



*** Please note that the teacher should draw questions on these seen passages for the Final Examination paper.**

1. Sociology as a discipline offers a scientific way of looking at the society in which we live. Indeed, the inspiration for this approach has come from natural sciences. Comte hoped to use a scientific approach to understand the society in which he lived. He lived in France, at a time of much turbulence and conflict. We have read about the impact of the French Revolution. Then, there was also the impact of the industrial revolution on society. Both these revolutions and the commercial revolutions transformed the lives of humanbeings in ways unimaginable. The discipline too developed in a big way, especially in Europe. Thinkers such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Max Weber are described as “classical sociologists”. Sociology spread to North America and influences there include names like Cooley, Parsons, Merton. In India, too the discipline includes some famous sociologists like Ghurye, Srinivas, Oomen, Gail Omvedt and Mukherji.

The impact of western education brought sociology as an academic discipline to Indian shores. The discipline continues to flourish in diverse areas of enquiry such as caste, tribal community, social change, social problems, education, movements, rural sociology, applied sociology and so forth.

Today, the discipline of sociology is both, relevant and useful in that, sociology studies people, wherever they are and whatever they might do. The scope of sociology is vast and dynamic.

2. Auguste Comte founded the subject of sociology in 19th century France. His positivist approach was based on the premise that it is possible to understand social reality through the use of a scientific method.

Various Western and Indian thinkers have contributed to the development of sociology as a distinctive discipline.

This passage will focus on just one approach to understand society - a structural functional approach, also called structural functionalism.

This approach is based on Spencer’s organic analogy, in which society is compared to a biological organism. So just as an organism has parts that make up the whole, society too can be seen as a whole with parts such as - marriage, family, economy, polity, education and religion.

Each of these parts are like systems in themselves, we call them subsystems. Thus, within the subsystems too there are parts and sub-parts.

Each part performs its own functions (or roles) but sometimes there are problems too. So systems may also become dysfunctional. There is an interrelationship between parts and sub-parts of a system and subsystems. This is one way to see how society works.

3. A characteristic of all cities is the large number of people who live in them. A city like Mumbai has a population of over 17 million. Such large cities are called metropolitan cities. There are many metropolitan cities in India. In such cities the infrastructure and services never match the ever-increasing demands of the population.

As a result of overpopulation in cities there are numerous problems. These include housing, roads, transport, recreational grounds, affordable health care, open spaces and green areas.

Today, the government makes concerted efforts to build infrastructure and provide services to as many as possible. However, due to such shortages or shortsightedness, lack of political will or no long term vision, there are always some persons who use their muscle or money power and influence those in high offices, in order to avail an opportunity, out of turn. This is a problem of corruption.

The city is also a place for opportunities. In fact, it's the one reason which attracts people to cities. Opportunities for study, work, or an urban lifestyle. The movement of people to urban areas is called migration. Metropolitan cities in particular, have become a melting pot of cultures.

4. Have you wondered about how we live our lives? It's a complex set of factors that influence the way we think and behave towards each other, in any type of social relationship.

Here's a little story.

Mr and Mrs Shah got married in 1994. They got married at a Court of Law and later there was a religious ceremony too.

Their twin children were born in 2003 and after four years at home, the twins joined pre-school. Later they joined a private, unaided school. As a result the fees they had to pay was far higher than State Board schools in the area.

Both parents are business persons so they have the financial means to pay for expensive school education. The children in their class are from middle class and upper class homes. The school however arranged for social work opportunities among children who come from a lower economic strata. The Shah twins enjoy the weekly experience at the NGO where they do community service.

Now both these young adults are involved in youth work. One is a youth worker for a local political party and the other has joined an international enterprise which reaches out to the less fortunate.

The parents are delighted with the sensitivity to others that have been inculcated in their twins.

5. The term ‘culture’ in daily usage is often used to describe people who have a taste for art, classical music, literature, wine and so on. In sociology however, the term culture refers to any and everything that is created by human beings. This would therefore include ideas, ideologies, beliefs, values, language, knowledge and a whole lot of material components too.

As people who live in India, we hear the expression “Indian culture” used in conversations or in debates about the same. One wonders, what is Indian culture? Can there be one common Indian culture? Yet, what makes us stand apart from say, Chinese culture or Indonesian culture?

This must have something to do with our past, our geographical territory, our history, rulers, invaders, and resultant cultural hybridisation.

India is described as a multicultural or pluralistic society, because we are a mixture of so many cultures. In fact, in sociology we use the term subculture. Note that there are subcultures which may even go against the dominant culture; these are called countercultures.

Even the media today exposes us to cultures from other parts of the world. The internet and television has shrunk the world, in a sense. We are influenced by the culture of other nations too. The term global culture is often heard in the present times. So is there any ‘pure’ culture?

6. Can you imagine a world without internet or television or mobile phones? It seems almost impossible to live in a world devoid of these gadgets. They have transformed our lives to such an extent that it is now called the ‘Information Age’. There is abundance of data on every possible subject or interest.

Sometimes it is called knowledge or information explosion! There is so much data that we can not always be sure that it is accurate, authentic or valid.

In such a situation it becomes necessary to access information using whatever technological means; but it is also necessary to figure out if the data is indeed a fact, opinion, scientific claim, propaganda or media hype.

Digitisation has enabled millions of people to access or upload data at their finger tips. Don’t we know about the ‘selfie culture’ and how people upload such visual data almost instantly. Today data mining has become a career in its own right. Data management is also a huge job opportunity for people who have the skills to develop programs.

Indeed, the world of internet, television and mobile phones reaches new heights ever so often. Now we are hearing about 5G. Ever wondered what the future might be?

7. Do boys really like fire engines and girls, tea sets? At what age does a child begin to associate with certain colours or toys?

Follow the story from a blog

My friend (Ambika) and her 2-month child (Tina) were at a departmental store with me. I went to the Toy Section of the store and found a lovely soft toy of a hippo and thought I'd gift it to Tina. I showed the toy to Tina and she seemed to enjoy playing with it.

Then I casually informed Ambika that I was going to buy this soft toy for Tina. Ambika remarked, "But it's blue in color! Why don't you pick up one in pink?" I burst out laughing and responded, "But why can't Tina have a blue toy? Do you think she already has colour preference at this age?" Ambika replied, "As her mother, I just know."

Anyway I went ahead and bought the blue hippo for baby Tina. I would have liked to tell my friend about how she was probably deciding for her daughter and turning her into a "girly girl". But I refrained from doing so, as parents can be very sensitive to criticism about their parenting ways.

Few years later I met Tina and she turned out to be the quintessential "girly girl". Ambika was indeed right; she knew fully well about what is expected from her daughter even at such an early age!

8. Here are three situations which some of you may have experienced in life.

Situation A:

Your parent prepares a brinjal dish for dinner. The family is sitting around the eating area and you remark, "I don't want that curry." And your parent remarks, "but you've not even tasted it." And you reply, "But I don't like it; I like it better when you prepare it stuffed and deep fried!"

Situation B:

Gunjana has always been one who studies about a week before an examination. However, she always does very well as she pays careful attention to all that happens during the term. Her school teachers tell her that she can do much better if she could just begin preparation for exams much earlier instead of at the last minute! However, Gunjana is unable to break her habit.

Situation C

You have always worn traditional attire. When you joined college you realise that some of your class mates wear western clothes. You feel like trying it too but you are not sure if your parents will permit you to do so.

Are we sufficiently motivated to make the change? Are we allowed to change? Are there forces that prevent change? Are there suitable alternatives?

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