

## The Ambiguity in the Concept of the human phenomenon

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**ABSTRACT :** This article aims to identify the general characteristics of human phenomena and distinguish them from social and humanitarian issues, as well as the methods humans use to address their daily concerns or solve problems and their human interactions. Four characteristics of human phenomena are identified: universality, continuity, stability, and specificity. These four characteristics are opposed by social or community issues, which lack universality as they pertain to specific segments of society, are unstable as they change frequently, and are transient as they eventually disappear. While the methods may share similarities with problems in that they stem from human phenomena, they follow two paths: if a method has a negative orientation, it may lead to the emergence of certain problems; if it has a positive orientation, it serves as a means or method of human interaction with social, biological, or psychological phenomena.

**KEYWORDS:** *Phenomenon, Human Phenomenon, Social Issues*

### I. INTRODUCTION

The term "phenomenon" is frequently used across various academic fields; however, its applications often come with ambiguity and confusion, leading to diverse interpretations and uses. In natural sciences, the concept of phenomenon is relatively clear, with no disagreement about it. Cosmic phenomena in their various forms are discussed in natural sciences as cosmic phenomena and are not considered otherwise. In the humanities and philosophy, however, the concept of phenomenon takes on different dimensions, where it is often confused with problem, method, and issue. Consequently, the term "human phenomenon" is one of the most conceptually ambiguous and confusing terms for many researchers. In the humanities, researchers often apply the term phenomenon to anything that is widespread in society, whether it is a problem or any behavior practiced by a minority in the community. They justify calling it a phenomenon because it is practiced by a large number of people. Examples include "drifting phenomenon," "divorce phenomenon," "drug phenomenon," "wastefulness phenomenon," "stinginess phenomenon," "absenteeism phenomenon," "consumption phenomenon," "boasting phenomenon," and so on. However, not all of these issues qualify as phenomena. So, what is a phenomenon? This paper aims to explain and provide examples to define the human phenomenon and distinguish it from a problem, method, Among the Activities of Daily Life for Humans and Creatures

#### **What are the characteristics of the human phenomenon?**

The term "Human Phenomenon" is one of the most conceptually ambiguous and confusing terms among many researchers. Many social scientists and media professionals use the term to refer to anything that spreads through society, whether it is a problem or a behavior practiced by a minority within the community. They justify calling it a phenomenon by noting that it is practiced by a large number of people. Examples include the phenomenon of reckless driving, divorce, drug abuse, extravagance, stinginess, absenteeism, consumerism, and boastfulness. However, not all of these issues qualify as phenomena. So, what is a phenomenon?

Now let's explain the conceptual differences between these three terms, starting with phenomenon:

Phenomenon (plural: phenomena) refers to something that occurs in the natural world and is known as cosmic phenomena or, in the case of living beings (humans, animals, or birds et.), biological phenomena. In human contexts, it is referred to as human phenomena, which can be divided into social and psychological phenomena. Social phenomena are those that are shared by all humans across different societies and eras, from the creation of mankind until the end of time. Examples include religion, competition, solidarity, conflict, racism, tribalism, marriage, reproduction, cooperation, adaptation, spending, learning, separation, communication, defense, and violence, among many other social phenomena.

Psychological phenomena, on the other hand, include emotions that all humans experience, such as love, hatred, joy, sadness, anger, fear, desire, disgust, doubt, anxiety, curiosity, amazement, stress, excitement, envy, contentment, greed, crying, and laughter. These psychological phenomena are common to all humans and living creatures, affecting their lives and behaviors and reflecting their inner states from the creation of Earth until the end of time.

As for biological human phenomena, these include illness, death, birth, and growth.

These phenomena are termed as such because they are observable behaviors or experiences that all humans and animals engage in or feel. They are noticeable, persistent, and present among all creatures from the creation of Earth until the end of time.

Thus, a phenomenon is characterized by four main attributes:

#### 1. **Permanence:**

Permanence is a prominent characteristic of a phenomenon, indicating its continuity over time. In other words, a phenomenon is enduring and sustainable; it does not appear in one era and disappear in another, nor does it exist in one society but not in another. For example, mating is a social phenomenon that is present across all eras and among all creatures; it persists and will continue to do so. What changes are the methods and practices of this phenomenon.

#### 2. **Stability**

Stability refers to the phenomenon's consistency and lack of change. For instance, mating remains a stable phenomenon among creatures. Although its forms and methods may vary from one society to another and from one period to another, the phenomenon of mating itself remains constant across all times and among all creatures. The same applies to other phenomena mentioned or others not listed.

#### 3. **Generality:**

Generality means that the phenomenon applies to all humans and even creatures without restriction. For example, tribalism is a social phenomenon practiced by all humans. There is no individual or community that does not exhibit some form of tribalism; a person might be loyal to their race, religion, sect, sports team, or hobby, and so forth.

#### 4. **Specific and Well-Defined:**

A phenomenon is specific and well-defined by the same name across all societies, languages, and eras. When a particular human phenomenon is mentioned, whether social, psychological, or biological, the listener does not think of anything else. For instance, when discussing phenomena such as competition, solidarity, conflict, racism, tribalism, mating, reproduction, cooperation, and adaptation, the listener's understanding remains consistent regardless of their language, religion, or social and economic status.

### **Secondly: "What are the characteristics of social problems?"**

A problem often emerges from a phenomenon and is considered a negative aspect or manifestation of it. It is not the phenomenon itself but rather one of the negative ways in which a particular segment of society engages with a social, psychological, or biological phenomenon. Therefore, a problem is characterized by four attributes that are completely different from those of a phenomenon. A problem is described as:

#### **Temporary**

: A problem is temporary and ephemeral, meaning it appears at a certain time and then fades away, with new problems emerging in its place. If we examine problems from the past, we find that they have become part of history and no longer exist. Problems are linked to specific circumstances and factors that contribute to their emergence; once these conditions and factors disappear, so does the problem. Since these factors vary over time and between societies, problems change accordingly. For example, the problems faced by previous generations are not the same as those faced by current generations, and they will differ again in future generations. Problems are thus associated with the social and economic conditions that contribute to their emergence.

#### **Changeable**

A problem is changeable and unstable. Issues that arise in one period do not persist but instead change over time and from one society to another according to the changing causes behind them.

#### **Specific**

A problem is specific, meaning it does not affect all humans or creatures but is limited to a particular group or segment of society. Even if this segment includes thousands or millions, it remains limited to that specific group as long as it is not universally experienced. This characteristic often leads to confusion between a problem and a phenomenon, as some might assume that if a problem spreads among a large number of people, it becomes a phenomenon. For example, issues like smoking, substance abuse, reckless driving, and terrorism are referred to as "phenomena" by some, but they are actually specific negative ways of engaging with broader phenomena. For instance, suicide is a problem because it is not practiced by all people; it is limited to a specific group and represents a negative way of dealing with the broader phenomenon of death. Similarly, substance abuse and smoking are not phenomena but negative methods of engaging with the broader phenomenon of seeking pleasure (or intoxication).

**Relative**

A problem is relative and not well-defined. Unlike phenomena, which are consistent and recognized across different societies and eras, problems are relative to specific contexts, times, and social or economic conditions. For instance, issues like extravagance, stinginess, and miserliness are problems within the broader phenomenon of spending. Spending itself is a general phenomenon, but its negative expressions, such as extravagance and stinginess, are considered problems. Similarly, divorce is a problem related to the broader phenomenon of separation; it represents a negative method of achieving separation, whereas other methods might be considered acceptable or neutral.

In summary, while a phenomenon is a stable, general, and well-defined occurrence across different contexts, a problem is temporary, changeable, specific to particular groups, and relative to its circumstances.

**Thirdly: What is the difference between a problem and a method in the human phenomenon?"**

A method aligns with the general characteristics of a problem because it represents one of the ways in which a phenomenon is practiced. For example, marriage and divorce are methods rather than phenomena or problems. Marriage is one way of practicing the phenomenon of mating among all creatures. However, the formal union between two individuals or creatures for mating is a method within this phenomenon. Mating can occur through various methods that vary by society and era. Some societies or creatures may not have a formal system of marriage. Thus, marriage is a positive method of mating, and when mating is practiced in socially or culturally unacceptable ways, it is considered deviant and classified as a problem.

Similarly, divorce is neither a phenomenon nor a problem. It may lead to issues such as family breakdown or children's behavioral problems, but it itself is not classified as a problem or a phenomenon. Rather, it is one method of separation. Separation is the broader phenomenon, while divorce is one of the methods through which separation occurs.

Accordingly, a method is the way a phenomenon is practiced. If the method is socially and culturally acceptable, it is considered a method. If it is not, it is categorized as a problem.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is evident that the confusion between these three concepts may stem from a lack of scientific clarity among researchers in the humanities regarding the explanation and discussion of these issues. This confusion is often exacerbated by the way the general public and media address such terms.