

UPSCprep Free Daily Answer Writing Initiative

Subject: Sociology

Questions

Q1. How did the Enlightenment contribute to the foundation of sociology? Elaborate. (10 Marks)

Q2. Sociology and common sense are often treated as railway tracks, apart yet together. Discuss. (10 Marks)

Model Structures

Q1. How did the Enlightenment contribute to the foundation of sociology? Elaborate. (10 Marks)

Introduction

- The Enlightenment period, also known as the Age of Reason, was an intellectual and cultural movement in the 17th and 18th centuries that emphasized reason, science, and individualism.

Main Body

Several aspects of the Enlightenment contributed to the development of sociology:

- **Rationalism:** The Enlightenment thinkers believed in the power of human reason to understand and improve the world. This emphasis on rationalism and critical thinking laid the groundwork for the scientific study of society, which is the basis of sociology. The belief in the power of reason led to the development of systematic observation, comparison, and experimentation, which are essential components of sociological research.

- **Empiricism:** Empiricism is the belief that knowledge comes from experience and observation. During the Enlightenment, thinkers emphasized the importance of using empirical evidence to understand the world. This focus on empirical research and the scientific method contributed to the development of sociology as a discipline that relies on systematic observation and analysis of social phenomena.
- **Secularism:** The Enlightenment period saw a shift away from religious explanations of social phenomena and towards secular, scientific explanations. This shift allowed for the development of sociology as a discipline that focuses on the study of society and social relationships without relying on religious dogma.
- **Individualism:** The Enlightenment period emphasized the importance of the individual and the belief in individual rights and freedoms. This focus on individualism led to the development of social contract theories, which explore the relationship between individuals and society. These theories, such as those proposed by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, laid the foundation for the sociological study of social order and social change.
- **Social progress:** The Enlightenment thinkers believed in the possibility of social progress and the perfectibility of human society. This belief in progress led to the development of theories about how societies change and evolve over time, which is a central concern of sociology. Auguste Comte, often considered the founder of sociology, was influenced by this belief in progress and developed his theory of social evolution, which posits that societies progress through stages of development.
- **The emergence of modernity:** The Enlightenment period marked the beginning of modernity, characterized by rapid social, economic, and political changes. These changes, such as urbanization, industrialization, and the rise of nation-states, created new social problems and challenges that required systematic study and analysis. This need for understanding the complexities of modern society contributed to the development of sociology as a discipline.

Conclusion

The Enlightenment period played a crucial role in the emergence of sociology by fostering an intellectual environment that emphasized reason, empiricism, secularism, individualism, social progress, and the challenges of modernity.

Q2. Sociology and common sense are often treated as railway tracks, apart yet together.

Discuss. (10 Marks)

Introduction

Common sense is defined as the "routine knowledge that people have of their everyday world and activities." Sociology, on the other hand, is the scientific study of society and social relationships, including patterns of social communication and cultural differences.

Main Body

- Common sense generally takes cues from what appears on the surface; sociology, on the other hand, looks for inter-connections and root causes which may not be apparent.
- Sociology uses reason and logic, common sense uses conjectures and stereotypical beliefs.
- Common sense is based upon assumptions, sociology is based on evidence.
- Empirical testing has no place in common sense knowledge, while sociological research may have an empirical orientation.
- Sociological knowledge is objective; whereas common sense is intuitive.
- Sociological knowledge results in generalisation and even theory building. Common sense knowledge, on the other hand, may be very personal, and two persons may draw different conclusions from the same event based on their own common sense.
- Sociological knowledge is change-oriented, while common sense promotes status quoism.

Convergence (Yet together)

- The concepts in sociology are framed by taking into consideration commonsensical knowledge. Common sense helps sociologists in hypothesis building.
- Common Sense provides the raw material for sociological investigations. Sociology tends to answer questions generated from common sense knowledge.
- Common sense also helps sociology by challenging its conclusions and thereby enriching the discipline.
- According to Anthony Giddens, sociological knowledge also itself becomes part of common sense knowledge sometimes.

Conclusion

- Thus, when sociology moved closer to positivism, common sense was almost discarded. Anti-positivists, on the other hand, again tried to give importance to common sense. Sociologists' perception towards common sense has thus changed over time as the discipline evolved.



The advertisement features a purple and blue background with a network of nodes and lines. On the left, the word "Sociology" is written in a stylized font inside a black speech bubble. In the center, several stylized human figures are shown in various poses, some holding question marks. On the right, the text "SOCIOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE COURSE" is written in large, bold, white letters. Below this, it says "With Mentorship" in a smaller font. At the bottom right, there is a white rounded rectangle containing the text "Including Test Series". At the bottom left, it says "Access for 3 years".

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