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ForumIAS

Optional – Answer Writing Focus Group 2025

SOCIOLOGY

Dawt #01 - (Test Code : 881241)

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Allotted Time : 2 Hours

Instructions to Candidates –

- There are 8 Questions in this Question paper.
- All Questions are Compulsory.
- Answers must be attempted in the QCA Booklet only.

Q. No.	Grade/Score
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
Overall Grade/Score	

Part # 01

1. The idea of enlightenment had a profound influence on development of sociology as distinctive discipline. Examine (10)

A. Sociology developed as a distinctive discipline breaking the influence of philosophy and theology. Enlightenment has worked as catalyst in its development.

Enlightenment is the ideology Prevalent in Europe during 14th to 17th century contributing to modernity in socio, economic and political aspects.

Influence of Enlightenment in development of Sociology

1. Enlightenment in political sphere: The ideas of liberty, equality and Fraternity culminated in the form of French revolution and its aftermath sowing the seeds of sociology

2. Enlightenment glorified the scientific ideas and the objective world to arrive at general laws. This made sociology adopt methods of natural sciences.

3. Development of surveys, cheques and modernity

in navigation has enriched the sociological imagination

④. Enlightenment ideas gave rise to Industrial revolution and the subsequent urbanisation, migration and emergence of nuclear families. These enriched the scope of sociology

⑤. Enlightenment produced literature that questioned the established divine social order with focus on rights, and basic human dignities.

The above situations are the primary factors, and result of enlightenment that made sociology distinctive.

Other than enlightenment

①. Counter enlightenment theorists and conservativist focused on social order. thus helping sociology.

②. Progress of science in the form of Darwinism, printing press and navy progress all made sociology more enriching

To account for changes in society and to provide for answers to questions due to social change aftermath of enlightenment comte, Durkheim adopted positivist approach while Marx adopted conflict perspectives.

Enlightenment provided fertile ground for genesis of sociology as distinctive discipline.

② Positivistic methodology challenged the idealist tradition. Discuss (10)

②

(A). Idealism in sociology is one of the early tradition to make sense of social world and social institutions. Idealism deals with the genesis of ideas and the proposition that ideas can change the world. Hegel's historical idealism is an example.

Features of idealism

1. Human cognition and ideas are primary to sociology

2. Ideas make the history and change course of history

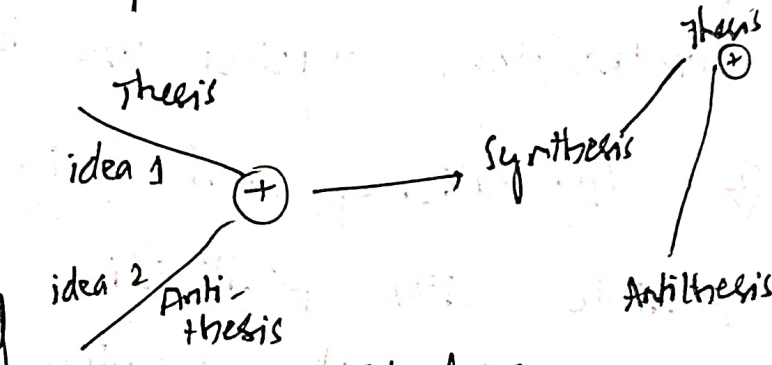

Fig: Idealism

Positivistic methodology emerged to make sociology akin to natural sciences and define the subject matter of sociology on lines of experimentation, objectivity and generalisation.

Challenges posed by positivism to idealism

① Objectivity : Ideas are abstract and exists in cognition.

They are difficult to measure, codify, while positivist

focus on observable facts challenged idealism.

(2). Materialism over Idealism : Karl Marx with his historical materialistic thesis challenged hegelian Idealism to establish a general law of mode of production.

(3). Value neutrality : Ideas are value laden while the positivists focus on value neutrality and value free methodology against the idealism.

(4). Generalising and universal theories : They are made possible with positivistic approach, while the idealistic approach failed to make sweeping generalisations.

(5) Use of scientific methods : like surveys, quantitative data sampling, multi variate analysis challenged the abstract idealism.

However the next generation sociologists like weber, Mead and schutz advocated for making sense of meanings in social action, value free approach of positivism is criticized to suggest value accomodating sociology

sociology thus progressed by critiquing the hitherto ideas and developing new ideas to suit to the time

③ Short note on Synthetic school (10) ③

Ⓐ Synthetic and Specialistic / formal school are the two strands of approach within sociology to provide for scope of sociology and the methodology to adopt.

Synthetic school rose in counter to the formalistic school that advocates for studying society in form and not content [G. Simmel]. He viewed that sociology must study few aspects of society and it only studies specialised concepts, institutions. The methodology must be unique to sociology.

Synthetic school countered the above proposition and advocated to study society in an integrated manner. Durkheim, Hobhouse are its chief proponents.

Characteristics of Synthetic school

① . Synthesis of all disciplines : knowledge from the other disciplines must be integrated within the sociological analysis. Eg Durkheim's Suicide borrowed methodological tools of statistics.

② . Integrated nature of society and the social institutions call for study in synthetic manner.

③ . Sociology must be an ~~all~~ all encompassing science to arrive at general laws objectively

④ . Focus on deriving social laws and universally applicable theories (Eg) Durkheim's DoL

⑤ . Focusing on latent, manifest functions and dysfunctions along with non functions (Eg) Merton's midrange theory

Limitations of Synthetic School

① . No unique way of studying sociology leading to it being branded as nothing but commonsense

② . Few specialised concepts of sociology like Division of labour, social cohesion and integration are ignored

However both the formal and synthetic schools of sociology make the discipline rich, and relevant to the emerging needs of the sociological imagination.

4) Sociology is the outcome of commen sense. Critically analyse the statement. (10 marks)

Common sense is the unteched, normative knowledge available in the crude form. However sociology is the scientific explanations of common sense to accept or dispel the notions.

Sociology outcome of common sense

1. Patriarchal institutions studied by sociologists like Ann oakley, veena Das have theorized from everday knowledge of household work

2. common sense of underdevelopment of east is studided by Marxist like wallerstein to develop the systems theory from core & periphery perspectives.

3 Effectiveness and efficient education leads to mobility is the commonsense, this is theorized in the form of education as vehicle of social mobility by Durkheim.

(4) Common sence in terms of Dowry, violence on women helped in sociological theorizing of "Patriarchal bargain"

Commonsense antithetical to Sociology

(1). Durkheim's study of Suicide explained social fact of suicide and suicidogenic currents rather than common sense of weak minds commit suicide

(2). Mead in his works concluded that Society is born prior to individual's self countering the common sense of self as centre of evolution.

(3). Durkheim's theory of Religion says man creates God countering commonsense of God creating man.

Commonsense provides a starting point for theorizing and help in sociological analysis.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Q.5) Sociology is intertwined with history, economics and political science. Examine the statement. (15 marks)

Sociology according to Weber, Simmel is a synthetic discipline, taking its concepts from other social sciences and studying the society as unit of sociological analysis.

Sociology intertwined with history

1. "History is past sociology and sociology is future history". History provides the events and materials for sociological analysis

Eg concept of historical materialism of Marx with historical modes of production.

2. Evolutionary theories of social change owes a lot to historical discription of societies and the values prevalent Eg Evolutionary theory of Comte.

3. History makes the discipline rich by providing the socio-economic conditions, value system and

Political successions of the time.

(4). Sociology makes history nomothetic over its idiographic nature by providing view points and generalisations.

(5). Sociology along with history helps in building the universal grand theories to explain history in better manner

Sociology intermixed with economics

(1). Economics helps sociology with concrete concepts, data and prevailing economic conditions

Eg Terminologies, concepts like regression.

(2). Understanding conspicous consumption in terms of Veblen's concept of goods as status symbol. Eg Audi car as status more than mobility

(3). Changes in economic system; From socialistic to capitalist states in central Europe have been understood better by sociology's revolution and counter revolution theory

(4) Demographic dividend as economic concept can be understood better by sociology's inequality, exclusion and deprivation (Eg) Human capital Index of world bank

Sociology intertwined with political science

(1). Concept of power, authority, hegemony are better understood by sociological theorization.

(2). Social movements, Neo cultural movements and revolutions like Jasmine revolution are covered through sociological concept of Relative deprivation

(3). State, nation and the political setup within are analysed with functionalist, pluralists and Marxist perspectives.

Sociology, in words of Comte is the mother of all disciplines and the last science to emerge as it is intertwined with other disciplines.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Q.6) Complete seperation of facts and values is impossible argues Jurgen Habermas ... Analyse the statement. (15 marks)

Fact - value dichotomy or distinction is the classical debate surrounding sociology since its genesis as positivistic science

Facts are unchanging, constant things that are true in nature. Values on the otherhand are predisposition of actors towards things.

Separation of Facts and Values

Possible

① positivists, in their bid to make sociology a science focused on facts and objective understanding (Eg) Durkheim treating 'social facts' as things.

②. Scientific method with study of observable phenomenon without importance to values, meanings can lead to factual theories.

However this contention of studying humans as mere puppets playing to chords of society is disagreed by Karl popper. He further goes on to say objectivity in social science is suffocating and killing creativity.

Weber says that facts doesn't lie like pebbles to be picked up. They must be studied in a context with verstehen and the ideal types.

Impossibility of separation of Fact & values

1. As human beings are individuals with consciousness and the actions performed are contextual unlike natural sciences according to non-positivists

2. Alfred schutz says that there is nothing beyond the meanings attached by individuals and sociology must study values.

(3). M.N. Srinivas calls for value accomodating sociology that can be useful to provide solutions of sociological ills (Eg) prescribing policy on poverty

(4). Feminists like Martineau argue that feministic studies and values are missing from sociology with focus on objectivity and facts

Middle path of weber

Weber calls for value frank approach as value neutrality is elusive goal. The values at ~~theoreti~~ choosing the topic is acceptable. once the topic is chosen the researcher must be value neutral, objective and value frank.

Alvin Gloudner says value neutrality is neither possible nor desirable. The sociological researcher must be reflexive, value frank to understand contemporary societies

Overall Grading (√)

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Q.7) Differentiate between objectivity and value neutrality with suitable examples from the works of Emile Durkheim and Karl Mannheim. (15 marks)

objectivity as a concept refers to the study of phenomenon through facts and without changing the direction of research as intended.

Value neutrality on the other hand refers to the conduct of sociological research without personal biases, prejudices or ideology and agendas.

	objectivity	Value neutrality
(1) scope	Makes the research feasible for generalisation and increases relaiability Eg Durkheim's study of suicide from the police records data.	Value neutrality increases validity of research and makes it truely representative of study Eg Durkheim's study of Religion through the concepts of sacred and profane without ethnocentrism

Objectivity	Value neutrality
Nature	
Objectivity will make the phenomenon to be treated as things. (Eg) Durkheim's social facts as things	Makes the research more free from personal biases and prejudices. (Eg) Durkheim's functional explanations of Division of labour
impacts	
Makes the researcher, participants follow standard procedures. (Eg) Karl Mannheim's study of ideology and power	Value neutrality makes the true picture of study without biased responses. (Eg) 'Ideology' according to Karl Mannheim is blinding
Resolve by	
Adoption of triangulation methods. (Eg) Durkheim's Concomitant Variables	Value frank and reflexive approaches

objectivity and value neutrality blinds the research of concious being like humans who create and recreate the social world by their interactions according to symbolic interactionists

Weber calls for methodological pluralism, verstehen and value frame approach to avoid problems of objectivity and values.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
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Q.8) Twin revolutions played a significant role in the bringing Sociology as a distinctive discipline. Analyse the statement. (15 marks)

Sociology as a discipline owes its genesis to answer the questions arisen in the social upheaval post Industrial revolution and to establish the social order in society post French revolution.

Twin revolutions played significant role

Industrial revolution: The shift from the inanimate power to animate power happened with inventions of the phase.

Impact of industrial revolution is seen on society in the form of breaking of joint family system to accomodate for the mobile labour working in factory. The old kinship bonds, ritual harmony and

Social village organisations got disturbed. The cities and urban places are filled with the squalor, sooth and grime. Ever increasing crime, along with violence on women at homes have shaken the social structure.

Urban areas acted as the refugee of displaced migrants who were exploited and alienated in modern workplaces. This upheaval posed serious questions about social change and sociology emerged to answer them.

French revolution

political upheaval noticed after French revolution has destabilized the social order. The aftermath of revolution is chaos and widespread confusion about the new changes in society.

To make sense of the

changes and to restore the social order, Positivits and functionalists like Durkheim came up with theories of social integration. He said "the moral scale has been shaken and new moral scale is needed" post the revolution to restore order.

Along with twin revolutions other factors like counter enlightenment and enlightenment theorists and cultural revolution – Renissance, secularism, biological evolution theories and commercial revolution all contributed to the emergence of unique discipline in the form of sociology to study social institutions and make sense of the social change.

Overall Grading (√)

Poor			Average			Good		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9