

**AN INSIGHT INTO SOCIAL SCIENCES: A REVIEW OF
ITS STRENGTHS AND RELEVANCE TO GLOBAL
CHALLENGES IN THE PRESENT ERA**

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Abstract

The present paper throws light on the real essence of the word 'social' as a science and the evidences of its deep roots followed by its development in the early centuries. It emphasizes that Science being producing secure and trustworthy truths due to its practical approach and having a great contribution to the new modernized society is due to the strengths of the intellectual society. So the paper debates that without 'Social Sciences', 'Physical Sciences' will not be able to exist and hence there is a need to strengthen the society and the focus apart from myths and discourses should be on social aspects to be studied as a science-an empirical approach leading to targeted and directed goals precisely and effectively. The paper discusses the issues and problems of concern in the present scenario along with the role of some of the disciplines into which Social Sciences is divided so that each area of the society is studied as a whole into depth to deal with the existing alarming situations prevailing in the society, which according to the need of the environment holds great relevance to respond to the global challenges arising from the present era's demands and challenges.

Keywords: Essence, Society, Problems, Relevance, Challenges

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Introduction

Social science had its roots evident in the early sixteenth and seventeenth century and formative moments of paradigm of enlightenment came into momentum in the eighteenth century. Comte (1798-1853) created the thought of science of society and systemized the character and structure of social sciences. As the natural sciences were helping in the understanding of natural phenomenon and progress, Comte argued that to make social activities beneficial to the entire mankind, there was a need to establish scientific principles and corrective thought towards social issues which was necessary for human understanding leading to the progress of society. Although, it can be said that the stage was all set to design new theoretical basis of society of concrete benefit to man. Thereafter, classic works of many prominent social scientists Max Weber, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim etc. contributed in the efforts of societal development. Earlier the focus was on locating the social issues which were of concern and needed attention and broad social analysis through reading, reflecting, observation and critical thinking. But, gradually with the upcoming of twentieth century, it was realized that as a science, social sciences were demanding narrowing of focus and handling or testing the issues with more precision and a more scientific endeavor. Social sciences developed differently with revolutionary changes and external along with internal forces governing the society. Initially, realm of the word 'social' was being realized as lying in its usual meaning 'relating to society' which is changing faces day by day. A confusion for the idea of social science as a science and questions on its precision, limits, boundaries, objectivity and strengths to meet the global challenges in the present era is forming a major point of concern for the social scientists. Now, arises the basic need of different disciplines in which Social Sciences is divided, to have confrontations with reality in response to the present era's demands and challenges.

Changing 'realm' of the word social

The word 'social' was formulated by the society, had its in depth meaning for the society and was understood for the progress of the society and in large mankind. But, due to the upcoming of Marxian theory discussing the models of nineteenth century which shares that social class advocated one's social life and also the perception in the twentieth century, that the relative success of European societies in economic, technological, and military terms was due to the

inherent superiority of Europeans in linkage to the Darwinian theory, somewhere caused the modern evils prevailing in the society (Hirschman,2000). Thus, the meaning of the word 'social' redefined. Now, in the race of copying the Europeans and following the social class the whole structure shattered and the social values gradually moved into a dark den. Hence, the need was now arising to review the strengths of Social Sciences.

Major Challenges for Social Sciences

In spite of the progress of social science, there are a number of significant limitations present in the system due to the increase in social evils. Marx shared his theory, which now we are experiencing as an evil. The agitation for 'Jat Arakshan' in Haryana now-a-days is a clear example of the perception of the society about good social life. It seems as if a race is going on and everybody is participating in it with his or her own materialistic perspective without thinking of the mankind at large. Our present society is totally confused. Through media, films we support something and we like it, but in real life the society adopts the other face. Due to the incorrect perception, the social evils are rising day by day. Suicidal rates are increasing as supported by the statistics given by The World Health Organisation (WHO), which says that each year approximately one million people die from suicide, which represents a global mortality rate of 16 people per 100,000 or one death every 40 seconds. It is predicted that by 2020 the rate of death will increase to one every 20 seconds. A human is feeling better to leave the world inspite of living. Here a question arises for the social scientists? Specifically, if we talk about India, there is a dire need to utilize and understand the strengths and relevance of Social Sciences for the society.

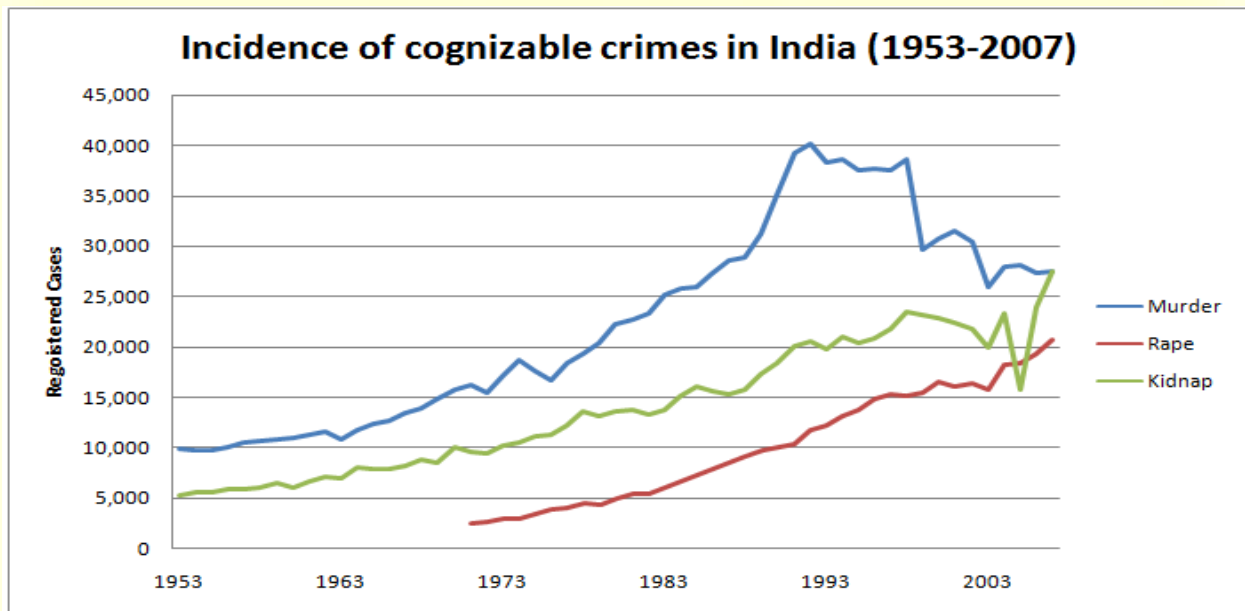
Table I: Total cognizable crimes for the five years 1987-1991

Year	Crimes under I.P.C	Crimes under local and special laws	Total
1987	1406992	3589326	4996318
1988	1440356	3765669	5206025
1989	1529844	3847665	5377509
1990	1604449	3293563	4898012
1991	1678375	3370971	5049346

In India, the above is the Statistics available from 'Crimes in India' published by National Crime Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (Bhattacharya, 1994).

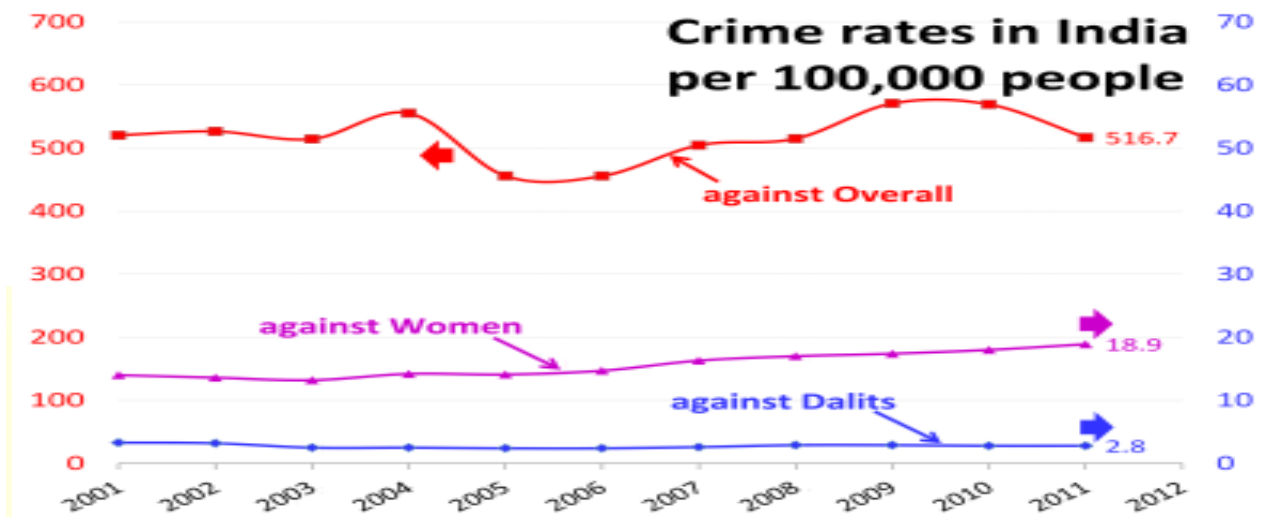
Indian society has experienced a recognizable rapid industrialization and urbanization as well as a notable increase in population over the past 40 years, leading to an increase in the rate of crimes.

Graph I



The above graph depicts cognizable crimes in India from 1953-2007 and clearly shows a trend of increasing rate. Murder has increased by 7.39% (from 9,803, a rate of 2.61 in 1953 to 32,481, a rate of 2.81/100,000 in 2006). Kidnapping has increased by 47.80% (from 5,261, a rate of 1.40/100,000 in 1953 to 23,991, a rate of 2.07/100,000 in 2006). IPC crime rate in 2006 was 167.7 compared to 165.3 in 2005 showing an increase of 1.5% in 2006 over 2005. The disturbing increase in crime rate is due to the crucial role of economic, political, and other societal factors. (Dubey and Agarwal, 2015).

Graph II



The graph above shows crime rate in India per 100,000 people from 2001 to 2012. Recently incidents of crimes were reported in 2014 which shows an increase of 7.7% from the 2013 figure (Yadav, 2015). Thus, there is a need to strengthen the social scientists and find out ways to stabilize the causal factors so that we may anticipate the improvement in the challenging situations in India and thereafter worldwide. The alarming situations have arisen with a drastically high speed, as the purpose and significance of idea of Social Sciences as a science was not understood. The whole world focused on Sciences, new discoveries but did not understand the reason behind the successes which mankind faced in the previous eras. No, doubt new innovations in sciences are very much compulsory for the development and growth of human beings, but they will be of worth, only if the society and the mankind at large will be in a state of embracing and valuing it. Hence, the sciences and social sciences form the two faces of the same coin and are incomplete without one and another as both complement each other.

Role of different disciplines in Social Sciences

Initially, only one discipline of Philosophy which deals with love for knowledge or wisdom existed. But, gradually the need for other disciplines in Social Science was felt, as Social Science is a study concerning all the aspects of the society. In today's scenario, some branches of Social Science are of utter significance and relevance. Starting with the discipline of History, it plays a vital role in making the mankind aware of their origin, existence, strengths and developments

which forms an integral part in shaping a 'human' for the present era. Through our past experiences, lessons for the better future must be learnt. But, knowledge of History is not complete without Geography as it helps in differentiating one place from another and understanding the reasons for the happenings which took place in the past. Why big empires of the Mughals, Mauryas and the Guptas were established in Indo- Ganga plain? What helped in expansion of the empires? What led to making of light weight stone weapons? etc. Apart from this, now a days, the subject which is most importantly needed to be studied as a science is Political Science which deals with the practice and theory of politics. Rise in prices and reducing resources is leading us towards deep thinking in the subject of Economics to organize our lives (Online notes of National Institute of Open Schooling, 2015). On the other hand, in this world, full of competitions and stress, practical significance of Psychology needs to be understood and practiced along with studying human behavior in societal context through the discipline of Sociology. It is not just dealing with upcoming of theories from time to time in both the subjects but making the disciplines play a role to handle important issues. Last, but not the least, the subject of Education is the hope of a country, shaping the future educationists. In the nutshell, just knowledge of History, Geography and just studying the theories in Education, Economics, Psychology and Sociology will not help us to meet the present global challenges unless and until we apply them to the practical situations of life. Making assignments, attempting written exams just for the sake of degrees poses a big question for the social scientists: Is it nurturing quality in shaping future youths or leading to a threat to survival?

Conclusion

Thus, the role and the strengths of Social Sciences need to be recognized to face global challenges at large. No doubt, the base theories are important but practical relevance cannot be ignored. The social scientists should be given area wise focused work by the government itself according to the need of the society and social issues and the scholars of different universities covering different areas should join hands to find solutions to the problems arising. In the nutshell, interdisciplinary research should be used to solve practical problems and not just for increasing the beauty of shelves of the library, but for meeting the challenges upcoming before the social sciences. But, to bring these steps into action, ways and methods should be found out

to inculcate social values among the individuals i.e. the future social scientists of the society through various disciplines as tools. At last, if anti-social elements can be trained within weeks, to create a chaos in the society, then serious and focused efforts can definitely lead to a new world of love and peace.

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