

First year

Lecture 4:

Sociology

1-Definition of Sociology :

The first social scientist who uses the term sociology was Auguste Comte. According to Comte, this term is a combination of two words: socius meaning society and logos meaning study or science. Therefore, Sociology is the study of society.

- Sociology is the scientific study of society, which is interested in the study of social relationships between people in a particular context. Sociology is interested in how human beings interact with each other, the laws, rules, and principles that govern the social relationships and interactions, in addition to the influence of the social world on individuals and vice versa. It is concerned with all groups' activities: social, economic, political, cultural, and religious.

Sociology studies:

- * The structure and function of society.
- * The nature and complexity of human social behaviours.
- * The principles of human social life.
- * The interaction of human beings with each other and with their external environment
- * How the social world affects people

2- History of sociology:

Sociology emerged as a result of the reflection of different social phenomena, which are interested in the nature of human social behaviours and society. Sociology as an academic science was thus born in the 19th century (1837), in Great Britain and Western Europe, especially in France and Germany. It greatly advanced throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The major conditions, and societal changes, which gave rise to the emergence and development of sociology as an academic discipline, include the industrial

Revolution, which began in Great Britain, the French Revolution, the Enlightenment, and advances in natural sciences and technologies.

3-The subject matter, scope, and concerns of sociology

The scope of sociology is extremely wide, from the analysis of passing encounter between individuals on the street up to the investigation of global social processes. This discipline covers every aspect of human social life, all types of human relationships and different forms of social behaviors. - Sociologists are primarily interested in human beings as they appear in social interaction and the effect of those interactions on other social activities. They tend to understand, explain, and analyze the effects of social world, social environment and social interaction on, our behaviours, lifestyles, personalities, attitudes, decisions etc. As creative, intelligent members of society.

4-Levels of sociological analysis

There are generally two levels of analysis in sociology which may also be regarded as branches of sociology: micro-sociology and macro-sociology.

a-Micro-sociology

It is interested in small level of the structure and functioning of human social groups. It analyzes the interpersonal relationships, and focuses on social interaction, in addition to what people do, and how they behave when they interact

. b-Macro-sociology

It focuses on the broad features of society. It examines the large-scale social phenomena that determine how social groups are organized and positioned within the social structure;

Note

some writers add a third level of analysis called meso-level analysis, which analyze social phenomena in between micro and macro levels.

5-Theories of sociology:

A-Functionalist Theory(structural functionalism)

Functionalism views society as a social system of interconnected parts. Society has social institutions like schools, families and the police that work together so the social can survive. According to this perspective society is a stable, orderly system that is characterized by social consensus, whereby the majority of people share a common set of values, beliefs, and behaviours.

B-The conflict perspective:

According to that perspective, groups in society are engaged in a continuous struggle, and conflict is a natural part of the social relationship. Different groups of society compete for scarce resources, power, authority; thus, in studying any culture, organization, and social group, sociologists want to know who benefits, who suffers, and who dominates. They focus on conflict between women and men, parents and children, white and black Americans.

C-Interactionism or Symbolic interaction :

In sociology, interactionism is a theoretical perspective that derives social processes (such as conflict, cooperation, identity formation) from human interaction. It is the study of how individuals shape society and are shaped by society through meaning that arises in interactions. Interactionist theory has grown in the latter half of the twentieth century and has become one of the dominant sociological perspectives in the world today.

6-The importance of learning Sociology:

- It helps us understand how social forces influence our goals, attitudes, behaviours, and personality. -It helps us to become more aware and more sensitive towards the social issues.
- It helps to erase biased assumptions, ethnocentric thinking and practices, and become more critical, open-minded and respectful in our interpersonal and inter-groups relationships.
- It helps us to be more human and people centered.
- It increases our self-knowledge.
- The application of sociology knowledge, principles, methods, concepts, and theories provides solutions to the different social pathologies and most crucial social problems.
- It empowers us to be active participants in our society.

Reference:

-From Wikipedia.