

# 1. Introduction to Sociology

## Emergence of Sociology

Sociology might be a new subject to you. You will know all that is necessary at this level, in the context of the subject and this will start with the origin of Sociology as a subject. Instruments, techniques, machines, traditions, social values etc. are created and developed in society due to the instantaneous needs of the society. Similarly, the origin of a subject is to meet the immediate needs of the society. When the interest of human grew in space, Astronomy was developed. To know the depths of the sea, Oceanography developed, Ayurveda and Medical Science have been developed to fight diseases. In the same way, we developed Economics (economic activities), Political Science (political activities) etc. to understand the activities of society. Until the beginning of the 19th Century, there was no development of any science that studied society as a whole. But the global social system was changing rapidly. Some of these social situations, which were responsible for the emergence of sociology are as follows—the commercial revolution in Europe during the period between 1450 to 1800 years. In countries like Portugal, England, Holland and Spain, the competition to increase business with Asian countries started. Countries like India and America were discovered. This led to translation of the business of Europe into a global business. Paper currency evolved. The development of the banking system, the emergence of the middle class, renaissance started in medieval Europe, it is considered to be the beginning of the scientific revolution. Dissection of human body was accepted in the field of Medical Science and Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics and Astronomy were developed.

**The French Revolution**—French revolution took place in 1789. The ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity emerged through this revolution. People became aware of their rights. Prior to the revolution there was monarchy in France and religious bombast dominance was also very high. Common people

were suffering from famine, malnutrition, social inequality and atrocities by the government. The revolution changed the system and democracy was established in France. The ideas of philosophers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire and Rousseau is considered to be an important contribution to the French Revolution, and rationality developed through their thoughts.

**The Industrial Revolution**—In the late 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, there was a major change in the technological and socio—cultural and economic condition of some countries in Europe. It was named the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution is thought to have started from England. Industrial Revolution brought various changes in the social and cultural life of people of Europe and other countries. Mechanization of the industries started and the production rapidly increased. Capitalism developed. Capitalism evolved and a new class emerged in the form of industrial workers, people left agriculture and cottage industries and started working in the big industries. The development of new cities began to grow but in this system, labourers were exploited at a large scale.

The social, cultural, religious and economic changes that took place in Europe created the need for a subject that could study the social system in a scientific manner, so in the 1838, French philosopher Auguste Comte introduced Sociology as a subject. He coined the name Social Physics which later became Sociology.

## Development of sociology in India

In India, as a subject Sociology was started very late but the study of social life has been undertaken since ancient times. In the epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata, Kautilya's 'Arthashastra', Manu's 'Manusmriti' and many such texts, we get to know about the existing social system, but these texts were not written according to the perspective of any subject. The main causes of the emergence of Sociology in Europe are thought to be the French Revolution and the

Industrial Revolution, but Sociology in India came later and at that time India was under British rule, due to which, initial sociological studies were conducted by European scholars. The real beginning of Sociology in India is from the University of Bombay, where in the year 1919 Department of the sociology was established under the chairmanship of Patrick Geddes, although it was taught as elective subject since 1914. Similarly, in 1917 Sociology was introduced in the University of Calcutta as an elective subject. Sociology was introduced in Lucknow University in 1921 and in 1923 in the Andhra and Mysore Universities. In 1952 the Indian Sociological Society was formed to provide a platform to connect all sociologists. Initially, Sociology was taught with other subjects in which Anthropology and Economics were predominant. Sociology was not developed in the pre-independence era, but few years after independence of India, the pace of development of sociology was very fast.

The popularity of Sociology began to grow and it was taught in universities and colleges of many states. Research centers like Tata Institute of Social Work, Lucknow and Institute of Social Sciences, Agra were established, where sociological research began. Some of the leading sociologists of India are : S.C. Dube, M.N. Srinivas, A.K. Saran, D.N. Majumdar, G.S. Ghurye, K.M. Kapadia, P.H. Prabhu, A.R. Desai, Iravati Karve, Radhakamal Mukerjee, Yogendra Singh etc. Apart from the concept of Sanskritization, Westernization and Dominant Caste given by M.N. Srinivas and social values given by Radhakamal Mukherjee in Indian sociologists, no significant theories and concepts at global level have been developed by the Indian sociology, which is also a matter of concern along with need for improvement. Presently, the requirement is that it should encourage practical work and research by not limiting Sociology as a subject taught in the classes alone, so that the society may have real benefit from it.

### **Nature of Sociology**

After understanding the subject we should understand the nature of sociology. We have to keep in mind that, the nature of the subject means to find out whether the subject is a science or an art or

something else. When we hear the word Science, we imagine laboratories and the objects used in them. But we need to understand as to what is Science? According to Stuart Chase, "Science is related to the methodology, not to the subject matter." Thus, Stuart considers the method of acquiring knowledge as science and not the subject matter. Similarly, Carl Pearson believes that, "The unity of all the science is in their method, not in the subject matter."

It is evident from the above statements that, science is related to the method, and knowledge acquired in a particular manner is called Science. And this knowledge can be obtained on the basis of scientific method . The **main steps of the scientific method** are as follows—

1. Selection of Problem/Topic of the study
2. Hypothesis building
3. Collection of data
4. Classification and Analysis of data
5. Generalization /Theory Building

So far, we have come to understand that only that knowledge which is gained on the basis of scientific method, is science Therefore, the main characteristics of science are as follows—

1. **Objectivity**—Objectivity is the unbiased study by the researcher. The researcher does not include his thoughts, prejudices, and preconceptions in the study. Research is based on facts.
2. **Verifiability**—In case there is any doubt about the knowledge and facts in science, then they can be verified.
3. **Definiteness**—Scientific knowledge can only be gained on the basis of definite steps taken on the basis of scientific method.
4. **Cause effect relationship**—Science actively tries to know cause-effect relationships, that is, attempts to know the hidden reasons behind the phenomenon.
5. **Generalization**—Any general rule in Science is based on the facts obtained through study.
6. **Predictability**—Based on the study of facts, in science, the future of events is predicted.
7. **Empiricism**—The researcher collects and analyzes the facts in science, with the help of the senses. Knowledge is not based on

imagination.

8. **Universality**—The rules made on the basis of scientific knowledge are universal, that is, they do not change with time and place.

### **Scientific Nature of sociology**

So far we have come to know about what science is? Now we will understand the nature of sociology. Scholars like Auguste Comte, Durkheim, Max Weber, etc., have considered sociology as science since the beginning. Sociology is considered a science on the following grounds—

1. Use of scientific method
2. Objective studies
3. Verifiability
4. Definiteness
5. Establishment of cause effect relationship
6. Generalization
7. Predictability
8. Empirical study
9. Universality

We have understood the above points earlier but we must keep in mind that sociology is a social science and because of this, it has its own limitations. The subject matter of natural sciences is not discretionary/conscious, but the subject matter of sociology are humans who can change their behavior. Therefore, verifiability and predictability in sociology is more difficult than natural sciences. Natural scientists do not have any form of affinity, love, attachment, jealousy, grudge or hatred with their study material. But a sociologist studies other people like himself, and he may have a preconception in his mind that may affect his study. In such a situation, objective studies in Sociology are more difficult than natural sciences. Therefore, we have to keep in mind that Sociology is a social science not a natural science.

### **Sociological Perspective**

By studying the scope of sociology, we have learned that, the study of the same problem or subject can be done by different sciences. To understand this difference, we have to understand their perspective. You should always keep in mind that there is an approach or view to study the problem in every science, which is different from other sciences, this approach or view is called

perspective. In order to understand more, we will understand by the example given by sociologist E Chinoy in his book ‘Sociological Perspective’. According to Chinoy, a Loaf of bread will be studied by the economist with reference to demand in the market, production cost, sale price, profit-loss, etc. in the economic perspective, and by a historian, it will be studied through the historical perspective in which he will try to know the history of the origin of bread. Similarly, a nutrition specialist will see how much nutrition a person’s body is getting from the bread and whether it is healthy or not. The perspective of a psychologist would be different as they can evaluate it from the view point of eating habits. But sociologist with sociological perspective will examine how this bread is affecting the social relations.

We have learnt that each science has a specific perspective to study the phenomenon. You may be thinking how bread can affect the social relations. So we should keep in mind that children may have a quarrel while eating bread and on this matter husband and wife or other family members also quarrel among themselves. It may also happen that the children are very happy by eating bread and mutual affection among family members becomes more intense, so everything can affect the social relations.

### **Meaning of sociological perspective**

Before knowing the meaning of sociological perspective, let us know meaning of perspective. The word perspective is derived from Latin word ‘perspect’ which means ‘seen through’ by any means or ‘seen from one end to the another’ or ‘to inspect’. Now we will understand sociological perspective from the views of various scholars—

In the views of **Theodorson and Theodorson**—Values, beliefs attitudes and meanings provide context and point of view to individual, according to which he observes the situation.

**Lundberg** explains perspective in his book “Foundations of Sociology”—according to him, the arrangement of our established habits constitutes reference perimeter. This system of habits is in a folk language, which is called faith, theory and philosophy of life.

**Goode & Hatt** has stated in his book ‘Methods in Social Research’ that any phenomenon



or position can be studied in various ways. According to them the study area, nature, theories, concepts and definitions of a subject determine its perspective.

We have understood that Sociological perspective is a specific perspective of study in sociology, which distinguishes it from other social sciences. In sociological perspective, we study any event or condition with reference to how they affect the social relations, social institutions, social values, status and role, social change, social control and social system.

Mainly, there are two parts or aspects of the sociological perspective—firstly, in which we study the relationship between individuals and the process of their development and their impact. Secondly, In this we study the effect of any social phenomenon or object of study on our social institutions, social relations, status and role, social values, norms and the social system.

### Meaning and definition of sociology

After knowing the origin of sociology, we first need to know the meaning of sociology. Until we do not understand its meaning, our knowledge as a student will be incomplete. You must keep in mind that to understand the meaning of a subject it is necessary to understand its definition.

Different sociologists have defined sociology differently on basis of their experiences—

**Kingsley Davis**—Sociology is the study of human society.

**H. W. Odum**—“Sociology, then, is the science which studies society.”

**R.M. MacIver and Page**—“Sociology is about social relationship, it is this network of relationships that we call society.”

**H.M. Johnson**—“Sociology is the science which deals with social group; their internal forms or models of organization, the processes that tend to maintain or change these forms of organization, and the relation between groups.”

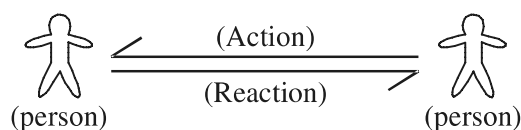
**Gillin and Gillin**—“Sociology in its broadest sense may said to be the study of interactions arising from the association of living beings.”

Study of the above definitions shows that Davis and Odum insist on the study of society and MacIver and Page emphasize the study of social relations.

Johnson believes Sociology to study of social groups and Gillin and Gillin regard it as a study of social interactions. Hence, no universally acceptable definition of sociology can be given, but one thing we must know is that, despite differences, there is similarity in all definitions. Social relations develop due to social interactions and on the basis of social relations social groups are formed and further on the basis of social relations, society is formed.

Now, we will try to understand the meaning of sociology on the basis of these definitions. Do you know that, when two or more people interact with each other, then it is called interaction. And if interaction is meaningful and stable, then social relationships develop.

Johnson says that, the group has meaning not only for individuals, but is the system of intermediate interactions of individuals.



Action + Reaction = Interaction

Interaction + Purpose + Stability = Social Relation

We can say that Sociology is that social science which studies social relations, social institutions (Family, marriage, kinship, educational institutions, political institutions, religious institutions, etc.), social groups, social change, social control, status and role etc., from the sociological perspective. Being a student of sociology, we should know that sociology does not study only one aspect of society but the entire society as a whole as a unit through sociological perspective. We should also keep in mind that, in addition to the concepts described in the definitions in sociology, many other concepts are studied in sociology. We will understand sociological approaches in later conclusion, we can say that sociology is a science of social order, because social institution, social change, social control, social relations, status and role are all included in the social order.

### Scope of sociology

After understanding the meaning of sociology it is important to know its scope. Scope means the

potential limitations to which the expansion of the subject is possible. Sociology is a new science, and so determining its scope is not an easy task. Various sociologists have expressed their views on this, which can be classified into the following schools :

**(1) Formal School :** The chief propounders of this school are George Simmel and F. Toennies. Among other supporters of this school are Max Weber, A. Vierkant, and L. Von Wiese are prominent. This school considers Sociology as a 'special' and 'pure' science. According to this school, sociology should have its distinct problems and subject matter as is the case with other sciences like Political Science, Philosophy, Physics, etc., which should be studied only in sociology and which is different from other sciences. This school emphasizes the study of the forms of the phenomena rather than the content. In order to understand this view, we need to understand the views of some scholars—

- **View of George Simmel**—According to him, each thing has a form and content that are different from each other and the content and form does not have any effect on each other. (For example, if empty glass or bottle is considered as form and the material to be filled in it will be considered as content then any content will have no effect on its form.) According to Simmel, social relations can also be separated on the basis of form and content. In sociology, we should only study the forms of social relations (cooperation, conflict, competition etc.) because other sciences study the content.

- **View of Vierkant A.**—According to Vierkant, sociology is a special science and believed that Sociology should study the forms of mental relations. It is these forms that bind the individuals together. According to him, social relations develop only with the mental relations of love, respect, cooperation, conflict, affection, fame etc.

- **View of Max Weber**—Max Weber considered Sociology as a special science, and according to him, only social actions should be studied in sociology. According to Max Weber every action is not a social action, but only those actions are social in which the subjective meanings of the actor or actors affect and define the action of other

persons. In this manner, Sociology should be the study of Social Actions.

In this way you have come to understand that, formal school considers sociology as a special science and considers the study of the forms of social relations to be the scope of sociology.

**Criticism of Formal School**—This ideology has been criticized by sociologists like Sorokin and Fichter. Main points are as under—

1. It is very difficult to distinguish between forms and contents in social relations.

2. Forms and contents of social relations are influenced by each other.

3. It is not possible to make Sociology independent and pure science, and separate from other sciences, because all social sciences are dependent on each other.

4. Some other subjects including Law, Economics etc. also study forms (Compromise, conflict, exploitation, division of labor etc.) of social relations.

**(2) Synthetic School :** The chief propounders of this school are Emile Durkheim, P.A. Sorokin, M. Ginsberg and L.T. Hobhouse etc. In contrast to the formal school, synthetic school believes that sociology is a general science and its area of study is the entire society. According to them, the society is like the body of the organism, due to which all the organs are related to each other, they are affected by each other, therefore it is necessary to understand the interpersonal relationships of these organs. Therefore, sociology should study society as a whole. To understand this school, we will study the views of some scholars—

- **View of Durkheim**—According to Durkheim a French Sociologist, sociology should be developed as a special science and should develop its independent rules like other sciences, and then it should coordinate with other social sciences as a general science. Durkheim believed that there is a great need for sociologists to be familiar with research done in specific sciences like Law, History, religion, economics, etc. regularly because sociology should be developed from the material available from different sciences. According to Durkheim, social facts are the subject matter of sociology.

• **View of Sorokin** : Sorokin considered sociology as a general science, according to which every social science studies specific types of phenomenon and these phenomenon remain connected to each other, so sociologists should study the common in all these phenomenon. This can be understood by the following example :

Economic	abcdef
Political	abcghi
Religious	abcjkl
Legal	abcmno
Recreation	abcpqr

The table shows that abc comes in the study area of all the sciences but none does their specific study.

Economics studies d e f and Political Science g h i and other sciences study in their own specific field of study, but common facts (abc) in all these are the subject matter of Sociology.

**Criticism of Synthetic School** : This school has been criticized by various sociologists for the following reasons—

1. With the effort to make Sociology a general science, it will lose its importance if mixed with other sciences.

2. Sociology will depend on other social sciences and it will not have its specific subject matter.

3. It would not be possible for sociology to develop its own method.

After understanding both the schools, we must also keep in mind that the idea of both schools is one sided and partial. Sociology is neither completely a specific science nor is it completely a general Science. In fact, Sociology adopts both general and specific approaches according to the needs of Study.

### **Relation of Sociology to other Social Sciences**

We know that sociology is a social science. Some other social sciences are Economics, History, Psychology, and Political Science all these sciences study only a particular aspect of Society through their own techniques. Due to the requirements of study, the social sciences are related to each other. We can understand the relations of Sociology and other social sciences as follows :

**1. Sociology and Economics** : Economics and sociology are closely related to each other. Thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber, Pareto are considered both as Sociologist and an Economist. Social and economic phenomenon affect each other. Thomas considers Economics as the branch of Sociology. Some topics like industrialization, urbanization, division of labor, unemployment, social welfare etc. are the subject matter of both sciences.

#### **Differences :**

1. Sociology is general science while economics is a specific science.

2. Sociology studies social phenomenon in a holistic manner while Economics studies economic phenomenon.

3. The scope of Sociology is broader than economics.

**2. Sociology and Political Science** : Political Science studies political phenomenon, law, administration. sovereignty, state etc. Political Science and Sociology are closely related to each other. Political and social phenomena affect each other.

The social behavior of a person is influenced by political events and political behavior is influenced by social events.

#### **Differences :**

1. The perspective of Sociology is broader than Political Science.

2. Sociology is general science while Political Science is a specific science.

3. Sociology studies political phenomena as part of social phenomena, while political science studies only political phenomena.

**3. Sociology and History** : George E Hobart believes that “History is past Sociology and Sociology is the History of the present.” This statement lays down how History and Sociology are closely related to each other. History describes and explains important past events and presents them in a systematic order.

#### **Differences :**

1. Ordinary phenomena are also studied in sociology while in History only important phenomena are studied.

2. Phenomenon are described in history while in sociology phenomenon are analyzed also.

3. In History, only past events are studied, whereas in Sociology, all kinds of events are studied.

4. Sociology is general science while history is a specific science.

**4. Sociology and Psychology :** Psychology studies personality, emotions, mentality, learning, motivation etc. Psychology primarily studies personality and mental states of the individual. The behavior of a person is influenced by his social circumstances, therefore, Psychology and Sociology are dependent on one another.

#### **Differences :**

1. Collective behavior is studied in Sociology while in Psychology, behavior of individual and mental state are studied.

2. The scope of Sociology is widespread, while the scope of Psychology is focused and limited to the social individual.

3. The perspective of Sociology is collective whereas psychological perspective is individualistic.

We have understood that Sociology is closely related to other social sciences. Sociology and other social sciences are coming closer and because of the need to study branches which connect two subjects are also being developed like Political Sociology which connects Sociology with Political Science. 'Social Psychology' which brings the study of Sociology and Psychology closer to each other. The branch of Sociology called 'Sociology of Economic Life' brings economics and sociology closer from study point of view. Due to the need of study of society as a whole, it is natural for social sciences to come closer.

#### **Important Points :**

- Man is a social animal.
- Due to the French Revolution in 1789 and the Industrial Revolution, there was a fundamental change in the socio—cultural and economic condition of society.
- For the systematic study of the changes in society August Comte founded Sociology in 1838.
- French philosopher Auguste Comte is the Father of Sociology.
- The literal meaning of Sociology is the 'science of society'.
- The real beginning of sociology in India was from Bombay University in 1919.

- Because of scientific nature Sociology is a science.
- Sociological studies are based on scientific method.
- There are two types of scopes, Formal School and Synthetic School in Sociology.
- Formal school considers Sociology as specific science.
- Synthetic school considers sociology as a general science.
- The chief propounders of formal school are George Simmel, Tonnies, Von Wiese, Vierkant and Max Weber.
- The chief propounders of synthetic school are Emile Durkheim, Sorokin, Ginsberg and Hobhouse.
- Scope means any subject that has potential limitations, as long as the subject is spread and its study is possible.
- Every science has an approach of study which is called its perspective.
- The nature of sociological perspective is scientific.
- The sociological perspective differs from the perspectives of other social sciences.
- Sociology, Political Science, History, Psychology, Economics, Anthropology etc. are considered as major social sciences.
- Political Sociology is that branch which brings sociology and political science closer.

### **Questions for Practice**

#### **Multiple Choice Questions :**

1. Man is—  
(A) a social animal  
(B) a wild animal  
(C) a biological animal  
(D) an antisocial animal
2. Who is Father of Sociology—  
(A) Weber  
(B) Marx  
(C) Durkheim  
(D) Auguste Comte
3. The main factors responsible for the emergence of sociology are



- (A) French Revolution and Industrial Revolution
- (B) Globalization
- (C) Urbanization
- (D) Other

4. When is the real beginning of sociology in India?

- (A) 1980                                      (B) 2000
- (C) 1919                                      (D) 1900

5. Nature of Sociology is—

- (A) Scientific                                      (B) Unscientific
- (C) Inhuman                                      (D) Antisocial

### Very Short Answer Type Questions :

1. Who is the Father of Sociology?
2. Which school considered Sociology as a special science?
3. Which school considered sociology as a general science?
4. Write the meaning of objectivity.
5. Who considered society as a web of social relationship?
6. Which science does economics study?
7. What is the central point of study of psychology?
8. What does political science study ?
9. Which science does the study of historical phenomenon in particular?

### Short Answer Type Questions :

1. Write two differences in sociology and economics.
2. Write the meaning of Economics.
3. Define sociological perspective.
4. Give two definitions of sociology.
5. Explain meaning of sociology.
6. Write the view of George Simmel about sociology.
7. What is the nature of sociology?
8. Explain the meaning of science.
9. Write two characteristics of scientific method.
10. Give two reasons for considering sociology as a science.
11. What is sociological perspective?
12. Write two differences in history and sociology.
13. Write two differences in sociology and Psychology.
14. What is social psychology?

### Essay Type Questions :

1. Describe the main factors responsible for emergence of sociology.
2. Explain the meaning and definition of sociology.
3. Is sociology a science? explain it.
4. Explain the sociological perspective in detail.

### Answer Key :

1. (A) 2. (D) 3. (A) 4. (C) 5. (A)