

**Sociology of Science**  
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**Lecture - 02**  
**Sociology: Anthony Giddens-Part II**

Dear students, I am discussing what is sociology. Now, I have already given you example of classroom, I have given you an example of suicide, we have already discussed how love marriage is a typical product of industrial revolution that is it is a social construct it is not in universal, it is not natural. So, this is what Anthony Giddens also argues things that appear as natural universal good true may not be so. What is common sense in India may not be common sense in Latin America right. So, the cultural values change from one zone to another zone, from one geographic space to another geographic space. Just take for example, in India amongst the Hindus; it is a custom to touch the feet of the elderly as a mark of respect.

Now, this is not a universal way of showing respect to the old person. Think of a Brazilian lady and an Indian young man the young man is trying to touch the feet of the Brazilian lady to show his respect, the Brazilian lady would be scared that why this person is after my legs. So, that is because the common sense attach to different social customs, religious beliefs traditions, norms and values it changes from one location to another location. What we consider as common sense may not be common sense for other place, other zone, other culture, other society.

Now, it is a sociologist task to break free from the immediacy of personal circumstances to put things in a wider context. It is our duty the responsibility of the sociologist to move away from a social situation to look at it in a new light. How is that possible? To explain that C. Wright Mills American sociologist has developed the concept of sociological imagination. How sociological imagination helps us to understand the social phenomenon that are happening around us, how to make sense of the social phenomenon happening around us, he give the concept of sociological imagination.

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- A sociologist is someone – who is able to break free from the immediacy of personal circumstances and put things in a wider context
  - Sociological Imagination – requires us to “ think ourselves away from the familiar routines of our daily lives in order to look at them anew” C Wright Mills
  - Sociological Imagination- It's an interplay of Biography and History
  - Biography – Individual Circumstance, Personal Experiences
  - History – Broader Social, Economic, Political, Economic, Religious context
  - Private Trouble Versus Public Issue
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Now, what is sociological imagination? It is nothing, but an interplay of biography and history. What is biography for him biography is not the story of somebody; it is not autobiography or biography in that sense. Biography is things that are happening to individuals at a personal level, personal circumstances, individual circumstances, happenings personal experiences, individual experiences things that are happening to any individual at his or her level that is biography for him.

And then again he uses another jargon that is history. What is history? History is not the history of mankind or history of a particular society or history of a particular country, here history refers to the broader social context which includes social, religious, political, legal, economic context of our lives. He says sociological imagination is interplay between biography and history that is how the broader social context that is history influences shapes, governs, controls, impacts the biography that is our individual happenings circumstances at the individual level or personal experiences or individual experiences, how things at a broader level in a wider context affects the lives of the individuals.

Now, let us take an example. Let us take an example of campus placement. Now, in IITs there is campus placement every year. Let us say there are 1000 students who are sitting for campus placement in a particular year out of which 50 persons do not get placed. How do you explain that, you will explain that by saying that it has something to do with

them there is inability to crack the interview, as their personal failure right 50 out of 1000, you can explain it away by saying that the problem lies with the individuals with the students right. But what if 500 students in a particular year, do not get placed can we explain it as a level of biography or I have to look beyond biography, we have to look beyond the individuals to look at the wider social context, the history that is the broader social context to explain it.

We can always here cite instance of economic recession that hit US in 2008 subprime crisis. Now, because of the very fact that the many software companies IT companies in India, which gets their project from US. And because of that economic recession in US, they were unable to obtain projects. If they do not have projects, they do not need people, they do not need employees, they do not need engineers to work for them. Hence, they would not be in a position to come to the campus for placement, hence the students a large number of students would in fact did go unplaced in a particular year.

So, here it says the things that are happening at an individual level like for instance looking for a job, appearing for a job interview, getting placed in the campus, the many factors which is beyond the individual which has a bearing on individuals. In this case, now one of these factors is economic recession, economic factors at a global level. It had a bearing on the campus placement scenario at the IITs.

Another example, divorce. Now, if two persons decide to annul the contract of marriages decide to end their marriages, this is a very disturbing phase in their life, can be difficult for both of them. It is private trouble. Can be explained through lack of compatibility between the spouses, ego (Refer Time: 07:32) or some other factor at individual level because it is a private trouble.

But what if in a country, the rate of divorce is very high like Anthony Giddens says one-third of marriages end up in divorce in the first five years of marriage in UK. Now that is a huge number, you definitely cannot explain that through private trouble, this has to be explained through public issue. It becomes a public issue in that case. You have to go beyond these individuals, go beyond the spouses to look at the causes.

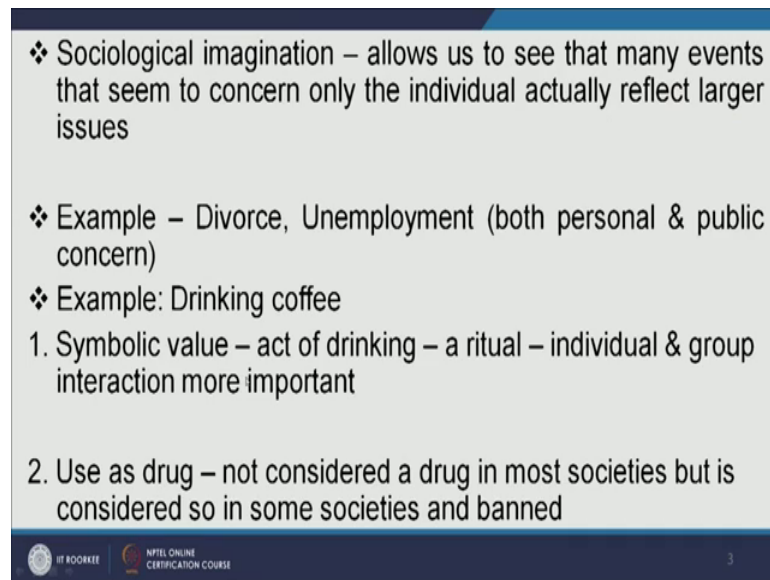
Again just as in the case of love marriages, we looked at the sociological factors such as legislation, financial independence, change in location, the power to take their own decision, all these things can come into being when we explain divorce also. All the

sociological factors which are at a broader level, social factors, religious factors, political factors, legal factors all these things can be looked into to explain such high rate of divorce in a particular country. So, sociological imagination allows us to establish a relationship between individual things, individual happenings or individual experiences and how it is shaped by, how it is governed by, how it is influenced by the broader social context.

Let us take another example of unemployment which again if some people do not get a job then that is their individual problem, personal issue, they do not have the requisite educational degree, they do not have the skill, they do not have the ability to get placed. But if in a country the millions of employable population are unemployed then definitely it is a public issue it has to be explained by the broader social context, social political economic legal context. You have to look at the employment policy of government of India, or industrial policy, or education policy, or issues regarding privatization all these things have to be looked at when you try to explain such high rate of unemployment in a country.

So, sociological imagination it allows us to think ourselves away from the familiar routines of our daily lives in order to look at them in a new light. Now, Anthony Giddens also has given example of drinking coffee. How can we explain drinking coffee sociologically, he says it is possible. In fact drinking coffee or tea can have four or five sociological implications.

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- ❖ Sociological imagination – allows us to see that many events that seem to concern only the individual actually reflect larger issues
- ❖ Example – Divorce, Unemployment (both personal & public concern)
- ❖ Example: Drinking coffee
  1. Symbolic value – act of drinking – a ritual – individual & group interaction more important
  2. Use as drug – not considered a drug in most societies but is considered so in some societies and banned

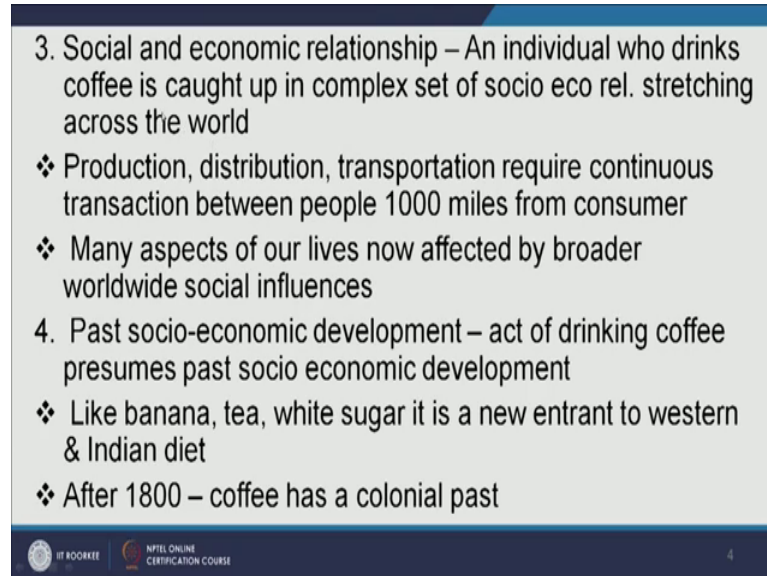
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He says the first one is a symbolic value drinking coffee or tea has a symbolic value. When we go out to have coffee or tea, it is not always coffee or tea on our mind, it is group interaction, interaction with our friends, team members that we are more interested in. When we are together in a group, we are taking a break from our work; we are ordering for coffee, coffee becomes the excuse for such individual and group interaction. So, coffee solves a symbolic value here for such group interaction. When people call their family other family members or friends for dinner, it is not food on the mind of the people, it is the social interaction, the get together that is important to them. And they do that through calling people for lunch or for dinner right. So, coffee or drinking tea it serves a symbolic value.

Now, the second point is and it can be the coffee can be used as a drug, coffee contains caffeine. So, in some societies, coffee is banned; in some societies coffee is prohibited because it contains caffeine which is considered as a drug. Sociologists try to understand why the same thing is prohibited in one country, but is accepted available in another country. Take for example, marijuana we all know that Netherlands or Holland is one country where legal production cultivation and a consumption of marijuana is allowed. You can legally consume smoke marijuana, you can produce cultivate marijuana legally, but it is considered as drug in many other countries, and it is banned. One needs to locate the underlying factors sociological factors for taking such decision, why coffee or

marijuana can be banned in one country, but it is accepted as a common drink in another country?

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3. Social and economic relationship – An individual who drinks coffee is caught up in complex set of socio eco rel. stretching across the world

- ❖ Production, distribution, transportation require continuous transaction between people 1000 miles from consumer
- ❖ Many aspects of our lives now affected by broader worldwide social influences

4. Past socio-economic development – act of drinking coffee presumes past socio economic development

- ❖ Like banana, tea, white sugar it is a new entrant to western & Indian diet
- ❖ After 1800 – coffee has a colonial past

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So, the third implications of coffee is the social and economic relationship. An individual who is drinking a cup of coffee or tea is caught up with in a complex set of social economic relationship stretching across the world. Where is coffee produced in Africa, in South America, two countries that come to our mind is Ghana in Africa and Brazil in South America who are the major exporters of coffee.

There are coffee plantations in those countries with the coffee farmers are working on it that it gives livelihood to so many farmers coffee farmers. Then those coffee which is produced in those plantations they are picked up by the middleman then are sent to this multinational coffee chains coffee companies like Nestle, Bru. So, this coffee is packaged processed packaged and sold all over the world by these companies, which gives again employment to so many people across the world.

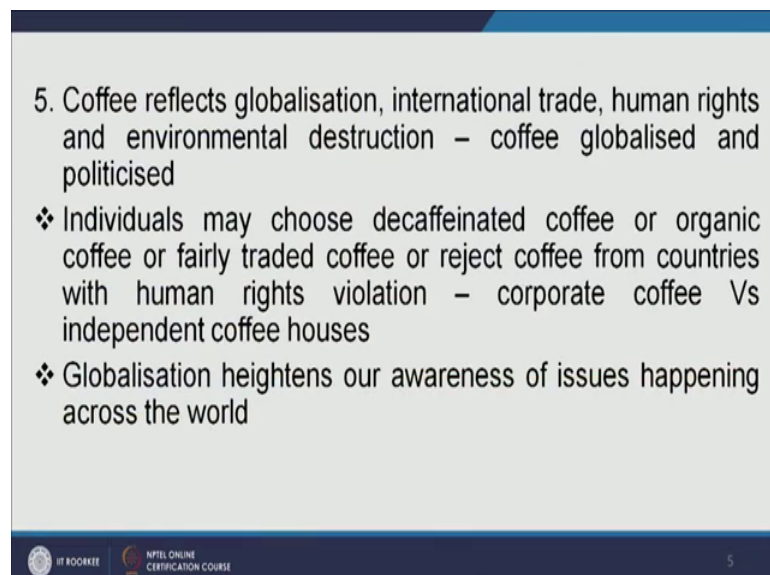
So, when we buy coffee or tea from the local grocer or from the local departmental store, and you consume we are unconsciously cut up in that complex socio economic relationship with people who are involved in the production of coffee or tea, who can be thousands of miles away from us from a set of people in Ghana or Brazil to the people in the middleman and to the company staff in US or Europe then to those people who are in to marketing to those people who are selling it in India, and those people who are

consuming it. So, it tells us about the social economic relationship, it tells us about the globalization of economy coffee tells us about globalization of economy.

Next, we can talk about past social economic development. Many of the things that we consume today whether at UK or in India like potato, white sugar, tea, coffee, banana, it was not part of the daily diet of the Europeans till 18th century, it was not part of the daily breakfast tea or coffee. It came to them or also through the British it came to India through a process of colonization, coffee, tea, white sugar, banana all these things came to India or UK through this colonization. So, coffee or tea entails our colonial past.

When we drink of your tree, it tells us about our past socio economic political changes, coffee or tea is part of our life because it came to the British to India or in went to the UK through this people through those colonial masters who went and conquered different parts of the world. And they discovered different fruits, different products - food products and brought them to Europe and through that it went to different colonies. So, coffee entails our colonial past tells about our past is a socio economic political development. Then coffee also reflects globalization international trend, human rights issues, environmental destruction, because coffee is politicized as well as globalized.

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5. Coffee reflects globalisation, international trade, human rights and environmental destruction – coffee globalised and politicised

- ❖ Individuals may choose decaffeinated coffee or organic coffee or fairly traded coffee or reject coffee from countries with human rights violation – corporate coffee Vs independent coffee houses
- ❖ Globalisation heightens our awareness of issues happening across the world

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When we drink coffee we make certain choices whether to drink coffee which are fairly traded which means whether the right amount of right price has been paid to those coffee producers to this plantation farmers are not. So, many of these companies who sell coffee

in that coffee packet it is written it is fairly traded coffee that they have paid the right price to the plantation workers, the farmers. The production of coffee does not include or does not entail exploitation of these people. So, make a choice whether to drink fairly traded coffee or organic coffee. Whether you want to have coffee in coffee chain like coffee-coffee day, barista or you want to have coffee independent coffee houses.

So, this choices tells us a lifestyle choices tells us about the different sociological implications of coffee sometimes. We make sure that we buy coffee from those countries where there is no human rights violation; there is no environmental destruction of common natural resources, so hence when we say that coffee is globalized and politicized this is what it means. Whether to buy coffee from countries which has human rights violation issues whether there is complaints of environmental destruction, when the coffee is fairly traded, whether to when we take a decision to buy a coffee from a corporate chain or to buy and drink coffee from a independent coffee for a shop. We are making certain lifestyle choices which also tells us how informed and how aware we are about issues that are happening all over the world right from globalization to environmental destruction to fair trading of coffee or tea to human rights issues all right.

So, this globalization also heightens our awareness of issues which are happening across the world. Now, our activities both structure that is it gives say up to the social world we live in; and at the same time, a structured by that social world. Now, this is a very interesting statement to come from Anthony Giddens. He says our activities both shape the social structure we live in; and at the same time, we are structured by the social world.

What does it mean? It means that it is a two way process the relationship between individual and society is a two way process there are certain rules, norms, beliefs, customs formal rules, for informal rules, values, norms, customs all these things, tradition, it has a bearing on our life it governs our life, it shapes, influences our day-to-day interaction. What we eat this may not be our decision because we eat what is eaten in our community, in our caste, in our culture, in our region right. How we eat also may not be part of our decision making, in some culture people eat with spoons; in some culture, people eat with the hand and some culture people eat with forks with sticks. So, though we think that we are in a position to take our own decision, but actually it is the structural



factors, cultural factors, social factors which determines what we wear, what we eat, how we eat right, how we dress.

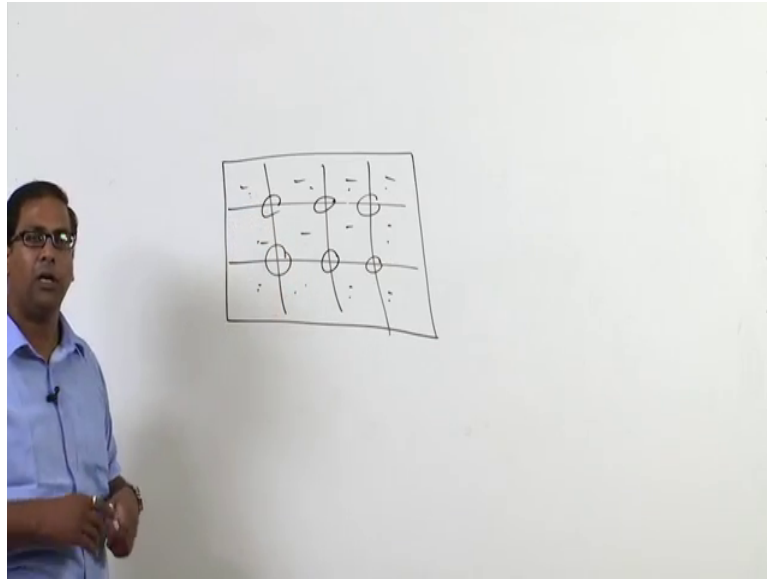
If you are an underage, you cannot drink. If you are an underage you cannot get a driving license. So, it is not your individual choice whether you want to drink or you want to drive it is the law the societal customs which determines all these things. Sometimes what we wear we think it is our individual choice, but actually our choices have been decided, our choices have been governed, our choices have been manipulated in the corporate boardrooms, where a new dress is designed, a new apparel is designed. Then it is marketed all over the world as the only thing that the young would and should wear. So, we also wear what we see in the media we also wear what we see our friends wearing.

Hence many of the things that we think is with an individual power may not be so, we get influenced, governed, controlled by the societal forces. How to eat; how to behave; how to behave within the family, there are certain rules that we follow; in the community there are certain rules we follow formal and informal rules we follow right. And that we pick up through a process of socialization the custom, the tradition, the norms, the values, the informal rules, the religious beliefs, the rituals all these thing we learn pick up through a process of socialization right from our childhood. And who socializes us it is the family the primary unit of society, it is a school, the media, the peer group.

So, when Anthony Giddens says that we are structured by that social world it means that our lives are structured governed influenced shaped by all this wider social forces, broader social context, the custom tradition values, norms, formal informal rules that I talked about. But at the same time we give shape to the social world we live in; we structure the social world we live in; it is not that this norms is values is rules formal and informal ones have appeared out of thin air.

It is we people who over the generation we individuals we human beings who over generations over centuries have formulated these rules have constructed, reconstructed, modified, re-modified, this rules, this customs, this norms, this values, this religious beliefs. Hence it is a two way process, we get we are structured by the world at the same time we structure the very world.

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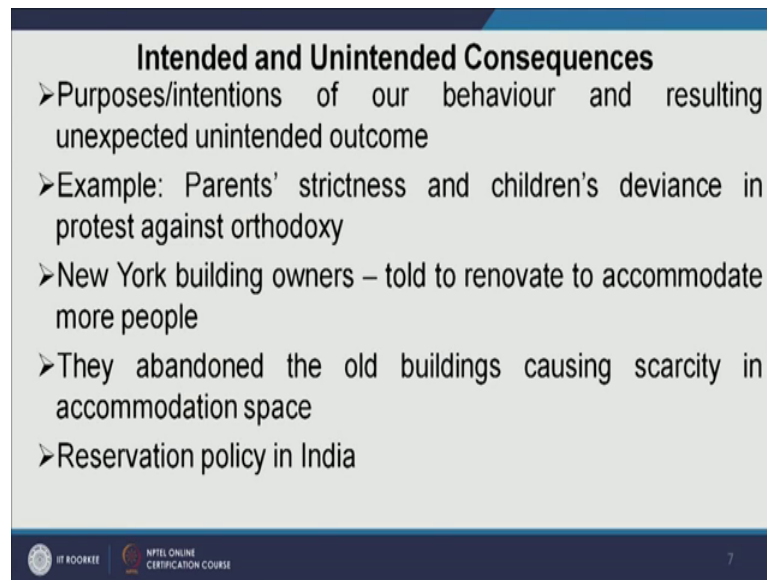


Let us compare that to a physical structure of a wall. Now, let us say this is a wall, and these are the bricks. Now, this wall is composed of this bricks. Think of this wall, the physical structure of a wall as society; and this bricks are human beings. But there is a difference between the physical structure of a wall, and the social structure of a wall. The social structure is composed of these human beings, but this human beings are constantly changing, we live, we die we are replaced by another set of human beings, but the structure remains the same.

And what glues the structure is custom values, tradition, laws, formal-informal rules, religious beliefs this is a constantly shifting structure with human beings living and dying and replaced by another set of human beings, but the structure remains the same. The family as a basic unit of society remains, religious beliefs remains constant over generations over centuries, education, economy, social institutions they survive.

Hence, this is how we can put that we individuals are structured our lives our day-to-day lives day-to-day interaction is structured by the social world. At the same time, it is we individuals who have made this social structure possible by creating, recreating, constructing, reconstructing, modifying, re-modifying over centuries over generations this social structure.

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**Intended and Unintended Consequences**

- Purposes/intentions of our behaviour and resulting unexpected unintended outcome
- Example: Parents' strictness and children's deviance in protest against orthodoxy
- New York building owners – told to renovate to accommodate more people
- They abandoned the old buildings causing scarcity in accommodation space
- Reservation policy in India

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Then we come to another part of this discussion of Anthony Giddens introduction to sociology that is intended and unintended consequences of different social actions. See there are certain social actions, which are initiated to meet certain ends to attend certain ends, but it can also lead to unintended social consequences. Like for instance, we can take the example of parents strictness. The parents can be very strict with the children, idea is to discipline the children, idea is to make sure that the children conform to the family norms, to the community norms, to the formal and informal rules of the society of the culture, so that they become a consciously region of the country, they become a responsible member of the society.

But such strictness over strictness can also have unintended social consequences. The children, the young ones, the adolescents, they may deviate from the family norms, they may deliberately break those norms, they may rebel against it, they may protest, they may become deviants because as a reaction to such orthodox socialization technique used by the parents. So, the unintended consequence of strictness of parents can also be deviant children.

Another example of unintended social consequences leading from intended social action is the example that is of New York building owners given by Anthony Giddens. He says sometime back in New York the New York authorities felt that all this New York building owners should be told to renovate their building within a stipulated time frame. Why so

that it will solve the problem of accommodation in a growing city like New York, it will accommodate more people if this dilapidated broken down buildings, unsafe buildings are renovated.

So, they issued a notice to those building owners, but the building owners looking at the cost involved in renovating, they found it impossible they found it beyond their means. And the deadline was they could not meet the deadline, hence they abandoned those buildings altogether, thereby creating for the problems of accommodation which is the unintended social consequence of such a social action initiated to solve the problem of accommodation.

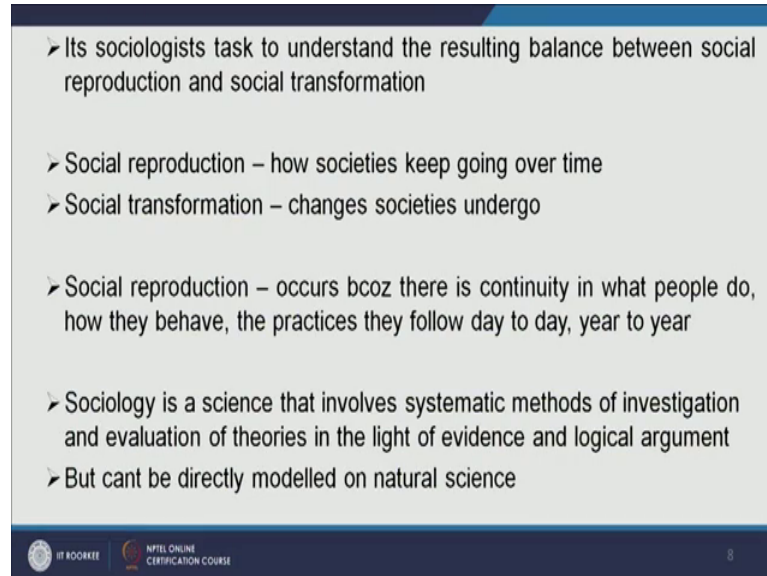
Let us look at for instance closer home the reservation policy that is an intended action, it to bring social political economic in equality among different castes of India. To bring all the caste on par on level playing field to give certain economic political advantages to the underprivileged castes, who have always been left out because of caste discrimination that is why reservation policy was introduced in the first place. But it has some unintended social consequences as well. It has led to a situation where only the creamy layers, within the backward castes have taken all the advantages. It has led to a situation where it has led to further casteism, it has divided the country into backward castes and the forward castes; the higher castes and the lower castes.

The main idea was to dispel casteism to eradicate casteism, but it has created for the casteism. If you look at the way the politics is played out the way elections are fought, the way the voting is done we know that reservation policies unintended social consequences is that of vote bank caste politics and that has happened that has been happening which definitely belies the other defeats the very purpose for which reservation policy was created. Social scholars, some scientists also argue that it has not reached the poorest of poor, the benefits of reservation has not reached the needy ones the poorest of poor.

So, these are certain unintended social consequences of reservation policy. So, it is sociologists task to understand the resulting balance between social reproduction and social transformation. What is social reproduction is how societies keep going over time. When I was discussing how we shape influence, create, recreate the society we are part of right of the what I talked about the fact that it is we people who have created,

recreated, modified, re-modified there is this social practices, this custom tradition, law, values right.

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- Its sociologists task to understand the resulting balance between social reproduction and social transformation
- Social reproduction – how societies keep going over time
- Social transformation – changes societies undergo
- Social reproduction – occurs bcoz there is continuity in what people do, how they behave, the practices they follow day to day, year to year
- Sociology is a science that involves systematic methods of investigation and evaluation of theories in the light of evidence and logical argument
- But cant be directly modelled on natural science

So, social reproduction talks about that. Reproducing the social practices over generation over centuries how they keep continuing, how the practices keep following itself. The individuals may live and die, I get replaced or another set of individuals, but the social institution, social norms, social practices they continue, they get reproduced by incorporating changes, by modifying itself. But remains intact like family, like economy, like religious beliefs religious systems all these things survived, thousands of years. Social reproduction studies how societies keep going over time, how social practices keep reproducing itself how it kept continuing over a period of time.

Where a social transformation is social change, social dynamics, how social change takes place social factors, political factors, technological factors of social change. Industrialization, modernization, secularization, westernization, urbanization, all these processes of change talk about constant change that to society all over the world is going through undergoing it is a constant process of change. Nobody, say you can say that India is an industrialized country or India is a modernized country or India is a secularized country. We will always say that India is going through the process of industrialization; India is going through the process of urbanization; India is going

through the process of secularization right. So, all this process of change are studied under social dynamics, social transformation.

Sociology again is a science, because it has certain methods certain theories, it relies upon evidence and logical argument and the findings that people or the social scientist arrive at it is understood within the framework of sociology, sociological theories where argument is made logically and with based on evidence and empirical facts. So, sociology is a science, because ultimately sociologist also try to come up with in universal laws of human behaviour, uniform laws and that they arrive at through the empirical facts, empirical evidence, analysis of empirical evidence through logical reasoning. And explaining these findings within sociological theories, theoretical framework, but though it is a science, but it cannot be directly modelled on natural sciences that is how Anthony Giddens argues. Though sociology is a science, but it cannot be directly modelled on natural sciences that men issue.

Why it cannot be directly modelled on natural sciences is that when we study in a laboratory we mostly deal with inanimate objects; but in sociology, we deal with human beings living human beings acting, thinking, feeling human beings. So, there is a lot of difference between studying inanimate objects and animate human beings thinking, feeling, acting, human beings. So, there is always a problem of objectivity. It is very difficult for sociology is to maintain value neutrality, maintain neutrality when non partisanship, non-judgment, it is very difficult for them to be non-judgmental, nonpartisan to be neutral when they study although human beings.

Also it is very difficult to come up with a universal laws because with the rise of post modernism people argue scholars argue that things are localized things are culture specific. We cannot and generalize everything based on a single study. We can always say that at this point of time, at this region, at this juncture, at this geographic area, we made this study and these are finding we cannot say that this can be true of entire world entire universe. So, there are certain issues where sociology cannot be directly modelled on natural sciences, but it is through sociology that we try to make sense of the social world we live in. It is through sociology and sociological imagination that we try to understand or different group patterns, how things that are happening at individual level can be explained through broader social context.

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**General Subject Matter of Sociology  
(Alex Inkle 1964)**

1. Sociological analysis – Human Culture & Society, Sociological Perspective, Scientific Method In Social Science
2. Primary units of social life – Soc. Acts & Soc Rel., Groups, Communities etc.
3. Basic social institutions – Family, Religious, Economic, Political, Educational etc.
4. Fundamental social processes – Social Stratification, Socialisation, Cooperation, Assimilation, Accommodation, Social Control, Social Conflict, Social Change

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Now, finally, let us look at this slide. This is the subject matter of sociology in Alex Inkle's book, a very popular book in 1964. What is sociology? In a book written by Alex Inkle called 'What is sociology', which came out in 1964. This is the subject matter of sociology that he put in the content section; this is what sociologists should study.

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**Sociology in 2017!**

- Contents in the Text books of Anthony Giddens and David Newman  
Individual and Society, Social Construction of Knowledge and Reality, Identity Building: Socialisation, Social Relationships: Family, Crime and Social Deviance, Organisations, Institutions, Social Stratification: Gender, Class, Caste, Race, Ethnicity and Inequality, Religion and Modern Society, Ageing and Old age, Media, Work and Economic Life, Cities and Urban Spaces, Politics, Government and Terrorism, Science, Technology and Society, Globalisation and Social Change

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Now, this is a subject matter of sociology the content in the content section of Anthony Giddens and David Newman's book in 2017. If you look at the content section these are the topics, which sociologists look at study or examine. So, most of the things like social

action, social relations, a family, all these things remain in relationship between individual society to act with to understand the changing dynamics of society, the many new topics have been added like terrorism, study of old people, science technology and society, globalization, media.

So, my aim in these two lectures was to give you a brief introduction of what is sociology, what is sociological perspective. And in the next lecture onwards, we will try to understand the sociological aspect of science, the sociology of science, the history of science, the methodology of science. Now, we stop here.

Thank you.