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METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

B.S.O.C.-134

B.A. General - 4th Semester

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY **B.S.O.C.-134**

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any **five** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Explain the meaning and characteristic features of qualitative research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'Qualitative Research' and Page No. 4, 'Characteristics of Qualitative Research'.

Q. 2. Discuss the various procedures involved in a social research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 6, Q. No. 3, Page No. 1, 'Introduction' and 'Alternatives to Social Research'.

Q. 3. How do you ensure objectivity in social research? Explain.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 21, 'Introduction', 'Durkheim and Objectivity', Page No. 28, 'Weber on Objectivity' and Page No. 30, 'Popper on Objectivity'.

Q. 4. Explain the various features of the inductive method and its usage by the evolutionist.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 55, Q. No. 2 and Page No. 51, 'The Inductive Method : The Evolutionists'.

Q. 5. What do you mean by Ethnomethodology? Explain its various dimensions.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 83, 'Introduction' and 'What is Ethnomethodology?'

Q. 6. Write a critique of androcentric social research from feminist perspective.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 92, 'The Critique of the Dominant Androcentric Methodologies' and 'Feminist Empirical Approach'.

Q. 7. Discuss various methods of collecting qualitative data.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 123, 'Generating Qualitative Data: Data Sources, Methods, Strategies and Approaches' and 'Particular Methods for Generating Data'.

Q. 8. Discuss the relevance of standpoint theory.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 101, Q. No. 7 and Q. No. 8 and Page No. 104, Q. No. 11.

■ ■

QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY **B.S.O.C.-134**

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any **five** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss the meaning and characteristics of qualitative research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 7, Q. No. 12 and Page No. 8, Q. No. 14.

Q. 2. Explain the relationship between social theory and social research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 17, 'Relationship between Theory and Research'.

Q. 3. Explain Max Weber's view on objectivity in social research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 28, 'Weber on Objectivity'.

Q. 4. Write a note on Durkheim's usage of comparative method in Sociology.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 72, 'Durkheim and Comparative Method'.

Q. 5. Discuss the various features of Standpoint theory.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 93, 'Standpoint Theorists'.

Q. 6. Discuss the various instruments used in empirical research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 18, 'The Bearing of Empirical Research on Sociological Theory'.

Q. 7. Explain the significance of visual methods in social research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 123, 'Using Visual Methods and Documents' and Page No. 128, Q. No. 7.

Q. 8. Discuss the features of documentary method.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 84, 'Documentary Method' and Page No. 89, Q. No. 15 and Chapter-4, Page No. 47, Q. No. 15.



QUESTION PAPER

Exam Held In

March – 2022

(Solved)

METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY (B.S.O.C.-134)

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. What do you mean by social research? How is it different from ‘Common sense’?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, Q. No. 2 and Page No. 6, Q. No. 3 and Q. No. 5.

Q. 2. What do you understand by social theory? Discuss its various elements.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 14, ‘What is a Theory?’ and Page No. 18, Q. No. 1.

Q. 3. Explain Karl Popper’s view on objectivity in social research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 30, ‘Popper and Objectivity’.

Q. 4. Discuss Gouldner’s view on ‘reflexivity’.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 39, ‘Gouldner and Reflexivity’.

Q. 5. Explain the usage of deductive method in sociology and social anthropology.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Pages No. 55, Q. No. 3 and Page No. 53, ‘The Deductive Method: The Social Anthropologists’.

Q. 6. Discuss the features of ethnomethodological research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 83, ‘Introduction’ and ‘What is Ethnomethodology?’

Q. 7. Explain the features of quantitative research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 110, Q. No. 6 and Page No. 111, Q. No. 7.

Q. 8. Discuss the features of experimental research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 109, ‘Experimental Research’ and Page No. 15, Q. No. 6.



Sample

QUESTION PAPER - 1

(Solved)

METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

B.S.O.C.-134

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. How all human beings are some types of researchers?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 5, Q. No. 1.

Q. 2. What is the importance of exploratory research?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 22, Q. No. 8.

Q. 3. What distinction Dilthey made between natural sciences and human sciences?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 34, Q. No. 6.

Q. 4. Discuss positivism and its critique reflexive sociology, as put forward by Alvin W. Gouldner, is a meaningful alternative to positivism.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 42, Q. No. 1.

Q. 5. What is the evolutionist method? Name some thinkers who have used this method.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 55, Q. No. 4.

Q. 6. Discuss how does Durkheim stress upon the comparative nature of social science?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 75, Q. No. 4.

Q. 7. What are the different perspectives in ethnographic research?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 86, Q. No. 5.

Q. 8. What were the main themes that dominated sociology at its inception?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 94, Q. No. 1.

Q. 9. What is a variable? What are its types?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 110, Q. No. 1.

Q. 10. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Qualitative Interviewing

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 123, 'Qualitative Interviewing'.

(b) Invention of Writing

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 135, 'Invention of Writing'.

(c) Phenomenology

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'Phenomenology'.

(d) Range of Theorising

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 15, 'Range of Theorising'.



Sample

QUESTION PAPER - 2

(Solved)

METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

B.S.O.C.-134

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any **five** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. How does over-generalization occur from our personal experience?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 6, Q. No. 6.

Q. 2. What is the use of descriptive research?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 22, Q. No. 9.

Q. 3. What are values in social science?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 34, Q. No. 8.

Q. 4. Explain how a reflexive sociology acknowledges the presence of outside influences on social scientific research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 43, Q. No. 2.

Q. 5. How have Graebner and his followers used the ethnological method?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 55, Q. No. 6.

Q. 6. To be objective, what rules Durkheim suggests for studying social facts as 'things'?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 176, Q. No. 6.

Q. 7. Write the distinctive characteristics of ethnomethodology.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 86, Q. No. 8.

Q. 8. What was the method followed by the Positivists?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 94, Q. No. 2.

Q. 9. How will you distinguish between mediating and moderate variable?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 110, Q. No. 1.

Q. 10. Write short notes on the following:

(a) Observing and Participating

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 123, 'Observing and Participating'.

(b) Shodhganga

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 137, 'Shodhganga'.

(c) Symbolic Interactionism

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 3, 'Symbolic Interactionism'.

(d) Focus of Theory

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 15, 'Focus of Theory'.



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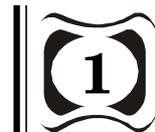


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METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

Research in Social Sciences



INTRODUCTION

The foundation of social science research is the basic sense of human curiosity. Every one of us is a researcher. We give meaning to, interpret and predict our surrounding and the social world. Research is an important tool in understanding the reality and the causes of changes as well as resisting changes. Social research can be said as a systematised effort to acquire knowledge. Social research helps us in adding new knowledge by supporting or disagreeing with the existing forms of knowledge. Social science research re-examines the social world with the goal of better understanding or explaining why or how people behave. According to P.V. Young, social research is “the systematic method of discovering the new facts or verifying the old facts, their sequences, inter relationship, causal explanations and the natural laws which govern them.” Stephenson says social research is “a manipulation of things concepts or symbols for the purpose of generalizing to extend correct and verifying knowledge, whether that knowledge aids in the construction of a theory or in the practice of an art.” Social research includes defining and re-defining problems; making hypothesis or re-recommending solutions; gathering organising and evaluating data, making deduction and making conclusions and testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the hypothesis.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

ALTERNATIVES TO SOCIAL RESEARCH

Some of the alternatives to social research are commonsense, media myths and personal experiences.

Common Sense

Common sense varies from person to person since opinions are not the same among a group of people. Sociology is closely related to commonsense as it touches the day-to-day experience of common people. But they differ. Sociological knowledge can be called as general, while commonsense is particular and localised. Commonsense is also unreflective because it does not question its own origin and pre-suppositions. Sociology helps us in understanding a society, but commonsense does not give us such an understanding. Sociology makes systematic investigation of the object with tools and techniques, but commonsense involves preconception. Commonsense is utopian, while sociology is anti utopian. Sociology is anti-fatalistic and does not accept the particular constraints taken for granted by commonsense as eternal or immutable. It offers a clearer awareness than commonsense of the range of alternatives that have been or may be devised for the attainment of broadly the same ends. Sociology is free of all forms of biases and value judgements but commonsense has biases and errors. Commonsense can be said as routine knowledge of everyday activities. Commonsense is key to Alfred Schutz’s phenomenological sociology, where it means organized and typified stocks of taken for granted knowledge upon which activities are based and that in the natural attitude are not questioned. For ethnomethodologists, commonsense is a constant achievement in which people draw on implicit rules of how to conduct and which produce a sense of organisation and coherence. Some sociologists see commonsense as different from sociological understanding. Durkheim says sociology must break free of the prejudice of commonsense perceptions before it can produce scientific knowledge of the social

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world. Marxists consider commonsense as ideological or at least very limited in its understanding of the world.

Personal Experiences

On the basis of personal experiences, we understand many things as true and consider as a legitimate source of knowledge. However, believing on personal experiences can lead us astray. We may commit four types of errors if it is based on personal experiences – over-generalization, selective observation, premature closure and halo effect. Over-generalization happens when we believe something on the basis of some evidence and then assume that it applies to many other situations. Selective observation happens when we take special notice of a small part of the reality and generalize from them. We make observation in a way that it reinforces pre-existing thinking instead of making observation in a neutral and balanced manner. Research helps in avoiding such errors.

Premature Closure

Premature closure happens when a researcher feels that he has all the answers and does not need to listen, seek information or raise questions. The researcher makes a judgement, or ends the study before he has the amount or depth of evidence needed by scientific standards.

Halo Effect

Halo effect means we overgeneralize from the believe that the person concerned is highly positive or prestigious. It happens because we allow the prior reputation of the person, places or things to colour ones evaluation rather than evaluating all in a neutral manner.

SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

Sociological imagination is sociological vision. It can be said as a way at looking at the world in which private problems of the individual and important social issues are connected. Sociological imagination requires us to think beyond the familiar routines of daily lives to look at them anew. A humanist sociology connects the social, personal and historical dimension of our lives. Take the act of drinking a cup of coffee. It has a symbolic value. In all societies, drinking and eating provide occasions for social interaction and the enactment of rituals and these offer a rich subject matter for sociological study. Sociological imagination allows us to see that many events which appear to concern only the individual reflects larger issues. For example, divorce may be a very difficult issue for an individual,

but it is also a significant ‘public issue’ in many societies.

DURKHEIM AND HIS PRESCRIPTION FOR SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

According to Durkheim, there are two basic procedures for establishing sociological proofs. The first involves the examination of the cause and effect relationship between social phenomena. The second is the method of concomitant variation. Durkheim says a comparison can be made of those phenomena where both are simultaneously present and see whether the variations they show in these circumstances suggest that one depends upon the other.

In experimental method, the phenomena can be artificially created at the will of the observer. Indirect experiment or comparative method is used if the production of facts is not within our control and we can only bring them together in the way that they have been spontaneously produced. Durkheim believes sociological explanation rests exclusively in linking a phenomenon to its cause or a cause to its effect. Durkheim advocates comparative method is the only method suitable for sociology because the social phenomena are beyond the control of the researcher and can escape the experimenter. He also does not agree with the historical method proposed by Comte. Durkheim tries to establish the sociological proofs. He rejects John Stuart Mill’s views that even indirect experimentation is inapplicable to sociology. He criticises Mill’s proposition that the same effect can be the outcome from various causes. Thus, if we wish to use the comparative method by conforming to the principle of causality to show the sociological proof we need to follow the proposition that ‘a given effect has always a single corresponding cause’. However, Durkheim’s contention is that all forms of comparative method are not equally applicable to the study of social facts. To explain this, he critiques the five canons of experimental inquiry included in Mill’s System of Logic. Durkheim specifically objects Mill’s Method of Agreement, Method of Difference, Joint Method of Agreement and Difference and Method of Residue. Durkheim does not criticise the fifth canon of the concomitant variable.

Durkheim proposes three methods by which such serial systematic variations might be formed: First, the sociologist might limit his study to a single unique society when dealing with very general facts about

which we have extensive statistical data. Second, collecting facts from several societies of the same social type makes available a more extensive field of comparison. The sociologist could now confront the history of one society with another, to see if the same phenomenon evolves over time in response to the same conditions. This method is used only to phenomena which have arisen during the existence of the societies in question and thus ignores that part of a society's social organisation which is inherited, ready made from earlier societies. Third, the genetic method produces both an analysis and synthesis of the facts under study by showing how each component element of the phenomenon was successively added to the other. It reveals them in their dissociated state and by means of the broad field of comparison, the fundamental conditions on which the formation and association of the elements depend are determined. Durkheim suggests arriving at a just comparison 'it will suffice to consider the societies compared at the same period of their development'. According to Durkheim, social research is independent of all preconceptions whether philosophical or practical and it is objective.

QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

There are two types of social science research: qualitative and quantitative.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research in social sciences depends on observation and interaction in the field with the subjects in their language. Anthropologists like Franz Boas, Evans-Pritchard contributed immensely towards the development of this tradition of doing research. In sociology, Robert E. Park encouraged his students to observe in detail the diversity, heterogeneity and complexities of the city. Qualitative research is naturalistic, participatory and ethnographic in its approach. It uses various data collection methods but the most important is the participant observation. It seeks to describe and analyse the culture behaviour of humans and their groups from the point of view of those being studied. Along with the participant observation unstructured interview, in which the researcher provides a minimal guidance and allows considerable latitude for interviewees, is also a favoured technique. Life history method, which entails the reconstruction of the lives of the one or more individuals is also another method used in qualitative research. The sources of data

are varied and include diaries and auto-biographies, the two most important sources of for generating histories. Group discussion is another method used by qualitative approach. It is essentially a form of unstructured interview but involves more than one subject. This method is gaining importance gradually these days.

The Intellectual Underpinnings of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research's distinct epistemologies are: phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, verstehen, naturalism and ethnogenics.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological perspectives reject various assumptions of positivism. It involves a systematic investigation of the consciousness. According to phenomenologists, unlike matter man has consciousness thoughts, feelings meanings, intentions and an awareness of being. Thus, man's actions are meaningful. He defines situations and gives meanings to his actions and those of others. He does not simply react to external stimuli or does not simply behave but he acts.

Sociologists do not simply observe action from the outside and impose an external logic upon it; they interpret the internal logic which directs the action of the actor. Max Weber outlined this perspective.

Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic Interactionism implies that interaction results in meaning. According to this, social life is considered as a process in which the individual interprets his environment and acts on the basis of this interpretation. In this theory, two important concepts are: the definition of the situation and the social self. The definition of the situation refers to the idea that people's actions are shaped more by the subjective meaning given to their situation than by the purely objective aspects of the situation. People develop the meaning of the situation based on their experiences, needs and wishes and on the basis of the customs and beliefs of the social group. The social self is a process. Self is the outcome of the dialectic of I and me. The process includes action and interaction. We do not simply act but we act on the basis of how we define the situation and how we think others will view our actions. It focuses on the following:

- (i) The ways in which human beings are distinctly 'symbol manipulating animals.' Men are capable of producing 'culture and transmitting history' through symbols.

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- (ii) The social world for the symbolic interactionist is a dynamic and dialectical web. Situations are always encountered with unstable outcomes and lives and their biographies are always in the process of shifting and becoming, never fixed and permanent.
- (iii) Social world is always interactive. Humans are always linked to one another.
- (iv) Symbolic interactionism looks beyond symbols, processes and interaction to determine underlying patterns or forms of social life. The other intellectual underpinnings are *verstehen*, naturalism and ethnogenics.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

A Subject's Perspective: It sees events, action and norms values from the point of the people being studied. Thus, it is important for the researcher to spend long time in the field.

Description: It describes the social setting being studied in greater details. It helps in understanding the happening in a particular context and gives hint to realities. However, qualitative research goes beyond description and tries to provide analyses of the environment they study. Description gives a social context to view the events and situations being studied.

Context: This research entails that we know social entities as a whole in their entirety. The implication of context is that the meanings people give to their own behaviour have to be seen in the context of the norms and values, beliefs and practices and underlying structure of the appropriate entity and the multiple perceptions that spread.

Dynamic Social Life: Qualitative research views social life as a process and not in static terms. It looks at social life as a series of events so tends to focus on changes. The emphasis on process is a response to the qualitative researcher's concern to reflect the reality of everyday life which they tend to argue takes the forms of streams of interconnecting events.

Flexible and Lack of Structure: Qualitative research is open and unstructured and do not seem to decide what to study beforehand. Proponents of qualitative research say that it allows them access to unexpected but important topics.

Theories and Concepts: Qualitative research rejects the formulations of theories and concepts in advance at the start of their studies. It favours testing

of theories and concepts in tandem with the fieldwork findings.

Nature of Quantitative Research

Quantitative research uses natural science model. The logic and proceedings of the natural sciences are used in quantitative research. It provides an epistemological standard against which empirical researches in social sciences are evaluated before it is treated as valid knowledge. Different methods of data collection are used in this research. Social survey is a key method of data collection. Experiment is also a key method of quantitative research. Other three methods are:

- (i) Analysis of previously collected data such as the official statistics. For example, Durkheim's analysis of suicide statistics.
- (ii) **Structured Observation:** In this method, the researcher records observation as per a predetermined schedule and quantifies the resulting data.
- (iii) **Content Analysis:** The quantitative analysis of the content of media like newspapers.

Quantitative research is based on a set of preconditions. It involves collection of practices and assumptions. The natural science approach provides sound basis against which knowledge can be judged. The methods of natural science are applicable to the study of society. Thus, the basis of quantitative research is the precise nature of scientific method.

The Positivist Position

Many founding fathers of sociology believed the principles and procedures of natural sciences are the basis of sociology, which is the basic premise of positivism. According to Auguste Comte, the application of the methods of the natural sciences would produce a positive science of society. This could expose that the evolution of society follows the invariable laws. It would reveal that the behaviour of man is governed by the principles of cause and effect which are just as invariable as the behaviour of matter, the subject of the natural sciences.

The assumptions of the positive approach are:

- (i) Like the behaviour of matter, man's behaviour can be objectively measured. Methods of objective measurement can also be devised for human behaviour just like the behaviour of matter which is quantified by measures like weights, temperature and pressure.