

# *Meaning, nature and scope of sociological theory*

## *(Chapter-1)*

Sociology(Hons.)

Semester: III

Paper: CC-7

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# ***DEFINITIONS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY***

***R.K.Merton:*** Sociological theory refers to logically inter-connected sets of propositions from which empirical uniformities can be derived.

***Talcott Parsons:*** Sociological theory is a theoretical system in the present sense is a body of logically interdependent generalized concepts of empirical reference.

## ***FUNCTIONS OF THEORIES***

1. Theory suggests potential problems and produces new investigative studies;
2. Theory predicts facts;
3. Theory systematizes matter and their relationships into convenient conceptual schema;
4. Theory establishes a linkage between specific empirical findings and general sociological orientations;
5. Theory guides research and narrows the range of facts to be studied;
6. Theory serve as tools of inquiry;
7. Theory points to gaps in our knowledge ;

## ***CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY***

1. A theory is couched in terms of well defined concepts and logically inter-connected propositions.
2. A theory is a systematized symbolic construction and does not share the ineluctability of fact .
3. A theory is provisional in character, it is always open to revision depending on new insights and evidences.
4. It is verifiable in a preliminary way ,that is , consistent with the body of known facts and available evidence.

# **TYPES OF THEORIS**

**G.C Homans(1964):** Homans identifies two type of general theory;

- 1) The normative theory
- 2) The non-normative theory

*The normative theory theories fall into two categories-*

- a) one side b) two or many sided

**H. Wagner:** Classifies sociological theory into three main categories:

- 1) Positive sociological theory
- 2) Interpretative Sociologies
- 3) Non-scientific or evaluative social change

***Sociological theories are mainly divided into three categories:***

- a) Speculative vs. Grounded Theories
- b) Grand Theory vs. Miniature Theory
- c) Macro vs. Micro Theory

**Reference : Abraham,M.F: Modern Sociological Theory; An Introduction, NewYork,Oxford University Press,1982**

***Thank you***