

Day 2

1. The issue of objectivity is a major concern in sociology as in search of true knowledge one's values should not contaminate the research." In the light of the above statement, critically examine value free sociology. 20

Model Structure

Introduction

- Objectivity and value- define OR Define 'Value free Sociology'
 - Value Freedom in Social Research refers to the ability of the researcher to keep his or her own values (personal, political and religious) from interfering with the research process.

Main Body

- Objectivity -
 - Essence in Positivistic Approach
 - Durkhiem's method to identify Social facts
 - Total discard of values and personal biases
- How values are problematic in Scientific research -
 - Criticism of Marxism - Functionalism (Their Lacunas)
 - Examples
- Value-free sociology NOT possible as-
 - Choice of topic influenced by personal preferences
 - Ideological biases of researcher
 - Hypothesis formation requires assumption making→ can't be done without the influence of values
 - Interpretation of facts- value biased
- Value-free sociology can be achieved-
 - Using scientific methods like "Double Blind" in research
 - Using Verstehen (Weber),
 - Train the researcher to adopt value-free approach
 - Enlarge the samples

- Expand the research in temporal & spatial dimensions for wider acceptability

Conclusion

- Weber - one may not eliminate values creeping into sociology but should strive for that. (He suggested objectivity in methodology. Values can influence the choice of topic→ it can be tolerated)
 - Phenomenology, reflexive sociology and anti-methodology proponents argue no objectivity and value neutrality is not sociological necessity
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2. How far the basic postulates of scientific method are applied in sociology. Also discuss whether application of scientific methods in sociology is justified. 10

Model Framework:

Introduction

- Background about the emergence of Scientificism in Social Studies
- Mention of positivism
- Scientific method- Building a body of knowledge through observation, experimentation, generalisation and verification.

Main Body

- Basic Postulates of scientific method:
 - Empiricism and identification of surface reality
 - Cause and Effect analysis
 - Use of research methodologies
 - Direct and calculated Observations
 - Rationality
- Application in Sociology -
 - Positivistic Approach
 - Spencer - Organismic Analogy, Social Darwinism

- Comte - finding laws that governs human behaviour
- Durkheim's methods for Direct Observation of social facts
- Debate (Positivism vs Non-Positivism)- Non positivist challenging use of scientific methods in sociology
- Interpretivism, Symbolic interactionism and Phenomenology
- Oppose the use of scientific methods
- Emphasis on identifying the underlying meaning
- Problem of objectivity in sociology –
 - Objectivity is an illusion and all research is guided by viewpoints which involve subjectivity (Gunnar Myrdal)

Conclusion

- Despite above criticism, the scientific methods paved the way for concrete rationalization in Social investigation.
- According to Goffman and Mead: 'Sociology is science' in itself and has its own methodology, spirit, purpose and results.