

Unit 1: Sociology: An Introduction

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Objectives

After studying this **unit**, the students will be able to:

- To understand the meaning and definition of Sociology;
- To explain the field and subject matter of Sociology;
- To explain the nature and importance of Sociology;
- To describe the origin and development of Sociology.

Introduction

Though the man lives in society from prime time yet he started late to take interest studying in his society and himself. First of all man studied natural events, and tried to understand the environment of his surroundings and at last started to think about his society. This is the reason that the natural sciences developed first and after that social sciences. In the series of development of social sciences, sociology developed as a subject after a long time. This new subject got the chance to have existence in previous century. In this view sociology is a new science comparatively the other social sciences. The experience of necessity of sociology was considered to understand the typical societies various social events. Gradually the importance of this ology increased too much. In relation to the development of Sociology **T.B. Bottomore** wrote that from thousands of years the societies and groups has been considered and inspected by the people in which they live. Yet Sociology is a modern science and is not old more than a century. **Don Martindale** tells that if man is a philosopher by nature, obviously he is sociologist also because social life is his natural aim. Man can not be a

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sociologist only by living in society, establishing the social relation and with participating in social life. So it is essential to try to understand what Sociology is in fact?

Sociology is the science or ology of 'society'. Society or social life has been studied through it. The credit goes to the famous scholar **Auguste comte**, the native of France, for giving birth to this new science. First of all only you named 'sociology' to this new science in 1838. Due to this reason you are known as '**Father of sociology**'. Among the first writers of sociology Durkheim, Spencer and Max Weber are also known besides **Comte**. The contribution of all these scholars to develop 'Sociology' as a subject, is too much.

Bringing to light on the fundamental source of origin of Sociology, **Ginsberg** wrote that is brief it is said that the origin of sociology is based on political philosophy, history, biological principles of development and all those revolutions of social and political reformation which investigated the social states. It is clear that there is a great contribution of political philosophy, history, biological principles of development and the revolutions of social and political reformations in origin of Sociology. The origin of sociology is the result of those efforts by which the common base, finding in the various branches of social science, was found.

1.1 Meaning and Definition of Sociology

According to verbal sense, we find that sociology is made of two words in which first words 'socius' from 'Latin' language and second one 'Logas' from 'Greek' language has been taken. The meaning of 'socius' is - 'society' and 'science' from Logas. Thus the verbal meaning of 'sociology' is the science of society. **John Stuart Mill** suggested replace 'Sociology' in 'Ethology' and said that 'sociology' is the illegal child of two languages, but most of the scholars did not admit it. From the posterior of nineteenth century **Herbert spencer** tried to study about society orderly and named his book 'sociology'. In relation about suitability of the word 'sociology' you wrote that the vantage of symbols and the suggestively is more important than its validity of origin. It is clear that in verbal sense, the meaning of sociology is the science in which social relations are studied systematically and orderly.

When we think about this question what 'sociology' is we find variety in views of various sociologists, but it is sure that most of sociologists admit 'sociology' as 'science of society'. Various scholars have been expressed their ideas to clear the meaning of sociology. The definitions of sociology given by them can be divided into four parts as the following:

1. Sociology as the study of society.
2. Sociology as the study of social relations.
3. Sociology as the study of groups.
4. Sociology as the study of social interaction.

Now we will consider on each of them here.

1.1.1 Sociology as the Study of Society

There were a few sociologists like Giddings, Samner, Ward etc., who tried to explain 'sociology' as a science by which one can be studied as a whole unit of whole society.



Note **Word's views**, "Sociology is the science of society."

According to Giddings, "Sociology is the scientific study of society." You wrote that sociology is systematic description and explanation of society as a whole unit.

According to **Odum**, "Sociology is the science which studies the society." On the basis of these definitions, it is clear that sociology is the scientific study of society, but a natural question arises

here which society has been studied by sociology – either of human society or animal society or both of them. Here we should understand clearly that human society has been studied in sociology. According to **G. Duncan Mitchell**, "Sociology is the analytic and expository science of structural aspects of human society."

1.1.2 Sociology as the Study of Social Relations

Where some scholars admit Sociology as a science of society in other hand some others call it the systematic study of social relations, but there is no difference between science of society and social relations. Its reason is that system of social relations is called by the name of society. There are some definitions of some special scholars who accept sociology as the study of social relations.

According to **Maclver and Page**, "Sociology is related to social relations this network of relations is called 'society' by us." You wrote in some other place, "Social relation is the only subject theme of sociology."

According to **J.F. Cuber**, "Sociology can be defined as the branch of scientific knowledge of human relationships."

According to **Max Weber**, "Sociology is the study of social relations and deeds." Expressing like these thoughts, **Von Wiese** wrote, "Only social relation is the virtual base of the subject-matter of sociology."

According to **Arnold M. Rose**, "Sociology is the science of human relations."

From the above definitions, it is clear that sociology is a science which studies the social relations systematically. Only the network of social relations is called society. Man establishes innumerable social relations with various persons and groups on the basis of mutual awareness and contact. When several persons and groups are related with each other as various units, whatever be made on the base of these relations, that is called society. These society and social relations are studied in sociology.

1.1.3 Sociology as the Study of Groups

According to **Nob's Hine and Flaming**, "Sociology is the scientific and systematic study of persons in groups." It is meant that Sociology gives attention to those reflection of behaviour which are found in the people of organised groups. According to **Johnson**, "Sociology is the study of social groups." You wrote, "Sociology is the science of social groups ... Social group is a system of social interactions." Your acceptance is that it is not sufficient to say to Sociology as the study of social relations and we will not be able to reach at a definite result. So Sociology should be accepted as the science of social relations. The meaning of social groups, according to Johnson, is not only the group of persons but it is the systematic interaction which create among people. When various persons contact each other, social interaction are created in them and the groups are made on the basis of these interactions. So Sociology is the study of these social relations which are based on social interactions. In sociology Johnson gives importance to social relations which are the result of social interactions. You wrote "Our interest in the people in sociology is till that where they participate in the system of social interactions. It is clear that in the construction of groups, the social interactions are as a base and these are studied in sociology."

Why the importance is given to the study of social groups in sociology, too much we should understand it here. Man lives in group and participates its various activities and fulfills his needs. He participates in family group, groups of relatives, group of caste, group of playmates, group of neighbours, group of school, group of professional action, group of religion and group of political action and development happens here. Among them every group is a system of social interaction. So when we study the social groups in sociology, we accept the importance of systematic study of social interactions indirectly.

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1.1.4 Sociology as the Study of Social Interactions

Some sociologists define sociology as the study of social interactions. They accept that social interactions are the base of society instead of social relations. The number of social relations are too much to study correctly. So the social interactions should be studied in sociology. To have contact of two or more persons or groups with each other in the state of awareness and to effect the behaviour of each other is interaction. The only base of social relations is interaction. This is the reason why Sociology is the science of social interactions.

According to **Gillin and Gillin**, "In wide meaning, sociology is called the study of interactions which are produced in people by contact with each other."

According to **Ginsberg**, "Sociology is the science of manual interaction and inter-relations and of their states and results."

According to **George Simmel**, "Sociology is the science of forms of human interrelations."

From the above definitions it is clear that sociology is the science of social interactions. Some other scholars have defined sociology as following:

According to **Max Weber**, "Sociology is that science which tries to know the analytical explanation of social action." According to you, it is difficult to understand Sociology without knowing social actions. The reason is that where sociology has a great importance of social relations and social interactions, one can not understand social actions without knowing it. Both are difficult to understand. Social interactions are itself made by social actions. So **Max Weber** compels one to understand social actions in sociology. The study of social action in Sociology is given a great importance by **Talcott Parsons**. You acceptance is that the whole social structure, social relations, society and social system can be understood by the medium of retention of 'action'.

According to **Sorokin**, "Sociology is the common science of social-cultural events, kinds and several inter-relations". You tell somewhere that "Sociology studies those directions of society which are recurrent, permanent and universal and are related with the subject-matter of every social science, but any of social science does not study them specially."

In its broad form sociology is the science which studies social system. Social system includes social actions, social relation, social control, social change, social institutions and the related effect and conditions of it. In other words, Sociology is that science which studies the various aspects related with social system.

On the basis of above definitions it is said that, Sociology is the science which studies the entire unit of the whole society. Sociology is the science of the study of an integrated unit of entire society. In view to understand social relations correctly the study of social interactions and social values are specially compelled to be real in sociology.

1.2 Scope of Sociology

Enkals says, "Sociology studies the changeable society, so neither then limit of study can be settled nor the field of study can be defined clearly of sociology." The meaning of field is that from where this science has been spread. In other words, the meaning of field is connected with those possibly limits in which any subject or science can be studied. The views of scholars about the subject field of Sociology can be divided into two parts:

- (i) Formal or specialistic or particularistic school and
- (ii) Synthetic school.

According to first view or concept Sociology is a special science and according to second one Sociology is a common science. We try to clear here every concept of them.

1.2.1 Formal School

The founder of this school is **George Simmel**, a sociologist of Germany. Vierkant, Von Wiese, Max Weber and Taneer are some of those scholars which are related to this school. The related sociologists admit that sociology is also a free and special science like political science, geology, economics, history, physics, chemistry etc. Like every science has its own special problem or matter and is studied by that ology, as there should be a main matter or problem to study in sociology also. With this happening sociology could be a specific and free science and the field could be defined. The followers of this school says that if sociology is trial to be the study of whole society then it will not possible to do on the scientific base. In that situation sociology will become a hotchpotch. So it is necessary to make sociology as a specific science, that the specific forms of these relations are studied instead the study of the whole social relations in it. Due to this compulsation of 'formal field' of social relations, it is called 'formal school.' There are some thoughts of some special scholars related with this school as:

1. **Views of George Simmel:** George Simmel wanted to make sociology a special science. You consider sociology is the study of forms of social relations.

Views of George Simmel: George Simmel wanted to make sociology, a special science. According to him sociology is the study of form of social relations. For him, if sociology starts the study of content of social relations like the other sciences, it could not be a special science. So sociology should study the forms of social relations. According to him elemental and non-elemental things have their own form effect of form and content to each other. Form and content do not have any effect on each other. For instance the three bottles, having the same form, can be filled with water, milk and wine separately. There will be no effect of water, milk and wine on the form of bottles and their form on the content of bottles (water, milk and wine). The special shape of bottle is its form and contained water, milk and wine is its content. Similarly the difference is found between the form of social relations and contents and they do not effect each other. The main forms of social relations are imitation, co-operation, competition, domination, sub-ordination, division of labour etc. Sociology is the science which studies that forms of social relations. When these forms of social relations are found in different contents like economical association, religious association. Political Party, these are studied in economics, political science and ethology not in Sociology.

So sociology should study only the forms of social relations, not of contents. According to **Simmel**, the contents of social relations and the forms of social relations in sociology as a special science are studied in other social sciences.

Views of Vierkant: Vierkant was also a supporter to make sociology, a special science. He has told if sociology is saved from the charges of unexplicitly and indefinitely, it should not study the solid society in historical view. Sociology, as a special science, should study the forms of mental relations which tied the people each other. Sociology does not consider what is the relations between father and son or mother or daughter? It only studies of fame, regards, love, shame, affection, dedication, jealousy, co-operation, struggle which are part of mental and emotional fold. The various social relations are formed with these basis and the society is developed by these social relations. So sociology should reserve itself to the forms of mental and emotional facts or relations. **Vier Kant** himself wrote, "Sociology is the study of last forms of those mental relations which tied the men with each other."

Views of Von Wiese: Von Wiese was also in favour to make sociology, a special science like **Simmel**. For him, Sociology is the especial social science which is the study of the forms of human relations and it is its especial field. Describing the 650 forms of social relations, you have told, sociology should study these forms.

Views of Max Weber: Max Weber defines Sociology as especial science. According to him Sociology is the study of social activities. He has explained the social activities as those behaviours which are meaningful, in additional, which are affected by the behaviours of other persons. For him, behaviour

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is the basis of social activities. So the work of Sociology is to understand and explain the social behaviour. According to him, the rules can be constructed or formed based on experience and argument in sociology from huge explanation and analysis of social actions. He tells that if the whole social relations are studied in Sociology, its field will become **limitless and inexplicit**. So it is essential that the study of social relations should be studied in a **definite limit**. In this view, Max Weber accepts that in sociology, social actions are studied only.

In the other supporters of formal school, the name of Tonies, Bogle, Ross Park, Barges etc. are described. All the scholars, related with this school, admit that **the field sociology is the study of the forms of social relations**. All the above scholars always tried to **make Sociology, as a free and special science from the other social science**.

Criticism of Formal School: Formal school is blamed by **indefinity and unexplicitity**. About the supporters of this school, Fichter says that it is true to call **social philosopher** them instead of sociologist because they did not try to understand the behavioural nature of social life. **The drawbacks of this school are following:**

1. It is wrong to say from the scholars related with formal school that the forms of social relations can not be studied by the help of other science. So sociology should study them as a **new science**. Such saying is baseless. A lot of forms of social relations like – superiority, lordship, administration, power, obeying, slavery, struggle etc. are **studied more systematically in the lawbook**. Sorokin wrote, "Forms are studied by other sciences also. So there is no place for the science of forms of human relations in Sociology."

2. The followers of this school has differentiated in between the forms and contents and separated from each other but it is not possible to separate from each other. In this connection Sorokin wrote, "We can fall a glass with wine, water or sugar without changing its form but I can't imagine about a social institution that its form will not be changed after exchanging its members." Its is clear when the form and context can not be separated from each other in the field of social relations, it is not possible to study the forms of social relations in Sociology.

3. The supporters of this school want to make Sociology a free and pure science differ from all the other social sciences, but it is not possible. The reason is that mutual dependence is found in various social sciences. All the social science gains something in less or more amount from each other. In this connection Sorokin wrote, "Perhaps there is no science which is not related with other sciences in any form."

4. Accepting Sociology, a new science, the followers of this school insist to restrict its learning field. According to them, the field of learning of sociology is limited to the specific forms of social relation, but they are not right about it. It according to the respect of this school only the forms of social relations are learnt in Sociology, the various sides of social life will not be in sociology. In this condition its field will be limited which is not proper to development of subject.

5. In wide sense, Sociology is the science of society. It is proved that the various sides of social life are attached firmly with each other. If any part or side of social life has been changed, it effects the other parts or sides. So according to the supporter of this school, it is not good to study the forms of social relation in Sociology by pressure, it is ignorance of the other sides of social life which is not proper in any way.

6. The followers of this school have not differentiated between the forms of socialization and the forms of social relations and accepted as a synonym of each other, while it is not in real. Not only the forms of socialization is contained by social relations but the forms of in socialization also. It is clear that views of this school are not right. Its followers are unable to clear the field of study of sociology.

1.2.2 Synthetic School

Sorokin, Durkheim, Hobhouse and Ginsberg are the main supporters of this school who support to make Sociology a general science instead of a special science. According to these followers the field of sociology can not be limited with the forms of social relations for getting whole knowledge about the society. It has to study the whole society and in this relation the followers of this school have given two reasons:

1. The nature of society is same as living being of which the various organs are intimately related with each other and changes in any organ effects the other. So to understand the society, it is essential to understand its various units or organs and their mutual relations. It can happen only when sociology becomes a general science with broad field.
2. An another reason is given in favour to be Sociology, a general science, that a part of society is studied from each social science. For instance political life, a side of a society, is studied in political science, similarly economical life in economics. There is no science which studies all the sides of social life or the whole society in broad form. So Sociology has to work as a general science. The real nature of society can be understand by this happening. Our knowledge will be contract and solitary. In fact sociology has to play a role to introduce the people with general states of social life and only it is possible when its field becomes broad as a general science.

The views of some main followers are being given to understand clearly the views of this school.

1. **Views of Hobhouse:** Sociologist Hobhouse from England is the main follower of synthetic school. According to him sociology has to find the general elements found between chief principles and gist elements of the other social science and to generalization them. Sociology has to establish co-ordination among various social sciences as a general science. Sociology can do this work as following:
 - (i) To get knowledge of the general forms of the chief concepts of all the social sciences.
 - (ii) To know the factors of changing and stably of the society.
 - (iii) To know the tendency and conditions of social development.

It will be possible when sociology becomes a general social science.

2. **Views of Durkheim:** French sociologist Durkheim has also followed the synthetic concepts. He told that it was possible to make a general Sociology which were made from more general rules on the rules of special field of special sciences. Only these, in collective form, lead the various sides of social life. By studying them one can understand the society correctly. **Durkheim** wrote, "It is believed that there is a great need for the sociologists to be familiar with the investigations done in special sciences like the history of law, traditions and religion, social-arithmetic, economics etc. Because sociology should be made only with the appliances available in them." Though Durkheim favours to make sociology, a general science but you have cleared that first have to made sociology a special science so that it may develop its own free rules like other social sciences. After that it has to establish co-ordination with the other social sciences as a general science. So first of all you pressed to study those social facts in sociology by which social representation is made. According to you, "Sociology is the science of collective representation." According to Durkheim the meaning of collective representation is to the set of views emotions and concepts which are found in every group or society on which the person depends for his views, humours and behaviour in insensitive form. Mostly the people of society accepts them. According to **Durkheim**, these views, emotions and concepts change into a collective strength. You named it collective representation.

They lead the various sides of social life in collective form and studying them one can understand society correctly. There are two specialities of collective representation:

- (i) They extend in all society and are above the strength of man.
- (ii) They effect all the people of the society essentially.

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Sociology should study these collective representations so that knowledge may get about various social problems and conditions.

3. **Views of Sorokin:** He also a supporter to make Sociology a general science. He wrote, "Suppose if social events are categorised and each category is studied by a special social science, there will be a demand of a science which will study about general and special sciences besides these special social relations." None of social science is completely free. Each of them has to depend on other in any form. The reason is that a side of social life or a especial events are studied by each science while the various events effects each other in mutual form. So there is a need of such general science which may establish co-ordination among the results of various social sciences so that society can be understand broadly. The work of Sociology is to study the mutual relations of various social sciences or their general elements. Sorokin has tried to understand it following:

Economical relation	- a, b, c, d, e, f
Political relation	- a, b, c, g, h, i
Religious relation	- a, b, c, j, k, l
Legal relation	- a, b, c, m, n, o
Recreational relation	- a, b, c, p, q, r

It is clear that whether we may establish any kind of relations like **economical, political or religious** or do any action, they essentially have some general elements **a, b, c, are some general elements** in them. These general elements or interrelations are studied in **sociology**. According to **MacIver and Page**. "Due to be sociologist, our interest is in social relations, not for they are economical, political or religious but for their being social." According to **Sorokin**, the study field of sociology should be general and should be studied each side of social life. Besides the above scholars word, **Motwani, Ginsberg** etc. also pressed on the needness of sociology to be a general science.

Criticism of synthetic school: There are some allegations against this school:


1. If all the social elements and events are studied in sociology then it will become the science of social sciences or Jack of all trades.
2. If Sociology is a general science, then will be no free field of its own. Such in this condition it will have to depend on other sciences.
3. If all the forms of social facts and events are started to study in Sociology then it will not be able to study of any fact or event completely in this condition.
4. If Sociology is a collection of various social sciences then its own definite principle or method will not be developed.

Sociology both as a special and general science: In the form of result, it can be said that in the relation of subject field of sociology the views of both formal and synthetic schools are unitary. Sociology is not a especial science completely which is limited itself to the study of some especial forms of social relations only and not a general science which studies all the social events. The reality is that both the views are mixed in subject-field of sociology. Where in one side in study of social events in the subjects field of sociology, the specific views are forced, to the other side, the general sides of social events are studied by the synthetic views. Where the general social relations have importance in sociology, additional the specific social relations also have. So in the subject field of sociology both 'general' and 'specific' are studied. Clearing it **Prof. Ginsberg** wrote, "For instance, all know that zoology is a collection of various sciences in which each science is a especial science clearly, but it can not be denied that there is a general zoology also, instead of this especial science, which is a developed knowledge hub of general state life. Similarly there are various special sciences related with the various parts of social life in Sociology and in this form, Sociology is same

as a group of all social sciences. In other meaning Sociology is a specific science in itself which aims to find the mutual relations which is found in other sciences and to give the description of the general qualities of social relations." It is clear that Sociology has contained such specific science which studies the various parts of social life. In addition Sociology is also a special science which aims to find the qualities or general nature of general relations.

Bierstedt's views regarding sociology: Bierstedt has explained some qualities of Sociology which makes it differ from other sciences. There are the following:

1. **Sociology is a social science not a natural science:** The subject matter of Sociology is different from the other sciences, but not a study procedure. On this basis we can differ Sociology from those sciences which study the physical world. So Sociology is different from, Astrology, Physics, Chemistry, Geology and Zoology.
2. **Sociology is a categorical not a normative science:** Sociology studies of 'what' not of 'what should be'. In form of science sociology does not discuss about values, it does not tell that in what direction the society should go, and does not give any suggestion for the settlement of social policies. But is not meant that sociologist knowledge is waste in the view of social and political decisions, but it clears that alone sociology does not study the problems of human values like goodness and badness, right or wrong, superior and inferior. Though sociology can do this work and does also, but only in a form of science. Sociology describes the values of definite human group in a definite time and place, but it does not tell to accept these values by those groups. On this basis Sociology is differ from social and political philosophy, policy and religion.
3. **Sociology is a pure science, not an applied science:** The aim of sociology is to get knowledge about the human society, not to use that knowledge. As physics does not build a bridge, chemistry does not prescribe the medicine to the ill likely sociology does not settle public policy, it does not tell a legislator, that which laws should be formed and which of not, the ill the handicapped, the child-offender and the poors are helped or not. In the form of a pure science, Sociology collects only knowledge which can be beneficial for a administrator, legislator, diplomater, teacher, foreman, supervisor, social worker and common citizen but the work of sociologists is not that they tell how the sociological knowledge is used in the form of applied.

 **Example:** The relation of Sociology with administration, legislation, diplomacy, teaching, supervision, social work and citizens is as the relation of a physicist with engineering, anatomy with remedy, judicology with law, astrology with aeronotomy, chemistry with dispensary and zoology with flora and animal husbandry.

The main subject of Sociology is about to get knowledge about society which is used to solve some problems but it is not a applied science in itself. It is not meant that sociological knowledge is wasteful or applying use is not possible. It is meant that those who are busy to collect the sociological knowledge, they are not be the user of this knowledge always and those who use it, there is a lack of time, power and training for them to gain this knowledge. This is the reason why theoretical and applied knowledge has been differentiated.

4. **Sociology is an abstract science not a concrete one:** Sociology is an abstract science. It is not meant that it is unnecessarily complicated and difficult but only sociology has interested in the forms of human events and illustrations not in their concrete demonstration. Sociology does not study of any specific war and revolution like history but studies war and revolution in a form of social events. It studies it in the form of a process and social struggle. Sociology is not interested in any specific social organization like Rotary international, U.N.O. Ahamadabad Clothes Mill Labour union etc. but interested in how does a man make union to full fill his rights or worthies and what is the relation between these union and other kind of social groups? Sociology is not interested in Russian, the British, Spanish, Italian or Arabian because they all

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are native of these place but so because all are human, whether their origin, beliefs, attitudes working methods or social organisations, have differences. In this meaning sociology is a abstract science.

5. **It is a generalising science:** It studies the general events instead of any specific law, society, man and event. It interest in common rules and the principles of human interactions, committees, groups and the nature of societies, structure, forms and internal subject or matter. Like history it is not interested in full and long description of any specific society or event. It does not study why, where and when Hitler, Musolini or Nepolean fought but interested in when a group is attacked with external attack how its internal firmness is established.
6. **Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science:** The knowledge is gained with the help of science and technology in sociology. Both human experience and argument are used in this science.
7. **Sociology is a general science, not a special science:** Sociology is a general science, not a special science though it is controversial for the sociologist till today. As being a general science, Sociology studies social relations and social actions found in all societies. The social relations and social actions are presented in all the behaviours like religious, political, economical and validatory of man. So Sociology studies them. In other words, Sociology studies those events and facts which are found in human interactions. Bierstedt has given a table to clear it:

Economical	a, b, c	d, e, f
Political	a, b, c	g, h, i
Religious	a, b, c	j, k, l
Legal	a, b, c	m, n, o
Recreational	a, b, c	p, q, r

It is clear from this table that economical, political, religious, legal and recreational all the forms have a, b, c factor. All these are social factors and are present in all in general form. Sociology studies economical, political, religious events for this reason not for so that they are economical, political or religious. Sociology interests to study the social factors, whether they are happened in any reference. Any -specific may be the center point of sociology likely may be of the others, sciences but its field of investigation is common.

So we can say that Sociology is a real, pure, abstract, generalizator argumentive, experience proved and general science.

1.3 Subject-matter of Sociology

Some sociologists do not differentiate of any kind between scope and subject matter of Sociology and accepted both the same, but it is not in real. There is a great difference between them. The meaning of subject-field is related with those possibly limits whereas any subject can be studied more and more. Subject matter is related with those definite subjects which are studied in 'a science.' The field of any subject expresses the real subject of estimated zone and subject-matter. Though there is a views – controversy among the scholars about the subject matter of Sociology, most of all sociologists associates social actions, social institutions, social control and social changes in it. To understand the subject-matter of Sociology the views of some main scholars are being given here.

Views of Sorokin: According to Sorokin, the following things should be associated in the subject-matter of sociology:

1. The co-relation and natural relations of various social events should be studied in it, for instance, the mutual relations of social political, economical, religious, familiar and etiquette events.

2. Mutual relations and correlations among social and unsocial facts and events should be studied. For instance, the effects of social life and events of geographical and zoological conditions.
3. The general qualities of all the social events of society should be studied. Accepting Sociology, a general science, Sorokin wrote about its subject-matter that, "Sociology has been a science of general qualities of all kind of social events, and of their mutual relations and correlations. Either it will remain same as or there will be no existence of sociology."

To know the views of **Sorokin** elaborately see the definition and subject-field of Sociology.

Views of Inkeles: Inkeles told the three paths about the subject-matter of Sociology which are the following:

1. Historical Path
2. Empirical Path
3. Analytical Path.

Each path of them helps to know about the subject-matter of Sociology. So to know the subject-matter of sociology, Inkeles takes the help of inductive method.

We will explain the above three paths here:

1. Historical Path: To know the subject-matter of Sociology in it, we shall study of the notes of those sociologists who are known as the instigator of Sociology. We will try to know that which subjects are mentioned as central-point by these instigator in their creations.

In his famous work '*Contemporary Sociological Theories*', Sorokin has described the important work of 1,000 those people who had contributed in the development of modern sociology. **Howard Beker** and **Herry Elmer Borness**, in his work '*Social Thought from Lore to Science*' has described the sociological history in about 1,178 pages. The name of four sociologists Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Durkheim and Max Weber are remarkable in the development of modern sociology. Their time is from 19th century to the beginning of 20th century. The early development of Sociology happened in France, England and Germany where these scholars worked. Each of these scholar has affected sociology personally. It is necessary to introduce with the views of these scholars to settlement of the real subject-matter of Sociology:

Auguste Comte (1787-1857) is known as the father of Sociology. He used a lot of his time to establish Sociology as a subject, not to define its subject-matter. He believed that sub-division of Sociology was not possible at that time, whether it, might be desired and possible after a long time. So we do not get any list or sub-field of related subject of Sociology from Auguste comte. Though Auguste Comte was inactive to settle the sub-field of Sociology yet he divided sociology mainly into two parts:

(i) Social statics and (ii) Social Dynamics. On this basis we can divide the subject matter of Sociology into two parts and this division is found in the other sciences in any form.

- (i) **In social statics:** Comte associates the study of the institutions of society like economical institution, family and states. By this view the mutual relations of various institutions have been studied in Sociology. **Comte** himself writes, "The rules of actions and reactions of various parts of the system of society have been studied in statics in Sociology."

He said that the parts of society could not be understood separately because they had not a free existence. They should be known in the relation with each other. He says this principle 'the principle of universal social inter-connection and it could be the main idea of his principle'.

- (ii) **Social Dynamics:** If in statics, the inter-connections of various parts of society have been studied in dynamics, society is known in the form of a whole unit and it is known that how its development and change happened according to time. Comte believed that he solved that problem. He said that the development of society happened with some definite levels. Passing from the various levels, society forwards to completeness and progress.

Task Enlighten the main approaches of the study of social reality in humanistic perspective.

Is Sociology a Science

Sociology is a science because the scientific theory is used in it, the factors are collected by the inspection observation method, and are formed in a series and system, the results are found without discrimination and the principles are constructed. The main basis of accepting Sociology as a science, are the following:

1. **The base of sociological knowledge is scientific method:** To collect the factors of sociology, a scientist uses the method. To study the abstract and concrete source factors, Sociology uses various scientific methods. For example, sociometry, observation method, schedule or questionnaire method, social review method, individual study method, statistical method, interview method, historical method etc. are used. Using these methods, social events are studied. Various steps of scientific method have been described before this lesson. Sociological knowledge or social factors are got by using these steps.
2. **The factors are collected by the method of observation in Sociology:** The other base to accept Sociology as a science is to inspect or observe for collecting the factors by the investigator. Imaginative and philosophical opinions are not given a place in sociology. In it the investigator, himself inspects the events and collects the factors by reaching at the spot. If a sociologists has to study the problem of child-crime or prostitution or has to inquire about mob's behaviours then he will collect the related factors by observing himself the events.
3. **The classification and Analysis of factors are done in Sociology:** It is not possible to put out the scientific result on the basis of unrelated or scattered factors. It is essential to put out correct result that received factors should be systematic and orderly. Factors are divided into various classes on the basis of equality for them. This work comes under classification. After that the factors are analyzed carefully. The main reason of accepting sociology as a science is that the factors are classified and analyzed to get correct result in it.
4. **'What is' is described in sociology:** In other words, the real events are investigated in sociology. This science does not consider what is good or bad, or what should be or what should be not. The events or factors are picturised in their actual form by it. 'What is' is described by it. For example, on the basis of received factors, the combined family or caste system are described in their actual form, not tells that they are good or bad.
5. **The relation of work-reason is analysed in sociology:** Sociology does not satisfy with the description of 'what is.' It is tried to find events, factors and the relation of work-reason of various problems. This science discovers the reasons of any event or problem. It considers that any event happens by various specific reason not by some miracle which are found and discovered by a sociologist. The principle of class-struggle of **Karl Marx** and the principle of **Suicide of Durkhiem** clear the co-relation of work-reason.

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6. **The principle or theories are established in Sociology:** The relation of work-reason is investigated in sociology. The mutual relations of factors or events are found, are classified and analyzed also and after that general result is put out. The sociologist establishes the principles or scientific rules on the basis of these result.
7. **Re-examination of sociological principles is possible:** Sociology is also able to test or re-test its principle or rules like physics or chemistry. In this science the factors are collected with the help of scientific method and main speciality of the factors receiving by these methods that the enquiry can be done about its validation. It is possible to enquire the sociological principles in fact. For example, broken family is responsible for child-crime for a sufficient limit, test or re-test can be done at separate place.
8. **The principles of sociology are universal:** Those principles which are established by Sociology, through the scientific method, are universal in nature. It is meant that if conditions remain equal then sociological principles are genuinely fit in various societies and times. For example, this principle is found correct in universal from like that broken family is based on social decomposition.
9. **Sociology has the strength of prediction:** Sociology is able to tell or predict that 'what will be' on the basis of 'what is', so it is also a science. In other words, this science has the strength to indicate about the future by its basis of present knowledge store. By considering the changing society in present, sociology can tell what will the form of social-system in future, and the form of cast-system will be and what kind of family is found in special form. On the basis of present knowledge of sociology it can be said that it is also able to predict like natural sciences.

On the above basis it can be said that Sociology is a science, and has all the essential elements of science. Its nature is scientific.

Some Objections Against the Scientific Nature of Sociology

Some thinkers accept that the aim of natural sciences is to present 'Explanation related with reason' while the aim of social-cultural and historical sciences is to 'interpretation' of meaning or to understand it. They deny to accept sociology as a science, object against its scientific nature. Some objections of them are given below:

1. **Lack of objectivity:** Objectivity means the study without discrimination. Against the scientific nature of sociology, it is said that it can not study its study-matter with objectivity like natural sciences. The reason is that when sociology studies society, caste, family, religion, social-institutions, social problems, social values, etc. it also involves in them and becomes a part of them. So its own interest, prejudice and personal views are hindrance to study objectively all them. So sociology can not be considered as a science.

Evaluation: It is correct that however, objectivity is found in natural sciences that much not found in Sociology, but it is not meant that Sociology has the lack of objectivity. Today Sociology has also developed those methods by which help the personal discrimination is checked to be a hindrance in study. But after that if any man gives importance to his interest, desire or discrimination in his study then the results found by him, can not be accepted scientific in any form.

2. **Complexity of social phenomena:** Against the scientific nature of sociology, one objection is arisen that sociology studies the social events which are very complicated. Only a social event happens with many reasons and all those reasons and the comparative importance of each of them to consider, is so difficult. It is difficult for sociology to study the complex social relations and humanistic behaviour by the scientific method because there are so many factors behind them which change time to time. Just opposite in physical science, studying the events, the various reasons of them can be separated and the comparative importance of each can be found. In the relation of complexity of social phenomena, **Lundberg** wrote, "The greatest

hindrance. to be a real science related with human group behaviour, is complexity its subject-matter." Due to complexity and changeability social-events, some scholars deny to accept sociology as a science.

Evaluation: Complexity is not a hindrance to call a science for any subject matter if researches study accepting scientific attitude and scientific methods. Any event or object seems complex till then its full knowledge is known about it. A foreign language can be difficult for us if we have not any knowledge about it but having learnt it and taken knowledge about it, difficulty or complexity may have gone.

3. **Dynamic nature of social phenomena:** Against the scientific nature of sociology, an objection is raised that the nature of social events is dynamic. So the scientific knowledge is not possible to receive on the basis of the study of these.

Evaluation: Though it is true that the nature of social phenomena is dynamic, but it is true also that when these phenomenas are studied by the scientific method afterwards physical and natural phenomena changes, it does not matter it may happen in social phenomena. It is not argumentive by any view that the study of changing events or phenomena are studied by which logy can not be a science.

4. **Lack of universality in social phenomena:** Another objection is that there is found a lack of universality, uniformity and equality in social phenomena and any two units of social phenomena does not equal in them. The social phenomena have a difference from each other at every place, while universality has found in natural phenomena.

Evaluation: The fact, there can be study of phenomena by the scientific method in lack of equality, is reasonless in itself. Society has both equality and diversity. So it is wrong to say that there is a lack of universality and equality completely in social phenomena. Besides it a sociologist collects the factors by the medium of scientific method like other scientists and finds the results based on them. In this condition it can be said that sociology is science.

5. **Difficulty in measurement of social phenomena:** Those who do not accept, sociology as a science says that the nature of social phenomena is abstract and multiple. Due to this nature social phenomena can not be measured. Contrary to it measurement is possible in natural sciences. Almost the results from the social phenomena are based on guess and inspection. So they have not scientific manner.

Evaluation: The above objection against the scientific nature of sociology, is not correct. First of all the measurement is not an essential factor for science, it is only a co-operative factor. Then sociology has developed such techniques by which help the measurement of social phenomenas is possible a lot. Besides it as the field of related knowledge of any subject spreads that subject becomes much resultant by multiple manner means the capacity of measurement of its subject-matter has because increased. It is correct about Sociology. So not accepting sociology as a science, is unreasonable.

6. **Lack of cause and effect relationship:** Scientists always have interest in knowing why any object is so, means they try to know the cause of any event. To call any knowledge as a science, there is necessary to have it the cause related traits. It is necessary to know what are the causes behind any event or work. The objection is raised about the scientific nature of sociology that there is a lack of cause and effect relationship. **Auguste Comte** himself has denied the discovery of internal reasons of the phenomena of Sociology.

Evaluation: The above objection is not correct. Today Sociology is in the condition to study the cause and effect relationship. Maclver, Durkhiem, etc. has specially compelled on the discovery of cause and effect relationship in sociology. Durkhiem says that each effect has a related cause always.

7. **No laboratory in sociology:** Next objection, against the scientific nature of sociology, is that it has not its own laboratory like physical or natural sciences in which in controlled conditions,

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study can be happened. It is further said that in the lack of laboratory, if results are found, they can not be accepted reliable. **Garner** wrote that to solve the social problems and to satisfy our query, we can not take any part of community in our hand. We can inspect it with various attitudes and cannot be kept in various conditions. It is cleared that the study of social phenomena is not possible in a definite and controlled laboratory. The controlled conditions cannot be produced in any laboratory to study about the behaviours of mass, the real situation of divorce, the tensions of familiar field, about the criminals etc. In this condition it is said that the results found by sociology are based on the guess or imaginations and due to this reason sociology cannot be accepted as a science.

Evaluation: It is correct that sociology has not any laboratory as a closed room like other physical or natural sciences. But it is not said that laboratory method cannot be used in sociology. **Gillin and Gillin** wrote, "The laboratory method is only a general mode of close or real inspection." The factors are collected by the help of inspection method in sociology. In addition the subject-matter of Sociology is like that it is not possible to study it by keeping it in laboratory. The study of any sage, dacoit and criminal is possible in their natural conditions not in a close room. It can be said that society is the laboratory of Sociology.

8. **Sociology is incapable to prediction:** Another objection is raised about the scientific nature of sociology that it is incapable to predict. Its rules are not true as universal which can be enforced in all the societies and times. In opposite it the rules of physical sciences are true universal. For example, fingers shall burn in fire. In the same way, the paper in water. This is true for everywhere and all times. If a man abuses or slaps, other then it is difficult to say definitely anything about his reaction. Its reason is that his reaction depends on many causes. He may reply in the same manner but it is possible that he may be quiet. A specially reaction depends on his family background, his education, his views, feelings, principles, values, social environment, etc. It is also said that the changes may occurs continuous by in social phenomena. So how it is possible to predict on the basis of changeable phenomena? Social phenomena are so indefinite and chargeable and additional social rules are so incomplete and restricted that it is too difficult to predict on their basis. If a prediction is said then one cannot prove it true correctly.

Evaluation: The above objections are baseless about the scientific nature of Sociology. Not only, limited ability to predict, is found in sociology but natural and physical sciences have it also. The results derived from those sciences are not true, several predictions are proved false. In spite of limited capacity of predicting when all then subjects are accepted as a science there should not be any kind of objection to accept Sociology as a science. In addition are being establishing by Sociology on the basis of factors found by the help of scientific method which are growing the capacity of sociologists to predict day by day. So it can be said that the capacity of predicting is not as an hindrance in scientific nature of sociology.

From the above investigations it is clear that the applying objections against the scientific nature of sociology, are baseless. Sociology is a science and has a scientific nature. But it is certain that sociology is not so definite science as the other natural or physical sciences. For this reason, Sociology is accepted as a pure and theoretical science instead of behavioural science or applied science. **Stewart and Gillin** wrote that sociology has all those characteristics which are necessary for a science. There are (i) Increasing in knowledge (ii) Collection of knowledge by the method of science (iii) Establishing of general rules (iv) Application of rules (v) Expansion of study-field of by the help of rules. All these characteristics are present in sociology. So it is also a science and its nature is scientific.

Self Assessment

State whether the following statements are True or False:

8. Politics is studied in Sociology.
9. Auguste Comte has divided Sociology into two parts.

10. The subject matter of sociology is social relationship.
11. Social relationship are concrete.

Real nature of sociology: Robert Bierstedt's has told the following factors about sociology:

1. Sociology is a social science, not a natural science.
2. Sociology is a real science, not a normative science.
3. Sociology is a pure science, not an applied science.
4. Sociology is an abstract science, not a concrete one.
5. Sociology is generalising science, not a special science.
6. Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science.
7. Sociology is a general science not a special science.

The sociologists, related with both the school have defined sociology with their own views, but today almost all sociologists accept sociology as a general science. According to them in sociology these phenomena are compelled to study which are general in all the humanistic interactions. Due to the study of all these events sociology is accepted as a general science.

All these points are considered in lesson 1 (The definition of sociology, scope of sociology and the subject matter of sociology) and the title is 'Bierstedt's views regarding sociology.' By this inspection, it is cleared itself that the nature of sociology is scientific, sociology is a science. Here, we can again say in words of **Pal.H.I.Lendis** that, science is science whether it is physical science or sociology.

Important of Sociology with Special Reference to India

There is a special importance of study of sociology in developing India. Where a various problems are found there the country has to forward by the medium of various plans of development. A question occurs naturally here that if sociology is a pure science, a theoretical science, what is applying use of its knowledge. The answer is that society is always benefited of theoretical achievements or intellectual results of any subject or science. Its is true about Sociology also. The importance of Sociology can be expressed from various titles as following:

1. **Helpful in providing scientific knowledge about entire Human society:** Sociology is a general science which has not a limit to study any one of the special society. By it the systematic knowledge is collected on the basis of the study of various societies. It helps to understand the whole human society. It gives also scientific knowledge about activities rapidly changing complicated societies and of social structures. The attitude of man becomes wide on the basis of sociological knowledge. He not only accepts the best methods of his customs and creed, traditions, institutions and behaviour by the study of sociology but gives the same importance to the manners or the method of life of other societies also. It helps in increasing world-peace and international co-operation. Received knowledge from various societies helps man to be a social creature and helps in proper development in personality. The study of sociology helps man to understand the aims and principles of society and helps to get it. Besides it, it is necessary to get scientific knowledge about the society to understand complicated society and to follow the social policies successfully. As much as grand or large the society will be and as much as the division will be in it, as much as the differences will be on the basis of caste, race, religion, language, regional etc., there will be requirement of scientific knowledge about the society. This knowledge will help to understand the various problems, to solve them and to reform the society. Thus the study of sociology has a special importance that it helps to understand the whole human society.
2. **Helpful in adjustment with new social situations:** Sociology makes accommodations easy for man in changing conditions. Sociological knowledge helps to understand the man himself