

INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY I&II

{Theories and Practice}

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INTRODUCTION

Industrial Sociology, also known as 'the study of work organizations' a term which came into use in the middle of twentieth century owing to the famous experiments conducted by George Elton Mayo and his associates during late twenties and early thirties at Hawthorne Works in Chicago. It is the application of sociological approach to the reality and problems of industry. The importance attached to the subject can be gauged to the fact that India as an example has committed to the industrial development as a necessary means to solve its economic and social problems. This book attempts to examine what Sociology of industry is, its evolution, nature and scope, its current trends as well as its relevance to our contemporary society. But for proper understanding of the paper and for us to dig into the foundation of the subject matter, it is expedient to understand the key terms: 'industry' and 'sociology'.

WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

The science dealing with the origin, evolution and development of human society and its organization, institution and functions, is known as Sociology. Coming together to live in a group is the compulsion of man, not his choice but he cannot live in isolation. The long journey of evolution of man made him develop the group living ways and thus society is formed. Thus, the study dealing with requirements of men living in group led to development of Sociology. That is why man is popularly known as 'Social animal.'

Behaviour of man ought to be different when living in group as individual behaviour should not disturb others. Then need of norms, rules and laws would then be felt.

WHAT IS INDUSTRY?

Simply put, Industry" is the branch of economic activity concerned with manufacturing goods - whether finished products or 'semi-products' (products that go into other products) - from raw materials.

Having considered what sociology and industry are, we can now examine what sociology of industry mean as postulated by different scholars.

HOW DIFFERENT SOCIOLOGISTS DEFINED INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY

Industrial Sociology is concerned with industry as a social system, including those factors (technical, economic, political) which affect the structure, the functions and the changes in that system.

Industrial Sociology is a substantive area of general sociology which might more accurately be termed the sociology of work organizations or sociology of economy.

The adjective industrial implies the application of Sociological theories and methods in one segment of society, i.e., the one concerned with the economic function of producing and distributing the goods and services which society requires.

In the opinion of Lupton who has been more specific and advanced the study of the social system of the factory and of the influences external to the factory which affect that system.

Industrial Sociologists center their interests upon the social organizations of the workplace, including the pattern of interaction among people who are responding to one another in terms of their roles in work organizations or whose behaviour is being affected by those roles

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Industrial Sociology is concerned with how the economic subsystem is related to other sub-system, how the sub-system is structured in terms of particular work organization and roles and how persons fit into these roles.

According to H.J. Smith who defined the field of Industrial Sociology as the study of social relations in industrial and organizational setting and the way these relations influence and are influenced by relations in the wider community

EVOLUTION OF SOCIOLOGY OF INDUSTRY

Investigations of topics that would eventually be labeled industrial sociology began in the early part of the twentieth century. In-depth studies of occupations such as Teachers, salespeople, physicians, waitresses, and ministers were conducted in the 1920s at the University of Chicago. However, the sub discipline of industrial sociology is generally considered to have begun with the famous Western Electric research program conducted at the Hawthorne Works in Chicago. These studies, conducted during much of the Great Depression, were designed to understand the factors involved in worker productivity. When the studies ended, the researchers claimed to have determined that the social environment. The work group of the worker and the way workers were treated by management had a powerful effect on worker performance. Although disagreement now exists about whether their results actually support their claims, there is little doubt that their conclusions captured the imagination of social scientists interested in worker productivity and culminated in substantial research projects dealing with work, workers, and the workplace. That research activity eventually became known as industrial sociology and represented, for a time, one of the most vibrant sociology sub disciplines. For examples of the research being conducted during this time, Guest provides an example of the importance of this research when he describes the results of one of his projects. In 1948, he and his team launched a two-phase project on a community whose U.S. Steel plant was to be shut down. The first phase was to be a study of the plant and the community before the shutdown and the second was to be a study of the community after the shutdown. After the first phase was completed, the results were published in the book *Steeltown*.

A year later, he contacted the head of public relations for U.S. Steel and asked why the mill had not yet closed. The director was surprised that Guest had not heard what had happened. Apparently, the head of engineering for U.S. Steel had read the report, realized the importance of the skill in the mill's workforce, and convinced top management to upgrade the mill to keep it in operation. The director concluded by saying, "You won't have a ghost town to study, but I'm sure that if you went back for a visit the Chamber of Commerce would parade you down Main Street as heroes.

NATURE OF SOCIOLOGY OF INDUSTRY

It is an economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories. Industry also means hard work. That is why it is usually said that "To shine your personality enter into industry." The need of industrial sociology, its development and put it on solid foundation is felt by man on the path of progress of mankind. After India got freedom, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, gave name to industries.

Temples of Modern India

From the dawn of civilization man has been making rules of behavior so that human activities may be bound into the formation of society. Manmade laws differ from those which are natural and universal, for instance, the rule that human beings must grow and mature.

Industrial Sociology deals more with soft skills of man. It plays vital role in building nation as it helps in increasing the production and thus helps in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rising. More so with quality as competition can be faced. Today, there is noticeable increase of interest in quality, on the part of both industry and society. There are several reasons for the greater interest in quality higher demands for quality from customers, greater competition, demands for better profitability and legislation on product liability. Good results cannot be achieved through work on a single department in the enterprise. It is necessary for all those functions which come into contact with the product during its development, manufacture and use, to cooperate in this work. This means that quality must be considered and controlled by all these functions: market research, product development, manufacturing engineering, purchasing, production, inspection, marketing and after-sales service. It is also necessary to coordinate the work of these functions on quality that the enterprise should have a wide approach to quality. Our lives are dependent in many ways on industrial products; shelter, nutrition, communications, healthcare, work, recreation and national security. One basic aspect of products of this type, goods or services, is that they must be fit to use. Failure in use may lead to injury, discomfort, death or economic loss. Since all these functions are created by men in manufacture of any product, those involved form a group and thus society is formed. The periphery of this society is also affected or for that matter they may come from general public and thus role of corporate comes into play. This is popularly known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

SCOPE OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY

Industrial sociology is an applied discipline. It is concerned with the study of human relations as they grow and operate in the field of industries. It deals with the sociological concepts that have relevance to industry. It concentrates upon the social organizations of the work place or industry. It studies the patterns of interaction between people in terms of their roles in industrial organizations. Industrial organizations are also studied by other disciplines such as- industrial management, industrial engineering, industrial psychology and economics. But they study the phenomena of industry in different ways. Their studies sometimes may overlap. Industrial engineering deals with the design of products and equipments. Industrial management is more an art than a science. Industrial psychology studies—the selection of personnel, job satisfaction, motivation and incentive to work, team spirit, accident proneness and such other personal matters and behavioural problems. Economics concentrates on such matters as-prices, wages, profits, full employment, finance, monopoly, marketing, taxation, etc. But none of these sciences focuses its attention on the social or human aspects of industrial organizations. This task is done only by industrial sociology. Industrial sociology studies industrial organization not as a technological or

economic organization, but more than that, as a social or human organization. It stresses up on the social or interactional factors in industrial relations, formal and informal organization, team work, communication etc. When interaction among two or more persons is affected by the fact that one of them is a doctor, a teacher, a plumber, a factory worker, a stenographer, a boss, an employee, a union leader, or an unemployed person, we have before us the raw material of industrial sociology. The industrial sociology deals with the total organization of the workplace. It also deals with three different organizations which may be conceived of as distinguishable but interrelated: namely, (a) management organization, (b) informal organization of workers, and (c) union organization (a) 'Management organization' refers to the relations between management and the workers. It also includes policies, programmes—structure and the functioning of the management. Its main emphasis is on the formal relations developed by the workers with the management.(b) 'Informal organization' of workers consists of informal relations developed voluntarily by the workers themselves. Such relations are established by the individuals and small groups within the factory or industry. Such organizations assume the forms of cliques, gangs, friendship groups, bands etc. These organizations develop their own informal norms to control the activities of their members.(c) Union organization refers to the role of trade unions and the participation or involvement of workers in union activities. Trade unions are playing a vital role increasing industrial unrest and maintaining industrial peace. They also control the formal and informal relations of the workers. These three organizations of the industry are affected by the physical conditions of the work place, fashions in management thinking, governmental and other social control, the personalities of employees and their experiences in playing roles in other organizations..

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The symbolic interactionist perspective

The symbolic interactionist perspective, also known as symbolic interactionism, directs sociologists to consider the symbols and details of everyday life, what these symbols mean, and how people interact with each other. Although symbolic interactionism traces its origins to Max Weber's assertion that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world, the American philosopher George H. Mead (1863–1931) introduced this perspective to American sociology in the 1920s. According to the symbolic interactionist perspective, people attach meanings to symbols, and then they act according to their subjective interpretation of these symbols. Verbal conversations, in which spoken words serve as the predominant symbols, make this subjective interpretation especially evident. The words have a certain meaning for the "sender," and, during effective communication, they hopefully have the same meaning for the "receiver." In other terms, words are not static "things"; they require intention and interpretation. Conversation is an interaction of symbols between individuals who constantly interpret the world around them. Of course, anything can serve as a symbol as long as it refers to something beyond itself. Written music serves as an example. The black dots and lines become more than mere marks on the page; they refer to notes organized in such a way as to make musical sense. Thus, symbolic interactionists give serious thought to how people act, and then seek to determine what meanings individuals assign to their own actions and symbols, as well as to those of others. Consider applying symbolic interactionism to the American institution of marriage. Symbols may include wedding bands, vows of life-long commitment, a white bridal dress, a wedding cake, a Church ceremony, and flowers and music. American society attaches general meanings to these symbols, but individuals also maintain their own perceptions of what these and other symbols mean. For example, one of the spouses may see their circular wedding rings as symbolizing "never ending love," while the other may see them as a mere financial expense. Much faulty communication can result from differences in the perception of the same events and symbols. Critics claim

that symbolic interactionism neglects the macro level of social interpretation the “big picture.” In other words, symbolic interactionists may miss the larger issues of society by focusing too closely on the “trees” (for example, the size of the diamond in the wedding ring) rather than the “forest” (for example, the quality of the marriage). The perspective also receives criticism for slighting the influence of social forces and institutions on individual interactions

The functionalist perspective

According to the functionalist perspective, also called functionalism, each aspect of society is interdependent and contributes to society's functioning as a whole. The government, or state, provides education for the children of the family, which in turn pays taxes on which the state depends to keep itself running. That is, the family is dependent upon the school to help children grow up to have good jobs so that they can raise and support their own families. In the process, the children become law-abiding, taxpaying citizens, who in turn support the state. If all goes well, the parts of society produce order, stability, and productivity. If all does not go well, the parts of society then must adapt to recapture a new order, stability, and productivity. For example, during a financial recession with its high rates of unemployment and inflation, social programs are trimmed or cut. Schools offer fewer programs. Families tighten their budgets. And a new social order, stability, and productivity occur. Functionalists believe that society is held together by social consensus, or cohesion, in which members of the society agree upon, and work together to achieve, what is best for society as a whole. Emile Durkheim suggested that social consensus take some of two forms:

Mechanical solidarity is a form of social cohesion that arises when people in a society maintain similar values and beliefs and engages in similar types of work. Mechanical solidarity most commonly occurs in traditional, simple societies such as those in which everyone herds cattle or farms. Amish society exemplifies mechanical solidarity.

In contrast, organic solidarity is a form of social cohesion that arises when the people in a society are interdependent, but hold to varying values and belief sand engage in varying types of work. Organic solidarity most commonly occurs in industrialized, complex societies such those in large American cities like New York in the 2000s. The functionalist perspective achieved its greatest popularity among American sociologists in the 1940s and 1950s. While European functionalists originally focused on explaining the inner workings of social order, American functionalists focused on discovering the functions of human behavior. Among these American functionalist sociologists is Robert Merton (b. 1910), who divides human functions into two types: manifest functions are intentional and obvious, while latent functions are unintentional and not obvious. The manifest function of attending a church or synagogue, for instance, is to worship as part of a religious community, but its latent function may be to help members learn to discern personal from institutional values. With common sense, manifest functions become easily apparent. Yet this is not necessarily the case for latent functions, which often demand a sociological approach to be revealed. A sociological approach in functionalism is the consideration of the relationship between the functions of smaller parts and the functions of the whole.

Functionalism has received criticism for neglecting the negative functions of an event such as divorce. Critics also claim that the perspective justifies the status quo and complacency on the part of society's members. Functionalism does not encourage people to take an active role in changing their social environment, even when such change may benefit them. Instead, functionalism sees active social change