BSOC-134: METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

Tutor Marked Assignments

Programme Code : BAG/BAM
Course Code: BSOC-134
Assignment Code: ASST/TMA / 2026-27
Total Marks: 100

There are three Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all the questions.

Section I

Answer the following Descriptive Category questions in about 400 words each.

1. Define theory and explain the relationship between theory and research. 20

2. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative research. 20

Section II

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

3. Explain Durkheim view on objectivity. 30

4. Elaborate Garfinkel's view on reflexivity. 30

5. Discuss ethnomethodology. 30

Section III

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

6. Write a note on the inductive and deductive methods. 06

7. Discuss standpoint theories. 06

8. Write a note on the questionnaire. 06

9. Discuss Weber's view on comparative analysis. 06

10. What is ICT and its application in social research? 06

1. Define theory and explain the relationship between theory and research. 20

Answer

In sociology, a theory is a logically connected set of concepts, assumptions and propositions that explains patterns in social life. It goes beyond a simple description of events by showing how and why particular relationships occur. For example, the concept of social solidarity helps explain how individuals remain connected to groups despite differences in their activities. A theory is not an unquestionable truth. Its value depends on its explanatory power, logical consistency, evidence and capacity to be revised when new findings appear.

Elements and purposes of theory

A theory uses concepts, such as class, role, status, power and socialisation, to identify important aspects of social reality. These concepts are connected through propositions about relationships between them. Some propositions become hypotheses that researchers can investigate. A theory may explain why an outcome occurs, interpret the meaning of an action, organise existing knowledge or suggest possible consequences. Functionalism, conflict perspectives, symbolic interactionism and feminist approaches illustrate different ways of interpreting the same social world.

Theories differ in scope. Broad theories examine social structures and historical change, while middle-range theories focus on processes such as reference groups, social mobility or relative deprivation. A study of unequal educational achievement, for instance, may use ideas about social class, cultural resources or institutional discrimination. These perspectives direct attention to different explanations rather than merely repeating observed differences.

How theory guides research

Theory helps formulate a research problem and makes it possible to ask focused questions. Instead of investigating 'young people and the internet' in general, a researcher may ask whether online peer relationships affect political participation and through which mechanisms. Theoretical ideas identify relevant variables or meanings, help formulate hypotheses, and influence the choice of methods. A survey may test relationships among measurable variables, whereas interviews may explore how people understand an experience. Neither approach is automatically superior; suitability depends on the research question.

Theory also provides a framework for interpreting findings. If a survey finds that political participation differs across social groups, the researcher needs concepts such as resources, opportunity, identity and social networks to understand why.