

**METHODOLOGY AND PERSPECTIVES  
OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**I Semester**

**CORE COURSE – I**

**B.A. SOCIOLOGY**

*(2014 Admission)*



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

**SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Calicut University P.O. Malappuram, Kerala, India 673 635



**UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**  
SCHOOL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

**STUDY MATERIAL**

**Core Course**

**B A SOCIOLOGY**

**I Semester**

***Methodology and Perspectives of Social Sciences***

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## Syllabus

### CORE COURSE

#### SOC1 B.01 METHODOLOGY AND PERSPECTIVES OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

No of credits: 4

#### Objectives

1. Identify the main concerns of social science disciplines
2. Articulate the basic theories prevalent across disciplines
3. Understand qualitative and quantitative models within the social sciences
4. To learn to apply the methods and theories of social sciences to contemporary issues
5. Critically read popular and periodical literature from a social science perspective

#### MODULE I INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCES

- I.1. Social Sciences- Its Emergence: Philosophical Foundations-Middle ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Development of Scientific spirit
- I.2. Theories on the nature of society: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau
- I.3. Relevance of the Social Science in understanding and solving contemporary problems

#### MODULE II SURVEY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- II.1. Social Science: Characteristics, Nature and Scope
- II.2. Different Branches of Social Sciences: History, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology (Definition, Subject matter, Methodology)
- II.3. Inter disciplinary and Multidisciplinary approaches in Social Sciences.

#### MODULE III OBJECTIVITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

- III.1. Objectivity in Social Sciences
- III.2. Limits to objectivity in Social Sciences.
- III.3. Ethical issues in Social Sciences

#### MODULE IV: APPROACHES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

- IV.1. Major Approaches: Evolutionary, Indological, Structural, Dialectical and Integrated Approach
- IV.2. Major Contributions: Dominant Caste - M. N. Srinivas, Purity and pollution-Louis Dumont, Household dimensions of Family- A. M. Shah

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## MODULE I

### INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL SCIENCES

- I.1. *Social Sciences- Its Emergence: Philosophical Foundations-Middle ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Development of Scientific spirit.*
- I.2. *Theories on the nature of society: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau.*
- I.3. *Relevance of the Social Science in understanding and solving contemporary problems.*

#### **I.1. Social Sciences- Its Emergence: Philosophical Foundations-Middle ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Development of Scientific spirit**

##### **THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Science is a knowledge, as of facts or principles, which is gained by systematic study. Science is defined as the systematic study of the nature and behaviour of the material and physical universe based on observation, experiment and measurement and formulation of laws to describe these facts in general terms. The word 'Science' is originated from the Latin word 'Scientia', meaning "knowledge". The main branches of science are commonly divided into three major groups:

1. **Natural sciences** - which study natural phenomena (including fundamental forces and biological life)  
**Physical science** - Physical Science is an encompassing term for the branches of natural science and science that study non-living systems
2. **Formal sciences** (such as mathematics and logic, which use an a priori, as opposed to factual methodology)
3. **Social sciences**, which study human behavior and societies.

The term social are ancient and derived from the Latin word 'socius', which means 'society'. Thus the Social science is a major branch of science, and a major category of academic disciplines, concerned with society and the relationships among individuals within the society. Social science is defined as the branch of science that deals with the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society. The emergence of social science can be analysed through different historical period such as Ancient period, Middle ages, Islamic period, renaissance period and age of enlightenment.

#### **Philosophical Foundations**

##### **Ancient history**

The term social is ancient and is derived from the Latin word 'socius'. The history of the social sciences has originated from the Greek philosophy. In the history, the Greeks were realised that their account of knowledge how the world was created and administrated by an enormous collection of gods or pantheon was not the only possible explanation. They are credited with:

- To establish rational theory
- To grasp rational concepts
- To be empirical and anti-mystic.

Plato and Aristotle are the two Greek thinkers responsible for the establishing basis for the knowledge. Aristotle studied planetary motion and poetry with the same methods, and Plato mixed geometrical proofs with his demonstration on the state of intrinsic knowledge. The philosophical debate of Greek period such as the role of the state (political science), the way mind interact with society (psychology), the individuals interactions with markets (economics) later became the base for the emergence of social science.

## **Middle Ages**

After the fall of Rome (the defeat of Christian religious armies in Constantinople by Islamic turks- which did little in the way of science) theorizing was transferred to the priesthood and a group of scholars known as the scholastics. With the division of the Roman Empire, the Western Roman Empire lost contact with much of its past. In the Middle East, Greek philosophy was able to find some support under the newly created Arab Empire. With the spread of Islam in the 7th and 8th centuries, a period of Muslim scholarship, known as the Islamic Golden Age, lasted until the 13th century. This scholarship was aided by several factors. The use of a single language, Arabic, was allowed communication without the need of a translator. Access to Greek texts from the Byzantine Empire, along with Indian sources of learning, provided

Muslim scholars a 'Knowledge base build up'. While the Byzantine Empire still held learning centers such as Constantinople, Western Europe's knowledge was concentrated in monasteries until the development of medieval universities in the 12th and 13th centuries. The curriculum of monastic schools included the study of the few available ancient texts and of new works on practical subjects like medicine and timekeeping. In middle ages, religion was central to the life that the study of religion was taken for granted. for eg painters paint religious pictures.

### **1. Islamic period**

Significant contributions to the social sciences were made in Medieval Islamic civilization. Al-Biruni (973–1048) wrote detailed comparative studies on the anthropology of peoples, religions and cultures in the Middle East, Mediterranean and South Asia. Biruni has also been praised by several scholars for his Islamic anthropology. Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) worked in areas of demography, historiography, the philosophy of history, sociology, and economics. He is best known for his *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomenon in Greek).

### **2. Renaissance period**

The Renaissance (from French: Renaissance "Rebirth",) was a cultural movement or rebirth that spanned the period roughly from the 14th to the 17th century, beginning in Italy in the Late Middle Ages and later spreading to the rest of Europe. In politics, the Renaissance contributed the development of the conventions of diplomacy, and in science an increased reliance

on observation. Historians often argue this intellectual transformation was a bridge between the middle Ages and Modern history. It made intellectual pursuits as well as social and political upheaval. As a cultural movement, it encompassed innovative flowering of Latin and vernacular literatures, beginning with the 14th-century resurgence of learning based on classical sources, which contemporaries credited to Petrarch, the development of linear perspective and other techniques of rendering a more natural reality in painting, and gradual but widespread educational reform. The Renaissance was a cultural movement that profoundly affected European intellectual life in the early modern period. Beginning in Italy, and spreading to the rest of Europe by the 16th century, its influence was felt in literature, philosophy, art, music, politics, science, religion, and other aspects of intellectual inquiry. Renaissance scholars employed the humanist method in study, and searched for realism and human emotion in art.

### **Humanism and individualism**

Humanism is prominent intellectual idea emerged in renaissance period. Renaissance humanism is a collection of Greek and Roman teachings, undertaken by scholars, writers, and civic leaders who are today known as Renaissance humanists, taking place initially in Italy, and then spreading across Europe. Humanist scholars shaped the intellectual landscape throughout the early modern period. Political philosophers such as Niccolò Machiavelli and Thomas More revived the ideas of Greek and Roman thinkers, and applied them in critiques of contemporary government. Pico della Mirandola wrote what is often considered the manifesto of the Renaissance, a vibrant defense of thinking, the Oration on the Dignity of Man. The rediscovery of ancient texts and the invention of printing democratized learning and allowed a faster propagation of ideas. Political philosophers, most famously Niccolò Machiavelli, sought to describe political life as it really was, that is to understand it rationally. A critical contribution to Italian Renaissance humanism Pico della Mirandola wrote the famous text "De hominis dignitate" (Oration on the Dignity of Man, 1486), which consists of a series of theses on philosophy, natural thought, faith and magic defended against any opponent on the grounds of reason.

Individualism is a belief system that places great importance on the ability of people to act as individuals. The basic moral premise is that the individuals think that they can act and benefit by alone , not by group. The opposite of this is collectivism, which holds that abstract groups or transcendent entities can act, benefit or suffer, necessitating an abstract structure (such as the state) to support these groups or entities. As the Renaissance developed, Individualism developed, became a prominent theme in Italy. Many philosophers wrote about the potential of man and developed their own beliefs as to the kind of person an individual should aim to be. These views inspired many people to invest in their studies of the arts and humanities, and as a result, many significant achievements came out of the Renaissance.

### **3. Age of Enlightenment & Development of Scientific spirit**

The history of social science during the Age of Enlightenment traces developments in science and technology during the Age of Reason, when Enlightenment ideas and ideals were being disseminated across Europe and North America. The enlightenment is the period in which rationalism definitely replaced religion as the organizing principle of knowledge. In this period that the development of social science took hold and flourished. The social science developed as individuals attempt to explain the social problems and suggest what could be done to solve them. Thus the Enlightenment period established the three 'humiliations' of human beings. They are:

- The earth is not the centre of the universe
- Humans are creatures of nature like other animals
- Our reasoning ability is subject to passion and subconscious desires

Before we experienced these 'humiliation', people believed that social problems set up by God and were to be accepted or endured. Only after enlightenment did people believe that society and culture are themselves products of history and evolution of culture. Many philosophers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Voltaire, and Denis Diderot, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke developed new social ideas during the Enlightenment period that were based on reason and methods of scientific inquiry. During the Age of Enlightenment, political entities expanded from basic systems of self-governance and monarchy to the complex democratic and communist systems that exist in the Industrialized and the Modern Eras.

In the 18th century, after Montesquieu's 'The Spirit of the Laws' established that social elements influence human nature, the pre-classical period of social theories developed a new form that provides the basic ideas for social theory, such as: evolution, philosophy of history, social life and social contract, public and general will, competition in social space, organistic pattern for social description and so forth. Jean-Jacques Rousseau in this time played a significant role in social theory. He revealed the origin of inequality, analyzed the social contract (and social compact) that forms social integration and defined the social sphere or civil society. He also emphasized that man has the liberty to change his world, a revolutionary assertion that made it possible to program and change society. Thomas Hobbes argued that deductive reasoning from axioms created a scientific framework, and hence his Leviathan was a scientific description of a political commonwealth. In the 18th century, social science was called moral philosophy, as contrasted from natural philosophy and mathematics, and included the study of natural theology, natural ethics, natural jurisprudence, and policy ("police"), which included economics and finance ("revenue"). Adam Smith was a professor of moral philosophy. Voltaire's 'Lettres Philosophiques' presented new scientific and philosophical ideas developed by Isaac Newton, John Locke, and others, introducing them to the French. Methods used to study scientific phenomenon were extended to study social and moral issues.

#### **4. FRENCH AND INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**

The beginning of tradition of social sciences has been one of the major developments of the 19th century. It is often said that social sciences are mostly understood as responses to the problem of order that was created in men's minds by the weakening of the old order under the blows of French Revolution and Industrial Revolution. The European society was hard hit by these revolutions. The old order that rested on kinship, land, social class, religion, local community and monarchy became very shaky. Thinkers were more concerned about finding ways and means of reconsolidating these elements of social order. Hence the history of 19th century politics, industry and trade is basically about the practical efforts of human beings to reconsolidate these elements. Before the revolution the French society consisting of three different estates that each represented a portion of the French population in which two of the three estates – the clergy and the nobility – were tax-exempt, the attainment of any such solution was unlikely. Third Estate – consisting of the general French public – was many times larger than either of the first two.

During the French Revolution, which began in 1789, France's class system changed dramatically. Aristocrats suddenly lost their money and status, while peasants, who had been at the bottom of the social ladder, rose to more powerful and influential positions. The Industrial Revolution followed on the heels of the French Revolution, unfolding in Western Europe throughout the 1800s. During the Industrial Revolution, people abandoned a life of agriculture and moved to cities to find factory jobs. They worked long hours in dangerous conditions for low pay. New social problems emerged and, for many decades, little was done to address the plight of the urban poor. The inequalities and oppression in French society leads thinkers to think and give solution for the social turmoil. As a result the famous concept 'liberty, equality and fraternity' arisen. Thus evolution of philosophy into social science can be seen in France, where philosophers joined to produce an encyclopedia, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert.

#### **1.2. Theories on the nature of society: Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Rousseau**

##### **Theories of origin of society**

There are two kinds of theories regarding the origin and nature of society. They are social contract theory and organismic theory. The major social contract theory proposed by the following:

- THOMAS HOBBS
- JOHN LOCKE
- JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

##### **1. Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1670**

Thomas Hobbes was the greatest of English political theorists. His masterpiece the Leviathan, was published in 1651. The first modern philosopher to articulate a detailed contract theory. Hobbes defended a strictly materialist view of the world. Hobbes's Leviathan illustrated 'the transition from medieval to modern thinking in Britain'.

**a. Human Nature**

Human beings are physical objects, according to Hobbes, sophisticated machines all of whose functions and activities can be described and explained in purely mechanistic terms. In Hobbes's view, human beings are governed by a selfish and "perpetual and restless desire for power after power". This lust for individual power continues until death. Specific desires and appetites arise in the human body and are experienced as discomforts or pains which must be overcome. Thus, each of us is motivated to act in such ways as we believe likely to relieve our discomfort, to preserve and promote our own well-being. Everything we choose to do is strictly determined by this natural inclination to relieve the physical pressures that impinge upon our bodies. Human volition is nothing but the determination of the will by the strongest present desire. This account of human nature emphasizes our animal nature, leaving each of us to live independently of everyone else, acting only in his or her own self-interest, without regard for others. This produces what he called the "state of war," a way of life that is certain to prove "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

The only escape is by entering into contracts with each other—mutually beneficial agreements to surrender our individual interests in order to achieve the advantages of security that only a social existence can provide. According to Hobbes, the lives of individuals in the state of nature were "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short", a state in which self-interest and the absence of rights and contracts prevented the 'social', or society. Life was 'anarchic' (without leadership or the concept of sovereignty). Individuals in the state of nature were a political and a social. This state of nature is followed by the social contract. The social contract was an 'occurrence' during which individuals came together and ceded some of their individual rights so that others would cede theirs (e.g. person A gives up his/her right to kill person B if person B does the same). This resulted in the establishment of the state, a sovereign entity like the individuals now under its rule used to be, which would create laws to regulate social interactions. Human life was thus no longer "a war of all against all". But the state system, which grew out of the social contract, was also anarchic (without leadership) with respect to each other. Just like the state of nature, states were thus bound to be in conflict because there was no sovereign over and above the state (i.e. more powerful) capable of imposing some system such as social-contract laws on everyone by force.

**b. Human Society**

Unable to rely indefinitely on their individual powers in the effort to secure livelihood and contentment, Hobbes supposed, human beings join together in the formation of a commonwealth. Thus, the commonwealth as a whole embodies a network of associated contracts and provides for the highest form of social organization. On Hobbes's view, the formation of the commonwealth creates a new, artificial person to whom all responsibility for social order and public welfare is entrusted.

## **2. JOHN LOCKE 1632-1704**

John Locke's intellectual curiosity and social activism also led him to consider issues of general public concern in the lively political climate of seventeenth-century England. In a series of Letters on Toleration, he argued against the exercise of any governmental effort to promote or to restrict particular religious beliefs and practices. Locke held, there can be no justification for imposing our own beliefs on others. Thus, although he shared his generation's prejudice against "enthusiastic" expressions of religious fervor, Locke officially defended a broad toleration of divergent views. The first instance of social organization, on Locke's view, is the development of the family, a voluntary association designed to secure the propagation of the human species through successive generations. His major works :-

- Two treaties of government
- Thoughts on education

### **Views of Man and civil society**

Man is social by nature and live according to reasoning. They have right to life, liberty, and property. Human beings know what is right and wrong and capable of knowing what is lawful and unlawful. Each individual is perfectly equal with every other, and all have the absolute liberty to act as they will, without interference from any other. According to Locke, is that each individual shares in the use of the faculty of reason, so that the actions of every human agent—even in the unreconstructed state of nature—are bound by the self-evident laws of nature. The state of nature vests each reasonable individual with an independent right and responsibility to enforce the natural law by punishing those few who irrationally choose to violate it.

Man as a part of justification for understanding legitimate political government. This create the social contract between people and government, where the individuals are transfer some of their rights to their government in order to ensure stable ,comfortable enjoyment of lives, liberty and property. If a ruler seeks absolute power, if he acts both as judge and participant in disputes, he puts himself in a state of war with his subjects and we have the right and the duty to kill such rulers and their servants. In the state of nature men mostly kept their promises and honored their obligations, and, though insecure, it was mostly peaceful, good, and pleasant. So the governments exist by the consent of people in order to protect the rights of people and promote public good. Civil society precedes the state, both morally and historically. Society creates order and grants the state legitimacy.

## **3. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, 1712-1778**

Jean Jacques Rousseau, French writer of the 18th century, in his famous work ' Social Contract' he wrote that man in the state of nature was a 'noble savage who led a life of "primitive simplicity and idyllic happiness". Human beings are independent, content, self sufficient, healthy, fearless and good. Rousseau's focus was on the possibility of drastic social change. Rousseau's ideas were more radical. He believed that man's original nature was corrupted by society, and that the only way man could become a virtuous, moral being was to totally transform society.

### **Emergence of civil society**

When qualities and happiness of the early state was lost, war, conflict, murder, conflict etc became the order the society. The escape from this was found in the formation of civil society. Natural freedom gave place to civil freedom by social contract. As a result of this contract, the multitude of individuals became a collective unity - Civil society. It is in the Social Contract that Rousseau's idea of the state is most clearly seen. It is much more rational, much less emotional, than the rest of his writings. And it is unquestionably much the most important of his works. In it is to be found most clearly his answer to the question, "What is the State and why should I obey it. He starts with the belief that the family is the only "natural" society. All other society, he thinks, is of man's making and artificial. But he rejects the view that society other than the family must rest on force. It rests, he concludes, on agreement. Men register their agreement to come together in society in the Social Contract. The idea of some such contract was, of course, a commonplace of political philosophy of his days. This is possible, Rousseau says where the law leads and men do not obey other men but obey only the law.

### **General will**

These were the only one contract according to Rousseau which was social as well as political. The individual is surrendered himself completely and unconditionally to the will of the body of which he became the member. The body so created was a moral and collective body and Rousseau called it 'General Will'. The unique feature of general will was that it represented collective good as distinguished from the private interests of its members. The will was inalienable and indivisible according to him.

### **I.3. Relevance of the Social Science in understanding and solving contemporary problems**

A social science is the science of society. Therefore it is more relevant and unique area of discipline in the understanding of contemporary social problems in society. Social sciences are sometimes criticized as being less scientific than the natural sciences. The social world is much too complex to be studied as one would study static molecules. The actions or reactions of a molecule or a chemical substance are always the same when placed in certain situations. On the other hand, human behavior is too complex for these traditional scientific methodologies. Humans and society do not have certain rules that always have the same outcome and they cannot guarantee to react the same way to certain situations. Some scientists have expressed their view that social sciences do not have quality as science and it is characterized as pseudo science. According to them, social Sciences do not carry scientifically. Even if there are various criticisms, social sciences help in understanding and solving contemporary problems at the regional, national and global levels.

Social science research is a systematic method of exploratory, analyzing and conceptualizing human life in order to extend, correct or verify knowledge of human behavior and social life. Social science seeks to find explanation to unexplained social phenomena to clarify the doubtful, and correct the misconceived facts of social life. It tries to find out the cause effect relationship between human activities and natural laws governing them. To develop new

scientific tools, concepts and theories which would facilitate reliable and valid study of human behavior and social life is another purpose of Social Science research. The social sciences examine the main functions of Social Science research and how it helps in understanding and solving contemporary problems such as problems related to children, women and old age people in different areas (economic, social, political, industrial, religious) of society such as infant mortality, female infant mortality, lack of nutritional food, lack of school education, gender discrimination in education, health, work place, sexual problems like child sexual abuse, rape, increasing number of prostitutes, domestic violence, administrative corruption, communalism, terrorism, media violence, environment pollutions...etc. Thus the social sciences try to make a sociological analysis on the contemporary social problems. Therefore the social science is relevant because of the following reasons:-

1. **It Discovers of facts and their interpretation on social mysteries:** Research in Social Sciences provides answer to questions of what, where, when, how and why of man, social life and institutions. Discovery of facts and their interpretation helps us to discard such distortions and thus enlighten us.
2. **It Contributes to our understanding of social reality:** There are half truths, pseudo-truths and superstition, and research strengthens our desire for truth and opens up before our eyes, hidden social mysteries.
3. **It Diagnosis the problems and their analysis lead to appropriate remedial actions:** The developing countries face innumerable problems such as poverty, unemployment, economic inequality, social tension, low productivity, technological backwardness etc. The nature and dimension of such problems have to be diagnosed and analysed. Research in Social Sciences plays a significant role in this respect. An analysis of problems leads to an identification of appropriate remedial actions. After all it will leads to the prosperity of human beings, society and nation itself.
4. **Systematisation of knowledge:** The facts and knowledge discovered through research are systematised and the body of knowledge is developed. A systematised body of knowledge wills properly helps us to implement a better social planning for the development of entire human society.
5. **It Controls over social phenomena:** Research in social science areas equip us with first-hand knowledge about the organizing and working of the society and its institutions. This knowledge gives us a greater power of control over the social phenomena.
6. **Prediction and ensures order among social facts:** Research in social science aims at finding an order among social facts and their causal relations. This affords a sound basis for prediction in several cases. Although, the predictions cannot be perfect because of the inherent limitations of Social Sciences, they will be fairly useful for better social planning and control.
7. **Development planning:** Planning for socio-economic development calls for baseline data on the various cross-sections of our society and economy, recourse endowment, people's needs and aspirations etc.. Systematic research can give us the required data base for planning and

designing developmental schemes and programmes. Analytical studies can illuminate critical areas of policy and testing the validity of planning assumptions. Evaluation studies point out the impact of the plan, policies and programmes and throw out suggestions for their proper reformulation.

8. **Social welfare:** Research in Social Sciences can unfold and identify the causes of social evils and problems. It can thus help in taking appropriate remedial actions. It can also give as sound guidelines for appropriate positive measures of reform and social welfare. A recent trend in Social Science research is that it calls for an interdisciplinary approach since human life cannot be compartmentalized into psychological, social, economic or political aspects. According to Karl Pearson, "man lives in a socio-economic and political world and thrives on its varied relationships. It is inconceivable that the study of bare and isolated events on any one aspect of man's life would yield any meaningful result".

A discipline-specific study of a social problem from an angle like, economic or sociology or political science only cannot give a correct and total View of the problem. According to Myrdal, in reality there are no economic, sociological or psychological problems, but only simple problems, and they are complex also. No Social science by itself sufficiently self-contains any social problem. So the problem of poverty cannot be just studied as a mere economic problem or a social problem or a political issue.

## MODULE 2

### SURVEY OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

- II.1. Social Science: Characteristics, Nature and Scope
- II.2. Different Branches of Social Sciences: History, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology (Definition, Subject matter, Methodology)
- II.3 Inter disciplinary and Multidisciplinary approaches in Social Sciences.

#### II.1. Social Science: Characteristics, Nature and Scope

In modern times, our emphasis is on the search for scientific knowledge. We have divided human knowledge into a number of areas and fields, and every science represents the systematic collection and study of data in one of these areas, which can be grouped roughly into two major fields social science and natural science. Each of these fields is subdivided into a number of specialized sciences or disciplines to facilitate more intensive study and deeper understanding. Social science is the field of human knowledge that deals with all aspects of the group life of human beings. Natural science is concerned with the natural environment in which human beings exist. It is a major branch of science, that tries to explain and predict nature's phenomena, based on empirical evidence. It includes such sciences as physics and chemistry, which deal with the laws of matter, motion, space, mass, and energy; it also includes the biological sciences, which deal with living things. The importance of social science goes far beyond the specific social sciences. It is social science thinking that underlies much of the law as well as our understanding of international relations and government. All these fields are the natural byproducts of social science inquiry. Thus, knowledge of social science is necessary for anyone trying to understand current world events.

Social science is a major branch of science, in its broadest sense, is a generic term covering the scientific study of man, the study of society and the manner in which people behave and influence the world around us. And a major category of academic disciplines, concerned with society and the relationships among individuals within a society. It in turn has many branches, each of which is considered a "social science". The social science generally include History, Political Science, Economics, Sociology, and Anthropology etc. In wider sense, Social Science also includes amongst its branches some fields in the humanities such as anthropology, archaeology, history, law and linguistics. The term is also sometimes used to refer specifically to the field of sociology, the original *science of society*, established in the 19th century. Positivist social scientists use methods resembling those of the natural sciences as tools for understanding society, and so define science in its stricter modern sense. Interpretive social scientists, by contrast, may use social critique or symbolic interpretation rather than constructing empirically falsifiable theories, and thus treat science in its broader sense. In modern academic practice, researchers are often eclectic, using multiple methodologies (for instance, by combining the quantitative and qualitative techniques). The term social research has also acquired a degree of autonomy as practitioners from various disciplines share in its aims and methods.

## II.2. Different Branches of Social Sciences: History, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology (Definition, Subject matter, Methodology)

A branch of sciences that deal with the institutions and functioning of human society and with the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society

A science (as economics or political science) dealing with a particular phase or aspect of human society. Social science is any discipline or branch of science that deals with the socio-cultural aspects of human behaviour.

### **History:**

**History** is the study of past events. It is a social science in the sense that it is a systematic attempt to learn about and verify past events and to relate them to one another and to the present. Every event has a historical context within which we commonly say the event must be studied. The subject matter of history is everything that has already happened. History is the continuous, systematic narrative and research into past human events as interpreted through historiographical paradigms or theories. History has a base in both the social sciences and the humanities. In the United States, the National Endowment for the Humanities includes history in its definition of humanities (as it does for applied linguistics). However, the National Research Council classifies history as a social science. The historical method comprises the techniques and guidelines by which historians use primary sources and other evidence to research and then to write history. The Social Science History Association, formed in 1976, brings together scholars from numerous disciplines interested in social history.

#### *The study of history involves:*

- Identifying
- Classifying
- Arranging
- Patterning

#### *The fruits of the study of history are:*

- Imposition of order
- Appreciation of variety
- Possibilities of prediction
- Realization of limitation

### **Political science:**

Political science is an academic and research discipline that deals with the theory and practice of politics and the description and analysis of political systems and political behavior. Fields and subfields of political science include political economy, political theory and philosophy, civics and comparative politics, theory of direct democracy, apolitical governance, participatory direct democracy, national systems, cross-national political analysis, political development, international relations, foreign policy, international law, politics, public administration, administrative behavior, public law, judicial behavior, and public policy. Political science also studies power in international relations and the theory of great powers and superpowers.

Political science is the study of social arrangements to maintain peace and order within a given society. It deals with government, and its interests are:

- Politics
- Laws
- Administration
- Theory of the nature and functions of the state
- International relations

It has both a philosophical and a practical base. It examines the theory of systems of government, but it also studies actual practices by which government:

- Taxes
- Prohibits
- Regulates
- Protects
- Provides services

Political science is methodologically diverse, although recent years have witnessed an upsurge in the use of the scientific method, that is, the proliferation of formal-deductive model building and quantitative hypothesis testing. Approaches to the discipline include rational choice, classical political philosophy, interpretivism, structuralism, and behavioralism, realism, pluralism, and institutionalism. Political science, as one of the social sciences, uses methods and techniques that relate to the kinds of inquiries sought: primary sources such as historical documents, interviews, and official records, as well as secondary sources such as scholarly journal articles are used in building and testing theories.

### **Economics:**

**Economics** is the study of the ways in which men and women make a living, the most pressing problem most human beings face. It considers the social organization through which people satisfy their wants for scarce goods and services. Its subject matter is often summarized as:

- Production
- Distribution
- Consumption

Some of the topics it includes are:

- Supply and demand
- Monetary and fiscal policy
- Costs
- Inflation
- Unemployment

Economics seeks to explain, guide, and predict social arrangements by which we satisfy economic wants. Economics is a social science that seeks to analyze and describe the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth.<sup>[13]</sup> The word "economics" is from the Greek οίκος [*oikos*], "family, household, estate," and νόμος [*nomos*], "custom, law," and hence means "household management" or "management of the state." An economist is a person using economic concepts and data in the course of employment, or someone who has earned a degree in the subject. The classic brief definition of economics, set out by Lionel Robbins in 1932, is "the science which studies human behavior as a relation between scarce means having alternative uses." Without scarcity and alternative uses, there is no economic problem. Briefer yet is "the study of how people seek to satisfy needs and wants" and "the study of the financial aspects of human behavior."

Economics has two broad branches: microeconomics, where the unit of analysis is the individual agent, such as a household or firm, and macroeconomics, where the unit of analysis is an economy as a whole. Another division of the subject distinguishes positive economics, which seeks to predict and explain economic phenomena, from normative economics, which orders choices and actions by some criterion; such orderings necessarily involve subjective value judgments. Since the early part of the 20th century, economics has focused largely on measurable quantities, employing both theoretical models and empirical analysis. Quantitative models, however, can be traced as far back as the physiocratic school.

**Sociology:**

Sociology is the systematic study of society and human social action. The meaning of the word comes from the suffix "-ology" which means "study of," derived from Greek, and the stem "soci-" which is from the Latin word socius, meaning "companion", or society in general. Sociology was originally established by Auguste Comte (1798–1857) in 1838. Comte endeavoured to unify history, psychology and economics through the descriptive understanding of the social realm. He proposed that social ills could be remedied through sociological positivism, an epistemological approach outlined in *The Course in Positive Philosophy* [1830–1842] and *A General View of Positivism* (1844). Though Comte is generally regarded as the "Father of Sociology", the discipline was formally established by another French thinker, Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), who developed positivism as a foundation to practical social research. Durkheim set up the first European department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux in 1895, publishing his *Rules of the Sociological Method*. In 1896, he established the journal *L'Année Sociologique*. Durkheim's seminal monograph, *Suicide* (1897), a case study of suicide rates amongst Catholic and Protestant populations, distinguished sociological analysis from psychology or philosophy. Sociology is the systematic study of relationships among people. Sociologists assume that behavior is influenced by people's social, political, occupational, and intellectual groupings and by the particular settings in which they find themselves at one time or another. Sociologists differ in their approach.

Their three major choices are:

1. Functionalism
2. Conflict
3. Interactionism

Sociology's vast subject matter can be identified as a study of people:

- Where they collect
- How they socialize and organize
- Whom they include in and exclude from their groups
- What they do to their environment
- When they confront formulas for control, such as politics, law, finance, religion, education, and social pressures
- Why they change.

### **Anthropology:**

Anthropology is the holistic "science of man", a science of the totality of human existence. The discipline deals with the integration of different aspects of the social sciences, humanities, and human biology. In the twentieth century, academic disciplines have often been institutionally divided into three broad domains. The *natural sciences* seek to derive general laws through reproducible and verifiable experiments. The *humanities* generally study local traditions, through their history, literature, music, and arts, with an emphasis on understanding particular individuals, events, or eras. The *social sciences* have generally attempted to develop scientific methods to understand social phenomena in a generalizable way, though usually with methods distinct from those of the natural sciences. It is the study of the relationship between biological traits and socially acquired characteristics. Sometimes called the study of humans, it consists of two broad fields:

1. Physical anthropology
2. Cultural anthropology

#### **Some of the concerns of physical anthropology are:**

- Influence of evolution of natural environment on the physical characteristics of humans
- Human evolution: how modern homo sapiens evolved from earlier species

#### **Some of the concerns of cultural anthropology are:**

- Archaeology or the remains of extinct civilizations that left no written records
- Organization of preliterate societies
- Characteristics of subgroups or subcultures within contemporary society.

Among the topics that interest anthropologists are excavation of formerly inhabited sites, fossils, the gene pool, technology and artifacts, linguistics, values, and kinship. The goal of anthropology is to provide a holistic account of humans and human nature. This means that, though anthropologists generally specialize in only one sub-field, they always keep in mind the biological, linguistic, historic and cultural aspects of any problem. Since anthropology arose as a science in Western societies that were complex and industrial, a major trend within anthropology has been a methodological drive to study peoples in societies with more simple social organization, sometimes called "primitive" in anthropological literature, but without any connotation of "inferior." Today, anthropologists use terms such as "less complex" societies or refer to specific modes of subsistence or production, such as "pastoralist" or "forager" or "horticulturalist" to refer to humans living in non-industrial, non-Western cultures, such people or folk (*ethnos*) remaining of great interest within anthropology.

**Methodology** :The origin of the survey can be traced back at least early as the 'Domesday Book' in 1086, whilst some scholars pinpoint the origin of demography to 1663 with the publication of John Graunt's *Natural and Political Observations upon the Bills of Mortality*. Social research began most intentionally, however, with the positivist philosophy of science in the 19th century.

In contemporary usage, "social research" is a relatively autonomous term, encompassing the work of practitioners from various disciplines which share in its aims and methods. Social scientists employ a range of methods in order to analyse a vast breadth of social phenomena; from census survey data derived from millions of individuals, to the in-depth analysis of a single agent's social experiences; from monitoring what is happening on contemporary streets, to the investigation of ancient historical documents. The methods originally rooted in classical sociology and statistical mathematics have formed the basis for research in other disciplines, such as political science, media studies, and marketing and market research.

***Social research methods may be divided into two broad schools:***

- Quantitative designs approach social phenomena through quantifiable evidence, and often rely on statistical analysis of many cases (or across intentionally designed treatments in an experiment) to create valid and reliable general claims.
- Qualitative designs emphasize understanding of social phenomena through direct observation, communication with participants, or analysis of texts, and may stress contextual and subjective accuracy over generality.

If we mean by Science the natural sciences only, then Social Science is not true science. If we mean by Science only the so-called exact Sciences, then again social science is not included. If however, we use the term Science broadly, to include all systematic attempts to expand knowledge by applying the scientific method, then social science must definitely be included in the scientific family. There has been much debate the correct methodology to be used in social science. Thomas Khun, a famous philosopher of science, defined a paradigm as a scientific theory and the core of beliefs that surround it. He argued that scientific progression occurs by paradigm shifts in which, for a long time, scientists will resist change and hold on to an old theory even as

evidence mounts up against it, and even when another theory better fits the data. Eventually, however, the evidence in favour of the new theory is so great that suddenly scientist shift their thinking. The process can be likened to the way a drop of water forms on a faucet. It grows larger and larger until it falls.

Social scientists will commonly combine quantitative and qualitative approaches as part of a multi-strategy design. Questionnaires, field-based data collection, archival database information and laboratory-based data collections are some of the measurement techniques used. It is noted the importance of measurement and analysis, focusing on the (difficult to achieve) goal of objective research or statistical hypothesis testing. A mathematical model uses mathematical language to describe a system. The process of developing a mathematical model is termed 'mathematical modelling' (also modeling). Eykhoff (1974) defined a *mathematical model* as 'a representation of the essential aspects of an existing system (or a system to be constructed) which presents knowledge of that system in usable form'. Mathematical models can take many forms, including but not limited to dynamical systems, statistical models, differential equations, or game theoretic models.

These and other types of models can overlap, with a given model involving a variety of abstract structures. The system is a set of interacting or interdependent entities, real or abstract, forming an integrated whole. The concept of an *integrated whole* can also be stated in terms of a system embodying a set of relationships which are differentiated from relationships of the set to other elements, and from relationships between an element of the set and elements not a part of the relational regime. A dynamical system modeled as a mathematical formalization has a fixed "rule" which describes the time dependence of a point's position in its ambient space. Small changes in the state of the system correspond to small changes in the numbers. The *evolution rule* of the dynamical system is a fixed rule that describes what future states follow from the current state. The rule is deterministic: for a given time interval only one future state follows from the current state.

### **II.3. Inter Disciplinary and Multidisciplinary Approaches In Social Sciences.**

#### **The Multi-Disciplinary Approach**

The multi-disciplinary approach involves the simple act (not easily accomplished in many graduate schools) of juxtaposing several disciplines. A student might take courses from several departments, or individual courses might be team-taught by professors from different disciplines. This approach involves no systematic attempt at integration or combination, but merely an exposure to more than one discipline. Many research teams and conference panels follow this pattern. Each disciplinarian does "his own thing" in his own universe of discourse. Consequently, communication is poor, and whatever breadth is achieved remains superficial. Introductory general-education courses in social science often take this multi-disciplinary form. Though interdisciplinary work of this "multi" kind may be better than narrow specialization, a questionable eclecticism tends to emerge. The most outspoken critics of interdisciplinary work usually have this approach in mind. Nevertheless, whenever the public calls for solutions to a serious social problem, multi-disciplinary research teams tend to be established.

Undoubtedly, when it is a question of solving a problem bearing on social and economic development, it is essential to look beyond the horizons of one specialized discipline; it quickly becomes evident that many links exist between elements which a specialized monodisciplinary scientific analysis would be liable to separate, and the natural impulse is to go beyond the frontiers of particular disciplines in order to get a more general and complete picture.

The "real world" is not divided up in the same fashion as academic departments, and policy proposals based on the narrow view of one discipline are at the least naive and in the worst case may lead to disastrous mistakes. Economists have learned this lesson the hard way, for many of their recommendations to the less developed countries have proven irrelevant or erroneous due to their failure to consider the social and political context or the applicability of their culture-bound models.

Many multi-disciplinary research projects produce reports with a chapter from each of the participating disciplinary specialists that show little evidence of communication between them. Professor Millikan of MIT, in reporting the results of a multi-disciplinary research project concerning agricultural problems in less developed countries, complained, "After we had conducted quite a number of these interviews we found we could pretty much predict the answer we would get from any particular specialist if we had enough information in advance about the nature of his specialty. Analysis of agricultural failures tended . . . to follow the discipline of the diagnostician. Each specialist would find that the factor familiar to him was crucial in the given situation, though he might also acknowledge the role of factors in fields other than his own. His prescription would read: 'Do something about my factor first -- and the others will follow.'"

Some multi-disciplinary research teams actually begin talking with each other and start perceiving that communication difficulties are hindering their effectiveness. When they initiate efforts at translating, coordinating, combining and even building conceptual bridges, they are no longer a problem-focused multi-disciplinary group, but one with cross-disciplinary attributes. Many so-called interdisciplinary courses are problem focused, and as long as the problem continues as the only common thread, they manifest the conceptual compartmentalization of the multidisciplinary approach. A problem is a good place to begin, because it generates interest on the part of students and faculty from several disciplines and the bringing together has value in and of itself.

However, the problem does not provide a conceptual framework for its own analysis, but has to be provided by the investigators -- the teachers, curriculum builders, researchers. Good education should concern itself with human problems, but collective analysis requires general principles and conceptual frameworks which make possible not only a better comprehension of the nature of the problem at hand and possible solutions but also a set of analytical tools which can be transferred to the understanding of other comparable situations as they present themselves in the future.

## **VARIETIES OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES:**

### **I. The Cross-Disciplinary Approach**

Cross-disciplinary topics frequently emerge from perceived social problem areas. Crime (law and order) is a social concern. Every one of the social science disciplines has something to say about crime. Cross-disciplinary research has been conducted on the subject. Cross-disciplinary courses and programs in Criminal Justice have been established at many institutions of higher learning. Another topical example is Area Studies. World War II gave a boost to Area Studies, and though their fortunes have varied over the years, most universities still offer one or more cross-disciplinary programs in Area Studies (Latin American Studies, East Asian Studies, American Studies, etc.). In response to labor-management conflicts, research institutes and academic programs in Industrial Relations were initiated around the country. More recently, problems in central cities have led to Urban Studies. Concern over an aging population has fostered the new cross-disciplinary field of Gerontology. Worries about the degradation of the environment were instrumental in the appearance of Environmental Studies. Some universities have an entire school devoted to Environmental Studies, such as Griffiths in Queensland, Australia. A few colleges are totally organized around this field, such as Green Bay, Wisconsin. The list of cross disciplinary topics could go on and on: Religious Studies, Futurism, Human Sexuality Studies, and so on.

The degree of conceptual order in these topical studies varies greatly. In fact, some of the older ones, such as Area Studies, seem to be going through periodic identity crises. In my view these crises are highly related to low degrees of conceptual coherence. Environmental Studies usually has a high degree of conceptual integration, because it has the thought model of ecology.

### **II. The Trans-disciplinary Approach**

Trans-disciplinary approaches are articulated conceptual frameworks which claim to transcend the narrow scope of disciplinary world views and metaphorically encompass the several parts of the material field which are handled separately by the individual specialized disciplines. These overarching thought models are holistic in intent. They propose to reorganize the knowledge structure in the social sciences (and in some cases, other fields of inquiry as well). Though some supporters of trans-disciplinary approaches suggest that their favorite conceptual framework should actually replace existing disciplinary approaches, others see them as alternatives or as providers of coherence for cross-disciplinary efforts. The various trans-disciplinary approaches differ from each other in several characteristics. One dimension in which they differ is the type of isomorphism claimed between their conceptual structures and the "real world" which they presumably represent. Some claim a greater specificity of correspondence and receptivity to quantitative manipulation while criticizing others for their loose formulations and weakness in empirical application. Supporters of general systems, one of the major trans-disciplinary approaches, sometimes criticize other trans-disciplinary approaches such as Marxism and structuralism in this fashion.

Other trans-disciplinary approaches besides general systems, structuralism and Marxism include phenomenology, policy sciences, evolution, sociobiology, etc.

Probably the most prevalent and influential trans-disciplinary approach in American social science is general systems theory. It has its own professional association, and many disciplinarians have attempted to imperialistically absorb it within their discipline -- both sure signs of its stature.

## MODULE 3

### OBJECTIVITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

III.1. Objectivity in Social Sciences

III.2. Limits to objectivity in Social Sciences.

III.3. Ethical issues in Social Sciences

#### III.1. Objectivity in Social Sciences

##### What is Science?

Science is a special way of knowing around us. Science is derived from the Latin word *scientia*, science means 'knowledge'. Initially science rejected all kinds of speculations or even hypotheses. Only ideas that are proven to be the truth mattered in science. The function of science is to guarantee certainty as it explains the world. Science indulges in discovery and invention, quite significantly the entire exercise is to advance the existing state of knowledge. Science, however, has advanced since the seventeenth-century attempt by Francis Bacon. For Bacon the core foundation of science is empirical facts. Scientific ideas were supposed to grow from factual information. So a continuous collection of facts would serve as the basic premise on which one can construct true science.

When social subjects are explained with the help of scientific method, they qualify to be termed as social science. Subjects that fall under the umbrella term 'social science' as science almost claimed itself to be a marker of uncompromising truth, all humanities disciplines aimed to emulate the same status as a subject are sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology and economics. As science almost claimed itself to be marker of uncompromising truth, all humanities disciplines aimed to emulate the same status as a subject.

The scientific method involves generating testable hypotheses in order to make predictions as well as the ability to refute and falsify hypotheses. A high degree of predictability can be ensured by scientific method with respect to the working of the natural world. We recognise the demand of objectivity as far as the scientific method is concerned.

##### Scientific method

In the 17th Century, the idea of Bacon, Newton and Boyle gave shape to what is popularly known as the scientific method. The scientific method is a systematic step-by-step procedure following the logical process of reasoning. It means gaining knowledge of the universe. The scientific method is one and the same in all branches and that is the method of all logically trained minds (Karl Pearson: 1911). It is clear that science has a reference to a method; not so much to a field of specific subject matter. Lastrucci, in his scientific approach; aptly observed "*Science is an objective, logical and systematic method of analysis of phenomena devised to permit the accumulation of reliable knowledge. It is systematized form of analysis*". It is characterized by an intellectual attitude.

The chief characteristic which distinguishes the scientific method from other methods of acquiring knowledge is that scientists seek to let reality speak for itself, supporting a theory when a theory's predictions are confirmed and challenging a theory when its predictions prove false. Although procedures vary from one field of inquiry to another, identifiable features distinguish scientific inquiry from other methods of obtaining knowledge. Scientific researchers propose hypotheses as explanations of phenomena and design experimental studies to test these hypotheses via predictions which can be derived from them. These steps must be repeatable to guard against mistake or confusion in any particular experimenter. Theories that encompass wider domains of inquiry may bind many independently derived hypotheses together in a coherent, supportive structure. Theories, in turn, may help form new hypotheses or place groups of hypotheses into context.

***Basis in scientific method:***

The scientific method consists of the following aspects.

**(a) Reliance on empirical evidence:-**

Scientific method involves a systematic process. The answer to a question is not decided by intuition or imagination. Relevant data are collected through observation and experimentation. The validity and their liability of data are checked carefully and the data are analyzed thoroughly using appropriate methods of analyses.

**(b) Use of concepts:-**

We use concepts to deal with real facts. Concepts are logical constructs or abstractions created from sense impressions. They are the symbols representing the meaning that we hold.

**(c) Commitment to objectivity:-**

Objectivity is the hallmark of the scientific method. It means forming a judgment upon facts unbiased by personal impressions. The conclusion should not vary from person to person. It should be same for all persons.

**(d) Ethical neutrality.**

Science does not pass normative judgment on facts. It does not say they are good or bad. Science aims nothing but making true and adequate statements about its object

**(e) Generalization.**

Scientist tries to find out the commonality of a series of event. They aim at discovering the uniformity. Assumed a discovered uniformity a logical class and its observed pattern, a descriptive generalization is formulated.

**(f) Verifiability.**

The findings of a research should be verifiable. Scientist must make known to others, how he arrived at his conclusion. He should thus expose his own methods and conclusions to critical scrutiny. When others test his conclusion under the same conditions, then it is accepted as correct.

**(g) Logical reasoning process.**

The scientist method involves the logical process of reasoning. This reasoning process is used for drawing inference from the finding of a study or for arriving at conclusion. This logical reasoning process consists of induction and deduction.

**(h) Induction:** One of the methods of logical reasoning process. The inductive method consists of studying several individual cases drawing a generalization. It involves two processes-observation and generalization. Conclusion from induction method is subjected to further conformation based on more evidence.

**(i) Deduction:** deduction is reasoning from the general to the particular. This reasoning establishes a logical relationship between the major premises. A major premise is a previously established generalization or assumption. A minor premise is a particular case related to the major premise. The logical relationship of these premise lead to conclusion. E.g. major premise: - All men are mortal

Minor premise: - A is a man

Conclusion: - A is mortal.

The logical process of both induction and deduction are useful in research studies. Both are inseparable parts of a system of reasoning. Both processes are often used simultaneously.

**Steps in the Scientific Method**

Following are the major steps in scientific enquiry:

**a. Identify the Problem**

The first step of the scientific method is to ask a question, describe a problem, and identify the specific area of interest. The topic should be narrow enough to study within the context of a particular test but also broad enough to have a more general practical or theoretical merit.

**b. Review of literature**

Now that the problem has been identified, the researcher must learn more about the topic under investigation. To do this, the researcher must review the literature related to the research problem. This step provides foundational knowledge about the problem area. The review of literature also educates the researcher about what studies have been conducted in the past, how these studies were conducted, and the conclusions in the problem area.

**c. Formulate the hypotheses**

The third and important step in scientific enquiry is to develop one or more formal propositions which can be tested.

**d. Plan the Research Design**

Any action need appropriate plan. It is necessary to make an outline about what is to be studied, what data will be sought, and where and how they will be collected, processed and analyzed.

**e. Data collection**

The actual study begins with the collection of data. The collection of data is a critical step in providing the information needed to answer the research question. Every study includes the collection of some type of data – whether it is from the literature or from subjects – to answer the research question. Data can be collected in the form of words on a survey, with a questionnaire, through observations, or from the literature.

**f. Data Analysis**

The researcher has data to analyze so that the research question can be answered. Classifying, tabulating, comparing data and making necessary tests and computations which helps to find out the results come under this step. The results of this analysis are then reviewed and summarized in a manner directly related to the research questions.

**g. Draw conclusion**

After careful examination of the findings of the study, researcher draws conclusion to the problem. It enables the researcher to check whether the original hypothesis can be confirmed or rejected.

**III.2. Limits to objectivity in Social Sciences.**

Objectivity in science is a value that understands how science is practiced and how scientific truths are discovered. It is the idea that scientists, in attempting to uncover truths about the natural world, must aspire to eliminate personal biases, a prior commitments, emotional involvement, etc. Objectivity is often attributed to the property of scientific measurement, as the accuracy of measurement, can be tested independent from the individual scientist who first reports it.

Objectivity is a central philosophical concept, related to reality and truth, which has been variously defined by sources. Generally, objectivity means the state or quality of being true even outside of a subject's individual biases, interpretations, feelings, and imaginings. A proposition is generally considered objectively true (to have **objective truth**) when its truth conditions are met and are "bias-free"; that is, existing without biases caused by, feelings, ideas, etc. of a sentient subject. A second, broader meaning of the term refers to the ability in any context to judge fairly, without bias or external influence.

Objectivity means basing conclusion on facts without any bias and value judgment. The conclusion should be independent of one's personal beliefs, likes, dislikes and hopes. Both the data and the inference drawn from their analysis must be free from bias and prejudices. The term objectivity may be defined as "The actions of scientists; assuming a position of disinterestedness or impartiality, or being open minded in the assessment of evidence". It is nothing but an attitude of the investigator.

### ***Factors Affecting Objectivity***

It is very difficult to achieve objectivity in social science research. This difficulty arises out of the adverse influences of (a) personal prejudices and bias, (b) value judgement, (c) ethical dilemma and (d) complexity of social phenomena.

#### ***a. Personal prejudices and biases***

Prejudices and biases are like fantasies to believe what is comforting to believe. It makes to believe something without considering evidence.

#### ***b. Value related problem arises***

Value related problem arises from the social context with in which research occurs. A researcher's attitudes towards socio-economic issues are influenced by his values.

#### ***c. Personal preconceptions***

Personal preconceptions of research create not only a distorting effect on the data but are also highly insidious. Research failed to examination objectivity.

#### ***d. Ethical dilemmas***

Research relation with other aspect of research creates ethical problems. E.g. Relation with sponsors, relation with source data, relation with research subject etc.,.

### **Objectivity in Sociology**

The demands of objectivity are properly addressed by early classical theoreticians in sociology. The turmoil around classical sociologist was, to what extent sociology can satisfy the condition of objectivity. Advocating positivism, Comte proposed a shift from social philosophy to social science. Drawing knowledge away from spiritual metaphysics, positivism placed greater stress on sensory experience and the data observed.

The essence of this view was that the experience was the only reliable source of human knowledge. In fact, Comte confirmed these shift from social philosophy to social science encompassing all aspects of human society. In his 'General View of Positivism (1848)' Comte advocated the positivist method as the most appropriate one for sociology. The issue of objectivity was well addressed in Comtian positivism.

Durkheim in the Rules of the Sociological Method stated that social facts must be treated as things and all preconceived notions about social facts must be abandoned. Even Max Weber emphasized the need of objectivity when he said that sociology must be value free. According to Radcliff Brown the social scientist must abandon or transcend his ethnocentric and egocentric biases while carrying out researches. Similarly Malinowski advocated cultural relativism while anthropological field work in order to ensure objectivity.

Sociology, with its roots in positivist philosophy, was seen by several of its early practitioners as a science capable of producing objective knowledge. However, the concept of objectivity has increasingly been held within the field as problematic. Today many sociologists believe that the discipline is not and cannot hope to be objective. Several of the fronts of this debate are discussed, including positivism and its conventionalist critics, Max Weber's methodological work and relativist opposition to the concept of objectivity. Definitions of the word are also examined. A clear definition of objectivity seems essential if meaningful discussion of its viability in the field of sociology is to occur, yet few unambiguous definitions exist. Definitions are shown to be bound up in partisan philosophy tracing back to the divide between empiricism and rationalism. A sociological definition, in the form of a practical test of a statement's objectivity, is suggested to bridge this divide. Drawing on Max Weber's ideal types, the fact value separation and the 'transmission chain' tool used in psychological experiment, this definition provides a chance for sociologists to discuss objectivity across the philosophical divide.

However objectivity continues to be an elusive goal at the practical level. In fact one school of thought represented by Gunnar Myrdal states that total objectivity is an illusion which can never be achieved. Because all research is guided by certain viewpoints and viewpoints involve subjectivity. Myrdal suggested that the basic viewpoints should be made clear. Further he felt that subjectivity creeps in at various stages in the course of sociological research. Merton believes that the very choice of topic is influenced by personal preferences and ideological biases of the researcher.

### **LIMITS TO OBJECTIVITY IN SOCIAL SCIENCES**

As social science are concerned the problem of objectivity is intrinsically linked to the question of arriving at an appropriate method of studying society .Whether social science can generate general laws of social development like natural sciences, rests upon the question of whether it can solve the problem of objectivity. Instead of a positive definition of objectivity, with regard to its application in social science method ,objectivity has been understood in terms of what to be .

**Objectivity in social science research has certain limitations, they are:**

- a) Social scientist is part of human society and their judgments are subjective and coloured by researchers own experience.
- b) The subject matter of social science research is too complex. All propositions are limited particular social groups and contexts. Thus objectivity in a major issue in social science research.
- c) All members of the society have different values, social researcher will unconsciously influenced by their values.
- d) Social scientist fails to achieve objectivity because the respondents are human beings have certain human problems. e.g. refusal of respondent, improper understanding, reluctance etc,. All these problems cause biases and invalidate the research findings and conclusion.

### III.3. Ethical issues in Social Sciences

The dictionary meaning of the word 'Ethics' is nothing, but a set of moral principles and values'. Webster's new world dictionary is typical among dictionaries, defining ethical as *conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group*. Another way of defining 'ethics' focuses on the **disciplines that study** standards of conduct, such as philosophy, theology, law, psychology, or sociology. One may also define ethics as a **method, procedure, or perspective** for deciding how to act and for analyzing complex problems and issues. In science it is more than the presence of basic set of values. It is base of action in any science. The search for objective truth is the ethics of social science.

The very nature of the subject matter of sociology raises the question that who is to decide the objectives of social science. Whether the scientists or the society. Thus the ethical content of social sciences became central to social science research. As Wilkinson points out, "the community of scientists with its set of intellectual values and community with its own set of cultural values , should together settle for or define the true objectives of science and thus, the obligations that a scientist feels he owes to himself would represent a working compromise between rival thrusts of scientific values on one hand, and the social values on the other."When we talk about the 'ethic' in social science research we are addressing those issues that concern the behaviour of social researcher and the consequences that their research brings to the people they study. Issues of ethics have the potential to create impact at every stage of the research process. There for all social researchers need to have a clear understanding of the ways in which ethical dilemmas can arise when carrying out their social research. Issue of ethics arise primarily out of researchers relation with different sections of society research subjects, sponsors of research, research process etc.

#### *Ethical issues related to the subjects of study*

In social science the prime subject of enquiry is human being. The individuals constitute the research subjects. Their response and behaviour is closely observed and studied by social investigator. Hence the human beings are treated as raw material for the end result of the study; of all ethical issues, the issues concerned with the individuals under study are major important. Themajor issues related to respondent and investigator is

- In some cases individuals are participating in a social research without their knowledge or consent. For example, rural or tribal communities became subjects of investigation without their consent or knowledge. They are participating in research without proper awareness. In such cases the researcher infringes upon their right to make their own decision to participate or not to participate. It is an intrinsic attack on an individual's freedom.
- In some cases the consent of respondents is obtained by the research without informing the real purpose and aims of research.
- In some other cases the researcher forced to provide incorrect or misleading information about the project. Such deceptive steps are highly questionable under the ethical frame work.
- Another questionable non-ethical practice is to expose participants to physical or mental stress to study their reactions. For example, mock- hijacking of an aircraft, mock - panic situation in a crowd etc.
- In-depth interviews or disguised projective tests and participant observations are generally used in social research to gather information. These methods may be an attack on one's privacy.
- Another ethical issue related to maintaining anonymity of the respondent. Anonymity might be violated through reports and publications.

## MODULE 4

### APPROACHES AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

IV.1. Major Approaches: Evolutionary, Indological, Structural, Dialectical and Integrated Approach

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#### IV.1. Major Approaches: Evolutionary, Indological, Structural, Dialectical and Integrated Approach

The first decades of the 20th century mark the beginning of sociology in India. Most of the time, sociology was treated as a style of cultural critique. Its character was thus defined by its responsive yet critical note on the western interpretation of Indian society, its institutions and cultural pattern. The diversity of sociological output and the vast numbers of the studies and research is indeed an indication that sociology in India has acquired a distinctive identity. The development of sociology in India cannot be understood as simple application of theoretical approaches that were developed elsewhere. Several approaches have been used by sociologists in their study of Indian society and culture.

**Approach:** means two things- direction and method. One who conducts a sociological research or study should know the objectives or goals of his study clearly and select the most appropriate method out of various methods and techniques of research.

**Sociological approach:** how a sociologist should study any aspect, institution, phenomenon or problem of society, how he should collect the social facts, verify, classify and analyze them and present his research findings. This knowledge of all these points constitutes the sociological approach.

#### Major approaches are:

- Evolutionary approach
- Ideological approach
- Structural approach
- Dialectical approach
- Integrated approach

All the above approaches have existed in Indian sociology from 1952 or even before and have continued to operate in varying forms.

### **Evolutionary Approach**

The evolutionary approach analyses social change as a gradual development from simple to complex forms. Every society passes through different stages of transition. The society and structures that we see today are the result of this gradual process of change. In evolutionary approach, the different stages of development of social institutions and organisations are analyzed. Change, as we know, is a continuous process. Each change results in a minor modification of the system. Such minor changes cumulate over a long period of time into new forms which are usually more complicated than the earlier ones.

The most important landmark in the beginning of what we call evolutionary approach in the theoretical nature of sociology is M N Sreenivas' work Religion and Society among the Coorgs of south India (1952). This work led him to form the concept Brahmanistaion later it is known as Sanskritisation.

Sanskritisation is the process by which a low Hindu caste / tribal /other group changes its customs, rituals , ideologies and life styles in the direction of a high and frequently, twice born caste. Many of the factors that promoted sanskritisation like industrialization occupational mobility, spread of literacy, western technology etc.

His concept westernization is on the basis of evolutionary approach. It refers to the impact of British rule on the Indian society. The British rule of India indeed ignited the process of self development of Indian communities. Dalit communities are converted in to Christianity. Many Dalit Christians took up higher positions in society.

Sanskritisation characterized a change within the framework of the Indian tradition, while westernization was a change resulting from the contact with the British socio economic and cultural innovations. The conceptual schemes that Sreenivas was formulated to analyze the phenomenon of social and cultural change have made an outstanding impact on Indian sociology.

Another attempt to analyze the cultural process of change on the basis of evolutionary approach in India has been made by Milton singer, Mckim Marriot, and Bernard Cohn. Singer and Cohn supported sanskritistion based on their empirical studies in the 1950s in a village of east U.P. they noticed that there was a wide gap between the dominant castes and lower castes. Cohn studied about the landless 'charmars'. They adopted the rituals of dominant castes. Milton Singer conducted study in industries in Madras. He conducted various studies like compartmentalization i.e.; Change of religious life based on evolutionary approach.

### **Indological Approach**

Indology means specialized knowledge of the traditional or ancient social structures and cultural systems of India. It studies social change through the records of Indian history. This type of analysis is relevant in the study of emergence and development of institutions like family, caste etc. the changes in these dominant institutions are studied pertaining to different periods of Indian history. Many Indian scholars of Sanskrit and Indian culture, British officers like Jones, Wilson, Colebrook, Wilkins Fasina led by the uniqueness of traditional Indian society and culture. Many of

the Foreign scholars like German scholar Max Muller, French scholars Renou and Bougle, and American scholars like Cambell, Elliade, and Coomaraswamy made their important contributions using this approach. A lot of work done by leaders and scholars of the theosophical society connected with indology.

Some Indian sociologist like G S Ghurye, Radhakamal Mukerjee, R N Saksena were also attracted by this approach and the used it not like the indologist but in combination with the Marxian historical or other approaches.

G S Ghurye emphasized on indological approach in the study of social and cultural life in India and the elsewhere. Ghurye utilized literature in sociological studies with his profound knowledge of Sanskrit literature, extensively quoted from Vedas, shastras, epics and poetry of Kalidasa to shed light on the social and cultural life in India. His central ideas like caste and kinship in India, new roles of caste in India, study of tribes' in India, rural-urbanization in India, religious beliefs and practices in India, roles of the sadhu in Indian tradition, Indian art and architecture, Hindu Muslim relationships etc. are mainly based on indological approach.

Louis Dumont was a French anthropologist. His studies on Indian society paved the way for the development of culturological approach to the study of Indian society. The culturological approach identifies itself close to the indological approach. According to him Indian civilization is a specific ideology whose components are in a binary opposition to that of the west -modern against traditional, holism against individualism, hierarchy against equality, purity against pollution, status against power etc.

### **Structural Approach**

The central concept of this approach is social structure. Social structure is defined as an orderly pattern relationship between elements of society. The social structure was studied at the village level and primarily focused on village communities, caste structure, family, kinship and religious ideologies of the people in Indian villages. It gives special attention to comparative study of social categories like class and caste in India and its implications on the nature of society. The earliest one that is structural functional approach is derived from British social anthropology. This approach required the detailed description of the social phenomenon being investigated.

The 1950s and 1960s saw the publication of monographs on various aspect of tribal rural and urban on various life in different parts of the country and on different aspect of Indian culture, religion and society. The data collected through intensive fieldwork made possible a deeper analysis that brought out the interconnections between the different parts of the social system. This resulted in a deeper understanding of the society being studied.

Radclif Brown focused on structural functional approach. According to him the culture of society is developed from its social structure. He says it is an empirical reality existing at a single moment of time. M N Sreenivas followed Radclif Brown and adopted a structural functional approach. He examined the relationship between local religious belief and practices and the under universe of world religious. This opened our understanding of the interplay between the local religions, belief system and the wider religion and practices.

S C Dubey: studied Indian villages through structural approach.

F G Baily: also used structural approach in his studies. He analyzed structural changes in India with a set of comparative categories like tribe caste and nation.

A M Shah: studied household dimensions of Indian family on the basis of structural approach.

Radhakamal Mukherjee: conducted micro level analysis of rural economy, land problem, population and the problem of working class.

Dhanagare: draws our attention to the development of sociology in India through structural functionalism.

Many Indian sociologists found the structural functional approach as adequate to the study of Indian society and social institution.

### **Dialectical Approach**

The dialectical approach highlights the conflicting forces and contradictions inherent in the society. The dialectical approach in sociology in India gained prominence as Marxist sociologists became critical of structural functionalism and the kind of research it emanated. They felt there was an overemphasis on the role of traditional factors as caste, kinship and religion, which underplayed the role of class and focus of change and contradictions in the society. The dialectical approach is influenced by Marxist tradition. This approach is based on economic interpretations of society. Economic change creates different classes with conflicting interests. This results in struggles and conflicts which are the causes of social change. Thus an analysis of the economic basis of society might be helpful in understanding the process of social change more clearly.

Marxist sociologist expresses the inadequacy of structural functional framework for understanding change. Change occurs with conflict and resistance; hence the Marxist framework would be useful in explaining these contradictions. Another area of research in Indian society is that of inequality. The changing relation between caste, class and power drew the attention of sociologists to these external forces of change.

### **Theoretical concerns of historical dialectical approach**

- Concern with transition
- Industrialism is historical process
- Dynamic interaction between human agency and social structure not as an abstract problem but as an empirical issue.
- Concerned with pattern of freedom and life histories of individuals in social context.

D P Mukherjee was a professed Marxist. He attempted dialectical interpretation of the encounter between Indian traditions of cultural contradictions during the colonial era. Within the broad framework of these dialectical Marxist approaches Mukherjee focused more on the historical specificity of India's cultural and social transformation. He did use the historical approach but did not conduct any empirical studies using this framework of reference.

A good example of the use of historical approach is seen in the work of A R Desai – the social background of the Indian nationalism. According to him nationalism is a material condition created by British colonialism and did not exist in pre-British India.

Other sociologists engaged in the study of agrarian relation frequently used dialectical historical approach. It is especially useful in making comparison of the past with the present. More recently, Yogendra Singh in his study of modernization, Suberwal in his assessment of colonial impact on urbanization and social inequalities, Partha Mukherjee, Rajendra Singh and other sociologists who have studied protest movement reveals, workers and weaker sections in India have disproved the value comparative history for sociological analysis.

### **Integrated Approach**

The integrated approach has offered us advantages of being theoretically consistent. It is a logical level at which an integrated view on social change can be achieved.

Noted Indian sociologist Yogendra Singh gives a comprehensive picture of the social change in India using the integrated approach. Yogendra Singh proposed the integrated approach as a comprehensive perspective on Indian Social change. In this approach he integrates a series of concepts related to social change to develop a new paradigm. The concepts which he integrates are:

- Direction of change
- Context of change
- Source of change
- Substantive domain of phenomena undergoing change

He makes a distinction between heterogenetic and orthogenetic source of change. A distinction between cultural structure and social structure was made to focus upon the need to observe change. Cultural structure has further been subdivided into little and great tradition. Social structure is subdivided into micro and macro structure. The direction of change is represented from traditionalisation to modernisation. Traditionalisation represents the total range of changes governed by orthogenetic pattern in the cultural and social structure. Modernisation represents the change from heterogenetic. The basic changes in micro and macro structure of Indian society have started taking place only after it comes into contact with the west. Migration was an important source of change. The example of macro structure are industry, bureaucracy, political parties etc. these consist of relationship which has an extension of boundaries. In contrast the micro structures such as kinship, family, etc. have limited boundaries.

### **IV.2. Major Contributions: Dominant Caste - M. N. Srinivas, Purity and pollution-Louis Dumont, Household dimensions of Family- A. M. Shah**

#### **Dominant Caste - M.N.Srinivas**

The social structure of Indian society is characterized by a unique social institution called caste. It is one of the ancient social institutions prevailing in India since time immemorial. Caste is a closed system in which social mobility is impossible. The concept of dominant caste was introduced by M.N.Srinivas which is of great help in understanding inter caste relation and conflicts, particularly in the rural setup.

According to M N Sreenivas a caste is dominant when it preponderates numerically over the other caste when it also wields preponderant economic and political power and when it enjoys a higher ritual status in the local caste hierarchy.

M N Sreenivas in his study of the Rampura Village (Mysore) introduces the concept of the dominant caste. That is a cast that is not only ritually powerful but also has numerical as well as economic - political strength .the concept of the dominant caste brings together the three dimensions of status , class and power - this concept helps us to identify the areas of non-conformity and change within the traditional structure.

### **Nature of Dominant Caste**

- A caste to be called dominant it should own a sizable amount of the arable land locally available
- It should have the strength of numbers
- It should occupy high place in the local hierarchy
- It should enjoy greater economic and political power
- It should have more number of educated and well employed members.
- Dominance not purely a local phenomena
- They act as reference groups in the process of Sanskritisation

A dominant caste may dominate a set of contiguous or closely related villages. They exercise certain powers in the village over other caste groups. A caste is considered as dominant if it possesses the following determinant features.

When a caste enjoys all elements of dominance, it is said to be dominant in a decisive way. The dominant caste have a role in settling the disputes between people of both their own as well as other caste groups in the village. The power of the Dominant caste is accepted normatively. Members of the dominant caste have a role in caste panchayats. Occasionally, there may be more than one dominant caste in a village and over a period of time; one dominant caste may give way to another. An upper caste need not always enjoy the status of a dominant caste. The dominant castes are found to be socially, economically and politically powerful. The dominant caste keeps watch over the culture and value system of the village. They also have an influential role in the political life. On the whole the dominant castes have a significant social role to play.

### **Louis Dumont - Purity and Pollution**

Louis Dumont was a French anthropologist succeeded with his striking 'structural explanation' of the Indian caste system, arguing that ritual purity/pollution is the fundamental binary opposition organizing the traditional Indian (mainly Hindu) hierarchy, society and power structure. Here the ritual status of the Brahman encompasses the 'temporal authority' of Kshatriya rulers. This unique value configuration made, he insisted, India's ideology traditional, holistic, and a historical, while the modern West emphasized history, individualism and secular power.

Louis Dumont's book, *Homo Heirarchicus*, is an important work on caste system. In the book he discusses the hierarchy and principles of caste system. It observes that all such talks of changes of the caste system are an exaggeration .as an overall framework governed by the ritual ideology, the caste system is an exaggeration.

The underlying principle of this hierarchy is purity and pollution. Dumont defines purity as "the eruption of the biological into social life". The condition of not being pure is called pollution. Pollution is of two types, permanent and temporary. Hindus are considered to be

temporarily polluted when they come into contact with the twelve secretions of the body. Death, birth and other family events are found to be associated with temporary pollution. Temporary pollution can be removed by purificatory agents and acts. Pollution which cannot be removed by any such acts is called permanent pollution. The concept of purity and pollution acts as the basis for caste system. It ensures that the upper and lower castes are segregated from each other temporarily or permanently. The difference in the degree of pollution creates closed segments which try to maintain their degree of purity. The concept of purity and pollution helps to keep the groups separate from each other but at the same time interdependent.

**A.M.Shah , *The Household Dimensions of Family in India : A Field Study in a Gujarat Village and a Review of Other Studies - 1973***

This book analyses a household census of Radhvanaj Village, central Gujarat, the conclusion of this micro study focus on "household dimension of the family in India". It confines itself to the size and genealogical components of the household, intentionally setting aside its legal, religious psychological and other aspects. The average number of persons per household in this village is only 4.6, and nearly two thirds of households are 'simple' (containing all part of one 'parental family'), the minority being 'complex' (containing all or part of more than one parental family). Based on this composition he divided household in to two- simple and complex

Simple households are defined as those which consisted of whole or part of the parental family while complex households are defined as those which consisted of two or more parental or part of parental families.

**A.M.Shah maintained that a simple household had six possible compositions**

- A man and his wife
- Either only a man or only his wife
- A man, his wife and his unmarried children
- Unmarried brothers and sisters
- A father and his unmarried children
- A mother and her unmarried children

**According to him, a complex household has three possible compositions**

- Two or more parental families
- One parental family and part of a parental family
- Part of one parental family and part of another parental family

**Based on the size, Shah classified households into**

- Small households with three or less members
- Medium households with four to six members
- Large households with seven to nine members
- Very large households with ten or more members

Household that is the body of persons who living one house or under one head including children parents and servants. The classification of households into simple and complex is often compared with nuclear and joint families but Shah considers them as distinguished from each other His study proved that the percentage of simple households is much larger than that of complex households. This was also a pointer to the disintegration of jointness among families in rural India.

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