

SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTRODUCTION

Social Sciences deal with the social universe or phenomena in general. They deal with forms and contents of man's interaction. They study human groups, society and social environment. The social phenomena which they study are as natural as the phenomena of magnetism, gravitation and electricity.

Different social sciences deal with the different aspects of the social life of man. Accordingly, History, Anthropology, Social Psychology, Economics, Political Science, etc. study the various facets of the same reality, i.e. the social milieu. Naturally these social sciences are then very much interrelated. Sociology, as social science has joined the family of social sciences very recently. It was born at a time when there was no other social science to study the human society in its entirety with all its complexity.

It is essential for a student of sociology to know in what respect his subject differs from the other social sciences and in what ways it is related to them. However, this is not an easy task. It is more difficult to distinguish sociology from the various social sciences, because the same content or area of investigation is sometimes studied by different social sciences with different degrees of emphasis.

In the field of social sciences interdisciplinary approach is gaining more currency today. Understanding of one social science requires some amount of understanding of the other. Further, Sociology as a young science, has borrowed many things from other sciences. In return, it has enriched other sciences by its highly useful sociological knowledge. In this context, it becomes essential for us to know the interrelation between sociology and history, anthropology, economics education and social psychology.

SOCIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

The problem of the relation between psychology and sociology, and of the status of social psychology in relation to both, is difficult and unsettled. There are two extreme views. J. S. Mill believed that a general social science could not be considered firmly established until its inductively established generalizations could be shown to be also logically deducible from the laws of mind. 'Human beings in society have no properties but those which are derived from, and may be resolved into, the laws of the nature of individual man'. Durkheim, on the other hand, made a radical distinction between the phenomena studied by psychology and sociology respectively. Sociology was to study social facts, defined as being external to individual minds and exercising a coercive action upon them, the explanation of social facts could only be in terms of other social facts, not in terms of psychological facts. 'Society is not a simple aggregate of individuals, the system formed by their association represents a specific reality possessing its own characteristics. . . . In short, there is the same discontinuity between psychology and sociology as there is between biology and the physico-

chemical sciences. Consequently, whenever a social phenomenon is directly explained by a psychological phenomenon one can be sure the explanation is invalid. The opposed views of Mill and Durkheim still have their partisans today, but most sociologists seem to have adopted various intermediate positions. Some, like Ginsberg, would hold that many sociological generalizations can be more firmly established by being related to general psychological laws, but that there may also be sociological laws *Sui generis*. Similarly S. F Nadel argued that some problems posed by social enquiry might be illuminated by a move to lower levels of analysis-psychology, physiology and biology.' Under Dilthey's influence, many German sociologists, including Max Weber, came to hold the view that even where strictly sociological explanation is possible, the sociologist gains an additional satisfaction or conviction in being able to 'understand' the meaning of social actions which he explains in causal terms. Such understanding was conceived in terms of 'common sense psychology', but neither Dilthey nor Weber was hostile to the development of a scientific psychology in the broad sense, and Weber was sympathetic to some of Freud's ideas. Freud's psychology, although it emphasized the role of individual and biological factors in social life, nevertheless recognized that the innate impulses were transformed in various ways before they became manifest in social behavior, and in the work of the post-Freudian school especially Karen Horney and Erich Fromm-the influence of society in moulding individual behaviour is given still greater prominence. Fromm's concept of the 'social character' is intended precisely to relate individual psychological characteristics to the characteristics of a particular social group or social system?

In spite of this wide recognition that sociological and psychological explanation may complement each other, the two disciplines are not, in practice, closely associated, and the place of social psychology, which ought to be specially close to sociology, is still disputed. It is easy to say that social psychology is that part of general psychology which has a particular relevance to social phenomena, or which deals with the psychological aspects of social life. In fact, all psychology may be considered 'social' in some degree, since all psychic phenomena occur in a social context which affects them to some extent, and it becomes difficult to mark out even roughly the boundaries of social psychology. This means that social psychologists have usually felt a closer association with general psychology than with sociology, have been bound to a particular method (emphasizing experiment, quantitative studies, etc.) and have often ignored the structural features of the social milieu in which their investigations are conducted. This divergence between sociology and social psychology can be illustrated from many fields. In the study of conflict and war there have been mutually exclusive sociological and psychological explanations. In studies of social stratification, the psychological approach seems to have produced a particular account of class and status in subjective terms, which is contrasted with the sociological account in terms of objective factors, rather than systematic investigation of the psychological aspects of a significant element in the social structure.

SOCIOLOGY AND HISTORY

Sociology and History are very much interrelated. Like political science, sociology is becoming one of the most genuine fruits of history to which it is intimately connected. The two sciences are so close that some writers like G. Von Bulow refused to accept sociology as a science different from history.

HISTORY: History is the reconstruction of man's past. It is the story of the experience of man-kind. It is a record of the human past. It is a systematic record of man's life and achievements from the dim

past to the present. The historian studies the significant events of man in the order of time. The historian is interested in what happened at a particular time in the past.

Further a historian is not satisfied, however, with mere description. He seeks to learn the causes of these events to understand the past-not only how it has been but also how it came to be. Nevertheless, he is, in a sense interested in events for their own sake. "He wants to know everything there is to know about them and to describe them in all their unique individuality". The historian concentrates only on the past. He is not interested in the present and is unwilling to look to the future. Still history provides the connecting link for the present and future. It is said that history is the microscope of the past, the horoscope of the present and telescope of the future.

SOCIOLOGY: Sociology as a science of society on the other hand is interested in the present. It tries to analyse human interrelations and interactions with all their complexity and diversity. It also studies the historical developments of societies. It studies various stages of human life, modes of living, customs, manners and their expression in the form of social institutions and associations. Sociology thus has to depend upon history for its material. History with its record of various social events of the past offers data and facts to sociologists.

History supplies Information to Sociology

History is a storehouse of records, a treasury of knowledge. It supplies material to various social sciences including sociology. History contains records even with regard to social matters. It contains information about the different stages of human life, modes of living, customs and manners, social institutions, etc. This information about the past is of great help to a sociologist. A sociologist has to make use of the historical records. For example, if he wants to study marriage and family as social institutions, he must study their historical development also. Similarly, if he wants to know the impact of Islamic culture on the Hindu culture, he has to refer to the Muslim conquests of India, for which he has to depend on history.

A sociologist is, no doubt, concerned with the present day society. But the present day society can be better understood from the knowledge of its past because what people are today is because of what they had been in the past. Further, sociologists often make use of comparative method in their studies for which they depend on history for data. It is true that the sociologist must sometimes be his own historian, amassing information from all the available sources.

Sociology helps History Too

Historian also uses sociology. Until recently it was perhaps from philosophy that the historian took his clues to important problems and historical concepts and ideas. But now these are drawn increasingly from sociology. Indeed, we can see that modern historiography and modern sociology have both influenced in similar ways by the philosophy of history.

Further sociology provides the social background for the study of history. History is now being studied and read from the sociological point of view. It is said that history would be meaningless without the appreciation of socially significant events. Further, it is often remarked that history would be boring, monotonous, prosaic and uninteresting unless the social events are narrated. Historical facts without reference to socially important matters would be like a body with flesh, blood and bone, but without life.

Differences Between History and Sociology

The two social sciences History and Sociology, are different. The points of difference between the two may be noted.

SOCIOLOGY	HISTORY
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sociology is interested in the study of the present social phenomena with all their complexity.2. Sociology is relatively a young social science. It has a very short history of its own. It is not even two centuries old.3. Sociology is an analytical science.4. Sociology is abstract in nature. It studies mostly regular, the recurrent and the universal. For example, the sociologist does not study all the wars or battles waged by the mankind. But he is interested in war itself as a social phenomenon, as one kind of conflict between two groups.5. Sociology is a generalising science. Sociology seeks to establishing generalisations after a careful study of the social phenomena.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. History deals with the past events of a man. It is silent regarding the present.2. History is an age-old social science. It has a long story of 2000years or even more.3. History is a descriptive science.4. History is concrete,. The historian is interested in the unique, the particular and the individual. For example, the historian studies all the wars waged by mankind in the past- the Wars , the World Wars, the Indo-Pak War, etc. For him, each war is unique and significant.5. History is an individualising science. History rarely makes generalisations, it seeks to establish the sequence in which events occurred.

SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The relation between Sociology and Anthropology is widely recognised today. Infact anthropologists Kroeber pointed out that the two sciences are twin sisters. Robert Redfield writes that “viewing the whole United States, one sees that the relation between sociology and anthropology are closer than those between Anthropology and Political Science, that is partly due to greater similarity in ways of work.”

Anthropology

Anthropology is a general science like sociology. The word Anthropology is derived from two Greek words- Anthropos meaning ‘man’ and logos meaning ‘study’. Thus, the etymological meaning of “Anthropology is the study of man. More precisely, it is defined by Kroeber as the ‘science of man and his works and behaviour.’ Anthropology is “concerned not with particular man but with man in groups, with races and peoples and their happenings and doings”.

Though the youngest of the traditional social sciences, it has developed and gone ahead of many of them. It has made outstanding contributions to the study of man. Sociology, in particular, has been immensely enriched by the anthropological studies.

Anthropology seems to be the broadest of all the social sciences. It studies man both as a member of the animal kingdom and as a member of the human society. It studies the biological as well as the cultural developments of man. Anthropology has a wide field of study. Kroeber mentions two broad decisions of anthropology:

- (i) Organic or Physical Anthropology
 - (ii) The Socio-Cultural Anthropology
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- (i) Physical Anthropology: Physical Anthropology studies man as a biological being, that is, as a member of the animal kingdom. Here, anthropology accepts and uses the general principles of biology: the laws of heredity and the doctrines of cell development and evolution. Also it makes use of all the findings of anatomy, physiology zoology, palaeontology and the like. Its business has been to ascertain how far these principles apply to man, what forms they take in his particular case.
 - (ii) Sociocultural Anthropology: Sociocultural Anthropology, more often referred to as 'Cultural Anthropology', studies man as a social animal. This branch of anthropology which is concerned with more than merely organic aspects of human behaviour seems to be more interested in ancient and savage and exotic and extinct peoples. The main reason for this is a desire to understand better all civilisations, irrespective of time and and place, in the abstract, or as generalised principles as possible.

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE TWO SCIENCES

According to Hoebel, "Sociology and Social Anthropology are, in their broadest sense one and the same". Evans Pritchard considers social anthropology a branch of sociology. Sociology is greatly benefitted by anthropological studies. Sociologists have to depend upon anthropologists to understand the present day social phenomena from our knowledge of the past which is often provided by anthropology. The studies made by famous anthropologists like Radcliffe Brown, B. Malinowski, Ralph Linton, Margaret Mead, Evans Pritchard and others have been proved to be valuable in sociology.

Sociological topics such as the origin of family, the beginning of marriage, private property, the genesis of religion, etc, can better be understood in the light of anthropological knowledge. The anthropological studies have shown that there is no correlation between anatomical characteristics and mental superiority. The notion of racial superiority has been disproved by anthropology.

Further sociology has borrowed many concepts like cultural area, culture traits, interdependent traits, culture lag, culture patterns, culture configuration, etc from socio-cultural anthropology. The knowledge of anthropology, physical as well as socio-cultural, is necessary for a sociologist. An understanding of society can be gained by comparing various cultures, particularly, the modern with the primitive.

Anthropology as a discipline is so closely related to sociology that the two are frequently indistinguishable. Both of them are fast growing. The socio-cultural anthropologists today are also making a study of the present people and their societies. In a number of universities anthropology and sociology are administratively organised into one department.

The conclusion drawn by sociologists have also helped the anthropologists in their studies. For example, anthropologists like Morgan and his followers have come to the conclusion regarding the existence of primitive communism from the conception of private property in our modern society.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY	ANTHROPOLOGY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sociology studies the modern, civilised and complex societies. 2. Sociologists more often study parts of a society and generally specialise in institutions such as family, marriage, or processes such as social change, social mobility. 3. Sociologists study 'small as well as large societies. 4. Sociologists makes use of observation, interview, social survey, questionnaires and other methods and techniques in its investigations. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anthropology concerns itself with the simple, uncivilised or primitive and non-literate societies. 2. Anthropologists tend to study societies in all their aspects as wholes. They concentrate their studies in a given "culture area" such as Melanesia or Negaland. 3. Anthropologists usually concentrate on small societies such as those of Naga, Rengma Naga, Khasis, Gond, etc. 4. Anthropologists directly go and live in the communities they study,. They make use of direct observations and interviews.

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EXPECTED QUESTIONS:

1. Write one similarity between Sociology and Social Anthropology.
2. Discuss the relationship between Sociology and Social Anthropology.
3. How is Sociology related with Social Anthropology,
4. Discuss the relationship between Sociology and History.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS:

1. What is Social Psychology?(2021)
2. Discuss the relationship between Sociology and History. (2021)
