

B.A.PART-III(SOCIOLOGY) PAPER-V(RURAL SOCIOLOGY)

Topic- Nature of Rural sociology
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Nature of Rural Sociology

- **Learning objectives**

- ✓ Understand the meaning, definitions of the Rural Sociology
- ✓ Understand the nature of the Rural Sociology.

- **Introduction**

Rural Sociology has taken the shape of an independent social science with its own characteristic standpoint and methods. The subject matter of Rural Sociology, according to Nelson, is the description and analysis of the progress of various groups as they exist in the rural environment.

It is a branch of sociology which studies rural society. Rural sociology studies the relations of the people who live in the villages. India is basically a land of villages. Rural sociology is the sociology of the village or village society.

Rural Sociology is a specialized field of sociology. It is the study of life in rural environment, which systematically studies rural communities to discover their conditions and tendencies to formulate the principles of progress. It is limited to various aspects of rural society in the study of rural social relationships.

“Indian rural sociology or the science of the laws governing the specific Indian rural and social organization has still to be created. Such a science is, however, the basic premise for the renovation of the Indian rural society, as indispensable for the renovation of the Indian society as a whole.” — A.R.Desai

- **Definitions:**

- ✓ **According to Sanderson,** —Rural sociology is the sociology of rural life in the rural environment.
- ✓ **Bertand says,** —Rural sociology is that study of human relationships in rural environment.
- ✓ **A.R Desai** defines rural sociology as, —the science of rural society....It is the science of laws of the development of rural society.

- **Nature of Rural sociology:**

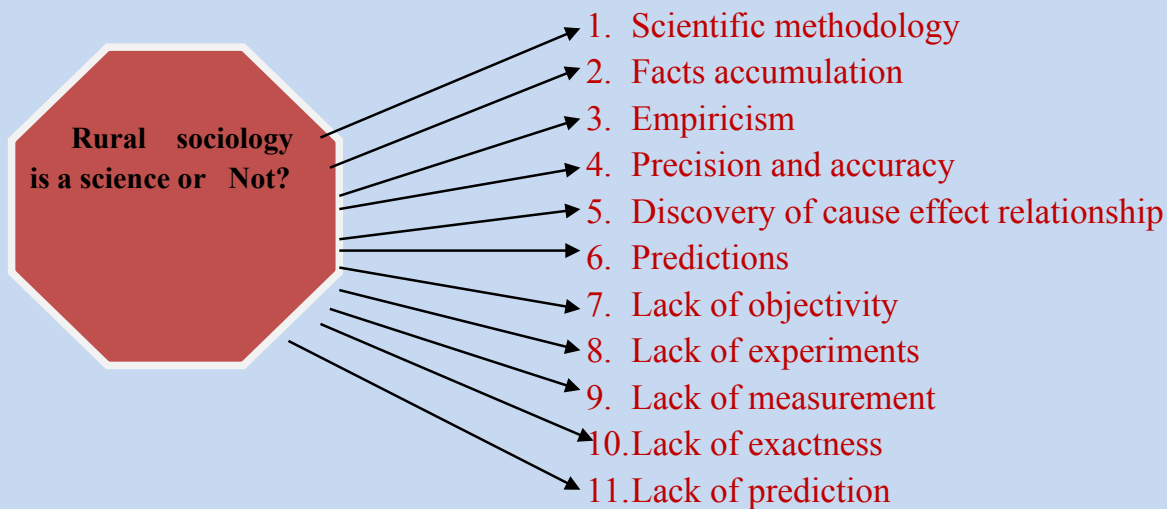
In India, rural sociology is treated as a part of sociology. Like sociology it is also considered as a social science. It is precisely a specialized field of sociology. Its nature is scientific. Actually to say, by nature rural sociology is a science. Science in simple words refers to a systematic body of knowledge. In case of rural sociology the rural problems are systematically and logically studied.

Most of the sociologists opine that Sociology has all the characteristics of science and it is, no doubt, a science. Since rural sociology is a specialized branch of Sociology, therefore it is also a science.

Nevertheless, before furthering to elaborate rural sociology as a science, it is essential to know what science is. Science is a method and way of looking at things consisting of systematic steps like observation, collection and classification of data, hypothesis, testing, theory and conclusion. Science possesses six basic ingredients.

Firstly, science employs the scientific method. Secondly; it is a study of facts. Thirdly scientific principles are universal. Fourthly, scientific laws are vertical. Its validity can be examined at any time and it proves true in every place. Fifthly, science discovers the cause-effect relationship in its subject-matter and in this connection provides universal and valid laws. Finally, science can make predictions on the basis of universal and valid laws relating to the cause-effect relationship in any subject. The function of science is based upon a faith in causality.

The nature or Rural Sociology as a science can be examined on the following grounds.



1. Scientific Methodology: Rural Sociology utilizes scientific methodology and hence, all the methods used in rural sociology are scientific in nature.

2. Facts Accumulation: Rural Sociology is always founded on factual study. It studies rural social relationship and activities in a factual manner. It makes a scientific study of facts, general principles and theories involved in them. It is also a known principle that science grows on the data collected from the field and that a sociologist stands on the shoulders of other sociologists as said by Robert Merton.

3. Empiricism: Unlike natural sciences that carry out experiments in the closed laboratory for measurement and verification, rural sociology uses the empirical method in the form of fieldwork. For a rural sociologist going to the field carries immense significance as it helps him/her to gather relevant data on the basis of which he will formulate theories and also it provides an occasion for experimentation, observation and verification.

4. Precision and Accuracy: Two of the important features of scientific investigation are precision and accuracy. The data that is collected should reflect the exact existing situation at the time of observation. The principles of rural sociology need to be proved true when verified. Their validity can be examined by any one.

5. Discovery of cause-effect relationship: Like Sociology, Rural Sociology also discovers a cause effect relationship between the phenomena. For

example, in the modern society, the rate of divorce increases rapidly due to the family disorganization. Similarly, due to the swift growth of population the rate of poverty and unemployment increases in the rural society. In these examples, family disorganization and population growth are two causes and divorce as well as poverty and unemployment are their effects. Rural Sociology has discovered a cause effect relation between the phenomena and population growth and divorce.

- 6. Predictions:** Eventually, on the basis of cause-effect relationship rural sociology becomes capable of anticipating the future and make predictions concerning social relationship, activities, incidents etc. For example, if disorganization in the families becomes pronounced, it can make predictions concerning the number of divorces and many other things. Knowing the cause-effect relationship, rural sociology can conclude what will be ' on the basis of what is '.

Thus, it is evident from the above analysis that Rural Sociology, by nature, is a science. It possesses all the essential characteristics of science. Some sociologists have raised their views against the nature of Rural Sociology as a science. They have vehemently objected to the scientific nature of rural sociology on the basis of the following grounds:-

- 7. Lack of Objectivity:** The first objection rose against the nature of rural sociology being called a science is that, an unbiased and objective study cannot be made in it. The chief reason of this is that the sociologists have to play dual role of both the doctor and the patient in society. They are the members of that very society which they studies. From this point of view, they have established a very secure relation with the contents, very commencement of society. The sociologists study religion, family, marriage, economic system etc. But hold their observation lacks the ingredient of objectivity, which is so much indispensable to science.
- 8. Lack of experiment:** There was also an objection that rural sociology doesn't use Rural Sociology is not a science just because of the term, science used in it. If science is used for physical sciences, then rural sociology cannot assert to be a science. The term science is used for physical sciences includes the dual process of experimentation and prediction. Rural Sociology, in this context, is not a science because its subject matter, the human relationship and behavior and they are abstract

in nature. One can neither see nor touch, neither weigh nor analyze in the laboratory.

9. Lack of measurement: The third argument against the nature of Rural Sociology as a science is that it is deficient in measurement. In natural sciences, definite and standard measurement is used to measure and weigh. The different measurements like units, grams, meters, centimeters etc, by which the subject matter of natural sciences can be measured the units or Rural Sociology. Due to the lack of measurement, the results of rural sociology differ from time to time which is not in the case of natural sciences.

10. Lack of Exactness: The fourth objection is that the discipline doesn't provide exactness. It is not possible to follow the laws and principles of rural sociology universally as the principles of natural science can be followed. Its law and principles vary on the basis of time and place concerned. For example, the rural social problems of one country may be different from the other country. In India untouchability is a serious rural problem but in America it is not so.

11. Lack of Prediction: The fifth and final objection against the nature or Rural Sociology being called a science is that it is deficient in accurate prediction. But due to the lack of objectivity and electivity, the principles that are invented by rural sociology are not always acceptable. Consequently, it becomes to predict any occurrence or phenomena or forecast cannot be possible about the laws and principles of Rural Sociology.

- **Conclusion:**

It is evident from the above analysis regarding the nature of Rural Sociology, that it is very difficult to conclude whether, by nature it is science or not as there are dual and contrasting opinions both in favor and against the scientific nature of rural sociology. There can be no doubt over the question that rural sociology uses scientific techniques like observation, experimentation, classification and tabulation in the collection and interpolation of data systematically. The conclusion derived by the rural sociology is based upon empirical realities.

Therefore, rural sociology, no doubt can definitely be a novel branch of science having the subject-matter and methodology of its own.