ENCYCLOPAEDIC DICTIONARY of SOCIOLOGY

VOL. 1

Edited By
B. B. SHARMA

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS
NEW DELHI

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS
4378/4B, Ansari Road
Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002

Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Sociology

ISBN 81-7041-651-5 (Set)

PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by J. L. Kumar for Anmol Publications, New Delhi and Printed at A.K. Printing Service, Delhi-110053.

ENCYCLOPAEDIC DICTIONARY
OF
SOCIOLOGY

Preface

This encyclopaedic dictionary is a careful attempt to deal with the terms and concepts used in every area of sociology, and to related terms in psychology, economics, political science and anthropology. This has been adited to provide students of sociology at all levels with a handy and reliable source for the entries which range from bureaucracy to critical theory, epistemology to gender and suicide to working class conservation. Entries have been taken from sociology, sociological research, social interaction, social systems, society, culture, sex roles and orientation, social groups, collective behaviour, social startification, religion, social control, models of society, etc. It is to be noted that this dictionary does not set out to be a comprehensive or a definitive work of scholarship, e.g. it is relatively little concerned with the complex etymologies of terms or to convey all usages. Rather its main function is to function as a study aid.

The presentation througout has been aimed at sustaining the interest of readers while enriching their vocabulary and comprehension of technical terms and expressions.

Every effort has been carefully made to entries in a clear and lucid style to provide both straight forward definitions and invaluable background information.

When a dictionary of this kind is using compiled, it becomes essential to draw upon the work of many authorities and seek the advice of colleagues to all of whom the editor is deeply indebted.

Finally the editor expreses his sincere thanks to the publishers and printer for printing the book promptly.

B. B. SHARMA

A

Abduction. Means taking away: the law penalises those who would thus exploit women, intending marriage or unlawful sexual intercourse, where the taking is by force or for the sake of her property. The rights of parents are also protected over a girl under eighteen (or a mentally defective female of any age) who is taken away for unlawful sexual intercourse.

Ability. A quality possessed by an individual that enables him to perform an act, solve a problem, or make an adjustment. Ability refers to potential performance, that is, whether or not an individual can at a given time act in a specified manner or learn certain skills or knowledge. It is not used with reference to the source of the individual's potentiality for accomplishment. Whether this potentiality is based on inherited traits or previous learning, or a combination of both, is irrelevant. Intelligence tests are tests of ability.

Ability, primary mental. A mental ability that occurs relatively independently of other mental abilities. In other words, primary mental abilities are not highly correlated with each other. In an intelligence test a person may score high in one primary mental ability and low in another. L.L. Thurstone hypothesized that the primary mental abilities are the basic components of intelligence. Among those that he hypothesized are memorization, reasoning, numerical ability, and verbal comprehension. *Factor Analysis* may be used to identify statistically independent abilities.

Abnormal. Denoting anything which is deviating from the usual or typical pattern of behaviour or social form within a

society or group, especially where such deviation can also be viewed as maladjustment, maladaption or *Dysfunction.*

Any sociological use of the term faces the problem of determining 'normality'. For example, *Durkheim* made the assumption that the average social form at a particular level of social development was also the functional form. However, whilst conceptions of functional normality and abnormality may be relatively clear in relation to biological organisms, the utility of these concepts in sociology has been widely questioned. With the partial exception of Durkheim and functionalist sociology, sociologists have usually conceptualized individual and social variability and deviation from established patterns of behaviour in other ways than in terms of 'normality' and 'abnormality'.

Abnormal behaviour. Deviation from expected patterns of behaviour. Abnormality of social or psychological behaviour may be defined differently in different cultures, in different historical periods, and in different social situations. Sociologists study what individuals and groups consider abnormal behaviour. Abnormal behaviour as defined within a given society usually interferes with an individual's ability to function in that society, but under specific conditions within a particular culture or in certain types of situations, abnormal behaviour may be encouraged, or at least temporarily tolerated. Many sociologists avoid the use of the term.

Abortion. Unlawfully taking or administering a poison or something noxious or using an instrument intending to procure a miscarriage.

Potts *et al.* define abortion as 'the loss of a pregnancy before the fetus or fetuses are potentially capable of life independent of the mother'. This general definition covers spontaneous abortion or miscarriage and induced abortion, but distinguishes both from premature birth, live or still. The subject of abortion is significant for current social policy and for social work for a number of different reasons.

Abreaction. Refers to the process of reducing or removing emotional tension by re-experiencing in some way the original situation that produced the tension. *Psychoanalysis*, *psychodrama* and *sociodrama* are techniques used to bring about abreaction.

Absentee ownership. The ownership of the means of production or distribution by persons who are not regularly present to supervise or otherwise be involved in the productive (or distributive) enterprise. The term may refer to the absentee ownership of land that is worked by tenant farmers, sharecroppers, or labourers supervised by local managers oroverseers. It also refers to the absentee ownership of factories or other businesses. This includes not only businesses that are branches of large, national companies with their headquarters in another city, but all large *corporations* in which there is inherent a divorce of ownership from management, with the owners consisting of widely scattered stockholders, most of whom are in no way involved in the operation of the company.

Absenteeism. Any absence from work, school, or any social setting in which regular attendance as a normal expectation. Rates of absenteeism are sometimes taken as an indicator of the wellbeing or otherwise of social organizations.

Absentee landowner. An owner of agricultural land who lives away from his property and is not directly involved in day-to-day production. Within a *peasant society* this form of land ownership can be conducive to the appearance of social and political conflicts between landlords and peasants, as in pre-revolutionary France and pre-revolutionary China.

Absolute poverty. Refers to that level of *poverty* defined in terms of the minimum requirements for basic subsistence.

Absolutism. 1. Any political regime in which rulers are unrestrained by custom or the rule of law, and where the exercise of power is arbitrary.

2. The doctrines justifying such a regime.

3. The specific state form and related doctrines (e.g. divine right of kings) associated with centralizing European monarchies in the 17th and 18th centuries.

4. (*Marxism*) The form of Western European state which precedes the *capitalist state.*

Abstaracted empiricism. A term used by C. Wright *Mills* (1959) to refer to those forms of social survey research that involve *quantitative research techniques* but draw little on the theoretical tradition in sociology and contribute little to sociological understanding. Somewhat unfairly, Mills singled out the work of Paul *lazarsfeld* as an exemplar, which he saw as elevating research techniques and the quest for 'reliability' of data at the expense of 'relevance',

Abstract labour. The basis of the measure of *value* in Marx's economic theory.

Abstract social class. A class of persons, or *social category*, whose members have some sense of self-awareness as a unit and feeling of common interests. They do not have sufficient unity or organization to be considered a *group* or even a *collectivity*. On the other hand, the abstract social class differs from those social categories that are merely classifications of an investigator, categories of which persons are often not even aware of being a part. Examples of abstract social classes would be cat lovers, gardeners, housewives, and teen-agers. The term was introduced by George Herbert Mead, who distinguished it from *concrete social class.*

Abstraction. An intellectual process using selective preception to reach generalizations. In the process of abstraction perception is focused on a certain aspect of reality. This aspect or element is selected from a variety of perceived phenomena, and, through the use of symbols, is analyzed and stated in terms of generalizations that are derived from some of the concrete contexts in which the element occurs and are assumed to be applicable to all similar cases, while not completely descriptive of any one of them. Through abstraction common elements may be seen in a

wide variety of objects and events, thus facilitating classification and anlysis.

Acceptance. This term is usually taken in a social welfare context to refer to one of the *principles* of *sociol work* or to a desirable attitude towards the resipients of any social service on the part of those who administer it. It is best approached in terms of the implicit or explicit purposiveness of human behaviour: acceptance in the case of a social work client refers to active search for the point any behaviour has for the client and recognition of this as legitimate for him. 'Acceptance' illustrates the ambiguity of 'principle' in social work: it is justified as part of *respect for persons* or as a statement of what is in fact required for any effective social work. Unlike the *'non-judgmental attitude'* with which it also overlaps, 'acceptance' does not seem to suggest one refrains from anything, Moreover, 'acceptance' can be given a weak, dispassionate meaning, as in social work records when 'the social worker accepted this' means only that he made no comment, or a stronger meaning in which the social worker actively recognises elements in a situation as real. This more positive sense is sometimes exaggerated into descriptions of acceptance as a kind of love, but such rarefied 'hugging at a distance' is best left unpursued. Biestek notes that 'acceptance' is one of the vaguest in social work language, but argues for a clear distinction between acceptance and approval.

Accommodation. In the sociological analysis of race relations this describes the process whereby individuals adapt to situations of racial conflict, without resolving the basic conflict or changing the system of inequality. The term derives from experimental psychology, where it denotes how individuals modify their activity to fit the requirements of the external social world.

Accounts. The language by which people justify their behaviour when challenged by another social actor or group is an 'account'. Following the philosopher J. L. Austin

(1962) who was particularly interested in 'excuses', and C.W. Mills (1940) who referred to the 'vocabulary of motives', the idea of accounts has been widely used in the sociology of deviance to study the ways in which criminals or deviants attempt to deny or to reduce their responsibility for behaviour which is regarded as untoward or socially unacceptable. The use of accounts is a method of avoiding the stigma of an accusation of criminality or deviance. Because sociologists have concentrated on denials of responsibility in accounts, they have to some extent neglected the analysis of alternative responses to social accusation, such as confession.

Accreditation. The public attestation that a particular person or those who have successfully followed certain courses of study are worthy to be trusted in the pursuit of a certain range of activities. Accreditation is frequently statutorily enforced.

Acculturation. This term is used to describe both the process of contacts between different cultures and also the outcome of such contacts. As the process of contact between cultures, acculturation may involve either direct social interaction or exposure to other cultures by means of the mass media of communication. As the outcome of such contact, acculturation refers to the assimilation by one group of the culture of another which modifies the existing culture and so changes group identity. There may be a tension between old and new cultures which leads to the adaptation of the new as well as the old.

Accumulation (or expanded or extended reproduction) of capital (*Marxism*). The process by which capitalism expands by employing labour to create *surplus value* in order to create new *capital*, which in turn is used to create further surplus value and further new capital leading, in the long run, to a continuous increase in the overall volume of capital.

For Marx, accumulation is the most central imperative and motor of change within a capitalist economy. Unlike Weber, Marx does not see accumulation primarily as a

motivational predisposition of capitalists (compare *protestant ethic*). Rather, it is the essence of capitalism that accumulation must occur, and this is essential for capitalism as a system to survive. Thus any long-term threat to this accumulation is also a threat to capitalism.

Acephalous. (In *social anthropology*) (of a society) without formal leadership, e.g. with no provision for chief or permanent political authority.

Achieved status. Any social position gained through personal effort or open competition. As such, achieved status contrasts with *ascribed status*.

Achievement. Means the gaining of social position or social status as the outcome of personal effort in open competition with others, e.g. in formal examinations or competition in a market. As such, achievement is contrasted with ascription and *ascribed status*.

While achievement in its widest sense can be seen as a particular feature of modern societies, with an open class society (see *Social Mobility*) (e.g. 'careers open to talents'), its opposite, *ascription* (e.g. taking over one's father's job), is a feature especially of traditional class-divided societies. However, both modes of allocation of social position and social status will usually exist in any society. One reason for this is that some positions (e.g. historically, especially *gender roles*) are mainly ascribed, while other positions, for example where skills or talents required by the society are in short supply, tend to be subject to open competition. Another reason is that there are likely to be ascriptive elements underlying achieved status (e.g. the effects of advantages of family background underlying educational achievement).

Achievement motivation. The need to perform well, or achievement motivation, significantly determines a person's effort and persistence in reaching some given standard of excellence or in comparison with competitors, and the level of aspiration that is involved in that standard or competition. Seen by D.C. McClelland (1961) as a major

determinent of entrepreneurial activity and as a cause of rapid economic growth when widely dispersed in a society, the concept has been criticized as neglecting social structural factors.

Acquired motive pattern. A concept developed by Theodore M. Newcomb to refer to the new motives and goals that an individual acquires as a result of his occupancy of a particular role. These acquired motives contribute to the satisfactory performance of the role. They result primarily from the new self-conception that the individual develops because of his new role and from his need to maintain this new self-conception.

Act. 1. To carry out or perform any unit or sequence of social behaviour.

2. To play or act out social roles as if on a stage.

3. Any unit of *action* or behaviour.

4. The 'accomplished act' rather than the process of social action (Schutz, 1972).

Acting-out. A term from *Freudian theory* originally referring to the re-living of past experience recalled as a result of the work of the psychoanalyst. The term has come to be used more widely to refer to people who deal with their emotional tensions through behaviour directed towards others; they enact their intra-psychic problems rather than express them through the symptoms of a *neurosis*. Acting-out behaviour is characteristic of people with very low thresholds of tolerance who tend to react to others in terms of the past rather than the reality of the present. For such acting-out is a habitual but not very efficient mode of problem-solving. Acting-out behaviour is frequently associated with *character disorder*, but the term is also used very generally as a shorthand for behaviour creating difficulties for others, including social workers.

Action. 1. Any unit or sequence of social activity or behaviour, e.g. the action of a trade union or state, as well as the action of an individual.

2. Refers to any unit or sequence of individual social activity which is intentional or purposive and involves conscious deliberation rather than merely being the result of a biological reflex.

For Weber, *meaningful social action* consists of any course of action in which subjective meaning guides the action and where this action is oriented towards others. For a symbolic interactionist, such as *Blumer* (1969), that actors act, rather than merely react, is a decisive feature of human action.

Action approach. An approach within *industrial sociology* which stresses the influence of actors' overall orientations to work, including those emanating from beyond the workplace. The approach presents itself as a reaction against those that are more deterministic, including the *sociotechnical systems approach.*

Action research. A loosely defined type of research, contrasted with that undertaken on a strictly controlled experimental basis. The investigator interacts systematically with a service project, frequently on a small scale, in order to assess its operation and its outputs; the results of the research are fed back into the project. Halsey identified five possible types of action research, whilst Lees discusses a range of models. Action research has been a feature of social policy research at least since the *Educational Priority Areas*, and it has been used in social work (*case review system*). Some critics argue that the twin objectives of action and research are in contradiction (e.g. Marris and Rein) but Lees's more modest conclusion probably predominates : 'It is not clear that action research in social policy has to fail.'

Action, social. 1. *Action* oriented to or influenced by another person or persons. It is not necessary for more than one person to be physically present for action to be regarded as social action. In social action the behaviour or anticipated behaviour of others is taken into account in the action. Max Weber pointed out that the failure to act, or the

passive acquiescence to the actions of others, is included as a part of social action.

2. An organized attempt to solve a social problem.

Action frame of reference. The *frame of reference* of social action theory used to analyze social and personality systems. It focuses on the actor (or actors), his values and goals, in specific situations.

Action research Research concerned primarily with discovering the most effective means of bringing about a desired social change. Here, the discovery of scietific principles is of secondary or incidental interest. Action research is a type of applied research.

Action theory, social. A theoretical development within social behaviourism which has focused upon the concept of social action, interpreted as the value-motivated behaviour of individuals, in attempting to constrct a systematic explanation of human behavioru. The foremost influence in the development of social action theory was the work of Max Weber. Other outstanding contributors include Karl Mannheim, Robert M. MacIver, Florian Znaniecki, and Talcott Parsons. Social action theory rejects rigid *Behaviourism* by emphasizing the importance of the subjective meaning attached to a situation by an individual actor. The subjective meaning is analyzed in terms of the actor's internalized values and his expectations of the reactions of others. In social action theory, human behaviour is studied in terms of persons acting in culturally defined situations and in systems of social relationships.

Although it is sometimes suggested that action theory is 'irredeemably individualistic', this is only so in some cases (e.g. *methodological individualism*). That the contrary can be true is illustrated by the work of Weber his (especially comparative studies of European and Asiatic religions). Nevertheless, there remain significant differences between 'action theory' and other more avowedly *structuralist* approaches in sociological theory, for example in

the degree of *voluntarism* or independent *agency* seen for social actors.

Activism. Active involvement as a member of a *political party*, *pressure group*, or related political organization, e.g. a 'trades union activist'. Theories and research concerned with *political activism* suggest that the tendency is for activists generally to be of higher social status, more socially confident and also often better informed than most non-activists. Levels of political activism obviously also vary according to political circumstances.

Activity. Observable physical action. One of the three principal concepts used by George C. Homans in his analysis of groups.

Adaptation. The way in which social systems of any kind (e.g. a family group, a business firm, a nation state) 'manage' or respond to their environment. According to Talcott *parsons*, 'adaptation is one of four *functional prerequisites* which all social systems must satisfy if they are to survive. He argues that in industrial societies the need for adaptation is satisfied through the development of a specialized subsystem, the economy.

Adaptation, sensory. Adjustment of the sense organs to a certain level of stimulation after prolonged experience with that level, so that the effect on the organism is less marked. For example, persons who regularly eat spicy foods are less sensitive to spices than those who rarely eat them; those who live in an environment with a certain strong odor or high level of noise become less aware of and disturbed by the odor or noise than a newcomer would be.

Adaptation, social. The process by which a group or an individual adjusts his behaviour to suit his social environment, that is, other groups or the larger society. Many sociologists prefer to reserve the term adaptation for the biological adjustment of an individual to his environment.

Addiction. Drugs have been used in most cultures, and for a long time in Britain were part of the accepted behaviour of the

professional and upper classes. Only in the twentieth century has the law been increasingly invoked to control drug use, thus 'changing' the drug-addict from a respectable member of society to a common criminal. The laws are highly restrictive and selective, however, within a society which values the medicalisation of drugs. The precise definition of addition is a matter of argument, but one key notion is that of a craving or overpowering desire for the consumption in one way or another of a particular substance, usually tobacco, alcohol and drugs (e.g. non-opiates such as cannabis or barbiturates); recently solvents of various kinds have been misused. Other components of addiction are often described as psychological and/or physical dependence, tolerance of increased does, and severe withdrawal symptoms. Socially preferred definitions of 'the addict' have changed over time from that of moral degradation through that of sickness to the present persuasive definition of drug-misuser, problem drinker, or alcohol abuser. Alcohol abuse has been defined variably, but one more acceptable definition refers to the intermittent or continual ingestion of alcohol, leading to dependence or harm. In social work it is usual to distinguish three categories of alcohol abuse—alcohol dependence, excessive drinking and alcohol-related disabilities; thus constituting a wide range of behaviours and associated problems. Addiction still persists as a term in fairly common use. In welfare discussion 'addiction' raises moral, social, including fiscal and legal problems of *control*; social response to the problem includes a complex range of voluntary and statutory services, some of which are innovatory (such as detoxification units for habitual drinking offenders and street agencies for drug-misusers). Addiction leads to complex individual and family problems. Programmes of treatment and of health education are high in cost and of uncertain result.

Addiction, drug. A "state of periodic or chronic intoxication, detrimental to the individual and to society, produced by a repeated consumption of the drug (natural or synthetic.