**Subject Matter and Scope of sociology**

**Subject Matter, Scope and Concerns of Sociology**

The scope of sociology is extremely wide ranging, from the analysis of passing encounter between individuals on the street up to the investigation of global social processes The discipline covers an extremely broad range that includes every aspect of human social conditions; all types of human relationships and forms of social behavior (Indrani, 1998).

Sociologists are primarily interested in human beings as they appear in social interaction and the effects of this interaction on human behavior. Such interaction can range from the first physical contacts of the new born baby with its mother to a philosophical discussion at an international conference, from a casual passing on the street to the most intimate of human relationships (World Book Encyclopedia 1994. Vol. 18, PP. 564-567). Sociologists are interested to know what processes lead to these interactions, what exactly occurs when they take place, and what their short run and long run consequences are The major systems or units of interaction that interest sociologists are social groups such as the family or peer groups; social relationships, such as social roles and dyadic relationships, and social organizations such as governments, corporations and school systems to such territorial organizations as communities and schools.

Sociologists are keen to understand, explain, and analyze the effect of social world, social environment and social interaction on our behavior, worldviews, lifestyle, personality, attitudes, decisions, etc., as creative, rational, intelligent members of society; and how we as such create the social reality.

**Levels of Sociological Analysis and Fields of Specializations in Sociology**

There are generally two levels of analysis in sociology, which may also be regarded as branches of sociology: micro-sociology and macro- sociology (Henslin and Nelson, 1995). Micro-sociology is interested in smallscale level of the structure and functioning of human social groups; whereas macro-sociology studies the large-scale aspects of society.

Macro-sociology focuses on the broad features of society. The goal of macro-sociology is to examine the large-scale social phenomena that determine how social groups are organized and positioned within the social structure. Micro-sociological level of analysis focuses on social interaction. It analyzes interpersonal relationships, and on what people do and how they behave when they interact. This level of analysis is usually employed by symbolic interactionist perspective.

Some writers also add a third level of analysis called meso-level analysis, which analyzes human social phenomena in between the micro- and macro-levels. Reflecting their particular academic interest sociologists may prefer one form of analysis to the other; but all levels of analysis are useful and necessary for a fuller understanding of social life in society.

**The Field of Social Organization and Theory of Social Order:** focuses on institutions and groups, their formation and change, manner of functioning, relation to individuals and to each other.

• **Social Control:** Focuses on the ways in which members of a society influence one another so as to maintain social order.

• **Social Change:** Focuses on the way society and institutions change over time through technical inventions, cultural diffusion and cultural conflict, and social movements, among others.

• **Social Processes:** Focuses on the pattern in which social change takes place, and the modes of such processes.

• **Social Groups:** Focuses on how social groups are formed, structured, and how they function and change.

• **Social Problems:** Focuses on the social conditions which cause difficulties for a large number of persons and which the society is seeking to eliminate.

Some of the problems may include: juvenile delinquency, crime, chronic alcoholism, suicide, narcotics addiction, racial prejudice, ethnic conflict, war, industrial conflict, slum, areas, urban poverty, prostitution, child abuse, problem of older persons, marital conflicts, etc.

Currently, sociology has got quite several specific subdivisions or fields of specialization in it: some of these include the following: criminology; demography; human ecology; political sociology; medical sociology; sociology of the family; sociology of sports; sociology of development; social psychology; socio- linguistics; sociology of education; sociology of religion; sociology of knowledge; sociology of art; sociology of science and technology; sociology of law; urban sociology; rural sociology; economic sociology; and industrial sociology.