

MCQs on Sociology and Society

1. According to the text, the initial advice "Study hard and you will do well in life" primarily contradicts other advice by:
 - a) Emphasizing the importance of family background over individual effort.
 - b) Suggesting that individual effort alone defines success, while other factors like the job market, gender, and socioeconomic background also influence outcomes.
 - c) Focusing solely on academic achievement rather than practical skills.
 - d) Promoting a negative outlook on future job prospects.
2. C. Wright Mills' "sociological imagination" is primarily defined as the ability to understand the connection between:
 - a) Past historical events and future predictions.
 - b) An individual's personal troubles and broader public issues or social structures.
 - c) Scientific theories and common-sense observations.
 - d) Economic policies and political ideologies.
3. The text suggests that in the contemporary world, individuals often belong to more than one "society." Which of the following best illustrates this concept?
 - a) Being a citizen of only one national identity.
 - b) Identifying as "Indian society" when abroad, but as a specific linguistic, ethnic, or caste community when among fellow Indians.
 - c) Limiting one's social interactions to only immediate family members.
 - d) Exclusive membership in a single professional organization.
4. A key difference between sociological observations and common-sense observations is that sociology is:
 - a) Always based on individual opinions.
 - b) Characterized by unreflective and naturalistic explanations.
 - c) A systematic, questioning, and evidence-based approach, uncovering "unsuspected connections," unlike unreflective common sense.
 - d) Focused solely on philosophical or religious commentaries.
5. Peter Berger compares a sociologist to a spy because both:
 - a) Are involved in clandestine operations.
 - b) Need to report accurately and free of bias about a certain terrain or subject matter.
 - c) Aim to influence political outcomes through their findings.
 - d) Work primarily in military intelligence.
6. Which two intellectual ideas or movements significantly influenced the making of sociology?
 - a) Romanticism and Absolutism.
 - b) Scientific theories of natural evolution and the Enlightenment.
 - c) Feudalism and Mercantilism.
 - d) Surrealism and Existentialism.
7. The Industrial Revolution dramatically changed the nature of labor by:
 - a) Strengthening the guild system and traditional crafts.
 - b) Leading to the degradation of labor, shifting work from protective contexts like guilds and families to factories with mechanical divisions of labor.

- c) Decentralizing production back to rural areas.
- d) Increasing the importance of individualized work rhythms.

8. It is important to study the European origins of sociology, even when focusing on non-Western societies like India, because:

- a) All modern societies are exact replicas of European ones.
- b) Sociology was exclusively developed in Europe and has no non-European roots.
- c) Many core issues (e.g., urbanization, factory production) are pertinent to all modern societies, and the global expansion of British capitalism and colonialism profoundly impacted societies worldwide, including India.
- d) European sociological thought is superior to all other forms of social inquiry.

9. In India, the relationship between sociology and social anthropology differs from many Western countries because:

- a) There is a rigid divide between them, with no overlap.
- b) Social anthropology exclusively studies modern urban societies.
- c) There is no rigid divide; Indian sociologists often study both modern, complex urban societies and traditional groups like tribes, blurring boundaries due to India's diversity.
- d) Sociology in India is primarily focused on ancient texts.

10. A sociological approach to economic behaviour differs from a traditional economic approach in that sociology:

- a) Focuses exclusively on pure economic variables like price, demand, and supply.
- b) Looks at economic behaviour within a broader context of social norms, values, practices, and interests, considering cultural factors.
- c) Primarily aims to formulate precise laws of economic behaviour.
- d) Neglects the impact of advertising and consumption patterns.

11. According to the introductory section, the concept of a "good job" is:

- a) Universally defined by financial compensation.
- b) Primarily determined by individual satisfaction.
- c) Socially and culturally constructed, with varying notions across societies.
- d) Strictly a matter of political policy.

12. C. Wright Mills' sociological imagination aims to unravel the connection between:

- a) Individual effort and personal satisfaction.
- b) Personal troubles of the milieu and public issues of social structure.
- c) Historical events and future prophecies.
- d) Manners and individual behaviour.

13. The example of homelessness is used in the text to illustrate how:

- a) It is solely a personal failure.
- b) It can be understood as a public issue with roots in larger social, economic, and political forces.
- c) Government schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna–Gramin are ineffective.
- d) It is primarily a result of rural-to-urban migration only.

14. The text uses the example of an Untouchable wanting tea to illustrate:

- a) The unwavering respect shown to all individuals in Indian villages.
- b) The inherent diversity and inequalities that exist within societies, especially related to caste.

- c) The simplicity of pre-modern societies.
- d) The absence of any social signals in public spaces.

15. Sociology is introduced as a discipline that is distinct from philosophical and religious reflections because it emphasizes:

- a) Moral and immoral aspects of human behaviour.
- b) Desirable ways of living and a good society as goals.
- c) An empirical approach and a commitment to objective observation, focusing on how norms and values function in actual societies.
- d) Personal liking and bias in observations.

16. The "unintended consequence" of the Government of India's decision to provide financial compensation to widows of deceased soldiers was:

- a) A significant decrease in forced marriages.
- b) An increase in women's property rights.
- c) Many forced marriages of widows with their brother-in-law to keep compensation within the patrilineal family.
- d) A shift from patrilineal to matrilineal systems of inheritance.

17. Early sociologists like Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, and Herbert Spencer attempted to:

- a) Reject scientific methods in social studies.
- b) Categorize societies into types and stages of social development, often assuming Western societies were the most advanced.
- c) Focus solely on individual psychological traits.
- d) Promote anarchist political systems.

18. The Enlightenment movement contributed to the emergence of sociology by:

- a) Discouraging rational thought.
- b) Emphasizing reason, individualism, and the belief that scientific methods could be applied to human affairs to solve social ills.
- c) Reasserting the dominance of theological explanations for social problems.
- d) Promoting the idea that poverty is a natural phenomenon that cannot be redressed.

19. Capitalism, as described in the text, became the driving force behind industrial manufacturing and involved:

- a) A return to barter systems.
- b) Entrepreneurs engaging in the sustained, systematic pursuit of profit, with markets as key instruments of productive life.
- c) A shift towards communal ownership of all assets.
- d) The decline of rational calculation in economic decisions.

20. The Industrial Revolution led to the rise of urban centers characterized by:

- a) Improved sanitation and housing for all.
- b) Large, well-planned cities with minimal social interaction.
- c) Overcrowded slums, poor sanitation, and new, often harsh, social interactions.
- d) A return to agrarian village life.

21. The impact of industrialization in India, compared to the West, was notably different in that:

- a) India experienced identical urbanization patterns.
- b) The influx of British manufactured goods ruined Indian handcraftsmen, leading more people to move into agriculture rather than industrial absorption.

- c) India became a major manufacturing hub for machine-made goods.
- d) India's industrial growth led to less social change.

22. A significant aspect of modern societies emerging from the Industrial Revolution was the new significance of "clock-time" because:

- a) Work rhythms became flexible and individualistic.
- b) Agricultural and manufacturing labor increasingly came to be set by the clock and calendar, implying synchronized, punctual work for set hours.
- c) People became less concerned with time.
- d) It led to a decline in urbanization.

23. The relationship between sociology and other social sciences is described as:

- a) Rigidly separate with no common interests.
- b) Having clear-cut divisions and distinct methodologies only.
- c) Having overlapping interests, concepts, and methods, with an increasing need for interdisciplinary approaches.
- d) Limited to one-way influence from sociology to other fields.

24. Traditional economics is primarily focused on:

- a) The broader context of social norms and values.
- b) Pure economic variables like price, demand, and supply, and the allocation of scarce goods and services.
- c) The sociological reasons for consumption patterns.
- d) Unintended consequences of economic policies.

25. Why might economists' predictive abilities sometimes suffer, despite the precision of their terminology?

- a) Because they only use qualitative data.
- b) Because they often neglect individual behaviour, cultural norms, and institutional resistance, which sociologists study.
- c) Because they focus too much on social context.
- d) Because they collaborate too closely with sociologists.

26. Unlike economics, sociology usually:

- a) Provides precise technical solutions to social problems.
- b) Encourages a questioning and critical perspective, facilitating discussion about the social desirability of a goal, not just technical means.
- c) Focuses solely on profit maximization.
- d) Disregards the material and symbolic costs of inactivity.

27. Conventional political science traditionally focused on:

- a) The actual study of political behaviour.
- b) Political theory and government administration, often neglecting extensive contact with political behaviour.
- c) The interrelationships between all institutions.
- d) The sociological reasons for supporting political parties.

28. While historians typically study the past and sociologists the contemporary, a key difference was that historians previously aimed to:

- a) Abstract from reality and generalize.
- b) Establish causal relationships only.

- c) Delineate actual events and establish how things happened, while sociology sought causal relationships.
- d) Focus on gender relations and customs.

29. Today, history has become "far more sociological" by:

- a) Focusing exclusively on kings and wars.
- b) Looking at social patterns, gender relations, mores, customs, and important institutions beyond rulers and monarchy.
- c) Limiting its scope to economic data.
- d) Rejecting sociological methods.

30. Psychology primarily involves itself with the individual's:

- a) Group behaviour only.
- b) Intelligence, motivations, memory, and nervous system.
- c) Societal structures and institutions.
- d) Collective actions within large organizations.

31. Social psychology acts as a bridge between psychology and sociology by:

- a) Focusing solely on macro-level societal analysis.
- b) Maintaining a primary interest in the individual but concerning itself with how the individual behaves in social groups.
- c) Studying only the nervous system reactions of individuals.
- d) Analyzing political systems exclusively.

32. Sociology attempts to understand behaviour as it is organized in society, specifically how:

- a) Personality is shaped by different aspects of society, such as economic/political systems, family structure, and culture.
- b) Individual intentions drive all social change.
- c) Human behaviour is solely a result of biological factors.
- d) Statistical data is irrelevant to understanding social characteristics.

33. Durkheim's study of suicide is mentioned to show how sociology:

- a) Focused on the individual intentions of those committing suicide.
- b) Prioritized statistics concerning social characteristics over individual intentions to establish a clear scope for sociology.
- c) Exclusively used psychological explanations.
- d) Avoided empirical investigation.

34. In Western contexts, a standard definition of social anthropology typically involves the study of:

- a) Modern, complex societies.
- b) Simple societies of non-Western and "other" cultures.
- c) Industrialized nations.
- d) Archaeology and physical anthropology only.

35. The unequal relationship between those who studied and those who were studied in early social anthropology was due to:

- a) The equal intellectual standing of all societies.
- b) Western-trained social anthropologists often studying non-European societies thought of as exotic or uncivilized.

- c) The focus on modern western societies as the primary subject.
- d) The absence of any colonial influence.

36. The traditional study by social anthropology focused on "simple societies" assuming they were:

- a) Highly literate and urbanized.
- b) Primarily focused on industrial production.
- c) Bounded and unchanging, despite global processes impacting even the smallest village.
- d) Exclusively found in Europe.

37. Social anthropology was characterized by its emphasis on:

- a) Survey methods and quantitative data.
- b) Long fieldwork traditions, living in the community studied, and using ethnographic research methods.
- c) Focusing solely on parts of society like bureaucracy or religion.
- d) Studying societies only from a distance.

38. The reason no rigid divide exists between sociology and social anthropology in India is attributed to:

- a) The lack of intellectual development in either discipline.
- b) The very diversity of the modern and traditional, of the village and the metropolitan in India.
- c) The exclusive focus on Western theories.
- d) The absence of tribal populations in India.

39. The scope of sociological study is extremely wide, ranging from:

- a) Only micro-level individual interactions.
- b) Only macro-level global processes.
- c) Micro-level individual interactions (e.g., shopkeeper-customer) to macro-level national and global social processes (e.g., unemployment, impact of electronic media).
- d) Only economic variables.

40. Feminist theories are mentioned as an example of why there is a greater need for:

- a) Disciplinary isolation.
- b) A single, unified social science.
- c) An interdisciplinary approach to understand complex social phenomena, like gender roles in politics or the economy.
- d) A return to traditional, narrow disciplinary foci.

ANSWERS

1. **b** — Suggesting that individual effort alone defines success, while other factors like the job market, gender, and socioeconomic background also influence outcomes.
The text contrasts advice focusing on individual effort with the reality that external social and economic factors also strongly affect life outcomes.
2. **b** — An individual's personal troubles and broader public issues or social structures.
Mills' 'sociological imagination' links individual experiences to larger societal contexts.
3. **b** — Identifying as "Indian society" when abroad, but as a specific linguistic, ethnic, or caste community when among fellow Indians.
The text notes that "society" is a flexible concept; identity changes with context.
4. **c** — A systematic, questioning, and evidence-based approach, uncovering "unsuspected connections," unlike unreflective common sense.
Sociology uses scientific methods distinct from everyday assumptions.
5. **b** — Need to report accurately and free of bias about a certain terrain or subject matter.
Berger uses the comparison to highlight the sociologist's commitment to objective reporting.
6. **b** — Scientific theories of natural evolution and the Enlightenment.
Both strongly influenced sociological thought.
7. **b** — Leading to the degradation of labor, shifting work from protective contexts like guilds and families to factories with mechanical divisions of labor.
The Industrial Revolution is associated with this transformation.
8. **c** — Many core issues (e.g., urbanization, factory production) are pertinent to all modern societies, and the global expansion of British capitalism and colonialism profoundly impacted societies worldwide, including India.
It is necessary to understand these global influences when studying Indian society.
9. **c** — There is no rigid divide; Indian sociologists often study both modern, complex urban societies and traditional groups like tribes, blurring boundaries due to India's diversity.
The divide in Western academia does not strictly apply in India.
10. **b** — Looks at economic behaviour within a broader context of social norms, values, practices, and interests, considering cultural factors.
Sociology includes contextual and cultural analysis of economic action.
11. **c** — Socially and culturally constructed, with varying notions across societies.
What constitutes a "good job" varies by context and culture.
12. **b** — Personal troubles of the milieu and public issues of social structure.
Mills focused on connecting personal troubles with societal issues.
13. **b** — It can be understood as a public issue with roots in larger social, economic, and political forces.
Homelessness is used as an example of a public, not only private, issue.
14. **b** — The inherent diversity and inequalities that exist within societies, especially related to caste.
The Untouchable example illustrates persistent social divisions and inequities.

15. **c** — An empirical approach and a commitment to objective observation, focusing on how norms and values function in actual societies.
Sociology is empirical and observational rather than prescriptive.

16. **c** — Many forced marriages of widows with their brother-in-law to keep compensation within the patrilineal family.
The policy had unforeseen social effects within families.

17. **b** — Categorize societies into types and stages of social development, often assuming Western societies were the most advanced.
Early sociologists ranked societies according to an evolutionary hierarchy.

18. **b** — Emphasizing reason, individualism, and the belief that scientific methods could be applied to human affairs to solve social ills.
The Enlightenment fostered rational inquiry, leading to sociology.

19. **b** — Entrepreneurs engaging in the sustained, systematic pursuit of profit, with markets as key instruments of productive life.
Capitalism involves the systematic pursuit of profit, distinct from pre-capitalist modes.

20. **c** — Overcrowded slums, poor sanitation, and new, often harsh, social interactions.
The Industrial Revolution drove people into rapidly growing, often squalid, urban centers.

21. **b** — The influx of British manufactured goods ruined Indian handcraftsmen, leading more people to move into agriculture rather than industrial absorption.
Unlike Europe, India's masses moved into agriculture, not industry, due to colonial economic policies.

22. **b** — Agricultural and manufacturing labor increasingly came to be set by the clock and calendar, implying synchronized, punctual work for set hours.
Time discipline is central to modern societies and industrial processes.

23. **c** — Having overlapping interests, concepts, and methods, with an increasing need for interdisciplinary approaches.
The disciplines are interlinked, not isolated.

24. **b** — Pure economic variables like price, demand, and supply, and the allocation of scarce goods and services.
This is the traditional scope of economics, in contrast to sociology's broader approach.

25. **b** — Because they often neglect individual behaviour, cultural norms, and institutional resistance, which sociologists study.
Economists' omission of broader social context often limits predictiveness.

26. **b** — Encourages a questioning and critical perspective, facilitating discussion about the social desirability of a goal, not just technical means.
Sociology typically addresses not just how to do something, but also whether and why.

27. **b** — Political theory and government administration, often neglecting extensive contact with political behaviour.
Traditional political science focused more on institutions than real-world political action.

28. **c** — Delineate actual events and establish how things happened, while sociology sought causal relationships.
Earlier historians emphasized chronology and narration over theory.

29. **b** — Looking at social patterns, gender relations, mores, customs, and important institutions beyond rulers and monarchy.
History now examines broader social structures and processes.

30. **b** — Intelligence, motivations, memory, and nervous system.
Psychology centers on the individual as its primary unit of analysis.

31. **b** — Maintaining a primary interest in the individual but concerning itself with how the individual behaves in social groups.
Social psychology bridges the gap by focusing on individuals in groups.

32. **a** — Personality is shaped by different aspects of society, such as economic/political systems, family structure, and culture.
Sociology examines how society influences personality and behaviour.

33. **b** — Prioritized statistics concerning social characteristics over individual intentions to establish a clear scope for sociology.
Durkheim's suicide study focused on statistical patterns across groups.

34. **b** — Simple societies of non-Western and "other" cultures.
Social anthropology in the West primarily studied non-Western or so-called "primitive" societies.

35. **b** — Western-trained social anthropologists often studying non-European societies thought of as exotic or uncivilized.
Early anthropology reflected Western biases and power hierarchies.

36. **c** — Bounded and unchanging, despite global processes impacting even the smallest village.
Anthropology often presumed stasis in simpler societies despite global influences.

37. **b** — Long fieldwork traditions, living in the community studied, and using ethnographic research methods.
Intensive participant observation distinguishes social anthropology.

38. **b** — The very diversity of the modern and traditional, of the village and the metropolitan in India.
This diversity blurs boundaries between the disciplines in the Indian context.

39. **c** — Micro-level individual interactions (e.g., shopkeeper-customer) to macro-level national and global social processes (e.g., unemployment, impact of electronic media).
The discipline of sociology ranges from micro to macro phenomena.

40. **c** — An interdisciplinary approach to understand complex social phenomena, like gender roles in politics or the economy.
Issues like gender require integrated approaches across disciplines.