Sociological Concepts: A Note on the Series

In our upcoming series, we plan to engage with concepts that are widely used in Sociology. The idea is to convey the specificity of the social sciences, the distinctiveness of its conceptual tools and their indispensable role to understand the social. We plan to do so in different ways.

First, there could be more general essays that discuss the significance of sociological concepts in understanding society.

Second, we would like brief articles (around 1500-2500 words) introducing the life and work of sociologists. These articles could either centre around key texts and ideas therein or they could focus on particular concepts and their implications. For instance, a write-up on Durkheim could provide a broad-brush sketch of his intellectual trajectory and key works. Or it could focus on specific concepts like social fact and anomie. In either case, efforts should be made to link up sociologists and their contributions to contemporary social and political questions. Such contextualization should be done with the pedagogical intent of the piece in mind.

Third, there could be short articles that introduce readers to basic sociological concepts. These could range from concepts of specific social phenomena like race, gender, class, caste, tribe, religion, capitalism and modernity, to methodological concepts like ideal type, sociological imagination, social formation, functional explanation, and thick/thin description. There could also be articles on particular theoretical approaches within Sociology from Marxism to ethnomethodology. Again, discussion of these concepts and perspectives should be carried out with reference to contemporary issues of general interest.

Finally, the kind of topics indicated above could also be discussed in short presentations or full-length lectures and interviews in video or podcast form. These could be in the form of short videos with images and text plates/voiceover, powerpoint/flash presentations made in an engaging way, short informative lectures, or longer detailed discussions.