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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY-I

B.S.O.C.-101

B.A. Sociology (Hons.) - 1st Semester

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY – I

B.S.O.C.-101

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five of the following questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss the meaning of the concept 'abstracted empiricism' used by C.W. Mills.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 1, 'Sociological Methods'.

Q. 2. Describe the social background to the emergence of Sociology in Europe.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 13, 'Emergence of Sociology'.

Q. 3. What are the similarities and differences between Sociology and Social Anthropology? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 27, 'Similarities between Sociology and Anthropology', 'Differences between Sociology and Anthropology'.

Q. 4. In what ways is Sociology related with History? Explain.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 47, 'Relationship of Sociology with History'.

Q. 5. Discuss the concept of culture and its major characteristics.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 75, 'Introduction', Page No. 76, 'Characteristics of Culture'.

Q. 6. What is a community? How have sociologists and social anthropologists described a community?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 86, 'Definitions of Community', 'Characteristics of Community'.

Q. 7. Explain the concept of a social institution and its different types.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 99, 'Defining Institutions', Page No. 103, Q. No. 4.

Q. 8. What is a social status? How is it related with roles played by members of a society?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 114, Q. No. 4, Page No. 112, 'Dimensions of Roles'.



QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY – I

B.S.O.C.-101

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five of the following questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss the factors for the emergence of sociology.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 13, 'Emergence of Sociology'.

Q. 2. Examine Bauman's contribution to sociological methods.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 4, 'Bauman: Values and Action', 'Bauman: The Sociological Eye'.

Also Add: According to Bauman, A sociological eye enables you to see what others may not notice. Sociological imagination gives you the ability to connect what is happening in your own life and in the lives of others to social patterns in the larger society. Sociological eye helps in developing a sense of analyzing what is going around us with a more critical and evaluative perspective. We can say that sociology teaches us the art of life and empowers us to be rational as well as predictive to some extent. The study of sociology is expected to be scientific as the activities and the products are basically useful to all.

Q. 3. Discuss the similarities and differences between sociology and anthropology.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 28, Q. No. 2.

Q. 4. Examine the similarities of sociology with economics.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 59, Q. No. 1.

Q. 5. Explain the AGIL model of Talcott Parsons.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 133, 'Functionalism of Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert R. Merton (1910-2003)'.

Q. 6. Examine the concept of Institution and its salient features.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 99, 'Defining Institutions'.

Q. 7. What is the relation between status and role? Explain with suitable examples.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 109, 'Introduction', Page No. 112, 'Dimensions of Roles'.

Q. 8. Discuss the various types of socialisation.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 120, 'Types of Socialisation'.

■ ■

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY-I

BLOCK-1 : SOCIOLOGY: DISCIPLINE AND PERSPECTIVE



Thinking Sociologically

INTRODUCTION

Let us study and understand the meaning of a sociological perspective and the way sociologists main concern is to observe and interpret the realities of everyday life. According to scholars like Zygmunt Bauman the prime mover of social relationships is power. It involved control over nature, hierarchical bureaucracy, rules and regulations, control and categorisation – all of which attempted to gradually remove personal insecurities, making the chaotic aspects of human life appear well-ordered and familiar.

American society was studied and shown by C. W. Mills as a self-contained society *The Sociological Imagination* is regarded as Mills' most influential work, in which he describes the way in which one should observe the world in order to view it from a sociologist's perspective. He wants people to observe connections between individuals and their everyday life; he further urges them to observe how the greater social forces have an effect on their everyday life.

We will study about the two scholars as examples of how a sociological perspective is in itself subject to a variety of scholarly understandings.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS

C. Wright Mills in *The Sociological Imagination* (1959) derided social scientists who allowed the primary task of understanding to be subverted by technical issues of data collection and analysis. The set rules of collecting data, analyzing them, codifying them, scaling them, and above all the manner in which these data are manipulated is done in an unquestioningly set pattern. Sociology has been practicing a particular kind of abstracted empiricism that Mills thinks is a dead-end. He has in mind the increasing popularity of

interviewing people for their opinions, coding these opinions into punch cards, and then extrapolating to society as a whole. Sociology has become obsessed in recent years, Mills thinks, with these studies of "public opinion", that may be true only for America and remains western centric. Sociology has created a repertoire of concepts and methods which remained regional and preclude generalization especially to non-western societies.

In the abstracted empirical style, the emphasis has been given on method rather than content of study and also its relevance for being studied.

Abstract empiricism is a term used by C. Wright Mills (1959) to refer to those forms of social survey research that involve quantitative research technologies to draw little on the theoretical tradition in sociology and contribute little to sociological understanding. He accepts that there is a place for numerical data and statistical analysis in sociological reasoning, he insisted that they are not sufficient for sociological analysis. Indeed, in the absence of the theoretical categories and comparative historical analyses that give such data their sociological meaning, he also insists that no conception of social structure is possible. This is because of the psychologism that he regards as intrinsic to all methodologies that restrict what is allowable as legitimate data to those which are produced by sociologists themselves by means of surveys and the like.

According to Emile Durkheim's classic work, in *Rules of the Sociological Method*, social facts should be explained by other social facts resulting in putting the psychological and philosophical as behind the scope of the sociological method.

Thus, sociology remains empirical, tied to specific situations and largely precluding generalizations.

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Abstracted empiricism tries to overcome the issue of too much specificity and lends a more scientific character to sociology.

SOCIOLOGY IN EVERYDAY LIFE

According to Mills (1959) concept of “The Promise” claims that each person should adopt a sociological imagination. This is a way of thinking and asking questions. He claims that people should be asking sociological questions. Now-a-days people often feel that their private lives are a series of traps. They sense that within their everyday worlds, they cannot overcome their troubles, and in this feeling, they are often quite correct. What ordinary people are directly aware of and what they try to do are bounded by the private orbits in which they live; their visions and their powers are limited to the close-up scenes of job, family, neighbourhood; in other milieux, they move vicariously and remain spectators. And the more aware they become, however vaguely, of ambitions and of threats which transcend their immediate locales, the more trapped they seem to feel. Mill felt that researchers had a responsibility to determine how the social environments of people were connected to the wider historical and social contexts. He studied milieu, social environments in which individuals lived in. This helped establish an approach called structural functionalism. In summation, Mills determined that the way people respond and act is mainly based on the things happening around them at the time. Personality and character traits are not an indication that somebody will react a certain way.

In “The Promise,” Mills writes about five problems he sees in American society. He describes them as alienation, threats to democracy, conflict between human reason and bureaucracy, threats to freedom, and lack of moral sense. Mills discusses the need to view human experience, history, and current events as parts of one whole.

The sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. That is its task and its promise. To recognize this task and this promise is the mark of the classic social analyst.

According to Bauman (1990) on his concept of “Oneself with Others in Everyday Life”– the experiences of being free or unfree are something that we all wish to solve as it continues to remain an enigma to almost all. The aspect of choices attached to the experience of being free or unfree links one to the ability to decide.

All humans are always part of a group and the tension between the individual and the collective is an ongoing sociological concern.

Sociological Concepts

1. Group: We all know that the individuals cannot function outside of the group as they are born in one and are a social human because of it. A group is when two or more people regularly interact on the basis of shared expectations of others’ behaviour; interrelated statuses and roles which gives both identity and the means of existence through socialisation.

2. Socialisation: Socialisation is the process of internalizing the norms and ideologies of society. Socialisation encompasses both learning and teaching and is thus “the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained”. Socialisation is strongly connected to developmental psychology. Humans need social experiences to learn their culture and to survive. The primary socialising agents enables the individual to develop the self’s intentions and expectations to choose the significant others from the many who come his/her way. In the later phases of life of an individual it would be a partial shift from what the individual used to be to acquiring new skills and knowledge to keep oneself update with the new changes that have come about in the life of the individual is called secondary socialisation. But the root of personality comes up by primary socialisation and stays during a lifetime.

3. In-Group and Out-Group: One of the ways that groups can be powerful is through inclusion, and its inverse, exclusion. The feeling that we belong in an elite or select group is a heady one, while the feeling of not being allowed in, or of being in competition with a group, can be motivating in a different way. Sociologist William Sumner (1840-1910) developed the concepts of in-group and out-group to explain this phenomenon. In short, an *in-group* is the group that an individual feels she belongs to, and she believes it to be an integral part of who she is. An *out-group*, conversely, is a group someone doesn’t belong to; often we may feel disdain or competition in relationship to an out-group. Sports teams, unions, and sororities are examples of in-groups and out-groups; people may belong to, or be an outsider to, any of these. Primary groups consist of both in-groups and out-groups, as do secondary groups.

In-group and Out-Group: When we talk about In-group, our family is the best example as mutual confidence and common bond keeps all the members together. Mutual help, protection and friendship which brings a ‘we’ feeling, a community feeling which is

home, where even all the time they might not be agreeable but they are together and it gives a feeling of security. We can say that in-group is a small face-to-face group and often a source of primary identity, where a general exchange without any measurement of what is given; for example parents do not put a value on what they do for their children and *vice-versa*. Some of the other examples of In-group are friendship, colleagues at work and a small village community.

In-group-out-group can also be identified in terms of the boundaries that demarcate those who belong from those who do not. Social groups help to make their boundaries compact so that society can easily define people and classify them. Therefore, groups generally define themselves on class, gender and ethnic lines and the strong in-group feelings also create the divisive forces in society, keeping people away from each other.

Stranger: This stranger is someone who has a particular place in society within the social group that the person has entered. The social position of this stranger is determined by the fact that he or she does not belong to this group from the beginning.

Together and Apart: Social groups that are functional in maintaining social unity and stability are of the kind that we call a community. A community provides a secure place for the individual which is often also the locus of identity and social well-being. Loss of community leads to a feeling of being rootless that is often the cause of mental anxiety and even anti-social behavior. Yet very strong communities also create a barrier between people. Thus, social groups are conducive to both keeping people together and also to keep them apart.

SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER DISCIPLINES

Mills: Types of Practicality and the Bureaucratic Ethos

According to Mills, the dominant trends in sociology at that time were “grand theory” and “abstracted empiricism.” The dominant attitudes were the “bureaucratic ethos” and “liberal practicality,” which meant that they emphasized bureaucracy over liberal values. They also overemphasized quantification while neglecting other social forces.

Academic sociologists used to focus on abstracted empiricism. This approach is similar to the bureaucratic ethos in that it focuses only on quantified data, and thus ignores moral principles of corporations or other institutions. But this ethos was blind to the fact that social scientists have a responsibility towards society as well. The liberal practicality’s notion of neutrality

failed to acknowledge these responsibilities because both approaches believed that the social scientists in universities should be neutral observers who shouldn’t take sides with respect to political or moral issues.

Abstracted empiricism and illiberal practicality come together, for Mills, in the “bureaucratic ethos” of the “New Social Science.” Today, social science is bureaucratic: it serves the goals of bureaucracy (bosses in business, for instance) at the same time that it is done within its own bureaucratic setting (the university, which itself is increasingly run as business).

Mills breaks down this “bureaucratic development” in sociology into five main features. First, there is a standardization of social inquiry. That means the methods sociologists are using are increasingly identical to each other. Second, research institutions have become systematized as well, with workflows that can carry out the work of polling that sociologists now do. Instead of cultivating scholars, universities become training centers that produce pollsters. Third, scholars themselves change their mental habits. Instead of thinking about social structure, they think about the specific task at hand, and original and creative thought is diminished. Fourth, studies now serve bureaucratic means. Instead of social science providing the public with information, it now caters to “clients,” usually administrators who want to make their institutions more efficient. Fifth, by giving bureaucracy these tools, social science increases social domination. The managerial elite are empowered to control society more effectively.

What all this means is that social science comes into line with the dominant social structure. Instead of critiquing or even describing the current state of affairs, social science perpetuates it. In turn, social science can’t be counted on to help society transform. It can’t even be counted on to give the public (as opposed to private clients) useful information. Social science is no longer autonomous, and therefore it can’t help the public reform society. It serves domination, rather than disrupting it.

Mills: Uses of History

Historians are charged with organizing the memory of mankind. Whether they admit it or not, they always have a point of view because they choose which information to work with among an innumerable sets of available facts. One of the pitfalls of doing historical work is the ease of distorting the record in the process of continually rewriting the past. But what historians produce is “a great file indispensable to all social science.” The social sciences themselves are historical

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disciplines. In carrying out their work, social scientists must use historical materials, for no social science can transcend history. "All sociology worthy of the name is 'historical sociology,'" Mills claims. Historians focus on changes occurring in institutions over periods of time but do not necessarily compare them, whereas other social scientists study institutions more comparatively than historically. Nonetheless, this is a difference in emphasis rather than substance.

IN WHAT WAY SOCIOLOGY LOOKS AT REALITY

Mills: The Human Variety

According to Mills conception of the aims of sociology, "What social science is about is the human variety, which consists of all the social worlds in which men have lived, are living and might live" and the broadest aim of the social scientist "is to understand each of the varieties of social structure, in its components and in its totality."

Stress was given by Mills on the requirement to incorporate the social, biographical, and historical versions of reality in which individuals construct their social conditions with reference to the vast society. Mills insisted that the nature of society is continuous with historical reality, he wrote of the importance of the empirical adequacy of theoretical frameworks.

Bauman: Values and Action: The most crucial element of culture is its Values. Values are a culture's standard for discerning what is good and just in society. Values might change with vast social interaction still their core values remain the same. Values often suggest how people should behave, but they don't accurately reflect how people actually do behave. Some actions get accepted automatically by the internal values without making any attempt at making a choice while others might be incontestable as one comes under outside influence.

Traditional values are automatically adopted and have a historical context and a text, which is time-tested. These values hold more authority than the later ones where they need to prove themselves and in times of changes the old ones hold ground firmly. Therefore, people with allure can turn out with new values in comparison with ordinary people initiating something new and getting it accepted.

Therefore, three types of authorities were pointed out by Max Weber as the traditional, the charismatic and the legal-rational. The third type – the legal-rational one are the ones with legal rights and a logical and legalized source to deliver their authority.

OBSERVE, INTERPRET AND VALIDATE SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Bauman: The Sociological Eye

Bauman who had given an approach regarding developing a sense of research of what is going around us with a more critical and evaluative perspective is called a sociological eye. With the development of a sociological perspective people have a tendency to get a more rational view of things that happen around them that enables them to get nearer to the truth. We can say that sociology teaches us the art of life which to some extent enables everybody to be rational as well as predictive.

Mills: Philosophies of Science

Science is the systematic methods used to obtain knowledge and the knowledge obtained by those methods. Science is assumed to be objective and rigid in its procedure and social science is supposed to be more open and liberal in its application. Whereas, social analysts, using the sociological imagination in the work has avoided any rigid procedures.

'Methods' means the questions one should ask with the answers with some assurance whereas 'Theory' emphasizes on paying close attention to the words one is using, importantly their degree of generality and their logical relations.

A working social scientist is the one who gets first hand information about the problem and situation. Scientists do reflect on the theory and method used in their studies.

Empirical verification means one has to talk about facts and how to get ideas and facts put together. As compared with grand theory which uses the deductive verification method and abstracted empiricism implies what to verify is not a serious issue. Classical research uses detailed expositions and macroscopic conceptions by designing small empirical studies.

Sociology takes a different approach, as it stresses that individual problems are often rooted in problems stemming from aspects of society itself.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. Discuss the sociology in everyday life.

Ans. Sociology is the study of society through many theoretical perspectives. The most important lesson of sociology is that society is not an external object to be studied. Instead, all of us are active members of society and constantly influence it. Thus, sociology can be applied in everyday life by all members of society.