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Introduction to Sociology

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Definition of Sociology
- Macro, Micro and Middle Range Approaches to the Study of Society
- Nature of Sociology or is Sociology a Science?
- Scope of Sociology
- Importance of Sociology
- Use of Sociology in Nursing

Learning Objectives

- At the completion of the chapter, the reader should be able to
- State the importance of sociology in nursing

INTRODUCTION

As compared with the other sciences, Sociology is a new science. Many people have some sociological knowledge and an understanding of some aspects of social life, but they lack the sociological imagination to see their own place in society. The key to the sociological imagination is the ability to see how the sweep of history relates to individual lives at one point in time. The science of sociology, at its best, can make this connection and give us not only knowledge of society but also a greater understanding of ourselves.

Sociology is perhaps the most significant of the social sciences at present all over the world. The credit for having established sociology into an independent science and to obtain for sociology a respectable position in the family of social sciences goes to Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber. Hence, these thinkers are often called the *“Founding Fathers of Sociology”*.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) a French thinker is often referred to as the “Father of Sociology”. He introduced the word **“sociology”** for the first time in his famous work *“Course de Philosophie Positive”* at

- **Specialistic or Formalistic school**
 - ***Simmel's view:*** According to Simmel, the distinction between sociology and other social sciences is that it deals with the same topics as they from a different angle —from the angle of different modes of social relationships. The social relationships, such as competition, subordination and division of labor, are exemplified in different spheres of life such as economic, political and even religious, moral or artistic, but the business of sociology is to disentangle these forms of social relationships and to study them in abstraction. Thus, according to Simmel, sociology is a special social science that describes, classifies, analyses and delineates the forms of social relationships.
 - ***Small's view:*** According to Small, sociology does not undertake to study all the activities of society. Every science has a delimited scope. The scope of sociology is the study of the generic forms of social relationships, behaviors and activities, etc.
 - ***Weber's view:*** Max Weber also makes out a definite field for sociology. According to him, the aim of sociology is to interpret or understand social behavior. Indeed not all human interactions are social.
 - ***Tönnies view:*** Tönnies also has supported the formalistic school. He has differentiated between society (*Gesellschaft*) and community (*Gemeinschaft*) on the basis of forms of relationships.

Thus, according to the formalistic school, sociology studies one specific aspect of social relationships. A comparison is drawn between the forms of social relationships and a bottle.

- ***Synthetic school:***
 - The synthetic school wants to make sociology a synthesis of the social sciences or general science, Durkheim, Hobhouse and Sorokin subscribe to this view.
 - ***Durkheim's view:*** According to Durkheim, sociology has three principal divisions, viz.
 - Social Morphology
 - Social Physiology and
 - General Sociology

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Individual and Society

Chapter Outline

- Introduction
- Man Depends on Society
- Theories on the relationship of man and society
- Basic Sociological Concepts
- Socialization
- Personal Disorganization

Learning Objectives

At the completion of the chapter, the reader should be able to

- Describe the inter-relationship of individual in society and community

INTRODUCTION

Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, declared long ago that “Man is a social animal, he who does not need society, should be either a beast or an angel”. Though man is a gregarious animal like many other social creatures, he has evolved a complex society in the course of evolution. Man is a product of group life. It is the group that socializes him, converts a neonate into a human being. It is the group life that may make a man, a coward or a self-scarifying hero; a law-abiding citizen or a criminal. It is this man-society relationship that forms the central theme of sociological inquiry.

However, there are a lot of questions on man’s social life, its origin and sources. It is therefore essential to know and understand the deep-rooted relations between man and society.

The central concern of sociology is man’s sociality.

It is a fact that without belonging to a society or a group man cannot exist. This statement leads us to several questions, which takes us to a more fundamental question of relation between individual and society.

This relationship is one of the most profound problems of social philosophy, as it involves the question of values. Here we see

life of society has no meaning except as an expression of the lives of individuals.

Society is like an organism, but an organization of minds for a common purpose. Society is real in itself, unique and different from other natural objects. Society gives us choices in our selections, thus helping to become more compete in what we are.

Man in Society and Society in Man

Peter L Berger: Man lives as a member of a group, isolated he ceases to exist. We depend on society not on livelihood but for life itself “society not only controls our movements, but also structures of society become the structures of our own consciousness”.

Our bondage to society is complex more frequently we are trapped by our own social nature.

PL Berger: We are located in society not only in space but also in times “society was there before we were born and it will be thereafter we are dead. Our lives are but episodes in its majestic march through time. Society is the walls of our imprisonment in history”.

BASIC SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

Concept

A concept is a general idea about all that surround us such as objects, persons, events, etc., and also all concrete and as an abstract experiences. A concept generally refers to an oral expression, label to all those which we referred above. All concepts or ideas that represent a category of phenomenon. Our concept of “*tree*” is a mental image that throws up the similarities or common properties of all the different trees we know. We will call a thing “*tree*” when it has some specific characteristics, the image of which we have already acquired in our mind on account of our previous experience, perception or exercise of imagination. Society, community, association, institution, etc. or some of the important basic concepts in sociology which help us to understand the social phenomena.

Society

“Society” is one of the most inclusive concepts in sociological literature. In fact the entire field of sociology has grown around the

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