INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY-II

Tutor Marked Assignments

Course Code: BSOC-103

Assignment Code: ASST /TMA /2026-27

Total Marks: 100

Section I

Answer the following Descriptive Category questions in about 500 words each.

1. Explain the interpretive approach of Max Weber. 20

2. What is Liberal Feminism? Examine its approach. 20

Section II

Answer the following Middle Category questions in about 250 words each.

3. Discuss George Herbert Mead's view on symbolic interactionism. 10

4. Distinguish between religion and science. 10

5. Explain Karl Marx view on the relationship between capitalism and conflict. 10

Section III

Answer the following Short Category questions in about 100 words each.

6. What is alienation? 6

7. Define social transformation. 6

8. What is phenomenology? 6

9. What is structuralism? 6

10. What is division of labour? 6

1. Explain the interpretive approach of Max Weber. (20)

Answer

For Max Weber, sociology does not merely record what people do. It tries to understand the meaning that people attach to their actions and then explains how those actions produce social consequences. This is known as the interpretive approach or Verstehen sociology. Weber developed it because he believed that human society could not be understood only by applying methods used to study physical objects. People interpret their situations, form intentions and act with others in mind. Those meanings are central to social life.

Social action and subjective meaning

Weber defined sociology as a science that seeks an interpretive understanding of social action so that it can causally explain its course and effects. An action becomes social when the person performing it takes account of the actual or expected behaviour of other people. A student studying only because of personal curiosity may be acting individually. The same student preparing carefully to meet a family's expectations is also responding to others. The outward act looks similar, but its social meaning differs. Thus, the sociologist must examine motives as well as visible conduct.

Interpretation does not mean accepting every explanation given by an individual as automatically correct. People may misunderstand their own motives, and different motives may produce similar behaviour. Weber therefore connected the understanding of meaning with evidence, comparison and causal explanation. The aim is to offer an account that makes sense of an actor's viewpoint and also fits the observable facts.

Four ideal types of social action

Weber identified four ideal types which help us compare motives. Instrumentally rational action is guided by calculated goals and the most effective means of achieving them, such as choosing a training course to improve job prospects. Value-rational action follows a deeply held principle regardless of immediate success, such as a person refusing a bribe on moral grounds. Affectual action arises primarily from emotion, as in responding angrily to an insult. Traditional action follows established habits, such as observing a customary greeting. Actual actions commonly combine these motives. Their classification is an analytical tool, not a label that perfectly describes everyone.