Course No.: SS 451N: Methodology of Social Sciences

MA 1st Semester; Compulsory Course; Monsoon Semester: July-December; Credits: 4
Mode of Evaluation: Tutorial Assignments-1 credit; Mid-Semester Exam 1 credit, & End-Semester Exam- 2 credits
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Methodology covers entire terrain of scientific research in the social sciences. For an approach to qualify as a social scientific methodology it must meet four criteria, one it must define the subject matter of the social sciences. Second, it must explain how that subject matter is constituted, that is how the ‘facts’ of social sciences become ‘facts’. Third, it must provide social scientists with precisely defined conceptual tools and procedures and fourth it must define the limits of the social scientific activity. Therefore, an understanding of methodology which is different from methods of social research will enable the social investigator to transcend the technician’s role and obtain the role of the research scientist. The specific objectives are:

- To understand the nature and the philosophy of the social sciences in general and sociology in particular.
- To understand the relationship of sociology with other sciences.
- To understand the methodological debates in classical sociology
- To understand the major methodological debates in Indian sociology

Course Outline

1. The Nature and function of Social Sciences
   a) The Ideas of Social Sciences: The Beginning
   b) The logic of disciplines of Social Sciences
   c) Emile Durkheim
   d) Max Weber
   e) Karl Marx

2. Sociology and other Social Sciences
   a) Sociology and Physics (Durkheim)
   b) Sociology and Biology (Merton)
   c) Sociology and History (Levi-Strauss)
   d) Sociology and Social Anthropology (Radcliffe-Brown)
   e) Sociology and Psychology (Durkheim and Marcel Mauss)
   f) Sociology and Linguistics (Levi-Strauss)
   g) Sociology and Economics (Karl Marx)

3. Major Debates in Classical Sociology
   a) Positivism vs Hermeneutics (Durkheim vs Weber)
   b) Verification vs Falsification (Kuhn vs Popper)
c) Structural Functionalism vs Structuralism (Radcliffe Brown vs Levi-Strauss)
d) Structuralists vs Post-Structuralists (Levi-Strauss vs Derrida/Foucault)

4. Methodological Debates in Indian Sociology

a) Sociology vs Indology (Dumont vs Bailey)
b) Structural Functional vs Historical (M.N.Srinivas vs A.R. Desai)
c) Relevance of Perspective from below in Indian Sociology

A. Essential Readings

Coomaraswamy, A.K., 1987, What is Civilisation? And other Essays, IGNCA and OUP, Delhi
Madan, T.N., 1995, Pathways: Approaches to the Study of Indian Society, OUP, Delhi
(Madan, T.N., 1995, Pathways: Approaches to the Study of Indian Society, OUP, Delhi)
Mauss, Marcel, 1950/1979, Sociology/Psychology: Routledge and Kegan Paul London
Matilal, Bimal Krishna, 2005, Epistemology, Logic and Grammar in Indian Philosophical Analysis, OUP
Merton, R.K., 1981, Social Theory and Social Structure, Amerind Publishing Company, New Delhi(Chapters 1,2,4,5)
Mukherji, Partha Nath 2000, Methodology in Social Research: Dilemmas and Perspectives, Sage, New Delhi
Oommen, T.K., and P.N. Mukherji, ed. Indian Sociology, Popular Prakashan, Bombay
Popper, Karl, 1983, A Pocket Popper (edited by Daniel Miller), Fontana Press, Glasgow (Part 2, Philosophy of Sciences)
Singh, Y, 1983, Image of Man, Chanakya, Delhi

B. Suggested Readings
Anderson, H. 2001, On Kuhn, Wadsworth, Australia
Barnes, J.A. 1999, The Ethics of Inquiry in Social Sciences: Three Lectures, OUP, Delhi
Barthes, Roland, 1987, Criticism and Truth, Continuum, London
Bloom, Harold, et al, 1979, Deconstruction and Criticism, Viva Books, New Delhi
Bose, P.K. 1995, Research Methodology, Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, New Delhi
Cohn, Bernard, 1997, Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge: The British in India, OUP, Delhi
Coomaraswamy, A.K., 1981, Figures of Speech and Figures of Thought, Munshiram and Manoharlal, Delhi
Methodology: Towards an Integration of Micro and Macro Sociologies, Routledge and Kegan Paul
Mahajan, Gurpreet, 1997, Explanation and Understanding in Human Sciences, OUP, Delhi
Mukherjee, Ramkrishna (1979) Sociology of Indian Sociology, Bombay: Allied
Prasad, Jwala, 1990, Indian Epistemology, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi
Rabinow, Paul, ed, 1984, The Focault Reader, Pantheon Books
Roberts, Marcus, 1996, Analytical Marxism, Verso
Satprakashananda, Swami, 2004, Methods of Knowledge According to Advaita Vedanta, Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata