**FYBMM 2016-17 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY**

**Developing a Sociological Perspective**

* ***Sociology*** is the systematic study of human societies with special emphasis on modern, industrialized systems. The subject arose as an attempt to understand the far-reaching changes in human societies over the past two to three centuries.
* Major social changes have impacted the most intimate and personal characteristics of people's lives. The development of romantic love as a basis for marriage is an example, openness in accepting political changes, literacy, gender equality, while the culture is strong in the roots the society adapts to all the modern changes.
* The practice of sociology involves the ability to think imaginatively and to detach oneself from preconceived ideas about social relationships.

**The Development of Sociological Thinking**

* Sociology comprises of a diversity of theoretical approaches. Because theoretical disputes are difficult to resolve even in the natural sciences, in sociology we face special difficulties because of the complex problems involved in studying our own behaviour.
* Important early sociological theorists include Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), Karl Marx (1818-1883), and Max Weber (1864-1920). Many of their ideas remain important in sociology today.
* The main theoretical approaches in sociology are symbolic interactionism, functionalism, Marxism, feminism, rational choice approach, and postmodernism. To some extent, these approaches complement each other. However, there are also major contrasts among them.

**When is a society considered to be modern?**

* **A society is generally considered modern when it is industrialized.** Other factors include literacy, being a nation-state and urbanization. Most facets of society have a modern example, such as secularism, for lifestyle.
* Modern societies no longer farm or produce products at the subsistence level. Instead, they make products to sell. People typically do not subsist by themselves and need to buy items to live.
* For example, people go to the grocery store instead of owning animals and a garden to provide food. Modern societies show a cultural, liberal growth as well. These societies put an increasing emphasis on equality and education for everyone as seen in the wide-reaching civil rights movements.
* A move away from spiritualism and traditional religion and toward secularism, atheism and agnosticism are also factors in modernity. This is most notably seen in modern societies that have education as a top priority for citizens.

**Is Sociology a Science?**

* **Horton & Hunt**: The study of face-to-face interaction is usually called *micro sociology*—in contrast to *macro sociology*, which studies larger groups, institutions, and social systems. Micro and macro analyses are very closely related; each complements the other.
* Sociology is - Accurate, Precise, Systematic, Recorded & Objective.
* Accurate, since it involves no imagination.
* Precise, since it refers to an exact degree of measurement, usage of simple words with clear meaning is encouraged.
* Systematic, since it is highly organized and follows chronological order.
* Objective because it is not biased but this may vary in certain cases.

**Stages of Scientific Method:**

* Scientific Observation - Data collection
* Defining the problem - Emphasis & Focus
* Review - Available researches done in the past
* Formation of Hypothesis - Tentative, can be right or wrong.
* Experimentation & Verification

Apart from scientific method other ways to collect data are - observations, questionnaires, and interviews.

**How Can Sociology Help Us?**

* Firstly, the difference between sociology and psychology is that sociology aims to study a group of people while psychology studies the human mind.
* Sociology has important practical implications for contributing to social criticism and social reform.
* First, the improved understanding of a given set of social circumstances offers a better chance of controlling them.
* Second, increased cultural sensitivities allow policies to be based on an awareness of divergent cultural values. Third, investigation of the consequences (intended and unintended) of particular policy programs can promote effective program change. Perhaps most important, sociology provides self-enlightenment, offering groups and individuals an increased opportunity to alter the conditions of their own lives.

**Sociological Imagination**

**C. Wright Mills:**  An Attempt to understand social behaviour for which sociologists rely on an unusual type of creative thinking. - Sociological Imagination

* Awareness of the relationship shared by an individual with the society.
* Comprehension of links between people, institutions, and groups.
* Understanding how society shapes our lives.
* Importance of History - experience to understand.
* It is a junction of **Biography and History.**
* Changes in modern society.

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