted only two per cent of the population but they owned about 35 per cent of the land. The peasants who formed 80 per cent of the population owned only 30 per cent of the land. The first two estates paid almost no taxes to the government. The peasantry, on the other hand, was burdened with taxes of various kinds. It paid taxes to the Church, the feudal lord, taxed in the form of income tax, poll tax, and land tax to the state. Thus, the peasants had become much burdened and poverty stricken at this time. They were virtually carrying the burden of the first two estates on their shoulders. On top of it all the prices had generally risen by about 65 per cent during the period, 1720-1789.

THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH SOCIETY: *Like in all absolute monarchies, the theory of the Divine Right of King was followed in France too.* For about 200 years the Kings of the Bourbon dynasty ruled France. Under the rule of the King, the ordinary people had no personal rights. They only served the King and his nobles in various capacities. The King's word was law and no trials were required to arrest a person on the King's orders. Laws too were different in different regions giving rise to confusion and arbitrariness. There was no distinction between the income of the state and the income of the King.

THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH SOCIETY: The kings of France, from Louis XIV onwards, fought costly wars, which ruined the country, and when Louis XIV died in 1715, France had become bankrupt. Louis XV instead of recovering from this ruin kept on borrowing money from bankers. His famous sentence, "After me the deluge" describes the kind of financial crisis that France was facing. Louis XVI, a very weak and ineffective king, inherited the ruin of a bankrupt government. His wife, Queen Marie Antoinette, known for her expensive habits, is famous for her reply, which she gave to the poor, hungry people of France who came to her asking for bread. She told the people that, 'if you don't have bread, eat cake'.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENTS IN FRANCE: France, like some other European countries during the eighteenth century, had entered the age of reason and rationalism. Some of the major philosophers, whose ideas influenced the French people, were rationalists who believed that all true things could be proved by reason. Some of these thinkers were, Montesquieu (1689-1755), Locke (1632-1704), Voltaire (1694-1778), and Rousseau (1712-1778).

MONTESQUIEU IN HIS BOOK, *THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW, held that there should not be concentration of authority, such as executive, legislative, and juridical, at one place. He believed in the theory of the separation of powers and the liberty of the individual.* **LOCKE, AN ENGLISHMAN,** *advocated that every individual has certain rights, which cannot be taken by any authority.* These rights were (i) right to live, (ii) right to property, and (iii) the right to personal freedom. He also believed that any ruler who took away these rights from his people should be removed from the seat of power and replaced by another ruler who is able to protect these rights.

VOLTAIRE, A FRENCH PHILOSOPHER, *advocated religious toleration and freedom of speech. He also stood for the rights of individuals, for freedom of speech and expression.* **ROUSSEAU** WROTE IN HIS BOOK, *The Social Contract, that the people of a country have the right to choose their sovereign. He believed that people can develop their personalities best only under a government which is of their own choice.*

THE MAJOR IDEAS OF THESE AND SEVERAL OTHER INTELLECTUALS STRUCK THE IMAGINATION OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE. Also some of them who had served in the French army, which was sent to assist the Americans in their War of Independence from British imperialism, came

back with the ideas of equality of individuals and their right to choose their own government. The French middle class was deeply affected by these ideas of liberty and equality.

MAJOR CHANGES AFTER FRENCH REVOLUTION: French Revolution changed the political structure of European society and replaced the age of feudalism by heralding the arrival of democracy. There were many significant themes, which arose due to the impact of this Revolution, which have been the focus of interest of the early sociologists. These significant themes included the transformation of property, the social disorder, caused by the change in the political structure and its impact on the economic structure. A new class of power holders emerged - the bourgeoisie. In order to understand more about these themes, we need to learn the details of the Industrial Revolution.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND MODERNITY &SOCIAL CHANGE IN EUROPE

The Industrial Revolution began around 1760 A.D. in England. It brought about great changes in the social and economic life of the people first in England, then in the other countries of Europe and later in other continents. *In Europe, especially England, the discovery of new territories, explorations, growth of trade and commerce and the consequent growth of towns brought about an increase in demand for goods. Earlier goods (i.e. consumer items like cloth, etc.) were produced at domestic levels. This means that there existed a domestic system of production. With increased demand, goods were to be produced on a large-scale.*

During Industrial Revolution, new tools and techniques were invented, which could produce goods on a large-scale. *During 1760-1830 A.D., a series of inventions in tools and techniques and organization of production took place and it gave rise to the factory system of production. Thus, a change in economy from feudal to capitalist system of production developed. Subsequently, there emerged a class of capitalists, which controlled the new system of production.* Due to this revolution society moved from the old age of hand-made goods to the new age of machine- made goods. This shift heralded the emergence of Industrial Revolution.

ONE OF THE SIGNIFICANT MECHANICAL INVENTIONS, which led to a quicker and better method of production in various industries, *was the Spinning Jenny, invented in 1767 by James Hargreaves, an English weaver. It was a simple machine rectangular in shape. It had a series of spindles, which cold be turned by a single wheel. In 1769, Arkwright, an English barber, invented another tool, which was named after the name of its inventor and called Arkwright's Water Fame. This Water Frame was so large that it could not be kept in one's home and a special building was required to set it up. Thus on account of this it is said that he was responsible for introducing the factory system. Another invention called "the Mule" was by Samuel Crompton in 1779 in England. There were several other inventions, which all contributed to the industrial growth of European society.*

WITH THE CHANGE IN THE ECONOMY OF SOCIETY SEVERAL SOCIAL CHANGES FOLLOWED. As **CAPITALISM** became more and more complex, **THE DEVELOPMENTS OF BANKS, INSURANCE COMPANIES, AND FINANCE CORPORATIONS TOOK PLACE. NEW CLASS OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, MANAGERS, CAPITALISTS EMERGED. THE PEASANTS IN THE NEW INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY FOUND THEMSELVES WITH THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE LIKE THEMSELVES, WINDING COTTON IN A TEXTILE MILL.** Instead of the famous countryside they found themselves in unhygienic living conditions.

WITH THE INCREASE IN PRODUCTION, POPULATION STARTED INCREASING. RISE OF POPULATION LED TO THE INCREASED RATE OF URBANISATION. THE INDUSTRIAL CITIES GREW RAPIDLY. IN THE INDUSTRIAL CITIES SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES WERE VERY WIDE. The factory workers were involved in repetitive and boring work, the result of which they could not

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enjoy. In Marxist terms the worker became alienated from the product of his/ her labour. City life in the industrial society became an altogether a different way of life.

THESE CHANGES MOVED BOTH CONSERVATIVE AND RADICAL THINKERS. The conservatives feared that such conditions would lead to chaos and disorder. The radicals like Engels felt that the factory workers would initiate social transformation. Though the judgement of values differed, social thinkers of the time were agreed upon the epoch-making impact of the Industrial Revolution. They also agreed upon **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NEW WORKING CLASS.** The history of the period from 1811 to 1850 further indicates that this class increasingly agitated for their rights.

The significant themes of the Industrial Revolution, which concerned the early sociologists, were as given below.

i) **THE CONDITION OF LABOUR:** A new population earning their livelihood by working in the factories arose. In the early years this working class lived in poverty and squalor. They were socially deprived. At the same time they were indispensable in the new industrial system. This made them a powerful social force. Sociologists recognized that the poverty of this class of workers is not natural poverty but social poverty. Thus the working class became during the nineteenth century the subject of both moral and analytical concern.

ii) **THE TRANSFORMATION OF PROPERTY:** The traditional emphasis on land lost its value while money or capital became important during the Industrial Revolution. The investment in new industrial system came to be recognised. The feudal landlords became less significant while the new capitalists gained power. Many of these new capitalists were the erstwhile landlords. Property was one of the central issues that were raised in the French Revolution too. Its influence on the social order is considerable. Property is related to economic privileges, social status and political power. A change in the property system involves a change in the fundamental character of society. Sociologists have grappled with the question of property and its impact on social stratification since the days of Marx, Tocqueville, Taine and Weber.

iii) **THE INDUSTRIAL CITY, I.E. URBANISM:** Urbanization was a necessary corollary of the Industrial Revolution. Industries grew and along with it grew great cluster of populations, the modern towns and cities. Cities were present in ancient period too, such as Rome, Athens, etc. but the new cities, such as Manchester in England, famous for its textile, were different in nature. Ancient cities were known as repositories of civilised graces and virtues while the new cities were known as repositories of misery and inhumanity. It was these aspects of the new cities, which concerned the early sociologists.

iii) **TECHNOLOGY AND THE FACTORY SYSTEM:** Technology and the factory system has been the subject of countless writings in the nineteenth century. Both the conservative and radical thinkers realised that the two systems would alter human life for all times to come.

iv) **RURAL –URBAN MIGRATION:** The impact of technology and factory system led to large-scale migration of people to the cities.

v) **FAMILY RELATIONS:** Women and children joined the work force in the factories. Family structure and interactional relations changed.

vi) **OCCUPATIONAL RELATION:** The siren of the factory seemed to rule peoples' life. The machine rather than man seemed to dominate work. As mentioned earlier the relation between the labourers and the products of their labour changed. They worked for their wages. The product was the child of everybody and of the machine in particular. The owner of the factory owned it. Life and work became depersonalised. Marx saw a form of enslavement in the machine and a manifestation

of alienation of labour. Social scientists, felt that men and women had grown mechanical in heart, as well as in hand due to the industrial system of production.

CHANGE IN INTELLECTUAL ORIENTATIONS IN EUROPE

Sociology emerged as a response to the forces of change, which took place during eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. The ideas, which are discussed again and again in early sociological writings, are thus essentially ideas of that period.

The thinkers of the Enlightenment of eighteenth century affected much of the early sociology. The Enlightenment appears as the most appropriate point of departure in the study of the origins of sociological theory, for various reasons including those mentioned below.

Firstly, a scientific approach to the study of society dates back to the tradition of Enlightenment. T*he eighteenth century thinkers began more consistently than any of their predecessors to study the human conditions in a scientific way using the methods of the natural sciences. They consciously **applied scientific principles of analysis to the study of human beings** and their nature and society.*

Secondly, the eighteenth century thinkers *u**pheld reason as a measure to judge social institutions** and their suitability for human nature. Human beings, according to them, are essentially rational and this rationality can lead them to freedom of thought and action.*

Thirdly, the eighteenth century thinkers believed that ***human beings are capable of attaining perfection***. *By criticising and changing social institutions they can create for themselves even greater degrees of freedom, which, in turn would enable them increasingly to actualise the potentially creative powers.*

Fourthly, In the early part of the nineteenth century **the philosophy of history** became an important intellectual influence. ***The basic assumption of this philosophy was that society must have progressed through a series of steps from a simple to complex stage.*** We may briefly assess the contributions of the philosophy of history to sociology as having been, on the philosophical side, the notions of development and progress. On the scientific side, it has given the concepts of historical periods and social types. *The social thinkers who developed the philosophy of history such as **Abbe Saint Pierre, and Giambattista,** were concerned with the whole of society and not merely the political, or the economic, or the cultural aspects. Later the contributions of Comte, Spencer, Marx and many others reflected the impact of the loss of this intellectual trend in their sociological writings.*

Fifthly, The influence of the philosophy of history was further reinforced by **the biological theory of evolution.** *Sociology moved towards an evolutionary approach, seeking to identify and account for the principal stages in social evolution. It tended to be modeled on biology, as is evident from the widely diffused conception of society as an organism, and from the attempts to formulate general terms of social evolution. **Herbert Spencer and Durkheim** are good example of this kind of writing.*

Six, Social survey forms an important element in modern sociology. ***It emerged due to two reasons,*** *one was the growing conviction that the methods of the natural sciences should and could be extended to the study of human affairs; that human phenomenon could be classified and measured. The other was the concern with poverty ('the social problem'), following the recognition that poverty was not natural but social.* The social survey is one of the principal methods of sociological inquiry. The basic assumption, which underlines this method, is that through the knowledge of the social conditions one can arrive at solutions to solve the social problems prevalent in society.

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THESE EXTENSIVE CHANGES BROUGHT ABOUT BY ABOVE MENTIONED FACTORS INVOLVED, MOREOVER, **A MAJOR PARADOX.**

- These changes brought **a new society with great productive potential** and more **sophisticated and complex ways of living**.
- While, at the same time generatated extensive **disruptions in traditional patterns of life and relationships** as well as creating new problems of **overcrowded and unpleasant urban conditions, poverty and unemployment**. **Sociology as a distinct discipline emerged against the background of these** *intellectual and material changes* **in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Other words to understand the complexity brought by modernity, and to formulate rules for better society early sociologists stressed the adoption of a scientific method of Investigation to the Society.**

● **The early sociologists were greatly influenced by the changes in a pattern of life** which they saw going on around them as industrialization proceeded, and they were often deeply disturbed by what they saw. It is important to stress at this point that *these early sociologists were not intensely 'radical' individuals, but rather could frequently be more accurately labeled as 'conservatives' made uneasy by the changes they were observing in the society.* Nevertheless, they were greatly **concerned with the idea of obtaining exact knowledge of the workings of society, and, living** . There was profound impact of Scientific revolution on these early sociologists. They thought the **natural science methods to the study of society** might produce similar advances in understanding of society. Thus, from the very beginning, there was a great emphasise on the need to analyse social life scientifically. **Auguste Comte, the 'founder' of Sociology, stressed the adoption of a scientific method** of analyzing society so that we might improve society through a thorough understanding of it. He summed up his approach in his famous phrase **'To know, to predict, to control.'** This early emphasis on the 'scientific' analysis of social life was to have (and still has) considerable implications for the subsequent development of the discipline. 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 sciences 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 as science. Hence these five thinkers are often called the *"pioneers"* or *"founding fathers of sociology".*

Early European Sociology:

Auguste Comte [1798 - 1857)

● Auguste Comte, the French Philosopher, is traditionally considered the *"Father of Sociology".* Comte who invented the term "Sociology" *was the first man to distinguish the subject-matter of sociology from all the other sciences.* He worked out in a series of books, a general approach to the study of society. Comte is regarded as the **"Father of sociology"** not because of any significant contributions to the science as such, but because of the great influence he had upon it.

● Comte introduced the word *"sociology"* for the first time in his famous work *"Positive Philosophy"* at about 1839. The term "Sociology" is derived from the Latin word **Socius,** meaning companion or associate, and the Greek word **logos,** meaning *study* or *science.* Thus, the etymological meaning of sociology is the *science of society.* He defined sociology as the science of social phenomena *"subject to natural and invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object investigation."*

● Comte devoted his main efforts to *an inquiry into the nature of human knowledge* and *tried to classify all knowledge* and to analyse the methods of achieving it. He concentrated his efforts to *determine the nature of human society and the laws and principles underlying its growth and development.* He also laboured to establish the methods to be employed in studying social phenomena.

● *Comte believed that the sciences follow one another in a definite and logical order and that all inquiry goes through certain stages (namely, the theological, the metaphysical and the 'positive or scientific or empirical).* Finally, they arrive at the last or scientific stage or as he called the positive stage. *In the positive stage,*

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objective observation is substituted for speculation. **Social phenomena** like physical phenomena, he maintained, can be studied objectively by making use of the positive method. *He thought that it was time for inquiries into social problems and social phenomena to enter into this last stage*. So, he recommended that the *study of society be called the science of society.* *i.*e. *'sociology '*.

- Comte proposed sociology to be studied in two main parts: *the social statics* **and** *the social dynamics*. These two concepts represent a **basic division in the subject-matter of sociology**. The '**social statics'** deals with the major institutions of society such as family, economy or polity. **Sociology** is conceived of as the **study of inter-relations between such institutions**. In the words of Comte, *"the statistical study of sociology consists, the investigations of laws of action and reaction of different parts of the social system"*. He argued that the parts of a society cannot be studied separately, "as if they had an independent existence".

- '*Social dynamic's* focuses on *whole societies as the unit of analysis and reveals how they developed and changed through time.* "We must remember that the laws of social dynamics are most recognisable when they relate to the largest societies", he said. Comte was convinced that all societies moved through certain fixed stages of development and that progressed towards ever increasing perfection. He felt that *the comparative study of societies as "wholes" was major subject for sociological analysis*.

Contributions of Comte to the Development of Sociology as a Science:
- ✓ Comte gave to *'sociology'* its name and laid its foundation so that it could develop into an independent and a separate science.
- ✓ Comte's insistence on '*positive approach, objectivity* **and** *scientific attitude'* contributed to the progress of social sciences in general.
- ✓ Comte, through his *"Law of Three Stages"* clearly established the close association between '*intellectual evolution and social progress'*.
- ✓ Comte's '*classification of sciences'* drives home the fact that '*sociology depends heavily on the achievements of other sciences'*. The 'interdisciplinary approach' of the modern times is in tune with the Cometian view.
- ✓ Comte gave maximum '*importance to the scientific method'*· He criticized the attitude of the armchair social philosophers and stressed the need to follow the method of science.
- ✓ Comte divided the study of sociology into two broad areas: *'social statics''* and *''social dynamics''*. Present day sociologists have retained them in the form of '*social structure and function'* and '*social change and progress'.*
- ✓ Comte had argued that sociology was not just a *''pure''* science, but an '*applied'* science also. He believed that sociology should help to solve the problems of society. This insistence on the practical aspect of sociology led to the development of various applied fields of sociology such as *''social work'', ''social welfare'',* etc.
- ✓ Comte also contributed to the *development of theoretical sociology*.
- ✓ Comte upheld the' *moral order'* in the society. The importance which he: attached to morality highly impressed, the later writers such, as *Arnold Toynbee* and *Pitrim A. Sorokin.*
- ✓ Comte's famous books *'Positive Philosophy'* and, *"Positive Polity"* are memorable contributions to the development of sociological literature.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876):
- Harriet Martineau grew up in England. In 1853, she translated Comte's six-volume *Positive Philosophy* into English and condensed it into two volumes, thus introducing sociology to England. Martineau made her own contribution to sociology with *Society in America*, one of the first and most thorough sociological treatises on American social life and one of the first to compare the system of social stratification in Europe to that in America. She took sociology from the realm of ideas to the arena of practice in *How to Observe Manners and Morals*, published in 1838 and one of the first books to focus on sociological research methods.
- Although Martineau introduced sociology to England, it was Herbert Spencer's controversial application of sociology that gained attention and support from wealthy industrialists and government officials in England and throughout Europe.

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Herbert Spencer [1820 - 1903]

- Observing the negative aspects of the Industrial Revolution in England—the struggle, competition, and violence—Herbert Spencer developed a theoretical approach to understanding society that relied on evolutionary doctrine.
- To explain both social structure and social changes, he used an *organic analogy* that compared society to a living organism made up of interdependent parts— ideas that ultimately contributed to the structural functionalist perspective in sociology. Using the phrase "survival of the fittest" even before Charles Darwin's landmark *On the Origin of Species* ([1859] 1964) was published, Spencer's *social Darwinism* concluded that the evolution of society and the survival of those within it were directly linked to their ability to adapt to changing conditions.
- According to Spencer, a free and competitive marketplace without governmental interference was essential so that the best and the brightest would succeed and, in turn, help build a stronger economy and society.
- Spencer opposed welfare or any other means of helping the weak or the poor, believing that such efforts would weaken society in the long term by helping the "unfit" to survive. These ideas appealed to wealthy industrialists and government officials, who used Spencer's theory to scientifically support policies and practices that helped them maintain their wealth, power, and prestige at the expense of those less fortunate.
- His three volumes of *"Principles of Sociology",* published in 1877 were **the first systematic study devoted mainly to the sociological analysis.** He was much more precise than Comte in specifying the topics or special fields of sociology.
- According to Spencer, *the fields of sociology are: the family, politics, religion, social control* and *industry* or *work.* He also mentioned the sociological study of as associations, communities, the division of labour, social differentiation, and stratification, the sociology of knowledge and of science, and the study of arts and aesthetics.
- Spencer stressed the obligation of sociology to deal with the inter-reations between the different elements of society, to give an account of *how the parts influence the whole and are in turn reacted upon.* He insisted that sociology should take the whole society as its unit for analysis. He maintained that the parts of society were not arranged unsystematically. The parts bore some constant relation and this made society as such *a meaningful* **'entity'**, a fit subject for scientific inquiry.

KARL MARX (1818 - 1883)

- *Marx was trained in history, economics, and philosophy, but his ideas reflect sociological thinking. Observing the same social conditions as Spencer, he drew very different conclusions about their origins*. Marx declared that the unequal distribution of wealth, power, and other limited resources in society was not the result of "natural laws," but was caused by social forces—specifically, the exploitation of one social class by another. He insisted that social structure and the political and economic institutions that people took for granted were not the result of natural evolution or social consensus but reflected the opposed interests of different social Classes.
- *Marx believed that society consisted of two basic social classes*: the "haves" and the "have-nots." According to Marx's viewpoint, the *bourgeoisie* (haves), the powerful ruling class, had assumed power not because they were the "fittest," but because they owned and controlled the means of production. He believed the bourgeoisie used deception, fraud, and violence to usurp the production of the *proletariat* (have-nots), or working class, whose labor created most of society's goods—and hence, its profits.
- *Marx was not a detached social observer but an outspoken social critic. He concluded that a slow, natural evolutionary process would not bring about necessary social changes.* Rather, his analysis called for a major social revolution in which the proletariat would rise up, forcibly overthrow the bourgeoisie, and form a new, classless society.
- *In such a society, Marx wrote, everyone would contribute according to his or her abilities and receive from society based on need. Marx's focus on social conflict was unsettling to many—especially those*

whom he described as the bourgeoisie. They were relieved when Émile Durkheim's more palatable social analysis emerged and shifted the focus of sociology back to a more conservative approach called *functionalism*.

EMILE DURKHEIM (1858-1917)

- *Unlike Marx, who focused on social conflict, French sociologist Émile Durkheim was primarily concerned with social order.* He believed that *social solidarity*, or the social bonds developed by individuals to their society, created social order. Durkheim believed that social solidarity could be categorized into two types: *mechanical solidarity*, the type found in simple rural societies based on tradition and unity, **and** *organic solidarity*, which was found in urban societies and was based more on a complex division of labor and formal organizations.

- *One of Durkheim's most important contributions to sociology was his study Suicide ([1897] 1951), which demonstrated that abstract sociological theories can be applied to a very real social problem. More important, it showed that suicide, believed to be a private, individualized, and personal act, can best be explained from a sociological viewpoint.*

- *By looking at suicide rates instead of individual suicides, Durkheim linked suicide to social integration—the extent to which individuals feel they are a meaningful part of society*. Those with the strongest social bonds are less likely to commit suicide than those who are less meaningfully integrated and have weaker social bonds. **For example**, his data demonstrated that married people had lower suicide rates than those who were single or divorced; people in the workforce had lower rates than those who were unemployed; and church members had lower rates than non-members. Moreover, those religions that promote the strongest social bonds among their members (e.g., Catholicism and Judaism) had much lower suicide rates than less structured religions (e.g., Protestantism). Today, over a century later, these patterns in suicide, and others discerned by Durkheim's early study, still persist.

MAX WEBER (1864-1920)

- *Max Weber, a contemporary of Durkheim, was concerned that many sociologists, especially his fellow German, Karl Marx, allowed their personal values to influence their theories and research*. Weber insisted that sociologists should be *value-free*—analyzing what society is, rather than what they think it should be.Weber did not advocate a cold, impersonal approach to sociology, however; he argued that understanding the meaning of social interaction requires *Verstehen*, an empathetic and introspective analysis of the interaction. In other words, Weber believed that researchers should avoid their personal biases and put themselves in the place of those they study, to understand better how they experience the world and society's impact on them.

- *One of Weber's most important contributions to sociology was his concept of the ideal type, a conceptual model or typology constructed from the direct observation of a number of specific cases and representing the essential qualities found in those cases*. By ideal type, Weber was referring to a generalization based on many specific examples, not implying that something was necessarily desirable. For example, Weber used bureaucracy as an ideal type to analyze and explain the increasing rationalization and depersonalization that is part of formal organizations.Weber contended that to maximize efficiency, formal organizations, such as private businesses, educational institutions, and governmental agencies, had become and would continue to become increasingly bureaucratic. Although Weber contended that bureaucracy as an ideal type represented the most rational and efficient organizational strategy, he also warned of its depersonalizing and dehumanizing aspects.

Contributions of These Four Pioneers of Sociology in Common

These "four founding fathers" - Comte, Spencer, Durkheim and Weber-it seems, agreed upon the proper subject-matter of Sociology.

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- *Firstly,* all of them urged the **sociologists to study a wide range of institutions from the family to the state.**
- *Secondly,* they agreed that **a unique subject-matter for sociology is found in the interrelations among different institutions.**
- *Thirdly,* they came to the common consensus on the opinion that **society as a whole can be taken as a distinctive unit of sociological analysis**. They assigned sociology the task of explaining wherein and why societies are alike or different.
- *Finally,* they insisted that sociology should focus on *'social acts'* or *'social relationships'* regardless of their institutional setting. This view was most clearly expressed by Weber.

Story of Spread and Popularity of Sociology (IN USA & Other Societies)

- *Although we have located the beginnings of Sociology in Western Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century, its development and acceptance as an academic discipline was not a uniform process. The early classical works in Sociology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were produced in France and Germany, with Emile Durkheim in France and Karl Marx and Max Weber in Germany as the outstanding figures.* The works of these 'classical' sociologists still occupy a position of profound importance in contemporary theoretical debates. *Sociology developed markedly in the USA too, and received more wide spread acceptance there than in Britain.* In many ways of USA till early in this century was ideal sociological material – a rapidly expanding and industrializing, cosmopolitan, immigrant-based society that was experiencing a wide range of social changes. Transplanted to U.S. soil, sociology first took root at the University of Kansas in 1890, at the University of Chicago in 1892, and at Atlanta University (then an all-black school) in 1897. From there, sociology spread rapidly throughout North America, jumping from four instructors offering courses in 1880 to 225 instructors and 59 sociology departments just 20 years later.

- **The University of Chicago** initially dominated North American sociology. Albion Small (1854–1926), who founded this department, also launched the *American Journal of Sociology* and was its editor from 1895 to 1925.

- As in Europe, the onset of rapid industrialization and urbanization, and accompanying social problems, gave impetus to the development of sociology in the United States. American sociologists built on and expanded the theories and ideas of the European founders of sociology.

- **Lester F. Ward (1841–1913)** Lester Ward is often considered the first systematic American sociologist. He attempted to synthesize the major theoretical ideas of Comte and Spencer and differentiated between what he called **pure sociology**—*the study of society in an effort to understand and explain the natural laws that govern its evolution*— and **applied sociology,** which *uses sociological principles, social ideals, and ethical considerations to improve society*. The distinctions between these two areas of sociology are still made today.

- **Jane Addams:** Of the many early sociologists who combined the role of sociologist with that of social reformer, none was as successful as Jane Addams (1860–1935), who was a member of the American Sociological Society from its founding in 1895. Like Harriet Martineau, Addams, too, came from a background of wealth and privilege. She attended the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia, but dropped out because of illness (Addams 1910/1981). On a trip to Europe, Addams saw the work being done to help London's poor. The memory wouldn't leave her, she said, and she decided to work for social justice. In 1889, Addams co-founded Hull-House with Ellen Gates Starr. Located in Chicago's notorious slums, Hull-House was open to people who needed refuge—to immigrants, the sick, the aged, the poor. Sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago were frequent visitors at Hull-House. With her piercing insights into the exploitation of workers and the adjustment of immigrants to city life, Addams strove to bridge the gap between the powerful and the powerless. She co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union and campaigned for the eight-hour work day and for laws against child labor. She wrote books on poverty, democracy, and peace. Adams' writings and efforts at social reform were so outstanding that in 1931, she was a co-winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace. She and Emily Greene Balch are the only sociologists to have won this coveted award.

- **Margaret Sanger (1883–1966):** Another notable social reformer, Margaret Sanger applied sociological theories to problems of population, health, and women's rights. After watching a poor working woman die from a self-induced abortion, she began publishing *Woman Rebel*, a journal aimed at raising the consciousness of working-class women. Her articles covered topics ranging from personal hygiene, venereal disease, and birth control to social revolution.

- **William E. B. Dubois (1868–1963)**: E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). After earning a bachelor's degree from Fisk University, Du Bois became the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard. He then studied at the University of Berlin, where he attended lectures by Max Weber. After teaching Greek and Latin at Wilberforce University, in 1897 Du Bois moved to Atlanta University to teach sociology and do research. He remained there for most of his career.

✓ It is difficult to grasp how racist society was at this time. As Du Bois passed a butcher shop in Georgia one day, he saw the fingers of a lynching victim displayed in the window. When Du Bois went to national meetings of the American Sociological Society, restaurants and hotels would not allow him to eat or room with the white sociologists. How times have changed. Today, sociologists would not only boycott such establishments, but also refuse to hold meetings in that state. At that time, however, racism, like sexism, prevailed throughout society, rendering it mostly invisible to white sociologists. Du Bois eventually became such an outspoken critic of racism that the U.S. State Department, fearing he would criticize the United States, refused to issue him a passport (Du Bois 1968).

✓ Each year between 1896 and 1914, Du Bois published a book on relations between African Americans and whites. Not content to collect and interpret objective data, Du Bois, along with Jane Addams and others from Hull-House was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Deegan 1988). Continuing to battle racism both as a sociologist and as a journalist, Du Bois eventually embraced revolutionary Marxism. At age 93, dismayed that so little improvement had been made in race relations, he moved to Ghana, where he is buried (Stark 1989).

✓ In his writings, Du Bois pointed out that some successful African Americans were breaking their ties with other African Americans in order to win acceptance by whites. This, he said, weakened the African American community by depriving it of their influence.

- **Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills: Contrasting Views:** Like Du Bois and Addams, many early North American sociologists saw society or parts of it, as corrupt and in need of reform. During the 1920s and 1930s, for example, Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (1921) not only studied crime, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency, and prostitution but also offered suggestions for how to alleviate these social problems.
  As the emphasis shifted from social reform to objective analyses, the abstract models of society developed by sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979) influenced a generation of sociologists. These models of how the parts of society work together harmoniously did nothing to stimulate social activism.
  Another sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1916–1962), deplored such theoretical abstractions. Trying to push the pendulum the other way, he urged sociologists to get back to social reform. In his writings, he warned that the nation faced an imminent threat to freedom—the coalescing of interests of a *power elite*, the top leaders of business, politics, and the military. The precedent-shaking 1960s and 1970s that followed Mills' death sparked interest in social activism among a new generation of sociologists.

*As an established discipline, however, Sociology is a relatively new arrival on the academic scene, and **the real expansion in its popularity has occurred in the postwar period.** We can point to some factors that have influenced this expansion.*

- **In the Post-war period there has developed a rather more critical awareness of how societies operate.** Very few people accept their societies unthinking. They see that alongside many technological and social advances that have been made so far, there still exist problem areas like over-population, poverty and crime.

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- Alongside this, there has developed an increasing **concern with social reform and the reordering of society,** accompanied by the belief that in order to make such reforms effective knowledge about society and its members is needed.

- There has also developed **an increasing awareness of other societies and ways of life** because of better systems of communications in travel and the mass media.

- Increasingly, it has been claimed that **people who work in government, industry, the social services etc ought to have some sort of specialist knowledge of society** on the grounds that they will be better equipped to meet the demands of their work.

- **Emergence of new nation states was accompanied with rapid modernization.** Therefore there was **increasing awareness among these societies that they need to understand social life scientifically in order to ease the process of nation building.** As a result, during and since the 1960's, sociology degree courses have increased considerably, Sociology has found its way into schools, sociologists have been increasingly recognized and consulted by various organizations, from national government downwards, in research programmes, policy, planning etc. and some sociologists have also found fame in the national media.

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SOCIOLOGY AND COMMON SENSE KNOWLEDGE:

- **Sociological knowledge is** different from theological and **philosophical observations**. Likewise sociology is different from common sense observation.

- Many a time we make certain statements which we have not to prove that they are true. They are **based either on common sense or on practical observations and experiences** on social life, though sometimes they may be based on wisdom too. However, often they are based on ignorance, prejudices and mistaken interpretation.

- Common sense knowledge, based on the accumulated experiences, prejudices and beliefs of the people, **is often contradictory and inconsistent.** On the other hand, **scientific observations are based on verifiable evidence or systematic body of proof** that can be cited. **For example,** some common sense statements may be quoted here: *man is more intelligent than women; married people remain happier than single people; high-caste people are more talented than low-caste people.*

  ……..Contrary to this, the scientific research or scientific inquiry finds that woman is as intelligent as man; there is no association between happiness and remaining married or unmarried by a person; caste does not determine individual's efficiency.

- Common sense observations result in widespread **ignorance and rejection of a sociological perspective when** people think about human behavior. Common-sense perspectives predominate in people's minds. They may, for instance, **employ a biological perspective in attempting to explain family and marital arrangements**; women rear children because they have a maternal instinct (biologically determined) for this task. Similarly, they may use **pseudo-psychological perspective in explaining suicide** (people commit suicide when they are mentally unbalanced), or a **moralistic perspective in explaining crime** (Criminals are people who have not developed a conscience regulating their actions). Because ordinary people are more familiar with these kinds of common-sense perspectives in their everyday lives a sociological approach does not come easily to them.

- **Commonsense observation is further compounded by a deeply held commitment to the idea that we are all individuals, unique beings with our own special qualities, which sociologists deny.** Sociology, however, insists on a willingness to reject what is obvious common-sense, natural and to go beneath the surface for understanding of the world. *As Berger puts it: "The fascination of Sociology lies in the fact that its perspective makes us see in a new light the very world in which we have lived all our lives. It can be said that the first wisdom of Sociology is that things are not what they seem".* Sociologists emphasise, that what is **'common-sense' or 'natural' may be by no means universal or eternal,** but is frequently relative to particular societies or to particular periods in time.

- **The common-sense view of differences in behaviour between men and women in the family in our society tends to assume that** *because there are biological and physiological differences between men and women, certain aspects of their behavior are therefore 'natural'.* **For example,** it is often argued that it is common sense and natural that women will engage in child-rearing and domestic tasks and that men will make sexual advances and will work outside the home. **Mead's study of New Guinea,** 'Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies', revealed the partiality of such common-sense interpretations of behavior pattern. **Among the Apache**, she found very few 'natural differences' in men's and women's behavior with neither sex exhibiting aggression: Women did the heavy carrying (Men stayed at home with their wives during and after child birth, 'sharing' the pain and strain. **Among the Munduracco**, both sexes were aggressive, children were treated brutally by both parents and lovemaking was rather like a pitched battle. **Among the Tchambuli,** yet further variation occurred: men adorned themselves, gossiped, made things for trade, while women selected their partners, made the sexual advances, did all the trade, and were the more aggressive sex. **Obviously, we cannot explain these very striking variations in behavior via biology,** since the people in the various societies were all the same biologically.

- *To the Hopi Indians of North America it is 'common-sense' view that rain-clouds are Gods and must therefore be made happy through exhibiting Rain dance.* This is a view not entirely consistent with that of the Meteorological office. **The essential point, then, is that one person's common sense is somebody else's nonsense** and there are many examples of sociological and anthropological investigation questioning and exploding many common-sense notions about behavior. Although the use of everyday common-sense beliefs is, usually not only unsystematic and inadequate but also often contradictory.

- **The common sense explanations are generally based on what may be called 'naturalistic' and/or individualistic explanation.** A naturalistic explanation for behavior rests on the assumption that one can really identify 'natural' reasons for behavior. An individualistic explanation of some event or phenomenon assumes that the event can be readily understood and explained solely through reference to the behavior of the individuals involved in it. **There is no attempt to understand or explain the phenomenon in terms of wider social forces.** A naturalistic explanation of behavior rests on the assumptions that one can readily identify 'natural' (or sometimes 'God-given') reasons for behavior. *For example, it is only natural, that two people should fall in love, get married, live together, and raise a family.* Such explanations are rejected as inadequate by the sociologist. The individualistic explanation is rejected **because** *it does not recognize the importance of wider social forces* acting on the individual that he or she cannot control. The naturalistic explanation is rejected **because** *it fails to recognize that behavior patterns are not primarily biologically determined but rather reflect social conventions learned by individuals as members of social groups*, or, more generally, society.

- **Sociology thus breaks away from both common sense observations and ideas as well as from philosophical thought.** It does not always or even generally lead to spectacular results. But meaningful and unsuspected connections can be reached only by sitting through masses of connections.

- Great advances in sociological knowledge have been made, generally incrementally and only rarely by a dramatic breakthrough. **Sociology has a body of concepts, methods and data, no matter how loosely coordinated.** This cannot be substituted by common sense. **Common sense is unreflective** since it does not question its own origins. Or in other words it does not ask itself: "Why do I hold this view?" **The sociologist must be ready to ask of any of our beliefs, about ourselves-no matter how cherished-"is this really so?"** The **systematic and questioning approach of sociology is derived from a broader tradition of scientific investigation.** This emphasis on scientific procedures can be understood only if we go back in time. And understand the context or social situation with which the sociological perspective merged as sociology was greatly influenced by the great developments in modern science.

Conclusion:

Thus, a statement made on common sense basis may be just a guess, a hunch, or a haphazard way of saying something, generally based on ignorance, bias, prejudice or mistaken interpretation, though occasionally it may be

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wise, true, and a useful bit of knowledge. At one time, common sense statements might have preserved folk wisdom but today, scientific method has become a common way of seeking truths about our social world.

Explanation of	Common sense	Sociological
Poverty	People are poor because they are afraid of work, come from 'problem families' are unable to budget properly, suffer from low intelligence and shiftlessness.	Contemporary poverty is caused by the structure of inequality in class society and is experienced by those who suffer from chronic irregularity of work and low wages.

SCOPE OF THE SUBJECT AND COMPARISON WITH OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

The scope of sociological study is extremely wide. It can focus its analysis on **interactions between teachers and students, between two friends or family members** etc. It can likewise **focus on national issues such as unemployment or caste conflict or the effect of state policies on forest rights of the tribal population or rural indebtedness**. Or examine **global social processes** such as: **the impact of new flexible labour regulations on the working class; or that of the electronic media on the young: or the entry of foreign universities on the education system of the country.** What defines the discipline of sociology is not just what it studies (i.e. family or trade unions or villages) but how it studies a chosen field. There has been a great deal of controversy regarding the subject matter of sociology. Sociologists of different schools differ in their views.

- **Specialistic or Formalistic School:** As has been said before, according to the formalistic school the **subject matter of Sociology consists of forms of social relationships**. These sociologists want to keep the scope of sociology distinct from other social sciences. They regard sociology as pure and independent.

- **According to George Simmel sociology should confine its study to formal behavior instead of studying actual bahaviour.** Sociology stands in such a relation with other sciences as is the relation holding between the physical sciences and geometry. Geometry studies the spatial forms and relations of objects, not their content. In the same way sociology, too, in its scope **comprehends the forms of social relationships and activities, not the relationships themselves.** Sociology is a specific social science which **describes, classifies, analyses and delineates the forms of social relationships, the process of socialization and social organization, etc**. In this way, the scope of sociology apprehends the forms of human relationships or forms of social processes. Simmel has mentioned some subtle forms in these various form e.g. competition, domination, imitation, division of labour, subordination, etc.

- **Small's opinion:** According to Small, **Sociology does not undertake to study all the activities of society**. Every science has **a delimited scope.** The **scope of sociology is the study of the genetic forms of social relationships, bahaviour and activities,** etc.

- **Vier Kandt's opinion**:   it has been said by Vier Kandt that sociology can be a definite science only when it abstains from a historic study of concrete societies. According to him **sociology studies the irreducible categories of science.** These irreducible categories are **the ultimate forms of mental relationships like love, hatred, cooperation, competition, etc.** In this way the scope of sociology is the study of **the ultimate forms of mental or psychic relationships**.

- **Max Weber's contention:** According to Max Weber **the scope of sociology consists in the interpretation of social behavior.** Social behavior is that which is related, by the intention of interpreter, to the bahaviour of others and is determined by it. **Sociological laws are those empirically established generalizations of social behavior whose meaning can be determined** or which can be obtained.

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- **The View of Von Wiese:** According to Von Wiese, **the scope of sociology is the study of forms of social relationships.**

- **Tonnies' opinion:** Tonnies has supported **the idea of pure sociology**. He has **differentiated between society and community on the basis of forms of relationships.** In this way, according to the specialistic school, sociology studies one specific aspect of social relationships and bahaviour, viz. their forms, and its scope is limited to them.

Criticism of Formalistic School.

In criticism the following arguments have been advanced against Formalistic School:

- **Other Sciences also study forms of Social Relationships: I**t does not appear to be an altogether correct assertion when sociologists belonging to the formalistic school contend that *sociology alone studies the forms of social relationships.* **Sociology is not the only science which studies the forms of social relationships.** The study of International law includes, of necessity, the study of such social relationships as conflict, war, opposition, agreement, contact etc. Political science delineates sovereignty and other social relationships.

- **The conception of Pure Sociology is impractical:** The specialistic or formalistic school has conceived of pure sociology and has also much literature concerning it but none of the sociologists has been able to make any pure sociology. **Actually, no science can be studied in complete isolation from the other sciences.** The conception of a pure sociology is not practical.

- **Forms of Social Relationships differ from the forms of Geometry:** According to the formalistic school, the relation which sociology bears to other sciences is comparable to the relation between geometry and physics. But in making this comparison, sight has been lost of the **incongruity between the forms of geometry and those of social relationships**. The forms of geometry have a definite spatial shape but the social relationships are devoid of any such shape.

- **Separated from the Concrete Relations, Abstract forms cannot be studied:** The formalistic school of thought has made **an absolute distinction between abstract forms and concrete contents and has limited the study of sociology to merely abstract forms.** But actually abstract forms cannot be studied in complete separation from concrete contents. *In concrete life, how can competition, conflict, hatred and love, etc, be studied without knowing their concrete contents?* Actually, social forms cannot be abstracted from the content at all, since social forms keep on changing as the contents change, and the contents are continuously changing. **In the words of Sorokin,** "We may fill a glass with wine, water or sugar without changing its form, but we cannot conceive of a social institution whose form would not change when its members change."

- **Formalistic School has extremely Narrowed the scope of Sociology:** When the forms cannot be studied in abstraction from the concrete relationships sociology will have to widen its scope to apprehend concrete relationships, bahaviour and activities. The formalistic school has extremely narrowed and confined the scope of sociology. Besides studying the general forms of social relationships sociology will have also to study the contents in social life.

- **Synthetic School.**

- As against the Formalistic school **the synthetic school wants to make sociology a synthesis of the social sciences or a general science**. Modern sociologists, among them **Durkheim, Hobhouse and Sorokin,** subscribe to this point of view. According to this opinion, **sociology is the science of sciences and all the sciences are included in its scope, it synthesizes all of them.** In this way, according to the synthetic school, **the scope of sociology is encyclopedic and synoptic**. According to this contention, **all the aspects of social life are inter-related;** hence the study of one aspect cannot suffice to understand the entire fact. Without studying the principles in concrete social life, their study becomes dull and purposeless.

- For this reason **sociology should symmetrically study social life as a whole.** This opinion contributes to the creation of a **general and systematic sociology**.

- Pointing to the ill effects of the specialistic viewpoint, which are reflected in geographical, biological and economic determinism, these sociologists have advised to make sociology comprehensive and wide. **In the words of Motwani,** "Sociology thus seeks to see life full and see it whole."

There is Unity of Data but difference in View point among different social sciences:

Society is the subject matter of all social sciences but they all study it from different view points and in specific areas. **In economics**, the study from the economic view point concerns men's activities pertaining to economic welfare and wealth. **In political science,** authority, government, etc., are studied from the political view point. **Social psychology** studies man's behavior in groups.

The scope of sociology differs from each of these sciences because **it studies social relationships.** But the study in this sphere necessitates a study of all these sciences. In studying any social phenomenon, it is necessary to contemplate upon all its aspects. *Suppose that you want to analyse and study the causes of family disorganization from the sociological view point, and then you will have to seek the assistance of economics, history, psychology and other sciences.* In this way, the scope of sociology includes the subject matter of all other sciences and it is studied from the sociological view point with the help of the other special sciences.

The scope of sociology is further distinguished from other sciences in respect of its different viewpoints. *In the words of Green,* "The focus of attention upon social relationships makes sociology a distinctive field, however clearly allied to certain others it may seem to be." To quote *Bennett and Tumin,* "no other discipline states or claims that its primary datum is that of the social aggregation of men."

Comparison of Sociology with other social sciences

Sociology is one of a group of social sciences, which also includes anthropology, economics, political science and history. **The divisions among the various social sciences are not clear cut, and all share a certain range of common interests, concepts and methods.** It is therefore very important to understand that the distinctions of the disciplines are to some extent arbitrary and should not be seen in a straitjacket fashion. To differentiate the social sciences would be to exaggerate the differences and gloss over the similarities. **Furthermore feminist theories have also shown the greater need of interdisciplinary approach.** For instance how would a political scientist or economist study gender roles and their implications for politics or the economy without sociology of the family or gender division of labour.

SOCIOLOGY AND ECONOMICS:

- **Economics** is **the study of production and distribution of goods and services**. The classical economic approach dealt almost exclusively with the inter-relations of pure economic variables: the relations of price demand and supply, money flows, output and input ratios, and the like.

- The focus of traditional economics has been on a narrow understanding of 'economic activity', namely the allocation of scarce goods and services within a society.

- **Economists who are influenced by a political economy approach seek to understand economic activity in a broader framework of ownership of and relationship to means of production.** The objective of the dominant trend in economic analysis was however to **formulate precise laws of economic behavior:**

- **The sociological approach** looks at economic behavior in *a broader context of social norms, values, practices and interests*. The corporate sector managers are aware of this. The large investment in the advertisement industry is directly linked to the need to reshape lifestyles and consumption patterns. **Trends within economics such as feminist economics seek to broaden the focus, drawing in gender as a central organizing principle of society**. For instance they would look at how work in the home is linked to productivity outside.

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- **The defined scope of economics has helped in facilitating its development as a highly focused, coherent discipline**. Sociologists often envy the economists for the precision of their terminology and the exactness of their measures. And the ability to translate the results of their theoretical work into practical suggestions having major implications for public policy.

- **Yet economist's predictive abilities often suffer precisely because of their neglect of individual behavior, cultural norms and institutional resistance which sociologists study.** Pierre Bourdieu wrote in 1998, "A true economic science would look at all the costs of the economy not only at the costs that corporations are concerned with, but also at crimes, suicides, and so on. We need to put forward an economics of happiness, which would take note of all the profits, individual and collective, material and symbolic, associated with activity (such as security), and also the material and symbolic costs associated with inactivity or precarious employment (for example consumption of medicines: France holds the world record for the use of tranquilizers)".

- **Sociology unlike economics usually does not provide technical solutions. But it encourages a questioning and critical perspective. This helps questioning of basic assumptions.** And thereby facilitates a discussion of not just the technical means towards a given goal, but also about the social desirability of a goal itself. Recent trends have seen a resurgence of **economic sociology** perhaps because of both this wider and critical perspective of sociology.

- **Sociology provides clearer or more adequate understanding of a social situation than existed before.** This can be either on the level of factual knowledge, or through gaining an improved grasp of why something is happening (in other words, by means of theoretical understanding).

- However, **attempts have been made to link the two disciplines with each other**. One extreme position has been adopted by Marxists. According to whom the understanding of the super structure consisting of various social institutions can never be complete, unless seen in the context of economic substructure. Thus economic behavior of man is viewed as a key to understand social behavior of man or economics is given precedence over sociology. **On the other hand sociologists have criticized the economic theory as being reductionist** in nature and according to them the economist's conception of man ignores the role of various social factors which influence the economic behavior.

- Various sociologists have tried of show that economics cannot be an entirely autonomous science. For e.g. *A. Lowie* in his book 'Economics and Sociology' has examined the lists of pure economics and discovers two sociological principles which underline a classical laws of the market: 'The economic man" and "competition or mobility of the factors of production". Similarly, *Max Weber's* 'Wirtscharaft and Gesellschaft' is the classical attempt to bring some of the concepts of economic theory within the frame work of general sociology. The recent work by *Talcott Parsons* and *N.J. Smelser* attempts on Weberian lines but, in a more ambitious way, to show economic theory as a part of general sociological theory. In fact, according to Parsons economic behavior can never be understood adequately if it is divorced from the social milieu.

- Of late, **the interactions between two disciplines have been on the increase.** For example, numerous sociological studies have directly concerned themselves with problems of economic theory; the recent example is **Barbara Cotton's book** "The social Foundations of Wage Policy" which attempts a sociological analysis of the determinants of wags and salary differentials in Britain. Other such examples are to be found in the works of **Thorstein Veblen and J.K. Galbraith.** Further, there are sociological works concerned with general features of economic systems. This is particularly so in the study of problems of economic development in the developing countries. One of the famous works of this kind has been that of **'dependency theorists'.** Thus it can be said that increasingly the two disciplines are coming closer.

SOCIOLOGY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

As in the case of economics, there is an increased interaction of methods and approaches between sociology and political science.

- **Conventional political science** was focused primarily on two elements**: political theory and government administration**. Neither branch involves **extensive contact with political behavior.** The theory part usually focuses on the ideas about government from Plato to Marx while courses on administration generally deal with the formal structure of government rather than its actual operation.

- **Sociology is devoted to the study of all aspects of society, whereas conventional political science restricted itself mainly to the study of power as embodied in formal organization.**

- **Sociology stresses the interrelationships between sets of institutions including government, whereas political science tends to turn attention towards the processes within the government.**

However, sociology long shared similar interests of research with political science.

- Sociologists like **Max Weber** worked in what can be termed as **political sociology.** The focus of political sociology has been increasingly on the actual study of political behavior.

- Even in the recent Indian elections one has seen **the extensive study of political patterns of voting.** Studies have also been conducted **in membership of political organizations, process of decision-making in organizations, sociological reasons for support of political parties, the role of gender in politics,** etc.

- **According to Marx,** political institutions and behavior are closely linked with the economic system and social classes. Provoked by this thinking some thinkers, by the end of the 19th century, pursued the matter in more details like **studies of political parties, elite voting behavior, bureaucracy and political ideologies,** as in the political sociology of Michels, Weber and Pareto.

- By then, another development occurred in America Known as **the behavioural approach to political phenomena**. This was initiated by the University of Chicago. In the thirties, attempts were made by various scholars to create a scientific discipline of behavioural politics although now a day this attempt stands discredited.

- In one more area, however, there has become a close relationship between these social sciences is the field of explanatory schemes and models. Both functionalism and social system have been adopted into politics. **It is interesting to note that there is a renewal of interest in Marxist sociological ideas because of revolutions in developing countries, as can be seen.** The forces at work and the changes that are taking place in peasant tribal or caste societies belong more to the sphere of sociologists and anthropologists rather than to that of the political scientist. Moreover, the fields into which Michels, Max Weber and Pareto led Sociology by the end of the 19th century are still being pursued. A new feature of these studies is that they are comparative.

Conclusion:

It is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish political science form political sociology. There are a number of Marxist studies having Marxist-socialist ideas as their hypothesis. Also as modern state is increasingly getting involved in providing welfare amenities, sociological slant to political activity and political thinking is gaining more and more acceptance.

SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY

"Sociology without History is rootless and History without Sociology is fruitless"

- Historians almost as a rule **study the past**, sociologists are more interested in the **contemporary or recent past.**

- Historians earlier were content to delineate the actual events, to establish how things actually happened, while **in sociology the focus was to seek to establish causal relationships**.

- **History studies concrete details** while the **sociologists are more likely to abstract from concrete reality, categorise and generalize**. Historians today are equally involved in doing sociological methods and concepts in their analysis i.e. Social History.

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- **Conventional history** has been about the history of kings and war. The history of less glamorous or exciting events as **changes in land relations or gender relations within the family have traditionally been less studied by historians but formed the core area of the sociologist's interest.**

- According to **Radcliff Brown "sociology is nomothetic, while history is idiographic".** In other words, **sociologists produce generalizations while historians describe unique events.** *This distinction hold true for traditional narrative history, but is only partly true for modern historiography.* There are works for serious historians which abound in generalizations while sometimes sociologists have concerned themselves with the study of unique event. An example of the former is R.H. Tawny's work "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", Weber's thesis "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism". "The Polish Peasant" by Thomas and Zelencki consist of mere description of a peasant family, and therefore, is idiographic as any historical study can be.

- **Further, historical accounts for phenomena like industrial revolution are quite general in nature and have served as source of data for sociological studies.**

- Inspite of those similarities the differences remain. History is primarily concerned with the past and essentially tries to account for change over time while the main focus of sociology, continues to be to search for recruitment patterns and to build generalizations. **However, given such works like Weber's 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' and Pitrim Sorokin's 'Social and Cultural Dynamics', the line for demarcation between history and sociology is becoming increasingly blurred. Yet H.R. Trevor-Roper** has tried to make a weak distinction by stating that historian is concerned with the interplay between **personality and massive social forces** and that **the sociologist is largely concerned with these social forces** themselves. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that historiography and sociology cannot be radically separated. They deal with the same subject matter; viz. men living in societies sometimes from the same point of view and the trends indicate that the two shall continue to borrow from each other extensively.

Today, however, history is far more sociological and social history is the stuff of history. It looks at social patterns, gender relations, mores, customs and important institutions other than the acts of rulers, wars and monarchy. It has been well said that *"sociology without history is rootless and history without sociology is fruitless"*

SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

- Psychology is often defined as **the science of behavior. It involves itself primarily with the individual.** It is interested in her/his intelligence and learning, motivations and memory nervous system and reaction time, hopes and fears.

- **Social psychology, which serves as a bridge between psychology and sociology**, maintains a primary interest in the individual but concerns itself with **the way in which the individual behaves in social groups collectively with other individuals.**

- **Sociology** attempts to **understand behavior as it is organized in society** that is the way in which personality is shaped by different aspects of society. *For instance, economic and political system, their family and kinship structure, their culture, norms and values.* It is interesting to recall that Durkheim who sought to establish a clear scope and method for sociology in his well-known study of suicide left out individual intentions of those who commit or try to commit suicide in favour of statistics concerning various social characteristics of these individuals.

- *J.S. Mill* believed that a general social science could not be considered firmly established, until its inductively established generalizations, can be shown to be also logically deducible from laws of mind. Thus, he clearly sought to establish primacy of psychology over all other social sciences. *Durkheim* on the other hand, made a radical distinction between the phenomena studied by sociology and psychology respectively. **Sociology was to study social facts defined as being external to individual mind and exercising the coercive action upon them.** The explanation of social facts could only be in terms of other social facts, not in terms of psychological facts. **"Society is not simply an aggregate of individuals; it is a system formed by their association and**

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represents a specific level of reality possessing its own characteristics". Thus sociology and psychology are totally separate disciplines. Though, an extreme interpretation of Durkheim might lead to the conclusion that most psychology is social psychology.

● Thus the views of Mill and Durkheim represent two extreme vies. **Most sociologists however have adopted various intermediate positions**. *According to Ginsberg*, "many sociological generalizations can be more firmly established by being related to general psychological laws. Similarly *S. F. Nadal* argued that some problems posed by social enquiry can be illuminated by a move to lower levels of analysis, viz psychology and biology. German scholars like *Dilthey and Max Weber* etc., came to believe that sociological explanations can be further enriched if an attempt is made to understand social behavior in terms of underlying meanings. Such understanding was conceived in terms of 'common senses psychology but neither Dilthey nor Weber was opposed to the development of a scientific psychology in the broad sense and Weber was even sympathetic to some of Freud's ideas.

● Similarly the interdependence of sociology and psychology for the study of human behavior has also been emphasized in the work psychologists belonging to post Freudian School especially *Karen Horney and Erich Fromm.* **The influence of society in moulding individual behavior is given still greater prominence**. **Fromm's concept of social character** is intended precisely **to relate individual psychological characterization to the characteristics of a particular social group of social system.** Inspite of such recognition of complementarities between sociology and psychology, divergence persists between the two. The divergence between sociology and psychology can be illustrated from various studies. *In the study of conflict and war there have been mutually exclusive sociological and psychological explanations. Similarly in the studies of social stratification and political behavior the two disciplines have remained divergent.*

● *According to Bottomore*, in almost every field of enquiry it can be shown that psychology and sociology continue for the most part and two separate universes of study. However, some attempts have been made to bring them together in one of the most valuable works is of *Gerth and Mills.* According to them, **the study of social psychology is an inter-play between individual character and social structure and it can be approached wither from the side of sociology or from the side for biology.** They have even **suggested the concept of role to bridge the gap between the two sciences**. Social role represents a meeting point of the individual organism and the social structure and it is used as a central concept and social structure in the same terms.

Conclusion:
Yet, inspite of these efforts sociology and psychology continue to offer alternate accounts for behavior, and if they are to be brought closer together, it will be necessary to work out more rigorously the conceptual and theoretical links between them.

SOCIOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

- **Modern philosophy and sociology came into existence during one time period to explain the social crisis of Europe in the 19th century**. Sociology aimed, to begin with, to provide a social doctrine that would guide social policy. This aim has now been abandoned. Even then some links exist between sociology and philosophy. **First,** there is a philosophy of sociology in the same sense as a philosophy of science: that is an examination of the methods, concepts and arguments used in sociology.

- **Secondly,** there is a close relationship between sociology and moral & social philosophy. The subject-matter of sociology is human social behavior as guided by values. Moral and social philosophy studies values and the sociologists study values and human valuation as facts. On occasions, the sociologist is made to distinguish between fact and value. It is only by some training that social philosophy becomes competent to distinguish between fact and value.

- **Thirdly,** it can be said that the study of sociology leads to philosophical quest. Durkheim thought that sociology has to necessarily contribute to a renewal of philosophical questions. This made him indulge in some epistemological discussions, a branch of philosophy. *Karl Mannheim* argued that sociology of knowledge had implications for philosophy. Both of them thought that **sociology can make a direct contribution to**

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philosophy. But this is an incorrect approach. Philosophy is the basis of the sociology of knowledge not vice versa.

- *It can also be said here that while sociology leads on to philosophical reflections, much of it also begins there.* Sociological research will become trivial if it ignores the larger problems of social life which are coordinated in philosophical world-views and in social doctrines. **The stimulating character of early Marxism in social research was to a great extent due to the fact the Marxism was not only a sociological theory but also philosophical base was helpful for social research.** Active participation in social movement and commitment to a social doctrine helped Beatrice Webb in her social research.

Conclusion:

In brief, although each social science, including philosophy, has its own specific area of study, there is a growing collaboration and faster cross fertilization among them. The unity of social science is best conceived as a unity of methods and of conceptual segments but not as a universal history.

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology in most countries incorporates archaeology, physical anthropology, cultural history, many branches of linguistics and the study of all aspects of life in "simple societies".

- Our concern here is with **social anthropology and cultural anthropology** for it is that which is close to the study of sociology. Sociology is deemed to be the study of modern, complex societies while social anthropology was deemed to be the study of simple societies.

- As we saw earlier, each discipline has its own history or biography. **Social anthropology** developed in the west at a time when western-trained social anthropologists studied non-European societies often thought of as exotic, barbaric and uncivilized. This unequal relationship between those who studied and those who were studied, remarked upon too often earlier. But times have changed and we have the erstwhile 'natives' be they Indians or Sudanese, Nagas or Santhals, who now speak and write about their own societies.

- In **terms of the method of study**, *social anthropologists developed **a preference of functionalist approach** and filed work as the main technique of data collection.* Functionalist approach proved suitable for social anthropologists because the tribal and agrarian societies of Asia and Africa hardly underwent any social change. *Field work* as a method of data collection was considerable because most of these societies lacked historical records and could be directly observed as functioning whole due to their small size.

- On the other hand sociology continues to be dominated by the historical approach, as can be seen in the works of *L.T. Hobhouse, Max Weber and even Marxian scholars.* However, **the post-colonial period witnessed a new trend towards the convergence of the two disciplines**. One major **factor responsible for this rapprochement** between sociology and social anthropology has been **the rise of new nation states** which, as a result of the process of nation building have acquired a dualistic character. *They have come to acquire the features of both modern industrial societies as well as traditional small scale societies. Therefore the study of these "Developing Societies" requires the use of both sociological as well as social anthropological approach.*

- The anthropologists of the past **documented the details of simple societies apparently in a neutral scientific fashion.** In practice they were constantly comparing those societies with the model of the western modern societies as a benchmark.

- Other changes have also **redefined the nature of sociology and social anthropology**. **Modernity** as we saw led to a process whereby the smallest village was impacted by global processes. The most obvious example is colonialism. The most remote village of India under British colonialism saw its land laws and administration change, its revenue extraction alters, its manufacturing industries collapsed. Contemporary global processes have further accentuated this shrinking of the globe. The assumption of studying a simple society was that it was bounded. We know this is not so today.

- **The traditional study of simple, non-literate societies by social anthropology had a pervasive influence on the content and the subject matter of the discipline**. Social anthropology tended to study society (simple societies) in all their aspects, as wholes. In so far as they specialized, it was on the basis of area as for example the Andaman Islands, the Nuers or Melanesia.

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- **Sociologists study complex societies** and would therefore often focus on parts of society like the bureaucracy or religion or caste or a process such as social mobility.
- **Social anthropology was characterized by long field work tradition,** living in the community studied and using ethnographic research methods. **Sociologists have often relied on survey method and quantitative data** using statistics and the questionnaire mode.
- **Today the distinction between a simple society and a complex one itself needs major rethinking.** India itself is a complex **mix of tradition and modernity, of the village and the city, of caste and tribe, of class and community.** Villages exists in the heart of the capital city of Delhi. Call centres serve European and American clients from different towns of the country.
- **Indian sociology has been far more eclectic in borrowing from both traditions. Indian sociologists often studied Indian societies that were both part of and not of one's own culture.** It could also be dealing with both complex differentiated societies of urban modern India as well as the study of tribes in a holistic fashion.
- **It had been feared that with the decline of simple societies, social anthropology would lose its specificity and merge with sociology.** However, there have been fruitful interchanges between the two disciplines and today often methods and techniques are drawn from both. There have been anthropological studies of the state and globalization, which are very different from the traditional subject matter of social anthropology. On the other hand, sociology too has been using quantitative and qualitative techniques, macro and micro approaches for studying the complexities of modern societies. For in India, sociology and social anthropology have had a very close relationship.
- Besides this, t**he diffusion of Marxist approach in social anthropology**, as a result of the works of Block, Sodden and Godlier, etc. have acted as a bridge between the disciplines. **On the other hand even sociologists working modern industrial societies like America have increasingly started to rely upon the methods of social anthropology**. For example, the works of Talcott Parsons and R.K. Merton are attempts towards an adaptation of functionalist approach to study industrial societies and **William Whyte has adopted participant observation for the study of modern industrial society.** Thus the disciplines are increasingly merging into each other.

Special Notes:

Importance Of Sociology

- **Sociology makes a scientific study of society:** Prior to the emergence of sociology the study of society was carried on in an unscientific manner and society had never been the central concern of any science. It is through the study of sociology that the truly scientific study of the society has been possible. Sociology because of its bearing upon many of the problems of the present world has assumed such a great importance that it is considered to be the best approach to all the social sciences.
- **Sociology studies role of the institutions in the development of the individuals:** It is through sociology that scientific study of the great social institutions and the relation of the individual to each is being made. The home and family ,the school and educaton,the church and religion, the state and government ,industry and work ,the community and association, these are institutions through which society functions. Sociology studies these institutions and their role in the development of the individual and suggests suitable measures for restrengthening them with a view to enable them to serve the individual better.
- **Study of sociology is indispensable for understanding and planning of society:** Society is a complex phenomenon with a multitude of intricacies. It is impossible to understand and solve its numerous problems without support of sociology. It is rightly said that we cannot understand and mend society without any knowledge of its mechanism and construction. Without the investigation carried out by sociology no real effective social planning would be possible. It helps us to determine the most efficient means for reaching the goals agreed upon. A certain amount of knowledge about society is necessary before any social policies can be carried out.

- **Sociology is of great importance in the solution of social problems:** The present world is suffering from many problems which can be solved through scientific study of the society. It is the task of sociology to study the social problems through the methods of scientific research and to find out solution to them. The scientific study of human affairs will ultimately provide the body of knowledge and principles that will enable us to control the conditions of social life and improve them.
- **Sociology has drawn our attention to the intrinsic worth and dignity of man:** Sociology has been instrumental in changing our attitude towards human beings. In a specialized society we are all limited as to the amount of the whole organization and culture that we can experience directly. We can hardly know the people of other areas intimately. In order to have insight into and appreciation of the motives by which others live and the conditions under which they exist a knowledge of sociology is essential.
- **Sociology has changed our outlook with regard to the problems of crime etc:** It is through the study of sociology that our whole outlook on various aspects of crime has change. The criminals are now treated as human beings suffering from mental deficiencies and efforts are accordingly made to rehabilitate them as useful members of the society.
- **Sociology has made great contribution to enrich human culture:** Human culture has been made richer by the contribution of sociology. The social phenomenon is now understood in the light of scientific knowledge and enquiry. According to Lowie most of us harbor the comfortable delusion that our way of doing things is the only sensible if not only possible one. Sociology has given us training to have rational approach to questions concerning oneself, one's religion,customs,morals and institutions. It has further taught us to be objective, critical and dispassionate. It enables man to have better understanding both of himself and of others. By comparative study of societies and groups other than his existence ,his life becomes richer and fuller than it would otherwise be. Sociology also impresses upon us the necessity of overcoming narrow personal prejudices, ambitions and class hatred.
- **Sociology is of great importance in the solution of international problems:** The progress made by physical sciences has brought the nations of the world nearer to each other. But in the social field the world has been left behind by the revolutionary progress of the science. The world is divided politically giving rise to stress and conflict. Men have failed to bring in peace. Sociology can help us in understanding the underlying causes and tensions.
- **The value of sociology lies in the fact that it keeps us update on modern situations:** It contributes to making good citizens and finding solutions to the community problems. It adds to the knowledge of the society. It helps the individual find his relation to society. The study of social phenomena and of the ways and means of promoting what Giddens calls social adequacy is one of the most urgent needs of the modern society. Sociology has a strong appeal to all types of mind through its direct bearing upon many of the initial problems of the present world.

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Sociology as Science

CSE MAINS Syllabus:
- ✓ *Science, scientific method and critique.*
- ✓ *Major theoretical strands of Sociology.*
- ✓ *Positivism and its critique.*
- ✓ *Non-positivist methodologies.*

SCIENCE, SCIENTIFIC METHOD AND CRITIQUE

Science is "a systematized body of knowledge". An essential feature of scientific knowledge is that it is based upon 'sensory observation or empirical data'. Next, the *information acquired through sensory observation has been made meaningful and manageable.* Thus science tries to arrive at *'law like explanatory generalizations'.* For the purpose of acquiring empirical data and for processing them into law like statements science relies on a '**method**'. *The basic elements of SCIENTIFIC METHOD are:*

a) *Observation of an event that stimulates thinking.*
b) *Defining or classifying the terms or events being considered.*
c) *Formulating the research issue or hypothesis.*
d) *Generating a theory or proposition - a general statement that serves as a potential answer to the research question.*
e) *Creating a research design in order to test whether the theory or proposition is valid.*
f) *Collecting data-working through the research design to make observations.*
g) *Analyzing the data*
h) *Making conclusions and evaluating the theory.*

The earliest sciences to grow were *physical and natural sciences.* *Due to their success in exploring the physical and natural world and in being able to arrive at near universal laws, they came to be viewed as models for other sciences to emulate.*

Physical and natural sciences try to rely on measurement and quantification of data. Quantification brings in exactitude and makes precise comparisons possible. Sociology, being a late comer was also influenced and developed under the shadow of these positive sciences. Early sociologists conceived Sociology as a positive science. For example, influenced by biology, **Herbert Spencer viewed society as an organism like entity; a unified whole made up of interconnected parts.** He advocated methods of positive sciences to be used for the study of social phenomena.

Even Durkheim regarded Sociology to be a positive science. According to him social facts constitute the subject matter of Sociology. *He defined social facts in such a way that they were amenable to sensory observation and exploratory generalization about them could be made by using positive science methods.* Subsequently, *Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski and even Parsons continue to view Sociology as a positive science and so did most of the Chicago School sociologists.*

"Scientific Method is a systematic and objective attempt to study a problem for the purpose of deriving general principles". **Robert Burns** describes it as "a systematic investigation to find solutions to a problem". The investigation is guided by previously collected information. Man's

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knowledge grows by studying what is already known and revising past knowledge in the light of new findings.

- While talking of research, sometimes we talk of empirical (scientific) research and sometimes of library research, historical research, social research, and so on. **Empirical research** involves *observation of facts or interaction with people.* Library research is done in library situation. Historical research is the study of history (e.g., functioning of caste system in different periods of history) or biographical research (e.g., research into the life and times of Mahatma Gandhi). Social research is a research that focuses on the study of human groups or the processes of social interaction. *Scientific research is building of knowledge through collection of empirically verifiable facts. The term 'verifiable' here mans "which can be checked by others for accuracy".*

- **Royce A. Singleton and Bruce C. Straits** have said that *"scientific social research consists of the process of formulating and seeking answers to questions about the social world".* For example, *why do husbands batter their wives? Why do people take drugs? What are the consequences of population explosion?* And so on. Similarly, *the issues of inquiry may be of rural poverty, urban slums, youth crime, political corruption, exploitation of the weak, environmental pollution, and the like.* To answer these questions, social scientists have devised basic guidelines, principles and techniques. *Scientific sociological research, broadly speaking, is concerned with discovering, organizing and developing systematic reliable knowledge about society or social life, social action, social behaviour, social relations, social groups (like families, castes, tribes, communities, etc.), social organizations (like social, religious, political, business, etc.), and social systems and social structures.*

- **Theodorson and Theodorson have maintained that scientific method is** *"building of a body of scientific knowledge through observation, experimentation, generalization and verification".* Their contention is that scientific inquiry develops knowledge experienced through the senses, i.e., which is based on empirical evidence. **According to Manheim,** scientific research involves a method characterized by objectivity, accuracy and systematization. Objectivity eliminates biases in fact-collection and interpretation: Accuracy makes sure that things are exactly as described. Systematization aims at consistency and comprehension.

- The assumption is that any statement pertaining to *any social phenomenon made on the basis of scientific inquiry can be accepted as true and meaningful, if it is empirically verifiable.* Thus, *individual's idiosyncratic observations not shared by all scientists are not regarded as 'scientific facts'.* **For example,** a statement that *"skilled workers are more undisciplined than non-skilled workers" lacks empirical validity;* hence no one will accept it as a 'scientific fact'. But, if a statement is given that *"the important cause of child's delinquent behaviour is a disorganized family", it will be taken as scientific,* considering it a proposition which has been found valid in a number of studies. "About whom" the facts will be collected in a scientific inquiry will depend upon the 'focus of the discipline' to which the researcher belongs. If the researcher is a sociologist, he will collect facts about social phenomena or social world.

- *Although scientific research method depends on the collection of empirical facts, yet facts alone do not constitute a science. For meaningful understanding facts must be ordered in some fashion, analysed, generalized, and related to other facts. Thus, theory construction is a vital part of the scientific inquiry.* Since facts collected and findings evolved through the scientific method are interrelated with the previous findings of other scholars or earlier theories, *scientific knowledge is a cumulative process.*

- *The scientific method could either be an inductive method or the deductive method.* **Inductive method** involves establishing generalizations, i.e., building generalizations inferred from specific facts, or drawing particular principles from general instances, while **Deductive method** involves testing generalizations, i.e., it is the process of reasoning from general principles to particular instances.

Characteristics of Scientific Research

Horton and Hunt have given following nine characteristics of scientific method :

Verifiable evidence, i.e., factual observations which other observers can see and check.

Accuracy, i.e., describing what really exists. It means truth or correctness of a statement or *describing things exactly as they are* and avoiding jumping to unwarranted conclusions either by exaggeration or fantasizing.

Precision, i.e., making it as exact as necessary, or *giving exact number or measurement.* Instead of saying, "I interviewed a large number of people", one says, "I interviewed 493 persons". Instead of saying, "most of the people were against family planning", one says, "seventy-two per cent people were against family planning". Thus, in scientific precision, one avoids colorful literature and vague meanings. *How much precision is needed in social science will depend upon what the situation requires.*

Systematization, i.e., *attempting to find all the relevant data, or collecting data in a systematic and organized way so that the conclusions drawn are reliable.* Data based on casual recollections are generally incomplete and give unreliable judgments and conclusions.

Objectivity, i.e., *being free from all biases and vested interests.* It means, observation is unaffected by the observer's values, beliefs and preferences to the extent possible and he is able to see and accept facts as they are, not as he might wish them to be. *The researcher remains detached from his emotions, prejudices and needs, and guards his biases.*

Recording, i.e., *jotting down complete details as quickly as possible. Since human memory is falliable, all data collected are recorded.* Researcher will not depend on the recalled facts but will analyse the problem on the basis of the recorded data. Conclusions based on recalled unrecorded data are not trust worthy.

Controlling conditions, i.e., *controlling all variables except one and then attempting to examine what happens when that variable is varied.* This is the basic technique in all scientific experimentation-allowing one variable to vary while holding all other variables constant. Unless all variables except one have been controlled, we cannot be sure which variable has produced the results. Though a physical scientist is able to control as many variables as he wishes in an experiment he conducts in the laboratory but a social scientist cannot control all variables as he wishes. He functions under many constraints.

Training investigators, i.e., imparting necessary knowledge to investigators to make them understand what to look for, how to interpret it and avoid inaccurate data collection. When some remarkable observations are reported, the scientist first tries to know what is the observer's level of education, training and sophistication. Does he really understand facts he reports? The scientists are always impressed by authenticated reports.

Major Steps in Scientific Research

According to Theodorson and Theodorson, scientific method involves the following steps :

- First, **the problem is defined.**
- Second, **the problem is stated in terms of a particular theoretical framework** and related to relevant findings of previous research.
- Third, **a hypothesis** (or hypotheses) relating to the problem is devised, utilizing previously accepted theoretical principles.
- Fourth, **the procedure to be used in gathering data to test the hypothesis** is determined.
- Fifth, **the data regathered**.
- Sixth, the data are **analysed** to determine if the **hypothesis is verified or rejected**.
- Finally, **the conclusions of the study are related to the original body of theory,** which is modified in accordance with the new findings.

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Kenneth D. Baily has delineated five stages of social research :

• Choosing the **research problem and stating the hypotheses**;
• Formulating the **research design**;
• Gathering **the data**;
• **Analyzing the data**; and
• Interpreting the results so as to **test the hypotheses**.

Horton and Hunt have pointed out eight steps in scientific research or scientific method of investigation:

• **Define the problem,** which is worth studying through the methods of science.
• **Review literature,** so that errors of other research scholars may not be repeated.
• **Formulate the hypothesis,** i.e., propositions which can be tested.
• **Plan the research design,** i.e., outlining the process as to how, what and where the data is to be collected, processed and analysed.
• **Collect the data,** i.e., actual collection of facts and information in accordance with the research design. Sometimes it may become necessary to change the design to meet some unforeseen difficulty.
• **Analyse the data,** i.e., classify, tabulate and compare the data, making whatever tests are necessary to get the results.
• **Draw conclusions,** i.e., whether the original hypothesis is found true or false and is confirmed or rejected, or are the results inconclusive? What has the research added to our knowledge? What implications have it for sociological theory? What new questions have been posed for further research?
• **Replicate the study.** Though the above-mentioned seven steps complete a single research study but research findings are confirmed by replication. Only after several researches can the research conclusions be accepted as generally true.

The important uses of scientific research in Sociology are:

• *It improves decision-making;*
• *It reduces uncertainty;*
• *It enables adopting new strategies;*
• *It helps in planning for the future; and*
• *It helps in ascertaining trends.*

It is because of this value of scientific research that today many sociologists are engaged in research-some on full-time basis and some on part-time basis. Many university teachers divide their time between teaching and research. The funds for research are provided by the UGC, UCSSR, UNICEF, Ministry of Welfare and Justice, Government of India, World Bank.

The scientific inquiry should not be conducted when availability of adequate data is doubtful, there is time constraint, cost (of inquiry) is higher than value, and no tactical decisions need to be made.

CRITIQUES PROPOSITION:

However, the attempts to build Sociology as a positive science were criticized by Non Positivist and Anti-Positivist. Critics have raised many questions regarding this. Following are some of the main limitations which come in the way of Sociology being a Positive Science:

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- **Problem of Experimentation:** Experimentation is *crucial in scientific observation to establish precise relationships between different variables.* However, *experimentation is only rarely possible in Sociology. The limitations are both practical and ethical.* It is *practically not possible to control human behaviour in a laboratory like situation and it is even ethnically undesirable to treat humans like guinea and pigs.* However, experimentation is not essential feature of a science. There are mature sciences like astronomy where experiments cannot be conducted. *Thus inability to conduct experiments does not automatically disqualify Sociology from being a science.*

- **Problem of Quantification:** *Although some aspects of sociological phenomena can be quantified using statistical methods.* But, a large part of it is essentially qualitative in nature and hence are not amendable to quantitative techniques. Even, the attempts of Neo-positivist to apply quantitative techniques to sociological phenomena have met with little success.

- **Problem of Generalization:** *Sociologists have not being successful in arriving at law-like generalizations through their studies. The reason for this failure lies in the very nature of the subject matter of Sociology. Human behaviour does not follow recurrent patterns like physical objects. Man is volitional by nature and human volition plays an important role in shaping human behaviour.* Quite often some of the human behaviour is unique and unrepeatable, further more due to inability carry out experimentation, precise causal relations cannot be established. *At best sociologists can establish statistical correlations.* The generalizations which sociologist make are often in the nature of statements, representing trends of tendency statements.

- **Problem of Objectivity :** Objectivity refers to a frame of mind whereby the personal prejudices and predilections of the scientists do not contaminate the collection and analysis of data. However, it has been found that objectivity is a near impossibility in sociological research. At best the sociologist can try to minimize subjectivity.

Problems of Objectivity (For Short Question)

- Objectivity is a goal of scientific investigation. Sociology also being a science aspires for the goal objectivity. Objectivity is a frame of mind so that personal prejudices, preferences or predilections of the social scientists do not contaminate the collection of analysis of data. Thus scientific investigations should be free from prejudices of race, color, religion, sex or ideological biases.

- The need of objectivity in sociological research has been emphasized by all important sociologists. For example Durkheim in the Rules of the Sociological Method stated that social facts must be treated as things and all preconceived notions about social facts must be abandoned. Even Max Weber emphasized the need of objectivity when he said that sociology must be value free. According to Radcliff Brown the social scientist must abandon or transcend his ethnocentric and egocentric biases while carrying out researches. Similarly Malinowski advocated cultural relativism while anthropological field work in order to ensure objectivity.

- However objectivity continues to be an elusive goal at the practical level. In fact one school of thought represented by Gunnar Myrdal states that total objectivity is an illusion which can never be achieved. Because all research is guided by certain viewpoints and view points involve subjectivity.Myrdal suggested that the basic viewpoints should be made clear. Further he felt that subjectivity creeps in at various stages in the course of sociological research. Merton believes that the very choice of topic is influenced by personal preferences and ideological biases of the researcher.

- Besides personal preferences the ideological biases acquired in the course of education and training has a bearing on the choice of the topic of research. The impact of ideological biases on social-research can be very far-reaching as seen from the study of Tepostalan village in Mexico. Robert Redfield studied it with functionalist perspective and concluded that there exists total harmony between various groups in the village while Oscar Lewis studied this village at almost the same time from Marxist perspective and found that the society was conflict ridden. Subjectivity can also creep in at the time of formulation of hypotheses. Normally hypotheses are deduced from existing body of theory. All sociological theories are produced by and limited to particular groups whose viewpoints and interests they represent. Thus formulation of hypotheses will automatically introduce a bias in the sociological research. The third stage at which subjectivity creeps in the course of research is that of collection of empirical data. No technique of data collection is perfect. Each technique may lead to subjectivity in

one way or the other. In case of participant observation the observer as a result of nativisation acquires a bias in favour of the group he is studying. While in non-participant observation of the sociologist belongs to a different group than that under study he is likely to impose his values and prejudices.

- In all societies there are certain prejudices which affect the research studies. In case of interview as a technique the data may be influenced by context of the interview, the interaction of the participants, and participant's definition of the situation and if adequate rapport does not extend between them there might be communication barriers. Thus according to P.V Young interview sometimes carries a subjectivity. Finally it can also affect the field limitations as reported by Andre Beteille study of Sripuram village in Tanjore where the Brahmins did not allow him to visit the untouchable locality and ask their point of view.

- Thus complete objectivity continues to be an elusive goal. The researcher should make his value preference clear in research monograph. Highly trained and skilled research workers should be employed. Various methods of data collection research should be used and the result obtained from one should be cross-checked with those from the other. Field limitations must be clearly stated in the research monograph.

Theory and Facts (For Short Question)

There is an intricate relation between theory and fact. The popular understanding of this relationship obscures more than it illuminates. They are generally conceived as direct opposites. Theory is confused with speculation and theory remains speculation until it is proved. When this proof is made, theory becomes fact. Facts are thought to be definite, certain, without question and their meaning to be self-evident. Science is thought to be concerned with facts alone. Theory is supposed to be realm of philosophers. Scientific theory is therefore thought to be merely summation of facts that have been accumulated upon a given subject. However if we observe the way scientists actually do research, it becomes clear 1. Theory and fact are not diametrically opposed but inextricably intertwined.2. Theory is not speculation.3.Scientists are very much concerned with both theory and facts. **A fact** is regarded as an empirically verifiable observation. A theory refers to the relationship between facts or to the ordering of them in some meaningful way. Facts of science are the product of observations that are not random but meaningful, i.e., theoretically relevant. Therefore we cannot think of facts and theory as being opposed rather they are interrelated in many complex ways. The development of science can be considered as a constant interplay between theory and fact.

Theory is a tool of science in these ways
1.it defines the major orientation of a science, by defining the kinds of data that are to be abstracted.
2.it offers a conceptual scheme by which the relevant phenomena are systematized, classified and interrelated.
3.it summarizes facts into empirical generalizations and systems of generalizations.
4. It predicts facts and
5. It points to gaps in our knowledge.
On the other hand facts are also productive of theory in these ways :
(1) Facts help to initiate theories.
(2) They lead to the reformulation of existing theory.
(3) They cause rejection of theories that do not fit the facts.
(4) They change the focus and orientation of theory and
(5) they clarify and redefine theory.

There is interplay between theory and fact. Although popular opinion thinks of theory as being opposed to fact since theory is mere speculation, observation of what scientists actually do suggests that fact and theory stimulate each other. The growth of science is seen is seen in new facts and new theory. Facts take their ultimate meaning from the theories which summarize them, classify them, predict them, point them out and define them. However theory may direct the scientific process, facts in turn play a significant role in the development of theory. New and anomalous facts may initiate new theories. New observations lead to the rejection and reformulation of existing theory or may demand that we redefine our theories. Concepts which had seemed definite in meaning are clarified by the specific facts relating to them. The

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sociologist must accept the responsibilities of the scientists who must see fact in theory and theory in fact. This is more difficult than philosophic speculation about reality or the collection of superficial certainties but it leads more surely to the achievement of scientific truth about social behavior.

In the light of above limitations, it is hard to admit that Sociology can be a positive science. Certain sociologists like **Max Weber have *questioned the very idea that Sociology can ever be a positive science. According to him social reality is qualitatively different from physical and natural reality. Thus the subject matter of social science is qualitatively different from that of physical and natural sciences.*** Social sciences study the human behaviour which is guided by meanings and motives, and any attempt to study human behaviour would be incomplete unless it takes into account these meanings and motives. Thus Weber finds use of positive science methods alone as inadequate for the study of human behaviour in society. According to him they must be supplemented with additional methods especially relevant to social sciences like the Verstehen approach and ideal type.

Further, the limitations that are encountered in the study of social phenomena are inherent in the very subject matter of Sociology and do not. In fact, even matured sciences like physics encountered similar problems because of the nature of the subject matter, the exactitude of microphysics is lost when we study the behaviour of sub-atomic particles and sometimes even predictability is not possible as can be seen from Heisenberg's Uncertainty principle. *Thus Sociology is a science since it fulfill the basic requirements of the science viz. it has perspective, a consensus with regard to subject matter and a set of methods to explore the subject matter, it may not be called a positive science but it is definitely a social science.*

There are two views about the "Value neutrality and objectivity" in scientific investigation

*One that science and scientists can be value-free other that science and researchers cannot be value-free. **Weber accepts the former position. He thinks that if a researcher separates his daily life from his professional role, he can be free of biases.*** On the other hand, **Gouldner** believes that "value-free science is a myth, though it is desirable". **Manheim** says: *"Value-free research is a desirable goal towards which social scientists can strive without any necessary expectation of actually attaining it".* This becomes possible when the social scientists remains careful in choosing the problem of research and states what he finds, i.e. follows data wherever they lead, regardless of how much the conclusions may please or displease him or the research consumer."

The term 'value' here does not have an economic connotation. Value is an abstract generalized principle of behaviour expressed in concrete form in social norms to which the members of a group feel a strong commitment. 'Scientific inquiry/investigation presents facts as they are; while a scientist has a moral responsibility of giving findings without any biases and prejudices, motivation for a scientist in conducting research is curiosity, developing theory and interest in change.

According to Mills and Wordsworth:
- *Objectivity is unattainable,*
- *Some standpoint or value judgment is necessary for solving social problems,*
- *Our socialization is based on values which direct our thinking and action,*
- *disclosing bias or personal belief is less dangerous than pretending to be value free, and*
- *Social sciences are normative.*
  Apart from studying what it is, they should also be concerned with what ought to be.
  Radical critics claim that behind a façade of objectivity and neutrality, some social scientists compromise their research talents in the support of the interests of the funding agencies. **Frederichs** has

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even gone to the extent of saying that these unethical scientists have even supported racism, militarism and other forms' of oppression.

But some scholars like Horton and Bouma, referring particularly to sociological research is of the opinion that the issue whether sociological research has been widely corrupted in this manner (of supporting even oppression) may be debated.

Becker has said that it is indisputable that problems of bias and partisanship and present in all research and that research findings are often helpful to the interests of some people and damaging to other people.

Sociology as a value-free science (For Short Question)

The subject matter of sociology is human behavior in society. All social behavior is guided by values. Thus the study of social behavior can never be value-free if value freedom is interpreted in the sense of absence of values because values of the society under investigation form a part of the social facts to be studied by sociology. Moreover social research is in itself a type of social behavior and is guided by the value of search for true knowledge. Then what is meant as clarified by Max Weber value-free sociology means that the sociologist while carrying social research must confine called value relevance. Thus the values can operate at three levels:

- *At the level of philological interpretation.*
- *At the level of ethical interpretation in assigning value to an object of enquiry.*
- *At the level of rational interpretation in which the sociologists seeks the meaningful relationship between phenomena in terms of causal analysis. The point of value interpretation is to establish the value towards which an activity is directed.*

Sociologists should observe value neutrality while conducting social research. It means that he should exclude ideological or non -scientific assumption from research. He should not make evaluative judgment about empirical evidence. Value judgment should be restricted to sociologists' area of technical competence. He should make his own values open and clear and refrain from advocating particular values. Value neutrality enables the social scientists to fulfill the basic value of scientific enquiry that is search for true knowledge. Thus sociology being a science cherishes the goal of value neutrality. According to Alvin Gouldner value-free principle did enhance the autonomy of sociology where it could steadily pursue basic problems rather than journalistically react to passing events and allowed it more freedom to pursue questions uninteresting either to the respectable or to the rebellious. It made sociology freer as Comte had wanted it to be -to pursue all its own theoretical implications. Value free principle did contribute to the intellectual growth and emancipation of the enterprise.Value-free doctrine enhanced freedom from moral compulsiveness; it permitted a partial escape from the parochial prescriptions of the sociologists' local or native culture. Effective internalization of the value-free principle has always encouraged at least a temporary suspension of the moralizing reflexes built into the sociologist by his own society. The value-free doctrine has a paradoxical potentiality; it might enable men to make better value judgments rather than none. It could encourage a habit of mind that might help men in discriminating between their punitive drives and their ethical sentiments. However in practice it has been extremely difficult to fulfill this goal of value neutrality. Values creep in various stages in sociological research. According to Gunnar Myrdal total value neutrality is impossible. 'Chaos does not organize itself into cosmos. We need view points.' Thus in order to carry out social research viewpoints are needed which form the basis of hypothesis which enables the social scientists to collect empirical data. These view-points involve valuations and also while formulating the hypothesis. Thus a sociologist has to be value frank and should make the values which have got incorporated in the choice of the topic of the research of the formulation of hypothesis clear and explicit at the very outset in the research. The value-free doctrine is useful both to those who want to escape from the world and to those who want to escape into it. They think of sociology as a way of getting ahead in the world by providing them with neutral techniques that may be sold on the open market to any buyer. The belief that it is not the business of

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sociologist to make value judgments is taken by some to mean that the market on which they can vend their skills is unlimited. Some sociologists have had no hesitation about doing market research designed to sell more cigarettes although well aware of the implications of recent cancer research. According to Gouldner the value-free doctrine from Weber's standpoint is an effort to compromise two of the deepest traditions of the western thought, reason and faith but that his arbitration seeks to safeguard the romantic residue in modern man. Like Freud, Weber never really believed in an enduring peace or in a final resolution of this conflict. What he did was to seek a truce through the segregation of the contenders by allowing each to dominate in different spheres of life.

Sociology As Interpretative Discipline (For Short Question)

The positivistic approach to sociology tends to assume that society can shape the behavior of its members almost completely through socialization. However there is a section of sociologist who regards the above view as an over-socialized conception of man. They do not accept the belief that an individual is simply the society writ small. According to them each individual's personality carries an imprint to his unique experience along with the socially transmitted world view. Also they draw attention to the mercurial nature of man and they see in the positivistic approach an attempt to reduce man to a passive being. But these sociologists have not altogether rejected the positivist approach rather they find it inadequate and seek to supplement it with new approaches which look for new data and adopt new methods. These sociologists see their discipline as somewhat akin to literature than to natural sciences in the sense that they seek to reflect the pattern of meaning in a set of observation they have made. However there is no total consensus among these critics of positivist approach. One aspect they share in common is that they all emphasize on the importance of underlying meanings in order to understand social behavior otherwise these critics differ significantly among themselves.

One extreme there exists anti-positivist approach like that of ethnomethodologists and on the other hand there are moderate critics of positivism like Max Weber whose approach tries to build a bridge between positivist approach and extreme form of interactionism.According to Weber social reality is characterized by the presence of geist or consciousness. Due to the presence of consciousness people ascribe meanings to the situation around them which include other people too. These meanings influence the subsequent behaviour.Consequently any attempt to understand social reality must take into account these meanings and motives. These meanings ascribed by the people are partly determined by cultural norms and partly shaped by the personal experiences of the individual actors. Thus an attempt to understand social behavior should not stop simply at observation from without instead it should involve interpretation of the underlying meanings and motives. This requires the use of new method through which an empathetic liaison can be established between the observer and the actor. Empathetic liaison means that the observer tries to place himself imaginatively in the actor's position. The sociologist should try to figure out meanings and motives given by the actor. In terms of these meanings and motives he then tries to rationally explain the actor's behavior. This is the essence of Verstehen Approach advocated by Max Weber.

Other interpretative sociologists those identified as Symbolic Interactionist are content to operate with a relatively simple set of assumption about how we come to know about social phenomena. They accept the meaning that the actors attribute to social phenomena at the face value and proceed to erect their systematic interpretations on these foundations. The term symbolic interactionist used because it is through symbols that meanings, motives and attributes are conveyed. Thus an understanding of symbols can help in understanding the meanings conveyed by actors involved in the interacting situation. For example a cross x may symbolize a barbarian method of execution or a religious movement. V-sign signifies victory where Winston Churchill elevated the gesture to a symbol of national aspiration. The assumptions underlying symbolic interactionism are

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1. The individual and society are regarded, as inseparable for the individual can become a human being only in a social context.
2. Human beings are viewed as acting on the basis of meaning that they give to the objects and events rather than simply reacting either to external stimuli such as social forces or internal stimuli such as drives.
3. Meanings arise from the process of interaction rather than being simply present at the outset. To some degree meanings are created, modified, developed and changed within interactive situation rather than being fixed and preformed.
4. Meanings are the result of interpretative procedures employed by actors within interactions context by taking the role of others; actors interpret the meanings and intentions of others. By means of mechanism of self-interaction, individuals modify or change definitions of their situation rehearse alternative course of interactions and consider their possible consequences. These meanings that guide actions arise in the context of interaction via a series of complex interpretative procedures.
5. The methodology of symbolic interactionism as advocated by Herbert Blumer demands that the sociologist must immerse himself in the area of life that he seek to investigate. Rather than attempting to fill data into predefined categories, he must attempt to grasp the actor's view of social reality. Since action is directed by actor meanings the sociologist must catch the process of interpretation through which the actors construct their action. This means, he must take the role of the acting unit whose behavior he studies.

Another approach belonging to social anthropology that can also be categorized as an interpretive approach starts with a description of commonly accepted meanings that people attribute to social phenomena. Mere description of such meanings would simply amount to an ethnographic study of the people - an account of their culture. These sociologists are interested in understanding social phenomena in general terms. Accordingly they must move beyond to find meaning of the phenomena and try to discover patterns and regularities in these meanings that they can represent as cultural themes. Further patterns and regularities running through themes may in turn be represented as configuration of themes which taken together may be held to characterize the essential characteristics of a culture. In this way the social anthropologist Ruth Benedict characterizes the cultures of some American Indian People as Dionysian that is given to extreme and frenzied state of being and other as apollonian always seeking moderation in behavior and cultural expressions. She achieved this by tracing these features through wide range of their manifestation in the cultures of the people she examined. These interpretations of meanings at different levels of abstractions are all informed and guided by the ultimate motive establishing concepts that provide sociologist with a general way of understanding human activities and beliefs. There is yet another set of sociologists -those identified as Ethnomethodologists- who try to analyze the commonsense nature of social interactions.

The accumulated commonsense of generation results in pattern of behavioral topicalities. Social order is dependent upon people behaving in a commonsense way. Thus, social interaction must be interpreted in terms of these commonsense meanings, however for ethnomethodologist the basic problem of Sociology goes back even further than this. They begin with the assumption that society exists only in so far as members perceive its existence. So member's view of social reality must be understood. But sociologists must also be concerned with processes by which people come to establish meanings in social phenomena. They say that the aim of sociology should not be simply to identify and record the meanings that people have ascribed to situation but to understand the ways in which they generate those meanings in the first place. The idea that it is important to understand how the world looks to those who live in it is approved of by these sociologists, but they argue that the final emphasis should be on the ways in which the members of society come to see their world in the ways they do. Harold Garfinkel and Circourel are some of the important Ethnomethodologists.Since most meanings are transmitted through symbols, sociologists who want to study the interpreted procedures which members of the society use to attribute

meaning typically focus their attention upon speech exchanges in which the participants are involve in making sense of each other talk.

The emphasis is upon the study of ways in which people in actual situation of interaction come to see what the other person is meaning. Circourel's study of Juvenile Delinquency is an example where he traces the way in which young people come to be categorized as juvenile delinquents by the police, probationary officers and courts so on.

The account of information which interpretative sociologists require to substantiate their analysis is quite different from the information needed by positivistic sociologists. Therefore new sources of information are made use of however quite often even those methods of data collection which are used by positivist sociologist are also made use of by interpretative sociologist. For example Weber relied on official statistical records and historical documents in his study of 'The Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism' direct observation is also frequently used accompanied by extensive verbatim recording of conversational exchange among the actors involved. Sometimes laboratory techniques have also been used as in the well-known experiment by Garfinkel when students were asked to take part in an experiment with Psycho-therapeutic procedures. The other methods of data collection used by interpretative sociologists include the case-studies, use of life histories, personal diaries and correspondence and other biographical records to provide insights into the subjective dimension of the social behavior.

MAJOR THEORETICAL STRANDS (PERSPECTIVES) OF SOCIOLOGY

Facts never interpret themselves. To make sense out of life, we use our common sense. That is, to understand our experiences (our "facts"), we place them into a framework of more-or-less related ideas. Sociologists do this, too, but they place their observations into a conceptual framework called a theory. A **theory** is a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work. It is an explanation of how two or more "facts" are related to one another.

FUNCTIONALISM

- The central idea of **functional analysis** is that society is a whole unit, made up of interrelated parts that work together. Functional analysis (also known as *functionalism* and *structural functionalism*) is rooted in the origins of sociology. Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer viewed society as a kind of living organism. Just as a person or animal has organs that function together, they wrote, so does society. And like an organism, if society is to function smoothly, its parts must work together in harmony.
- Emile Durkheim also viewed society as being composed of many parts, each with its own function. When all the parts of society fulfill their functions, society is in a "normal" state. If they do not fulfill their functions, society is in an "abnormal" or "pathological" state. To understand society, then, functionalists say that we need to look at both *structure* (how the parts of a society fit together to make the whole) and *function* (what each part does, how it contributes to society).
- **Robert Merton and Functionalism.** Robert Merton (1910–2003) dismissed the organic analogy, but he did maintain the essence of functionalism—the image of society as a whole composed of parts that work together. Merton used the term *functions* to refer to the beneficial consequences of people's actions: Functions help keep a group (society, social system) in balance. In contrast, *dysfunctions* are consequences that harm a society: They undermine a system's equilibrium.

- Functions can be either manifest or latent. If an action is *intended* to help some part of a system, it is a *manifest function.* For example, suppose that government officials become concerned about our low rate of childbirth. Congress offers a $10,000 bonus for every child born to a married couple. The intention, or manifest function, of the bonus is to increase childbearing within the family unit. Merton pointed out that people's actions can also have *latent functions;* that is, they can have *unintended* consequences that help a system adjust. Let's suppose that the bonus works. As the birth rate jumps, so does the sale of diapers and baby furniture. Because the benefits to these businesses were not the intended consequences, they are latent functions of the bonus.

- Of course, human actions can also hurt a system. Because such consequences usually are unintended, Merton called them *latent dysfunctions.* Let's assume that the government has failed to specify a "stopping point" with regard to its bonus system. To collect more bonuses, some people keep on having children. The more children they have, however, the more they need the next bonus to survive. Large families become common, and poverty increases. Welfare is reinstated, taxes jump, and the nation erupts in protest. Because these results were not intended and because they harmed the social system, they would be latent dysfunctions of the bonus program.

- **In Sum:** From the perspective of functional analysis, society is a functioning unit, with each part related to the whole. Whenever we examine a smaller part, we need to look for its functions and dysfunctions to see how it is related to the larger unit. This basic approach can be applied to any social group, whether an entire society, a college, or even a group as small as a family.

Criticisms of Functionalism

- *The conflict theorists regard the functionalist approach as Utopian in nature and emphasize the need to study conflict in systems of stratification as a universal, all pervasive and an omnipresent phenomena.*

- *The conflict theorists say that all societies are characterized by some degree of constraint, disagreement, uncertainty, control dysfunctional and coercions that can't be ignored.*

- *However, unlike the functionalists, the conflict theorists do say that, conflict leads to stability and consensus in society.*

- *It becomes important to study also the nature of consensus and equilibrium in a given system with conflict.*

MARXISM (CONFLICT PERSPECTIVES)

- The **conflict perspective** *views society as composed of diverse groups with conflicting values and interests.* In any society, these groups have differential access to wealth, power, and prestige. The most important aspects of the conflict perspective are the Marxian approach, which focuses on economic determinism and the importance of social class, and the neoconflict approach, which focuses on differential power and authority.

- **The Marxian Approach to Conflict**: The theoretical roots of the conflict perspective can be traced to Karl Marx. Often, the values and interests of different groups conflict with one another. According to Marx, these conflicts are determined by economics and are based on social class, and the struggle between the different values and interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is inevitable. When these battles occur, the dominant group attempts to force its values and ideology on less powerful groups. The result is the domination and exploitation of the masses (the proletariat) by the rich and powerful members of society (the bourgeoisie). The conflict perspective is not solely Marxist sociology, however; today conflict theorists often take a neoconflict approach.

- **The Neoconflict Approach**: Social conflict can be viewed as a necessary and even functional social process. From this perspective, conflict necessitates negotiation and compromise; hence it can produce

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order and a reaffirmation of the social structure. In a diverse nation like the United States, conflict between racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender, and political groups is inevitable but not necessarily destructive. For example, attempts to balance the national budget have typically been thwarted by bickering over what areas of the budget should be increased and which should be cut.

- Those dependent on Medicare and Social Security resist cuts to those programs and would rather see cuts in, for example, the defence budget or federal aid to tobacco growers. Meanwhile, Pentagon officials and cigarette manufacturers are not about to sit back and allow legislators to balance the budget at their expense. Both sides employ powerful lobbyists to persuade legislators to vote for their relative interests. These political and ideological quarrels are marked by compromises or tradeoffs that may not satisfy either group but also do not allow one interest to totally dominate the other. When society is confronted by an external threat, these internal conflicts may decrease, for, as is often said, nothing unites a group like a common enemy. From this perspective, conflict is dysfunctional only if it threatens one or more of society's core values.

- Neoconflict theorists also contend that class conflict in industrialized countries is not so much a struggle over the means of production (as Marx argued) but rather a result of the unequal distribution of authority For example, the differing power and prestige of college professors and students sometimes lead to tension and conflict between the two groups that has nothing to do with the ownership of property or the means of production. This version of the conflict perspective focuses on differences in power and authority and the exploitation of some groups by other, more powerful groups. A good example of this approach can be seen in the work of C.Wright Mills.

- **C. Wright Mills and the "Power Elite"** C.Wright Mills promoted the conflict perspective for analyzing the distribution of power and authority in the United States. In *The Power Elite* (1956), he contended that post–World War II U.S. society was dominated by a powerful military, industrial, and political elite that shaped foreign and domestic policy for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful class. His approach focused on historical and structural analyses of class conflict and the uses of ideology for domination.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM (INTERACTIONISM)

The **symbolic interactionist perspective** *views social meaning as arising through the process of social interaction*. Contemporary symbolic interactionism rests on three basic premises:
- ✓ *Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that they attach to Them.*
- ✓ *These meanings are derived from, or arise out of, social interaction with others.*
- ✓ *These meanings may be changed or modified through the processes of interaction and interpretation.*

- **Symbols in Everyday Life.** Without symbols, our social life would be no more sophisticated than that of animals. For example, without symbols we would have no aunts or uncles, employers or teachers—or even brothers and sisters. This sounds strange, but it is symbols that define our relationships. There would still be reproduction, of course, but no symbols to tell us how we are related to whom. We would not know to whom we owe respect and obligations, or from whom we can expect privileges—the essence of human relationships.

- Look at it like this: If you think of someone as your aunt or uncle, you behave one way, but if you think of that person as a boyfriend or girlfriend, you behave quite differently. It is the symbol that tells you how you are related to others—and how you should act toward them.

- Let's make this a little less abstract. Consider this example:
  Suppose that you have fallen head over heels in love. Finally, after what seems forever, it is the night before your wedding. As you are contemplating tomorrow's bliss, your mother comes to you in tears. Sobbing, she tells you that she had a child before she married your father, a child that she gave up for

adoption. Breaking down, she says that she has just discovered that the person you are going to marry is this child.

You can see how the symbol will change overnight—and your behavior, too! It is not only relationships that depend on symbols to exist, but even society itself. Without symbols, we could not coordinate our actions with those of others. We could not make plans for a future day, time, and place. Unable to specify times, materials, sizes, or goals, we could not build bridges and highways. Without symbols, there would be no movies or musical instruments. We would have no hospitals, no government, no religion.

- Proponents of this perspective, often referred to as the *interactionist perspective*, engage in **microlevel analysis,** which *focuses on the day-to-day interactions of individuals and groups in specific social situations*. Three major concepts important for understanding this theoretical approach include meaningful symbols, the definition of the situation, and the looking-glass self. In addition, two important types of theoretical analysis fit within the interactionist perspective: dramaturgical analysis and the labelling approach.

- **Meaningful Symbols:** George H. Mead (1863–1931) insisted that the ongoing process of social interaction and the creating, defining, and redefining of meaningful symbols make society possible. *Meaningful symbols* are sounds, objects, colors, and events that represent something other than themselves and are critical for understanding social interaction. Language is one of the most important and powerful meaningful symbols humans have created, because it allows us to communicate through the shared meaning of words.

- **Definition of the Situation:** *Definition of the situation* refers to the idea that "if [people] define situations as real, they are real in their consequences" (Thomas and Thomas, 1928:572). Simply put, people define social reality through a process of give and- take interaction. Once a definition is established, it shapes all further interactions. For example, have you ever decided that you were "in love" with someone? If so, how did that change the way you interacted with that person? Conversely, what happens when a married couple decides they are no longer in love? If they define their marriage as meaningless or decide they have irreconcilable differences, how does that affect their relationship? Is a marriage likely to survive if both partners have defined it as "over"?

- **The Looking-Glass Self :** The *looking-glass self* refers to the idea that an individual's self-concept is largely a reflection of how he or she is perceived by other members of society (Cooley, [1902] 1922). Society is used as a mirror to reflect a feeling of selfpride, self-doubt, self-worth, or self-loathing. These important elements of symbolic interactionism contribute to socialization and the process of becoming human as we establish our personal and social identities.

- **Dramaturgical Analysis**: A useful theoretical framework within symbolic interactionism, **dramaturgical analysis,** *uses the analogy of the theatre to analyze social behavior*. In this approach, people are viewed as actors occupying roles as they play out life's drama. In real life, people do not passively accept others' definitions of the situation nor the social identities assigned to them. Rather, they take an active part in the drama, manipulating the interaction to present themselves in the most positive light. Thus, people often use *impression management* to communicate favorable impressions of themselves (Goffman, 1959).

- **The Labeling Approach:** Another theoretical viewpoint within symbolic interactionism is the **labeling approach,** which *contends that people attach various labels to certain behaviors, individuals, and groups that become part of their social identity and shape others' attitudes about and responses to them*. For example, in *Outsiders*, Howard Becker (1963) explored the fascinating world of jazz musicians and how their non-traditional music, penchant for marijuana, and open racial integration during the 1950s led mainstream Americans to label them "deviant." The influence of the Chicago School and symbolic interactionism waned in the late 1950s, when a faction of sociologists argued that its approach was too

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dependent on ethnographic studies, personal observations, interviews, and subjective interpretations. Insisting that sociology must be more scientific, or at least, as Comte had envisioned, more positivistic, this group believed that sociology should rely more heavily on quantifiable data, facts, figures, and statistics. This led to the development of the Iowa School of symbolic interaction and also fueled a revival of structural functionalism.

Critique:

- Interactionists have often been accused of **examining human interaction in a vacuum.** They have tended to focus on **small-scale face to face interaction with little concern for its historical or social settings** (Marxian Criticism).

- *They have concentrated on particular situations and encounters with little reference to the historical events which led up to them or the wider social framework in which they occur.* Since these factors influence the particular interaction situation, the scant attention they have received has been regarded as a serious omission.

- While symbolic interactionism provides **a corrective to the excesses of societal determinism,** many critics have argued that it has gone too far in this direction. Though they claim that action is not determined by structural norms, interactionists do admit the presence of such norms. However, they tend to take them as given rather than explaining their origin.

- As **William Skidmore** comments, the interactionists largely fail to explain *'why people consistently choose to act in given ways in certain situations, instead of in all the other ways they might possibly have acted'.* In stressing the flexibility and freedom of human action the interactionists tend to downplay the constraints on action. In **Skidmore's view** this is due to the fact that **'interactionism consistently fails to give an account of social structure'.** In other words it fails to adequately explain how standardized normative behaviour comes about and why members of society are motivated to act in terms of social norms.

- Similar criticism has been made with reference to what many see as the failure of interactionists to explain the source of the meanings to which they attach such importance. *Critics argue that such meanings are not spontaneously created in interaction situations. Instead they are systematically generated by the social structure*.

- **Marxists** have argued that the **meanings which operate in face to face interaction situations** are **largely the product of class relationships**. From this viewpoint, *interactionists have failed to explain the most significant thing about meanings*: the source of their origin.

- **Interactionism i**s a distinctly American branch of sociology and to some this partly explains its shortcomings. Thus **Leon Shaskolsky** has argued that **interactionism is largely a reflection of the cultural ideals of American society.** He claims that ' interactionism has its roots deeply imbedded in the cultural environment of American life, and its interpretation of society is, in a sense, a "looking glass" image of what that society purports to be'. Thus the emphasis on liberty, freedom and individuality in interactionism can be seen in part as a reflection of America's view of itself.

PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenological perspectives in sociology argue that the subject matter of the social and natural sciences is fundamentally different. As a result the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences are inappropriate to the study of man.

The natural sciences deal with matter. To understand and explain the behaviour of matter it is sufficient to observe it from the outside. Atoms and molecules do not have consciousness. They do not have meanings and purposes which direct their behaviour. Matter simply reacts 'unconsciously' to external stimuli; in scientific language it behaves. As a result the natural scientist is able to observe, measure, and impose an external logic on that behaviour in order to

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explain it. **He has no need to explore the internal logic of the consciousness of matter simply because it does not exist.**

• **Unlike matter, man has consciousness-thoughts, feelings, meanings, intentions and an awareness of being**. Because of this, his actions are meaningful; he defines situations and gives meaning to his actions and those of others. As a result, he does not merely react to external stimuli, he does not simply behave, he acts. **For Example,** *imagine the response of early man to fire caused by volcanoes or spontaneous combustion.* He did not simply react in a uniform manner to the experience of heat. He attached a range of meanings to it and these meanings directed his actions. For example he defined fire as a means of warmth and used it to heat his dwellings; as a means of defence and used it to ward off wild animals; and as a means of transforming substances and employed it for cooking and hardening the points of wooden spears. Man does not just react to fire; he acts upon it in terms of the meanings he gives to it.

• **If action stems from subjective meanings, it follows that the sociologist must discover those meanings in order to understand action.** He cannot simply observe action from the outside and impose an external logic upon it. He must interpret the internal logic which directs the actions of the actor.

• **Max Weber was one of the first sociologists to outline this perspective in detail.** He argued that sociological explanations of action should begin with *'the observation and theoretical interpretation of the subjective "states of minds" of actors'*.

Analysis

As the previous section indicated, interactionism adopts a similar approach with particular emphasis on the process of interaction. While positivists emphasize facts and cause and effect relationships, interactionists emphasize insight and understanding. *Since it is not possible to get inside the heads of actors, the discovery of meaning must be based on interpretation and intuition. For this reason objective measurement is not possible and the exactitude of the natural sciences cannot be duplicated. Since meanings are constantly negotiated in ongoing interaction processes it is not possible to establish simple cause and effect relationships.* Thus some sociologist argues that **sociology is limited to an interpretation of social action and phenomenological approaches are sometimes referred to as 'interpretive sociology'.**

A number of sociologists have argued that the positivist approach has produced a distorted picture of social life. They see it as tending to portray man as a passive responder to external stimuli rather than an active creator of his own society. Man is pictured as reacting to various forces and pressures to economic infrastructures and the requirements of social systems.

Peter Berger argues that society has often been viewed as a puppet theatre with its members portrayed as 'little puppets jumping about on the ends of their invisible strings, cheerfully acting out the parts that have been assigned to them'. Society instills values, norms and roles, and men dutifully respond like puppets on a string. *However, from a phenomenological perspective man does not merely react and respond to an external society, he is not simply acted upon, he acts. In his interaction with others he creates his own meanings and constructs his own reality and therefore directs his own actions.*

ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Roughly translated, ethnomethodology means the study of the methods used by people. It is concerned with examining the methods and procedures employed by members of society to construct, account for and give meaning to their social world.

Ethnomethodologists draw heavily on the European tradition of phenomenological philosophy and in particular acknowledge a debt to the ideas of the philosopher-sociologist Alfred Schutz.

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Many Ethnomethodologists begin with the assumption that society exists only in so far as members perceive its existence. With this emphasis on member's views of social reality, ethnomethodology is generally regarded as a phenomenological approach. Ethnomethodology is a developing perspective which contains a diversity of viewpoints.

One of the major concerns of sociology is the explanation of social order. From the results of numerous investigations it appears that social life is ordered and regular and that social action is systematic and patterned. Typically the sociologist has assumed that social order has an objective reality. *Ethnomethodologists either suspend or abandon the belief that an actual or objective social order exists. Instead they proceed from the assumption that social life appears orderly to members of society.*

Thus in the eyes of members their everyday activities seem ordered and systematic but this order is not necessarily due to the intrinsic nature or inherent qualities of the social world. In other words it may not actually exist*. Rather it may simply appear to exist because of the way members perceive and interpret social reality.* Social order therefore becomes a convenient fiction, an appearance of order constructed by members of society. This appearance allows the social world to be described and explained and so made knowable, reasonable, understandable and 'accountable' to its members.

The methods and accounting procedures used by members for creating a sense of order form the subject matter of ethnomethodological enquiry. **Zimmerman and Wieder** state that the **ethnomethodologist is 'concerned with how members of society go about the task of seeing, describing and explaining order in the world in which they live'.**

Ethnomethodologists are highly critical of other branches of sociology. They argue that **'conventional' sociologists** have misunderstood the nature of social reality. They have treated the social world as if it had an objective reality which is independent of members' accounts and interpretations. Thus they have regarded aspects of the social world such as suicide and crime as facts with an existence of their own. They have then attempted to provide explanations for these 'facts'. By contrast, **ethnomethodologist argues** that the **social world consists of nothing more than the constructs, interpretations and accounts of its members. The job of the sociologist is therefore to explain the methods and accounting procedures which members employ to construct their social world.** According to Ethnomethodologists, this is the very job that mainstream sociology has failed to do.

Ethnomethodologist sees little difference between conventional sociologists and the man in the street. They argue that the methods employed by sociologists in their research are basically similar to those used by members of society in their everyday lives. Members employing the documentary method are constantly theorizing, drawing relationships between activities and making the social world appear orderly and systematic. They then treat the social world as if it had an objective reality separate from themselves. **Ethnomethodologists argue** that the procedures of conventional sociologists are essentially similar. They employ the documentary method, theorize and draw relationships and construct a picture of an orderly and systematic social system. They operate reflexively like any other member of society. *Thus when a functionalist sees behaviour as an expression of an underlying pattern of shared values, he also used instances of that behaviour as evidence for the existence of the pattern. By means of their accounting procedures members construct a picture of society. In this sense the man in the street is his own sociologist.* Ethnomethodologists see little to choose between the pictures of society which he creates and those provided by conventional sociologists.

Critique to Ethnomethodology:

Ethnomethodology has labeled as conventional or 'folk' sociology. *Its critics have argued that the members who populate the kind of society portrayed by Ethnomethodologists appear to lack any motives and goals.*

As **Anthony Giddens** remarks, there is little reference to 'the pursuance of practical goals or interests'. *There is little indication in the writings of Ethnomethodologists as to why people want to behave or are made to behave in particular ways. Nor is there much consideration of the nature of power in the social world and the possible effects of differences in power on members behaviour.*

As **Gouldner** notes, *'The process by which social reality becomes defined and established is not viewed by Garfinkel as entailing a process of struggle among competing groups' definitions of reality, and the outcome, the common sense conception of the world, is not seen as having been shaped by institutionally protected power differences'.*

Critics have argued that Ethnomethodologists have failed to give due consideration to the fact that members' accounting procedures are conducted within a system of social relationships involving differences in power. Many Ethnomethodo-logists appear to dismiss everything which is not recognized and accounted for by members of society. They imply that if members do not recognize the existence of objects and events, they are unaffected by them. But as John H. **Goldthorpe** pointedly remarks in his criticism of ethnomethodology, *'If for instance, it is bombs and napalm that are zooming down, members do not have to be oriented towards them in any particular way, or at all, in order to be killed by them'.* Clearly members do not have to recognize certain constraints in order for their behaviour to be affected by them. As **Goldthorpe** notes, with reference to the above example, death 'limits interaction in a fairly decisive way'. Finally, the Ethnomethodologists' criticism of mainstream sociology can be redirected to themselves.

As **Giddens** remarks, 'any ethnomethodo-logical account must display the same characteristics as it claims to discern in the accounts of lay actors'. Ethnomethodologists' accounting procedures therefore become a topic for study like those of conventional sociologists or any other member of society. In theory the process of accounting for accounts is never ending. Carried to its extreme, the ethnomethodological position implies that nothing is every knowable. Whatever its shortcomings, however, ethnomethodology asks interesting questions.

POSITIVISM AND ITS CRITIQUE

Many of the founding fathers of sociology believed that it would be possible to create a science of society based on the same principles and procedures as the natural sciences such as chemistry and biology. *This approach is known as* **positivism.** *Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who is credited with inventing the term sociology and regarded as one of the founders of the discipline, maintained that the application of the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences would produce a 'positive science of society'. He believed that this would reveal that the evolution of society followed 'invariable laws'. It would show that the behaviour of man was governed by principles of cause and effect which were just as invariable as the behaviour of matter, the subject of the natural sciences.*

The positivist approach makes the following assumptions:

• **The behaviour of man, like the behaviour of matter, can be objectively measured.** Just as the **behaviour of matter** can be quantified by measures such as weight, temperature and pressure, **methods of "objective measurement" can be devised for human behaviour**. Such measurement is **essential to explain behaviour**. **For example,** in order to explain the reaction of a particular chemical to heat, it is necessary to provide exact measurements of temperature, weight and so on.

• **With the aid of such measurements it will be possible to accurately observe the behaviour of matter and produce a statement of cause and effect.** This statement might read A+B=C where A is a quantity of matter, B a degree of heat and C a volume of gas. Once it has been shown that the matter in question always reacts in the same way under fixed conditions, a theory can be devised to explain its behaviour.

- **From a positivist viewpoint** such methods and assumptions are applicable to human behaviour. Observations of behaviour based on objective measurement will make it possible to produce statements of cause and effect. Theories may then be devised to explain observed behaviour.

The positivist approach in sociology places particular emphasis on behaviour that can be directly observed. It argues that factors which are not directly observable, such as meanings, feelings and purposes, are not particularly important and can be misleading. **For examp**le *if the majority of adult members of society enter into marriage and produce children, these facts can be observed and quantified. They therefore form reliable data. However, the range of meanings that members of society give to these activities, their purposes for marriage and procreation are not directly observable. Even if they could be accurately measured, they may well divert attention from the real cause of behaviour. One individual may believe he entered marriage because he was lonely, another because he was in love, a third because it was the 'thing to do' and a fourth because he wished to produce offspring.* Reliance on this type of data for explanation assumes that individuals know the reasons for marriage. This can obscure the real cause of their behaviour.

The positivists' emphasis *on observable 'facts' is due largely to the belief that human behaviour can be explained in much the same way as the behaviour of matter.* Natural scientists do not inquire into the meanings and purposes of matter for the obvious reason of their absence. Atoms and molecules do not act in terms of meanings; they simply react to external stimuli. Thus if heat, an external stimulus, is applied to matter, that matter will react. The job of the natural scientist is to observe, measure, and then explain that reaction. The positivist approach to human social behaviour applies a similar logic. Men react to external stimuli and their behaviour can be explained in terms of this reaction. **For example** *Man and Women enter into marriage and produce children in response to the demands of society. Society requires such behaviour for its survival and its members simply respond to this requirement. The meanings and purposes they attach to this behaviour are largely inconsequential.*

Systems theory in sociology adopts a positivist approach. Once behaviour is seen as a response to some external stimulus, such as economic forces or the requirements of the social system, the methods and assumptions of the natural sciences appear appropriate to the study of man.

Marxism has often been regarded as a positivist approach since it can be argued that it sees human behaviour as a reaction to the stimulus of the economic infrastructure.

Functionalism has been viewed in a similar light. The behaviour of members of society an be seen as a response to the functional prerequisites of the social system.

The study of society and social phenomena till the middle of the nineteenth century was made mostly on the basis of speculation, logic, theological thinking and rational analysis. August Comte, a French philosopher, described these methods inadequate and insufficient in the study of social life. In 1848, he proposed positive method in the field of social research. **He maintained that social phenomena should be studied not through logic or theological principles or metaphysical theories but rather in society itself and in the structure of social relations. For example**, he explained poverty in terms of the social forces that dominate society. He described this method of study as scientific. *Comte considered scientific method, called positivism, as the most appropriate tool of social research.* This new methodology rejected speculation and philosophical approach and focused on gathering of empirical data and became positivistic methodology, using similar methods as employed by natural sciences. By the 1930s, positivism came to flourish in the USA and gradually other countries also followed the trend.

Critique to Positivism*:*

Comte's positivism was criticized both from within and outside the positivist domain. Within positivism, a branch called logical positivism was developed in early twentieth century which claimed that science is both logical and also based on observable facts and that the truth of any statement lies in its verification through sensory experience.

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Out side positivism developed schools of thought like **symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and ethnomethodology, et**c. These schools questioned the positivist methodology and its perception of social reality.

But Positivism came to be accepted more in the 1950s and 1960s onwards by the academics. Today some **writers refer to the emergence of a new stage of research, the post-empiricist research marked by the notion that the scientific method is not the only source of knowledge, truth and validity.** Thus, today, sociological methodology is no longer based on positivist methodology as in the past but it has become a body of diverse methods and techniques, all of which are perceived as valid and legitimate in social research.

Non-positivist methodologies.

Interactionism, Phenomonologist, , Ethnomethodologist

(Explained above)

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Research Methods and Analysis

CSE MAINS Syllabus
- *Qualitative and quantitative methods.*
- *Techniques of data collection.*
- *Variables, sampling, hypothesis, reliability and validity.*

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Before analyzing methods, it is necessary to understand difference between 'scientific method' and 'scientific methodology'.

Method is a tool or a technique used to collect data. It is a procedure for obtaining knowledge based on empirical observations and logical reasoning.

Methodology is logic of scientific investigation. *Methodology means description, explanation and justification of methods and not the methods themselves.*

When we talk of **methodology of any social science**, say of sociology, we refer to the **method(s) used by sociologist, e.g. survey method, experimental method, case study method, statistical method** and so on. The word **'technique'** is also used in the contexts of inquiry of any science, e.g., techniques in a mass opinion, survey, for conducting interviews, for observation and so on. There is a right way and a wrong way or a good way and a bad way to do anything in science as in any other work. **The techniques of a science are the ways of doing the work of that science.** Methodology is concerned with techniques in this sense.

Methodology inquires into the potentialities and limitations of some technique or other. It is a **plan and procedure for carrying out the research**. It **refers to research techniques and strategies for obtaining valid information**. It is **an approach to**

understanding phenomenon. It is **a procedure of empirical investigation**. **It is not concerned with building knowledge but how knowledge is built,** i.e., how facts are collected, classified and analysed.

The approach of a social scientist is different from that of a natural scientist. A natural scientist does not participate in the phenomenon, he studies,

- *does not interview elements,*
- *has a laboratory for conducting experiments,*
- *uses instruments and chemical and*
- *can control many variables, in his experiment.*

Against this, a social scientist….

- *participates in the phenomenon under study,*
- *interviews elements from whom collects data,*
- *has no laboratory,*
- *does not use any instruments for measuring etc., like barometers and so on,*
- *cannot control many variables.*

Thus, **the difference in the approach of two scientists is of methodology and not method. Methodology** *refers to philosophy on which research is based. This philosophy includes assumptions and values that serve as basis (rationale) for research and are used for interviewing data and reaching conclusions. It is said that the methodology used in natural sciences is more rigorous than that of social sciences.*

QUANTITATIVE METHOD:

This research employs quantitative measurement and the use of statistical analysis. **For example,** what percentage of medical, engineering, law, arts, science and commerce students takes drugs or uses alcohol? What percentage of prisoners rejects prison norms and internalizes norms of the inmate world? What percentage of women leading unhappy marital life takes initiative to divorce their husbands? What was

the cost of poll violence (in cores) in Lok Sabha elections in last ten elections in India? How many mandays have been lost due to strikes and lockouts in industries in India in the last two decades?

This type of research is based on the methodological principles of positivism and adheres to the standards of strict sampling and research design.

QUALITATIVE METHOD

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This research presents **non-quantitative type of analysis.** It describes *reality as experienced by the groups, communities, individuals etc*. **For example,** how does the structure and organisation of wall-less prisons (or minimum security jails) differ from that of the central or district jails (or maximum security jails) and contribute to the reformation and resocialisation of criminals? What has been the partywise stand on women's reservation in Parliament and state assemblies?

Difference in Designing Quantitative and Qualitative Method

Quantitative researchers tend to be more prescriptive than qualitative researchers. *The later operate with as few prescriptions as possible.*

Some people hold that the **qualitative researchers** *usually do not employ a design. They are more open and flexible and have greater freedom of choice. But this is not correct. Investigators engaged in qualitative research are equally concerned with how, what, where and when the data are to be collected.* **However, some differences in designing the two types of research (quantitative is described here as 'former' and qualitative as 'later) may be pointed here (Sarantakos):**

- ☐ *In the former research,* **the problem is specific and precise** *in the later research,* **it is general and loosely structured**.

- ☐ *In the former,* **the hypotheses are formulated before the study**; i*n the latter*, **hypotheses are propounded either during the study or after the study**.

- ☐ *In the former*, **concepts are operationalized**; *in the latter* **concepts are only sensitized**.

- ☐ *In the former,* **in designing research, the design is prescriptive**; *in the latter,* **the design is not prescriptive**.

- ☐ *In the former,* **sampling is planned before data collection;** *in the latter,* **it is planned during data collection.**

- ☐ *In the former*, **sampling is representative**; *in the latter*, **it is not representative.**

- ☐ *In the former*, **all types of measurements/scales are employed;** *in the latter*, **mostly nominal scales are used.**

- ☐ *In the former,* **for data collection, generally investigators are employed in big researches**; *in the latter*, **the researchers analyse data single-handed**.

- ☐ *In the former*, **in processing data, usually inductive generalization is made**; *in the latter*, **usually analytical generalization are made.**

- ☐ In reporting in the former research **the finding are highly integrated;** in the latter, the **findings are mostly not integrated**.

TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

- • **Questionnaire**
- • **Observation**
- • **Interview**
- • **Case Study**

QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire is described as **"a document that contains a set of questions, the answers to which are to be provided personally by the respondents".** *Questionnaire is the structured set of questions usually sent by mail, though sometimes it is delivered by hand also. The hand delivery could be at home, school/college, office, organization, and so on. The importance of the survey is explained to the respondents through a covering letter. Usually, a self-addressed stamped envelop is sent to the respondents along with the questionnaire to reduce* their expenses. *The follow up request for returning the questionnaire is made through repeated letters.*

Questionnaire is used as a tool when…

- • *Very large samples are desired,*
- • *Costs have to be kept low,*
- • *the target groups who are likely to have high response rates are specialized,*
- • *ease of administration is necessary, and*
- • *moderate response rate is considered satisfactory.*

Following guidelines should be followed for framing and asking questions:

- • *Questions should be clear and unambiguous:* The question like, "What do you think about the

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proposed peace plan for Kashmir?" may not be clear to respondent who does not know anything about the peace plan.

- *Questions should be relevant:* Sometimes the respondents are asked to give opinions on issues on which they have never given any thought, e.g., "What is your opinion on the economic policies of the BJP, the Congress and the CPI parties?" Such questions are bound to be disregarded by the respondents.

- *Questions should be short:* Long and complicated items are to be avoided. The respondent should be able to read an item quickly, understand its meaning and think of an answer without difficulty.

- *Negative questions should be avoided:* The appearance of a negation in the question paves the way for easy misinterpretation. For example, asking to agree or disagree with the statement, "India should not recognize the military rule in Fiji", a sizeable portion of the respondents will not read the word 'not' and answer on that basis.

- **Biased terms should be avoided:** Prejudice affects the answers. For example, the question, "Have military rulers in the neighbouring country always hampered our country's progress?" may encourage some respondents to give particular response more than other questions do.

- **Respondents must be competent to answer:** The researcher should always ask himself whether the respondents he has chosen are competent enough to answer questions on the issue of research. For example, asking daily wage labourers to give their views on 'communal violence' may not be rational. Similarly, asking students to indicate the manner in which university's total income ought to be spent will be wrong because students may not have fairly good knowledge of the nature of activities and the costs involved in them.

- **Respondents must be willing to answer:** Many a time people are unwilling to share opinions with others, e.g., asking Muslims about Pakistan's attitude towards Muslims in India.

Types of Questions:

☐ **Primary, Secondary and Tertiary:**
- *Primary Questions* elicit information directly **related to the research topic.** Each question provides information about a specific aspect of the topic. For example, for determining the type of family (whether it is husband-dominant, wife-dominant, equalitarian), the question "who takes decisions in your family" is a primary question.

- *Secondary questions* **elicit information which do not relate directly to the topic,** i.e., the information is of secondary importance. They only guard the truthfulness of the respondents, e.g., in the above topic, the question "who decides the nature of gift to be given in marriage to family relative" or "who finally selects the boy with whom the daughter is to be married" are the secondary questions.

- *The tertiary questions* **are of neither primary nor of secondary importance.** These only establish a framework that allows convenient data collection and sufficient information without exhausting or biasing the respondent.

☐ **Closed-ended and Open-ended Questions:**

- *The closed-ended questions* are the fixed-choice questions. They require the respondent to choose a response from those provided by the researcher. Here is one example: "Whom do you consider an ideal teacher?" (a) who takes teaching seriously; (b) who is always available to students for discussions and guidance; (c) whose approach to students' problems is flexible; (d) who does not believe in punishing students; (e) who takes interest in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

- *The open-ended questions* are free-response questions which require respondents to answer in their own words. For example: (1) Whom do you consider an ideal teacher? (2) How would you rate the performance of the last government? (3) What do you feel is the most important issue facing India today?

The advantages of open-ended questions are:
- The researcher gets insight in respondent's understanding.
- When the total answers categories are very large (say, 50 or more), it would be awkward to list all of them on a questionnaire; but if some were omitted, then there would not be appropriate answers available for all respondents.
- Since the respondent gets freedom in answering, the researcher gets more and varied information based on the respondent's logic and thought

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processes. Sometimes, the information and responses received are so unexpected that the researcher's ideas are completely changed.

- They are preferable for complex issues that cannot be condensed into a few small categories.

The disadvantages of open-ended questions are :

- Sometimes responses received are irrelevant.
- It is difficult to classify and code all responses.
- Since the data are not standardized, statistical analysis and computation of percentages become difficult.
- Sometimes the responses given are very lengthy and analyzing them becomes time-consuming.
- Semi-literate respondents find it difficult to answer open questions since they require better ability to express one's feelings.

On the other hand, the advantages of closed-ended questions are:

- They provide a greater uniformity of responses.
- It is easy to code, score and process standard answers which saves time and money.
- The respondent has not to use much brain as he is often clearer about the meaning of question.
- Little time is taken to complete questionnaire.
- Answers can be compared from person to person.
- Irrelevant responses are not received and the answers are relatively complete, e.g., an open-ended question "how often do you smoke" may receive an answer "whenever I feel like smoking", but a closed-ended question may receive an answer, "one packet a day, or two packets in a day, or four cigarettes in a day", and so on.
- Response rate is high, particularly in sensitive questions like income, age, etc. If the answer in closed-ended question is a category, the respondent may easily identify himself with the range in which his income/age falls.

The disadvantages of closed-ended questions are:

- The respondent may not get all alternative responses as some important responses might have been omitted by the researcher.
- The respondent does not think and does not involve himself in giving free information. He ticks even wrong answer.
- Many a time the respondents do not find those answers in the closed questions which correspond to their true feelings or attitudes.

- The respondent who does not know the response guesses and chooses one of the convenient responses or gives an answer randomly.
- Detecting the mistake whether the respondent has ticked the right answer is not possible.

☐ **Direct and Indirect Questions :**

- *Direct questions* are personal questions which elicit information about the respondent himself/herself, e.g., "Do you believe in God?"
- *Indirect questions* seek information about other people, e.g., "Do you think that people of your status and age believe in God now-a-days?" Other examples are:
- **Indirect Question :** Do college teachers these days read more English or Hindi Books?
  Direct Question : Do you read English books?
- **Indirect Question :** How would you describe the relations among members in your family?
- **Direct Question :** Do you quarrel with your spouse frequently/occasionally/rarely/never?

Nominal, Ordinal and Interval Questions:

- *Nominal question* is one in which its response falls in two or more categories, e.g., male/female; rich/poor, married/unmarried; rural/urban; illiterate/educated; Shia/Sunni; Hindu/Muslim. Nominal question is also called classification scale.
- *Ordinal question* is one in which the responses are placed in rank order of categories. The categories may be ranked from highest to lowest, greatest to least, or first to last.
  Examples:

☐ Smoking: regularly/occasionally/never
☐ Reserving 33 per cent seats for women in Parliament: Agree/disagree/don't know
☐ Relations with colleagues in office: excellent/satisfactory/dissatisfactory/can't say

Ordinal scales are sometimes referred to as ranking scales.

- *Interval question* is one in which the distance between two numbers is equal. For example:

☐ Present age: 10 or below/11-20/21-30/31-40/41 and above
☐ Income per annum: Below Rs. 18,000/18,000-36,000/36,000-54,000/54,000-72,000/Above 72,000
☐ Age at marriage: Below 18/18-22/22-26/26-30/Above 30.

Steps in Questionnaire Construction

Questionnaires are constructed in a systematic manner. The process goes through a number of inter-related steps. The most commonly steps are (Sarantakos):

- ☐ *Preparation:* The researcher thinks of various items to be covered in the questionnaire, arrangement of these items in relation to one another, and taking into consideration questions prepared and used in other similar studies.
- ☐ *Constructing the first draft:* The researcher formulates a number of questions including direct/indirect, closed/open-ended and primary/secondary/tertiary questions.
- ☐ *Self-evaluation:* The researcher thinks about relevance, symmetry, clarity in language, etc.
- ☐ *External evaluation:* The first draft is given to one or two experts/colleagues for scrutiny and suggestions for changes.
- ☐ *Revision:* After receiving suggestions, some questions are eliminated, some changed and some new questions added.
- ☐ *Pre-test or pilot study:* A pre-test or a pilot study is undertaken to check the suitability of the questionnaire as a whole.
- ☐ *Revision:* The minor and major changes may be made on the basis of experience gained in pre-testing.
- ☐ *Second pre-testing:* The revised questionnaire is then subjected to a second test and amended, if necessary.
- ☐ *Preparing final draft:* After editing, checking spelling, space for response, pre-coding, and the final draft is prepared.

Limitations of Questionnaire

- ☐ The mailed questionnaires can be used only for educated people. This restricts the number of respondents.
- ☐ The return rate of questionnaires is low. The common return rate is 30 to 40 per cent.
- ☐ The mailing address may not be correct which may omit some eligible respondents. Thus, the sample selected many a time is described as biased.
- ☐ Sometimes different respondents interpret questions differently. The misunderstanding cannot be corrected.
- ☐ There may be bias in the response selectivity because the respondent having no interest in the topic may not give response to all questions. Since the researcher is not present to explain the meaning of certain concepts, the respondent may leave the question blank.
- ☐ Questionnaires do not provide an opportunity to collect additional information while they are being completed.
- ☐ Researchers are not sure whether the person to whom the questionnaire was mailed has himself answered the questions or somebody else has filled up the questionnaire.
- ☐ Many questions remain unanswered. The partial response affects the analysis.
- ☐ The respondent can consult other persons before filling in the questionnaire. The responses, therefore, cannot be viewed as his opinions.
- ☐ The reliability of respondent's background information cannot be verified. A middle-class person can identify himself as rich person or a person of intermediate caste can describe himself as upper-caste person.
- ☐ Since the size of the questionnaire has to be kept small, full information cannot be secured from the respondents.
- ☐ There is lack of depth or probing for a more specific answer.

Advantages of Questionnaire

- ☐ **Lower cost:** Questionnaires are less expensive than other methods. Even the staff required is not much as either the researcher himself may mail or one or two investigators may be appointed for hand-distributing the questionnaires.
- ☐ **Time saving:** Since the respondents may be geographically dispersed and sample size may be very large, the time required for getting back the questionnaires may be little greater but usually less than that for face-to-face interviews. Thus, since all questionnaires are sent simultaneously and most of the replies are received in 10-15 days, schedules take months to complete. In simple terms, questionnaires produce quick results.
- ☐ **Accessibility to widespread respondents:** When the respondents are separated geographically, they can be reached by correspondence which saves travel cost.
- ☐ **No interviewer's bias:** Since the interviewer is not physically present at interviewee's place, he cannot influence his answers, either by prompting or by giving his own opinion or by misreading the question.

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- **Greater anonymity:** The absence of the interviewer assures anonymity which enables respondent to express free opinions and answers even to socially undesirable questions. The absence of the interviewer assures privacy to the respondents because of which they willingly give details of all events and incidents they would have not revealed otherwise.

- **Respondent's convenience:** The respondent can fill in the questionnaire leisurely at his convenience. He is not forced to complete all questions at one time. Since he fills up the questionnaire in spare time, he can answer easy questions first and take time for difficult questions.

- **Standardized wordings:** Each respondent is exposed to same words and therefore there is little difference in understanding questions. The comparison of answers is thus facilitated.

- **No variation:** Questionnaires are a stable, consistent and uniform measure, without variation.

INTERVIEW

- Interview is verbal questioning. As a research tool or as a method of data collection, interview is different from general interviewing with regard to its preparation, construction and execution. This difference is that: research interview is prepared and executed in a systematic way, it is controlled by the researcher to avoid bias and distortion, and it is related to a specific research question and a specific purpose.

- Lindzey Gardner (1968) has defined interview as "a two-person conversation, initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on the content specified by the research objectives of description and explanation".

- In the research interview, thus, the interviewer asks specific questions pertaining to research objectives/criteria and the respondent restricts his answers to specific questions posed by the interviewer.

Functions of Interview

The two major functions of the interview technique are described as under:

- **Description:** The information received from the respondent provides insight into the nature of

social reality. Since the interviewer spends some time with the respondents, he can understand their feelings and attitudes more clearly, and seek additional information wherever necessary and make information meaningful for him.

- **Exploration:** Interview provides insight into unexplored dimensions of the problem. In the problem of "exploitation of widows by the in-laws and office colleagues", it is the personal interview with the victims which enables the interviewer to get details about widows' position in the support system, and their sticking to their traditional values which make their life miserable and adjustment difficult. The interview can prove to be effective exploratory device for identifying new variables for study and for sharpening of conceptual clarity. Even the new hypotheses can be thought of for testing. For example, in the study of problems faced by husbands and wives in inter-caste and inter-community marriages, probing their attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns in considerable depth, one can come up with interesting data about different aspects of adjustment.

Characteristics of Interview

Black and Champion have pointed out the following characteristics of an interview:

- **Personal communication:** There is a face-to-face contact, conversational exchange and verbal interaction between the interviewer and the respondent.

- **Equal status:** The status of the interviewer and the interviewee is equal.

- Questions are asked and responses received verbally.

- Information is recorded by the interviewer and not the respondent.

- The relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, who are strangers to each other, is transitory.

- The interview is not necessarily limited to two persons. It could involve two interviewers and a group of respondents, or it could be one interviewer and two or more respondents.

- There is considerable flexibility in the format of the interview.

Types of Interview

There are many types of interview which differ from one another in terms of structure, the interviewer's role, number of respondents involved in

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the interview. Some types of interviews are employed in both quantitative and qualitative researches but others are used in one research type only.

Unstructured V/s structured interviews:

☐ **In the unstructured interview**, there are no specifications in the wording of the questions or the order of the questions. The interviewer forms questions as and when required. The structure of these interviews is flexible, being presented in the form of guide. In this interview, the interviewer has only the general nature of the questions in mind. He has no prior indication of the specific issues on which the questions are to be asked. He has not ordered questions in a particular way. He has no time-limit for continuing the interview. Thus, what is asked from one respondent in the beginning may be asked from the other respondent in the end and from yet other respondent in the middle.

The advantages of this type of (unstructured) interview are:

• The questions being asked spontaneously, the interview can be conducted in the form of natural conversation.

• There is a greater possibility of exploring in an unrestricted manner.

• Finding the interest of the respondent in a specific aspect of the problem, the interviewer can focus his attention on that particular aspect.

But this type of interview has some limitations also:

• The data obtained from different respondents cannot be compared with each other.

• With no systematic control over asking questions, the reliability of the data becomes doubtful.

• The obtained data cannot be quantified.

• Much time can be wasted adding nothing or little to the knowledge already obtained. Time is also wasted in repetitions and unproductive conversations.

• Some aspects may be left out in discussions, when conversation is focused on a few aspects.

☐ **The structured interview** is based on the structured interview guide which is little different from the questionnaire. In reality, it is a set of specific points and definite questions prepared by the interviewer. It allows little freedom to make adjustments to any of its elements, such as content, wording, or order of

the questions. In this type of interviewing, the interviewer is expected to act in a neutral manner offering the same impression to all the respondents. The purpose is to reduce the interviewer's bias to the minimum and achieve the highest degree of informality in procedure. This form of interview is employed in quantitative research.

Standardized V/s unstandardised interviews:

☐ **In standardized interviews,** answer to each question is standardized as it is determined by a set of response categories given for this purpose. The respondents are expected to choose one of the given options as the answer. For example, the alternative answers could be yes/no/don't know; agree/disagree; illiterate/less educated/highly educated; for/against/undecided; and so on. This is mainly used in quantitative research.

☐ **Unstandardised interview** is one in which the responses are left open to the respondent. This is used mainly in qualitative research.

Individual V/s group interviews:

☐ **Individual interview** is one in which the interviewer interviews only one respondent at a time.

☐ **In group interview,** more than one respondent are interviewed simultaneously. The group can be small, say, of two individuals (e.g., husband and wife, or two co-workers in a factory, etc.) or large, say, of 10 to 20 persons (e.g., all students in a class).

Self-administered V/s other administered interviews:

☐ **In self-administered interview,** the respondent is supplied a list of questions along with instructions for writing answers in the appropriate place on the interview form.

☐ **In other administered interview,** the interviewer himself writes answers to questions on the response sheet.

Unique V/s panel interviews:

☐ **Unique interview** is one in which the interviewer collects entire information in one interview. However, he is not barred for approaching the interviewer for the second time for seeking additional information.

☐ In panel interview, the interviewer collects information from the same group of respondents two or more times at regular intervals. If different

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respondents are involved in various stages for asking the same questions, it is called trend study.

Personal V/s non-personal interviews:

☐ **In the personal interview**, there is a face-to-face contact between the interviewer and the interviewee,

☐ **In the non-personal interview** there is no face-to-face relationship, but the information is collected through telephone, computer or some other medium.

Conditions for A Successful Interview

Gardner has pointed out three conditions for successful interviewing: accessibility, understanding and motivation.

☐ **Accessibility:** For giving information, it is important that the respondent understands what is required of him and he is also willing to provide information he possesses. The possibilities are that the respondent might have no information or he might have forgotten some fact, or he is under emotional stress and therefore, unable to give information or the question is so framed that he cannot answer it.

☐ **Understanding:** The respondent sometimes is not able to understand what is expected of him. Unless he understands the significance of the research/survey, the extent of interview demand, the concepts and the terms used, the nature of answers which the interviewer expects from him, his answers might be off the point.

☐ **Motivation :** The respondent needs to be motivated not only for giving information but also for giving accurate information. The fear of consequences, embarrassment at ignorance, being suspicious about the interviewer, and dislike of the subject are some of the factors which decrease the level of respondent's motivation. The interviewer, therefore, has to try to reduce the effect of these factors.

Process of Interviewing

It could be said that the training to the interviewer or the process of training implies explaining the interviewer the process of conducting the interview in a number of stages. Each stage including certain tasks. These are:

• Fully explain the researcher what the study is all about, what the objectives of the study are and what aspects of the theme are to be focused.

• Select and locate the sampled members.

• Seek appointment from the respondent before approaching him for the interview.

• Manipulate the situation of the interview in such a way that only the respondent is available at the place of interview and others leave the place willingly.

• Inform the respondent about the approximate time the interview is to last.

• Begin interview by stating the organization he represents, and explaining how he (respondent) was selected for the interview.

• Appear with an attitude so that the respondent feels free to express his views.

• Probe questions phrased in an impartial way.

• On no account give an indication of own views. This will either prevent the respondent from giving the opposite view or he might favour the interviewer's view. In either case, the answers would misrepresent the respondent's true opinion.

• Increase the respondent's motivation to cooperate.

• Reassure the respondent of keeping his identity a secret.

• Training the interviewer that all applicable questions have to be asked in a given order.

Advantage of Interview

Some more advantages are:

• the response rate is high,

• in-depth probing is possible,

• respondent's confidence can be sought through personal rapport,

• interviewer can explain difficult terms and remove confusion and misunderstandings,

• administration is easy because respondents are not required to be educated or handle long questionnaires,

• interviewer gets opportunity to observe respondents' non-verbal behaviour,

• identity of the respondent is known, and

• since all questions asked by the interviewers are answered by the respondents, completeness of the interview is guaranteed.

Disadvantages of Interview

• The interviewees can hide information or give wrong information because of fear of identity.

• Interviews are more costly and time-consuming than questionnaires.

• The nature and extent of responses depends upon interviewee's mood. If he is tired, he will be

distracted. If he is in hurry, he will try to dispose off the interviewer quickly.
- There could be variability in responses with different interviewers, particularly when interview is unstructured.
- The interviewer may record the responses differently, depending upon his own interpretation sometimes.
- If offers less anonymity than other methods.
- It is less effective for sensitive questions.

OBSERVATION

Lindsey Gardner has defined observation as "selection, provocation, recording and encoding of that set of behaviours and settings concerning organisms 'in situ' (naturalistic settings or familiar surroundings) which are consistent with empirical aims". In this definition,
- Selection means that there is a focus in observation and also editing before, during and after the observations are made.
- Provocation means that though observers do not destroy natural settings but they can make subtle changes in natural settings which increase clarity.
- Recording means that the observed incidents/events are recorded for subsequent analysis. Encoding involves simplification of records.

Characteristics of Observation

Scientific observation differs from other methods of data collection specifically in four ways: (i) observation is always direct while other methods could be direct or indirect; (ii) field observation takes place in a natural setting; (iii) observations tend to be less structured; and (iv) it makes only the qualitative (and not the quantitative) study which aims at discovering subjects' experiences and how subjects make sense of them (phenomenology) or how subjects understand their life (interpretive).

Loftland has said that this method is more appropriate for studying lifestyles or sub-cultures, practices, episodes, encounters, relationships, groups, organizations, settlements and roles, etc.

Purpose of Observation
- To capture human conduct as it actually happens. In other methods, we get a static comprehension of people's activity. In actual situation, they sometimes modify their views, sometimes contradict themselves, and sometimes are so swayed away by the situation that they react differently altogether, e.g., clerks' behaviour in office; tone of voice, facial expressions and content of slogans by the demonstrators.
- To provide more graphic description of social life than can be acquired in other ways. For example, how do women behave when they are physically assaulted by their husbands? How do young widows behave when they are humiliated, harassed and exploited by the in-laws? How are bounded labourers treated by their landlords?
- To explore important events and situations. There are many instances when little is known about the topic/issue. By being on the scene, issues that might otherwise be overlooked are examined more carefully, e.g., visiting office soon after the office hours and finding that the married men and single women were working overtime and single men and married women had gone home.
- It can be used as a tool of collecting information in situations where methods other than observation cannot prove to be useful, e.g., workers' behaviour during strike.

Types of Observation

☐ *Participant and non-participant observation:::*
- **Participant observation** is a method in which the investigator becomes a part of the situation he is studying. He involves himself in the setting and group life of the research subjects. He shares the activities of the community observing what is going on around him, supplementing this by conversations and interview. In India, M.N. Srinivas had used this method in studying the process of 'sanskritisation' in Mysore while Andre Beteille had used it to study social inequality in rural areas (Tanjore village) on the basis of class, status and power.

The weaknesses in this type (participant) of observation are:
- since the observer participates in events, sometimes he becomes so involved that he loses objectivity in observation;
- he influences the events;
- he interprets events subjectively;
- his presence so sensitizes the subjects that they do not act in a natural way;

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• he may record some information but may fail to record other information as well as to explain reasons why information was not recorded;
• he fails to be precise about the procedures for data accumulation;
• since he fails to specify the procedures for gathering information, others cannot replicate his research findings for verification and validity;
• There is less attention to precision; and
• this method cannot be used for studies where people indulge in illegal activities.
• **In non-participant observation**, the observer remains detached and does not participate or intervene in the activities of those who are being observed. He merely observes their behaviour. Sometimes this places the persons being observed in an awkward position and their conduct becomes unnatural. But some say that though initially the observer's behaviour may affect the behaviour of the observed but after a little while, less and less attention is paid to his presence. This type of observation is more useful as a tool of data collection because the observer can choose the situations to be observed and can record the data freely.

☐ *Systematic/unsystematic observation :*
Reiss (1971) has classified observation as systematic and unsystematic on the basis of the ability of the observational data to generate scientifically useful information.
• **The systematic observation** is one in which explicit procedure is used in observation and recording by following certain rules, which permits the use of logic, and which makes replication possible.
• The unsystematic observation does not follow any rules or logic which makes replication difficult.

☐ *Naive and scientific observation:*
• Naïve observation is unstructured and unplanned observation.
• It becomes scientific when it is systematically planned and executed, when it is related to a certain goal, and when it is subjected to tests and controls.

☐ *Structured and unstructured observation:*
• Structured observation is organized and planned which employs formal procedure, has a set of well-defined observation categories, and is subjected to high levels of control and differentiation.
• Unstructured observation is loosely organized and the process is largely left to the observer to define.

☐ *Natural and laboratory observation:*
• Natural observation is one in which observation is made in natural settings.
• Laboratory observation is one in which observation is made in a laboratory.

☐ *Direct and indirect observation:*
• **In direct observation,** the observer plays a passive role, i.e., there is no attempt to control or manipulate the situation. The observer merely records what occurs.
• **Indirect observation** is one in which direct observation of the subject(s) is not possible because either the subject is dead or refuses to take part in the study. The researcher observes the physical traces which the phenomena under study have left behind and make conclusions about the subject, e.g., observing the site of bomb explosion where the dead and the injured people and vehicles destroyed is lying.

☐ *Convert and overt observation:*
• **In convert observation,** subjects are unaware that they are being observed. Generally, the researcher in this type of observation is himself a participant in all the activities; otherwise it becomes difficult for him to explain his presence. These observations are mostly unstructured.
• **In overt observation,** subjects are aware that they are being observed. Sometimes this causes them to act differently than they do normally. For example, if a policeman in a police station knows that his behaviour is being watched by a researcher, he will never think of using third-degree methods in dealing with the accused person; rather he would show that he is polite and sympathetic.

Process of Observation
One of the most striking aspects of observational field research is the absence of standardised operating procedures. As all cultures have their own distinctive characteristics, different demands are placed on researchers. Since observation involves sensitive human interaction, it cannot be reduced to a simple set of techniques. Yet some scholars have tried to point out the path that the observer in the fieldwork

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has to follow. Sarantakos has pointed out the following six steps in observation:

☐ **Selection of the topic:** This refers to determining the issue to be studied through observations, e.g., marital conflict, riot, caste Panchayat meeting in a village, child labourers in a glass factory, and so on.

☐ **Formulation of the topic:** This involves fixing up categories to be observed and pointing out situations in which cases are to be observed.

☐ **Research design:** This determines identification of subjects to be observed, preparing observation schedule, if any, and arranging entry in situations to be observed.

☐ **Collection of data:** This involves familiarization with the setting, observation and recording.

☐ **Analysis of data:** In this stage, the researcher analyses the data, prepares tables, and interprets the facts.

☐ **Report writing:** This involves writing of the report for submission to the sponsoring agency or for publication.

Factors Affecting Choice of Observation

Observers are influenced by a number of factors in the process of observation. Black and Champion have identified three such factors:

☐ **Relating to the problem:** Certain types of situations are not easy to be observed, e.g., mafia group's functioning, daily lifestyle of professional criminals, prisoners in jails, patients in hospitals and so on. Some theoretical orientations like ethnomethodology (the study of the methods used in everyday routine social activity), phenomenology (approach that observes the phenomena as perceived by the acting individual, emphasizing perception and consciousness), and symbolic interactionism (approach that stresses linguistic and gestural communication in the formation of mind, self and society) are orientations in which observation holds a central place as a method.

☐ **Relating to skill and characteristics of the investigator:** All social scientists do not feel comfortable in observing a situation for a long time. They feel more at ease in asking questions for an hour or so. Only a few scholars adjust themselves in an observable situation. Thus, persons with certain characteristics and skills can prove to be good observers.

☐ **Relating to the characteristics of the observed:** In getting information from the investigated people, their characteristics play an important role. The status of the interviewee vis-à-vis the interviewer is a major factor in determining whether observation will be feasible as a method of data collection. Many people who are to be observed give such importance to their privacy because of their occupational position, economic status, sub-cultural values and social norms that they do not permit the observer to observe them in all situations. It is easy to observe those who are in economically disadvantaged position relative to the well-to-do; easy to observe teachers, clerks, etc., than doctors and lawyers who have to maintain sanctity and confidentiality of their relations with their clients.

Basic Problems in Observation

Festinger and Katz have specified six basic problems:

• Under what conditions are observations to be made? How is the observation situation structured?

• What behaviour is to be selected and recorded in order to obtain the information required.

• How stable are the conditions in which observations can be made so that same results may be obtained under what appears to be same conditions. Are the measures reliable?

• What is the validity of the process which has been observed or inferred?

• What evidence is there that some process with functional unity is being observed?

• Has an attempt been made to summarize what is observed in quantitative terms? Can a score be assigned?

According to Lyn Lofland (1995: 63), the following activities need to be avoided by a researcher while using observation technique:

• The observation purpose should not be kept secret from the subjects under observation.

• Information should be collected from all people and not from a few people only.

• Help should not be offered to people even if its severe need is felt.

• There should be no commitment for anything.

• The researcher should be strategic in relations.

• In factionalized situations, taking sides should be avoided.

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- Paying cash or kind for getting information should be totally avoided.

Advantages of Observation

Bailey has pointed out four advantages of observation:

☐ **Superior in data collection on non-verbal behaviour :** When a person's opinion on a particular issue is to be assessed, survey method is definitely more useful, but when the non-verbal behaviour is to be discovered or where memory failure of the respondent is possible, observation will be more functional. It allows not the restrictive study of the individuals but their in-depth study. The unstructured observational method, being very flexible, allows the observer to concentrate on any variables that prove to be important.

☐ **Intimate and informal relationship :** Since the observer often lives with the subjects for an extended period of time, the relationship between them is often more intimate and more informal than in a survey in which the interviewer meets the respondents for 30-40 minutes on a very formal basis. The relationship sometimes becomes primary than secondary. Being close to the subject does not necessarily mean that observer will lose objectivity in recording facts. This becomes possible only when the observer becomes emotionally attached to his subjects.

☐ **Natural environment :** The behaviour being observed in natural environment will not cause any bias. Observation will neither be artificial nor restrictive.

☐ **Longitudinal analysis :** In observation, the researcher is able to conduct his study over a much longer period than in the survey.

Sarantakos has mentioned the following advantages of observation:

- It is less complicated and less time-consuming.
- It offers data when respondents are unable or unwilling to cooperate for giving information.
- It approaches reality in its natural structure and studies events as they evolve.
- It allows collection of wide range of information.
- It is relatively inexpensive.

Besides these advantages, two other advantages in observation tool are:

- Observer can assess the emotional reactions of subjects.

- The observer is able to record the context which gives meaning to respondent's expressions.

Disadvantages of Observation

According to Bailey, the disadvantages in observation technique are:

- **Lack of Control :** In artificial setting, control over variables is possible but in natural environment, the researcher has little control over variables that affect the data.
- **Difficulties of quantification :** The data collected through observation cannot be quantified. The recorded data will show how persons interacted with one another but it cannot be completed the number of times they interacted. In communal riots, looting, arson, killing may be observed but it cannot be quantified what type of people indulged in what? It is difficult to categorise in-depth emotional and humanistic data.
- **Small sample size:** Observational studies use a smaller sample than survey studies. Two or more observers can study a bigger sample but then their observations cannot be compared. Since observations are made for a longer period, employing many observers can become a costly affair.
- **Gaining entry:** Many times the observer has difficulty in receiving approval for the study. It is not always easy to observe the functioning of an organization or institution without obtaining permission from the administrator. In such cases, he may not record observations then and there but may write notes at night.
- **Lack of anonymity/studying sensitive issues:** In observational study, it is difficult to maintain the respondent's anonymity. In survey, it is easy for the husband to say that he has no quarrels and conflicts with his wife but in observation over a longer period of time, he cannot conceal them.
- **Limited study:** All aspects of the problem cannot be observed simultaneously. The observation technique studies only limited issues. Similarly, internal attitudes and opinions cannot be studied.

Williamson et. al. have discussed the following limitations of observation method :

- This method is not applicable to the investigation of large social settings.

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• There are few safeguards against biases of the researcher.

• There is the related problem of selectivity in data collection.

• The mere presence of the researcher in the setting may change the group/social system to some extent.

• Since there is no set procedure of observation technique, the researcher may not be able to explain exactly how the work was done. It, therefore, becomes difficult to replicate the study.

It could thus be concluded that observation becomes an effective tool of scientific study when it is planned systematically, recorded systematically, is subjected to checks and control, and selected observers have skills and are trained.

CASE STUDY

Case study is an intensive study of a case which may be an individual, an institution, a system, a community, an organization, an event, or even the entire culture. **Yin** has defined case study as **"an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used".** Kromrey holds that **"case study involves studying individual cases, often in their natural environment and for a long period of time"**.

Case study is not a method of data collection; rather it is a research strategy, or an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon by using multiple sources of evidence.

Mitchell has also maintained that a case study is not just a narrative account of an event or a series of events but it involves analysis against an appropriate theoretical framework or in support of theoretical conclusions. Case study can be simple and specific, such as "Ram, the delinquent boy", or complex and abstract, such as "decision-making in a university". But whatever the subject, to qualify as a case study, it must be a bounded system/unit, an entity in itself.

Characteristics of Case Study

Hartfield has referred to the following distinguishing characteristics of case study:

• It studies whole units in their totality and not some selected aspects or variables of these units.

• It employs several methods in data collection to prevent errors and distortions.

• If often studies a single unit: one unit is one study.

• It perceives the respondent as a knowledgeable person, not just as a source of data.

• It studies a typical case..

Purposes of Case Study

Following are the purposes of a case study :

• To use it as a preliminary to major investigation as it may bring to light variables, processes and relationships that deserve more intensive investigation.

• To probe the phenomenon deeply and analyse it intensively with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which the unit belongs.

• To get anecdotal evidence that illustrates more general findings.

• To refute a universal generalization. A single case can represent a significant contribution to theory building and assist in focusing the direction of future investigations in the area.

• To use it as a unique, typical and an interesting case in its own right.

According to Berger et. al. reasons for employing case study method can be :

• To get intimate and detailed information about the structure, process and complexity of the research object,

• To formulate hypotheses,

• To conceptualise,

• To operationalize variables,

• To expand quantitative findings, and

• To test the feasibility of the quantitative study.

Types of Case Studies

Burns has stated six types of case studies:

● **Historical case studies:** These studies trace the development of an organization/system over time. The study of an adult criminal right from his childhood through adolescence and youth is an example of this type of case study. This type depends more on interviews, recording and documents.

● **Observational case studies:** These focus on observing a drunkard, a teacher, a student, a union leader, some activity, events, or a specific group of people. However, the researchers in

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this type of study are rarely total participants or total observers.

- **Oral history case studies:** These are usually first person narratives that the researcher collects using extensive interviewing of a single individual. For example, the case of a drug addict or an alcoholic, or a prostitute or a retired person who fails to adjust himself in son's family. The use of this approach depends more on the nature and cooperation of the respondent.

- **Situational case studies:** This form studies particular events. The views of all participants in the event are sought. For example, a communal riot: how it started with conflict between two persons of two different religious groups, how each person sought support of persons of his own religion present at the spot, how police was informed, how police arrested persons of one particular religious group, how power elite interfered and pressurized the police department, how did public and the media react, and so on. Pulling all these views together, a depth is provided that contributes significantly to the understanding of the event.

- **Clinical case studies:** This approach aims at understanding in depth a particular individual such as a patient in the hospital, a prisoner in the jail, a woman in a rescue home, a problem child in a school, etc. These studies involve detailed interviews, observation, going through records and reports, and so on.

- **Multi-case studies:** It is a collection of case studies or a form of replication, i.e., multiple experiments. For example, we can take three case studies and analyse them on replication logic. This logic is that each case will either produce contrary results or similar results. The outcome will demonstrate either support for the initial propositions or a need to revise and retest with another set of cases. The advantage of multi-case design is that the evidence can be more compelling. However, this approach requires more time and effort.

Sources of Data Collection for Case Studies

Two main sources of primary data collection are **interviews and observation,** while the secondary data are collected through a variety of sources like reports, records, newspapers, magazines, books, files, diaries, etc. The secondary sources may not be

accurate or may be biased. But they specify events and issues in greater detail than interviews can.

Interviews may be structured or unstructured. Both these methods most commonly, it is the unstructured interview which is used by the investigators. The questions are usually open-ended with a conversational tone. However, at times, the structured interview is also used as part of a case study.

The observation method used could either be participant or non-participant. The latter has been used more by sociologists in India like **M.N. Srinivas, Sachchidananda, L.P. Vidyarthi,** etc. For some topics, the non-participant observation is more suitable.

Advantages of Case Study

- It makes in-depth study possible.
- It is flexible with respect to using methods for collecting data, e.g., questionnaire, interview, observation, etc.
- It could be used for studying any dimension of the topic, i.e., it could study one specific aspect and may not include other aspects.
- It can be conducted in practically any kind of social setting.
- Case studies are inexpensive.

Yin has referred to following three uses of single case study :

- It provides a critical test of a theory to corroborate, challenge or extend it.
- It helps in studying a unique case which is useful not only in clinical psychology but also in sociology for the study of deviant groups, problem individuals, and so on.
- It helps in studying the phenomenon that occurs in a situation where it (the phenomenon) has not been studies before, e.g., studying the problems and rehabilitation of the sufferers of cyclones in the coastal areas (sociology of disaster), management of irrigation canals for the farmers, environment disasters, etc.

Criticisms of Case Studies

Case study method is generally criticized on the following basis :

- **Subjective bias :** The case study design is regarded with disdain because of investigator's subjectivity in collecting data for supporting or refuting a particular explanation. Many a time the investigator allows personal views to

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influence the direction of the findings and his conclusions.

- **Little evidence for scientific generalizations:** It is said that case study provides little evidence for inferences and generalizing theory. The common complaint is: How can generalization be made from a single case?

- **Time-consuming :** Case study is time-consuming as it produces a lot of information which is difficult to analyse adequately. Selectivity has naturally a tendency to be biased. But if the case study is focused on relevant issues of person or event under study, it need not be lengthy.

- **Doubtful reliability:** It is very difficult to establish reliability in the case study. The investigator cannot prove his authenticity for obtaining data or having no bias in analysing them. It is not easy to fix steps and procedures explicitly to the extent that others are enabled to replicate the same study.

- **Missing validity:** The investigators in the case study fail to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures. As such, checks and balances of reliable instruments are found missing. For investigator, what seems true is more important than what is true. The case study can oversimplify or exaggerate leading to erroneous conclusions.The validity question also arises because the investigator by his presence and actions affects the behaviour of the observed but he does not give importance to this reaction while interpreting the facts. Yet one more argument against the case study is that it has no representativeness, i.e., each case studied does not represent other similar cases.

Yin has criticized case studies mainly on three grounds :

- The findings of case studies are biased because the research is usually sloppy. This criticism is probably based on the prejudice that quantitative researchers are against qualitative data. They think that only numbers can be used to describe and explain social life validly and reliably.

- Case studies are not useful for generalization. One argument is that it is not possible to generalize from a single case. The other argument is that if a number of cases are used for the purpose, it will be extremely difficult to

establish their comparability. Each case has too many unique aspects.

- Case studies take too long time and produce unmanageable amounts of data. In fact, it is not the case study but the methods of data collection which are time-consuming.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Social Survey

The basic procedure in survey is that people are asked a number of questions on that aspect of behavior which the sociologist is interested in. A number of people carefully selected so that their representation of their population being studied are asked to answer exactly the same question so that the replies to different categories of respondents may be examined for differences. One type of survey relies on contacting the respondents by letter and asking them to complete the questionnaire themselves before returning it. These are called Mail questionnaires. Sometimes questionnaires are not completed by individuals separately but by people in a group under the direct supervision of the research worker. A variation of the procedure can be that a trained interviewer asks the questions and records the responses on a schedule from each respondent.

These alternate procedures have different advantages and disadvantages. Mail questionnaires are relatively cheap and can be used to contact respondents who are scattered over a wide area. But at the same time the proportion of people who return questionnaires sent through post is usually rather small. The questions asked in main questionnaires have also to be very carefully worded in order to avoid ambiguity since the respondents cannot ask to have questions clarified for them. Using groups to complete questionnaires means that the return rate is good and that information is assembled quickly and fairly. Administrating the interview schedules to the respondents individually is probably the most reliable method. Several trained interviewers may be employed to contact specific individuals. The questionnaires and schedules can consist of both close-ended and open-ended questions. Also a special attention needs to be paid to ensure that the questionnaires are filled in logical order.

Where aptitude questions are included great care must be exercised to ensure the proper words are used. In case of schedules emphasis and interactions may also be standardized between different

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individuals and from respondents to respondents. Finally proper sampling techniques must be used to ensure that the sample under study represents the universe of study. In order to enhance the reliability of data collected through questionnaires and schedules, these questionnaires and schedules must be pretested through pilot studies.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

NOMOTHETIC AND IDEOGRAPHIC METHODS

Ideographic and nomothetic methods represent two different approaches to understanding social life. An ideographic method focuses on individual cases or events. Ethnographers, for example, observe the minute details of everyday life to construct an overall portrait. A nomothetic method, on the other hand, focuses on general statements that account for larger social patterns that form the context of single events or individual behavior and experience.

Nomothetic Method refers to the approach of investigating large groups of people in order to findgeneral laws of behaviour that apply to everyone. *Idiographic Method refers* to the approach of investigating individuals in personal, in-depth detail to achieve a unique understanding of them.

"Nomos" refer to laws in ancient Greek; this approach assumes that an individual is a complex combination of many universal laws; it is best to study people on a large scale. **"Idios"** refer to 'private' or 'personal' in ancient Greek; this approach assumes that humans are unique.

According to Nomothetic Method, Quantitative Experimental methods are best to identify the universal laws governing behaviour. The individual will be classified with others and measured as a score upon a dimension, or be a statistic supporting a general principle ('averaging').

According to Idiographic Method, Qualitative methods are best; case study method will provide a more complete and global understanding of the individual who should be studied using flexible, long terms and detailed procedures in order to put them in a 'class of their own'.

Advantages of Nomothetic Method - In line with the deterministic, law abiding nature of science, useful in predicting and controlling behaviour; nomothetic findings on prejudice and discrimination perhaps helpful (reduce discrimination)

Disadvantages of Nomothetic Method - Superficial understanding of any one person; even if two persons have same IQ they may have answered different questions in the test; a person may have
1% chance of developing depression (but is he among the 1%?); classification manuals are not accurate and does not help people.

Advantages of Idiographic Method: More complete and global understanding of an individual; sometimes the most
efficient; often lead to results that spark off experimental investigation of behaviour.

Disadvantages of Idiographic Method
Difficult to generalize findings; Sociologists create universal theories on the basis of a limited and unrepresentative sample; Idiographic research tends to be more unreliable and unscientific (subjective, long term and unstandardised procedures)

While comparing Sociology and History, **Radcliff Brown** said **"sociology is nomothetic, while history is idiographic".** In other words, **sociologists produce generalizations while historians describe unique events.**

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a research method used to analyze social life by interpreting words and images from documents, film, art, music, and other cultural products and media. It has

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been used extensively to examine the place of women in society. In advertising, for example, women tend to be portrayed as subordinate, often through their lower physical positioning in relation to the males or the unassertive nature of their poses or gestures.

Researchers can learn a great deal about a society by analyzing cultural artifacts such as newspapers, magazines, television programs, or music. This is called content analysis. Researchers who use content analysis are not studying the people, but are studying the communications the people produce as a way of creating a picture of their society.

Content analysis is frequently used to measure cultural change and to study different aspects of culture. Sociologists also use it as an indirect way to determine how social groups are perceived. For example, they might examine how African Americans are depicted in television shows or how women are depicted in advertisements.

In conducting a content analysis, researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of words and concepts within the cultural artifacts they are studying. They then make inferences about the messages within the artifacts and about the culture they are studying. At its most basic, content analysis is a statistical exercise that involves categorizing some aspect of behavior and counting the number of times such behavior occurs. For example, a researcher might count the number of minutes that men and women appear on screen in a television show and make comparisons. This allows us to paint a picture of the patterns of behavior that underlie social interactions portrayed in the media.

Strengths And Weaknesses:

Content analysis has several strengths as a research method. ***First,*** *it is a great method because it is unobtrusive.* That is, it has no effect on the person being studied since the cultural artifact has already been produced. ***Second,*** it is relatively easy to gain access to

the media source or publication the researcher wishes to study. ***Finally,*** it can present an objective account of events, themes, and issues that might not be immediately apparent to a reader, viewer, or general consumer.

Content analysis also has several weaknesses as a research method. **First,** it is limited in what it can study. Since it is based only on mass communication – either visual, oral, or written – it cannot tell us what people really think about these images or whether they affect people's behavior. **Second,** it may not be as objective as it claims since the researcher must select and record data accurately. In some cases, the researcher must make choices about how to interpret or categorize particular forms of behavior and other researchers may interpret it differently. **A final weakness** of content analysis is that it can be time consuming.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus group Discussion is a form of qualitative research that is used most often in product marketing and marketing research. During a focus group, a group of individuals - usually 6-12 people - is brought together in a room to engage in a guided discussion of some topic.

Focus groups are often used in social science research as well. Take William Gamson's research on political views as an example. In 1992, he used focus groups to examine how U.S. citizens frame their views of political issues. He chose four issues for discussion: Affirmative action, nuclear power, troubled industries, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. First Gamson conducted a content analysis of the press coverage on these topics to get an idea of the media context within which the participants would be thinking and talking about these topics and politics in general. Then he conducted the focus groups to observe the process of people discussing these issues with their friends.

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The participants of a focus group are selected based on their relevance and relationship to the topic under study. They are not typically chosen through rigorous, probability sampling methods, which means that they do not statistically represent any meaningful population. Rather, participants are chosen through word-of-mouth, advertising, snowball sampling, or similar, depending on the type of person and characteristics the researcher is looking to include.

Advantages of Focus Groups:
There are several advantages of focus groups:

As a socially oriented research method, it captures real-life data in a social setting.

It is flexible.

It has high face validity, meaning that it measures what it is intended to measure.

It generates quick results.

It costs little to conduct.

Group dynamics often bring out aspects of the topic or reveal information about the subject that may not have been anticipated by the researcher or emerged from individual interviews.

Disadvantages of Focus Group
There are also several disadvantages of focus groups:
- The researcher has less control over the session than he or she does in individual interviews.
- Data are often difficult to analyze.
- Moderators require certain skills.
- Differences between groups can be troublesome.
- Groups can often be difficult to pull together.
- The discussion must be conducted in a conducive environment.

Basic Steps In Conducting A Focus Group

There are several basic steps that should be involved when conducting a focus group, from preparation to data analysis.

Preparing For The Focus Group:
- Identify the main objective of the focus group.
- Carefully develop your focus group questions. Your focus group should generally last 1 to 1.5 hours, which is usually enough time to cover 5 or 6 questions.
- Call potential participants to invite them to the meeting. Focus groups generally consist of 6-12 participants who have some similar characteristic (e.g., age group, status in a program, etc). Select participants who are likely to participate in discussions and who don't all know each other.
- Send a follow-up invitation with a proposed agenda, questions up for discussion, and time/location details.
- Three days before the focus group, call each participant to remind them of the meeting.

Planning The Session:
- Schedule a time that is convenient for most people. Plan the focus group to take between 1 and 1.5 hours. Lunchtime or dinnertime is usually a good time for people, and if you serve food, they are more likely to attend.
- Find a good setting, such as a conference room, with good air flow and lighting. Configure the room so that all members can see each other. Provide nametags as well as refreshments. If your focus group is at lunch or dinnertime, be sure to provide food as well.
- Set some ground rules for the participants that help foster participation and keep the session moving along appropriately. For example: 1. Stay focused on the subject/question, 2. Keep the momentum of the conversation going, and 3. Get closure on each question.
- Make an agenda for the focus group. Consider the following: Welcome, review of agenda, review of the goal of the meeting,

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review of ground rules, introductions, questions and answers, wrap up.

- Don't count on your memory for information shared at the focus group. Plan to record the session with either an audio or video recorder. If this isn't possible, involve a co-facilitator who takes good notes.

Facilitating The Session:

- Introduce yourself and your co-facilitator, if you have one.
- Explain your need and reason for recording the focus group discussion.
- Carry out the agenda.
- Carefully word each question to the group. Before a group discussion, allow everyone a few minutes to carefully record his or her responses or answers. Then, facilitate discussion around the answers to each question, one at a time.
- After the discussion of each question, reflect back to the group a summary of what you just heard. If you have a note-taker/co-facilitator, he or she may do this.
- Ensure even participation among the group. If a few people are dominating the conversation, then call on others. Also, consider a round-table approach in which you go in one direction around the table, giving each person a chance to answer the question.
- Close the session by thanking the participants and telling them that they will receive a copy of the report generated as a result of the discussion.

Immediately After The Session:

- Verify that the audio or video recorder worked throughout the entire session (if one was used).
- Make any additional notes on your written notes that you need.
- Write down any observations you made during the session, such as the nature of participation in the group, any surprises of the session, where and when the session was held, etc.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

Serendipity

In general, serendipity is the act of finding something valuable or delightful when you are not looking for it. In information technology, serendipity often plays a part in the recognition of a new product need or in solving a design problem. Web surfing can be an occasion for serendipity since you sometimes come across a valuable or interesting site when you are looking for something else.

The term was coined by English writer Horace Walpole on January 28, 1754, in a letter written to Horace Mann. He credited it to a "silly fairy tale" he once read called 'The Three Princes of Serendip'.

Three goodly young princes were traveling the world in hopes of being educated to take their proper position upon their return. On their journey they happened upon a camel driver who inquired if they had seen his missing camel. As sport, they claimed to have seen the camel, reporting correctly that the camel was blind in one eye, missing a tooth, and lame. From these accurate details, the owner assumed that the three had surely stolen the camel, and they were subsequently thrown into jail. Soon the wayward camel was discovered, and the princes brought to the perplexed Emperor of the land, who inquired of them how they had learned these facts. That the grass was eaten on one side of the road suggested that camel had one eye, the cuds of grass on the ground indicated a tooth gap, and the traces of a dragged hoof revealed the camel's lameness.

This exotic tale, told of ancient princes of Sri Lanka, then known as Serendip, inspired Horace Walpole, the English novelist (e.g., The Castle of Otranto), politician, and belle lettrist. In this last capacity, Walpole coined the term 'serendipity" while writing to the British diplomat, Horace Mann, in January 28, 1754. Walpole created serendipity to refer to the combination of accident and sagacity in recognizing the significance of a discovery.

Serendipity in classical fieldwork

Qualitative research inevitably contains such "good fortune," but serendipity consists in how we transform our fortune into substantive discovery.

Since Malinowski (1950), many fieldwork classics provide evidence of the importance of interpreting and capitalizing on unpredicted, unplanned events. Yet, traditionally, ethnographers were reluctant to discuss their errors and chance occurrences, even when these events proved to be the basis of subsequent insight, perhaps fearing that it would confirm the belief that ethnography was truly dilettantism. Hortense Powdermaker (1966) recognized this absence when she remarked:

Little record exists of mistakes and learning from them, and of the role of chance and accident in stumbling upon significant problems, in reformulating old ones, and in devising new techniques, a process known as "serendipity." A lack of theory, or of imagination, an over commitment to a particular hypothesis, or a rigidity in personality may prevent a fieldworker from learning as he stumbles.

With the growth of the "reflexive turn" in ethnography - what some have labelled the "new ethnography" (Dowd, 1994), the inclusion of occurrences of serendipity in accounts of fieldwork is a battle won long ago, perhaps contributing to the heroic image of the ethnographer who pulls meaning from chaos. We have come to present ourselves as lovers of the play and surprise of research. Although we now have what Atkinson (1990) described as a "mythological corpus" of ethnographers' tales of discovery - frequently in the form of "confessionals" we know little of how serendipity operates in qualitative research. The conceptualization of the dimensions of serendipity must be made more explicit. The question becomes: How do our own lived experiences of insight lead to substantive discovery?

The serendipity pattern

The most influential attempt to apply the concept of serendipity to social scientific theorizing has been the one by Robert Merton. As Merton (1962) noted, "There is a rich corpus of literature on how social scientists ought to think, feel, and act, but little detail on what they actually do,

think, and feel" (p. 19). Merton (1968, p. 157) provided a systematic attempt to make sense of serendipity in sociology, speaking of the serendipity pattern, whereby unexpected data provide the spark for the creation of theoretical analysis. For Merton three features characterize datum that fit into a serendipity pattern: it must be "unanticipated," "anomalous," and "strategic" (i.e., with implications for the development of theory).

Merton, of course, operated from the scientific model described above, which is also implicated in the princes' tale. That is, a real world exists for which clues provide insight. In contrast to a positivist (or postpositivist) view, we suggest that serendipitous insight provides the opportunity for constructing a plausible story. We do not deny the reality of an external world, but only suggest that numerous possible explanations exist and that chance events can be made serendipitous if the event provides the opportunity for story-building. In this way, story-telling is a means, not an end. We use stories in much the same way as researchers might use an illustrative case decorating a statistical study. Our stories are intended as supporting evidence for the paper's conclusions and, it is hoped, permit the reader to experience an abbreviated version of the verstehen and inference processes of the researcher.

Variables, Sampling, Hypothesis, Reliability and Validity

THE VARIABLE

A variable is a characteristic that takes on two or more values. It is something that varies. It is a characteristic that is common to a number of individuals, groups, events, objects, etc. The individual cases differ in the extent to which they possess the characteristic. Thus, age (young, middle-aged, old) income class (lower, middle, upper), caste (low, intermediate, high), education (illiterate, less educated, highly educated),

occupation (low status, high status), etc., are all variables.

The variables selected for analysis are called **explanatory variables** and all other variables are **extraneous variables**. Extraneous variables which are not part of the explanatory set are categorized as controlled or uncontrolled variables. Controlled variables, commonly called control variables, are held constant or prevented from varying during the course of study. This is to limit the focus of the research. For example, in age, all males and females under 18 years of age may be excluded from study. This would mean that the hypothesis is not concerned with specific sub-groups.

Types of Variables

Dependent and Independent Variables :

- **A dependent variable** is one which changes in relationship to changes in another variable. An independent variable is one whose change results in the change in another variable. In a controlled experiment, the independent variable is the experimental variable, i.e., one which is withheld from the control group.
- In experiments, **the independent variable** is the variable manipulated by the experimenter. For example, a teacher wants to know which method of teaching is more effective in the students' understanding: lecture method, question-answer method, visual method or combination of two or more of these methods. Here, teaching method is independent variable which is manipulated by the teacher. The "effect on students' understanding" is the dependent variable. The dependent variable is the condition we are trying to explain. In this experiment, besides the methods of teaching, other independent, variables could be personality types (of students), social class (of students), types of motivation (reward and punishment) class atmosphere, attitude towards teacher, and so on.

Experimental and measured variables :

The experimental variables spell out the details of the investigator's manipulations while the measured variables refer to measurement. For instance, rural development (measured variable) may be assessed in terms of increase in income, literacy level, infrastructure, availability of medical facilities, availability of social security and so forth. In another study on factors affecting student's achievement (high or low marks), we may examine the absence/availability of books, libraries, good teachers, use of visuals and so on. All these will be experimental variables or experimental manipulations for the researcher. It is important when planning and executing research to distinguish between these two types of variables.

Active and assigned variables :

Manipulated or experimental variables will be called active variables, while measured variables will be called assigned variables. In other words, any variable that is manipulated is an active variable and variable that cannot be manipulated is an assigned variable.

Qualitative and quantitative variables:

- **The quantitative variable** is one whose values or categories consist of numbers and if differences between its categories can be expressed numerically. Thus, age, income, sizes are quantitative variables. **The qualitative variable** is one which consists of discreet categories rather than numerical units. This variable has two or more categories that are distinguished from each other. Class (lower, middle, upper), caste (low, intermediate, high) sex, (male, female), religion (Hindu, non-Hindu) are all qualitative variables.
- **Relationships among quantitative variables may be either positive or negative** (Singleton and Straits). A positive relationship exists if an increase in the value of one variable is accompanied by an increase in the value of the other, or if decrease in one is accompanied by decrease in the other. In other words, the two variables constantly change in the same direction, e.g., the taller a father, the taller will be his son. The negative relationship between variables exists if the decrease in the value of one variable is accompanied by an increase in the value of the other, e.g., as age increases, the life expectancy decreases.
- **Therese Baker has used the terms categorical and numerical variables for qualitative and quantitative variables, respectively.** The former (e.g., occupation, religion, caste, gender, education, income) are made up of sets of categories (or attributes) which must follow two rules: one, the categories must be distinct from

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one another, i.e., they must be mutually exclusive; two, the categories must be exhaustive, i.e., they should cover all the potential range of variation in a variable. After putting himself in the categories of educated (other being illiterate) in the field of education, one can put himself in the sub-category of undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, etc.

The variables can also be dichotomous or continuous.

While sex is dichotomous variable, intelligence is continuous variable. Ordinarily, only a few variables are true dichotomies. Most variables are capable of taking on continuous values. Nevertheless, it is useful to remember that it is often convenient or necessary to convert continuous variables to dichotomous or trichotomous variables.

SAMPLING

A sample is a portion of people drawn from a larger population. It will be representative of the population only if it has same basic characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. Our concern in sampling is not about what types of units (persons) will be interviewed/observed but with how many units of what particular description and by what method should be chosen.

According to Manheim, "a sample is a part of the population which is studied in order to make inferences about the whole population". In defining 'population' from which the sample is taken, it is necessary to identify 'target population' and 'sampling frame'. The target population is one which includes all the units (persons) for which the information is required, e.g., drug abuser students in one university, or voters in one village/constituency, and so on. In defining the population, the criteria need to be specified for explaining cases which are included and excluded.

For example, for studying the level of awareness of rights among women in one village community, the target population is defined as all women–married and unmarried–in the age group of 18-50 years. If the unit is an institution (say, Vidya Mandir), then the type of its structure, size as measured by the number of students in school section, college section, and in professional courses the number of teachers and employees needs to be specified.

For making the target population operational, the sampling frame needs to be constructed. This denotes the set of all cases from which the sample is actually selected. It should be noted that sampling frame is not a sample; rather it is the operational definition of the population that provides the basis for sampling. For example, in the above example of Vidya Mandir, if students studying in school and in college are excluded, only students of professional courses (MBA, Computer Science, B.Ed., Home Science and Biotechnology) are left out from which the sample is to be drawn. Thus, the sample frame reduces the number of total population and gives us the target population (i.e., students of professional courses only).

There are two objectives of sampling (a) Estimate of parameters (b) Testing of hypothesis

Estimate of parameters:

The major objectives is to estimate certain population parameters (e.g. the proportion of clerk did an office working overtime).Thus, the researches attempts to select a sample and calculate the relevant statistics (i.e. average and proportion. He can use this statistic as an estimate to make a statement about its precision in terms of standard errors and conclude about its population in terms of probability.

Testing of hypothesis:

The second objective of sampling may be to test statistical hypothesis about a population (i.e. the hypothesis that at least 60 percent of the household in Kurukshetra town have T.V sets).The researchers may select a sample of household and then calculate the proportion of household possessing T.V sets. The problem now is to assess whether the sample result is such as to reject the hypothesis or whether it supports the hypothesis. To resolve this problem, the researcher has to find out a criterion by which he can determine the precise deviation of the sample result from the hypothetical value..

Purposes of Sampling,

Sarantakos has pointed out the following purposes of sampling:

- Population in many cases may be so large and scattered that a complete coverage may not be possible.
- It offers a high degree of accuracy because it deals with a small number of persons. Most of us have had blood samples taken, sometimes from the fingers and sometimes from the arm or

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another part of the body. The assumption is that the blood is sufficiently similar throughout the body and the characteristics of the blood are determined on the basis of a sample. Singleton and Straits have also said that studying all cases will describe population less accurately than a small sample.

- In a short period of time, valid and comparable results can be obtained. A lengthy period of data collection generally renders some data obsolete by the time the information is completely in hands. For example, collecting information on the attitudes of voters' preferences during election period, or demanding action against police personnel responsible for using violence against women demonstrators, or for making a large number of accused persons in the police lockup blind. Besides, opinions expressed at the time of incidence and those expressed after a few months are bound to be different. The findings are thus bound to be influenced if long period is involved in data collection, i.e., not taking a small sample but studying the entire population.
- Sampling is less demanding in terms of requirements of investigators since it requires a small portion of the target population.
- It is economical since it contains fewer people. Large population would involve employing a large number of interviewers which will increase the total cost of the survey.
- Many research projects, particularly those in quality control testing, require the destruction of the items being tested. If the manufacturer of electric bulbs wishes to find out whether each bulb met a specific standard, there would be no product left after the testing.

Principles of Sampling

The main principle behind sampling is that we seek knowledge about the total units (called population) by observing a few units (called sample) and extend our inference about the sample to the entire population. For purchasing a bag of wheat, if we take out a small sample from the middle of the bag with a cutter, it will give us the inference whether the wheat in the bag is good or not. But it is not necessary that study of sample will always give us the correct picture of the total population.

If few people in a village are found in favor of family planning, it would not mean that all people in the village will necessarily have the same opinion. The opinion may vary in terms of religion, educational level, age, economic status and such other factors. The wrong inference is drawn or generalization is made from the study of few persons because they constitute inadequate sample of the total population.

The study of sample becomes necessary because study of a very large population would require a long period of time, a large number of interviewers, a large amount of money, and doubtful accuracy of data collected by numerous investigators. The planning of observation/study with a sample is more manageable.

The important principles of sampling are (Sarantakos):
- Sample units must be chosen in a systematic and objective manner.
- Sample units must be clearly defined and easily identifiable.
- Sample units must be independent of each other.
- Same units of sample should be used throughout the study.
- The selection process should be based on sound criteria and should avoid errors, bias and distortions.

Advantages of Sampling

The above mentioned purposes and principles of sampling point out some advantages of sampling. These are:
- It is not possible to study large number of people scattered in wide geographical area. Sampling will reduce their number.
- It saves time and money.
- It saves destruction of units.
- It increases accuracy of data (having control on the small number of subjects).
- It achieves greater response rate.
- It achieves greater cooperation from respondents
- It is easy to supervise few interviewers in the sample but difficult to supervise a very large number of interviewers in the study of total population.
- The researcher can keep a low profile.

The Significance of Sampling:

There are various reasons for the signifance o\f sampling in colleting statistical data.

Only Possible, Quick, Economic Method: Perhaps it is the only possible method; it is quick and economic. In a manufacturing unit, quality of

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products is tested with the help of sample. After testing, if the quality of the product is unsatisfactory, it is reprocessed or scrapped. Thus, there is no alternative to sampling for measuring quality. Likewise instead of observation of all items, selection of a sample from the universe and inferring its characteristics from that sample forms the quick and economical method. It is a highly useful device for the researchers and the practitioners concerned for interring within limits certain characteristics of a population.

Representativeness and Size of Sampling:- Problem of representatives of sample The basic point in the selection of a sample is to ensure that it is as representative of the universe as possible. Explicitly, the size of sample does not necessarily determine its representivess.Thus, if a relatively small sample is scientifically selected , it may be more reliable than an arbitrary selected large sample. The process of sample selection should be such that every items in the population under study has the same chance representative of the population.

A sample which does not represent the population is called biased sample .As **Yule and Kendal** observes, "the human beings is extremely poor instrument, for the conduct of a random selection. Whenever there is any scope for personal choice or judgment on the part of the observes, bias is almost certain to creep in, The studies based on biased sampling are intrinsically inaccurate and misleading. This is true of several studies in behavioral science which are based on mailed questionnaires involving incomplete and distorted returns. Of course, the original mailing list of prospective respondents any be representative sample However ,the questionnaires actually received may be extremely in view of operation of selective factors.

Problem of Sample Size:-A scientific sample is one which in conjunction with representing the population also consists of enough cases to ensure reliable results. The issue of adequacy of a sample is highly complex. As indicate by Hagood and price ,the size of the sample cn be determine by the following items of information :the designation of parameters which one intends to study, the range of reliability permissible in estimates and a cride estimate of the dispersion of studied characteristics.

Types of Sampling

Two types of sampling: **probability sampling and non-probability sampling**. Probability sampling is one in which every unit of the population has an equal probability of being selected for the sample. It offers a high degree of representativeness. Non-probability sampling makes no claim for representativeness, as every unit does not get the chance of being selected. It is the researcher who decides which sample units should be chosen.

Probability Sampling:
Probability sampling today remains the primary method for selecting large, representative samples for social science and business researches. According to Black and Champion, the probability sampling requires following conditions to be satisfied:
- Complete list of subjects to be studied is available;
- size of the universe must be known;
- Desired sample size must be specified, and
- each element must have an equal chance of being selected.

It means use some kind of randomization in one or more of their phases. Leabo classifies probability samples in five categories-sample random samples, stratified samples.

SIMPLE RANDON SAMPLING: Although simple random samples are not used widely, they form a basis for other types of sampling. A simple random sample of n items refers to a smple which has been selected from a population in such a manner that each possible combination of n units has the same chance or probability of being selected.

THE ADVANTAGES OF SIMPLE RANDON SAMPLING:-
1. *Its saves time- As against complete coverage, sampling is cheaper of course, per unit cost is higher.*
2. *It saves labour- Sampling includes a smaller number of staff for the collection, tabulation and processing of the data. Thus it saves labour considerably.*
3. *It saves time-Because of these advantage, sampling was first used with the census of population in 1951.This procedure save a of time.*
4. *It improve accuracy: A sample coverage provides a higher overall level of accuracy. It permits a higher quality of the field, more checks for accuracy, more care editing and the analysis and more elaborate information.*

STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING: These samples involve division of population into similar groups and selection of a random sample from each other. The population can be divided into groups in the light of the knowledge about it and effect of a certain characteristic group. The population can be divided into groups in the light of the knowledge about it and effect of a certain characteristic upon the estimate to be made.

ADVANTAGE: *This procedure ensures proper representation from each group and probability sample. The basis for division into groups or strata related to the nature of the problem to be studied .For e.g. if the problem involves the estimates of the average income in an area occupational groups can be used as biases for dividing the population. The stratified random sample, if properly carried out, forms improvements upon the sample random sample. Indeed, the reliability of the results for a given size increases with the smaller range of all possible sample averages accordingly, it can said that a properly stratified random sampling is more reliable the a simple random sample of the same size*

Non-probability sampling:

In many research situations, particularly those where there is no list of persons to be studied (e.g., wife battering, widows, Maruti car owners, consumers of a particular type of detergent powder, alcoholics, students and teachers who cut classes frequently, migrant workers, and so on), probability sampling is difficult and inappropriate to use. In such researches, non-probability sampling is the most appropriate one. Non-probability sampling procedures do not employ the rules of probability theory, do not claim representativeness and are usually used for qualitative exploratory analysis.

These samples do not use randomization and can be classified as quota sampling, purposive sampling, accidental sampling, and snowball sampling.

Quota sampling: It is used in marketing research. It is a stratified sampling but of the non-random type. In this sampling, the population is divided into two or three parts in terms of characteristics. Quota is then fixed up and interviewer is asked a specified number from each division. The interviewer may select a member of the population who is conveniently available. Because of this convenience, bias is likely to color. The bias can be reduced by restricting his convenience. This method is useful where merely rough estimates (rather than results)are needed.

Indeed, it results are only a rough estimate and thus , cannot be tested for reliability.

Purposive Sampling: It involves use of judement and a concerted attempt to obtain representative under the impression of including typical areas or groups in this sample.A study conducted by Namjoshi exemplifies the nature of purposive sample .In this study two types respondants were selected 1.marries males and females2. Unmarried males and females. Both the samples were selected by this procedure in order to get sufficient representation of respondents from higher and lower castes, socio-economic groups and from both the sexes. A sample of 400 married male and female respondents and a sample of 400 unmarried boys and girls were selected.

Accidental sampling:- This involves use of available , samples and , is therefore, the weaker type of sampling. This kind of sampling can be used if no other types of sample are available.

Snowball Sampling:- It related to set of procedure whereby the initial respondents' are selected by probability methods and thereafter, additional respondents' are obtained on the basis of information provided by them. This technique is used to identify elements of rare populations by referral. For e.g, a manufacture is interested in marketing a mahogany croquet set for serious adult players as the market for this product is small, the researches is required to use this technique in order to accomplish the task economically.

HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is an assumption about relations between variables. It is a tentative explanation of the research problem or a guess about the research outcome. Before starting the research, the researcher has a rather general, diffused, even confused notion of the problem. It may take long time for the researcher to say what questions he had been seeking answers to. Hence, an adequate statement about the research problem is very important.

- **Theodor son and Theodor son,** "a hypothesis is a tentative statement asserting a relationship between certain facts.
- **Ker linger** describes it as "a conjectural statement of the relationship between two or more variables".

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- **Black and Champion** have described it as "a tentative statement about something, the validity of which is usually unknown". This statement is intended to be tested empirically and is either verified or rejected. If the statement is not sufficiently established, it is not considered a scientific law.
- **Webster** has defined hypothesis as "a tentative assumption made in order to draw out and test its logical or empirical consequences". 'Test' here means "either to prove it wrong or to confirm it". Since statements in Hypothesis have to be put to empirical investigation, the definition of hypothesis excludes all statements which are merely opinions (e.g., aging increases ailments), value judgements (e.g., contemporary politicians are corrupt and have a vested interest to serve), or normative (e.g., all people should go for a morning walk). Normative statement is a statement of what ought to be, not a factual statement that can be shown through investigation to be right or wrong.

Following are a few examples of hypotheses:

- Group study increases higher division achievement.
- Hostlers use more.
- Young girls (between 15-30 years) are more victims of crimes against women than middle-aged women (between 30-40 years).
- Lower-class men commit more crimes than middle-class men.
- Suicide rates vary inversely with social integration.
- Educated women have more adjustment problems after marriage than illiterate women.
- Children from broken homes tend to become delinquents.
- Unemployment decreases juvenile delinquency.
- Upper-class people have fewer children than lower-class people.

Criteria for Hypotheses Construction

Hypothesis is never formulated in the form of a question. **Bailey, Becker, Selltiz** and **Sarantakos** have pointed out a number of standards to be met in formulating a hypothesis:

- It should be empirically testable, whether it is right or wrong.
- It should be specific and precise.
- The statements in the hypothesis should not be contradictory.
- It should specify variables between which the relationship is to be established.
- It should describe one issue only.

A hypothesis can be formed either in descriptive or relational form. In the former, it describes events, whereas in the latter, it establishes relations between variables. A hypothesis can also be formed in the directional, non-directional or null form.

Nature of Hypotheses

A scientific justified hypothesis must meet the following criteria:

- It must accurately reflect the relevant sociological fact.
- It must not be in contradiction with approved relevant statements of other scientific disciplines.
- It must consider the experience of other researchers.

Hypotheses cannot be described as true or false. They can only be relevant or irrelevant to the research topic. For instance, the causes of poverty in a village can be explored in terms of:

- Low development of agriculture (caused by lack of irrigation, sandy soil, erratic rainfall and use of traditional agriculture implements) causes poverty.
- Lack of infrastructure (electricity, roads, markets) causes poverty.
- Barriers in rural development are resource barriers (water, soil, minerals), support barriers (rainfall, irrigation, livestock) and social system barriers (credit, infrastructure, extravagant expenditure and market barriers).

The important hypotheses could be :

- Rural poverty is positively co-related with availability of and accessibility to credit.
- Rural poverty is the result of lack of infrastructural facilities.
- Poverty is associated with extravagant social expenditure.
- Rural poverty is adversely related to resource barriers (water, soil, minerals).

Types of Hypotheses

Hypotheses are classified as working hypotheses, research hypotheses, null hypotheses, statistical hypotheses, alternative hypotheses and scientific hypotheses.

- Working hypothesis is a preliminary assumption of the researcher about the research topic, particularly when sufficient information is not available to establish a hypothesis, and as a step towards formulating the final research hypothesis. Working hypotheses are used to design the final research plan, to place the research problem in its right context and to reduce the research topic to an acceptable size. For example, in the field of business administration, a researcher can formulate a working hypothesis that "assuring bonus increases the sale of a commodity". Later on, by collecting some preliminary data, he modifies this hypothesis and takes a research hypothesis that "assuring lucrative bonus increases the sale of a commodity".

- Scientific hypothesis contains statement based on or derived from sufficient theoretical and empirical data.

- Alternative hypothesis is a set of two hypotheses (research and null) which states the opposite of the null hypothesis. In statistical tests of null hypotheses, acceptance of Ho (null hypothesis) means rejection of the alternative hypothesis; and rejection of Ho means similarly acceptance of the alternative hypothesis.

- Research hypothesis is a researcher's proposition about some social fact without reference to its particular attributes. Researcher believes that it is true and wants that it should be disproved, e.g., Muslims have more children than Hindus, or drug abuse is found more among upper-class students living in hostels or rented rooms. Research hypothesis may be derived from theories or may result in developing of theories.

- Null hypothesis is reverse of research hypothesis. It is a hypothesis of no relationship. Null hypotheses do not exist in reality but are used to test research hypotheses.

- Statistical hypothesis, according to Winter (1962), is a statement/observation about statistical populations that one seeks to support or refute. The things are reduced to numerical quantities and decisions are made about these quantities, e.g., income difference between two groups: Group A is richer than Group B. Null hypothesis will be: Group A is not richer than group B. Here, variables are reduced to measurable quantities.

Goode and Hatt have given the following three types of hypotheses on the basis of level of abstractness :

- Which presents proposition in common sense terms or, About which some common sense observations already exist or, Which seeks to test common sense statements. For example: Bad parents produce bad children, or Committed managers always give profits, or Rich students drink more alcohol.

- Which are somewhat complex, i.e., which give statement of a little complex relationship. For example:

- Communal riots are caused by religious polarization.
- Growth of cities is in concentric circles (Burgess).
- Economic instability hampers development of an establishment.
- Crime is caused by differential associations (Sutherland).
- Juvenile delinquency is related to residence in slums (Shaw).
- Deviant behaviour is caused by mental disorders (Healy and Bronner).

- Which are very complex, i.e., which describe relationship between two variables in more complex terms, e.g., high fertility exists more in low income, conservatives and rural people than in high income, modern and urban people. Here dependent variable is 'fertility' while independent variables are income, values, education and residence, etc. The other example is: Muslims have high fertility rate than Hindus. We have to keep number of variables constant to test this hypothesis. This is abstract way to handle the problem.

Difficulties in Formulating Hypotheses

According to Goode and Hatt, three main difficulties in formulating hypotheses are:

- Inability to phrase the hypothesis properly.
- Absence of clear theoretical framework or knowledge of theoretical framework, e.g., awareness of rights among women depends upon personality, environment (education).
- Lack of ability to utilize the theoretical framework logically, e.g., workers' commitment and role skills and role learning.
- Evaluating whether a hypothesis is good or bad depends upon the amount of information it

provides about the phenomenon. For example, let us take the following hypothesis, given in three forms:

(i) X is associated with Y.

(ii) X is dependent on Y.

(iii) As X increases Y decreases.

Of these three forms, third form explains the phenomenon better.

Characteristics of A Useful Hypothesis:

Goode and Hatt have described the following characteristics of a good hypothesis:

• It must be conceptually clear. This means that concepts should be defined lucidly. These should be operationalized. These should be commonly accepted. These should be communicable. In the hypothesis, "as institutionalization increases, production decreases", the concept is not easily communicable.

• It should have empirical referents. This means that it should have variables which could be put to empirical test, i.e., they should not merely be moral judgements. For example, capitalists exploit workers, or officers exploit subordinates, or young people are more radical in ideas, or efficient management leads to harmonious relations in an establishment. These hypotheses cannot be considered useful hypotheses.

• It should be specific, e.g., vertical mobility is decreasing in industries, or exploitation leads to agitation.

• It should be related to available techniques, i.e., not only the researcher should be aware of the techniques but these should be actually available. Take the hypothesis: "Change in infrastructure (means of production and relations of production) leads to change in social structure (family, religion, etc)". Such hypothesis cannot be tested with available techniques.

• It should be related to a body of theory.

Sources of Deriving Hypotheses

☐ **Cultural values of society :** American culture, for example, emphasizes individualism, mobility, competition and equality, while Indian culture emphasizes tradition, collectivism, karma and unattachment. Therefore, Indian cultural values enable us to develop and test the following hypotheses:

• Residential jointness in Indian family has decreased but functional jointness continues to exist.

• Divorce is used as a last resort by a woman to break her marriage.

• Caste is related to voting behaviour among Indians.

• Indian family comprises of not only primary and secondary kin but most often of tertiary and distant kin too.

☐ **Past research :** Hypotheses are often inspired by past research. For example, a researcher studying the problem of student unrest may use the finding of another study that "students having spent two or three years in the college/university take more interest in students' problems in the campus than freshers; or that "students with high ability and high social status participate less in students, agitations than those who have low ability and low social status". Such hypotheses could be used either to replicate past studies or revise the hypotheses that the alleged correlation does not exist.

☐ **Folk wisdom :** Sometimes researchers get the idea of a hypothesis from commonly held lay beliefs, e.g., caste affects individual's behaviour, or that geniuses lead unhappy married life, or married women without children are less happy, or that young illiterate married girls are more exploited in joint families, or that being an only child creates barriers in child's development of some personality characteristics, and so on.

☐ **Discussions and conversations:** Random observations during discussions and conversations and reflections on life as a person throw light on events and issues.

☐ **Personal experiences:** Very often researchers see evidence of some behaviour pattern in their daily lives.

☐ **Intuition:** Sometimes the investigators get a feeling from inside that certain phenomena are correlated. The suspected correlation leads the investigator to hypothesize a relationship and conduct a study to see if his/her suspicions are confirmed. For example, living in a hostel for a few years gives an idea to the hostler that "lack of control leads to deviant behaviour". He/she therefore decides to study hostel sub-culture.

Functions or Importance of Hypotheses

Sarantakos has pointed out following three functions of hypotheses:

• To guide social research by offering directions to the structure and operation;

- To offer a temporary answer to the research question; and
- To facilitate statistical analysis of variables in the context of hypothesis testing.

  The importance of hypotheses can also be pointed out in following terms: • Hypotheses are important as tools of scientific inquiry/research because they are derived from theory or lead to theory.
- The facts (in hypotheses) get a chance to establish the probable truth or falsify it.
- Hypotheses are tools for the advancement of knowledge as they stand apart from man's values and opinions.
- Hypotheses help the social scientists to suggest a theory that may explain and predict events.
- Hypotheses perform a descriptive function. The tested hypothesis tells us something about the phenomenon it is associated with.

  In a nutshell, the main functions of hypotheses are:
- To test theories,
- To suggest theories, and
- To describe social phenomena.

The secondary functions are:
- to help in formulating social policy, say, for rural communities, penal institutions, slums in urban communities, educational institutions, solutions to various kinds of social problems;
- to assist in refuting certain 'common sense' notions (e.g., men are more intelligent than women); and
- To indicate need for change in systems and structures by providing new knowledge.

Criticism of Hypotheses

- Some scholars have argued that each study needs a hypothesis. Not only exploratory and explanatory researches but even the descriptive studies can benefit from the formulation of a hypothesis. But some other scholars have criticized this position. They argue that hypotheses make no positive contribution to the research process. On the contrary, they may bias the researchers in their data collection and data analysis. They may restrict their scope and limit their approach. They may even predetermine the outcome of the research study.
- Qualitative researchers argue that although hypotheses are important tools of social research,

they must not precede the research but rather result from an investigation.
- Despite these two contradictory arguments, many investigators use hypotheses in their research implicitly or explicitly. The greatest advantage is that they not only guide in goals of research but help in concentrating on the important aspects of the research topic by avoiding less significant issues.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability

Reliability is the consistency of your measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects. In short, it is the repeatability of your measurement. A measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar. It is important to remember that reliability is not measured, it is estimated.

There are two ways that reliability is usually estimated: test/retest and internal consistency.

- **Test/Retest:** Test/retest is the more conservative method to estimate reliability. Simply put, the idea behind test/retest is that you should get the same score on test 1 as you do on test 2. The three main components to this method are as follows:
  1. Implement your measurement instrument at two separate times for each subject;
  2. Compute the correlation between the two separate measurements; and
  3. Assume there is no change in the underlying condition (or trait you are trying to measure) between test 1 and test 2.
- **Internal Consistency:** Internal consistency estimates reliability by grouping questions in a questionnaire that measure the same concept. For example, you could write two sets of three questions that measure the same concept (say class participation) and after collecting the responses, run a correlation between those two groups of three questions to determine if your instrument is reliably measuring that concept.

  The primary difference between test/retest and internal consistency estimates of reliability is that test/retest involves two administrations of the measurement instrument, whereas the internal

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consistency method involves only one administration of that instrument.

Validity:

Validity is the strength of our conclusions, inferences or propositions. More formally, Cook and Campbell (1979) define it as the "best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion." In short, were we right? Let's look at a simple example. Say we are studying the effect of strict attendance policies on class participation. In our case, we saw that class participation did increase after the policy was established. Each type of validity would highlight a different aspect of the relationship between our treatment (strict attendance policy) and our observed outcome (increased class participation).

Types of Validity

There are four types of validity commonly examined in social research :

- Conclusion validity asks is there a relationship between the programme and the observed outcome? Or, in our example, is there a connection between the attendance policy and the increased participation we saw?

- **I**nternal Validity asks if there is a relationship between the programme and the outcome we saw, is it a causal relationship? For example, did the attendance policy cause class participation to increase?

- Construct validity is the hardest to understand in my opinion. It asks if there is there a relationship between how I operationalzed my concepts in this study to the actual causal relationship I'm trying to study? Or in our example, did our treatment (attendance policy) reflect the construct of attendance, and did our measured outcome - increased class participation – reflect the construct of participation? Overall, we are trying to generalize our conceptualized treatment

and outcomes to broader constructs of the same concepts.

- External validity refers to our ability to generalize the results of our study to other settings. In our example, could we generalize our results to other classrooms?

➢ **Validity and Reliability Compared:**

The real difference between reliability and validity is mostly a matter of definition. Reliability estimates the consistency of your measurement, or more simply the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used in under the same conditions with the same subjects. Validity, on the other hand, involves the degree to which you are measuring what you are supposed to, more simply, the accuracy of your measurement. It is my belief that validity is more important than reliability because if an instrument does not accurately measure what it is supposed to, there is no reason to use it even if it measures consistently (reliably).

So what is the relationship between validity and reliability? The two do not necessarily go hand-in-hand. At best, we have a measure that has both high validity and high reliability. It yields consistent results in repeated application and it accurately reflects what we hope to represent.

It is possible to have a measure that has high reliability but low validity – one that is consistent in getting bad information or consistent in missing the mark. It is also possible to have one that has low reliability and low validity – inconsistent and not on target.

Finally, it is not possible to have a measure that has low reliability and high validity – you can't really get at what you want or what you're interested in, if your measure fluctuates wildly.