

## **Basic concepts in rural sociology and psychology and their relevance in fisheries extension; social change, social control**

Throughout history human have made efforts to gain increasing control over his physical environment and to gain freedom from its limitations. He has sought to gain knowledge about his environment and the myriad phenomena that surround him in natural elements and other inanimate objects and in plant and in animal life. From this knowledge, he has built bodies of knowledge fields of study and disciplines. But humans themselves have also been an object of study: human have tried to understand their behaviour in relation to others. Emerging from this attempt are the social sciences, which study man and his works from various standpoint. Sociology, the youngest of the social sciences, focuses on the study of human behaviour in its entirety. It joined the family of social sciences when it was recognized that the other social sciences failed to fully explain man's social behaviour.

Sociologists have defined sociology in many ways, it was **Auguste Comte** (1789-1857) often referred to as the **father of sociology**, who named the field of study from two words the **Greek “logos”** meaning word, speech, reasoning, or calculation, and the **Latin “socius”** meaning companion. "Logus, as a suffix, indicates scientific study. For example, biology means the science of life, geology, the science of the earth and anthropology, the science of man. Sociology would, therefore, mean **the study or theory of companions**, concerned with what goes on when people get together in groups and interact one with another. Definitions can at best serve to identify what is defined, and while definitions of sociology may vary, the focus and central theme undoubtedly remains the same. Most people have a wrong idea, or no idea at all, of the field's content, but their error is not surprising since sociology as a scientific field of study emerged only a little more than 60 years ago. Because of the several misconceptions about sociology, it is useful to describe what it is not thereby, dispelling misconceptions and clarifying the major concerns of the field of sociology

(1) **Sociology is a Science, not a Social Philosophy:** A social philosophy is a system of ideas and values that tell people how to behave and lay down procedures, norms, and rules of behaviour according to which people are expected to act. **Sociology studies how people do behave *without trying to influence how they should behave.*** It studies *what is*, not *what should be*. Social philosophies may be many, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, or Christianity.

(2) **Sociology is Science, not Socialism:** Even though the two words are similar, they are not connected one with another. One is a science interested in systematic determination of facts concerning human behaviour, the other is a political and economic movement

Despite variation in definition, the basic focus and theme of sociology remains the same. What then are the essential ingredients or elements that form a compound called sociology? Let us attempt to list these so as to indicate the broad content of the field of sociology.

1. It is the study of man.
2. It is the scientific study of man
3. It is the scientific study of man's behaviour.
4. It is the study of man in relation to groups with whom he interacts

The above can be united in the following working definition: Sociology is the scientific study of man's behaviour in relationship to other groups and individuals with whom he interacts.

It is essential to comment on various aspects of the above definition to make for greater comprehension and clarity.

### **WHAT IS RURAL SOCIOLOGY?**

Rural Sociology is a specialized field of sociology. What has been stated above about sociology refers to man regardless of whether his residence is urban or rural? However, within sociology there are distinctions and specialisation. The people who live in villages and rural areas and follow patterns of occupation and life somewhat different from those living in urban areas. Their behaviour, way of life and beliefs are conditioned and deeply influenced by their rural environment. A specialisation of the field of sociology has therefore emerged. We have stated that sociology is the scientific study of man's behaviour in relation to groups with whom he has reciprocal interaction. Simply enough, when this study focuses on man living in rural areas it is the field of Rural Sociology, the rural location of man's residence and its consequences being the distinction that demarcates this specialised field of sociology.

### **WHY STUDY RURAL SOCIOLOGY?**

The purpose underlying the study of Rural Sociology is to develop greater understanding of the behaviour of rural people and rural society. Rural Sociology equips the student with tools of understanding that allow effective analysis of rural people in their relationships with others in rural society. But why is the study of human behaviour considered desirable as a field of

study offered to college students? In the United States system of education the student may have the option of studying this subject, but in some countries, such as India, this is a required subject at the undergraduate level for courses of study like the Bachelor's degree in Fisheries, Agriculture etc. and the student has no choice in the matter. The decision to make Rural Sociology a compulsory subject was based in these nations, on the deep conviction that such inclusion was strongly desirable for the following reasons:

The subject is a part of the student's general education. The field contributes to a general understanding of the world and hence to a well-rounded and comprehensive education. While relatively few students who study the field become professional rural sociologists, all are members of society and become more and more involved in various social roles after they graduate from formal academic training

All people must live in society and all have social roles to enact whatever the occupation or profession they follow. Sociological knowledge or knowledge of the society in which he lives and of the people with whom he interacts is of considerable significance and value for anyone of any vocation or occupation.

## **PSYCHOLOGY**

Psychology is the science of human behaviour. BEHAVIOUR of an individual refers to anything an individual does. An act of behaviour has three aspects

**Cognition-** to become aware of or know something,

**Affection-**to have a certain feeling about it, and

**Conation-** to act in a particular way or direction after the feeling.

Human behaviour may be covert (expressed inside like: perceiving, remembering, reasoning, thinking) or overt (expressed outside or unobservable actions like: walking, dancing, running, using body language such as hand gestures and facial expressions). While symbolic adoption is an example of covert behaviour, use adoption is an example of overt behaviour.

Personality is the unique, integrated and organized system of all behaviour of a person. Personality is the sum total of one's experience, thoughts and actions: it includes behaviour patterns, traits and characteristics that make up a person. A person's physical traits, attitudes, habits and emotional and psychological characteristics are all parts of one's personality.

Genetical influence on personality is seen clearly in the effect of physiology on physique and temperament, their interaction, and the role of nervous system in the acquisition of personality traits.

The cultural influence commences at birth with the infant's response to environment and continues throughout life as the influence of the home, community and society increases during growth and maturity of the individual. Parents, teachers and friends exercise great influence on the formation of attitudes and of the personality as a whole.

## **Social Control**

**SOCIAL CONTROL** is the pattern of influence the society exerts on individuals and groups to maintain order and establish rules in the society. Social control helps in the maintenance desired social values i.e. conformity, which makes modification of the existing behaviour difficult and slow. Social control may vary in degree.

**Folkways** are the informal rules of behaviour based on habit and tradition, mostly found in usage. Violation of the folkways are not taken very seriously by the society how a person shall eat or the type of dress one shall wear are determined by folkways.

**Mores** are socially acceptable ways of behaviour, that do involve moral standards. They are the group-shared understanding about what to do and what not to do in a situation. The ways of behaviour imply some amount of compulsion, the deviation from which may severe social action. For example, rearing of a particular animal, inspite of its profitability: may not be acceptable to a group or society. Mores are more powerful than kways in conditioning the behaviour of an individual.

**Norms** are the established behaviour patterns for the members of a social system. It Expected that the members of a society shall follow the norms. A person who deviates from the norm is generally regarded as a deviant by other members of the system. An individual who first adopts a new technology may be regarded as a deviant by others.

## **Social Change**

SOCIAL CHANGE involves alteration in the structure and function of society. Implied in it is cultural change, as culture is an integral part of society. Social change occurs in all societies. It is slow in primitive and folk societies and rapid in complex modern societies

The aspects of social change are-

**Structural change:** It involves changes in roles, emergence of new role. changes in class and caste structure, and changes in social institutions such as the family, the Government or the educational system etc.

**Functional change:** It refers to changes in the interactional processes between persons and groups Changes may be in the frequency of social contacts, a shift from primary to secondary group relationships, informal personal to formal contractual relationships cooperative to competitive forms of relationships etc.

**Cultural change:** It refers to changes in the culture of society through discovery, invention, adoption and diffusion of new technology, cultural borrowing etc.