CHAPTER 2

CONCEPT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
2.1 INTRODUCTION

Social science may be defined as all the disciplines which deal with men in their social contacts. They are concerned with an orderly investigation of the behaviour of man in society with the aim of formulating a body of relevant theory. The focus of their study is behavioural analysis of human groups, collectivities, communities etc. It is difficult to draw lines of demarcation between the social sciences.

2.2 NATURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The Social Sciences, study the structure and properties of human groups, the way in which individuals interact with one another and their environment. The arts focus their attention on man's knowledge and culture, on his creative powers and on his reactions to his fellows and to the environment around him. The line of demarcation may, of course, be made logically for the convenience of study, but the realities of life do not correspond to such logical and convenient division of the discipline. For example, a study of some aspects of educational psychology in India would require a good working knowledge of the Indian economy and political system. Again, in order to conduct a survey of the impact of teaching in particular types of schools on pupils belonging to different communities and living in different social environment. The research techniques from the social psychologist and anthropologist might have to be borrowed. Further, studies about the effects of certain hereditary
disease of genetic differences. These illustrations clearly bring out the fact that the demarcation of the social science as also of the subjects falling within the domains of Natural Sciences and Human Science hold good for the convenience of study in a particular area and for making further contribution to that subject through research.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

In the primitive society or even in the Middle Ages the frame work employed to regulate the society was either superstitious, religious or moral. The frame work was supposed to have the devine sanction and as, such, people were required to conform, their behaviour to this ideal pattern which could insure their happiness in this world and salvation in the hereafter. For example, this usually was condemned by the church and people where expected to avoid this sin. However, the same sin of the medieval ages has turn into the life line of the contemporary economic system. To-day the vital element of the modern banking system without which no economy can function or generate developmental potentialities. But this change from the medieval period to our own age has come about through a sustained process of change owing to numerous factors and social currents in the western society after the European Renaissance. With intellectual awakening of the west and growing impulses of a fast changing society the medieval social order, based on the religious tenents of the church, began to crumble down and the evolution of modern
social science started from the 17th century. The 18th century science which was characterised by its emphasis on mechanics, self-regulating system and other Newtonian concepts, made a clear impact on the theories of society.

2.4 CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 19th century social sciences had attained a firm and respectable position in all the leading European countries. The characteristic features of the history of social science in the 19th century were as under:

1) The various disciplines became elaborated and more sharply defined in relation to one other. Their boundaries were clearly demarcated.

2) Social Science became recognised as independent branches of academic training and scholarly pursuit. Political Economy gained recognition in all the major countries by 1830. The university of Chicago recognised sociology in 1890, and all of the social sciences were to be studied at London School of Economics, Political Science was later founded in 1895.

3) Efforts were made to develop and elaborate adequate methodological procedures for the various branches of social sciences.
4) Along with the specialisation, the 19th century was also characterised by an opposite tendency toward the construction of a synthesis of social science especially at the hands of Comte, Herbert Spencer, Marx and John Stuart Mill.

By 20th century the social sciences had been well established and were quickly following the heads of scientific disciplines to gain academic maturity. Development of methodological procedures and perfection of research techniques, borrowed from the sciences, were the chief concern of social scientists in the century.

The synthetic tendency in social sciences continues steadily. The most potent factor which is encouraging this trend is the interdisciplinary character of the present day research. Research in one discipline has essentially its bearing on social probes and inquiries in other disciplines. In the present century due to the resultant information explosion the interdisciplinary impact of research is growing. The recent regrouping of social sciences by the UNESCO into four main categories 1) Nomothetic Science 2) Historical Science 3) Legal Science 4) Philosophical science. All the four groups are very closely inter-related.

2.5 DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Colliers Encyclopedia defines social sciences as follows:

"The term social science is used to indicate highly
specialised disciplines characterised by research and teaching at the university level. Although scholars differ as to what disciplines should properly be considered social sciences, anthropology, history, economics, geography, political science, sociology and psychology are commonly cited" (1).

The term social sciences has not yet been clearly defined in its scope of inclusion of subjects. It is being used to include subjects like anthropology, economics, geography, sociology and statistics by the International Encyclopedia of social sciences. Various councils of social science Research in USA and other countries including the one in India i.e. ICSSR (Indian council of Social Science Research) include anthropology, commerce, demography, economics, education, geography, history, international affairs, journalism, law, library science, linguistics, management, political science, sociology, public administration, statistics and town and country planning, psychology in social sciences since it falls within the purview of their activity. One of the major study of our information requirements of social scientists, the INFROS (Investigation into Information Requirements of Social Scientists) Project carried out by the university of Bath between 1968 and 1970 had included the subjects such as economics, education, political science, psychology and sociology.
Thus, the above inclusion of subjects within 'social sciences' has great variations from one source to another and, therefore, lacks uniformity. The social sciences as a group studies relationship of man with society from all its manifestations.

"The sphere of the field of social sciences resembles an onion where in each subject represents the layer of the onion in turn they are interlinked with the thin membrane. It is therefore quite evident that the subjects of the present study are vast. They are not independent, but interdependent." (2)

In the present study, seven subjects (i.e. Commerce, Economics, Political Science, History, Sociology, Anthropology and Geography) are taken from the social science discipline for analysis. An attempt has been made to know scope and structure of each subject in short in the following sections.

2.5.1 Commerce

The term Commerce is often used in a wider and less precise sense. Commerce means primarily the exchange of commodities conducted on a wide scale and involving transportation over considerable distance. It has been truly said that commerce begins "Where civilization begins". Even the first great steps in the growth of civilisation were dependent on essential materials such as flint and metals being brought to people, usually over long distances.
The activities associated with Commerce may be studied under:

1) Buying and selling and the organisation of markets;
2) The structure of industry, trade, transport and finance;
3) The policy, organisation, administration and direction of a business.

Within each group various levels of training and a member of specialised skills are necessary.

2.5.2 Economics

"Economics according to a widely accepted definition, is the study of the education of resources among unlimited and competing uses. It is the social science that deals with the ways in which men and societies seek to satisfy their material needs and desires, since the means at their disposal do not permit them to do so completely".(3)

It was Economics that first attained the status of a single and separate science among the social science. That autonomy and self-reputation that physiocrats and Adam had found, or thought they had found, in the process of wealth, in the process of prices, rents, interests and wages during the 18th century becomes the basis of a separate and distinctive economics or, as it was often called, 'political economy' in the 19th century.
The term Economics came into general use in the 20th century, replacing the term "Political economy". The change of the name reflected changes in the discipline itself, which had become subdivided into a number of specialities.

2.5.3 Political Science

Political Science is a term most broadly understood to mean the systematic study of government processes by the application of scientific methods or political events. Political science, however, concerns itself with institution and behaviour, normative judgments as much as possible, and attempts to derive principles from objective facts with as much quantification as the evidence will allow.

Political philosophy thus speculates about the place and order of values, the principles of political obligations, and the nature of such terms as right, justice and freedom. Political science on the other hand, seeks to establish by observation the existence of uniformities in political behaviour and to draw correct influences from these data.

2.5.4 History

The term History may be employed into different senses; it may mean (i) The events and actions that together make up the human past, or (ii) The accounts given of that past and the modes of investigation whereby they are arrived at or constructed. When used in the first sense, the word
refers to what as a matter of fact happened, while when used in the second sense it refers to the study and description of those happenings. The notion of philosophical reflection upon History and its nature is consequently, open to more than one interpretation and contemporary writers have found it convenient. To regard it as covering two main types of undertaking. On the one hand, they have distinguished philosophy of History in the traditional or classical sense, this is conceived to be a first order of enquiry, its subject matter being the historical process as a whole and its aim being, one of providing an overall elucidation or explanation of the course and direction taken by that process.

2.5.5 Sociology

'Sociology' as a concept was first introduced in the area of social science. Auguste Comte used the term sociology in 1837 in his lectures on positive philosophy. Earlier to him Hume's "Treaties of Human Nature" published in 1739 attempted to unify and evaluate the total available knowledge of man.

It includes the study of the customs, structures and institutions that emerge from interaction. Sociology is also concerned with the basic nature of human society, locally and universally, and with the various processes that preserve continuity and produce change.
Application of sociology also appear to be spreading in various directions. Sociologist aid industries on obtaining more efficient production, they help union to increase their power; reform disorganised villages and families and give or sell services to a wide variety of consumers. There is also an expansion of sociology into other than practical applications, for example, there is mathematical sociology, in which mathematical models of social behaviour are developed without systematic observations of behaviour.

2.5.6 Anthropology

Etymologically, Anthropology is the science of man. In fact it is only one of the science of man, bringing together those disciplines the common aims of which are to describe man and explain him on the basis of the biological and cultural characteristics of the population among which he is distributed and to emphasise, through time, the difference and variations of these populations. The concept of race, other and that of culture on the other hand, have received special attention.

Anthropology, which is concerned with the study of human differences, was born after the Age of Discovery had opened up societies that had remained outside the technological civilization of the modern west. Anthropologists to-day study more than just primitive
societies, their research extends not only to villages within modern societies but also to cities, even to industrial enterprises. (2)

2.5.7 Geography

Geography, geo, meaning "the earth" and graphein, "to write" - is the science that describes the earth's surface. The concept of the discipline is simple but its study is complex. Modern Geography, like the Geography of past centuries, studies the earth as the space in which man lives his habit or environment. This includes not just part of the environment, the physical or natural part, but the total environment; in any inhabited area, the environment of to-day has been in part produced by man, and the existing population constitutes a living factor in the present environment.

2.6 NEED FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION

Over the last three decades the awareness of a number of global problems have grown, such as the realisation of inequality in level of economic progress, shortage of primary sources, social-economical changes etc. Interpretative perspective on these problems have tended to be seen in technological turns (alternative energy resources the green revolution in agriculture, computers and telecommunications) with the realization of social consequences lagging behind.

Themes and concerns which have been risen to prominence as social issues in the last ten years include the
nuclear arms race and disarmament, the social and political consequences of poverty in large areas of the world, ecological deterioration on a global scale, the disruption of traditional modes of life and livelihood, feminism and women movement, the instability of systems of economic and financial management, the patterns of political power, mass unemployment and its consequences and demographic changes. These issues should provide stimuli which will be very useful for developing an agenda on social sciences information problems and their solution and for information policy-making more generally. It is thus likely that the importance of social factors and therefore the contribution of social science information will continue to increase significantly, social questions are now being recognised. The rapid expansion of research has completely outstripped the capacity of society journals to disseminate.

In the last twenty years awareness of the information and documentation problems of the social sciences has grown. During that period there have been significant development for practice, organisation and research in social sciences information but knowledge of these has remained confined to small groups of specialists. In to-days world of complex and often man-made problems, social science knowledge is needed to devise new strategies of human behaviour and social action.
2.7 INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION AND TRENDS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION TRANSFER

The significance of the role of international organisations in the field of social science information transfer lies in their promoting favourable conditions for activities in this field.

Some of the International institutions and organisations which promote the transfer of social science information are the followings:

1) ICSSID

The International Committee for Social Science Information and Documentation (ICSSID) is a non-governmental international organisation which was established in 1950 with the support of UNESCO

2) IFLA social science libraries section.

The social science libraries section of the International Federation of Library associations and Institutions provide social science, particularly economics.

3) IASSIST (International Association for Social Science Information Service and Technology), Ann Arbor, Michigan was founded in 1976 in order to encourage the establishment and maintenance of social science data bases.
4) IFDO (International Federation of Data Organisation for the social science) was established in 1977 in Louvainla-Neuve, Belgium.

At the international level the Data Retrieval system for the social science (DARE) and the International Information system of social science concepts (INTERCONCEPT) of UNESCO are of particular importance.

The significant national social science automated data bases—e.g. in France, FRANCIS (Social Science and Humanities), in the United States, the Social Science Citation Index— are in fact international in coverage, there by forming part of global information transfer.

5. SOCIAL SCIENCE CITATION INDEX (SSCI)

Philadelphia, Institute for Scientific Information, 1973—(3 issues per year, cumulated annually). It was developed by Dr. Eugene Garfield. A major new development in bibliographical services for social science, SSCI indexes significant articles from the world's 1000 most important social science journals from the following disciplines: Anthropology, Archaeology, Area studies, Business and Finance, Communication, Community health, Criminology and Penology, Demography, Economics, Educational Research, Ethics, Group Studies, Geography, History, Library and Informations Science, International Relations, Law, Management Marketing, Political

Apart from this SSCI selectively covers another 2000 journals from Natural, Physical and Biomedical sciences indexing those articles relevant to social sciences.

SSCI has three parts- 1) a citation index 2) a source Index 3) permuterm subject Index.

Citation Index is a list of bibliographical references that have been cited in journal articles published in the current year. It is arranged alphabetically by cited author. Beneath each cited author are listed brief details of the source articles citing this work. Included in the Index are books and reports as well as journals, all the significant material in journal, including letters and book reviews, is indexed.

To search the Citation Index one starts with a reference known to be relevant to one's own work. The Citation Index is searched for the author's name and then beneath this the original journal reference is given. Under this reference are listed those articles that have cited the original article. Full details of the citing article can be then obtained from the Source Index

The Citation Index therefore tells us where and by whom a particular paper has been cited. Those researchers who
rely on an author's references for their bibliographical information will probably find SSCI useful.

The third part of SSCI is the 'Permu Term Subject Index'. This is an alphabetical list of significant words extracted from the titles of all source items processed for SSCI. Each significant word is paired with every other significant word in the title. This is the best example of a computer-produced natural-language index.

For the social scientists working in an interdisciplinary field SSCI is likely to be very valuable, because such fields usually lack their own bibliographical services. SSCI makes no claim to comprehensive coverage, but only indexes the most important journals. It cannot, therefore replace the existing conventional-abstracting and indexing services, but prove useful in supplementing them. Comprehensive instructions on how to use the indexes, are provided in each issue. SSCI is useful and flexible tool and commercially provided service.

2.8. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCE DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

Before World War II, much research activity did not take place in the field of social sciences therefore, a smaller number of learned periodicals appeared in this field, but after the World War II, a greater number of periodicals appeared. Indexing and abstracting work was also undertaken
in a few areas. Documentation has therefore crept into this field very late. Documentation now information science as modern technique of library science owes its origin in India to Dr. S.R. Ranganathan (5).

In 1952 UNESCO established South Asia science cooperation office in Delhi, later it changed its name into UNESCO Research Centre on Social and Economic Development and moved its headquarter at Calcutta. Again to Delhi in 1961. Since 1952 the centre has been publishing social science bibliography annually.

During the next decade (1961-1970) subjects like Sociology, Economics, Political Science, Law, History and Psychology have had their independent growth. The first library seminar on social science Research and Libraries was held at New Delhi in 1959 under the auspices of the Indian School of International studies in Corporation with the Indian council of World Affairs Library. One of the papers by P.N. Kaula, had proposed the setting up of the social science Documentation Centre. After eleven years, the social science Documentation centre was set up by the Indian Council of Social Science Research in 1970. The centre was renamed as National Social Science Documentation centre (NASSDOC) in 1987.

The need to set up a National Information System in Social Science (NISSS) has to be considered in the context of the rapid development of Social Sciences as well as the
increasing awareness of their relevance to the social development. The Council (ICSSR) by setting up a National Social Science Documentation centre and social science Data Archives, has paved the way for the establishment of a National Information System for Social Science (NISSS), but it has not yet come out. This national system will help research works, scholars, academicians, management personnels and many others who would like to have an easy access to authentic information economically, efficiently and expeditiuosly.

The status, role and significance of information in general is closely interrelated with the characteristics of a given discipline. In the present study, an attempt has been made to study the characteristics of the social science literatures in the following chapters.
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