Can sociology help us to solve problems sociology essay

Problems in society, often termed social problems/issues affect every type of community whether big, small, rich or poor. A social problem can be seen as a condition resulting in negative consequences for both an individual and their society as well as threatening our social institutions. However it does not need to be experienced by every individual. An issue considered as a social problem comes from the objective reality of realising that the problem is in fact a social condition that exists, for example you do not need to be poor to recognise that some people live in poverty. Sociology enables individuals to gain a sense of consciousness and awareness that structural or social forces are the causation of our own personal experiences. This enables us to have a systematic and objective approach to understanding cause of social problems and potential aid in finding solutions for these problems. It is vital that there is an understanding that sociology does not offer exact solutions for each problem, it can be used to define and discover problems, their trends and the potential driving forces behind these problems to aid institutions when creating solutions. A problem must be effectively defined before it can be effectively solved, sociology offers this vital definition. This essay will discuss what the discipline of sociology is, offer a sociological perspective on social problems and show two clear examples of completely different social problems and how sociology has given insight into these problems ƒŸ rubbish! And aided in the process of finding solutions.

Sociology is the systematic study of social structures and individuals. Many think of sociology as a continuous activity with a growing concern, constant adding to already developed knowledge and new experiences. The study of sociology adds to knowledge enabling us to think beyond the obvious and

ask more questions. For example when asked to pass a phone we immediately know what the phone is due to the link between the word (referring to objects) and the object however this answer does not give knowledge about the object. Sociology prompts us to ask more questions, where does this phone come from? How does it work? The study of sociology concentrates on current actions or on actions with qualities that do not change over time. Sociologists view humans actions as elements of wider figurations. Individuals are seen as actors locked together by a system of mutual dependency, that mutual dependency being the state. The central question to sociology is how and in what sense are people and actions dependant on other members/actors in society, therefore why exist in a society with cohesive communications, competition and coordination with other people. Sociology is " a way of thinking about the human world: which can be thought of in different ways". In sociological studies the material for social findings is the experience of ordinary people living their daily life therefore in theory everyone has access to this and it has been lived by someone else previous to sociological study when actions were viewed as common sense. However, there are many different perspectives and a number of alternative ways of both collecting and analysing data. Each perspective will have a different assumption about society and will therefore as a result of this ask different questions about social problems. For example the Functional Marco level of analysis sees society as held together by social institutions which have specific functions in society and is mainly focused on order therefore one of the questions that will be asked is " How does this problem originate from the social structure?" In comparison to this, the Conflict/Feminist Macro level of analysis sees conflict as the main focus;

therefore these sociologist will see society as held together by power and intimidation resulting in asking questions such as " how does the problem originate from the competition between groups and from the social structure itself?" C Wright Mills promoted the perspective that problems and their solutions are not just involving individual but social structures of society. In his essay " The Promise of the Sociological Imagination" 1959. Mills argued that the sociological imagination can help us differentiate between public issues and personal troubles, creating links with our personal lives and experiences and with our social world. Mills argued that personal troubles occur within an individual and their character and relationship with those around them, whereas public issues when values held by society are threatened. Mills does however recognise that personal issues can be transformed into public issues. For example unemployment is an individual's own personal trouble but when there are high levels of unemployment in your society, a personal issue has become a public issue as unemployment threatens our sense of economic security. This leads to challenging the general belief that everyone can work hard to succeed. The Promise helps to detect the structural bases of social problems enabling us to be aware of the political, economic and social structures that may be influencing these problems.

The subjective reality of a social problem deals with how a problem becomes defined as a problem to begin with. This is driven from the concept of social construction of reality created by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1996). This theory sees our world as a social creation, originating and evolving through society's actions and thoughts on a daily basis. Our

experiences do not just happen to us predetermined and out of our control, therefore our social problems are also not predetermined, they become problems when we view them as problems and acknowledge that they are there. Denise Loseke (2003) says " conditions might exist, people might be hurt by them, but conditions are not social problems until humans categorize them, as troublesome and in need of repair". Social Constructionist perspective focuses on how a problem is originally defined and how groups with power such as politicians and the media can influence our opinions of what a social problem is.