

- i) Sociologists in their study of society are principally concerned with the analysis and understanding of values, as these are the crucial elements of any society. However, they must not let their own values come in the way of a clear understanding of the subject matter. This is the basic foundation of a value-free sociology.
- ii) Sociologists, as human beings are fundamentally involved in evaluating, or passing certain value-judgements. In so far as they are personally involved, can hardly avoid having or living by values. The values, by which sociology develops, however, are the values by which knowledge and science develop as the commitment to dispassionate inquiry. In this inquiry, the sociologists own experiences of valuing or devaluing are themselves data, giving insight into the meaning and relevance of that which they explore.
- iii) The development of a value-free social science in this sense is necessary for creating a body of reliable and assured knowledge. As to whether such knowledge becomes subsequently cause for action is not within the domain of merely sociology as a discipline. Knowledge can guide action only when the discipline itself becomes reliable.

It bears mentioning, in this context that Weber in addition to being an eminent sociologist was also a politician in the troubled Germany between the two World Wars. He is remembered, both for his sociological studies and political activity as having firmly championed the cause of reason, at a time when it was beset with challenges on all sides. This is a fact we must keep in mind when we consider his plea for a value-free sociology.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) Describe Zweckrational society in about three lines.
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.....
.....
- ii) Describe Wertrational society in three lines.
.....
.....
.....
- iii) Describe the basic idea of a value-free sociology, in about three lines.
.....
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.....

17.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have read about the idea of rationality and its accompanying process, rationalisation, the two key themes in the work of Max Weber.

After learning what these terms mean, you have seen how they were studied by Weber in his analysis of Protestantism, capitalism and bureaucracy. You have also seen how Weber classified rationality into two types namely, 'Zweckrationalitat' and 'Wertrationalitat'. Finally, you have learnt how Weber used rationality in sociological investigation and argued for a value-free sociology.

17.6 KEYWORDS

Authority	Legitimate power that is institutionalised.
Free labour	Free labour is the labour of the contractual labourers who are free to choose their employment, employer and the terms and conditions of employment.
Hypothesis	A statement of inter-related concepts, which may be tested for its validity.
Reason	An explanation or justification of an act, idea etc.
Value	An idea about what is good, right, wise or beneficial.

17.7 FURTHER READING

Aron, R. 1967. *Main Currents of Sociological Thought*. volume 2, Penguin Books: London

Thompson, K. and J. Tunstall (eds). 1971. *Sociological Perspectives*. Penguin Books: Middlesex

17.8 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) a) specialisation, technological
- ii) b) the external world
- iii) a) F (b) F (c) T

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Rationality appears in two distinct ways in Max Weber's work. First, he studied society as a process of rationalisation: that is the logic of change in society itself from less rational form to or more rational form. Secondly he used rationality as a methodological tool, i.e. a methodological principle, a strategy of inquiry. In this sense rationality is a mode of inquiry that seeks to discover the reason of a social form or development.
- ii) Weber argued that rationalisation of traditional Protestant ethic gave birth to capitalism. The most important rationalisation is the

development of an inner worldly asceticism, a foregoing of consumption in favour of saving and a accumulation among the Protestant believers. Hence believers assume themselves of being included amongst those born to be saved in a religious sense.

Check Your Progress 3

- i) Zweckrational society is a capitalist society. This society represents the rationalisation of the means and ends and resorts to reason as an effective instrument to affect one's desires.
- ii) Wertrational society is a traditional society. This society has more to do with morality that touches upon value judgments, emotions, and stresses social approval of individual activity.
- iii) Sociologists in their study of society are primarily concerned with the analysis and understanding of values, as these are crucial elements of any society. However, they must not let his own values come in the way of a clear understanding of that which they undertakes to study.



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