

Importance of Sociology

Sociology has contributed generously to enhance the value of human culture: Sociology has trained us in building a rational approach to questions that concern ourselves, our religion and customs. It teaches one to have an object-oriented and balanced approach. It emphasizes the importance of ignoring petty personal prejudices and ambitions that are influenced by ego and envy. • Sociology studies the role of institutions in the development of the individual: The home and family, school and education, church and religion, states and government, and marriage and family are important institutions through which a society functions. Furthermore, they are conditioners of an individual's knowledge of sociology. • Sociological knowledge is indispensable for understanding and planning of the society: Sociological planning has been made easier by sociology. Sociology is often considered a vehicle of social reform and social organization. It plays an important role in reconstruction of the society. • The need for sociology in underdeveloped countries: Sociologists have drawn the attention of economists regarding the social factors that have contributed to the economic backwardness of a few countries. Economists have now realized the importance of sociological knowledge in analysing the economic affairs of a country. • Study of society has helped several governments to promote the welfare of tribal people: Not only civilized societies but tribal societies also have several socio-economic problems. Studies conducted by sociologists and anthropologists regarding tribal societies have helped many governments in undertaking various social measures to promote the welfare of tribal people.

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SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology involves a systematic and objective study of human society. Sociologists study individuals' social actions. Social relationships, for instance, those between a husband and a wife, a teacher and a student, a buyer and a seller, and social processes, namely, cooperation, competition, conflict and organizations, communities and nations, and social structures (family, class and state), give rise to sociological queries. Explanations that are derived from norms and values result in the formation of social institutions. Thus, sociology can be defined as the study of social life. Sociology comprises a variety of apprehensions and interests. It is aimed at providing classified forms of relationships within societies, institutions and associations. These relationships pertain to economic, political, moral, religious and social aspects of human life. Although, so far no collective agreement has been reached on the essence of sociology, so far yet it is established that sociology deals with the study of interaction systems, which shape social institutions, the state and the non-native order. Therefore, in sociology, we study about social organization, social structure, institutions and culture. Sociology was defined differently by two schools of thought, pertaining to its range and theme: (i) Formal school (ii) Synthetic school

(i) Formal school The formal school defined sociology as a social science that has definite characteristics. This school was advocated by eminent sociologists including George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopold Von Wiese. On the other hand, the synthetic school with well-known sociologists, namely, Durkheim, Hobhouse and Sorokin attempted to bring together a type of coordination among all social sciences. The formal school supported the idea of giving sociology a suitable subject matter to make it a distinct discipline. It stressed on the study of forms of social relationships and considered sociology as independent. Simmel defined sociology as a specific social science that describes, organizes, analyses and visually explains the forms of social relationships. To put it in a different way, social interactions should be classified into various forms or types and analysed. Simmel argued that social interactions have various forms. He conducted researches on formal relationships such as cooperation, competition, sub and super ordinate relationships, and so on. He said, 'however diverse the interests are that give rise to these sociations, the forms in which the interests are realized may yet be identical.' His main emphasis was to conceptualize these forms from human relationships which are not affected by different scenarios. Vierkandt believed that sociology should pertain to people being extremely attached mentally or psychically

32EA(ii) Synthetic school of sociology The synthetic school defines sociology as a combination of social sciences. It stresses on widening the range of sociology. Durkheim divided sociology into three main sections. These were social morphology, social physiology and general sociology. Social morphology pertains to the lifestyle of people on the basis of their location or region. It comprises factors like population, density, distribution and so on. One can further divide this into two categories: (i) analysis of density and type of population that influences social relationships and social groups, and (ii) learning about social hierarchy or details related to the main categories of social groups and institutions, along with their operation. Social physiology deals with the origin and character of different social institutions, namely religion, morals, law, economic institutions, and so on. The prime objective of general sociology is to frame general social laws. Efforts are still on to find out the links between different types of institutions that are treated independently in social physiology and the possibilities of emergence of general social laws as a byproduct. Hobhouse, a British sociologist, defined sociology as a field of science which focuses on the whole social life of man. It relates to other social sciences in a way that can be regarded as a blend of mutual exchange and stimulation. Classical sociologist Karl Mannheim has explained sociology in terms of two key divisions: systematic, and general sociology and historical sociology. Systematic sociology provides a methodical review of the main factors of coexistence, such that they are evident in every kind of society. Historical sociology deals with the historical array and existence of general forms of the society. This can be divided into two sectors: comparative sociology and social dynamics. Comparative sociology basically deals with identical historical changes and tries to highlight the general features by comparing them. It also separates general features from industrial features. Social dynamics is concerned with the interrelations that exist among different social factors and institutions in a given society, for example, in an ancient society