

Introduction to Sociology

COURSE CODE: B21SO01DC

BACHELOR OF ARTS
SOCIOLOGY

**SELF
LEARNING
MATERIAL**



SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Mission

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Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

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Course Code: B21SO01DC

Semester - I

Bachelor of Arts Sociology Self Learning Material



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www.sgou.ac.in

ISBN 978-81-963283-0-1



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March 2023

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavours.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

The university is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The UG programme in Sociology is conceived to be of coherent academic learning modules, capable of generating interest in the dissection of social engineering process. Both theory and practice have been covered with greatest tools in sociological analysis. Care has been taken to ensure a chronological progression in understanding the discipline. The curriculum provides adequate space for a linear journey through the historical concepts in sociology. The programme caters to the need of the aspirants for civil services examination as well. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

Feel free to write to us about anything that you feel relevant regarding the academic programme.



Wish you the best.

Regards,
Dr. P.M. Mubarak Pasha

01.03.2023

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Understanding Sociology



UNIT

Socio-Political Background of the Emergence of Sociology - Scientific Revolution, Twin Revolution, Enlightenment and Renaissance

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To recognise the socio-political and intellectual forces behind the emergence of Sociology
- ◆ To familiarise the commonly accepted definitions of Sociology
- ◆ To discover the possibilities and boundaries of Sociology as a discipline in relation to other social sciences
- ◆ To be familiar with the significance of sociological understanding of society

Prerequisites

Let us start our lesson on the bank of a river. You might have noticed the pebbles and rocks of various sizes and shapes along the bank. These pebbles were once big rocks. So how did the pebbles take shape? Originally they may have belonged to a mountain, just a rudimentary stone; its crude rough edges would have gotten smoothened overtime due to the constant interaction with the heavy flow of the river, thus the pebble would have taken its form, as we now see it. Likewise, each subject that we learn, including Sociology, got transformed into what it is today after centuries of engagement with its social and political environments. And it is still in evolution! A theorist or a philosopher shapes and streamlines the knowledge developed in decades into a science. Most often, it is the new political developments or/and social unrest that leads to the emergence of new ideas.

A pebble, the beautiful Tanjore sculpture that is carved out of a single rock

might have come into the minds of some of you! Yes, a sculpture that is created out of a big rock was once imaginative effort of an artist. Similarly, when sufficient information regarding a subject gets into the hands of an appropriate theorist, he may give it a name and an outline. Then, depending on what part of the sculpture/subject is being worked on, specific parts/specializations are added, depending on what part of the sculpture/subject is being worked at and so on and so forth! Only when the sculpture falls within the standard design does it get the endorsement of others in the field. Thus formalities like endorsement by experts are inevitable in the development of a discipline.

The very well-known 'Fall of Constantinople' that signified the surrender of European political supremacy to the Turks in 1453 AD is when Sociology's history begins. The restoration of ancient knowledge after the middle age at this point was the most significant point in European social history and in the development of Sciences. The ensuing political and social developments paved the way for organised forms of knowledge to emerge. Let us discuss these environmental impacts on our beautiful sculpture called 'Sociology'. Further in the module we will look at the nature and the scope of the subject and then subsequently discuss certain sociological tools and concepts. It is a long and interesting journey with beautiful halts to take in what we learn on the way. Are you ready to start the journey?

Keywords

Political supremacy, Knowledge, Critical approach, Capitalism, Working class, Social physics, Humanitarianism

1.1.1 Socio-Political Background of the Emergence of Sociology

Have you ever thought about how particular branches of knowledge or science develop? We always associate discoveries, innovations, and knowledge with a geographic location: For example Geometry with Greece, silk making and gunpowder with China, decimal system with India and writing with Mesopotamia. Haven't we heard of Europe as the birthplace of many sciences and social science subjects? If this is so, it will be

interesting to learn about the emergence of Sociology.

It is important to understand that knowledge is always scattered in society. It has to take a definite form and outline before it is called a science or a discipline. Also, to qualify itself to be called a science, it has to have methods of collecting and organising the scattered information. Many political and social developments led to the birth of sociology in European society. We are going to learn about the emergence of our subject in the various sections below. They include the socio-political environment of



Europe during Renaissance, Enlightenment, events like Scientific Revolution, French Revolution and Industrial Revolution. Some other significant factors like growth of science and technology and positive influence of scientific temper also impacted the birth and growth of Sociology.

What we have to keep in our mind is that the effects of all these major events lasted even after they reached their peak. All these events impacted society, the main ideologies of the time and the way knowledge was created and approached. This meant that reason and rationalism got priority over the ideas that were prominent earlier – theological or religious with a high moral undertone or pitch. Cause and effect and reasoning; seeking proof with senses and other scientific tools, objectivity in dealing with a subject and a rise in the scientific outlook of the population meant that the social world also was subjected to scientific examination and application of rules. Don't you feel that we need to look at the background of all these in detail? Let us have a look at that in the sections below:

a) Scientific Revolution

As the name suggests, the scientific revolution was all about science! But if you ask the question: Was it a revolution? Then we must pause for a minute there, for sure! Yes! You are right: This was not a revolution in the strict sense of the term, but is referred to as such because of the significant role it played in reconstructing the idea of knowledge and the method to acquiring it. Scientific revolution was not just one event; it was a series of events and episodes of discoveries and inventions that replaced many superstitions with scientific facts. In short, this event helped in the development of the scientific spirit.

What was the time period of these series of events? Scientific revolution took place

in Europe from the fourteenth century to the seventeenth century (1400 AD-1700 AD), and continued through the late eighteenth century. A number of transformative scientific developments that replaced the then existing, predominantly illogical thinking about nature and society are popularly known as the scientific revolution. Through these new developments, scientists working in various disciplines like Mathematics, Physics, Astronomy, Biology and Chemistry transformed the time-honoured views of society about Mother Nature. How to acquire scientific knowledge was the dominant question in the minds of the theorists.

Various kinds of scientific breakthroughs influenced almost all dimensions of knowledge during the period known as the scientific revolution. You know about telescopes, don't you? Scientific tools like that were invented during this time, which could be used to observe objects that could not be seen with naked eyes. Thus scientists like Nicholas Copernicus and Galileo Galilee invented and utilised instruments that helped them understand, for example, that the Sun and not the Earth was the centre of the universe.

Some important scientific facts that placed the longstanding beliefs on their head during the scientific revolution are:

1. Earth revolves around the Sun and not the other way (replacing Sun circling the earth and thus moving from the East to the West that we even now use for some rituals!).
2. Earth as round (replacing the idea of the Earth as flat)
3. Lightning understood scientifically as having electric charge (not as a message from an angry God)

This shift of focus of the astronomical studies from geocentric theories to heliocentric (Sun as the centre) had consequences for the natural sciences. Do you know what

geocentric theory is? In that theory earth is depicted as the centre of the universe! The new heliocentric theory, that is, sun as the centre, replaced the geocentric theory! Imagine that! That changed everything, didn't that? This discovery impacted the social world in unforeseen ways. But do you think change is that easy? Such was the resistance to change that those who propounded these new theories were thought to be working against the existing law and society and needed to be punished.

Those who supported the new opinion and those who opposed formed opposing groups and fought with each other. What did that mean? This created social divisions. Sometimes these divisions sided with existing rulers and sometimes they were opposed to them. What happened to them in the long run? Yes; slowly, and steadily though, these fresh points of view based on logic and rationality helped in a better understanding of the natural world around human beings. Gradual additions and corrections over the preceding theories led to further scientific developments. This also provided sciences with the direction to gain power over nature and brought in progress.

I am sure you have heard about Isaac Newton! Even he was involved in the process called scientific revolution. The range of scientists from Copernicus to Newton formed the important contributors of the development called scientific revolution. Now you can imagine the significance of this process.

b) Growth of Science and Technology

Do you know that when sociological theory was being developed, science was given more importance than before? This was true not only in academic institutions and universities but in the larger society as well. The technical yields of science were filtered through to all segments of society,

and as a result science was given immense status and standing. Exceedingly flourishing sciences like physics, biology, and chemistry were given privileged positions in society. Early Sociologists like Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer were thinking about science when they thought about studying society. They wanted to model sociology after the thriving physical sciences.

But you must note one thing! There was a dialogue, rather a debate, on whether the science of society should accept a scientific model without any question. Do you know that such a discussion happened at that time between those who unconditionally accepted the scientific model and those who thought that uncritical adoption of a scientific model would be taxing and unwise. This matter regarding the correlation between sociology and science, however, remains unsolved to everyone's satisfaction until this day.

c) Development of Scientific Spirit

What do you understand about the scientific spirit? You might have already heard about scientific temper, haven't you? That is a relevant concept even in the present day society. Because scientific temper helps us to tide over superstitions that we encounter in our daily lives. Many misconceptions based on traditional beliefs are uncritically accepted by us but when science enters our lives, we become more matter of fact to face situations like sickness in the family. This scientific temperament was a feature developed in the enlightenment period which was remarkable in intellectual development and philosophical transformation. A number of long standing beliefs and practices about social life were driven out during this period. As alternatives, philosophy and science were developed.

Don't you understand the significance of it when even common people think of reason



and empiricism as having the power to help human beings? For what? To understand and manage their world. The notion that since the physical world could be explained by natural laws, the social world also could be explained by general laws. Thus it was left with the Philosophers now to discover laws that could explain the societal events using reason and research.

1.1.2 Twin revolution: - The French revolution and The Industrial Revolution

a) The French Revolution

Do you know what is meant by the twin revolution? The very well-known French revolution and the first industrial revolution in Britain are jointly known as the twin revolution. Importance of the twin revolution should not be underestimated in the emergence of sociology. The French revolution signified changes in the political and social lives of people. Similarly industrial revolution transformed the economic fabric of the society and subsequently the outlook of the people. The significance of these two events not only in the history of sociology but also of the entire world was their capacity to transform the ways of life and the mind-set of the masses.

Let us have a look at the French revolution below: Haven't you heard of the French revolution? Probably the word revolution must have been learnt by us for the first time when we read about this one! France, under the rule of Louis XVI of the Bourbon dynasty, was undergoing many crises like social discontentment and unrest. Common people were distressed by high taxes, unemployment and poverty (remember the much talked about question, real or imagined, by the queen Mary Antoinette when she heard about the shortage of food among commoners:

"If they don't have bread why don't they eat cakes?"). But the luxuries of the royal family continued without any hesitation. The Catholic Church was the predominant religious authority in France. The ruling elite enjoyed the already amassed wealth and did not pay any attention to the suffering of the common people. Did you know that even the Aristocratic elite were unhappy with the situation? Enlightenment ideas that supported skepticism- critical approach- towards the existing political and social system finally led to the outbreak of what is popularly known as the French revolution in the summer of 1789 AD. The intellectual climate was favourable for raising demands for remedying their problems. So what did they ask for? Many demanded a more efficient monarchy and some even asked for an absolute democracy. Curtailing the power of the supreme rulers was argued by the theorists who propounded the social contract theory. This theory had great influence on the revolting French population. Prominent proponents of this theory were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and so on. John Locke argued that human beings were originally social and cooperative. Therefore the rights of the individual need to be protected, even from the rulers' excesses. These were deeply inspiring to the revolutionaries during the French Revolution. It is natural that the main demands of the participants of the revolution were many. Greater religious and cultural freedom, introduction of some form of Parliamentary body to represent the common people, and greater equality under the law were some such demands. Enlightenment writings were widely spread, especially among the urban population in Europe including France. Wars, high taxes and unpopular financial policies made the people angry and fuming. What did they do? They rose in revolt! Impact of the French revolution was long lasting though its immediate impact was total destruction and dis-organisation. Even then there were some

positive outcomes. We will be surprised to learn that the French revolution paved the way for the supremacy of the parliament; a big achievement for that era which had great implications for the common people. The system of constitutional monarchy restricted the power of the rulers, compelling the latter to listen more openly to the new ideas floating in society. Ideas like the recognition of individual rights of the enlightenment thinkers, sovereignty of the people, and the universal applicability of these ideas were the long lasting impacts of the French revolution. The French revolution was not an isolated political event; rather a prolonged sequence of political upheaval started with the French revolution in 1789 and continued through the nineteenth century. There was a huge impact of these revolutions on many societies and many positive changes took place. Nonetheless the attention of many early thinkers was not attracted to the constructive consequences; on the other hand, the negative effects of such changes were the focus of the thinkers. This turned out to be the most immediate factor in the rise of sociological theorizing. These thinkers, on the whole, were distressed by the resulting anarchy and confusion. This was especially true about France. They were united in their objective to re-establish order in society. What do we do when we see that changes in our lives are painful or stressful? We want to go back to the previous state. The same thing happened in this case also. A few of the more extreme thinkers of this period expressed their desire to go back to the more peaceful and relatively orderly days of the middle ages. Those who were more refined acknowledged that many social changes had occurred and such a return was impracticable. Are you familiar with such people?

Having faced such a dead-end, who would try to find solutions? Similarly the second group of thinkers wanted to find ways to restore peace for those societies that had been upturned by the political revolutions

of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This issue of social order was one of the major concerns of classical sociologists like Emile Durkheim and even his predecessor, Auguste Comte.

b) The Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution was another fundamental event in the development of Sociology. How? It sounds too far-fetched, isn't it? But the relation between the Industrial revolution and the birth of Sociology is closer than what we would generally imagine. It was not, however, a single event. Rather, numerous interconnected episodes by which European society transformed itself from a largely agricultural to an industrial system are collectively called the Industrial revolution. These developments affected not just the urban areas but rural regions as well. Do you know how? Massive number of people gave up agricultural work to engage themselves in the industrial employment offered in the factories that were mushrooming. Are you familiar with this kind of situation of massive flow of people to join factories? This, as we know, also leads to migration and urbanisation on a large scale. Changes in such situations lead to transformation of urban areas too, isn't it? Extensive sequences of technological enhancements changed the factory settings. That is natural, isn't it? Services required for the rising entrepreneurs and the industry were supplied by the huge financial and administrative machinery. Manufactured goods of the industrial system could be bartered for others in the free market place. Is that all? No. What about humans and their labour? All these changes need human labour, no? Masses worked for long hours for low wages while a few made a huge profit. Don't we recognise this as Capitalism? Yes this was a transformative period to a capitalist society. Naturally a reaction against the exploitation of the industrial system and capitalism in general ensued. This led to the



labour movement and a number of other radical movements trying to get rid of the capitalist structure.

The Industrial revolution was important due to its social impacts. Machinery took over from individual as the producing agent. What was its implication? Large scale production happened. But didn't they need human labour to run the machines? Definitely, they needed many of them. Cities were crowded with migrant workers from villages. Thus the processes involved in the Industrial revolution initiated the flow of migrants to factories in the city for work, leading to urbanisation and migration. The uprooted villagers had suffered tremendously as is evident in English literature depicting that period. The period also witnessed tumultuous changes in European societies. The Industrial revolution, Capitalism and the reaction against them all involved an enormous upheaval in western society. This upheaval influenced the social thinkers. Some major figures in the early history of sociological theory spent their time studying the effects of the industrial revolution. They were interested in devising programmes, in finding solutions to their societies' problems. Thus Sociological theories were born in Europe.

1.1.3 Enlightenment

Enlightenment is one of those rarest time periods in human history that is named after the most significant development of the human mind. European intellectual movement is what we are referring to right now. This movement has been one of the most significant influences on human intellect and therefore on human societies because it highlighted reason and science rather than tradition. At this stage of development of our minds and society, we may not fully understand the exact significance of the rupture it had created in the development of European society. But haven't you gone

through examples of the damage a malicious mix of tradition and superstition can bring to individuals and collectives? Thinking about that time period in human history, what were the crucial points we have to learn? First of all, the period of enlightenment was marked by progress in rational education and scientific understanding. Enlightenment thinkers were forced to examine their society and social relations in detail due to social turmoil and a desire for order and stability. The widespread ideas of the time were influenced by the 17th-century philosophers such as Descartes, Locke, and Newton. Prominent figures included Kant, Goethe, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Adam Smith. What a range of prominent thinkers! Their goal was to attain the right kind of society 'here and now'. They did not want that to happen in some 'heavenly future'. Advancements in rationality, spread of idealism and humanitarianism far and wide made scientific understanding of self and society look indispensable and achievable at the same time. Did this mean that the prominent thinkers of the time were optimistic in their attitude? Yes because they were hopeful that the kind of advancement of society they were looking for seemed to be guaranteed. Because all human beings had the power of reason, they argued, they could attain progress for themselves and their societies. No subjective factor—tradition, religion or any other kinds of authority claiming supremacy—could limit this progress. What do you think was the basis of their assertion? The premise behind such a position was that reason required no more than the right kind of education and exercise. Education meant facts and scientifically proven truths and would lead to rational thinking. Rational thinking was the path to human and social advancement. This would help humans achieve three objectives—knowledge, freedom, and happiness—for themselves and for society. Enlightenment social and political thought led to ground-breaking changes in customary social

relations. European societies had already started gaining modern character from the period of Renaissance onwards. However stress on reason and individualism by the Enlightenment ideas along with the American, French and Industrial revolutions brought in the ultimate features of a modern capitalist society. The immeasurable misery during the French revolution drew the attention of some of the enlightenment thinkers. How did that impact sociology? In fact, the problems and issues of that time became the issues of sociology, the new science, at the commencement of the nineteenth century. With the diffusion of the thoughts of thinkers like Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Charles Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and so on, opposition to traditional authority happened to be more achievable. Thomas Hobbes stated, without any room for doubt, that the social order could be changed by human beings because it was created by them. Thus all the divine theories on the creation of society were thrown away and the makeover- of humans- from subjects into citizens began with this confidence in the power of humans. John Locke is the other important thinker who prepared the theory about the nature of human beings in the original state of nature. Initially, based on the right of individuals and the need to curtail the powers of the sovereign, Locke deemed that human beings were first and foremost social and supportive creatures. The social contract theories of Hobbes and Locke were highly influential in American and French revolutions. Montesquieu argued that all human beings are social creatures. He stated that the origin of society should be searched for in the pre-social dispositions of human beings. In order to understand society, he pointed out; facts about this entity should be investigated just as the way natural scientists observe facts about the physical world. What does that mean for the methods of studying society? What do you

think? He stated, as an answer, that similar to the way natural scientists discover cause and effect relations in their subjects, social scientists could find the patterns about social relations through observation. Subsequently laws could be discovered, he argued. Have you read about Rousseau? We cannot think about a modern political system without his name being considered, Can we? His ideas about social contract theory had influenced all leading figures in the formation of modern nation states. Rousseau was another thinker who contributed towards the understanding of social relations during this era. He said that contract among individuals led to the formation of society. Rousseau focused his attention on chances of sweeping social change. According to him, a human being was originally virtuous. This good human being was corrupted by the collective called society. Now how to restore the virtuosity of the human being? He suggested that the only way to regain the moral nature of the individual is to completely transform society. He claimed that private property is the cause for all conflicts and wars. Even the civil state was formed to supervise private property. The state and a social contract are necessary to regulate private property. In the original state of nature, he stated, there was hardly any disparity because each had a natural right. Another most prominent social thinker of the time was Saint Simon. He was one of the earliest known utopian socialists. He was a social dreamer. He believed that the problems of the society of his times could be resolved by the reorganisation of economic production. He wrote about two classes: Industrial Class or working class and the Idling Class. Those engaged in all sorts of productive work, not simply manual labour, are called working class. He suggested that the second class is the idling class who live on the fruits of others. Saint Simon was of the opinion that the working class needed to be recognised and rewarded so that an efficient

economy could be created. He considered morals and politics as 'positive' sciences. He elevated science to the level of the original sacred authority. With all these thinkers and debates and discussions involving them, the subject matter of philosophy bloomed to its best shape. Philosophy encompassed all such subject matter which was then divided into many disciplines. Was there any other social science? History was the other discipline of social science. We will learn the transition of our subject Sociology from social philosophy later in this unit.

1.1.4. Renaissance

Renaissance is a beautiful word and it denotes hope. What does it mean? Do you know? It is originally a French word meaning rebirth. We all learnt about renaissance in our schools. Anyone who is even remotely interested in European History or World History cannot skip a discussion on this event. Rebirth of what? Definitely it refers to the rebirth of something. Here it is the rebirth of ideas or knowledge; in other words, because of the restoration of importance to ancient knowledge by Europeans this period is known as the age of the renaissance. The period of the renaissance started in the fourteenth century(1400 AD) and moves upto the seventeenth century. The beginning of this event marks the transition from the medieval to the modern world. This was a time of the great revival of art, literature, and learning in Europe. Do you know that there was a political reason behind this kind of a revival? The conquest of the capital of Byzantian Empire-Constantinople- by the Turks in 1453 led to the retreat of Europeans. Many great artists and scholars fled back to Italy and other European nations, leading to a flurry of activity in those places around what was in existence earlier- like art, music, ancient knowledge and so on. This added great strength to the efforts to search for classical texts on various subjects, to focus on

traditions of art and music. Some questions may come to your mind at this point of our discussion: But how did Sociology or the broader spectrum of Social Sciences benefit from this rebirth? Restoration of ancient knowledge also meant that rationality started gaining more importance. Evidence became important for everything. Prior to this period, that is, in the Middle Ages everything was explained in terms of religion and divine intervention. With the arrival of the Renaissance, an older establishment based on religious ideals came into conflict with scholars in different fields of study with the so-called rationalist learning. The rationalist approach places human reason and logical connections above faith. What we should not forget is that faith and religious explanation did not need to prove anything! They wanted people to accept things as they were. Renaissance made rationalism replace religion as the organising principle of knowledge. In general, knowledge benefited because of recovery and collection of ancient texts that were considered lost until then. Encouragement of proper reading of texts contributed to renewal of interest in learning. Specific fields of knowledge also profited as they were divided in new forms. We should, however, note that the rationalist approach did not influence different subjects in the same manner! It impacted different disciplines to different degrees. This influence took effect at different speeds. Recovery of texts during the early renaissance along with the numerous inventions during the process of the scientific revolution bestowed knowledge with social status and in turn helped scientists and humanists in the establishment of various disciplines.

Scientific subjects like natural and physical sciences, which already had a beginning some time ago, were making some progress. Logical explanations based on observation using naked eye and instruments

like telescopes started becoming acceptable. Use of new methodologies and inventions helped scientists to expand the scope of their subjects and some moved on to study other objects. Outside the natural and physical sciences took place the birth of Philosophy- the first discipline that studied matters other than natural and physical objects.

At this point of time, an explanation regarding the reason- why something happened? - was asked in the subject Philosophy. Thus almost all of the social science subjects owe their origin to Philosophy. Then how did Philosophy differ from the other prominent forms of knowledge? Answer to the question, 'can you prove it?' made all the difference! Also methods of enquiry differentiated Natural Sciences and Philosophy. Philosophy was getting nurtured in this process which eventually would play the most significant part in the emergence of Sociology. This will become clear to you when we discuss the transition from Social Philosophy to Sociology in this unit later on.

1.1.5 Intellectual Forces

We have observed the importance of intellectual forces in our society at various junctures. Can you name a few intellectual forces that are at work in our society? They appear sometimes as ideologies. Sometimes waves of ideas that have the potential to influence us direct our activities towards a certain way of living. These forces contribute to the character of each era of the society.

Are you aware of the way in which ideas become dominant and influence the development of society? In the emergence of organised forms of knowledge like our subject Sociology, some ideas played a major role. The following is a brief description of the major intellectual forces in the foundation of sociology and other social sciences. We will learn crucial points about them here.

a) Rationalism

We have referred to reason and rationalism in many places in our discussion already. What is rationalism? The principle or practice of firm dependence on reason as the basis of one's thoughts and actions is called rationalism. A rationalist does not believe in religious or emotional explanations. Rationalism was believed to be embedded firmly in the power of the human mind.

According to rationalists humans were reasonable animals. Just like an individual could get out of his problems and find solutions by thinking through them, society could get out of its difficult times by applying logical thinking insightfully. Therefore societal life is explainable using reason. Troubles of the society could be overcome, and serenity achieved by using the logical quality of the individual and collective mind.

b) Empiricism

How do you define empiricism? It may be defined as the theory that all knowledge is based on experience derived from the senses. Every theory demands evidence that can be observed. Since evidence is there, it is possible to repeat the phenomena. Empiricists of that time period held, therefore, that the reality could be understood by using science. By means of empiricism which was a superstructure for most sciences, it was believed, complex layers of reality could be explained. Answers to social problems could be achieved through this and human life and society could be improved using empiricism. It suited the needs of the time, didn't it?

c) Humanitarianism

Haven't you seen or read about humanitarians? What do you understand by humanitarianism? How does it work in society? This is an ideology that became dominant within the social framework



whereby humans consider themselves responsible for the welfare of their less fortunate fellow humans. It bases itself on a view that all human beings are worthy of respect and should be treated with dignity. Therefore, humanitarians work towards advancing the well-being of humanity as a whole. Many of the humanitarians that we see in our times are influenced by this ideology which also had an impact on Sociology- that is, the need to improve society so that all humans live harmoniously.

Humanitarianism, when it influenced the birth of a science of society, stood for the mounting understanding of the life of the less fortunate, the less capable and the underprivileged in general. This denoted the growing sensitivity within the social consciousness towards the diverse human conditions. This newfound wisdom compelled the Philosophers to look for solutions to the ills and afflictions of individuals and society.

d) Idealism

Haven't we heard about it several times in our life- Idealism of the Youth, idealism of political worker and so on? But there may not be clarity regarding what is idealism. Envisioning things in an ideal form is what idealism is. This can be a principle or a practice for many. Sometimes idealism may turn impractical in the real practice of it. However when one pursues one's ideas or ideals without considering the practical result, he is an idealist.

This meant that one's own ideas are taken as the dominant and the right one. Therefore this takes the character of a dogma. Whenever an individual thinks and takes his or her ideas seriously, idealism is in existence.

The intellectual forces mentioned above were dominant during the period culminating in forcing the thinkers to work towards the betterment of their societies. That ultimately

led to the search for a science of society and subsequently resulted in the birth of Sociology.

1.1.6 Transition from Social Philosophy to Sociology

Do you know that Sociology evolved from Social Philosophy? As much as other Social Sciences, Sociology was born out of the ancient knowledge that was systematically arranged called Social Philosophy. What was the birthplace of Social Philosophy? Do you know that Philosophy existed in almost all ancient societies? It did exist in all societies but it was laid down in the modern form by the Greeks. Therefore ancient Greece is considered as the birthplace of Philosophy. It was nurtured well during the Middle Ages.

But do you know that every knowledge, every science has its finest stage of development? As for Philosophy, as we learnt in an earlier section, that was the age of Enlightenment. In other words, the eighteenth century saw the discipline of Social Philosophy blooming itself into its totality and refinement. Though both got independent status as two separate branches of knowledge, Social Philosophy and Sociology are said to be still quite close. The extent of this closeness may be understood from the comments by some scholars that Sociology of today can use some propositions of the early Philosophy. Do you see the point?

As curious observers you must have noticed that despite the intimacy between the two disciplines, both are "two different endeavours of man's enquiry". Let us consider this in detail. There is an important similarity in terms of their intent. What is their most important goal? Both the subjects claim to be aiming at the elucidation of reality. Another important similarity is that both base their findings on generalization after observation of facts.

Philosophy because of the efforts of the Social Philosophers. History and Philosophy were the only two subjects that were developed at that point of time and only Philosophy could explain the cause and effect relationships. Philosophers addressed the disorder and instability in society. Data was to be available in society and needed to be collected using empirical methods. This led to the emergence of Sociology as an independent discipline in its own right.

Some of us might have wondered why all the early Sociologists were Philosophers! Do you understand now? It was not accidental that all the initial theorists who helped in the emergence of Sociology – Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim and others were Philosophers! We will learn more about the efforts of Philosophers of the time in the emergence of Sociology later on in our course.

1.1.7 Emergence of Comte and the Development of Sociology

Nineteenth century Europe was going through a lot of transformation. Among the nations of Europe, France was especially important in our analysis. We have already learnt that France was undergoing transformation after, and as a result of, the French Revolution. We saw the problems that the nation was facing immediately before and after that event in an earlier section, didn't we? There was disorder and confusion in social and political arenas. Post-revolution era was the Napoleonic time when the actual nation building in accordance with the Republican principles was taking place. At the same time ideals from the Revolution were spreading far and wide wherever Napoleon made inroads. In fact, they went even beyond those regions if we go by what we had learnt in our world history classes, isn't it?

In any case social cohesion and harmony



were absent in the post-revolution France. However, despite all such problems, the French intellectual climate was very active and vibrant during the early 19th century. Achievements of Mathematics and other Physical sciences were immense and the French openly exhibited their pride in it! Intellectuals firmly believed in the methods followed by Natural Sciences. As far as society was concerned, there were discussions on finding a theory in order to solve the problems existing there. To put it in simple terms, they were looking for ways to establish the Law of Progress of Society or social laws similar to the natural laws. Do you know that even early thinkers like Blaise Pascal and Charles Montesquieu had contributed towards the development of such a law?

Have you heard of the French thinker Jacques Turgot? He had already prepared the setting for one such law. Similarly Marquis de Condorcet came forward with a hypothesis: the progress of humans could be predicted if a law exists in that field. This law could be established if history ceases to be the history of individuals but becomes the history of masses. He said that most of these laws were unknown but depending on the transformation of the human stages- anthropomorphic, metaphysical and scientific explanations of Nature- progress is necessary and uninterrupted. He had considerable influence on the founding figure of Sociology- Auguste Comte- and other thinkers like Saint Simon. Thus the stage was set in the nineteenth century France for a social law and the emergence of a scientific study of society. In short, social problems which were perceived as the aftereffects of the French revolution disheartened thinkers and they wanted to produce explanations and solutions. Similarly, the industrial revolution also dislocated masses and created social issues. Enlightenment ideals had already made inroads into social consciousness

all over Europe. Sensing the demand for a science to understand society and taking advantage of the favourable intellectual climate in Europe for this purpose, some intellectuals like Herbert Spencer in Britain, Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte in France set out to establish a science of society. Auguste Comte and Henri de Saint-Simon collaborated to create “Plan of the Scientific Operations Necessary for the Reorganisation of Society” in 1822. In this they named the science of society as Social Physics. All knowledge, according to them, would pass through three stages- the theological, the metaphysical and the positive. This Law is the centre of Auguste Comte’s social theory. According to him, not only knowledge but individuals and society also pass through the three stages given in this Law. He later changed the proposed name for the science of society to Sociology in his book *Positive Philosophy* (1838). Comte regarded Sociology as the last of the Sciences to develop. He considered Sociology to have reached the positive stage after passing through theological and metaphysical stages. He defined it as the “abstract, theoretical science of social phenomena” that is at the pinnacle of all sciences. In brief, acceptance of rationalism and skepticism during Renaissance and Enlightenment, Social Contract theories that asserted the place of the individual, influence of the French revolution, growth of science and technology, development of scientific outlook, social changes due to Industrialisation, urbanisation and revolutions along with the persuading intellectual forces like idealism, empiricism, humanitarianism and rationalism stimulated thinkers in Europe to create the science of society- Sociology.

Recap

- ◆ Economic distress and irresponsible rulers led to the French revolution in 1789.
- ◆ Social contract theory which emphasized on the individual right and equality.
- ◆ Disorder and turmoil prevailed in the post -revolutionary French society.
- ◆ Industrial revolution leading to a change in the mode of production.
- ◆ European society changed itself to an industrial capitalist system.
- ◆ Masses working for low wages were in great misery.
- ◆ Migration of masses of people from rural to urban areas.
- ◆ Twin revolution led to the emergence of Sociological theories.
- ◆ Enlightenment literally means the state of having knowledge.
- ◆ Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau were the prominent thinkers.
- ◆ The enlightenment ideas encouraged inquisitiveness and questioning of the conventional way of life, system and regime.
- ◆ Renaissance means rebirth.
- ◆ The birth of Sociology was influenced by a number of intellectual forces.
- ◆ Predominant forces were rationalism, empiricism, humanitarianism, and idealism.
- ◆ Complex layers of reality could be explained using empiricism.
- ◆ Humanitarianism as an informal ideology spread sensitivity.
- ◆ Idealism also was an important intellectual force in the emergence of Sociology.
- ◆ Sociology evolved from social philosophy.
- ◆ Philosophy is an attempt to explain reality in its totality.
- ◆ Birth of the study of society-Sociology- occurred in France, Europe.

- ◆ Change starting from the renaissance period were caused by, and in turn favoured, rationality and inquisitiveness.
- ◆ Social Philosophers were keen on an understanding of these and on a solution for a better society.
- ◆ Progress in the natural sciences had established the value of science and its methods.
- ◆ Some of the Philosophers tried to apply the scientific method adopted by the Natural Sciences to the study of society.
- ◆ Prominent among them are Herbert Spencer, Saint Simon and Auguste Comte.

Objective Questions

1. When did the scientific revolution happen?
2. Which planet is considered as the centre of the universe in geocentric theory?
3. What is the centre of the universe according to heliocentric theory?
4. What was the science on which early sociologists modeled sociology?
5. What is meant by the practice of firm dependence on reason as the basis of one's thoughts and actions?
6. Which is the process of gaining knowledge only through senses?
7. Which is the birthplace of philosophy?
8. Who is the author of the book 'Positive Philosophy'?
9. What are the primary causes for the origin of the French Revolution?
10. What is the etymological meaning of the concept Renaissance?

Answers

1. 1400 AD-1700AD
2. Earth
3. Sun
4. Social Physics
5. Rationalism
6. Empiricism
7. Greece
8. Auguste Comte
9. Economic distress and Irresponsible ruling
10. Re-birth

Assignments

1. Discuss about the significance of Scientific Revolution including the theoretical and practical dimensions in the emergence of Sociology
2. Explain the Twin Revolution in Britain and how these bring changes in the social and political lives of the people
3. Examine the Socio-Political and Intellectual forces behind the emergence of Sociology
4. Define Enlightenment
5. Examine the role of Auguste Comte in the development of Sociology

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UNIT

Sociology-Definition, Nature and Scope, Sociology and Other Social Sciences-Political Science, History, Economics, Psychology, Anthropology

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To describe the definition, nature and the scope of Sociology
- ◆ To have an understanding of the subject matter in different dimensions
- ◆ To compare Sociology with other Social sciences

Prerequisites

Do you remember the story in which the ants were looking at an elephant? Being small beings, they were getting only a partial view of the big animal. To get a full view they all described what they saw to each other. Thus one ant went through the legs of the elephant and thought that an elephant is like a big pillar. And another one through the tail and thought an elephant to be like a broom. This description of an elephant by a group of ants among themselves provided them with an understanding of how big an animal the elephant was. Finally they put all of these together and understood the size and nature of the animal they were trying to view.

It took us back to our childhood for a moment. Very similar to the ants in this story, we do have a number of definitions given by prominent Sociologists. It is not feasible to study each of them at this point. Moreover, when we learn about the social thinkers in their respective sections later, we will come across their approach and the way each of them labeled the subject. We will mention a few of them here just to familiarise you with the diverse ways in which Sociology was approached.

Keywords

Independent science, Pure science, Empirical science, Abstract science, Formalistic and Synthetic school, Social relationship

1.2.1 Sociology-Definition, Nature and Scope

We learnt about the socio-political dynamics along with some other factors that contributed to the emergence of Sociology in the previous unit. For a deep understanding of the subject we must know the definition, the subject matter, the scope and so on. You might have already noted that there are a number of definitions for Sociology. That shows the broader ways of understanding the subject and its different dimensions.

We learnt already that Sociology arose out of the social and political turbulence that happened in Europe over centuries. Changes in the economic spheres of life due to industrial revolutions also impacted the emergence of sociology as a scientific study of society. This period was politically, socially and intellectually important and lasted from about 1400 AD until the mid-nineteenth century. Historical events in Europe-- Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, and French Revolution-- impacted the way society was changing in different nations within the European continent and subsequently in their colonies across the world. Knowledge was structured and organised accordingly.

Natural and physical sciences emerged and flourished following the drastic changes in Europe due to the scientific revolution. Widespread rise in scientific temper, empiricism and rationality in European society led to a state where religious and theological doctrines were replaced by the scientific ideas. Challenging the dominant

ideology was encouraged and this led to political and social unrest. Progress in the economic realm during the first Industrial revolution resulted in changes in the form and functioning of social institutions like the family and education system in Britain. Subsequent revolutions occurred in other parts of Europe as well and social changes ensued. So also social problems!

Do you know that such problems did have some positive consequences? Developments like the above prompted thinkers and philosophers of the time to search for a science of society so that solutions to the existing social problems could be found. Emphasis on and popularity of empirical methods in natural and physical sciences motivated thinkers to look for similar methods to study society. This led to the formation of social sciences. We can understand now why all the disciplines of social sciences approach the issues from different angles; because they all surfaced from the same ancestors. And naturally because of this common origin, Sociology shares a relation with other social sciences. We will examine these in detail in the subsequent sections.

Coming back to the evolution of sociology, taking theoretical cues from social philosophy and methods from physical sciences, Sociology emerged as the youngest discipline within the family of social sciences. It qualifies all the standards of a science and its founders have clear-cut views about its jurisdiction and methods.

These are reflected in its definition, nature and scope which are going to be discussed in this unit.

a) Definition of Sociology

Let us consider, therefore, what Sociology is! That is, we will go through the definition of the subject given by important theorists. You might have heard already that people consider it as the science of society; some define it as the study of social behaviour while some others call it as the study of social interaction, social life etc. As we all know Auguste Comte coined the term Sociology; before that it was named Social Physics. He considered Sociology as the abstract theoretical science of Social Phenomena. Comte suggested that social phenomena should be studied in the same spirit as the study of astronomical, physical, chemical or physiological sciences. So Sociology was defined by classical theorists, keeping in mind the heavy responsibility it was carrying. Are you ready to examine some of the definitions of Sociology below?

Now let us consider defining the subject matter. What is Sociology? A commonly heard definition is: Sociology is the scientific study of society. We can arrive at this definition if we look at the etymological meaning of the term Sociology. The term Sociology is a combination of two terms: the Latin word 'socius' meaning companion/ associate and the Greek word 'logos' meaning science/study. This term was first used by Auguste Comte in his book '*The Positive Philosophy*' in 1838.

Have you noticed anything important in the term borrowed from Latin to name Sociology? Look at the term once again: socius meaning companion/ associate. This indicates the crucial matter that Sociology is about companionship or association. In other words, it is a science to study human beings when they are in each other's company. Sociology is not meant to study humans in isolation. Do you see what is discussed here?

The above definition states beyond doubt that society- humans in association/

companionship- is being studied in Sociology. Nonetheless, as we all know, many thinkers and theorists worked towards the development of Sociology in its initial stages of development. They all approached the subject matter- society- from various angles and therefore have gone about defining Sociology differently. But that does not mean that they were studying different subjects. Rather they saw the same subject matter from different viewpoints. Let us think further.

They range from the definition of sociology as the general science of society to the description of it as the study of human interactions and interrelations. Social life has been considered as the subject matter of sociology by some scholars whereas interpretative understanding of social action has been regarded as the theme by some others. Sociology has been seen as the science of social relationships as well as the study of social groups. Placing all of the above together gives an idea on what Sociology is trying to study.

We do, nevertheless, need to know how the founding father of Sociology defined the subject, don't we? We will confine ourselves to understand the definition given by Auguste Comte, who is known as the father of sociology. He defined Sociology as the study of social phenomena. We will learn more about the way he approached the subject and the background in which he came to this conclusion on the thematic content of the subject later in the course.

Glancing through the above section, we may realise that all the definitions point out the fact that a common thought underlies all these definitions. They are only different modes resorted by theorists to thematically arrange the material that Sociology is concerned with. All of them emphasise the 'social' aspect of human beings. Then, what do you think is the subject matter of Sociology? The subject matter is 'society'



rather than the individual.

Sociology shares a reaction with other social sciences. We will examine these in detail in its definition, nature and scope which are going to be discussed in this unit.

b) Nature and Scope of Sociology

From the history of evolution and definition of sociology it is clear that it has been designed as a science. The founding fathers intended that as a science it should form its own theoretical propositions, collect data using its own methods and analyse them using techniques developed for that purpose. All these require exactness, reliability and facts that validate the findings. These findings should be generalised so that they can be made applicable in similar contexts.

We know by now that sociology was modelled after natural and physical sciences. Since sociology was modelled after sciences, a comparison with them is natural. But the thematic content of our subjects differs so much with that of the sciences which study the physical phenomena that an evaluation in those lines seems irrelevant at times. And yet, claiming the status of sciences demands that the principles of rationality cause- effect and generalisation are incorporated.

Going by the general understanding that a subject can attain scientific status if it can collect data, analyse them to discover a recurring pattern, and present the importance of that to the scientific community and the public. Do you know that sociology can do all these? Therefore it is accepted as a science. Even when it is established as a science, the nature of the discipline may differ from other sciences. Each science may have its own features and characteristics.

Its scope - all the possible areas that can be covered under the umbrella of its subject matter – need to be examined as well. This

will enable us to differentiate sociology with other sciences. Thus the nature and scope is a basic matter that we require to grasp before we go further into other areas of the subject.

So, what is sociology? What does it study? What are the dimensions of sociology? It studies the social aspects of human lives, isn't it? But don't you think that it is a very broad subject matter to study? Does it mean that the range of topics is vast? Does it mean that the discipline is very elastic and expandable? It has been pointed out by critics that it is difficult to determine where the boundaries of sociology begin or end, or where sociological knowledge can be applied to understand human relations. Since society is growing more and more complex with new issues emerging all the time, the application of sociological knowledge is becoming more relevant day by day. Nevertheless, the founding fathers of Sociology did have a vision for the subject and wanted it to cover a broad spectrum of issues. They envisioned Sociology to be a general science of society which studies all aspects that other social sciences do not cover. That is, the scope has been designed on intent to be vast. Let us have a detailed discussion of the nature and scope of sociology in the following section.

1. An independent science: Sociology has its own subject matter and clear-cut methods. Therefore its boundary is distinct from that of other subjects even when some other sciences study society. They study different aspects of society and are distinctively different from sociology. Sociology has its own theoretical formulation, knowledge, theorists and techniques to gain knowledge from its marked field of study.

2. A Pure Science: Sociology is not an applied science. Rather it is a pure science. As a pure science, its direct task is to gain knowledge and it does not utilise and apply the existing knowledge in the field. Have you heard of engineering being referred to as

applied knowledge? Just like Mathematics and Engineering may, respectively, be considered as the pure and applied part of the same knowledge, Sociology and Social Work may be considered as the pure and applied part of equivalent knowledge.

3. An Empirical Science: Like any other science Sociology relies on empiricism. What is empiricism? We have learnt that in the previous unit. Empiricism is the theoretical position that knowledge should be based on experience and evidence derived from senses. Therefore when we say that Sociology is empirical, it means that it depends on the data collected directly from the field to create Sociological knowledge. It bases itself on experimentation. Thus the facts and information collected through its methods are solid and firm. Since it is based on experimentation, it can be recurring and forms a pattern.

4. Relies on Rationality: The information collected through empirical methods are arranged logically and rationally in sociological theory. Thus theories that are based on logical deduction are born by the use of reason. It means that both facts collected through strict methods and theoretical inference based on hard earned facts are important.

5. A general science: Sociology deals with human life in general. To make this point clear let us take the example of other social sciences like Economics or Political Science.

Economics deals with the economic aspect of human life whereas Political Science looks at the political aspect. Sociology is not concerned with such specialised aspects of human life rather it studies human life in general.

6. A generalizing science: Sociology generalises the findings based on the study of a number of events or social phenomena.

In order to generalise, it does not, however, study all the events or phenomena. This is a very important point since it is a solid proof that Sociology is a Science. With the use of its rigorous methods and theories, if we study some social events and the behaviour of some individuals, we can generalise the findings of others with similar characteristics.

7. No Value Judgments: Sociology as a discipline does not make any ethical, moral or value judgments. It categorically states ‘what is’ there in society and does not indicate ‘what should be’. Thus it is not a normative science but is a categorical science. In simple words, this means that Sociology cannot suggest which direction a society should take even if it is seen as having a lot of problems within it! Moreover, it is free from any types of bias and it tries to be more objective.

8. An Abstract Science: Sociology is a conceptual science. What does it mean? It means that Sociology as a discipline is interested in social events in general to study its forms and patterns; it is not interested in one event. Take the example of suicide. Sociology looks at this act of individuals as a social phenomenon, to learn the general nature and not to learn why one individual or another takes his or her life. After analysis, a Sociologist will be able to understand the social determinants of suicides that happen in a particular society rather than why one individual took his life. Thus it theorizes the event so that the principles may be applied to other such events.

9. A Social Science: Sociology deals with the ‘social universe’. Is it clear then that it distinguishes itself from Physical Sciences like Physics, Astronomy and so on that deal with the ‘natural universe’? To put it in simpler words, Sociology studies human beings, their social relationships and their behaviour in groups. You must have heard about many Social Science



disciplines, haven't you? Sociology, itself a Social Science, has a close relationship with these Social Science disciplines. And yet they are distinct as well. We will learn these matters of similarity and differences with a number of Social Science disciplines in subsequent sections.

It is clear that Sociology is a pure, generalizing science based on empirical and rational methods of study. Do you understand by now that Sociology deals with a broad range of thematic contents? Naturally there are differences of opinion among scientists on the nature and scope of the subject. Such a discussion on Sociology's scope- what subject matter it studies and what goes outside its purview- is mainly dominated by two schools of thought: (a) Formalistic or Specialistic School and (b) Synthetic School. Let us have a look at those two theoretical positions below about the scope of Sociology.

(a) Formalistic or Specialistic School: Have you heard of Georg Simmel, the German scholar? He is the leading theorist of this school of thought. According to the Formalistic Group Sociology is a pure and independent subject. They argue that as a discipline it studies only certain, and not all, aspects of human relationship. That is, it studies only the forms of these relationships and not its contents. In addition, Sociology should straighten out various social relationships apparent in various fields of society and study them only in abstract. And therefore it has a limited scope. Though the scope is perceived as limited, it is not an easy task. Main proponents of this school include Max Weber, Ferdinand Tonnies, Albion Small, Leopold von Weise, Alfred Vierkandt and so on.

What do other theorists have to say about them? They are not kind and sympathetic with the Formalistic School. The latter is criticised to have narrowed the field of

Sociology pointlessly. According to the critics, Sociology as a pure science is not a practical proposition. All subjects rely on others to understand more about social reality and the interdisciplinary approach is favoured currently. Moreover, Sociology cannot claim to be the only social science that studies forms of social relationships. Other Social Sciences like Political Science and Economics, for example, also study forms of these relationships. In addition, they differentiate between the form and content of the subject matter. However, the most important question here is; is it simple to differentiate between the two- form and content? Is that viable? In fact, there is no feasible way by which form and contents of social relationships can be differentiated. Now let us consider the second school of thought that outlines the scope of Sociology.

(b) The Synthetic School: This school views Sociology as a synthesis of the Social Sciences. And you did understand why this school got its name, didn't you? This school does not want Sociology to be a specialist science; rather they consider Sociology to be a general Science. This school argues that all elements of social life are thoroughly inter-connected. Therefore, it is not possible to study only the forms or any aspect; but the entire social life should be studied by Sociology. And hence they advocate a systematic and general Sociology. Emile Durkheim, Leonard Hobhouse, Morris Ginsberg and Pitirim Sorokin are the prominent figures of this school of thought.

Can you imagine how difficult it is for Sociologists to decide the boundaries of their discipline? First of all, the subject matter is broad. Take the case of the definition of sociology as the study of society; if we carry on with the understanding that Sociology's subject matter is society, then the concept itself is very abstract. Don't you feel challenged by the mere proposal of the entire society being studied by you? That

is why some theorists resorted to studying specialised aspects of society. But then how do you distinguish them from others? If you look at the substance, there is too much to analyse. They decided, therefore, that only forms need to be examined by Sociologists. But then the problem is: how do you take out the form alone, leaving the content intact? Some theorists, therefore, thought that sociology should be a general science. Thus the debate continues. However that does not stop Sociology from continuing with its task of understanding human behaviour in its social context.

1.2.2. Sociology and Other Social Sciences

Sociology is the youngest of the Social Sciences and emerged out of the necessity felt by thinkers and philosophers that societal problems were not adequately addressed by existing sciences. The etymological meaning in itself is indicative of the fact that Sociology should study social aspects. Social aspects of what?.

Essentially sociology as a science was designed to study social aspects of the association of human beings and their behaviour while associating with each other. Let us consider the example of unemployment in India. It has social, political and economic dimensions. Therefore we rely on other social sciences to analyse the various aspects of the same issue. It is quite normal that the meaningful analysis of a social issue makes it mandatory to extract knowledge created by other disciplines.

It is important to point out another matter at this moment. Since the origin is from the same sources, Sociology and other Social sciences have many features in common. The central point of all of them is human beings; the difference is in the aspect or dimension of human behaviour. Therefore, a wholesome analysis of human behaviour in

society contributes towards Social sciences. Sociology, like any other Social Science discipline, shares a relation with the others in the family. Let us consider this relationship of Sociology with other Social Sciences.

a) Political Science and Sociology

We all have heard of politics. Have you heard of the name of the subject related to that? Haven't you heard of Political science? What does it deal with? Political science is one of the Social Sciences dealing with the principle of administrative organisation and government. Different forms of government, law, state (can mean the government for our purpose here), election, democracy, all such matters get covered in the subject matter of Political Science. It has major theories on the political aspects of human life as well.

There is a two-way relation between Political science and Sociology. What does it mean to have a two-way or mutual relationship between two subjects? It indicates that there is interdependence between them. One needs the help of the other subjects to understand social phenomenon in its totality. Political Science requires some basic understanding of society in order to know about the working of political institutions. For example, without knowing the nature of various social groups and the factors that influence their behaviour, how can we arrive at a conclusion on their voting pattern? Thus Political Science requires that the knowledge created by Sociological methods and theories are utilised.

Similarly Sociology also needs the resources produced by Political Science. Don't you think it important to learn about the political aspects of various groups to study society as a whole? Most of the founding fathers of Social Sciences were experts in many Social Science subjects, not just in one discipline. For example, early social theorists



b) History and Sociology

Can you name the oldest of the Social Sciences? It is said that History and Philosophy are the ancestors whose lineage may be claimed by every other member of the Social Science family! Therefore History is one of the oldest disciplines. History and Sociology share a special relationship. History records human life and its material manifestation, actions and ideas of humans, and the resultant changes in human societies. One feature of History is that it studies societies of the past. Sociology deals with different modes of living of human beings in current times. Their behaviour, customs, folkways, traditions and institutions evolved and developed on purpose by human beings are studied by Sociologists. Do you think that there is interdependence between History and Sociology? Sociologists' work necessitates a comparative picture of how a society was in the past and to what degree any kind of social change happened. This requires historical knowledge. Do you remember your history classes in school? Some chapters were very interesting, weren't they? Why was it so? Plain political and administrative history consisting of only the narrations of conquests of kings and their administrative follies did not capture our attention, did they? We needed, instead, social aspects of the era under that particular king's rule to learn the period's authentic history. This points out that History as a discipline calls for Sociological

Both rely on empirical methods to conduct their studies. Information collected through various techniques like fieldwork and review of literature are used to advance or to refute the already available theories. Empirical data are collected using fieldwork- surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, case studies, observation and so on- in both Political science and Sociology. To sum up, there are many similarities and differences between these two social science disciplines.

Table. 1.2.1

Political Science Vs Sociology

Political Science	Sociology
Specialised	Comprehensive
Scope is limited-political aspects of society	Scope is broad- Entire society
Studies the attitude of political authority, policy makers and executing authority	Studies humans' view in social interaction



Conscious acts of political man is studied	Unconscious behaviour and acts of people in their social context is the subject matter
Limited to the study of political institutions	Studies all social institutions
Political Science deals with political man	Sociology deals with social man

knowledge to make it worthwhile. Isn't the interdependence of these two disciplines very clear here?

Despite that, History and Sociology are dissimilar in more than one way. Sociology is an abstract science with a range of subjects to explore as its themes whereas History is tangible as a discipline that studies only

the past. Exactly because of the fact that History studies the past events, specificities in methods of data collection should be pointed out here. History uses content analysis, surveys, interviews of people who lived through certain episodes (like Indian independence movement, for example), Life History approach and so on.

Let us look at these differences between these two social sciences in the box below.

Table. 1.2.2

History Vs Sociology

History	Sociology
One of the oldest Social Sciences	Youngest Social Science
Scope- limited; studies past	Scope- vast; studies present, past and future
Studies entire aspects of the past events	Studies social dimensions of the events
Unique and peculiar events are the interests	Studies activities of humans influenced by social groups and incidents that happen frequently
Chronological description of events	Studies actions of humans in society, their causes and consequences
History is concrete	Sociology is abstract

c) Economics and Sociology

Imagine that you have to buy a television (TV) for your home. Which one will you buy? There are many brands and many types of TV sets available in the market. How will you decide which one to buy? You will consider many things before arriving at a decision. Main factor to consider is the resource- that is money available with you for buying a TV. If you have a limited budget, you have to consider the amount that you can make available accordingly. Thus the kind of TV and the brand will be governed by the amount of money that you can spare for that purpose. So there is a possibility that you end up buying a budget TV. This is how we do most of our purchases and make most of our decisions involving money. Thus the social needs are largely satisfied by matching them with the economic background. Sociologists had noted that monetary events are always decided by social needs. In return they are constantly re-determining, creating, shaping and transforming social needs and activity of every kind. In short, the limited scope of Economics mandates that it deals with aspects regarding economic resources and methods of production at an individual and collective level. Sociology, on the other hand, would deal with individual and collective behaviour in groups, in relation to other

members of the society and therefore the scope is broader.

You have heard of economists doing research, haven't you? Why do they undertake that? Their main intention is to bring down the economic misery of mankind and also to make the welfare of common people possible. This economic dimension is studied using traditional econometric and quantitative methods. The ultimate aim of material well-being is the happiness of individuals which will have its repercussions in the social relationships around them. Studying these aspects require mutual assistance between these sciences and the use of knowledge acquired by each of them. Economics uses some methods (including study techniques and tools) similar to those of Sociology. In order to arrive at conclusions or generalizations, economists use a large quantity of data. Quantitative methods are used to collect and analyse these data. Surveys, census, interview schedules or questionnaires are the prominent tools used for this purpose. However in-depth analysis of economic behaviour demands that more detailed and specific data are needed. In such cases, like Sociology, data is obtained using participant observation, semi structured interviews, life histories, and so on.

Table. 1.2.3

Economics Vs Sociology

Economics	Sociology
Older subject	Youngest subject
Scope is limited –human activities to obtain the material means to satisfy their wants	Scope is broad-Whole of society
Studies economic relationship and activities with economic viewpoint	Studies social relationships
Unit of study is individuals indulged in economic activity	Unit is individuals in groups and interaction in their background

Methods include traditionally arithmetical and quantitative.	Methods can be qualitative, quantitative or a mixture of both
Material happiness of man	Social aspect of economic activity

d) Psychology and Sociology

Most often we get confused with the boundaries of Sociology and Psychology more than any other disciplines. Why is it so? Both disciplines deal with individuals. That is the reason! And yet, the difference is quite obvious to us, isn't it? Psychology studies the attitudes and values of an individual

in the context of his behaviour while Sociology would study the group behaviour of individuals. A branch of Psychology called Social Psychology is quite close to Sociology and studies the psychological aspects of the collectives. Let us have a glimpse of the features of both Psychology and Sociology in a tabular form below. Psychology while studying the individual uses observation,

Table. 1.2.4

Psychology Vs Sociology

Psychology	Sociology
Study individuals from a psychological viewpoint	Study society from a community viewpoint
Scope is limited- studies individual behaviour from the angle of psychological factors	Scope is broad- studies society
Studies mental processes of individuals	Studies social processes, social laws or values related to attitudes
Study of individual attitude towards cultural and social values and laws	Studies society, its structure, functions and its institutions, values

Survey, Case Study, Correlation Design, and Experimental method to collect data. Psychologists use these methods to describe different events, experiences, or behaviours and look for links between them. When it comes to Social Psychology, a branch of Psychology, the similarities with Sociology are very striking. Therefore critics point out that the boundaries between the two disciplines are not clear. However distinct hypothesis and methods of data collection apart from the manner in which the data are analysed make them very distinct sciences.

e) Sociology and Anthropology

What distinguishes Anthropology from other members of the Social Science family? Can you guess? Have you ever come across the subject matter of Anthropology? If you have, then you know that it studies early humans including their physical characteristics. What does that imply in terms of the methods of study? Because of this feature of the subject, it combines the methods of biological sciences with that of the social sciences. Its subject matter



– society and culture in the past- necessitates this interdisciplinary approach.

Anthropology tries to understand the acquired and inherited traits of human beings. While living in groups and mingling with other humans, they must have acquired some characteristics apart from those which were ascribed to them by nature. There is a relationship between these two features of humans. Anthropologists study those aspects of human life as well.

When a comparative study of pre-modern societies is needed, Anthropologists venture out for that. Quite similar to the Archeologists, Anthropologists also study the unearthed artifacts and remains of ancient civilisations in order to ascertain historical data or to find out the cultural characteristics of certain extinct civilisations. Physical Anthropology, Social Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology are the branches of this Science. Do you know that the famous American Anthropologist A. L. Kroeber called Sociology and Anthropology as twin sisters? It means that both subjects

are closely linked and are look-alike. Their interdependence starts there. Sociology studies present-day societies; nonetheless it needs Anthropological know-how the past to comprehend them better. Anthropology has lent many concepts to Sociology. Are you able to identify any of them? Concepts related to the theme ‘culture’ like cultural traits, cultural lag and so on are originally Anthropological ideas that Sociology has borrowed.

Anthropology relies on Sociology for a comprehensive understanding of its own subject matter. Thus sociological knowledge rooted in the present offers the former with possible patterns of human behaviour in societies of the past. Both use fieldwork but Anthropology uses excavations to validate its theories about past cultures and societies. One main method used by anthropology is ethnography. Through ethnography as a method, it can study the subject matter over a period of time and from different viewpoints. These may bring unexpected dimensions to their subjects, revealing new facts in their study.

Table. 1.2.5

Anthropology Vs Sociology

Anthropology	Sociology
Studies society of pre- modern origin	Studies modern society
Studies culture that is past and static	Studies civilisation that is vast and dynamic
Studies man and his culture in the past	Studies the same phenomena as they exist at present
Studies biological characteristics of humans also	Studies social relationship
Uses excavations, skeletal remains, fieldwork and ethnography as methods	Uses documents, fieldwork, survey and interview (quantitative, qualitative and mixed method) as methods
No need to think of policies	Policies and solutions to the research problems are part of research

Recap

- ◆ Sociology is generally defined as the scientific study of society.
- ◆ The subject was named Sociology by Auguste Comte in his book 'The Positive Philosophy'.
- ◆ Socius means companion or associate and logos mean science or study.
- ◆ Auguste Comte is known as the father of Sociology.
- ◆ Sociology as the study of social phenomena.
- ◆ Pure, independent, abstract, general and generalizing science.
- ◆ As an empirical science, it relies on rationality and does not venture into value judgements on its subject matter.
- ◆ The Formalistic School and the Synthetic School are prominent in the theoretical discourse.
- ◆ Formalistic school considers sociology as a pure science.
- ◆ The synthetic school considers it as a general science.
- ◆ Sociology has a clear-cut relation with other Social Sciences.
- ◆ Sociological analysis is incomplete without considering the knowledge created by other sciences.
- ◆ Social Psychology acts as a link between Sociology and Psychology.
- ◆ Sociologists are largely using historical data to interpret the present situation.
- ◆ Anthropology studies societies of the past and Sociologists benefit from its findings.

Objective Questions

1. What did Sociology study according to Auguste Comte?
2. In which book was the term Sociology first used?



3. When was the science of society renamed as Sociology?
4. What were the two words from which the term Sociology was coined?
5. What is the etymological meaning of the term Sociology?
6. Which school of thought claims that Sociology is a pure and natural science?
7. Which school considers Sociology is a general Science?
8. Which is the Social Science that deal with the principle of administrative organisation and government?
9. Which is the Social Science that studies the Societies' past?
10. Which is the most popular method used in Economics to collect primary data?

Answers

1. Social phenomena
2. Positive Philosophy
3. 1838
4. Socius and logos
5. Companionship
6. Formalistic School
7. Synthetic School
8. Political Science
9. History
10. Quantitative methods

Assignments

1. Discuss about the Nature and Scope of Sociology.
2. Examine the relationship between Sociology and Political Science
3. Examine the relationship between Sociology and History
4. Compare the differences and similarities of Sociology and Economics.
5. Distinguish Anthropology from Sociology.

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UNIT

Sociological Imagination, Sociology and Common Sense

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To describe the relevance of sociological understanding in our everyday lives
- ◆ To understand the significance of Sociological imagination in analysing society
- ◆ To make comparisons with sociological imagination and common sense

Prerequisites

Common folks like us, anxious to get over day by day in the best possible manner, do not see anything beyond our own lives. We get deeply involved in routines and habitual practices and get away from many situations with practical knowledge peculiar to each social setting. We may not methodically scrutinise the process, causes and effects, or meaning of any events in our social world. We may not even be aware that others have similar experiences. Sometimes you may argue that in the present day world, we do devour the private lives of a lot of people, especially celebrities. Television, internet and other communication networks forcefully bring much of it to our homes without even editing the contents. But that does not help us much in our lives, isn't it? How do we, then, manage to connect our lives with others' in order to fill the larger picture? Most of us would agree that each of us forms part of a jigsaw puzzle: Something bigger than the sum total of each of us. We do try to connect with that larger context. Sometimes we succeed and sometimes we fail. Sociology, as a discipline, has some tools to deal with each situation.

Keywords

Sociological understanding, Personal experience, Social issues, Everyday life, Scientific study, Collective experience.

Discussion

As we saw in the previous unit, Sociology is a science and follows logic and reason in formulating hypothesis, accumulating evidence, deducing logically and creating universally applicable conclusions. It has got scientifically accepted, competent methods of study to collect information and to analyse them systematically in comparison with other social sciences as well. And it does rely on other social sciences to learn about different aspects of the society and establish a relation with them.

Sociology, as a social science discipline, was mandated by its founding fathers to use its tools and techniques in order to understand problems of society and also to maintain order and stability. Harmony and progress in society imply similar conditions for individual components as well. Correspondingly, therefore, sociological understanding is not meant exclusively for social theorists but is expected to assist common people like us in our everyday lives as well. Then the question arises: how does learning Sociology help us in our everyday lives?

In such a situation it is important to realise the relevance of sociological understanding in our everyday lives. Does it help to make a better sense of the world outside? Do we find any frame or tool whereby we can get on with our lives more smoothly once we study sociology? Are the common beliefs and actions based on them synchronizing with the sociological understanding? Or don't they tally? Let us consider all these

questions in the following unit.

1.3.1 Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills, a well-known sociologist tries to bring about a connection between individual lives and the realities of society at the same time. He uses the term 'Sociological Imagination' to denote that conceptual device. Connecting private life events to the larger society is helpful to the common people in more than one. It helps them detach themselves from their personal troubles by making sense of it. It is a theoretical means for sociologists as well. They can develop their understanding of social life by combining the study of major changes in society and individual lives.

Have you ever gone through a personal crisis like failing an examination? Of course you did feel very miserable and worthless. Didn't you feel better when you learnt that half of your classmates also failed in the examination? No, it was not because you were a jealous person or a person with a negative mind-set who wished bad things to happen for everyone. Rather, when you came to know that half of the class failed in that examination, it stopped being a mere personal problem for you. Now your failure can be connected to those of the class as well!

Now you are able to more confidently explain your failure in terms of the difficult questions in the examination and also those which were out of the given syllabus! See how

the personal failure has been turned around to be a problem of the entire class or rather an issue beyond an individual, having wider ramifications. Similarly all personal issues have roots in their environment and society. One can perceive this connection between the personal predicament and the wider social world if one possesses 'Sociological Imagination'. This idea could be traced in the writings of the German sociologist Max Weber and has been supported more recently in the works of Anthony Giddens. However an American sociologist C. Wright Mills (1916-1962) put forward the clearest picture of the concept.

The sociologist who established this concept, Mills, named the personal challenges as "troubles" and larger social challenges as "issues". These are called biography and history respectively. Have you heard of them before? Mills' Sociological Imagination enables us to understand the relationships between events in our personal lives (biography), and events in our society (history). By doing that, this concept offers us a framework to understand the connection between personal problems and larger social issues.

Historical change and institutional contradictions in the wider society affect our individual lives. However most often people are not able to see these relations while they are busy navigating their lives through the turbulent environment around them. We cannot blame them if they cannot see beyond their immediate problems in these difficult times, Can we? We must not forget that they do not do it deliberately nor do they feel happy about it. On the other hand, most often they feel "trapped" in their private lives, as discussed by Mills in the opening paragraph of his book.

An unemployed person may see the situation as a private trouble and may not even be aware of the rate of unemployment

and structural issues associated with it. He /She is too busy making both ends meet that they consider themselves as trapped in that situation and does not see a way to get away from trouble. Similarly, a teacher once told us about a studious student who lacked resources for higher studies in the subject of their choice. They perceived this situation as the result of their parents' inability to fund the studies. They were emotional and felt quite constrained as their classmates were all going for higher studies in a preferred field. They did not see the wider picture and the class background. And the lack of any kind of student support system in our country especially at that point of time. They were unable to get part time employment either to sponsor their own studies unlike in some other countries. The systemic factors were not immediately visible to them and thus they were disheartened and inconsolable. We can, to some extent, be empathetic to their situation, can't we?

That is the point: the systemic flaw is not instantly detectable when, in fact, the root cause may be the broader social issues. That is why despite their hard work, many young people do not reach the heights that they think they are entitled to. What ordinary people can perceive and what they are capable of doing in response to that are determined by their 'private orbits'- their families, neighbourhood, close friends -in which they are living.

As a young person, you might have wanted to graduate in social sciences or humanities while your parent insisted on you taking a biology course so that you could appear for the NEET examination. This decision persuaded you to become an MBBS doctor was not directed by their limited ambition for the child; rather this was because they understood the higher possibilities for a doctor in a society like ours. The individual choice cannot be understood without understanding society's employment structure.



Remember that serious disagreement with your parents on spending money? And what about that particularly fierce drama you performed with the objective of making your mother your sole audience? That was regarding wearing that pair of low waist jeans, wasn't that? Of course you did have one of those scuffles in your life and probably are going to have more! That big picture may be the generational divide and changes in the outlook on fashion of the younger generation due to their wider exposure or the value attached to money in the current society in comparison to that in your parents' generation.

However most of us do not realise – like the parents and the children in the above examples- the complex links between our lives and developments in the larger society. It is here that Sociological Imagination as a conceptual tool comes to our service. It enables us to best understand our personal position, experiences and problems by 'locating' ourselves within the period in society's evolution. This is done by examining our broader social context. This indicates that the big picture is visible to us and that finally the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are put in their places.

You have to be particularly attentive here and now to understand an important point. In most cases, as described by C. Wright Mills in his book *Sociological Imagination* (1959), individual problems and private troubles are entrenched in the social milieu. And what happens outside in the social world is beyond one's personal control. Understanding this relationship between individual experiences and public issues is possible with the help of Sociological Imagination. According to Mills, personal experiences can and should be interpreted in the context of major public forces in the wider society. For example, very specific circumstances might lead to one person becoming a great, successful businessman, but when the number of

business persons or successful entrepreneurs in society 'as a whole' rises, it is definitely a public feature that needs to be explained. Sociologists have to consider the economic and political institutions in society and not merely the personal situation.

Does the term 'Sociological Imagination' still sound tricky? Let us consider the case of X. X was born in a poor family, literally! The father was a rag picker who occupied that vacant land behind the private bus stand on the way to the mosque. It was only when X was in the 8th standard that they got a house of their own. X was not particularly a good student either. Many made loud remarks as if X was going to follow in their father's footsteps for their livelihood. X went to college with not much consequence for anyone, everyone thought. When X started that small workshop to repair mixer-grinders and was efficient in it, only the homemakers of the small village were happy. Why? Because they did not have to go to the nearest town to get them repaired. When X began to sell mixer-grinders, some notice but no appreciation came their way. X developed themselves into a big-time entrepreneur when their factory flourished and started branches in two other villages nearby. Then the photograph appeared in the newspaper sharing a dais with the Industries Minister. And X remarked that all this was possible because of the favourable public (industrial) policy of the state. This connection with the wider environment made by X was the motivation for all those business-people who financed the small entrepreneurs, who made those hosiery items, sandal makers and even

horticulturists. This ‘rags to riches’ story is a personal success story which is the apple of the eye of a TV show. But wait! We have to accept that the entire success was made possible not just due to the hard work put in by these entrepreneurs but they were at the “right intersections of history and biography within society”. Linkages of a great number of milieu came right for these individuals.

Sociological Imagination is of use not just to Sociologists but is important to people like us. You may wonder how! All members of our society, if they wish to understand change and improve their lives, benefit from this tool. It has another dimension as well: the human mind can sustain memories of public issues only by relating them to its personal troubles and to the problems of individual life.

We did mention in the beginning of our discussion that the concept Sociological Imagination can help Sociologists, didn’t we? How? That is, sociological hypotheses may be formulated by including both troubles and issues, both biography and history and the variety of their intricate relations. The life of the individual and the making of societies occur around us and within that, the Sociological Imagination has its chance to make a difference in the quality of human life in our times. This triple focus on biography, history and structure is sociology’s heritage.

Sociology, thus, definitely acknowledges the importance of the individual situation; but the discipline does not endorse or celebrate individualism. Do you get the difference? This is an important difference. Individualism approves of social isolation and even encourages it. Nevertheless, Sociology, first and foremost, deals with relational standpoint. We, human beings, are members of our society and that society

already existed even before we were born. When we were born, we entered into certain social relations, whether we liked them or not. From then onwards our experiences are influenced by the nature of the social structure in which we live. The cultural particularity of that social structure colours our sight and insights.

Sociological Imagination is a good tool towards thinking sociologically. It presents itself as a beautiful shell that contains a relational way of understanding the social world around us. It is that magic wand which makes visible all the elements that constitute our everyday lives. The role of social forces in shaping individual lives is acknowledged by Sociological knowledge by using such concepts which, in turn, helps us to make sense of everyday life that we fail to appreciate. Sociological Imagination is not just for the use of Sociologists; It is important to all members of society who want to understand, change and improve their lives.

1.3.2. Sociology and Common Sense

Can you give a definition of commonsense? Common sense means the ideas that are entirely taken for granted by society in such a way that they have never been critically viewed. One important feature of commonsensical beliefs, as we discussed before, is that they appear to be reasonable and logical to us. Common sense explanations derived from individual knowledge and collective experiences are vital for us in analyzing the information that is made available at present. This helps us in settling for the next step or finding solutions in various junctures of life. Universal presence of the ideas and statements that we call commonsense are no guarantee that they are correct. That is why we must think of relying on scientific studies for arriving at conclusions. Human behaviour and social



relationships can be studied scientifically as we discussed in the previous section- nature and scope of Sociology. Scientific methods to test the accuracy of commonsense beliefs and ideas about human behaviour and the social world are useful to us so that we are not completely misled. Then we need to understand one thing: If examined through the lens of scientifically gathered information, many commonsense notions, however useful, are going to be rejected as baseless. Let us consider this particular illustration on gender roles right out of the lives of many of us. It is often argued that it is common sense and natural that men are incapable of caring and women/wives are natural carers and therefore they are good at child-rearing and domestic tasks. Many kinds of arguments and examples- right from economic to religious- are given to justify this commonly held belief. Such commonsensical understanding sometimes makes many men turn away from expressing their concern for their dear and near ones. The same belief prevents women from leading a dignified life by resorting to decent work. Once we observe closely, the commonsensical ideas about strict gender roles may not be entirely true even in traditional societies. We can find that there are women who engage in work outside home and men who do housework and caring duties with a lot of interest and efficiency. Such notions that are seen as common sense cannot be proved against the facts collected from society. Gender roles may not work in stereotypical forms in real life. Can you cite one such example where the clichéd notions do not apply in real life situations? It will be found that many commonsense notions are contradictory and inconsistent. There are many truisms and proverbs that are passed on from generations to the next and are in vogue in all societies. We have already seen how they act as a guide to us at least in some situations in our lives. They can be true in some circumstances and in fact, may not hold true under all

conditions. Thus it may be said that the commonsensical beliefs work ‘in some places, for some people and some things’. Here the difference between commonsense and sociology becomes pertinent. The latter scientifically studies the conditions in which these beliefs hold and do not hold true. The difference, accordingly, between common sense and sociology is that sociologists assess the beliefs by collecting data and scrutinizing the proof. They do this in a premeditated, objective, methodical and, therefore, scientific way. Since it is based on experimentation, it can be replicated as well. The subject is studied to examine whether they can refute what they think is true. The scientist can quote the scientific body of evidence gathered from scientific observations. Let us consider one example below: Some common sense statements in almost all societies indicate that boys have a natural aptitude for Mathematics and learn the subject more easily than girls. In contrast, scientific research based on observation of similar boys and girls discovered that girls are as intelligent as boys. Therefore the use of biological perspective by common sense to explain the differences in the preference of subjects by boys and women are not correct. Another example of a popular adage across the world is: “Boys do not cry”. And “women cry for silly reasons”. This type of common sense understanding has such firm and fixed images that result in great emotional problems for men. This is because society disapproves of men expressing their emotions, having passed on this commonsensical belief from one generation to the next. The common-sense analysis of differences in behaviour between men and women in our families assume that because there are physiological differences between men and women, the difference in their behaviour is ‘natural’. Social determinants of such behaviour are not taken into account at all in these explanations. That is, the role society plays in the construction of such behaviour is

forgotten. Ordinary people are familiar with these kinds of common-sense perceptions in their everyday lives and sociological outlook does not apply. Believing commonsensical knowledge is comfortable to us also because it lightens our work. We are not expected to shoulder the responsibility to transform the situation. Thinking sociologically, on the other hand, is a challenge to us. Its process demands that we become more sensitive to and tolerant of diverse thinking and practices. It exposes to us the world beyond our immediate lives. We come across and familiarize ourselves with experiences that we may not even believe to be existing. It sharpens the possibilities to explore further and make sense of this novel knowledge. Sociology, with its heritage of idealism, rationalism and humanitarianism, offers knowledge that makes us understand that society is changeable. What we take for granted as natural and inevitable can be transformed through the exercise of the human mind. As a matter of fact the net result of this is that Sociological thinking can enable us to be more effective social actors.- in both individual and social lives. The often ignored connection between the action and the context, as we read in the previous section, become visible and open new avenues for transformation. Then we come to another question. Why is it important to look at the sociologically derived knowledge and common sense? Sociology deals with subjects that fall within the daily experiences of people; and commonsensical viewpoint and traditional wisdom often play an important role in that particular intersection of everyday living of events in one's lives. Think about it. We all come to that meeting point of commonsensical knowledge and decision-making in our lives, don't we? Commonsense can be cultural expressions and culture specific. Social location becomes important in the creation of commonsense. Therefore commonsense of one region can be the nonsense of some other region.

They range from very practical wisdom like “pregnant women don't go out in the evenings ” to “do not expose infants to outsiders before they reach 28 days” which borders on scientific rationale like the susceptibility of infants to catch infections. Sociological thinking, on the other hand, enables us to perceive things in a relational manner. Equipped with Sociological knowledge, we are definitely able to see the individual, very well positioned in the social setting. “How do our cultures shape what we see and do?” is one of the prominent questions that Sociology asks. Some may even state that the most important difference between common sense and scientific theory like Sociology is that educated common sense is used in conducting research in the latter.

a) Common Sense and Educated Common Sense

Sociology is a scientific discipline that has rules and methods regarding the formulation, conduct and dissemination of information or knowledge. Established and institutionalised modes of creating, discerning and clarifying the content that is based on data collected systematically from society exist in Sociology. Scientific guidelines put forward this as the nature of science; this clearly differentiates scientific knowledge from other knowledge. Evidence confirms the provisional ideas, transforming it to scientific information. What else do you think distinguishes Sociology from other forms of knowledge that do not qualify itself as science? The final form, it should be noted, of knowledge and the steps in reaching that are open to scrutiny. And you might have heard about review of literature in research? That is also important because the knowledge that is created should not be standing in isolation; rather it should relate to other works on the topic. Further, it should try to advance the findings hitherto. Reliability and validity should be kept intact. Do you



To make it easier for us to understand, let us take the example of a comparison between the human mind and a supercomputer. Imagine a mind as a supercomputer stocking up a massive quantity of facts. Not all these information is available at the exterior for immediate memorization. Even then capabilities of the human mind are comparable with even the most powerful computers of the world. Infinite amount of information stays with the mind. If the outcome differs in the case of such machines and human minds, it is better to depend on the mind which seems to be more powerful. The difference between common sense and educated common sense may be understood by considering the following problem: What is the answer to the question: Does the Sun circle the Earth or the Earth circles the Sun? Mere commonsense answers that the Sun circles the Earth. That particular

commonsense conclusion got established in society over a period of time and became the accepted belief. Throughout the Middle Ages this was the belief of the societies around the world. The Renaissance era Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus tried to validate this common sense with the educated common sense of that time. He did this by using observations that the classical Greeks had gathered about heavenly bodies. He found that these observations matched only with the idea that the Earth moved around the Sun rather than the other way. This was an educated common sense- rational thought based on observation and the best information available. It was that kind of educated common sense that ultimately led to scientific methods. Later this was adapted in studying society. In short, the relations between Sociology and common sense may be summarized in the following manner.

think that without reliable information, we can consider Sociology as a science? Thus the Sociologists are expected to follow rigour in method and procedure to produce generalisable theory. And what do you think about the society which is the field from where they get all the information? Yes, that is where we started our discussion. The field- the society- which provides us with the material is constituted by both the similar and the opposite, simple and complicated, reliable and unstable. Relying on some without taking into account the other will produce prejudiced and incomplete information. Here a massive amount of information has to be processed with a closely controlled perspective. This will produce knowledge beyond what an individual biography can produce and can be applicable in general as well. Thus the quantity of information, its quality and applicability also increase manifold when it is created by a Sociologist

who follows legitimate practices. This attribute of Sociology cannot be claimed by commonsense despite the latter's capacity to navigate daily lives comfortably. Is that all? Definitely not! We know that we look at others through our eyes. Our eyes see things that transmit these objects to our mind and the mind analyses it according to its own experience until then. That is, we interpret what we observe according to our understanding. This is informed by our experiences until then. There is no standard against which we measure what we observe; rather we have this mold in the form of our experiences for shaping the new information or others' actions. While commonsense provides us with an easy mold to form opinions and base our actions, Sociology broadens the horizons and gives us a standard. That can act as a springboard to confidently make sense of hitherto unknown actions and even societies.

Recap

- ◆ The sociological imagination is a concept developed by the American sociologist C. Wright Mills.
- ◆ The book “The Sociological Imagination” published in 1959.
- ◆ The term sociological imagination can be traced to the works of famous Sociologists Max Weber and Anthony Giddens.
- ◆ Sociological Imagination enables us to understand the relationships between events in our personal lives (biography), and the wider society (history).
- ◆ Sociological Imagination can be used as a conceptual tool.
- ◆ Common sense may be defined as the ideas that are believed, without any proof, as truth by society.
- ◆ Common sense may appear to be reasonable and help common people to navigate their daily life comfortably.
- ◆ Scientific disciplines like Sociology adhere to strict rules and methods in the formulation of propositions and accumulation of knowledge.

Objective Questions

1. Who gave the concept ‘Sociological Imagination’?
2. Which concept in Sociology can help us in understanding the relationship between individual experience and public issues?
3. What was the term used by C. Wright Mills to indicate private experiences of individuals in his book Sociological Imagination?
4. When did the concept of Sociological Imagination enter into academic sociology?
5. What is the term used to explain human behaviour in terms of reasonable and logical?
6. What is the prime difference between Sociological Imagination and Common sense?
7. Which is the concept that is believed, without any proof, as truth by society?



8. Which concept is traced to the works of famous Sociologists Max Weber and Anthony Giddens?
9. Which is the term that enables us to understand the relationships between events in our personal lives?
10. Which is the term that enables us to understand the relationships between events in wider society?

Answers

1. C. Wright Mills
2. Sociological Imagination
3. Biography
4. 1959
5. Common sense
6. Methodology
7. Common sense
8. Sociological Imagination
9. Biography
10. History

Assignments

1. Discuss about C Wright Mill's Sociological Imagination
2. Examine the significance of Sociological imagination in understanding society
3. Explain the major difference between Sociological imagination and Common sense
4. Discuss about the historical background of the concept 'Sociological Imagination'
5. Discuss about the difference between common sense and educated commonsense

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Suggested Readings

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Basic Concepts in Sociology



UNIT

Society, Community, Association, Organisation: Definition and Characteristics

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To comprehend and differentiate the core concepts of society, community, association, and organisation.
- ◆ To expose the relationship between individuals and society.
- ◆ To define and explain the characteristics of society, organisation, association, community

Prerequisites

With the rise of social media, people spend a lot of time on Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Twitter, etc. How do they interact and create social networks? Shared language, common interests, and ways of life bind them all together to some extent. This is the basic nature of human beings. They are forming relationships with people all over the world. Sociology's central premise is that human behaviour is profoundly influenced by the groups to which individuals belong and the social interactions in those groups. The group, rather than the individual, is the primary focus of Sociology. Social scientists are primarily concerned with human interaction, specifically with how individuals respond to and influence one another in their daily lives. Throughout the unit, you will understand what society is from a Sociological perspective and the factors that influence the formation of societies.

Keywords

Interdependence, Mutual awareness, Cooperation, Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft



Discussion

2.1.1 Society

Allow us to begin by picking your brain as a complete beginner in Sociology by asking you a few straightforward questions regarding yourself. Allow yourself a few minutes to meditate on any intuitions you may have about the nature of society, and then write them down. Take a moment to reflect on why and how you came to have preconceived notions about the world in the first place. Keep that idea in your head or jot it down somewhere convenient. You can experiment with different ideas without worrying about whether they are true or false. It is common practice to understand a subject before attempting to understand it scientifically. If you have opinions about society, it is best to keep them until you have studied what Sociology has to say about them. After that, you'll have to decide whether you were correct or incorrect about the concept of society in the first place.

The knowledge gained in this module will help you understand better how Sociology conceptualises and thinks about society. Please consider what the word society means to you before continuing with this discussion. What are your thoughts? In your mind's eye, what is the first image, sight, or idea that comes to mind when you hear the word "society"? Are you a part of any organisations or societies? Is it possible to exist without belonging to any organisation or society? This module's goal is to define the central concept of society, list the distinguishing characteristics of society, and bring together the most important defining characteristics of society through engaging and relatable illustration tactics. We will present various aspects of a society using critical examples to enable basic understanding.

We use words like society, community association, and social organisation daily in our everyday conversations and writing. These terms may sound familiar, but they are concepts that you must grasp to be effective. In sociology, they have a variety of connotations attached to them. Words are used to describe various aspects of society, and each word has a specific meaning that we can deduce. Sociology students who wish to gain a comprehensive understanding of the multiple aspects of society will need to be familiar with these terminologies. As a result, it is critical to understand how to apply these notions to comprehend society. Following that, we'll go over all the fundamental terminology associated with the Social Sciences in greater detail.

Throughout the discipline of Sociology, the term "society" refers to the most fundamental concept. However, even though it is the most fundamental concept in Sociology, it is frequently misinterpreted. Generally speaking, this is because the general public uses the word society in a broad sense. Some terms you may have come across include cooperative society, housing association, agricultural association, and other similar expressions. These instances raise concerns because the word "society" is being used incorrectly and misleadingly to refer to "associations".

Throughout our daily conversations, we use phrases such as 'I enjoy the society of dancers', 'They have moved up to high society' 'I cherish the time I spend in her society' and other variations. In this context, the term 'society' refers to friendship, companionship, and fellowship. In these contexts, the term 'society' is used casually. However, it does not correspond to socially acceptable usage. Returning to

the disciplinary context of Sociology, we frequently hear sociologists refer to societies as 'rural society' or 'urban society', 'primitive society', 'modern society', 'post-industrial society', 'liberal society', or 'conservative society', among other terms. You might be thinking about what we mean when we say 'society' at this point.

The term 'society' comes from the French word "societas" which has a Latin origin "socius" means "friendship" or "relationship". "The term 'companionship' refers to someone who is with you. To put it another way, 'companionship' is synonymous with 'sociability'. According to George Simmel, "It is the aspect of sociability that defines the concept of society". In other words, it implies that human beings always prefer to be in the company of other people rather than alone. Perhaps you'll be aware of the following wellknown quote: "Man is a social animal". That was stated hundreds of years ago by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. From caves to small villages to large cities, primitive people have always lived in small and large groups, in both small and large settlements. Based on this, we can conclude that they never lived alone but rather in groups of varying sizes throughout their entire lives. Thus, to meet the requirements of life, we humans need society or the companionship of many other human beings to function correctly. As a result, society is a necessary component of human being's ability to thrive, persist, and coexist.

The concept of society is defined by the sociological lexicon (vocabulary) as a collection of individuals and the complex system of social interaction based on certain norms that take place between them. As a system of relationships built on specific interactions, society produces patterns of behaviour and interaction that can be observed over time. When it comes to what constitutes a society, different people have different ideas about what does it means. Some sociologists

believe that society can only exist if all the members are mutually aware of others' existence and share common interests and materials. Since they are co-travelers, we cannot refer to ten people travelling on a long-distance bus for twelve hours as members of society. However, society's idea is conceived if they interact and get to know each other by interning at a rest stop when the bus stops for food and refreshments. An important concept called reciprocal awareness, coined by British sociologist Anthony Giddens, is summarised in the preceding example briefly and concisely. Societies, according to Giddens, are "a grouping of like-minded individuals who are aware of and enjoy their like-mindedness and are, as a result, able to work together for common ends".

Although society has a significant impact on everyone's personality, society cannot exist without people who make up its constituent parts. A society is a collection of people who live together as members of a community. All society's characteristics are gradually shaped and changed over successive generations due to innovations introduced by the people who live in it and contribute to it. The influence of a single individual may be insignificant. Still, the cumulative contributions of many individuals over a long time can be significant in magnitude. Although a group of individuals serve as the foundation of any society, the group's ability to survive over time is just as crucial to society's establishment as its initial formation. A football crowd brought together for a game is an aggregate, but it is not a society. Its members are physically close to one another. For the time being, a common interest unites them. Any sense of unity they may have, on the other hand, is only temporary and superficial. They disperse promptly upon the ending of the game. They have not been together for a long enough time to form a society. If the same people were stranded on an uninhabited island for a year, they would have no choice but to bond



together and form a society to survive. They would develop shared ideas, interests, and techniques for living and working together as they progressed through their lives. A society is defined by the sense of belonging that people have to one another as a group.

a) Definitions of Society

The purpose of this section is to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the prominent defining characteristics of society within the disciplinary purview of Sociology. In the field of sociology, there are countless definitions of society. All of them explain what society is; however, to develop a fundamental understanding of society, you should become acquainted with some of the essential definitions of society.

It may seem that this is a strange field that has difficulty describing its essential phrase concisely. Still, this word has a comprehensive range of connotations in this context. It may refer to the whole of human interactions, which is both the broadest and least practical definition. More specifically, it relates to any self-reproducing human group that inhabits a reasonably limited area and has a cultural and social structure that is quite different from the rest of the world. Society is a term that is frequently used to refer to nation-states, such as India or Sri Lanka. However, we may also use the word to refer to a specific group of people inside a state, such as the Malayalees or the Assamese. It is also used to refer to separate communities that have managed to maintain some sense of collective identity via culture and social interaction despite the absence of a physical area.

People always live close to one another, and this is an unavoidable fact of life. We might live in a village, a town, or a city, depending on our circumstances. Human beings will encounter other human beings at some point during their daily lives. The

other human beings may be related to them, or they may be known or unknown to them, depending on their circumstances. It can be said with certainty that no one lives by themselves in this world. Human beings rely on society to meet their most basic needs, including obtaining nutritious food, a safe place to live, clothing, finding work, and enjoying life. Society is necessary for the initiation and continuation of human existence. Cooperation is essential for the continuation of human life and society.

There were many kinds of societies on Earth. The hunter-gatherer societies that dominated prehistoric times were the most advanced. They made a living by hunting animals, catching fish from rivers and other bodies of water, and putting together plans for our future survival. People are constantly moving from one location to another as a result of geo-climatic and environmental changes. Nomadic societies are groups of people who move from one place to another. Around 12,000 years ago, pastoral societies first appeared, as humans became dependent on agriculture and animal domestication. The development of feudal society was based on land ownership. Because of the growth of cities, industrial societies emerged, and we are now living in a post-industrial society that is heavily reliant on information technology.

According to the sociologist Peter L Berger, a society can be defined as "a human product, and nothing but a human product, that continues to act upon its producers even though it is a human product". Humans, according to Berger, are the creators of the societies in which they live, and this creation influences, creates, and defines humans daily as well. The definition of society has been provided by a plethora of sociologists, social theorists, and philosophers. According to a significant number of them, society is a group of individuals united by specific relationships and behavioural attributes that distinguish them from others who are not a part of these

relationship and behaviours. Society can also be thought of as a complex collection of organised human groups with specific goals and ties to one another. Alternative definitions include 'society' as the state of a union of human beings, containing forms, and possessing various types of formal and informal relationships among themselves.

Auguste Comte saw society as a social organism with a structure and function in harmony. Society for Durkheim was treated as a distinct reality by him. According to Talcott Parsons, society is a total complex of human relationships that emerge from action in intrinsic or symbolic means-end relationships. G.H. Mead envisioned society as a series of gestures involving the use of symbols. Ginsberg suggests that society is composed of people bound together by certain relationships or modes of behaviour, which separate those who don't participate from those who do. G. D. H. Cole defines society as a network of organised associations and institutions bound together by a sense of community. According to MacIver and Page, society is a collection of customs and procedures governing authority and mutual assistance among numerous groups and divisions and a system of controls over human behaviour and liberties. Society is a web of social relationships that are constantly changing.

b) Characteristics of Society

We shall discuss the essential characteristics of society. It would help if you kept in mind a couple of things while reading about different characteristic aspects of society in the following. Let us take the example of a rural village or urban town. Both arrangements are human settlements and, therefore, part of society. People in the village might know each other better than the people in town. They might be mutually aware of the other individual. They may like or dislike each other based on similarities

and dissimilarities. People in a village and town have varying degrees of cooperation and division of labour. People in villages, towns are interdependent. The following factors will give the necessary clarity to understand society. Society is the canvas on which human life exists and thrives. Society creates a space for human beings to interact, know each other, be self-aware, and be aware of others. From birth, human beings are taught the ways of society by their parents. In school, they learn about being punctual, paying attention, and learning. At work, they also learn about cooperation and interdependence.

While living in an urban industrial society, large groups of people interact with one another only briefly and only for very narrow and specific tasks before moving on to their next task. A lot of relationships are built based on contracts. For example, someone will hire a plumber to repair the shower head and pay the agreed-upon sum. They may will never have to see the plumber again; they will not contact the plumber even if they require assistance later. Compared to the pre-industrial village dweller, who dealt with the same 20 people their entire life, the typical city-dweller deals with 200 people every day, most of whom they see only briefly. Consider the concept of compulsion as a simple way of capturing the point. The modern city dweller can choose a plumber from among a hundred listed in a trade directory.

The society represents a resemblance to MacIver. Likeness has gone through numerous changes in modern society, whereas in traditional societies, blood or family ties defined it. Likeness has widened from being limited to contemporary society to being social. Though essential to society, we should not ignore differences. These are mutually unrelated concepts. Diversity will decrease, and so will interaction if everyone is similar. Contrasting or balancing relationships, the



different varieties of diversity include gender, interests, and nature. Differences lead to diversity, which produces various aspects of society.

The foundation of society is everyone's interdependence. A single social institution will never be able to meet all of society's needs. Interdependence enables society to achieve its objective. Numerous countries are now interdependent. Coordination is required for a society to function effectively. Almost no society can exist in isolation. Humanity must efficiently work while preserving its harmony. Social relationships are the fabric of society. Civic organisations work to maintain order. Important characteristics of society are given below:

1. People form Society: Human beings comprise society, without whom its meaning is null and void. For example, a village can continue to exist if people continue to reside there. Like this, a city or a town is valid if human beings are living within its borders. You also understand that we can't call a school or college unless teachers and students are present. Everything else is entirely desolate here. As a result, we can conclude that society and human relationships cannot exist without human beings.

2. Exchange of information and mutual awareness: The continuous exchange of information and mutual understanding between human beings is the essence of society. For a group of people to be referred to as a society, there must be reciprocal contact between them. If there is a reaction between the individual and other members of society, the individual can be considered a member of society. In other words, individuals must be in constant communication with one another. Similarly, the limits of society are dependent on the limits of social interaction, which are the following: For example, the production of goods and services occurs as a result of people coming to an agreement and being

aware of each other's wants and needs. A variety of people use the milk produced by farmers in a village. The farmer intends to use it for his purposes. If there is excess milk, he can sell it to a local shop or to a cooperative farmers group, which will collect milk from various producers and deliver it to a town daily. Every other consumer product, like milk, has a story that is like this one. This context consists of mutual interaction and awareness based on economic desires and the desire to meet basic human needs, which together form human relationship.

3. Mutual awareness enables social interaction to happen: Society is a web of social interaction that connects people. However, we are unable to consider all interpersonal and social relationships. In the absence of mutual knowledge of each other's existence, social concerns do not manifest themselves. They should be aware of another's presence. Society exists due to the social behaviour that people exhibit in front of others to respond to their recognition. The absence of this recognition may indicate a lack of sociability and an absence of society. Social relationships necessitate mutual awareness.

4. Society rests on likeness: The concept of similarity is critical to the functioning of society. A feeling of closeness exists between people who are somewhat like one another in their minds and bodies. In other words, the term "likeness" refers to a similarity. All human beings share specific characteristics in terms of their life requirements, values, work, ideals, ethics, and life perspectives, among other things. This is referred to as "consciousness of kind" by the sociologist F H Giddings. As a result, to summarise, society exists among individuals who share a common goal.

5. Responsibility: A school nurtures young individuals and can provide an insight into society's composition. The similarity element,

in this case, is the similarity that students have in common as young learners. As a social unit, the school has the responsibility of instilling in students the art of learning, the value of hard work, the importance of values and ideals, and morality and ethics. The success of a school as a social unit is due to the similarity of its members.

6. Society accommodates differences too: Society, on the other hand, is tolerant of differences. There are no perfect societies where all individuals are alike, and all individuals uniform in their behaviour. If everyone is the same, there will be less sociability in the world. There will be a lack of mutual reliance and reciprocity in the relationship. If all human beings in a society are same, they will find it futile to contribute to the mutual fulfilment of their life's goals if they are all like each other. Societies that are monotonous do not survive. Society accepts and celebrates differences in the same way that it does to similarities. Every human being is incapable of performing the same task daily. Different people are required to do other things every day in our society. How can a society function if all its members are engaged in the same type of occupation? Society needs a diverse range of human beings to perform a variety of tasks to function well. Therefore, teachers, lawyers, doctors, drivers, business owners, farmers, mail carriers, bureaucrats, soldiers, police officers, firefighters, scientists, artists, poets, and writers are examples of human beings who work in various fields. These individuals, through their abilities, contribute to the functioning of society.

7. Cooperation and division of labour: Similarity and difference lay the groundwork for labour division to occur. The division of work refers to the fact that every human being in society is assigned a specific task. It could be assigned to each unit or group, depending on the circumstances. For example, in the production of rice, the

responsibilities are divided among various groups of people. Rice cultivation begins with the labourers who toil in the paddy fields, who lay the groundwork for the crop. The farmers keep an eye on the progress of the cultivation process by engaging with the labourers proactively or passively. The harvesting machine and its crew carry out the harvesting. Rice is collected, sorted, and de-husked before being sold to a variety of agro-farming organisations. It is polished and packaged using machines and technology to transform it into a finished product. The manufacturer sells it to a distributor, who then sells it to a wholesaler, then sells it to a retailer. Similarly, if you look around your home, you will notice that the mother, father, and children share household chores. Specialisation is made possible by the division of labour, which is a defining feature of a modern, complex society.

8. Society involves interdependence also: Interdependence is necessary for the development of social relationships. As a society, we recognise that the most fundamental unit is the family. This mutual interdependence between man and woman is at the heart of the family's foundational structure. Human beings rely on one another to meet and satisfy their basic needs and wants. The interdependence factor will inevitably increase as society evolves from a simple to a complex society. The concept of interdependence has grown significantly in recent years. When individuals are dependent on one another, they form interdependent networks, which rely on one another. It may happen among larger social organisations, such as towns and nations.

9. Society is dynamic: The ability to adapt and change is one of humanity's most enduring characteristics. Humanity is never static but is always in a state of flux. Change, as well as the ability to change, are fundamental characteristics of human civilisation. Throughout history, every society



has transformed. Due to the replacement of old cultures by new ones, the world is perpetually in motion. New associations and social institutions replace and disband old ones. On the other hand, the changes may occur slowly and gradually or may occur suddenly and abruptly.

10. Social control: Throughout history, human society has exercised complete command over its members' behaviours. Today, cooperation is unquestionably present; however, there are other current aspects, such as conflict and tension, rebellion, competitiveness, and suppression. These occurrences can occur regularly or only on rare occasions, depending on the situation. It could be economic, political, religious, or regional in nature. Eg: The potential for harm to society exists if such events are left to their own devices and manifest themselves. Therefore, systems are put in place to regulate the behaviour and activities of the individuals who take part in these events regularly to keep them safe.

11. Culture: Every society has its own distinct culture. We can always distinguish one culture from another. According to cultural anthropologists such as Ralph Linton, culture refers to the social heritage of humanity. Our morals and values, beliefs, judgments, attitudes, ideologies, ideas, and institutions such as the economic, legal, and political systems, as well as the philosophies and sciences of our society are all included in our culture. In other words, culture is how all members of society behave, think, live, and act towards one another. Keep in mind that culture is not the same as a society, but is rather an aspect of society.

12. Gregarious nature of man: Another essential characteristic of human society is cooperation. The word gregarious means that the ability to form groups. It is not the final characteristic of humanity, but we should remember it. According to Aristotle, "Man is

a social animal", Furthermore, McDougall well-known psychologist indicated that man is a social being because the fundamental human tendency or instinct is gregarious (i.e., the desire to gather in groups). From the preceding sections, you should have gained a better understanding of what society is all about. As we have discussed, several sociological factors influence how society is defined. We have also talked about the various elements of modern societies, which is a separate topic. Nevertheless, many other aspects are still unaddressed, and it is essential to remember that the recommendations that follow are not required to fully comprehend society's fundamental concept. They have been excluded from the course because the material is too advanced for beginners in sociology.

On the other hand, some readers may be captivated by the subject and eager to learn more about it in greater detail. If you want to learn more about human societies throughout history, the present, and the future, the following section will serve as a guide to assist you in your quest for knowledge. To better understand society, you can inquire about hunter-gatherer societies, tribal societies, feudal societies, industrial societies, and post-industrial civilisations, to name a few examples of what you can learn. Aside from that, there are other types of virtual societies based on the internet and are constantly changing in nature. We have developed cyber societies in this digital age, primarily concerned with online communities and forums. You can gain a better understanding of such societies by participating in them.

2.1.2 Community

As previously discussed, Sociology defines society as a group of people who live in a society. We demonstrated how it differs from the point of view of the average person. We will introduce a similar concept

to you in this section, which will be the sociological concept of community. After that, you will learn how to distinguish between a common perspective of community and the sociological definition of community

Before we discuss the characteristics of a community, let us try to imagine a community. What is the first image that comes into your mind when you think about the word community? Some of you might think about the community in a village, such as the farming community, or others may think about the urban community of IT employees working for a technology company in a technopark or Indian society in a Middle Eastern country as examples of community. Now, what demarcating words will you use to describe them physically? For that, you need to look at the identifying characteristics that make them unique.

When you visualise the word ‘community’, what do you imagine? Just like in society, the word community is used very loosely by everyone in day to day conversation. You might have encountered the phrase ‘community’ while filling forms for admission to school or college, applying for jobs or other occupational positions, etc. We can see that community is interpreted and used to make sense of different things. The word community is also used in casual conversation to denote caste community, religious community, national community, racial community, linguistic community, professional community, Asian community, etc. People even use it to refer to the entire humankind in a restricted sense. The word community casually means any social group or association and humanity in the broader sense.

While this is true, the term ‘community’ is descended from two Latin words, "Com" and "Munis," which translate as "together" and "servicing" in English, respectively. It comprises a group of individuals who

share numerous common interests and goals. However, the term ‘community’ is frequently misused in popular discourse, with terms such as ‘racial community’, ‘caste community’, and ‘religious community’ being used in the place of ‘community’.

In a narrow sense, the term ‘community’ refers to a Hindu or Muslim group, but the term ‘community’ can refer to a nation or the entire world in a broader sense. The term can also refer to a town, a village, or a tribal community. The idea of community is often misinterpreted in sociology. However, that happens because most people who use the word ‘community’ cannot differentiate between the three distinct ways the word ‘community’ is used in a sociological or social scientific sense. There are three major types of communities—the first one being the location-based way of identifying them. Eg: words like our neighbourhood, panchayat, village, town, or city; local community; South Indian, regional or national; or even the whole planet. These are called “communities based on place”. Identity-based communities include ethnic groups, religious groups, cultural groups, linguistic groups, etc. The third type is organisationally identified communities. They have professional groups, political associations, and economic enterprises located locally, nationally, and globally. From the three different types of community usage mentioned, you can imagine what aspects form the basis of your relationship with the word community. For example, do you have a location, identity, or organisation-based community membership? Now, let us explore deeper.

For example, people closely interact in a village because they share close family/ kinship ties, and share similar occupations based on agriculture. However, in a town or city, the population seldom shares deep familial or kinship ties as many of them might have come from other places to settle there. In a city, we also find diverse types of



occupations. As a result, people in the city do not form extensive social networks as we see in the village. Therefore, community formation in a city is different from that of a village or town. From this example, we can see that geographical location plays a prime role in creating a community.

In addition, it is evident and natural that individuals who live in a specific area develop a sense of similarity, co-operation, and a sense of belonging to one another. Consequently, they share common customs, traditions, and cultures. They develop common social ideas due to this interaction—communities form when people share an everyday social life within a limited or defined geographical area.

However, we can trace the origins and development of community back to the dawn of human civilisation. Man has been a member of some community since the beginning of time. Human society, the first and most primitive of all, began in a community. The inception of human civilisation can be traced to community formation. During the prehistoric period, man lived a hunter-gatherer or barbarian lifestyle, wandering from place to place searching for food and was unable to establish a permanent residence anywhere.

However, as his mental horizon expanded, he learnt the skill of gathering food and other necessities from a specific location, primarily along river banks or fertile areas, and he eventually settled there permanently. Whenever a group of individuals or families live together in a particular area, they can share one another's fears and worries. Therefore, a structure of shared living was established, which served as the foundation for the development of communities. Gradually, as new socio-economic, cultural, and political ties are found among the people of a given area, the scope of community life grows and becomes more extensive. As a result, various social, political, economic,

and cultural institutions came into being. As a result, a fully functional community was established.

Even though the term community is frequently used in a geographical sense as a synonym for the neighbourhood, it has a precise meaning in Sociology, derived from Ferdinand Tönnies' (1887) *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* (or Community and Society). We could find the following characteristics in the community of the pre-industrial rural society. A small group of people interacted with one another over a long time and in various spheres of life: work, leisure, church, and family. Relationships were multifaceted, intimate, and long-lasting, and they resulted in reciprocal obligation, networks passed down from generation to generation. Due to ensuring stability and close relationships, there was a great deal of social cohesion.

During a typical day in an urban industrial society, large groups of people interact with one another only momentarily and for very narrow and specific tasks before moving on to the next task at hand. A lot of interactions are built based on a written agreement. According to some, the modern city provides a level of anonymity that was nearly impossible in small-scale pre-industrial societies. Not to say that community is absent from the city; where major social divisions prevent interaction (e.g., in an ethnic minority neighbourhood), one may experience an unusual degree of stability and intimacy in one's relationships, as well as a sense of belonging. However, the difference in the degree of compulsion continues to exist. As a result, many of the current uses of the term 'community' appear to be completely inappropriate. The term 'community' alludes to a collection of individuals who share common interests, beliefs, and values but may only interact through intermediaries (for example, through the internet) and are referred to when the term "voluntary association" would be more appropriate. The absence of any sense of

necessity or compulsion is critical; regardless of how involved people are in a steam engine restoration society or a white witch network, they can easily withdraw without causing significant disruption to the other aspects of their lives.

a) Definitions of Community

This section will not go over all the various definitions of community, but instead focus on the most prominent ones and highlight their distinguishing characteristics. Because of this, we will discuss a variety of aspects that define the concept of community in social science. We do not intend to cover all possible definitions but instead we focus on a few of the most fundamental ones to develop a foundational understanding.

When individuals or members of any group, large or small, live together and share daily life, the group develops a strong sense of reverence and awe. They are involved in specific social, economic, and cultural relationships, and they have developed a sense of community consciousness that distinguishes them from other people in their environment. A community is a group of individuals or families who live in close physical proximity to one another within a defined geographical boundary and who are all members of the same religion, racial group, linguistic group, ethnicity or social status.

However, to comprehend the meaning of the term community, we must first look at the definitions provided by sociologists. On the one hand, sociologists have different approaches to understanding the community essential. Some people emphasise geographical or ecological aspects, while others place a strong emphasis on psychological factors.

Traditionally and conventionally, a community is defined as a social unit built,

conceived, or imagined around individuals who share a common characteristic and who live in a common geographical area, according to sociological theory. In a society, a community is the most fundamental social unit. A community is typically associated with a specific location within a geographical area. There are communities of people who live in villages, towns, and large cities in every continent.

Human beings do not live in isolation from one another. It seems impossible or rare to look for a human being who lives alone in a remote geographic location with no communication with other human beings. By their very nature, all human beings are members of some community. Even though humans tend to be members of various communities, no one is expected to be involved in the decisions that affect all the world's communities. It is reasonable to assert that most human beings have a relationship with communities with which they are familiar in terms of location, identity, or organisational affiliation. As a result, all communities share a sense of belonging, social similarity, similar traditions and a shared sense of identity. As an illustration, let us consider the Indian community that exists in various locations throughout the world.

Sociologist Robert McIver provided one of the most prominent definitions of community. He explains that a community is "an area of social living signified by some degree of social coherence." McIver further states that "members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not to show that particular interest, but the primary conditions of everyday life, we call that group a community". Now think about how you can visualise what MacIver said. For other sociologists, community means any social group with a feeling and a dwelling in a particular locality. Any small territorial group that shares all aspects of life



is also called a community. Additionally, a community is also an area of social living where a particular social group resides in a contiguous geographical location possessing similar interests in activities.

Talcott Parsons defined community as a group of people who share a similar geographical location as a base of everyday activities. According to Tönnies, a community is an organic, natural type social group whose members are linked together by a common identity formed through daily interactions across the whole spectrum of human activity. He offered ideal-typical images of social connections, connecting the community's solidarity-based social interactions with the massive and impersonal social relations associated with industrialised societies. According to Kingsley Davis, it is the smallest geographical group capable of encompassing all facets of social life. According to Karl Mannheim, a community is any group of individuals who live together and are connected so that they share more than one interest.

b) Characteristics of Community

When we examine the characteristics or elements of a community, we can understand better its meaning. These characteristics determine whether a group is considered a community. Community, on the other hand, possesses the following features or elements:

To understand the characteristics of a community, one must investigate the ideas of community sentiments and locality. What role does community sentiment and locality play in describing the features of a community? Let us try to imagine an ideal community. What comes to your mind when you think about community? Let us say you are thinking about the farming community in a rural locality like a village.

A group of people living in the coastal area engaged in fishing is part of the fishing community. They share all the primary conditions of life, which is one of the prerequisites for being a community. This example depicts an occupational and location-based community. Similarly, migrant workers from the North of India who live in labour camps and housing colonies in the towns and cities of Kerala constitute the migrant labor community. This community is both linguistic and occupational-organisational based. From the above example, we can talk about how locality forms an essential aspect of a community. It would be beneficial if you kept in mind that even nomadic tribal groups such as the cattle herding groups of the Deccan plateau, the nomadic tribes of Rajasthan, or the pastoral tribes of Jammu and Kashmir are considered communities. The critical point to remember is that the human beings who constitute these communities tend to live together in a particular spot. Just living together in that specific geographic location qualifies them to be a community.

In society, we can identify a social group of people as a community if they exhibit the following characteristics.

1. Group of people: A community, no matter how small or large, is unquestionably a collection of individuals. On the other hand, a community is a group of people who live together and share all the 'basic conditions' of social life. As a result of these circumstances, they come to be known as a community. For example, we can think of two or more houses where different families live as a small community and the entire human race as one large community to consider. The term 'community' has developed a broad range of meanings that we can apply in various contexts.

2. Locality: Considering that human communities always occupy distinct geographic locations, it is always appropriate

to refer to them as territorial groups. The physical location of a community serves as the foundation for identifying that community. The nomadic tribes of the world and other nomadic cultures that roam the earth are well known to many people. They have a residence in the same way that everyone else does, though their address changes from time to time as they relocate from one location to another. According to the above definition, if a nomadic group has remained in one place for an extended period, they can only be part of a community. A group of people cannot be referred to as a community unless they are all located within a specific geographical area. The boundaries of a community are unquestionably defined by its immediate surroundings, as demonstrated when comparing it to society. When humans live near one another, the development of social relationships, the provision of protection, care, and the provision of security take place. When lived together, these elements assist members of a community in identifying and pursuing common goals. The physical conditions of a place's environment and the nature of its social life have a significant impact on its overall character.

3. Sense of mutual sentiment: 'We' feeling is an essential part of the human experience. All members of a community express themselves with great enthusiasm when they are in social contact with others. The 'we' feeling fosters a sense of belonging among the members of the community. In period modern, people who live in a specific area are less likely to express such sentiments or have any form of mutual contact or communication. It is uncommon for people in a large city to know their neighbours well. To make a community, you need people with shared interests and values. Compared to people living in rural areas, people living in cities and urban areas may suffer from a lack of effective communication. Another issue to consider is that they may not have the same outlook on life or share any common

interests, which is another factor. As a result, we cannot exist as a community unless we have feelings for one another.

4. Belongingness and expression: merely existing within a geographical area, let alone as a community, does not automatically transform a collection of human beings into a single entity. A community is a place of everyday life where people feel a strong sense of connection and belongingness and express themselves freely. The way of life shared by a community is essential for it to flourish.

5. Stable and Permanent: Apart from having a sense of place and community sentiments, the community must also have some stability to function. An alternative definition of a community is a group of people who have bonded together to achieve a common goal. A crowd waiting for a train at a railway station or a crowd watching 'test cricket' or a one-day international cricket match in a cricket stadium, cannot be referred to as a community. We cannot refer to people as a community because they are only temporary human group formations, not communities. Being a permanent member of a community is only possible if the individual or group decides to disown themselves or others and surrender the community membership and leave.

6. Naturality: Communities form through natural processes. They are not the result of a conscious effort to create them. Human communities are a natural phenomenon. From a traditional/conventional perspective, belonging to a community, whether it is one or many, and being a part of that community are universal aspects of human existence. By birth, people are becoming member of the community. As a result, participation in a community is not entirely voluntary.

7. Sharing similar ways of living: Another distinguishing characteristic of a community is the similarity in dialect, language, customs,



to build; and it takes time for the set of rules that regulate the relationships between the organisation's members to be established and become effective. Institutions and customs based on shared mutual traditions and memories define the general desire to live together.

2.1.3 The Fundamental Distinctions between a Community and a Society

1. Shared sentiments: Based on the examples provided above, we can conclude that a community is a group of people who live in a specific location and have a common need for necessities. However, the concept of community is incomplete if there is a lack of reciprocal feelings between members. Society doesn't need to have mutual feelings for it to function. People or groups who do not get along with one another can exist in a society. Community sentiment is another critical factor that distinguishes society and community from one another. Community sentiment is an essential characteristic of a community. It is impossible to form a community without the participation of all members. A society, on the other hand, may or may not have a sense of belonging. Society is more concerned with organisation, whereas the community is more concerned with life, which is the source from which organisation emerges.

2. The community occupies a definite location while society is boundless: Society has no defined boundaries, and it is up to those who define it to draw them. Consider, for example, Indian society, Kerala society, Tribal society, or any other society. Almost everywhere there is human society and it is universal and omnipresent. On the other hand, a community is a social unit that occupies a specific geographical area within a society. As a result, geographic location is not a necessary component of society's structure. In nature, society is abstract, whereas community is

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concrete in its manifestation. Although each community has its physical existence, society only exists in the minds of the individuals who make up the community. When we talk about society, we talk about a system of social relationships rather than a group of people who live in a specific location like a neighborhood.

3. A community is a divisible social unit of society: Many communities make up an organisation's membership, and thus an organisation is an amalgamation of many communities. Communities are sub-orders or species of society that exist within a larger society. A community's social structure is distinct from that of other communities, and it has its own set of rules. A vast community may contain several smaller communities within its borders. There could be several small municipalities within a larger metropolitan area, each of which could be a substantial town, and smaller townships could be considered a small city. A society's size is consistently large, regardless of how small or large a community, such as a village or a nation.

4. A community is specific, while society is an abstract idea: An entire society comprises innumerable and intangible networks of social relationships. As a result, purely it is an abstract concept. A community, on the other hand, is accurate, authentic, and objective in its existence. A community is a social grouping of people with similar sentiments and ideas of belonging and who come together. A society is a broader concept, whereas a community is a more specific concept to consider for the simple reason that there are multiple communities within a society. As a result, the community is much smaller than the larger society.

5. A society is a web of social relationships, whereas a community is a group of people: who live in a particular area and have a sense of belonging or cohesion.

In nature, society is abstract, whereas community is concrete in its manifestation. Although each community has its physical existence, society only exists in the minds of the individuals who make up the community. When we talk about society, we talk about a system of social relationships rather than a group of people who live in a specific location like a neighborhood.

2.1.4 Association

In the previous sections, we discussed how the word society and community are used differently from a layman's perspective. We further discussed how it is different in Sociology and presented additional facts and definitions that enable you to have a final understanding of the concept. In this section, you will read about what association means in Sociology. You might have different ideas about the association, but you will have to keep them aside and pay attention to the new meanings and views from the ambit of sociology.

The term association is largely misinterpreted in everyday discussions. Sometimes the term is used for group functions, working groups, interest groups etc. But in a sociological understanding, the association is something different and specific. Therefore, it is essential to understand and isolate the real meaning of association from the layman's perspective and its present use in Sociology. A common viewpoint is the grouping of people based on certain specific social, cultural, occupational, sporting attributes.

There are several examples of everyday associations that must have caught your attention. For instance, in a school or a college, you might have heard about a parent-teacher association. Such association's purpose is to discuss and solve common problems for students, teachers, and parents. These associations discuss many things. It includes



students' daily commute and transportation from home to school, students' academic progress, extracurricular activities in sports and fine arts, personality development, and other concerns.

Another form of association we see every day is political associations. It is difficult to ignore the existence of political parties and the significance of their role in today's world. We live in a democratic country where political parties are an essential element in sustaining democracy. We see different political party outfits doing various activities. Political parties are a form of association. Religious associations exist to explore the spiritual and religious aspects of human societies. Student associations in schools and colleges are student-only associations that exist to advocate for the rights of students in a college or university. A Laborer's association exists to safeguard the rights of a laborer. Such an association needs to fight against the exploitation of employers who don't pay salaries for their workers. Professional associations assert, safeguard and advocate for skilled workers' rights.

a) Meaning of Association

Humans have diverse needs, desires, and interests, all of which must be satisfied. There are three options for meeting these requirements. First and foremost, they are free to act independently, each in their way and without regard for others. It is a socially awkward situation with limitations. Second, men may seek to achieve their goals by engaging in conflict with one another. Finally, men may attempt to achieve their goals through cooperative efforts and mutual assistance with one another. We can find a reference to the association in this collaborative effort.

The formation of an association occurs when a group or collection of individuals organise themselves specifically to pursue

their common interests cooperatively instead of individually. According to Morris Ginsberg, an association is a group of social beings connected by the fact that they share or have shared an organisation to achieve a specific end or a set of goals. We can find a variety of associations in a variety of fields. There is no single organisation that can satisfy all the interests of an individual or group of individuals. Because man has a wide range of interests, he organises various associations to pursue those interests. He may be a member of multiple organisations at the same time.

Therefore, we can restate that associations exist to fulfill specific human needs. Human beings have a wide range of interests and desires, some of which can only be satisfied by joining a specialised social group at certain times. The essence of collaboration and mutual assistance is the driving force behind the formation of the association. An association is a group of or a collection of human beings who pursue common goals or promote common interests.

b) Definitions of Association

An association is a group of people who come together for a specific purpose for a limited amount of time. It adheres to formal space, an association that differs from a regular group or team. Like-minded people can form associations for various reasons, including the length of time they will be operational, determining whether they will be permanent or temporary. For example, an association formed for flood relief activities is brief, whereas one created for state issues is permanent. It can also be developed based on power, with autonomous entities such as the state, semi-autonomous entities such as universities, and non-tribal independent entities such as clubs. Third, it is formed to carry out a variety of functions, such as music clubs' associations for recreational purposes, sports associations for athletics or

games such as tennis, teacher's associations and trade unions for vocational training, biological organisations such as families, and altruistic organisations such as charitable societies.

There are several different definitions for the term 'association'. We will, however, focus on the most significant ones that will aid you in developing a fundamental understanding of the subject. An association is a group of people who come together to pursue common interests or a set of interests that all members of the group share. According to sociologist Robert Morrison MacIver, "an association is an organisation that has been purposefully formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests that its members have in common". Other sociologists, such as *Emory S. Bogardus*, asserts that "association is typically defined as a group of people coming together to accomplish a common goal." He went on to say that for an association to exist; it must first be formed. For an association to be valid, a few aspects must be present: it must be a social group of people; (ii) it must have some form of social organisation and should adhere to rules and regulations, and (iii) they must be motivated to work toward a common goal and ambition. According to another sociologist, *Morris Ginsberg*, "an association is a group of social beings who are linked to one another by the fact that they possess or have instituted in common an organisation to achieve a specific end or a set of specific ends".

c) Characteristics of Association

We will discuss the various aspects that form an association. You know that associations are found in every walk of life from the examples we have discussed before. One single association cannot exist to fulfill all the needs. Numerous associations

exist concurrently, and an individual may be a member of multiple associations. It is because human beings have different interests. Various associations exist to fulfill such needs. Therefore, a person might have political association, cultural, religious, professional or entertainment association. From the examples of these associations, we can infer that they all have different purposes. By taking one association at a time, we can discuss their characteristics.

To form an association, a group of people has to come together; second, this group should organise and work according to established specifications and rules to produce a successful outcome. Associations such as music clubs and labor unions are examples.

1. Association is a human group:

Associations are formed or formed by people to achieve a specific goal. Although all associations are social groups, not all social groups are associations, and not all associations are social groups. An association is a distinct group of people who come together to pursue a common goal. It is a formalised organisational structure. For example, a large group of people at a college football game is not an association; however, other groups within a college, such as an art club, a debating club, or a sports club, are. Since the individuals have come together to achieve a shared goal, it helps keep them connected and provides them a sense of concreteness, as no one will back out before the task or work at hand is completed. This teaches the members how to take on various roles that are appropriate for their abilities and how to work responsibly.

2. General or specific interests: All association members have one thing in common: they are all motivated by a common desire to achieve the same aim or achieve the same target. As a result, charitable or philanthropic interests will establish trusts



or create new charitable institutions. Those engaged in political activism or social activism will join organisations specifically designed to meet their requirements. For example, in a college, a student union is formed to advocate for the student's rights in an educational institution. Students make up the total membership of such a union.

3. The association, like a community, does not grow in importance on its own; rather, the specified number of people is only decided upon and finalised, after which the work progresses within the specific time frame. Furthermore, they all work under the supervision of a single individual, whereas everyone is free to pursue their ideas in the community. The association's rules and regulations are established by the organisation's president, who may outline the laws and regulations in consultation with other knowledgeable members of the organisation. The remaining members of the subordinates then devise ways to get around these rules to achieve their goals. As a result, they are obligated to follow a 'code of conduct'. These rules, however, are adaptable and can be changed if the association's founder determines that the rules' provisions are preventing the desired outcome. They always have a goal in mind to maintain the identity of their organisation. To put it simply, they seek solutions to problems. The purpose of a drama association, for example, is to put up plays and dramas on stage, which is a natural outcome.

4. A sense of cooperative spirit: An association is founded due to collaboration among its members. Working together, the participants complete a defined set of tasks, purposes, goals, or objectives. As an illustration, A political party has many officials. Most of them are at the grassroot level, with a few at the middle level. They work together to gain the support of the populace to gain control of the government. No one can be compelled to participate in

the operations of the organisation. It is a voluntary decision because it is made solely based on the individual's desire. This is since an association is not the same as any other state or society's essential organisation, where a person becomes obligated to perform services for the organisation. They also don't feel compelled to participate, even though it is based on shared ideas. Everyone is responsible for their actions and outcomes because they are the result of voluntary movement. Another advantage of joining is that the individual can withdraw if they believe that the goal for which they joined is not being pursued with seriousness. A sports association, for example, may exist that is not adequately serving the players' interests, and a considerate individual may decide to join in to assist them. However, suppose he discovers that he has not been given the freedom to execute plans in the players' best interests. In that case, he may decide to withdraw because he realises that he can work more freely if he is not associated with the project. If a person wishes to, they can also freely switch from one political party or organisation to another.

5. Regulation of relations: Every organisation has its own set of strategies and tools for dealing with the issues that concern its members. For an association to function, it must be governed by law. These regulations may be in the form of a written document or spoken word. For example, when it comes to student union leadership, there is a democratic system in place with different persons holding crucial positions, such as the union president and several secretaries. They are responsible for allocating work and aiding the president. Several middle-level members, as well as representatives from various classes, serve on numerous committees. No association's leader can function effectively with disobedient members. A code of conduct exists that must be always adhered to and should not be violated. Only those who adhere to the rules

and regulations are allowed to participate in achieving the goal because only they can gain the confidence of their superiors as employees. In addition, they are given official recognition as members. Anyone who violates their membership obligations almost always faces expulsion from the organisation. It is critical to support the rules and regulations of the association rather than criticising them. Members should be aware of the importance of working together; otherwise, it is pointless to keep such a person as a group member.

6. Associations as agencies: Associations are a type of agency through which all its members work together to achieve their mutual and common goals. In addition to having leaders, associations also have officials and representatives who act following their needs. Along with a specific mode of operation and membership, an organisation has legal status.

7. The durability of association: An association can be either a long-term or a short-term social gathering. Some associations, such as state, political, and religious organisations, are permanent or have existed for a long time. On the other hand, some associations are only temporary, such as those formed to facilitate the work of well-known artists, scientists, writers, political or religious personalities, among others. As a result of these examples, we can deduce that associations are purpose-built to meet the needs of members who share a common interest. The concept of an expressly contained set of associations distinguishes itself from the idea of a social group. People gathered in a classroom, mob, or public assembly (such as a bus stop, crowd at a music concert, etc.) are not considered members of an association.

2.1.5 The Fundamental Differences between Association and Community

Even though a community can be made up of many associations, an association cannot be considered a community. In contrast, social groups are formed to meet specific needs within a community. Plantation workers in the Idukki district of Kerala, for example, will be members of the Tea Workers Association, the Cardamom growers Association, and so on. These are not communities but rather social groups that exist to support the members of their respective communities.

To elucidate further, the following are the significant differences between an association and a community.

1. An association is a section, while a community is whole: When a specific goal needs to be achieved, an association is formed. Even though the plans are not as intricate and complex as life itself, they are essential in that they require the cooperation of individuals to work together to achieve them in a specific way. A community comprises everything, including associations, and does not exist solely to serve the needs of individuals with specialised concerns. As opposed to associations formed on purpose and with the consent of their members, communities are more organic in their formation and development. Communities, in contrast to associations, do not have a clearly defined beginning. Compared to a community, social life in its raw form, which is widespread and unplanned, culminates in social life in its natural state.

2. Many associations prevail inside communities: Individuals form groups to pursue specific and similar interests. This is how associations include. In other words, an association is a group of people who come together to work for a common cause.



8. Associations have written laws, by-laws, rules and codes of conduct, whereas a community works following customs and traditions: In contrast to a community, an association has legal standing.

Association is further subdivided into various types. Clubs, trade unions, and voluntary organisations are studied by a branch of Sociology known as organisational

sociology. As a result, the club serves an essential purpose. As a result, various social, professional, artistic, and sporting organisations significantly impact our society. To an extent, trade associations or organisations that work to benefit a particular industry or business organisation are confederations of large industrial conglomerates, as is the case with federations of large industrial conglomerates.

2.1.7 Organisations

It is reasonable to assume that you have a good understanding of what society is and how a community is a social group within an organisation by this point of time. Also, you have gained a better understanding of what an association is in Sociology, which is beneficial. Along with this, you have gained a better experience of how an association functions to achieve specific goals and objectives. The study of human behaviour and interpersonal relationships, among other things, will be covered in-depth in the section on social organisation in the course. Specifically, in the context of a social group, it is a term that you will come across in social science literature; however, we must simplify it for someone unfamiliar with Sociology to understand what it refers to.

Stability and change are both present in a well-organised society. Stability is the state of being in a balance among the various components of an organisation. It is also the state of being in which everything is running smoothly. During this period, the number of social problems in society decreases. Society is in a state of flux, and change is inevitable. As a result of the achievement of social needs, organised society is changing as well. Disorganisation occurs in society due to sudden changes in revolution, which disrupts the existing social order.

The human body organs, which are functionally joined together and referred

to as the organisation of parts in the human body, serve as excellent examples of an organisation. Typically, the carpenter will prepare the individual components of a table before assembling them in a logical sequence. This table is a well-organised structure. It means that organisation is the process of bringing together disparate parts to form a cohesive whole. In a similar vein, a social group is also an organisation of people who start a social unit. Individuals establish themselves in their positions (status), and through their interactions (roles), they form a social community. This indicates that they have been assimilated into the group by their respective positions. The participation of individuals in a group is referred to as a social organisation.

A large organisation in which individuals, groups, and institutions all participate in the entire society. It is a vast network of social relationships that is organised similarly to the components of a watch. By organising themselves in interaction with one another, the groups shape society: The organisation's process is analogous to that of a human body, a machine, a factory, an office, a bank, and the human society itself.

Organisations of various sizes have been discussed extensively in the preceding sections on society, community, and associations. It is also possible to think of society in its entirety as one large organisation. For example, the emergence of organised societies and large organisations is usual in contemporary periods. On the other hand, humans can only realise their aspirations through the efforts of these organisations and individuals. In this context, the term 'social organisation' can refer to a wide range of things. Consider the concept of organisation as a foundational concept in the study of Sociology and organisational behaviour. The term 'organisation' refers to a formal agreement between two or more people or parts of a group of people. The word



"reserved sense" refers to a specific attribute of associations representing the way roles and statuses are organised. Understanding the meaning of the word 'bureaucracy' in this context is also essential when it comes to organisation, bureaucracy can be defined as the process of controlling and managing using a vertical hierarchical structure. Governments and business corporations can function properly and efficiently because of bureaucracy. Anything from political parties to the United Nations can be considered an organisation.

The social organisations that exist within a society are constantly evolving. More private social organisations in the societal structure include groups that are born out of shared interests and discussions.

Smaller social organisations include many everyday groups that most people would not expect to have these characteristics, such as civic organisations and volunteer groups. Bands, clubs, and even sports teams are examples of small social organisations that we can find in various settings. There are characteristics shared by all these small-scaled groups that are like those found in a large-scale organisation. Even though these small social organisations do not have nearly as many members as larger organisations, they interact and function almost the same way.

It is simple to see how a typical small organisation, such as a school sports team, can function as a social organisation when considering it in isolation. The team members all share the same objectives to win, and they all work together to achieve their common goal. The team's organisational structure is also easily discernible. Everyone shares a shared vision, but they each have a unique set of responsibilities to achieve that vision. They must work together to achieve their goal, which distinguishes them as a social organisation.

In large-scale organisations, bureaucracy is almost always present in some form or another. Bureaucracy consists of a set of regulations and a hierarchical system, to name a few characteristics. Attempting to maximise efficiency is now possible for these larger-scale organisations. It is also necessary for large-scale organisations to ensure that managerial control is appropriately implemented. A common approach is to take an impersonal authority position. Whenever authority is detached and unbiased in its interactions with all the other organisation members, this is known as a power vacuum. These procedures are followed to ensure that everything runs smoothly and that the social organisation remains at its peak performance level.

Undoubtedly, one of the most well-known social organisations is that of a medical facility. A small social organisation, such as the nursing professionals and the surgeon, exists inside the hospital. They collaborate more closely to achieve more for their organisations, which helps the hospital become more successful and long-lasting. The hospital, taken as a whole, exhibits all the characteristics of a social organisation. The relationship between all hospital staff members, and between staff and patients, are extensive. One of the primary reasons a hospital is classified as a social organisation is that provides medical care and treatment. It also includes aspects such as division of labour, structural cohesion, and communication systems. The features of a social organisation must be present in a hospital for it to be as effective as possible. This is what gives a hospital its strength. Therefore, for an organisation to function correctly, one of these elements must be present.

a) Definitions of Social Organisation

In this section, we will discuss the different definitions of social organisation. We will discuss what other sociologists stated about the idea of social organisations. The social organisation concept broadly pertains to societies. According to Auguste Comte, social organisation and social consensus are general social agreements. The social deal implies the popularly acknowledged consensus. For Herbert Spencer, a social organisation meant interrelationships between political, economic, and other societal divisions. For Emile Durkheim, Social organisation implied social integration and ideas of individual regulation through agreement on values and morals.

Social organisation is a structure of relationships that exist among both individuals and social groups. Characteristics such as sexual composition, spatiotemporal cohesion, leadership, organisational structure, division of work, and communication systems, among others, can be considered characteristics of social organisation. As a result of these characteristics of social organisation, people can keep track of their daily activities and participation in other activities that are regulated forms of human interaction. Relationship, collective resources, interdependence of individuals, and recorded control are some of the interactions that take place. These interrelationships come together to form common characteristics in fundamental social units which includes families, businesses, clubs, and governments, among others.

Definitions of social organisation would be to emphasise the interdependence of parts in a social group. The social group we are trying to describe may be varying in size. It may be a large group or a tiny group. Sociologists such as Talcott Parsons, GH Homans, RK Merton advocate using a social

system instead of social organisation. Social organisation is a phrase utilised in sociology to examine the significance of numerous parts and their interdependence in social groups and society. Social organisation enables us to discover how aspects of culture relate to one another and how each element is connected to the whole. From a functional point of view, social organisation enables the survival and effective functioning of societies and different social groups. For some sociologists, social organisations are “a pattern of relations of individuals and groups.” It is also defined as an aspect of interaction systems.

There are many definitions for social organisation, however, we will investigate the essential definitions to develop a basic understanding. According to Duncan Mitchell, a social organisation means “the interdependence of parts in a sensual characteristic of all enduring collective entities, groups, communities, and societies”. Ogburn and Nimkoff state that “an organisation is an articulation of different characteristics that perform various functions, this is an active group device for getting something done”. Finally, HM Johnson considers that “an organisation refers to the aspect of interaction systems”.

The term “social organisation” refers to any group, institution, or social system that exists within a society. Social organisation is defined as the process by which people form a group by assigning different roles and statuses in order to achieve a specific objective or meet a specific need. Individuals in a social organisation have a variety of roles and obligations. The ones that are delegated to them are determined by their current statuses. Human social organisation is formed through the cooperation of individuals with others in a social environment. Stability is achieved through social organisation in a society. Society is constantly evolving, but in many cases, the changes are slow and incremental.



We can also find that there is a consensus among the members of work in the respective organisation. They work with a method that has cooperation, agreement, and shared understanding. If such an organisation is unorganised, it will not work towards that common goal to transport people. In addition, we can find a clear-cut idea regarding the role and status of each employee. These organisations also regulate the behaviour of the individual.

Social organisation is the result of human encounter with one another. Organisation refers to the interrelationships between members or parts of a whole, which is an interaction. When the members of a family interact with one another, they begin to form an organised group. In the same way, the various sections of a factory are interconnected. Components of a single product are passed among teams until they are complete, and then the product is completed by putting the pieces together. Components interact to form a complex whole. It is all due to the interaction that occurs between sections, groups, and individual members. The result is social organisation.

Social organisations form during everyday life. Many people are members of a variety of social structures, both formal and informal. Clubs, professional organisations, and religious institutions are examples of this type of organisation. They are becoming closer to one another and aids in developing a sense of belonging to the social organisation, which aids in creating a sense of community. While organisations bring together many like-minded people, they can also cause a rift with those who are not members of their organisation due to differences in thought. Social organisations are structured in such a way that there is a hierarchical structure. In social groups, a hierarchical organisational structure impacts how an organisation is structured, and the likelihood of the group remains intact.

Let's discuss the characteristics of a formal organisation. What do you imagine when you think about social organisation? Yes, you might be thinking about an organisation like Railways and airports transporting people from one place to another by rail and air. In these two examples, we see that the organisation certainly functions to transport people from one place to another.

These interactions also influence the group's cohesion. A group's members must feel a strong sense of belonging to one another. To be affiliated with a group implies that you have a connection with and acceptance in that group. When you become affiliated with an organisation, you are obligated to return to that organisation. To be affiliated with an organisation, the organisation must be aware of and recognise its membership. The organisation gains power as a result of the pooled resources of its affiliated organisations. Affiliates frequently have a vested interest in these resources, which serves as a motivator to continue improving the organisation.

On the other hand, the organisation can replace individuals if the need arises. While the organisation requires affiliation and resources to survive, it also needs to replace individuals who leave the organisation to keep the organisation running. Because of all these characteristics, it cannot be easy to maintain organisational structure within an organisation. As a result, written control becomes more apparent and more organised due to writing down the information.

1. A definite purpose: An organisation has a specific set of goals that it strives to achieve. However, you should note that lack of a clear purpose or intent prevents individuals from forming any organisation to meet the many different needs of humanity. Furthermore, the members of an organisation are interconnected with one another to achieve a common goal.

2. Unanimity or consensus among members: The members' shared understanding, cooperation, and agreement on conducting themselves are essential for an organisation's efficient operation. A family that operates on certain consensus, unity of interest, and so on becomes disorganised if these norms are broken.

3. Harmony between statuses and roles: An organisation can also be thought of as a method that brings a diverse range of individuals together to form a social interaction network that performs a variety of tasks. Every member of an organisation is assigned a status and a role by the organisation. It entails the performance of duties and the assumption of responsibilities. When there is a sense of acceptance of the designated statuses of the members and the roles that they must play, the organisation can function correctly. Consider the example of a college as a type of organisation. It consists of various people, including the principal, teachers, office staff, students, support and maintenance staff, and security personnel, among others. We can see that the college can effectively function if everyone is aware of their respective roles and responsibilities.

4. Control of organisation on the behaviour of individuals: An organisation's control mechanism, which is in place to affect and regulate members' behaviour, can influence, and regulate members' behaviour and daily activities. If a member violates the rules, they must face sanctions that range from a warning to a formal punishment. Students who, for example, violate the college's norms will face disciplinary action.

c) Formal and Informal Organisations

Formal organisations have clearly defined organisational structures and procedures, and goals for the organisation's specific business objectives. Formal organisations, as opposed to informal ones, are frequently public-facing entities that follow hierarchy and instruct procedures to direct work situations systematically. Often, members of a formal organisation are assigned specific roles that they must fulfil to achieve specific objectives that contribute to its overall mission. In many organisational forms, the formal organisation

is used to establish consistent processes for dealing with various aspects of daily business.

The term 'informal organisation' refers to social structures that direct how individuals work together in the place of employment or other organisations. Informal organisations collect professional and personal connections and norms that provide structure to the way teams accomplish projects and tasks and form relationships at their places of employment. Informal organisations aren't typically seen as public entities but rather as a type of interaction within a work environment that fosters personal relations, communities that share similar values, and social networks among its members. Informal organisations also provide people who are actively engaged or associated with them through personal and situational support. People can collaborate across teams in informal organisations, fostering innovation and enabling teams

to solve problems outside of traditional structures and processes of more formal organisations. Informal organisations provide a way for people to cooperate across teams, which can benefit both individuals and organisations.

Therefore, to summarise, we can say that an organisation can be divided into two. They are formal and informal organisations. Informal organisations are functioning based on norms, values, customs, etc. It may be temporary, more minor, and fulfils limited goals. Family is an example of an informal organisation.

On the other hand, formal organisations are more significant and functioning based on strict rules and regulations. There is a clear hierarchy of functions from top to bottom. For Society is a collection of human beings organised in simple and complex groups.

Recap

- ◆ Society is a collection of human beings organised in simple and complex groups.
- ◆ Society consists of people and the complex social interaction system based on social norms.
- ◆ Society is a system of relationships based on interactions that result in patterns of behaviour and interaction.
- ◆ Giddens sees society as consisting of people who are working together for shared goals.
- ◆ A community is formed or imagined around individuals who share a common interest and live in the same area.
- ◆ A community is defined by a sense of "we" and by close living.
- ◆ A community is a collection of individuals who share common values.
- ◆ A community needs a local foundation.
- ◆ Communities comprises of regular, frequent contacts between individuals.

- ◆ Associations are held together by cooperation and mutual assistance.
- ◆ All associations include families, churches, trade unions, and music clubs.
- ◆ Associations may be formed on different bases, for example, duration, power, and recreational activities.
- ◆ Association can be defined as a group of people that has a common goal.
- ◆ A social group that has a collective organisation set up for a particular purpose is called an association.
- ◆ An association is a social organisation deliberately formed to pursue some interest or set of interests that all the members share.
- ◆ Officials and representatives work in conjunction with leaders' associations to meet their requirements.
- ◆ An Association functions with a set of rules and regulations.
- ◆ Associations have offices and periodic meetings.
- ◆ For Auguste Comte, the social organisation refers to society, as well as social consensus or general social agreement.
- ◆ For Herbert Spencer, a social organisation meant interrelationships between political, economic, and other societal divisions.
- ◆ For Emile Durkheim, Social organisation implied social integration and ideas of individual regulation through agreement on values and morals.
- ◆ Social organisation enables us to discover aspects of culture relate to one another and how each element is connected to the whole.
- ◆ Organisations are functioning based on sanctions, norms, and values.
- ◆ Some other organisations are based on written documents and procedures.
- ◆ Organisations are two types formal and informal.

Objective Questions

1. What are the three conditions required for society to exist?
2. What is the essential feature of society?
3. What does society require to be called a society?
4. According to whom, is society a human product?

5. What can we call a complex collection of organised human beings with specific goals and relations?
6. What are the two types of relationships found in society?
7. What are the three fundamental elements of a community?
8. What is the foundation of a community?
9. What do people need to have to form a community?
10. Who defined an association as “an organisation that has been purposefully formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests that its members have in common”?
11. Who states that an “association is typically defined as a group of people coming together to accomplish a common goal.”?
12. What are the guiding factors of an association?
13. Who defined associations as “an association is a group of social beings who are linked to one another with the goal of attaining a specific set of goals”?
14. What type of social group is an association?
15. What are the essential factors required for a social organisation?

Answers

1. Mutual awareness, common interest, and materials
2. Human interaction
3. Human beings
4. Peter L Berger
5. Society
6. Formal and Informal
7. Belonging, likeness, and cooperation
8. Structure of common living
9. Same values
10. Robert MacIver

11. Emory S Bogardus
12. Rules and regulations
13. Morris Ginsberg
14. Synthetic
15. Change and stability

Assignments

1. Define society and discuss its types
2. Discuss basic characteristics of a community
3. Differentiate between an association and an organisation
4. Explain the concept of social organisation and its types
5. Elucidate the fundamental distinctions between society and community

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Suggested Readings

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UNIT

Role and Status: Meaning, Nature and Types

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To familiarise with the concepts of role, role confusion, role strain and role conflict
- ◆ To understand the nature of social status and its various types
- ◆ To have an understanding of the structural composition of society

Prerequisites

We see society as a vast web of statuses. Status in society has an associated role, and here role means the expected behaviour of a member. As you carry out the roles, expected behaviours, rights, obligations, responsibilities, and privileges assigned to social status, each status (position) in your network includes certain behaviours and obligations. Roles are the dynamic, action-oriented component of a society's status. They specify how each participant in a conversation is expected to behave. For example, attending classes, learning, taking tests, writing essays, and conversing with professors and other students are all part of the role of a person with the status of a "college student". We enter most positions with some understanding of how to perform the roles imposed by our culture. We learn roles through socialisation by observing others, watching television and movies, reading, and being taught how to carry out the status by family members, teachers, and others. Because they must be carried out in relationships with others, both statuses (positions) and roles (behavioural expectations of people holding the status) form links with other people in the social world. A father, for example, has responsibilities (or roles) toward his children and their mother. The father's role does not exist in isolation but rather in conjunction with other significant others

with whom he shares reciprocal ties. Therefore, we can state with certainty that status and roles are integral elements that mold the social structure. In the following section, we will discuss what role means. We will provide you with prerequisites to understand what it means in Sociology. Further, we will discuss the different meanings of roles to understand the concept comprehensively.

Keywords

Role strain, Role conflict, Role confusion, Ascribed status, Achieved status

Discussion

The previous section of the block introduced the fundamental concepts of Sociology. We presented how it is different from a lay person's understanding. Now, we assume that you possess a basic knowledge of the fundamental concepts in Sociology in the previous section. We hope that concepts like "society," "community," "association," and "organisation" are familiar to you as a young sociologist. However, these concepts, are not enough for you to understand society's other aspects and complexities. Therefore, to gain a more profound knowledge of society, especially about individuals and their relation to society, you need to develop new ideas. In this section, you will learn about the concept of role and status. If you look at any society in India or elsewhere around the planet, you will find specific orders. Role and status are conceptual tools that help to understand this order. All human societies exhibit this order as an outcome of their respective members' different social relations and activities. Working in a coordinated manner fulfils group needs and individual needs. They try to achieve an order while utilizing their ability and

time to their full potential considering their weaknesses. However, from experience, it is an established social fact that human beings in isolation cannot fulfill the needs and desires of daily life.

All members of society occupy different positions. They are assigned specific responsibilities associated with their roles. For example, depending on whether you're interacting with a dean, a professor, an adviser, a classmate, or a potential employer, your status as a student necessitates certain behaviours and expectations. This is because as one interacts with specific people in other statuses, the role expectations of the student status change. The student has a role and status in a university or school setting, and the others are those with whom the student interacts as a student. Individuals in a group can have both formal and informal statuses. The formal status of high school students, each of whom plays several informal roles in cliques outside of the formal school structure, is one example. A student may be labeled as a popular kid, a jock, a nerd, a loner, a goth, a clown, a prep, or an outcast. Teacher-student, peer-peer, and coach-athlete are all roles that

take place in a status relationship with others. Social networks can be formed based on ascribed characteristics like age and sex and achieved status like education, occupation, or shared interests. Social interactions and group structures are built on the foundation of these connections. On the other hand, individuals may not always be able to fulfill their roles as others expect, resulting in role strain or conflict.

Because some members failed to follow the norms and did not behave according to their statuses, and did not perform their expected roles in the rehearsal situation, the social structure became ineffective. In the most basic form, norms are rules for behaviour, and status is a social group position and role in carrying out the status. A mother in a family group, a teacher in an occupational group, or a plumber in a workgroup are examples of statuses. The role is the dynamic aspect of that status, or what the mother, teacher, and plumber do. The term "role" is a perfect fit for this situation. Society, in a figurative sense, hands each individual a script. Individuals—society members—are like actors who play their parts throughout their lives. We are not given a script, but we are born with some statuses and acquire others due to our actions or inactions. Statuses are ranked and assigned a value based on the group's overall values. A famous musician, actor, football player, or Wall Street financier has a higher status in American society than a plumber, and both have a lower status than a teacher. A person with a specific status is expected to act in a manner that is appropriate for that status. We don't expect the plumber to give us a lecture on Middle Ages English literature, and we don't expect the teacher to fix our leaking faucet. (Of course, just as the plumber may be an expert in literature, the teacher may be able to fix faucets.) The need for each group to perform its tasks efficiently leads to the development of statuses and roles.

2.2.1 Role

The following section discusses what role means from an everyday perspective of a layperson and how role is defined in Sociology. Further, it explains how sociologists use the role as a concept to understand human interaction in society, by exploring the meaning, nature, and types of roles. What do you think about social roles? Since we have mentioned the various ways of role as part of daily life, you might have some idea regarding the position. So, therefore, we want you to take a moment to think about your role in society. The word role is familiar and commonly used and therefore not at all strange. We use the word role or hear it being used in many different contexts. For example, the word 'role' is often used in theater arts such as drama or movies to denote the character role of a performer or actor. Similarly, daily we play different roles as members of society. On an individual level, we are members of other communities and sometimes members of associations or part of an informal or formal social organisation. Being part of any social group comes with a role that you must play as a member.

When it comes to understanding the concept of role, the most straightforward approach is to ask yourself about your role in society. Consider the role you play in the community to which you belong or in any other social group to which you belong, such as an association or an organisation. Then ask yourself how you came to be in this role. The process of reflecting on yourself and your relationship to the role that you play on a day-to-day basis will assist you in better understanding what role means.

The following illustration, which includes real-life examples, will further explain the sociological concept that underpins the concept of role. First and foremost, we can state categorically that everyone who



is reading this material is a member of the human community. So you play the role of an individual who belongs to a specific community, association, or organisation in a general sense. Second, roles are created as a result of belonging to a specific gender. These are referred to as gender identities, such as being female, transgender, or male. As a result, the role that comes with being a member of a particular gender is referred to as the gender role. The third category includes those of you who are full-time or part-time employees who work in a variety of business or social organisations. This means that their role is that of a laborer. Some of you may also be aspiring sociology students aiming for a bachelor's degree in Sociology, which will require you to take on the role of a student. As a result of the predicament mentioned earlier, we as members of society are responsible for a variety of roles on a daily basis.

a) Meaning of Role

In this section, we talk about what role means. So far, we have discussed what role means in general sociology. Here we will discuss what particular sociologists have mentioned explicitly about the concept of role. Then, we will try to understand the role using the different aspects pointed out by other sociologists. Finally, we will analyse an example and move into the various definitions of roles. It is an undeniable fact that an individual plays numerous roles in different groups. Take your example, for instance. You are an aspiring student of undergraduate Sociology who is enrolled in an educational institution. Simultaneously, you might be working as a part-time employee. You might be a daughter or son of some parent. You could also be a father or mother. From these, for instance, we can pick out four different roles at least. The first is the role of the student, and the next is that of a part-time employee, the third is that of a son or

daughter. Moreover, the fourth might be that of her father or mother

All individuals in society have roles to play. They are expected to do this on behalf of their community, association, or social organisation, which can be their job or occupational unit. They are assigned a task to perform daily. The word for this is the division of labor. It constitutes an essential aspect of the human social system. Sociologist Lundberg defined social role as a set of behaviour that is expected from an individual who belongs to a specific group of situations. Social roles also mean what a person is supposed to do as part of his role enactment in the everyday activities of his social group or community. Another sociologist Young and Mack, states that a role is a function of status. For Sociologist Morris Ginsberg, status is considered a position, and role is the technique in which that position is filled. Other sociologists defined role as a set of expected behaviours that are associated with social positions. The role is also interpreted as how an individual carries out the requirements of his position. Few other sociologists consider the role to be the dynamic and behavioural aspect of status. Social roles are patterns of behaviour expected of an individual in a particular group or social situation. Ogburn and Nimkoff explained that a role is a set of socially expected and approved behaviour patterns, both duties, and privileges, associated with a particular position in a group. These definitions will bring the required clarity to your understanding of the social role and its relation to society.

b) Nature of Role

We'll go over the various characteristics that make up the role description. This section discusses the most critical aspects of Sociology straightforwardly to make it easier for those new to the field. Putting yourself under the microscope allows you

to gain a clear understanding of the various characteristics of a role. When a person is five years old, they are required to enroll in school. In a school, they take on the role of a student from the time they are pre-teens until they reach late adolescence. The average person spends 15 years in school; however, there are some exceptions to this rule. Individuals must have completed formal or informal education, regardless of their family and social circumstances. As a result, an individual becomes familiar with the roles of a student. It is a step-by-step procedure that has taken more than a decade to complete. We can see from this that an individual must go through a long and rigorous training process to master the role of a student. In the meantime, an individual uncovers the existence of gender roles. It influences how they act and behave following cultural norms. Men will learn about the role of a man, and women will learn about the role of a woman. They will also realise that certain roles cannot be interchanged because cultural norms and expectations condition them. For example, the role of procreation falls to the female. In today's society, many roles that were previously restricted to women have become available to them. In today's society, men and women occupy nearly identical roles.

Furthermore, it is influenced by various other social factors, which are not considered in this investigation. We will now go into greater detail about the characteristics of the role. The following section will dwell on some of the essential applications of roles.

1. Every social group member or society is naturally assigned a specific role to play in the group or society. In other words, having a role is a requirement for all members of the community. However, there are times when one person is required to perform multiple roles. This is determined by the type of status they currently hold.

2. Organisation and regulation of human behaviour takes place as a result of the establishment of social roles. They choose the methods that society, communities and social organisations use to complete a specific task. For example, a doctor can effectively treat a patient if both parties act following their respective roles. This means that the doctor pays close attention to everything that the patient is saying. The patient is disclosing all their medical history as well as their current medical problems. This implies that they should limit their attention to finding a solution to the health problem under consideration.

3. It is common for people to take on multiple roles. For example, millions of people around the world take on the role of a teacher every year. Every citizen of every country is called upon to fulfill the role of an ideal citizen daily. The social expectations placed on a soldier's role while on duty and off duty are different. While on duty, the role is defined by the occupation. It is standard practice for any soldier from any country tasked with protecting their country's borders. Protecting our borders from intruders is a shared responsibility between Indian soldiers, particularly those in the border security force. While off duty, a soldier is not required to carry out the on-duty role.

4. Some social roles are positions that a single individual can only perform at a given time. Other people can take over this role in the event of a vacancy. For example, the role of chief minister is performed by a single individual from the time of their election until the time of the next election. The President of the country and the prime minister's role position are also decided similarly.

5. Social life is more predictable and orderly when roles are defined. When students and instructors are in the same room, they are constantly interacting according to their



respective roles. So long as they adhere to their assigned roles, they will predict and understand each other's actions effectively.

6. From a cultural perspective, roles provide the necessary directives and guidelines for establishing a well-ordered society.

7. Human beings have a wide range of attitudes toward one another in society. From the same person, different behaviours emerge as a result of their various roles.

8. A crucial aspect of social role is the division of labor. There is a specific task assigned to each individual to complete. The job expected to be completed by a person constitutes the role they are expected to perform.

9. Specific roles are sometimes assigned voluntarily by the organisation. Individuals are given the option of accepting or declining the role that has been offered to them. During a natural disaster such as a flood or a cyclone, for example, different associations form volunteer groups to assist those in need. The volunteers are assigned to a variety of roles. If anyone wishes to participate entirely voluntarily, there is no obligation to take on any roles or volunteers.

10. There are times when specific roles are assigned to a person who did not choose to take on those responsibilities. A person is compelled to perform a role for which they have no preference—taking on the role of a stateless refugee fleeing from a war-torn country. In the same way that females will be required to perform a female role, men will be necessary to perform the role of a man.

c) Role Conflict and Role Strain

It is only when the real world differs significantly from the ideal that there is confusion. After coming into contact with

the 'real' world for the first time, young people are disillusioned and feel betrayed. People may resolve to bring the real world closer to the ideal and to work towards a social goal in some instances, but in others, the discrepancy may cause stress and strain as a result of it. As a result of rapid social change, future lifestyles are unpredictable and it is impossible to plan for them. Since most household chores are performed outside the home in Industrialised societies, many children grow up with little understanding of what their parents do when they go to work. In this case, some roles are not learned at all, or are learned incorrectly, in early childhood, and others must be learned as one moves ahead. As previously stated, these issues do not arise in preindustrial or emerging societies; however, they are extremely prevalent in post- industrial and technological societies.

In actual practice, we are in doubt or disagreement about what behaviour is expected in a given role. Sometimes, an individual presents the role assigned to him and fails to line up with the expectations. Consequently, there is group tension and conflict. For example, it can be seen in the family, government, or workplace. For individuals, there is sometimes confusion about what is appropriate. An individual has to play different roles in different groups. For example, his role as the head of the family may conflict with his role as a doctor. He may at times be asked to sacrifice obligation towards his family in the interest of his profession.

Most people may have experienced times in their lives when they simply couldn't fulfill all of the responsibilities of status, such as student—write two papers, study adequately for two exams, complete the studio art portfolio, complete the reading assignments for five classes, and memorize lines for an oral interpretation class—all in the same week. Every status comes with

role expectations, or how the status should be carried out by societal or group norms. However, individuals in these situations face role strain, which is the tension between roles within a status. As in the case of the status of 'student,' role strain causes the individual to be pulled in many directions by various obligations of the single status. Individuals can cope with role strain in a variety of ways, including dismissing the problem (and thus failing in class); finding the dilemma amusing; becoming hyper-focused and pulling a couple of all-nighters to get everything done; or becoming stressed, tensed, fretful, and immobile as a result of the strain. Individuals frequently set priorities based on their values and make decisions as a result: "I'll focus on my major class and let another one slide." The conflict between the roles of two or more social statuses is referred to as role conflict. It differs from role strain in that it involves conflict between roles from two or more different statuses, rather than the tension between roles within one status. College athletes, for example, face role conflicts as a result of competing demands on their time. They must finish their studies on time, attend practices and be prepared for games, possibly attend meetings held by their student union, and return home for their younger brother's birthday.

Similarly, a student may be attending school, working part-time to supplement income, and raising a family. When a student's child becomes ill, the student's status as a parent clashes with that of a student and worker. When there is a role conflict, the person can choose — or be informed by others — which status is the master.

The majority of statuses and associated roles come and go. You will not always be a student, for example. At different times in your life, you may or may not be married. You will leave your current position. People disengage from some statuses as they get older and engage in new and different statuses

and roles. Our positions in organisations at the micro- and macro-level connect us to them and make us valuable members. Because of the statuses we hold—within small groups (family and peers), larger groups and organisations (school and work organisations), institutions (political parties or religious denominations), and finally as citizens of the society and the world—our place within the social world is guaranteed, if not obligatory (citizens, and workers in global corporations). Each of these statuses links us to a specific group.

d) Role Strain

Playing one's role well can be stressful: a supervisor must maintain the discipline to ensure that a workgroup achieves its objectives. During this process, the supervisor may be required to be severe, even unfriendly, or drive workers too hard, resulting in the supervisor getting despised by their subordinates. As an alternative, one can choose to be a 'good guy' and to be well-liked at the expense of achieving group objectives. A leader must constantly evaluate their actions in the light of the responsibilities of the position of leader.

It is also possible for role strain to occur when entrenched social statuses are altered due to changes in the social system. Women have traditionally held wives, mothers, and homemakers, which were considered undemanding tasks requiring little intellectual insight or talent. They were ranked low in social status as a result. In contrast, men were assigned to provide roles that, while ranked according to the level of prestige and financial rewards associated with each job, were generally considered to necessitate the possession of more superior abilities. As a result, men held all of the positions of real power in society at the time of writing. As women gained more education, they were able to compete on an equal footing with men in the workforce. As a result, their positions



within the family have grown stronger as they have gained financial independence. Many men were unable to adjust to their new roles, and conflicts between spouses were common, leading to the breakdown of many relationships. For the sake of their survival and the survival of their children from a failed marriage, divorced women were forced to compete for jobs (angry fathers frequently shirk their financial responsibilities towards their children). When social change occurs, the consequent shift in statuses and roles occurs, creating a situation in which adjustment is required both within the family institution and society as a whole, as previously stated. As the media and politicians constantly remind us, the institution of the family has been in a state of crisis for several decades now. People will eventually learn to adapt to new roles or to adapt old roles to unique circumstances. Still, the transitional period will be extremely difficult for both individuals and society as a whole.

e) Role Confusion

The final point is that roles can confuse, particularly when a person in a specific status is required to abruptly abandon their previous role and take on a new one. An accountant who is forced out of work because of mandatory retirement, for example, may experience a sense of loss of identity and may refuse to accept the role of a retiree, mainly if her interests have always revolved around her job and she is unable to fill the hours of leisure time available to her. College-educated women, particularly those on the verge of starting a promising career, may also be perplexed if an unplanned pregnancy forces them to take on the dual roles of mother and full-time housewife. Individuals who perform poorly in their roles, according to societal standards, may experience not only confusion and strain but also mental illness, maladjustment, or a state of constant

frustration. People fail in the roles for which they have been trained for various reasons, some of which are purely coincidental. People frequently fail in their professions and businesses when operating in a highly competitive economic environment. The high rate of divorce demonstrates that many people are unable to fulfill their marital responsibilities. However, it is evident that most people cannot perform equally well in all roles and that a person may occasionally fail in one role while succeeding in another that conflicts with it.

2.2.2 Status

The following section will discuss the different aspects one needs to understand status or social status. First, we will start with a prerequisite to give you an overview of approaching this concept. Then we will discuss the different meanings of social status followed by different approaches to understand the definitions of social status. Then we shall discuss its nature and social context in which it is conceptualised. Finally, we shall discuss the various social statuses and provide you a blueprint to advance your knowledge about the concept.

In society, status is a social position. We communicate with others, and they respond to us in part based on our statuses. When we are in the role of a daughter with our parents, student with our professor, or friend with our peers, we interact differently. Each person has multiple statuses, and the combination of these statuses is referred to as a status set: for example, daughter, sister, worker, teammate, and student.

Individuals' social statuses have an impact on the types of interactions they have. People are equals in some interactions (such as with classmates). Individuals interact with people who have a superior or inferior status in other situations. Your interactions with former peers and subordinates will change

if you are promoted as supervisor. Consider the interactions that could occur if the first relationship is between equals and the others are between people of unequal status. These status relationships are constantly negotiated and bargained with a friend: "I'll do what you want tonight, but I choose tomorrow." However, when people are in dominant or subordinate positions, their interactions are influenced by power or deference. A more powerful person, such as one with more wealth or privilege, can interrupt and show less deference in a conversation with their partner.

Status can be defined as the different types of social positions all members of society are assigned. All of them usually have an occupational status. It means a man or a woman can hold occupational statuses like being a teacher, a doctor, an artist, a driver, among others. Other forms of status come as a part of being in a family. They are statuses such as mother, daughter, father, and son. There are also culturally defined statuses. They might be based on biological factors such as the sex or racial identity of an individual. For example, skin color or hair color does not connect with an individual's status. These are insignificant factors that do not assign any status.

a) Meaning of Status

The word status is not a new word. It is something that people use in everyday conversations. The term is typically used to denote someone's position regarding education, knowledge, wealth, and other biological traits in a hierarchy. However, in Sociology, it is conceptualised and represented differently. There are two approaches to understand the idea of status in Sociology. In the first approach, status is identified as the position an individual occupies in the social structure. For example, think of a doctor or a driver. The approach, status, is associated with social roles and

conceptualised as role status. In the other approach to understanding social status in Sociology, we identify status concerning ranking in which status groups are ranked and arranged by cultural, legal, and political characteristics.

Furthermore, status is a term used to designate the relative amount of prestige, difference, and respect accorded to persons who have been assigned different roles in a group or community. The status of a person is high if the role he plays is considered necessary by the group. It also pointed out that status is the rank order position assigned by a group to a role. An individual of high status is greeted with respect and enjoys great prestige in society. Thus, an individual wins respect for his social status.

b) Definitions of Status

This section discusses the various approaches developed by sociologists to understand better the factors that influence one's social status. The concept of status is closely associated with the concepts of honor and respectability at various levels. In this context, reputation or a good name, as well as respectability, refers to a sense of being accepted by others. In other words, a person's social standing is defined by the value that they possess that is socially acceptable.

There are several different ways to define social status. However, to gain a fundamental understanding, we will concentrate on the most important ones. According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, status is the rank order position assigned by a group to a role or a set of roles in a hierarchy of importance. He states that 'status' refers to an individual's position within a group—his place in the social network of reciprocal obligations and privileges, rights, and duties—according to H T Mazumdar. As defined by Duncan Mitchell, social standing is the position held by a person, family, or kinship group regarding



their relationships with others within a social system. This determines our rights, responsibilities, and other behaviours, as well as the nature and extent of our relationships with other people and our social statuses in general. Sociologist Lundberg pointed out that social status is defined as the level of prestige and respect accorded to a person's position in society.

c) Nature of Status

We have understood the numerous factors that contribute to the definition of status. Now we'll talk about the different types of status that exist. Referring to individuals who occupy different roles in a social group, status is used as a social measure of privilege, respect, or difference to distinguish them from one another. As a result, an individual's social standing is determined by their role in society.

1. External symbols to identify status: people's identities reveal their social status when they engage in social interaction. Signs, symbols, and logos that aid in identifying someone's status, on the other hand, may not always be as consistent as they should be in some instances. To recognise a police officer a temple priest a lawyer a doctor or a nurse, each of these individuals must dress in a specific way. In the same way, there are differences in the uniform and badges that show the person's rank in the army, navy, and police, indicating the person's status in the organisation.

2. Every status has its rights, duties, and obligations: The normative system of a society determines the rights and responsibilities of its members. A right can be thought of as a genuine expectation that a person can fulfill through portraiture. To give an example, from the perspective of a manager, he can expect all of the foremen to behave in a specific manner while also knowing that the workers will act differently

from the foreman. Expecting this type of behaviour is part of the managerial position the manager holds.

3. Norms control statuses: Norms vary depending on who you are, where you are, and what you do. They are, however, believed to be well-known to the general public. Realistically speaking, a person who is assigned to a specific role status cannot always tell the truth. For example, when passengers are waiting for a train, they are frequently informed of delays in their scheduled arrival time. When they inquire with the railway officer in charge of public relations at the station, they are rarely given an accurate answer about when the train will arrive at the station. In this context, accuracy is synonymous with truth. The truth, on the other hand, cannot be revealed in this situation. All of the facts have been determined, but the truth is not readily available to the person performing the role of holding the position.

4. One individual has several statuses: Society can be thought of as a network of social standing. In every society, there are some individuals or groups who hold a variety of different social statuses. Every Indian has one of these positions, and the one they hold will vary depending on their group's identity. Every individual today may find himself in a large number of different statuses daily. For example, a University student may work as a project assistant for a professor, a part-time employee in an organisation, a private tutor for a high-school student, and so on.

5. Status changes with the difference of importance: Some social statuses are considered more important than others, determining an individual's place in society. For example, in India, caste status and occupational status may be more critical. In primitive societies, caste, gender, age, and kinship status are more important than other considerations.

6. Statuses contribute to social order and social stability: We are all born into specific social and economic situations. We need to be aware that no role in the process of creating them from scratch. However, that status, like culture, is subject to change at any time.

7. Social status is hierarchical: Because social statuses are not evenly distributed, a small number of people hold the highest positions, while the majority holds ordinary places. As a result, social standing is determined competitively by a person's ability and the demand for that ability in society.

d) Types of Status

There are different types of statuses in our society. We will first discuss static statuses, which means that they are somewhat fixed, and there is nothing an individual can do to change that. This type of status is called ascribed status. Ascribed statuses are assigned by birth, for example, sex, age, caste, etc. First, we will discuss using examples what ascribed statuses are. Then, we will use the example of aristocratic titles and gender to talk about ascribed status. For example, the gender identity of a male or a female is fixed at birth. A person's ascribed status is usually determined at birth and does not change throughout their life. A child is born male or female; it is white, African, Asian, Hispanic, or a mixture of these; its parents are working, middle, or upper class—or somewhere along the social class continuum—and they may claim allegiance to a given ethnic group and religion. These newborn child statuses are bestowed upon it; they are not earned through individual effort, merit, or fault. Gender, age, race, ethnic background, social position, and religious affiliation determine one's ascribed status.

For example, while a few people undergo sex transformations, sex is an ascribed characteristic for most people. However,

on rare occasions, ascribed status related to aristocracy changes. For example, the Russian revolution and American Revolution abolished the ascribed status of the aristocratic class. In many societies, the occupational status of the family is being transferred from one generation to the other. It means the son is carrying out the occupation of the father. Similarly, the occupation of the mother is being carried out by the daughter. The traditional caste system in India is an example where the work is followed in that order. A person's ascribed status is determined without regard for their desires, talents, or choices. In some societies, one's birth caste or social position (e.g., "untouchables" or Dalits in India) is an ascribed status because it is often impossible to change it within one's lifetime.

The following section will discuss the idea of achieved status. Achieved status refers to the position achieved by an individual by his/her own effort. It may be through education, power, achievements, etc. Achieved status is determined by one's choices and, in some cases, personal ability. Obtaining a higher education, for example, enhances a person's occupational opportunities and, as a result, their achieved status. Being a band guitarist is an earned status, as is being a criminal because both are earned positions based on the individual's own decisions and actions.

Let us talk about a few examples to give you an idea regarding achieved status. For example, becoming a scientist, mechanical engineer, or neurosurgeon requires passing an exam and competing for a job in the open formal market. All statuses are not fixed by inheritance, such as biological traits or other factors over which the individual has no control. An individual achieves status through the purposeful action and choices they make. Status such as occupational status, marital status are examples of achieved status.

Status are not equal same of them may



become most important and take precedence over others at a certain point in life or under certain circumstances; this is known as a master status. For some time, it dominates and shapes much of an individual's life, activities, self-concept, and position in the community, whether it is an occupation, parental status, or something else. For example, for a seriously ill person, the illness may take on a master role, requiring constant medical attention, influencing social relationships, and limiting what that person can do in family, work, and community activities.

However, individuals achieve the majority of other statuses through their effort and choice, or, conversely, through a lack of action, apathy, or poor decisions. We go on to become college graduates, wives, or bank executives. After all, we don't want to put in the effort or risk being unemployed or incarcerated because we didn't learn a skill or made poor decisions. In pre-industrial societies, ascribed status was more common than achieved status. Estates served as a permanent and rigid social class in feudal Europe, mobility from one estate to the next nearly impossible. Until recently, people in

India were also divided into castes based on their occupation. Individual liberty is restricted in such societies. Regardless of ability, talent, or hard work, individuals cannot rise above their parents' occupation and social class. Individualism and personal achievement, on the other hand, are valued in industrial societies. Individual liberty is fiercely defended, and individual accomplishments are celebrated. As a result, achieved status is highly valued, while ascribed status, which comes from being born into a family with a long history of high status, is highly valued.

People's discontent with their assigned statuses and the roles they have been forced to play has caused significant upheaval in most post-industrial societies, particularly in the United States, over the last several decades. Women, gays, and racial and ethnic minorities have all fought to end discriminatory practices imposed on them due to their assigned statuses. Although the problematic aspects of their roles have not been completely eliminated, they have made progress.

Recap

- ◆ Social roles mean patterns of behaviour expected from an individual in society.
- ◆ The role involves behavioural aspects, function, manners, and expectations.
- ◆ All members are assigned roles to play.
- ◆ Roles are shared and regulated by social groups or organisations.
- ◆ Roles create order and division of labor.
- ◆ Some roles are voluntary, while others are involuntary.
- ◆ Role conflict occurs when there is disagreement or doubt about expected role behaviour.

- ◆ Social status is a position occupied by a person, a family, or a kinship group.
- ◆ Social status simply means a position afforded by group affiliation.
- ◆ Signs, symbols, and emblems identify status.
- ◆ Status is a body of rules, duties, and obligations governed by certain norms.
- ◆ A person's position in society and position in their career are both important.
- ◆ Status has varying degrees of importance along with the hierarchical distribution.
- ◆ Statuses add to the social order and stability in specific ways.
- ◆ There are different social statuses, namely the ascribed and achieved statuses.
- ◆ An ascribed status is any social position one has either through birth or family heritage, and that cannot be changed based on one's achievements.
- ◆ Achieved status can be defined as any social position occupied by an individual in society due to his or her accomplishment.

Objective Questions

1. What does social role help to understand society?
2. What role does society create?
3. Who defined "social role as a set of behaviour expected from an individual who belongs to a specific group of situations"?
4. Who stated that role is a function of social status?
5. What is a set of expected behaviours that are associated with social positions?
6. What determines multiple roles?
7. What is the relationship between role and status?

8. What is “status” in society?
9. What is the sociological term for more than one status?
10. Who defined status as the rank-order position assigned by a group to a role or a set of roles in a hierarchy of importance?
11. Who defined "status" as an individual's position within a group—his place in the social network of reciprocal obligations and privileges, rights, and duties?
12. Who defined status as asocial standing is the position held by a person, family, or kinship group within a social system regarding their relationships with others?
13. Who defined social status as the level of prestige and respect accorded to a person's position in society?
14. Which status is achieved by birth?
15. What are aristocratic titles and gender?
16. Which status is acquired by an individual through education and qualification?

Answers

1. Human interaction
2. Division of Labor
3. Lundberg
4. Young and Mack
5. Social role
6. Status
7. Mutual expectations
8. Social position

9. Status set
10. Ogburn and Nimkoff
11. H T Mazumdar
12. Duncan Mitchell
13. Lundberg
14. Ascribed
15. Ascribed status
16. Achieved status

Assignments

1. Define role
2. Differentiate between ascribed and achieved statuses
3. Examine various types of social role
4. Discuss the nature of social status and pen down its various types
5. Do you think that status change is possible in contemporary India? Elaborate process of social change

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UNIT

Social Systems, Social Structure and Social Function

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To familiarise the characteristics of the social system.
- ◆ To examine various definitions and elements of social structure.
- ◆ To explain the meaning and attributes of social function.

Prerequisites

Sociology and social science use the word “social system” exclusively. However, everyday conversations use the terms “social” and “system” separately. Thus, to make things simpler, we will revisit the fundamental meaning of social, which means anything related to society. For example, you might have studied the organic systems of human body. How does the human body work? Nervous system, the Circulatory system, and the digestive system of the human body all work well together to function our body. Simultaneously, our society has various categories of systems such as the education system, the industrial system, the political system, the economic system, and so on. The following session will present the macro concept of the social system in Sociology.

The perfect system that you can identify around you will be the village or city you live in. Yes, you read it right. A village and a city are ideal examples of a social system. The following shall explain what a system is? Social systems are the web of connections that connect individuals, groups, and organisations to form a different totality that includes them all. It is the conventional configuration of roles and status that allows for the formation of a small, stable social group with long-term stability. A person may be a member of a number of different social systems at the same time. Typical examples include urban nuclear families, joint families, residential communities, housing colonies, townships, urban agglomerations, villages,

cities, provinces, nations, national and multinational corporations, and various other industries, among other things. Similarly, a system implies a collection of rules or procedures according to which something is accomplished in an organised scheme or configuration. In other words, a system means a collection of things that work together, forming a contiguous relation.

A social system can be simple and can become progressively more complex. You can think about a social system as any relationship, between two or more individuals with similar objectives or purposes who work and live in the same area. A group of humans or what we call a family, is the micro-unit of the social system. A group of families related or unrelated by blood is also part of a social system. A group of communities in a village or a town is also part of a social system. Similarly, all the cities in a province or a state are connected by roads and railways, and airports are also part of the social system. Regions connected through national highways or international highways or waterways, or international air routes are also part of social systems. A group of nations is also part of macro social systems.

By now, you would have understood what a social system means. We shall now discuss how the social system became part of sociological thinking from a theoretical perspective. We shall simultaneously explore the different ideas presented by other sociologists

Keywords

Social interactions, Sub-system, AGIL-scheme, Latent function, Manifest function

Discussion

2.3.1 Meaning of Social System

In this section, you will discover the incorporation of the social system into the disciplinary purview of Sociology. Charles Darwin's theory, which compared human society to an organism, paved the way for the organic analogy in Sociology. However, it gained much more momentum after Herbert Spencer incorporated this idea into mainstream Sociology. Herbert Spencer believes that biological systems and social

systems are alike. He thought that there were elements that were found in both the social and natural worlds. Spencer tried to show how societies tend to function as the human body. He compares aspects of society to organs in the human body that have specific functions. He compared simple and complex organisms to simple and complex societies. For Spencer, Human Society is akin to a mammal's body.

The social theorist Montesquieu coined

and introduced social systems in the middle of the 18th century. Montesquieu proposed that “all the features of social life are united in a coherent whole.” Many other social scientists like Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, and Emile Durkheim have conceptualised social systems to talk about aspects of society. However, they did not use the term “social system” in their works.

Human society is a web of interactions and interrelationships. It is an orderly arranged system that facilitates interaction between individuals. It may not be limited to a person or a social group and interaction between them. It can also imply groups, institutions, and societies. For example, this method can be used to analyse social systems ranging from schools to international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, among other things. In Sociology, a social system is used to help visualise how different social units fit together to form a larger whole society.

a) Definitions of social system

From the above discussion, you have understood that the social system has been used significantly in Sociology.. In this section, we shall discuss the different definitions of the social system within the ambit of Sociology. It is vital to bear in mind that each group, whether made up of only two people or millions of other people, is essentially a social system. But, of course, the social system that comes out of these interactions is an abstraction, which shows how social ties work.

Now we will look into the most important ones that will give us a basic understanding. A vital viewpoint is provided by WF Ogburn when he reiterated Talcott parson’s definition. He states that “A social system may be defined as a plurality of individuals interacting with each other according to shared cultural norms

and meanings. Furthermore, Sociologist Duncan Mitchell professes that “a social system consists of two or more individuals interacting directly or indirectly in a bounded situation.”

b) Characteristics of Social System

A social system possesses many characteristics. We will look into the most important ones that would help us understand the concept.

1. A social system necessarily consists of two or more individuals.
2. Individuals have standard social interaction.
3. All individuals in a social system behave or act according to how others interact with them.
4. An individual in a social system is motivated to behave following their shared values and norms.
5. In general, all individuals in a social system act in accordance with the achievement of the fulfillment of common goals, objectives, and rewards.
6. As a concept, a social system may represent the entire society or different subsystems like economic, political, and judicial systems.
7. All social systems consist of a boundary that differentiates them from other systems within society.

The first sociologist to formulate a systematic theory of social systems was Talcott Parsons. He achieved this as a



3. Integration for the harmonization conceptualised that values and norms of human society must converge. Thus, for example, the religious system should function reasonably stable.
4. Latency or latent pattern maintenance is conceptualised as the diverse challenges to society to maintain integration. Therefore, institutions like family and the school mediate belief systems and values inter generationally.

2.3.2. Social Structure and Social Function

In the previous section, we discussed the social system. First, we looked into different ways to conceptualise the social system and its defining aspects in Sociology. Then, we looked at the essential characteristics of the social system. In this section, we will discuss the meaning and attributes of social structure and social function. Before we begin, you must keep in mind that the concepts of social structure and social function have the utmost significance in contemporary Sociology. As a result, they are intertwined concepts that are critical to comprehending as for a first-year Sociology student. Finally, we will elucidate the intricate connection between both concepts and how it helps us understand the enormous social world of human beings. Social structure can be simplified and thought of as a pattern of social arrangement in society. It is the product and a cause of action among individuals in society. The structured view of society is based on how roles are assigned to individuals. Thus, we can see that there are sets and groups of roles allocated to various individuals who carry distinct goals, significance, and functions.

1. Adaptation is conceptualised as the capacity of human society to interact with the natural environment. It demonstrates the ability to gather resources for producing commodities for consumption and social redistribution.
2. Goal attainment is explained as the competence to set future goals and make decisions to achieve them. Socio-political resolutions and societal objectives are associated components.

intact make up a social structure. Family, religious groups or churches, schools and universities, the legal system, government, and the economy are social institutions. This social structure, when taken together, forms a framework within which we can relate to and interact with anyone without inflicting harm or suffering. A family is an example of social structure at its most fundamental level because it provides a foundation for educating children on pursuing responsible, ethical lives. The judicial system assures that social cohesion is maintained by penalizing individuals who violate the rules that regulate that society.

Now you might be wondering what constitutes social structure. The primary factor that constitutes social order is the family structure. The family is the fundamental unit of social structure. It consists of the father and mother, as well as siblings and other family members. Other important elements are religion, the economy, the legal and judicial system. You will read in detail about these in the following modules.

a) Meaning of Social structure

In this section, we shall talk about what is meant by social structure. First, it is essential to understand that structure, in general, is the subject of study in natural sciences and social sciences. Our primary purpose is to explore and find out characteristics of the structure of the respective study.

In Sociology, social structure refers to the distinct, permanent arrangement of institutions within which human beings interact and live together in a society. The idea of social structure is frequently used in conjunction with social change, which is concerned with the causes that alter social structure and organisation. While it is widely agreed that the phrase "social structure" pertains to social regularities, it is used in various ways. For instance,

the word is occasionally misused when other terms like custom, tradition, role, and norm are more relevant. Patterned social interactions frequent and repetitive elements of interactions amongst members of a specific social entity—are sometimes used to characterize the social structure. However, the concept is abstract even at this description level: it only selects a few aspects from an on-going social activity. The more complex the social entity under consideration, the more abstract the term becomes. Consequently, the social structure of a small group is generally more closely tied to its individual members' daily activities than the social structure of a larger community. Therefore, selecting is prominent in studying bigger social groups: everything depends on what is included as social structure components.

It is necessary to understand these concepts about each other. Two social thinkers are critical to the story that would help you to understand the social structure and social function. They are Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim. Spencer compared human societies to living organisms. All organisms possess a structure, a body that is a collection of interconnected and interrelated parts like a head, a spinal cord, limbs, lungs, etc. All aspects have essential functions to perform to sustain the life of the organism. Similarly, Spencer argues that society also possesses a structure which consists of interrelated parts like family, religion, economy, the state, etc. He further states that all these components have specific functions, which bring stability to the whole system. However, contemporary sociology does not promote this analogy between society and organisms. However, they promote the general idea that society consists of interrelated systems and subsystems, each having a specific functional structure. Sociologists who are proponents of this viewpoint are called functionalists.

Social structure which becomes a very fundamental concept in the discipline of



Sociology However, the term has been used follows

inconsistently and remains ambivalent. Social structure found renewed interest in social anthropology. Social structure found adequate attention in the works of George Murdoch, AR Radcliffe Brown, and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Social structure for George Murdoch implied a building analogy or a dead organic model. In Radcliffe Brown's social structure, society could be compared to a living organism or a working mechanism. Brown thinks that society has a life of its own, and it is not an object but a living creature. Therefore, a study of structure is critical to understand the interdependence of different parts of that system that determines its function.

Studying the factors brings out how the system works in relationship with each other and as a whole. In short, existing relationships in society are called structure.

b) The Definition of Social structure

It is possible to find countless definitions of social structure that come from the social sciences field. However, we will look into a few definitions from various thinkers in order to gain a fundamental understanding of the concept in question.

- ◆ According to AR Radcliffe Brown, Social structure is “an arrangement of persons in institutionally a controlled and defined relationship”.
- ◆ According to Morris Ginsberg, the total structure is defined as the complex principle of groups and institutions which constitute society.

c) Elements of Social structure

HM Johnson defines the following elements of social structure. They are as

1. **Consist of subgroups of various types:** Social structure consists of big groups of people. They include political, economic, religious education, familial, and other groups and associations. They exist as groups and subgroups. People in the sub-groups have roles and are part of a more extensive system. Social norms define the role and obligation of subgroups.
2. **Social structure consists of roles of various types:** All sections within larger systems and also within subgroups. The side-by-side existence of roles and subgroups point towards the entire relationship. People occupying different roles are expected to fulfil their obligation to other individuals. For example, in a school, a teacher has a responsibility towards their students.
3. **Regulative norms govern subgroups and roles:** Social norms moderate groups and roles. They are of two types (a) Obligatory or relational (b) Permissive or regulative. Few norms suggest a positive obligation; however, they are not commonly implemented to all roles and subgroups. The example of the positive obligation of a family is not the same as that of a business firm. The obligation of a mother is not the same as the obligation of the daughter. Norms of this kind or obligatory or relational. Limits of acceptable action condition some other

norms. For example, a person who occupies a role in a subgroup must certainly do certain things. Similarly, they must not do others. Such norms are called regulator norms.

4. **Cultural values:** All societies have unique cultural values. Alternatively, we can understand values as an aggregate of desirability and goodness in a particular society. All individuals and groups who are part of that society exhibit an emotional attachment to those values. Values are closely associated with norms. Therefore, values are considered to be higher-order norms.

2.3.3 Social Function

Now a contentious viewpoint within Sociology is function. It has a long history; nineteenth-century sociologists were particularly taken up with the way the various components of a social structure were interdependent on one another, and they frequently explained this interdependence in terms of evolutionary theory or the organic analogy. Like the heart, which circulates blood, social institutions serve a larger purpose for society as a whole. Social anthropology also incorporated functionalist ideas into Sociology. In its most basic form, functionalism explains social action by referring to its implications for the operation of another social activity, institution, or society as a whole.

The social functional approach highlights the interconnection of social life and the difficulties of changing only a small portion of society with a particular policy. Followers of the functionalist theory approach are hesitant to pass judgment on societal issues because all components of society serve a purpose. Several fundamental concerns are raised

by functionalism: What is the relationship between this element and the rest of the system? What role does it play in the overall functioning of the social system? What kind of ramifications will this have? How do these outcomes help or hinder the system's function and implement the cultural values on which it is based? A functionalist will consider the family as a social system organised around specific social factors. Aspects such as cultural values, the importance of nurturing and socializing children, providing love and protection for family members, regulating sexual behaviour, passing on the family's accumulated wealth, and, of course, perpetuating the family as a social system are functional features. Like with any social system, a family could have a range of traits that have ramifications for individuals and, more crucially to the functionalist, for the system.

A classic metaphor, popularized by Herbert Spencer, depicts various facets of society as "organs" that contribute to the "body's" correct functioning. To put it more simply, it emphasizes "the endeavour to attribute as rigorously as possible to each feature, tradition, or practice its impact on the function of a theoretically stable, unified system." Talcott Parsons defined "structural-functionalism" as a phase in the methodological evolution of social science, rather than just a single school of thought.

The term function has several meanings when we pose it against different contexts. The common definition of social function means doing a thing or activity, or performance. Sociologist Emile Durkheim in his *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), theorized a systematic method to use the concept of function to study society. Emile Durkheim is mainly identified with functionalism, as he sometimes uses comparisons with biology. Society is like an organic entity, with several constituent components maintaining the others and helping themselves. This is



fundamental to his view of organic solidarity. Durkheim recognised the necessity of both functional and historical explanations. A functional explanation presents an occurrence or action as contributing to or sustaining a social whole.

The idea of function received renewed interest through Malinowski, A R Radcliffe Brown, Talcott Parsons, Robert K Merton, and Kingsley Davis. Emile Durkheim's view on function thoroughly influences the core ideas of these theorists, as mentioned above.

a) Definitions of Social Function

Now we will discuss the definitions of function given by the prominent theorist of social function. The functionalist view in Sociology can be traced back to the ground breaking work of French sociologist Emile Durkheim in the nineteenth century and American sociologist Talcott Parsons and his disciples in the twentieth century. Its anthropological roots go back to Malinowski and A. R. Radcliffe Brown's work. The functionalist approach is concerned with the social system and how they function, change, and the social repercussions they cause. Functionalism raises several fundamental questions when evaluating or explaining any part of a social system or its implications.

1. According to *Durkheim*, the “function of a social institution is the correspondence between it and the needs of the social organism”.
2. *RK Merton* states that functions are those “observed consequences which make for the adaptation and adjustment of a given system.”
3. According to *Radcliffe Brown*,

the term function means “the contribution of a partial activity to the total activity of which it is a part.”

We will discuss the evolution of the functional perspective. We can trace back the earliest functionalist analysis in the writings of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. Later, Emile Durkheim developed it further, and Talcott Parsons refined it. According to the basic premise of functionalism, Society is viewed as a system that is a set of interconnected parts which together form a whole. Thus, functionalism is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together and often interconnect to promote solidarity and stability. This perspective begins by recognising that our lives are guided by social structure, which is a relatively stable pattern of social behaviour. This perspective led us to understand the social structure in terms of its social function or consequences for the operation of society.

The functional theory is based on the idea that all aspects of society exist to fulfill specific functions. To determine what functions are to be fulfilled by each element, the sociologist asks questions about its consequences and not the purpose. It can be said that their functions exist in the social system, which does not explicitly show what its functions are supposed to be. It can have varying consequences. R K Merton distinguishes between manifest function and latent function in his analysis of functionalism.

Robert K. Merton greatly improved functionalist theory. He agreed with Parsons' thesis in principle, but he allowed that it may be challenged because it was overgeneralised. Merton favored middle-range theory over grand theory, which allowed him to address some of Parsons' flaws more directly. Merton felt that any social structure had various

functions, some of which are more visible than others. Functional unity, universal functionalism, and indispensability were the three fundamental limitations he found. He distinguished between manifest and latent functions. The recognised and intended implications of any social structure were referred to as manifest functions. Unrecognised and unintended repercussions

of any social structure were referred to as latent functions.

Modern functionalism differentiates manifest (planned repercussions or repercussions that the actors are aware of) and latent (unintended consequences or implications that the participants are unconscious of) functions.

Recap

- ◆ Group of interrelated things, objects, or organisms that work together.
- ◆ Economic system, the political system, education system, industrial systems are examples of social systems.
- ◆ Charles Darwin's organic analogy influenced Herbert Spencer to bring it into Sociology.
- ◆ A social system is a web of human inter-relationships and interactions.
- ◆ Four functional prerequisites are needed for all social systems to be functional.
- ◆ Adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance are functional prerequisites.
- ◆ George Murdoch and Radcliffe Brown compared society to the structure of an organism.
- ◆ Functionalist thought propounded the study of the structure and the interdependent parts of the system.
- ◆ An institutionally controlled and defined relationship is a social structure.
- ◆ A social structure is a general arrangement of individuals in an institutionally controlled environment, exhibiting a controlled and defined relationship.
- ◆ Elements of the social structure includes various groups, roles, regulative norms governing subgroups and functions, and cultural values.
- ◆ Emile Durkheim developed the concept of function to study society.
- ◆ Society is viewed as a system that is a set of interconnected parts that form a whole.

- ◆ A function is a goal-oriented action undertaken by a social institution to fulfill specific requirements of society.
- ◆ Manifest function and latent function are two kinds of functions.
- ◆ Manifest functions are functions that are intended and recognised..
- ◆ Functions that have unintended and unrecognised consequences are called latent functions.

Objective Questions

1. Who developed the AGIL scheme?
2. Who proposed the “Organic analogy”?
3. Whose theory is Herbert Spencer using to compare to human society to an organism in Sociology?
4. Who compared the social structure to an organism?
5. Who proposed manifest function and latent function?
6. Who proposed goal-oriented rational action?
7. Who suggested partial activity contributed to the total?
8. Who proposed the “Middle Range Theory”?
9. Which perspective led us to understand the social structure in terms of its social function or consequences for the operation of society?

Answers

1. Talcott Parsons
2. Herbert Spencer
3. Charles Darwin

4. Herbert Spencer
5. Robert K Merton
6. Max Weber
7. A R Radcliffe Brown
8. Robert K Merton
9. Functionalist perspective

Assignments

1. Define social system
2. Elaborate on the four prerequisites that are essential for every system to be functional
3. Explain social structure and discuss its various definitions
4. Examine the concept of social function
5. Differentiate between manifest and latent functions

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Society and Institutions



UNIT

Social Institutions–Meaning and Characteristics

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To be familiar with the concept of social institutions and its significance in society
- ◆ To identify the role of different institutions in society
- ◆ To explain the relationship between society and social institutions

Prerequisites

Can you imagine the machines in a car and how it functions? It has gears, clutch, brakes, wheels, etc. If all these parts function together, driving becomes easy and smooth. If one wheel becomes damaged, it will affect the smooth running of a car. It means that the damage to one part of the car affects the whole process. Like that, social institutions are part of society and are equally important to the smooth functioning of society. In this unit, we study the basic social institutions like family, marriage and kinship. In addition to this, we are analysing other institutions like religion, economic and political institutions.

Keywords

Stable, Established form, Standardised practices

Discussion

Throughout the previous blocks, you learned about the basic concepts in sociology that provide prior knowledge regarding the key terms like society, community, association and organisations. Can you recollect your understanding of viewing society and community as fundamental elements of society? You may already be aware that sociology is concerned with the study of human societies and their companionships, interdependence, cooperation, and variety of social relationships. It also differentiates between society community and other fundamental concepts in common language.

The different outsets of society and communities provide you with a clear idea of that society is a larger group to which an individual belongs. It shapes our attributes, beliefs, morals, and ideals that form an essential condition for human life to exist. In contrast, community is a much more concrete concept. People are limited to live in a particular locality, with definite boundaries in a community. It is visible in the form of villages, towns, cities, regions, or nations. You are able to distinguish between what we call “society” and “community” from the earlier unit. Further, you can also remark that societies are concerned with groups, associations and organisations. Associations were purposefully formed to pursue various needs, interests, or demands, through which individuals seek mutual cooperation and support to achieve their goals. Thus, different kinds of associations, such as political, students, religious, economic may be found in various fields. In addition, the concept of role and status provides a clear idea of what a society wants.

The discussions in the previous units give a clear idea of the notions of social systems that

reinforce society as a structured arrangement of parts and social structure as a patterned arrangement of human groups, organisations, collectivities and institutional agencies, without which society cannot move ahead. You have been introduced to these concepts and seen how it differs from one another. Each of the characteristics is significant and gives you better understandings in Sociology. Let us now further take into account the idea of social institutions and its significance in society in this unit.

Institutions are close to our daily lives. They perform different types of functions, which are fundamental. So, we depend on these institutions at varying levels. Without the help of the basic social institutions, it is impossible. Social institutions are a remarkable arrangement for binding people together with ties of obligation. The poet Robert Frost, said that ‘home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.’ Thus, institutions are fundamental and important in our daily lives.

The following section will help you to examine these significant institutions in detail. A few questions may come to your mind: What is a social institution? What is the significance of institutions in society? In addition, what purpose does it serve? In everyday conversations, you are familiar with the term 'institution' as it applies to schools, hospitals, banks, charity centers, etc. How do they help us? These institutions were set up to serve various purposes like training and education. For example, hospital for better treatment when we fall sick, bank support monetary transactions, legal provisions, and many others. Some agencies fulfill the needs of the individuals and help to smooth the functioning of society. These are the

institutions that are close to our day-to-day lives, including family, education, religion, economy, and political systems. Without these social institutions, human life would be chaotic and without order. Thus, to have a comprehensive view of social institutions, we must understand the important institutions in society like the family, marriage, kinship, education and religious institutions.

3.1.1. Understanding Institutions

Usually, institutions are defined as certain permanent and accepted forms of procedure governing the relations between individuals and groups. In a way, these forms of procedures are highly sanctioned and approved by society. The word “institution” means “established practice.” That is why it has a significant role in the social structure. Institutions are the characteristic agencies that integrate social norms that stand to preserve fundamental societal values. As we have said, it is not modes or endless ways of doing things, but through institutions that we move and act. These institutions exist everywhere; thus, its universality reveals that they are highly imperative in developing and maintaining order.

Moreover, it is deep-rooted in human nature as it meets the particular basic needs of society. They can also be regarded as the whole or part of the established and recognised instruments of social life.

Meaning and Characteristics of Social Institutions

From the above discussion, it is clear that social institutions are fundamental and important in social life. Now we are going to understand the meaning and characteristics of social institutions.

- i. Social institutions are standardised practices, i.e., those

widespread activities that follow certain norms about how things are being done. Let us look at this with an example. How do you behave when you are at school or college? You will have to obey certain rules and procedures of the educational institutions. You will need to wear uniforms, be regular in your classes to have attendance, be punctual, be expected to have good conduct, maintain class discipline etc. Similarly, each institution also prescribe duties and responsibilities which are to be followed by the individuals. Institutions, therefore, propose standardised norms and procedures, each member must act in accordance with these guidelines.

- ii. Institutions are universal and social. Do you know why social institutions are regarded as universal? They exist in all societies and play a vital role in all stages of social progress. Thus, universality is one of the most notable features of institutions. On the other hand, they are also considered essentially social in nature, since it comes into existence with the individuals' collective activities and social relationships.
- iii. Institutions are defined as established forms of procedure. It is through institutions that human society organises, directs and executes all its activities. Therefore, anything that is socially established constitutes an institution. They contribute to satisfying the fundamental human needs and prescribes various means of fulfilling them. According to this understanding, family, marriage, economy, political systems like the state,

and government are established forms or conditions of procedures.

- iv. Now let us see another vital characteristic, the controlling mechanisms of institutions. All our actions are influenced and regulated in one way or the other. If that is not done, society is subject to disharmony, disorder, or deviance. Accordingly, to maintain the stability and order of the society, institutions exercise some control over the members. Thus far, as we had discussed earlier, institutions are regarded as the wheels on which society marches on to carry out all its activities and desired goals. Institutions are not controlled by any agencies but act as a stable means of social control, with certain expectations from people to behave in an accepted way.
- v. Institutions satisfy the basic needs of individuals. Why do you think societies want these institutions? consider the institutions that exist in society, such as the family, religion, the economy, or any other institution. You can see that these institutions meet specific needs like reproduction, socialisation, morality, economic functions, etc. Thus, each institution is established to satisfy particular needs of individuals. Accordingly, institutions are meant to satisfy the primary needs of the society.
- vi. Institutions are relatively permanent in nature which signifies its rigid and enduring features. Though it usually encounters changes, these do not

take place suddenly but gradually and slowly.

- vii. Institutions preserve social order and provide stability to the social system. They greatly contribute to maintain unity and uniformity to society. Moreover, it regulates the behaviour between individuals and promotes group activity. It stipulates that individuals must abide to certain rules, values and norms to maintain a state of stability and social order. Examine the role of religion, and it is clear that social order arose from people's shared norms, beliefs, and values. Through the practices and interactions within daily life, it binds the groups together. As far as any society is concerned, maintaining social order enables a sense of belongingness and shared values. In the same way, other social institutions such as family, state, education and economy foster formative roles for the smooth functioning of society.

Barnes points out that "Institutions act as strongholds of social life and refer to the gear through which society carries out its activities." According to Horton and Hunt, "Institutions are an organised system of relationships that embody specific standard rules and procedures that meet society's basic needs." Institutions, therefore means 'the forms of procedure recognised and accepted by society, having an established a set of rules, traditions, and usages which govern the relationship between individuals and groups'. It is regarded as the blueprint of society.





Image 3.1.1. Social Institution

Therefore, the fundamental attribute of a social institution consists of a group of people who are united by a common interest and with specific norms that define and fulfill the social needs of society. It is an interrelated system of social roles and norms centered on the ability to transfer cultural aspects from one generation to the next. Social institutions may sound complex, but it is the backbone of society's efforts to meet fundamental human needs. Imagining the machinery of vehicles: to run efficiently and move the vehicle forward, these wheels are indispensable. Hence, institutions are the characteristic agencies that drive society ahead in its functions and all other aspects. Thus, it is the wheels on which the community marches and carries out all its activities.

3.1.2 Relationship between Society and Institutions

In the previous unit, we already understood the definition of society and its peculiarities. Now we are analysing the linkages between society and institutions. As mentioned in the last unit, it is pointed out that the general characteristics that shape society consist of its interdependence and the means of controlling the behaviour of its members. While studying the vast network of social

relationships in society, we cannot ignore the nuclei or centers that coordinate the social structure as a whole. These centers are the institutions of society. However, these interdependencies characterise social relationships, likeness, social interactions, and cooperation. Institutions are also confronted with different attributes like conflict, competition, tensions, oppositions, and rivalry. It may damage the very fabric of society.

Hence, organised, patterned, and enduring sets of social structures called institutions come into existence. That provides guidelines for behaviour and helps each society meet its basic survival needs. Therefore, institutions deliver a blueprint of society. It supports society by maintaining social order and stability. Let us look more deeply at this linkage between society and institutions.

Society itself is perceived as a system of institutions. It supports society by maintaining social order and stability. The relevance of social institutions can be attributed to the following factors:

- i. Institutions are vital for social life. They act as a medium for transferring beliefs, knowledge, values, customs, and other practices from generation to generation.
- ii. They are establishments that make society function, hence referred to as the backbone of every society.
- iii. Social institutions contribute to the well-being of individuals and are indispensable to the functioning of a society.
- iv. They regulate human behaviour and fulfill the needs of their members.

- v. Institutions are not simply structures; they exist as structures of relationship, having strong commitment, and performing specific roles and functions.
- vi. Social institutions support other institutions for their smooth functioning.
- vii. Thus, society conceptualised as a social institution layout many specific functions to each of these social institutions.

Recap

- ◆ The family, marriage, religion, education, economy and political system are the key institutions operating in society.
- ◆ Institutions are an inevitable part of society.
- ◆ Functioning forms of the social structure.
- ◆ Institutions were set up and controlled by society.
- ◆ A social institution provides individual orientation.
- ◆ Maintains collective order in society.
- ◆ Social institutions hence act as the structure of society.
- ◆ Having well-established procedures that meet the needs of people.
- ◆ An institution regulates individual actions and interactions.

Objective Questions

1. What does the word “institution” symbolise?
2. Who defines “institutions as an organised system of relationships which embodies common rules for meeting society's basic needs”?
3. Which part of the social system acts as the stable means of social control?

4. What kinds of institutions are the family, marriage, economy, and political systems?
5. Which term is referred to as “a set of norms surrounding a necessary function of society”?
6. By what formalised methods do social institutions regulate human behaviour in society?
7. Who gave the definition of sociology as the “science of social institutions”?
8. What kind of control is organised through primary social institutions?
9. Which social structure helps meet the basic needs of a society?

Answers

1. Established Practices
2. Horton and Hunt
3. Social institution
4. Established forms
5. Institution
6. Social control
7. Durkheim
8. Formal
10. Social institutions

Assignments

1. Describe the features of a social institution
2. Elaborate the functions of social institutions
3. Explain the relationship between society and institutions
4. Define the meaning of social institutions and give an example of social institutions
5. Briefly explain different types of social institution

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UNIT

Marriage, Family and Kinship: Definition, Types and Changes

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To become familiar with the definition and types of marriage
- ◆ To become acquainted with the different forms of family and kinship institutions
- ◆ To explain the changes that have occurred in marriage and family institutions

Prerequisites

You are all interested in attending marriages and have participated in different marriage ceremonies and feasts. Do you think about the process involved in a marriage? When we speak of the institution of “marriage”, it is generally assumed as the union between two individuals stepping together to lead a new life. Do you ever think the union between these two persons are for particular needs that society ought to expect? In a way, society sanctions this union for having a socially accepted relationship for the right to sexual relations, procreation, and companionship and admits men and women to a family life. It fosters family and kin bonds. Therefore, Marriage, Family and Kinship as a social system cannot be signified by one single meaning. People's conceptions of marriage, family, and kinship are changing over time due to the changes in society's structure. However, families are the basic building blocks and the basic social unit upon which society is built upon. It is through marriages and families are created. Marriage and family are both social units by society. In everyday usage, these terms are close to you since, more or less, we remain adherents of it. Let us discuss more about these institutions.

Keywords

Monogamy, Polygamy, Exogamy, Endogamy, Conjugal, Consanguine, Matriarchal, Patriarchal, Descent, Lineage, Clan, Kin, Inheritance, Consanguinity, Affinity

Discussion

A comprehensive view of the institution was summed in the previous unit. As an elaboration, the present section stipulates to give aspects of family, marriage, and kinship. As sociologists are concerned, the relationship between family and marriage is a vital topic to study.

3.2.1 Marriage: Definition, Types and Changes

There are different marriage customs, which predominantly differ based on religion, caste, tribe, or region. The institution of marriage is not similar in all parts and in all traditions. Hence, each society has its own customs and rules for marriage, and it differs in its forms across the world. Although marriage exists as a social institution transversely in all cultures.

a) Concept of Marriage

Marriage is a universal social institution found in all societies. It establishes a social and legal union between two individuals to form a common bond. They enter into a personal relationship (commonly called partners) through the process of marriage. From time immemorial, there have been different definitions of explaining the term marriage. Even sociologists could not rely on a single meaning since the perception of its object due to variations. However, historically it has been transformed from a mere legal union or permission to imply the right to sexual relations or the association

between spouses of opposite sexes (male and female).

You could recall of the traditional expectations of marriage in society and how it differs today from its existence. For example, in modern societies, is it necessary for the union between spouses should be of opposite sexes? Does it require a legal sanction? Is marriage taken for granted as the production and maintenance of children alone? Even in between, same sex marriage also exists. Remarkable changes have been noticed from the earlier definitions of marriage. You can only understand it through the changes that have happened in human history. These changes will be deliberated on in later sections. Let us consider the meaning and characteristics of marriage.

Edward Westermarck defined marriage as the more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the mere act of procreation lasting even after the birth of offspring. Marriage, moreover, is a social institution that has biological foundations. It is defined more as a process in which men and women mutually unite together to start their lives for sexual gratification, procreation, companionship, economic dependence, and the rearing of offspring.

Sociologist George Peter Murdock has remarked that “Marriage is a universal institution that involves residential cohabitation, economic cooperation that leads to forming a nuclear family.”-

Thus, marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family for the need of procreation and states the social pattern that unites two or more persons to establish a family. It consists of the rules and regulations that define the rights, duties, and privileges of husband and wife with due respect to each other.

From the above discussions, we can point out the following characteristics of marriage:

- ◆ Marriage as an institution necessitates the social, physical, and psychological needs of two individuals.
- ◆ It establishes a specific relationship based on mutual rights and obligations.
- ◆ The primary function of marriage aims at the regulation of sexual relationships.
- ◆ It allows partners to establish a family, allows them to live together, and produces children.
- ◆ Other essential components are procreation, mutual care, support, economic functions, and socialisation of children.

b) Forms of Marriage

Marriage as an institution has evolved over eternity. Different types of marriage can be visible in human societies based on various common grounds. Every culture, region and nation has their own laws and practices for getting married. It exists in numerous ways based on the number of spouses, mate selection, certain uniformities in marriage customs, and other rules governing marriages. Monogamy, polygamy, polyandry, endogamy, exogamy etc to a few to name. Certain marriage types are detailed below.

Monogamy (single spouse): Usually, we

see a relationship between a husband and wife that ought to have only one partner at a time rather than multiple partners. It is the most common type of relationship. Monogamy is regarded as the type of marriage whereby one man marries one woman at a time.

A monogamous family is more successful, stable, and enduring for a more extended period. Its stability offers a robust familial bond and gives equal importance to all members. It opens up further chances for getting significant support, love, care, and affection between the partners. At the same time, husband and wife enjoy more rights, freedom and understanding between each other.

- ◆ **Polygamy** (plurality of wives and husbands) As opposed to monogamy, when a single individual has more than one spouse at a time, it is called polygamous relationship. When an individual is married to more than one individual simultaneously, it is called polygamy. It permits the individual to engage in a relationship with more than one of the opposite sexes. Therefore, it is a condition in which an individual has more than one spouse at one time. Such marriage was prevalent among kings, aristocrats, and rulers of ancient India and partially among some religious and customary traditions. There are two basic forms of polygamy: polygyny and polyandry.

- ◆ **Polygyny** (one man with many wives) Polygyny is the form of marriage in which one man marries more than one woman at a time. Though these practices date back to ancient civilisations, these marriages were found among primitive tribes like Baigas or Gonds of India. Besides, it



is also sanctioned in Muslim communities.

- ♦ **Polyandry** (one woman with many husbands) Polyandry is depicted as the typical marriage system in which one woman marries multiple men at a time (plurality of husbands). Brothers often share a wife is also involved in poly andry . Such marriage resulting in brothers marrying one woman (husbands of the shared wife are brothers to each other) is known as fraternal polyandry. The prime motive behind such forms of marriage is to retain the land undivided within their own families. The best-known occurrence of polyandry is noticed in South India, particularly among the Nayars of Hindu religion of the Malabar Coast, the Paharis settled in Northern parts of India, the Bahamas of Africa, and the Todas, Kota, and Khasa tribes of India, etc. In traditional Nayar families, women engage in sexual relationships with more than one man and have children within these alliances. Interestingly, paternity cannot be acknowledged or claimed by any single one.

Endogamy

Generally, people are interested in marrying within their same caste or group. Thus, marriages taking place within one's castes, a similar ethnic, cultural, social, and religious group is called endogamy. It strictly prohibits marriage outside the group, thus contributing the various features of group unity. For example, marrying within a caste is caste endogamy. Within the sub-caste, there is sub-caste endogamy.

Exogamy

Exogamy is just the opposite of endogamy marriage. It is the rule of marriage outside one's group or clan. In the early system

of marriage individuals were prohibited from marrying outside their group and also restricted to marrying certain degrees of blood or affinal relationships. Exogamy can take several forms, including gotra exogamy (marrying outside one's gotra), pravar exogamy (marriage of persons from the same pravar is forbidden), and village exogamy (restriction on marrying outside one's village). Marriage alliances also take place between individuals belonging to different social statuses. For instance, it is a kind of inter-caste marriage. There is a provision for men and women belonging to different castes (higher or lower) to marry each other. Thus, this system is of two forms: Hypergamy, commonly known as Anuloma and Hypogamy, commonly known as Pratiloma.

Anuloma Marriage

Certain marriage customs occur between spouses of different social statuses, which mean that marriages do not happen between social equals. Therefore, Anuloma (hyper gamy) implies that a man of higher varna or caste marries a woman of lower caste or varna. Nowadays, such marriages are found to be practiced. For example, a marriage between Brahmin men and shudra girl.

Pratiloma Marriage

The marital practices whereby a man belonging to a lower caste or varna marries a woman of higher caste or varna is referred to as pratiloma. The traditional norms of marrying someone above the social class or status are changing. Today, to a large extent, love or inter-caste marriages occur where either the mates or females are free to choose their partners from any caste or varna.

Sororate

You learned different marriage forms so far, and apart from these, there is certainly

another custom of marriage. Usually, after the death of the wife or being unable to conceive a child, the man remarries another spouse. It is a type of marriage system under which if a man's wife dies, is expected to marry his wife's sister or sisters. The Latin word 'soror' means sister generally; such marriage is practiced in patrilineal societies with a preference for cross-cousin marriages.

Levirate

On the other hand, when a woman's husband dies in a levirate marriage, she is expected to marry his brother or a male member of the dead husbands' lineage. The Latin word 'levir' means 'husband's brother'. It has been practised by societies that follow a strong clan structure.

Cross Cousin Marriages

The custom of marriages between cousins is one of those which is most acceptable in some cultures. Let us say your brother's marry their mother's daughter or your sister's marry their father's sister's son. Cross-cousin marriage refers to the marriage alliance between the children of a brother and sister. This rule specifies a man marrying either his mother's brother's daughter (maternal uncles' child) or his fathers' sisters' daughter (paternal aunts' child). The siblings would be from parents of opposite sexes.

As marriage is viewed as an essential social institution, each society is obliged to follow specific rules and regulations for guiding its marriages. Since the choice for mate selection and of the union between two individuals, every society imbibes certain restrictions. One such limitation that controls the relationship is that marriages are forbidden between close blood relationships (or on account of consanguinity) like brother and sister, mother and son, or father and daughter. In addition to this, there are several restrictions on entering in to marriage such

as in the name of caste, community and status. This led to different forms and types of marriage.

3.2.2. Family: Definition, Types and Changes

The family structure is traditionally meant for both the relationship between parents and children or between spouses. However, from the sociological point of view, the family cannot be limited to this characterisation alone. You may think of your family. Whom do you consider as your family? Is it your parents, brothers and sisters alone? Or else does it include father, mother, siblings, grandparents and other relatives too? People generally consider their intimate network as their families. It is explained chiefly on the grounds of joint families (encompassing parents, children, or other relatives) or extended families (including three or more generations), or nuclear families (comprising parents and children alone) as of today. Earlier, the family system is generally recognised as a system in which several generations live together in a single household. Similarly, it examines a broader kinship group that closely links ancestors and their descents together.

How do you define family? It may vary from society to society and from culture to culture. You will notice that the traditional family has changed relatively over time, and you will find it difficult to explain what we mean by "family".



Image:3.2.1 Nuclearfamily



Image 3.2.2. Joint family



Image 3.2.3 Extended Family

Generally, “family” is an intimate domestic group of people bonded by ties of blood or common ancestry, marriage, adoption or degree of kinship. It is the nucleus of the growth of the social structure and the first society of human beings. It is derived from the Latin word 'famulus,' meaning servant. Fundamentally, the family structure consists of either the relationship between parents and children or the ties between spouses. It is the primary social institution that forms the "fundamental institution" of any society. The primary function of the family makes it an essential prerequisite in a community. It is also regarded as the universal social group as it is intended to meet our basic needs. No society exists without any system of family organisation. Through marriage, the social arrangement consists of parenthood, binds social bonding through love, care, companionship, and maintains social control. Therefore, the family, as a vital social institution, functions as the primary pillar of any society.

a) Meaning and Characteristics of Family

A family is regarded as a biological unit sex relationships consisting of a husband, wife, and children. It is sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. It is a more or less durable association of husband and wife with or without children. Thus, family is a socially recognised group (bonded together by blood, marriage or adoption) that forms the basic unit of society.

According to Malinowski, "Family is a group consisting of a mother, father, and their progeny (offspring). It is a biological unit with a common dwelling place for its members with institutionalised or sanctioned sex relationships between husband and wife." Similarly, George Peter Murdock pointed out that "Family is a universal social institution, characterised by common residence, economic corporation, and reproduction. It maintains a socially approved sexual relationship between two persons of both sexes to have their own or adopted children."

Thus, family is so important and has the following peculiarities.

1. Consisting of households, who live in one house or under one roof, including children and parents
2. A group encompassing parents and their children, whether they live together or not
3. All groups that are nearly tied to each other by blood and affinity
4. Those having a common descent or ancestry.

Though there are several definitions of 'family' given by earlier sociologists, the diversity within the modern world suggests

broader definitions for the term. Thus, a family is considered a group of two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adoption. Family as defined by modern social thinkers have been redefined to intensify family as a group of people who are either related each by blood, marriage or in the form of other committed relationships. We will examine in detail while discussing the considerable changes that have happened to the family in the subsequent section.

b) Essential Characteristics of Family

As per your understanding of various definitions and meanings of family discussed earlier, families in all communities satisfy similar needs and procedures for their members. Though it is their obligation to secure food and shelter, rear children, and care for dependents, these primary groups perform vital roles in society. Members come together to form strong bonds of physical, emotional, and social ties. Thus, families provide crucial functions internally (for the family members themselves) and externally (for the society). Other distinctive features of it comprise:

Universality

Why is the family regarded as the universal group? Family, considered as the nucleus and oldest of all social organisations, exist around all parts of the world. Every culture identifies a family structure that controls the sexual behaviours of the members and shares common elements. Hence, it is said to be universal.

Limited size

The size of the family is primarily well-defined in terms of biological conditions consisting of a household

having a husband, wife, mother, father, son, or daughter taking each other to their respective social roles. In many earlier families, all family members lived together in a single household called a joint or extended family. Later, with the emergence of nuclear families, family structure changed, individuals left their homes to live independently due to marriage, jobs, or many other reasons. Thus, parents and their children form the family unit.

Common Habitation

Our basic survival needs are food, clothing, and shelter. Therefore, to have a shared experience, a family permits the members to live in a common household. After marriage, the spouses start to live in a home that generates the foundation for affection, companionship and a new family.

System of Nomenclature

In Kerala's history, royal families (rajakudumbam) derive their family names such as Arackal Kingdom, Kollattiri. As time passed, the royal situation changed, and each family became known by their surname. The nomenclature system attaches the members to their families. Generally, a family is recognised by a distinct name that gives representation to it. Sometimes, it helps to trace the descent (recognition of the biological relationship between individuals).

Emotional Basis

In a family relationship, members are attached by family ties. Thus, such an emotional relationship between the members often forms the basis of any family structure. For example, people are emotionally attached to their siblings thus husband-wife, brothers, and sisters. Strong bonds of psychological attachment among the group



members constitute the firmest social support mechanism. In addition sexual relationships provide an effective emotional basis. This intimacy and affection laid the foundation of its unity and solidarity between the members. The intensity of affection surrounding the family members helps them to withstand situations of quarrels and disagreements.

Economic Provision

In every family, either the husband or wife is an earning member, and in some families both. This provides financial security to the family members. All other members depend on this income and are meet the economic needs of their members. Economic cooperation is provided through the division of labour and income generation. For earnings, gradually they engaged in different occupations or activities for earnings. In a sense, it serves as a significant economic unit to provide financial provisions and economic stability. Henceforth, it shares responsibility among the members of the family.

Responsibility of Members

Each family member has a different role. Parents provide basic necessities such as food, shelter, and education for the children. Individuals of the family develop a sense of responsibility for members towards each other. Family defines the meaning of social responsibility and the necessity for cooperation.

Social Control

Social control is the means through which society brings people into an accepted code of behaviour. It can be either direct or indirect. The family also exercises some powerful means of control on the behaviour of its members. It is carried out when the person with proximity in a family exerts control in better socialising individuals with

the norms and values of society. A family represents a socially approved organisation for maintaining social customs and legal regulations. It exercises its profound influence in the form of social rights and rules over its members.

c) Functions of Family

Families as an institution satisfy several purposes. It fulfils several imperative functions and needs that include regulating sexual activities and reproduction, offering support and care to the members, and providing an economic commitment. Sociologists have enumerated different functions of families. Ogburn and Nimkoff distinguished family functions into affection, economic, religious, protective, recreational, and educational. In contrast, MacIver divided it into essential and non-essential functions. A few of the essential functions of the family are as follows.

◆ Biological Functions

Every society regulates sexual activity of its members through reproduction or procreation. The strong biological basis to satisfy the mating relationship is an essential function of the family. The primary function of it is to fulfils sexual regulations and control reproduction. Thus, all societies recognise it as desirable to promote stability and survive over time.

◆ Psychological Functions

The human need for affection and companionship is a fundamental phenomenon. A family provides affection and emotional support for its members. Thus, families are the primary source of providing a sense of identity, love, comfort, belongingness, protection, and security. In times of emotional instability and distress, it is the most conducive environment providing intangible support and acceptance.

◆ Sociological Functions

Families form the primary unit of socialisation. Thus, they are agents for primary socialisation. Children learn their fundamental values and norms from the beginning of their lives. Through this socialisation process, the child is nurtured and molded to become responsible individuals in society. Once they are physically, mentally, and emotionally strong, it will be maintained throughout their life. Through family, children recognise their status and role arrangements and socialise with society. Henceforth, the family makes essential contributions to regulating its members' behaviour, social control, and socialisation. In addition to this, it transmits familial traditions, customs, and beliefs from one generation to another.

d) Classification of Family

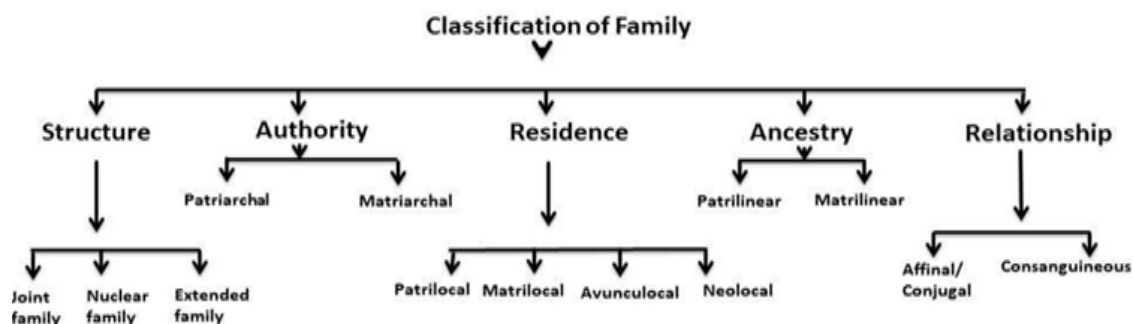
The composition and structure of families vary according to structure, rules of authority, blood relationship, residence, and descent or ancestry. Just like marriage, family structure differs in various significant ways. It can be of different types based on multiple classifications, including the number of spouses, authority, strength of the bond, spouse choice, residence, etc. In the following part, we may see these broad distinctions.

1. Classification based on Family Structure

On the basis of division of family structure, the families are classified into three divisions; joint family, extended family, and the nuclear family.

◆ Joint Family

The family system consists of a more extensive kinship network whereby close relatives and other family members jointly live together in the same household or under the same roof. Such families are referred to as joint families. It is a kind of extended family commonly found in primitive and non-industrial societies that comprise parents, grandparents, children, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, etc. They lived in such families with the care, support, and guidance of all those family members and mostly shared all household chores. Likewise, there are many other peculiarities for the joint family system. As recognised, social bonds are strong enough in such families. Members are relatively dependent on each other and rely on a typical dwelling with generations living, working, eating, and worshipping together. Besides, the property is held in common. Generally, properties are not divided. The head of the family (basically the eldest male member) exercised all regulatory powers.



◆ Extended Family

This type of family consists of three or more generations (several or multiple generations) of people, who usually live together in the same residence and undertake shared responsibilities. Rather than just your parents and brothers or sisters, you have many relatives who maintain strong bonds with you. All these near-relatives and cousins, such as great-grandparents, grandparents, uncle or aunt, your married brother or sister etc., come under the extended family. They follow a common culture, share equal rights over belongings, and perform all religious and familial functions together as a coherent group. They enjoy specific advantages like greater support from the members, share a sense of security and togetherness, and are responsible for supporting and helping each other. In short, extended families are composed of more than two generations.

◆ Nuclear Family

This is the universal form of family. A nuclear family is composed of a husband, wife, and their unmarried children. Factors like industrialisation, urbanisation, education, and employment paved the way to shift from rural areas to urban areas. Henceforth, the joint family or extended family system which prevailed then had shrunk to a small group composed of a husband, wife, and their children. Why do you think, in modern times, nuclear families have gained popularity? This type of family predominantly depends upon autonomy and self-independence, which allows greater flexibility for the members.

2. Classification based on Agency or Authority

On the basis of ownership of property and authority over family members, a family can be divided into patriarchal and matriarchal.

◆ Patriarchal or Father-centred Family

Patriarchy connotes merely descent through the patrilineal line. The same implies authority in the hands of the eldest male member of the father's family. Male Member is the owner and has authority over all family members. The family property ultimately lies under his control. Male Member has the right to preside over religious ceremonies in the household and is the custodian of all household goods. The most common characteristics of a patriarchal family include tracing the descent through the father's line.

◆ Matriarchal or Mother-centred Family

Matriarchy is the system in which the family's authority and ownership of property reside in the mother's hands. Moreover, the transmission of descent is through the female line. The determinant of family structure is through matriliney, in which the descent is reckoned through the mother only. Here, the mother is the head of house and the husband lives in the wife's house. Apart from this the women are authorised to perform religious rites. The 'Marumakkathayam' among Nairs community in Kerala and those practiced among the Khasi and Garo tribes of Meghalaya are examples of matriliney.

3. Classification based on Residence

In terms of changing the family's residence after marriage, there are various kinds of families. It is customary for men and women to alternate their residences. Therefore, you can find various forms of residence patterns across different cultures. After marriage, the couples want to settle down somewhere. The types of families based on residence are patri-local, matri-local, avunculocal, and neo-local systems.

◆ **Patrilocal/ Virilocal Family**

The type of family in which the bride moves to or near the parental home of her groom. In this kind of family, a woman moves to the location where her husband is residing. The binding link forms the father-son relationship in which the son remains at his own home whereas the daughter moves out after marriage.

◆ **Matrilocal/ Uxorilocal Family**

Matrilocal is just the reverse of patrilocal residence. In this type of family pattern, the groom moves to or near the parental home of his bride. Here, mother-daughter forms the binding link. The daughter remains at home while the son moves out after marriage.

◆ **Avunculocal Residence or Avunculocality**

In this family type the couple is expected to live at the groom's maternal uncle's house. Thus, the binding link is between nephew and maternal uncle. The best example of this is practiced among the Nayers of Kerala. After the marriage, the married couple settles at the maternal uncle's house.

◆ **Neo-local Residence or Neo-locality**

Since it is the most common and familiar residence system wherein the couple lives separately after marriage. The common trend today is that after they become financially stable, they move to a new residence, either in the parental property or purchased one. This type of residence is called neo-local.

4. Classification based on Descent

Based on the descent or ancestry, families are classified into Patrilineal and matrilineal types.

◆ **Patrilineal (Makkathayam)**

The inheritance and descent rules that follow the father's line are called patrilineal descent. In such families, the rights, lineage, and properties are transferred from the father to the next generations. It is the common type of social organisation found in society. In the traditional system of monarchies (rule of the monarch or a king), the patrilineal descendant is followed as they allow only male succession, from the father to son. Thus, after the death of the king, only his son can succeed him.

◆ **Matrilineal (Marumakkathayam)**

Familial relationships traced through the female line are known by matrilineal descent. In this kind, the family's ancestry is believed to be a woman who is the central figure. Moreover, the position of the father tends to remain peripheral. The wealth is normally divided among children through their mother's descent. As compared to the patrilineal system, matrilineal lineage is least significant. In India, Khasis in Meghalaya and traditional Nayers of Kerala were typified as having matrilineal.

5. Classification based on Relationship

Based on relationships, there are also different types of families namely consanguineous and Conjugal.

◆ **Consanguineous Family (same blood)**

Consanguineous family means that family organisations related by blood relationships or having the same origin. Rather than marital relationships, parent-children relations or brothers-sisters' links are of prime importance. The degree of relatedness based on blood is consanguinity.

♦ Conjugal Family (united by marriage)

The family constituted through a marriage relationship is referred to as a conjugal family. In this kind of family organisation, rather than blood relationships, the primary emphasis is placed upon husband-wife relationships.

3.2.3 Changes in Marriage and Family

The above section presents a brief overview of conceptualising marriage and family, its characteristics and various forms of occurrences. Even though marriage and family are the fundamental social institutions, it undergoes tremendous changes in the present society due to various reasons.

The traditional conception of marriage underwent transformations. Variations happened in its structure as well as existence. Age-old days portray marriage as a legally recognised social contract between two persons that traditionally rely upon a sexual relationship with permanent union and companionship. Marriage, though primarily conceived as the union between a man and a woman, legitimised to have offspring which involve certain rights and duties for the fulfilment of individual needs, is on the decrease.

Today, the very form of its existence is questioned and often debated with the emergence of personal concepts of marriage like living together or co-habitation (the arrangement in which two persons started to live together without being married) homosexuality (having same-sex partners), single-headed parenthoods, etc. These modern trends have affected the existence of family as a primary social institution. It is no longer considered the union between male and female nor tends to the procreation of children.



Image 3.2.4 Homo-Sexuality (Male-Male & Female-Female)

A wide range of diversity occurs in traditional patterns of marriage among different cultures. Society is hesitant to accept all these emerging marriage patterns. In contemporary society, men and women have more choices. Preferential selection of marriages has increased tremendously. The breakdown of caste endogamy and the preference for inter-religious marriages are more common. Moreover, the growing option for couples to live together has also become the new norm of marriage, just like homosexual marriages and living together are tremendous changes that have occurred in the marriage institution.

Similarly, families as a social institution undergo significant changes by replacing traditional extended families with the modern nuclear family (a smaller family size). It may, however, be noted that this basic social unit linked by blood, marriage, or adoption has tremendously transformed in its structure. Moreover, as seen earlier, urbanisation and large-scale migration prompted individuals to move towards cities mainly in search of work, leaving their home villages and family members.

The advent of urbanisation, industrialisation, and modernisation has intensified these changes. As a result, many of the main activities of the family—like

religion, caring for elderly parents, rearing of children, etc.—were handed over to other agencies or institutions.

Some of the notable changes that happened in the marriage and family are:

a) Changes in the regulation of sexual and reproductive functions

Sexual behaviour is still regulated through the institution of marriage. However, there is an occurrence of extra and pre-marital relations. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, the exercise of traditional control in regulating sexual behaviour has failed in the modern times.

b) Changes in the structure of family

Changes that happened in the marriage and among the members' relationship affect the family profoundly. The decreased control of marriage contracts provides more autonomy. Parental control and other forms of social pressure have lessened. Choice of mates and mutual determination of relationships that binds people have replaced the traditional rules.

c) Economic independence

However, fulfilment of a family's economic needs remains as a primary function. Changes occur in the division of labour between sexes. It has moreover become a shared responsibility between men and women as both earn to meet their living. Women also attained more economic independence than earlier times.

d) Decline in the influence of mores and religious values

The notable decline of religious control made families more secular in their outlook. Many of its earlier rites like religious

sentiments, beliefs, and attitudes are losing their grounds to a great extent and are absent in modern families. The conception of the family as a divine ordinance became less prevalent.

e) Changes in the social functions

One of the most significant functions of the family is its stable social control. As this function of the family declined, it failed to exercise direct control over the individuals, leading to family disharmony. As a result, the custodianship and the traditional role of the family are weakened largely. The decline of the authoritative mores tends to lose some of its supremacy over its members.

Members of the family are responsible for specific duties and obligations. Hence, it provides security and protection for the members. However, duties of the family are now undertaken by other agencies and the protective functions of the family have been extorted. Even though the family remains the primary agent of socialisation their role is minimised. It has been taken away from families and vested with other agencies of socialisation. For instance, the child-rearing functions have been shifted to preschool agencies and maternity centers.

f) Separation of non-essential functions from the family

The modern family imparts many functions that are not essential to its emerging characteristics. Most of the traditional functions, which it ought to perform were taken over by other external agencies. For example, fulfilment of various economic functions and specialised work was attributed to banking institutions. Apart from home, educational functions are better provided by schools. Besides, the non-essential functions are transferred to other institutions like the healthcare system, financial institutions and



other governmental agencies.

Thus family and marriage undergoes tremendous changes due to various functions like education, nature of women employment, emergence of child rearing and old age care institutions, etc.

3.2.4 Kinship: Definition and Types

Imagine a social gathering to celebrate the birthday of your child. Whom do you invite first? You will surely invite your friends and intimate members of your family like aunts, uncles, nieces, and members of your spouse's family including many kith and kin: the near and dear ones or relatives that were so close to you. What is the common feature that you notice all around? The invitees except friends are either related to you through blood or commonly by marriage. Some people might have been recognised as biological links to you, such as your mother, father, sister, brother, children, grandparents, uncles, aunts, or cousins.

In contrast, your husband, or wife, other members like mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother or sister-in-law's were also related to you, not by blood but through marriage. You might also note some other affinity or close relationships between individuals due to adoption or different practices, forming stronger relations. Hence, it may be near or distant. Since all these relationships in which people are generally born into or created at a later part of their life stood as a solid binding force of so-called 'kinship.'

Most people use different terms to address these relations. All our relationships are resultant of these ties or bonds. This formal grouping for classifying people to have relationships between individuals are all kinsmen who are commonly thought to have family ties. We see everywhere that kinship connections are based on these blood ties or family groups. Kinship is the most

noteworthy social organising principle that transmits status and property from generation to generation.

Right from earlier times, kinship rules and patterns were witnessed around the world. Therefore, to understand any society, it is inevitable to recognise the functioning of their kinship system. As we have seen in the previous section, the family and marriage exist as the foundation of society and laid a necessary condition for human existence. To encompass its significant potentials, we see a universal social institution that binds individuals' social relationships. At the same time, it is essential to remember the closeness of kinship link to these primary social institutions found in society is by the robust bonds of marriage and reproduction.

Generally, consanguinity refers to blood relation and affinity refers to marital relation. For example, mother-child relation is blood relation and husband-wife relation is by marriage. Kinship can be traced as the essential feature of primitive, rural or tribal societies. It has close connectivity with kinship relations. Moreover, it is intensely concentrated in villages, castes, families, and other significant social structures. It has been predominantly evident during the rituals performed in various familial, marriage or death ceremonies. You also might have observed or been part of several such occasions in and around you. It is obligatory to practice these rituals during various events. For example, naming the newborn by fathers' sister, rights and duties accomplished by mothers' brother during the marriage of their daughters, strict compliance of preventing kinsmen from social gatherings (entering a place of religious worships, attending marriages etc.) up to 14- 16 days after the death of their close family members which is ubiquitous among the Hindu cultures. Many other customary rituals that occur during weddings (exchanging gifts) among different castes or tribes are strictly adhered

to rituals. Various kinds of such incidence are followed in various communities. It similarly varies from one region to another region.

a) Defining Kinship

Kinship ties can be determined by the connections between individuals established either through the lines of descent connected based on blood relations or marriage. Otherwise, the kinship system forms a social structure with strict adherence to rights and obligations. It can also be explained as the degree of sharing likelihood among two individuals who were unrelated either by lineage or marriage. Thus, kinship can be explained in different ways. Robin Fox explained that 'Kinship' is simply the relations between 'kin' that are persons related by real, putative or fictive consanguinity'. George Peter Murdock views "Kinship as a structured system of relationships in which kins are bound to one another by complex interlocking ties".

Harry. M. Johnson accorded six major characteristics for kinship:

Sex: Some specific terms of reference, like "brother, sister, father, mother" etc. not only indicate biological relation but also used to classify different ties of relatives. In all societies, usage of such terms embodies exact relationships.

Generation: Kinship explicitly indicates the relationship between a person and the generation of the relative to which he is referred. For example, the generation between father and son specifies two successive generations. The relationship between brother and cousin represents the same generations.

Affinity or Closeness: Mostly, kinship terms are widely related to genetic ties or bonds initiated by marriage. Example: husband-wife, parents-children but unlike these, a few relations like son-in-law and uncle or those in the uncle or aunt exist.

Collaterality: Blood relations may be lineal specifying relatives not in a direct line of descent or collateral relatives consisting of one's siblings or all other siblings of his or her ancestral relatives beyond their generations. eg: uncle, aunts and cousins.

Bifurcation (Division): Kinship is also recognised in terms of bifurcation. The distinction for specifying relations concerning division like son's daughter's son, daughters' son's son, brother's daughter or sisters son etc.

Linkage: A commonly distinguished binding thread defined in terms of the intimacy of relation. Family tree, lineage or descent, residence, bond through family and marriage are considered the basis of kinship system.

b) Kinship Types

The previous section gives you a clear picture of individuals related to one another based on closeness or affinity to their relationship. Concerning the kind of bond that arises, kinship has got various divisions. It is of several types based on the principle of biological origin, based on the relationship on blood ties, socially or legally defined bonds of marital relationships, and rules that trace the individual's descents (rules of descent). Let us examine these types one by one in the sections below.

Based on nearness or distance, the degree of relations is classified as primary kins and Secondary kins and tertiary kins. Now we can discuss various divisions of these kinship relations:

- ♦ **Primary Kins:** The most intimate kind of kinship related to the closeness within the family is called primary kin. It may be the nearness of husband-wife, father-son, mother-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, brother-sister etc. Hence, your



primary kins are your parents, younger or older brothers and sisters under this system. The relationship between siblings (two brothers or two sisters) also form examples of immediate kinship.

- ◆ **Secondary Kins:** Secondary kinship refers to those who are directly related to one's primary kin. Thus, your grandparents. Mothers or fathers' brother (uncle), father's sister or brother's wife (Aunt), sisters' husband (brother-in-law's) or brothers' wife (sister-in-law) and parents-in-law also belong to your secondary kins.
- ◆ **Tertiary Kins:** This is another kind of kinship which is neither primary nor secondary. It refers to the relationship of the secondary kins of our primary kins. To your understanding, the examples of tertiary kins consist of either of your great grandparents (parent's grandparents), first cousins, nephews and nieces and some other relatives like sister's husband's brother, wife's brother's son, grand uncles or aunts, spouse's grandparents and so on. Let us see how family relationships are shaped by each other. They are shaped based on blood or marriage ties. Accordingly, based on the degree of relationships, there are mainly two types of kinship found in any society. The kinship relations established based on birth (blood relations) are called consanguineous kinship. The bond of marital relationships known by affinal kinship tends to exist in societies.

i) Consanguineal kinship (bond of blood)

The relationships established between persons based on birth (biological process), blood, or descent are termed consanguineal kinship. One person is related to the other as consanguine (blood) relatives. It is observed as the most universal and elementary kin relations among humankind. Parent-child relationships and relations between siblings, uncle, nephew, and cousins were notable examples of consanguineous kinship groups. You may also note, rather than the actual blood relationship established through the biological process, kinship ties also arise based on social recognition, as in adopted children. Hence, blood relations may therefore be actual or supposed.

ii) Affinal kinship (bond of marriage)

It refers to the relationship expressed in terms of marriage. The two persons have therefore established a relationship through the ties of marriage, which is affinal. They become kin to one another via the marriage bond, which forms wider kinship groups. The union of spouses (husband-wife) is a typical relationship of this type of kinship. As a result of marriage, a person is entitled to become husband or wife and connect to the broader web of social relationships like a brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, mama, mami, dadha dhadi etc. These relationships bind themselves together apart from biological descent.

c) Rule of Descent

It is interesting to note that many cultures follow or adhere to a decent system of its kind. From traditional times onwards, the rights, statuses, and properties were transmitted from one generation to the next through this socially recognised biological relation

between persons. Generally, it is used to trace one's ancestry (people who lived in the past) or his parentage. In every family, the descent centres on this organisation of kinship relationships. Primarily, one's descent is traced through the lines referred to as the 'lineage', which may encompass many generations. We can describe this lineage either through your father's line or your mother's line or from both sides. Therefore, you usually may notice these lineages through rules of inheritance. An individual's economic rights and authority structures were transformed from parents to children through these descent groups.

The rules of descent refer to the succession of inheritance by a person commonly related by blood in recognition of biological relationships. Sociologically, it fixes one's relation to one's close and distant relationships through the line of succession. Based on the rule of descent, kinship is generally classified into different types. It can be traced either on the paternal line or through the maternal line or involving both sides. Thus, kinship based on the rules of descent are of different types such as cognate, unilateral (Matrilineal and Patrilineal) and bilateral descent. The rule of descent is significant in terms of:

- ◆ **Cognate:** It is a mode of descent where people share a common ancestor. That is, the descent is traced through any combination of male or female lines. Such kinds of kinship relations are known as cognates.
- ◆ **Unilateral Descent:** The kinship line is traced through only one line. It is called unilateral descent. The two types of unilateral descent are patrilineal (descent through fathers' line) and matrilineal (descent through mothers' side) descent.

- ◆ **Agnatic Kinship (Patrilineality):** The kinship that traces the descendant through the father's lineage generally involves the inheritance of rights, property, and entitlements through male kin. Kodangs trace their descendants through the male line alone.
- ◆ **Uterine Kinship (Matrilineality):** As the name implies, matrilineality is a form of kinship whereby the descent is traced exclusively through the female line. The individual is therefore identified with their matrilineal kin (female ancestor). Hence the property and other titles also are inherited in terms of the mother's lineage. Hopi, Khasis and Nayers in Kerala are matrilineal societies.
- ◆ **Bilateral Descent (Double Descent):** The rule of descent in which an individual's family membership is derived from paternal and maternal sides. In this type of kinship, the descent and inheritance are generally passed equally through both parents. Since, here in this kinship type, a 'double unilineal' system of descent exists 'which allows individuals to choose or rely upon two sets of families. Hence it is also known as 'double descent', commonly found among primitive tribes such as Yako in Nigeria.

d) Kinship Terminology

In our day-to-day interactions within our families, we use common names to refer to our relatives. It may differ between cultures, communities, caste, or even households. For example, we call fathers sister as paternal aunt or mother's sister as maternal aunt and many other different kinds of relative



terms to denote different individuals. It is interesting to study these kinship phrases as it determines many things such as whom one should marry and whom one shouldn't, to whom one can joke with or show respect etc. There are different types of kin groups, and it differs from societies. Some may have only lineages; some have both clans and lineages. In contrast, some others have different combinations of descent groups, including clans, phratries and moieties, etc. Now we examine various such terminologies used to define kinship in multiple ways.

Kinship usages, therefore, involve words used to identify or classify relationships and may be found complex among varied cultures. Similarly, it consists of different terms to address similarities or differences between kinds of relations. These terms of reference particularly help to identify the relationships of the kins. The kinship terminologies regulate the behaviour of kins normally. Lineages, clans, phratries, moieties and joking relationships are kinship terminologies that you will learn in detail in the subsequent section.

Lineages

You learnt about the matrilineal and patrilineal descent groups that traced the lineage either through the mother's or father's line. A lineage is defined as a unilineal descent group that traces its origin from a common ancestor. Depending on tracing their descent through mothers or fathers' line, it may either be patrilineal or matrilineal descent, respectively. Thus, it helps individuals to determine their exact genealogical relationship and recognise their inheritance and obligations in the broader category of kinship groupings.

Clans

Like lineage, clan is also referred to as a unilineal descent group whereby the social

group members claim their descendant from a common founder or ancestor. The exact genealogy of their ancestors is unknown. The ancestors are either claimed as humans or believed mythically to be animals, plants or inanimate objects. These objects were called 'totems'. Hence, large groups, geographically dispersed, usually live in the same locality and share similar beliefs, rituals, and a common totemic name, in particular and are termed as clans. 'gotra' of the Hindus is an example of a traditional clan.

Phratry

We have already seen the peculiarities of a clan. So, if the size of the clan becomes huge, what can be done? For easy identification, it can be divided or segmented into smaller units. This splitting up of clans into small sections is termed as phratry, usually considered a clans group's brother. In other words, several clans combine to form phratries. It is predominantly found among the Oraon, Ho and Munda tribes. Phratry is thus a much larger grouping or association of clans that recognise some relationships to each other and are composed of traditions of common descent. The actual genealogical links are not evident in these unilineal descent groups. Same as in clans, mythical ancestors are common in phratries too.

Moiety is a specific form of phratry. The whole society is divided into two kin groups so that there is dual organisation. In such cases, each group is called a 'moiety'. Among the tribes of Todas in Nilgiri Hills of Kerala, moiety systems of social organisation are distinguished. Teivaliol and Tartharol are two such groups of dual organisations. It is interesting to note that each of these moieties has several clans by its division. Moieties are intended to undertake consistent positions and functions in societies. They are usually exogamous. Thus, marriages are only permitted within the group itself. As clans and phratries, the members of moiety

cannot trace their descent links back to a common ancestor.

Teknonymy

The kinship usage found in different cultures in which the kin are not referred directly but referred through another kin. For example, the practice of referring to parents by the names of their children. It can be found among Khasis of Meghalaya, Tao of Taiwan and various other societies.

Avunculate

Avunculate is a peculiar kind of kinship usage in which the relationship exists between a person and his maternal uncle (mothers' brother). This usage is expected in the matrilineal system. The mother's brother has an important relation to their nephews and nieces.

Couvade

Another kinship usage that provides a robust marital bond between husband and wife where the husband leads a life along with his wife. It is most prevalent among the tribes like Todas and Khasi. The husband is obliged to carry out specific active work,

follow some diet, and observe some taboos, the same as undertaken by his wife whenever she prepares to give birth to a child.

Amitate

Similar to the reference towards providing special significance to the maternal uncle, the usage, amitate usually found in patrilineal societies, gives superior reference to father's sister. Besides the mother, particular respect is given to the father's sister. Consider if you have an aunt (Appa/Chitta) who has a unique role in your life. The supreme authority is handed over to fathers' sisters where the child gets their title not through their parents but in terms of their fathers' sister.

Joking Relationships

A joking relationship simply is a kind of relationship permitting individuals and groups to tease and make fun of each other in certain social situations. It comprises a combination of friendliness and antagonism. It provides a platform to exchange abuse, mock, ridicule and make vulgar references even to sex without any offence. In this relationship, extreme familiarity is expressed that sanctions equality and mutual reciprocity

Recap

- ◆ Marriage is a universal social institution.
- ◆ Marriage regulates the sexual behaviour of individuals.
- ◆ Through marriage, individuals establish a family for procreation.
- ◆ Marriage permits regular cohabitation with some degree of rights and obligations.
- ◆ Marriage exists in various forms depending upon the number of spouses and other rules.
- ◆ The principal forms of marriage are monogamy and polygamy.
- ◆ Monogamy is the leading marriage form that permits one man to marry one woman at a time.
- ◆ The family is the most fundamental and primary institution.
- ◆ Family is the most pervasive (universal) of all social institutions.
- ◆ Families are the fundamental social unit and the nucleus of all social organisations.
- ◆ The biological unit consists of husband, wife, and children united by ties of blood, marriage, or adoption.
- ◆ Families can be classified on the basis of authority, blood relationship, and descent.
- ◆ In terms of structure, families are of joint, extended, and nuclear families.
- ◆ Based on the authority there are patriarchal and matriarchal families.
- ◆ Patri-local, matri-local, avunculocal and neo-local are the other patterns of residence.
- ◆ Matrilineal and patrilineal forms were classifications of family in terms of ancestry or descent.
- ◆ Consanguineous and affinal families are the nature of families based on kingship ties.
- ◆ Kinship is the primary organising principle in the social structure of every society.

- ◆ Kinship relations are either through blood relations or marriage.
- ◆ The ties of blood relation are called consanguine.
- ◆ Marital ties are called affinal kins.
- ◆ Based on the closeness of relations there are primary, secondary and tertiary kin.
- ◆ A cognate is the kinship system in which people share a common ancestor.
- ◆ The descent commonly traced through the female line, is uterine.
- ◆ The kinship that traces the descendant through the father's lineage is agnatic.

Objective Questions

1. Who defined marriage "as a universal institution that involves residential cohabitation, economic cooperation that leads to the formation of a nuclear family"?
2. Which marriage is commonly referred to as the marriage that takes place within the lineage or group?
3. Which system of marriage wherein can "One man marry one woman"?
4. Which is an institution that permits a man to have more than one wife at a time?
5. Which is the system of marriage wherein can one woman marry several men at a time and keep all of them with herself?
6. What do you call marriage within one's caste, tribe, group, or community?
7. Which is the form of inter-caste marriage wherein a man of higher castes marries a woman of lower caste?
8. What do you call the marriage of a man with the sister of his deceased wife?
9. Which marriage preference rule relies on a widow to marry her deceased husband's brother?
10. Which marriage form is found to be superior to other forms of marriage?

11. What do you refer to, when the marriage involves relationships with three or more people?
12. Which marriage type is otherwise called "Hypergamy"?
13. Which is the institution often called the basic building block of society?
14. Who defined family as a biological unit having a common dwelling place for its members with institutionalised or sanctioned sex relationship between husband and wife?
15. Which type of family system, members of several generations, live under a common household?
16. Which type of family consists of a small group composed of husband and wife and their children?
17. What do you refer to, the family in which authority is vested in the eldest male member of the family?
18. When authority is vested with the female member of the family, it is known as?
19. What is another term for a virilocal family?
20. What is a typical example of the families that trace their lineage through mothers' line?
21. Which kind of kinship relations occurs through the bond of blood?
22. Which kind of kinship relations occur through the marriage relation?

Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. George Peter Murdock | 13. Family |
| 2. Endogamy | 14. Malinowski |
| 3. Monogamy | 15. Extended |
| 4. Polygyny | 16. Nuclear family |
| 5. Polyandry | 17. Patriarchal |
| 6. Endogamy | 18. Matriarchal |
| 7. Anuloma | 19. Patrilocal |
| 8. Sororate | 20. Nair Family |
| 9. Levirate | 21. Consanguinean |
| 10. Monogamy | 22. Affinal kinship |
| 11. Polygamy | |
| 12. Anuloma | |

Assignments

1. Describe the various kinds of kinship terminology
2. Examine and elaborate the major trends in the institution of family
3. Describe recent trends in the forms of marriage
4. Distinguish between the various forms of family
5. Describe the nature of kinship

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Suggested Readings

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UNIT

Religion- Definition and Components, Economic and Political Institutions – Definition and Types

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To become familiar with the dichotomy and components of religious institutions
- ◆ To describe various types of economic institutions
- ◆ To narrate relationships between individuals and economic and political institutions

Prerequisites

All individuals are born and brought up in a particular religious, economic, and political tradition that determines the factors that define their identity and position in society. For instance, at weddings and funerals, we can observe different religious traditions and their influences. When we observe people, we can see that they follow various religious traditions and practices. Some people read the Geetha, while others read the Bible or the Quran. As you see around you, different religions have diverse customs, beliefs, and practices, indicating that religion is a universal institution that influences individuals, groups, and societies. Similarly, human beings are relentlessly trying to fulfil their needs and wants through economic activities and pursuits. The economy is a system that has a main structure and many subsystems attached to it. Together, people facilitate the multifaceted, complex, and varied nature of economic activities, including work or labour, production, investment, and innovation. Similarly, political institutions are an undeniable and unavoidable aspect of human existence. All human beings are interdependent on the state and political system of the state. From this unit, you can elucidate the understanding of political, economic, and religious institutions.

Keywords

Sacred, Profane, Monotheism, Polytheism, Capital, Labour, Polity, Authority



Discussion

3.3.1. Religion: Definition and Components

To your understanding, how is your religion identified? It might be linked to significant religions, like Hinduism, Islamism, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism etc. and other belief systems. Indeed, it is a matter of faith, and they involve things that are beyond our senses. It cannot be readily observed but generally inspires one to move ahead with admiration, worship, beliefs and even fear to its extremity. For many people, these beliefs and values are personal ones. What does religion do in the social life of an individual? Moreover, how does religion indulge in acting as a social institution?

From prehistoric times onwards, religion is demonstrated through nature worship, animal worship, and so on. Every society practices religion in essences so rigorously. At the same time, the nature and practices of religious worship differs from one culture to the other. Primitive beliefs and practices were closely associated with natural events, birth or death ceremonies, and other daily needs of human existence. From the sociological standpoint, we can see that religion plays a significant role in the social structure. It is observed as a set of beliefs and practices that help societies understand the meaning and purpose of life. As far as individuals are concerned, these beliefs and practices are sacred and play a vital role in their social transformation. It is evident that some believe in one god and others worship many gods and goddesses on the basis of customs and beliefs.

As we see, religion is a universal phenomenon perceived differently by individuals in society. The concrete experience, faith, beliefs, sentiments and

practices differ from individual to individual and society to society. Thus, there is no uniformity. A person is said to be religious only if he or she believes in the existence of a supreme being that indulges religious precepts to the conduct of life.

It is very difficult to explain religion within a single definition. It can be understood as a unified system of beliefs and practices of the supernatural that provides norms about the right way to live in a society. It would transcend everyday lives' needs and desires, thus giving greater dignity and meaning to human existence. Though it takes many forms, it provides a sense of meaning and purpose in life. It belongs to the culture in which we live, the status or position which we take, our attitudes towards other people, or more or less to the morals that we adhere to. Religion describes the supreme integrating and unifying force in any human society. At the same time, its relationship to others can be regarded as something sacred, holy, divine, or spiritual. In a broad sense, religion is a relationship between man and the superhuman power that he believes in and feels himself to be dependent upon. This kind of relationship is expressed in the forms of feelings of trust or fear, myths, prayers, rituals and other religious conduct of life. D.N. Majumdar & T.N. Madan considered "religion as the human response to the apprehension of something or power, which is supernatural and super sensory. It is the expression or type of adjustment affected by people with their conception of the supernatural". Thus, religion is a natural response to supernatural powers.

a) Components of Religion

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, religion is a universal phenomenon, but there

are differences in it. How do they differ from each other? Factors such as gods, goddesses, myths, demons, ideals, symbols, natural or supernatural things, and various other kinds like beliefs, path of salvation, sacred and profane, and human relationship with supernatural forces differentiate one religion from another. It is essential to understand what religion is and what its elements are. Let us understand the components of religion in detail.

Religion as a form of Culture: Religion shares the features of culture. It is composed of shared beliefs, values, ideas, and norms that create a sense of identity among people and unite them.

Religion involves beliefs and ritualised practices: All religions are concerned with their ideas and ritual activities. It is a faith in supernatural or superhuman powers. Worship is the core of the religion to express the beliefs and rituals. It is expressed by means of prayers, hymns, and other acts. The concepts of heaven and hell are built around righteous and sinful actions for their members. Believers undertake these rituals to support their faith in the world.

Religion as a sense of purpose or meaning makes one feel that life is ultimately meaningful. It defines values and transcends people's everyday life.

b) Common Elements of Religion

You know that some of the people go to the temple/church/mosque for worship. Some others pray before idols, pictures etc. Some extent offerings; some others pray in their minds. These are the common practices in our day to day life. All these are related with beliefs, rituals, and practices.

Beliefs: We all have or possess our own beliefs, it may be certain or uncertain.

Sometimes, we may not have any reason to believe or not believe it. It is more or less a state of mind that to be true though we are not sure about its origin. How are your religious beliefs shaped? You might hear many stories from your parents or grandparents. The narratives from the holy books, traditions, or religious practices (prayers) you encounter within your families shape your beliefs.

Thus all religions have their beliefs, ideas, doctrines, dogmas, faith and ideologies, which their followers tend to believe. The religious belief system is commonly connected to myths and theologies. These take into account several stories regarding its origin, creation and protection that bind believers into faith. Some examples of religious beliefs can be pointed towards the stories connected with the birth of Christ among the Christian community, the Hindu concept of Trinity, origin of the Quran as a sacred text among Muslim followers and the rest. Religion is thus a matter of beliefs in supernatural forces that is external to humans but influences all their activities and events.

Rituals: It ensures various forms like owing prayers, reverence to a deity, commemoration of various organised activities like sermons (holy preaching or talks) and reading scriptures, performances including special songs, dances or ceremonies. It may also include one's rites of taking feasts, fasting, attending communal festivities, and even those performed at marriages, death ceremonies, etc. In its simplest observance, hand-shaking or greeting each other, wearing special dresses, eating certain special food items are all a kind of ritual. You either practice them or witness such types of activities either at your homes or pilgrimage centers or other places.

Rituals are ceremonies or repetitive practices essential for performing religious actions. In a narrow sense, it's a practice of



worship or activities that have meaningful significance in terms concerning supernatural beings or forces. The most common examples include symbolic acts, ceremonies of any kind, known behaviours like praying, kneeling, dancing, chanting, bowing, feasting, and so forth. These rituals differ from the routine procedures of ordinary life. Like beliefs, rituals have a sacred character. They awaken a sense of the divine and make specific ideas or objects sacred. These performances are part of the religious system since it supports and strengthens faith and supreme empirical entities.

Symbols (creation of meaning): You have seen numerous types of symbols in various places. It may include not only religious but also other non-religious types. Where do you commonly find these symbols? Do you think symbols are essential for religions? Could you point out some examples of such symbols? You just recollect what you have learned in your mathematics classroom. You have solved several calculations using mathematical formulas or symbols ($=$, \sim , $<$, $>$, $+$, $*$). These particular signs indicate various arithmetic abbreviations which codify specific meaning. In the same way, symbols are visible in the form of pictures, signs, words, objects, or gestures. In a simple sense, it is the pictorial representation or expressions of religious facts or notions. We also knew that they are not just symbols but convey particular meanings to us. By seeing a cross or a dharma chakra, we perceive it as a sacred or holy thing. Similarly, several types of symbols embody particular meanings.

Same as that of rituals, symbols are indeed confined to religion. Religions use symbols as an object for representing something beyond its existence. They are mere substitutes for the representation of objects having meaning. It can be of any type ranging from country flags, emblems, wedding rings, historical, literary, cultural entities of any other kind. Moreover, symbols are considered sacred

to which people are emotionally attached. It is symbolised with powerful meanings that elicit strong feelings and commitment. Each culture denominates its peculiar symbols and meanings.

Myths: During our childhood, most of us heard some stories that our parents and grandparents told us. Of which some stories were related to past events or had some traditional or religious connectivity. Few of them were also associated with religious beliefs. These sayings, stories, fictions or narrative fantasies, had broader connotations. Thus, we can remark myths as simply stories without any factual basis and which is difficult to prove.

Moreover, numerous myths are connected with particular religious traditions that explain historical events, popular beliefs, practices or natural phenomena. You might hear these misconceptions from elders about specific accounts of gods, super naturals or extraordinary circumstances that exist beyond everyday human experiences. Such distinct mythologies were found in every religious culture and society.

c) Dichotomy between Sacred and Profane as the Essence of Religion

We have learned the significance of symbols in religion in the last part. Do you know how these symbols become sacred? Humans consider anything sacred, including gods or goddesses, a rock, a tree, sun, moon, earth, birds and animals, etc. As these elements establish sacredness, they become symbols of religious beliefs, sentiments and practices. In contrast, profane is just the opposite of what we call sacred. Anything ordinary, impure or unholy that is not truly devoted to religious purposes is profane. Now, what do you consider as 'sacred' and 'profane' in your religion?

For example, sacred texts, sacred places for worship, sacred months, and all other dedicated supernatural services entitled to reverence and respect refer to sacred. While, profane relates to something that is treated as irreverence (disrespect), dislike, or mistreatment. It probably describes things that do not come under the purview of religion or religious purposes.

Sacred and profane elements constitute or make up religion. Sacred (anything extraordinary) refers to all supernatural entities or the things that are kept apart from daily life which we treat with utmost respect. It is the unexplainable, unusual, mysterious and powerful facet of life. These supernatural beings or forces are either invisible, intangible or tangible and visible like god, rock, cross, tree, earth, moon, animals, birds, synagogue, church altar, etc. It consists of religious beliefs, duties, rites that receive special religious treatment. For instance, once these are established as 'sacred,' they become symbols of the supernatural beings and influence our religious beliefs, sentiments and practices.

On the other hand, profane (anything ordinary) includes familiar and explainable objects or everyday life events. That is, everything which is not holy or unholy is treated as profane. It can be any place, act or thing regarded as an everyday attitude of commonness, utility, and familiarity. It takes precedence over the sacred as it denies the holy to some extent.

d) Functions of Religion

As we have noted, religion involves patterns of beliefs and behaviour that help society meet its basic needs. As individuals, what role does religion play in our daily lives? Each of you has your perspectives regarding it. Your religious faith and practices shape your religiosity. For some, it gives meaning and purpose to life. For a

few, it may be a motivation that provides physical and emotional well-being at times of distress. For others, it helps to strengthen social bonds, enhance self-actualisation or control hostility and violence. Despite personal beliefs and disinterests, religion contributes significant functions to society. Various theoretical approaches propose to explain religion from different perspectives, including the nature and origin of religion, its function in society, and its role in an individual's life. Let us look at the primary functions performed by religion in society.

As Source of Moral Values and Norms

The stability of society is maintained on the grounds of legitimating social values and norms. Religion lays the foundations of morality (the rules of conduct that insist on following good practices or behaviours and prohibits undesirable ones). It serves as a means to preserve moral, social, and spiritual values. Its integrative force derives values from ethical and moral principles. Without adherence to such moral principles, it would be challenging to maintain the social order of society.

Promotes Social Cohesion

Throughout human life, religion becomes an essential requirement. Among its many functions, it cohesively unites people. For example, though different religions share their religious interpretations, it promotes collective unity and social solidarity of the group members. Rituals are built up through prayers, worship at institutions (church, mosques, temple, gurudwaras), and many other observances and ceremonial practices. We can see that it reinforces social cohesion since religion maintains conformity and unites people together without chaos and disharmony. Religion holds individuals together to develop a sense of belongingness and unity among each other. Besides, it serves a shared sense of purpose in unifying people. With the provision of a common set of norms



and values, they act as an important source of social solidarity. In a way, it teaches all members to realise the way they behave with each other.

Act as Social Control

All religions have the same unifying force in one way or the other that it controls individuals' lives and actions. The integrative force of religion helps people to abide by mores and folkways. Religion reinforces social control in any society through its disciplinary values. One's religious beliefs greatly influence one to follow good moral behaviour. Even within your religion, you all are trained to follow certain do's and don'ts that distinguish the right from wrong. Once you are within the system of religion, you strictly adhere following its principles and ideas. For instance, some taboos exist in various religions. It includes forbidding eating of beef and pork among some religions (sets limits to food and dining), some ritual regulations in killing animals, restrictions in sexual behaviours of members, sets limits to marrying outside religion, and many others. Likewise, primarily the power of religion lies in controlling individuals at each stage of their life, and violation often triggers strict punishments. In many societies, it restricts people from violating social norms (becoming deviant) and committing crimes despite government laws. Eventually, religious beliefs influence people's activities. The same regulates social control mechanisms by setting rules of conduct and moral principles for people to follow. Members are abided to follow it to maintain social adherence. It perpetuates social stability and sanctions approved actions for the individuals to lead a disciplined life. Rewards and punishments regulate human behaviour and actions. It adopts its methods to reintegrate the non-compliant social group.

Supports Social Change

Religion impedes social change and

obstructs protests. It stands for or against bringing social change. At some point in time, society experiences these in the form of protests or conflicts. These changes would not always be negative, and there would be positive changes that are beneficial to the welfare of the society.

e) Types of Religion

World religions accomplish various categorisations including monotheism, polytheism, ethical and ancestral (Animism and Totemism). The different belief system depicts the various forms of people's worships. Few religions like Islam, Christianity, and Judaism believe in the concept of a single deity, termed as Monotheism. Hence it possesses the ultimate faith towards one god and only worships this powerful creator (God). On the other hand, polytheism is the belief in multiple deities, prominently found in Hinduism as they worship multiple deities representing a hierarchy of gods even those from many caste groupings.

Similarly, it is important to note religions such as Confucianism and Buddhism that recognise no gods at all. Still, they revolve around a set of principles that define the order of the universe. Followers of these ethical religions seek these principles as more important than the belief in a personalised god. In most traditional societies, primitive religion plays a central role in cultural life. Thus, individuals specialise in religious (magical) knowledge. Animism and Totemism are two such religious forms. Animism, supernatural entities, is a belief in spirits, animate beings (animals), or inanimate objects (including trees, rivers, mountains) that greatly influence humans. People themselves attach to these spirits as it interacts with or influences them in a variety of ways. However, Totemism believes in any species of plants or animals (objects referred to as totems) thought to possess supernatural powers. These objects are symbolised as

sacred, worshiped through various rituals that direct human existence.

Non-believers who do not believe in any divine entity, known as 'atheists,' also found in every society. Though they

are non-conformist to religious beliefs or practices, they strictly adhere to morality and codes of human behaviour.

Table 3.3.1: Various Classification of Religions

Religious Classification	Divine Worship/Belief	Examples
Monotheism	Single god	Islam, Judaism, Christianity
Polytheism	Multiple gods	Hinduism
Ethical	Not concerned with a personalised god	Buddhism, Confucianism
Animism	Spirits, Animate beings (Animals, plants) or Inanimate objects (Rivers, trees, Mountains)	Common among indigenous tribal people
Totemism	Supernatural forces or Human- nature connection	Primitive groups
Atheism	No deities (non-believers)	Atheists

3.3.2. Economic and Political Institutions: Definitions and Types

Now we will discuss another important social institution which is the economic and political institutions. In the first section, we shall discuss the different definitions of the

economic system and list its types. In the following section, we will elaborate on the political institutions.

Political institutions and economic institutions are conjoined branches of social sciences. We will study how Sociology views it. The basic premise of economic

and political institutions is to facilitate relationships between individuals, institutions of economic and political fulfillment, and governments. What do you mean by an economic institution? Why do we need to study it in sociology? It can be stated with certainty that human beings are social animals and economic beings.

The economic institutions develop and contribute to the standard of living in a country. In contrast, the political aspects control economic development through negative and positive influences. In the following section, we will dissect various aspects of the economic and political system to develop a comprehensive understanding of society and have a sociological understanding of the economic and political system.

a) Meaning of Economic Institutions

The purpose and functions of 'economy' as an institution is precisely concerned with humans' efforts to satisfy their basic needs like food, clothing and shelter and includes all other activities to lead a comfortable and luxurious life. The economic activities of individuals are multifaceted, which give rise to the economic system consisting of production mechanisms devised by person, his/her capacity to store, the provision of exchange and transportation of goods or the distribution of wealth, goods or services. Thus, a person not only began to produce goods but consume the products and cannot alone be involved in the production and consumption process. She/He has to deliver the produced item to other people and take other items, which initiates exchange. The production, consumption, exchange and distribution of goods and services whereby person engages himself/ herself contributes to the beginning of an economic system. Distinctly economic institutions also form the basic institutions like others because

each society has an economic system that ranges from simple to complex forms.

The term "economic" in particular stands for the provision of goods and services to satisfy wants. It is expressed more in terms of money, prices of goods and services, including labor (occupation), property or quantity of goods produced. In simple terms, this economic system includes the banking system, government or private organisations, corporations, business firms, competitive markets and enterprises that facilitate the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services. By and large, our economic wants are satisfied by these highly systematised social arrangements or organisations without which the economic functioning would be futile. Therefore, the primary functions of economic institutions consist of fulfilling human needs, enabling financial support, providing opportunities to earn a livelihood (employment and income generation), and generate a division of labour that allocates specific roles to people based on their skills, capabilities and abilities.

From the above discussions, the social life of humans confronts the process of economic production, distribution and consumption that together gives rise to the economic system. Now we shall discuss these features in detail.

Production

For any economy, the activity of production becomes at most peculiar. The way in which goods and services are produced or created involves the process of production. For instance, how do we make things? As stated previously, it involves the extraction and gathering of resources to create goods and services. Natural resources, raw materials, human resources, and economic assets are required to derive the final product. Harvesting, manufacturing, mining, fishing, agriculture and forestry, all belong to the production process. The typical example includes making furniture, extracting raw

cotton to use it in the textile industry, manufacturing cars, airplanes, steel, and many others.

Distribution

Now we have seen the process of production. What do manufacturers do further with the products they produce? First, they must have a distribution channel to properly distribute or exchange your products to the customers' hands. The produced goods like automobiles, electrical appliances, stationeries, luxury items, and others, such as agrarian products, are delivered to the market for distribution. The manufacturers find a market or the distributors for the distribution center. Hence, distribution is a social mechanism through which goods and services produced are exchanged.

Consumption

In simple terms, buying or using up goods and services in an economy involves consumption. As peculiar to the process of production, consumption requires the purchasing of goods and services produced. Thus, consumption necessitates human lives and becomes the foundation of all economic activities in society. Think about the process of buying something. What do you purchase? You purchase the things that you need most. For example, you went for shopping, bought provisional items, apparels, utensils, cosmetics, consumed food items, purchased electrical goods, vehicles like cars, bicycles, and your list may go on according to your needs. These are your items of consumption.

b) Basic Elements of the Economy

Now we can see, in any economy, production, distribution and consumption seem to be the major concerns for people to make decisions and choices. The first of its kind includes the need for production that

motivates the members to produce goods and meet their sustenance. The second step is that of distributing what has been produced. Finally, the essence of consumption is also inevitable in making the economy grow.

In any economy, the goods and services produced derive greater significance. The objects or things needed for the production of goods and services were termed as 'Resources'. Hence, the process centers around producing goods and services, including three principal types: land, capital, and labor. These productive resources form the essential elements referred to as the factors of production.

Land

The whole production process can be underlined to a single factor, 'land', hence land is considered as the prime factor of production. Apart from the common understanding of its usage of physical land, it comprises natural or physical resources desirable for production. Thus, it includes land, raw materials and all other material products that humans make.

Capital

If you are planning to start a new business, you know that you need investments or raise funds to get it started. These funds or resources that you always need is your capital. In a sense, these are assets that you use to create wealth. Moreover, the assets enhance value to your business. But, to your understanding, capital is not all about money (economic capital) only. It includes all other items like types of machinery or equipment that you use, all other assets, skills and abilities of peoples, their relationships to each other (human capital or social capital) that benefit you to produce goods and services that form your capital.

The productive material objects made by humans, including tools, machines, factories,



and any other goods that satisfy personal wants, are capital, which refers to the "means of production".

Labour

The economic work undertaken by individual is labor. It consists of all kinds of physical or mental exertion carried out with the motive of monetary rewards or wages. For example, those who work in factories, services offered by lawyers, doctors, teachers, engineers, waiters, artists, pilots, mechanics, drivers, and works done by all people contribute to labor. Any effort for the mere sake of pleasure or social service is not considered to be labor. On the other hand, the effort or the human energy spent in making the products is called labor. The other important factors involved in the production processes stands specific to the skills and commitment of the workers (all the human resources) that drive the production of material goods

c) Types of Economic Systems

A great variety of economic systems exist to know how man uses his environment to satisfy his needs. As long as there occurs some creation and distribution of goods and services, there has been a reference to some economy. As societies grew in size and complexity, economies grew larger. Each of which is defined by its history, features and development. The ancient economy was different from that of modern times. The major types of economies can be distinguished as the hunter-gatherers or the collecting economy, pastoral economies, feudalistic, industrial, and capitalist economies. Let us now look at the features of each of these various types of economies.

Primitive Hunting and Gathering Economy

Are you aware of the earliest societies that

are quite different from recent societies? For example, societies in which people lived in all their simplicity without any technological advancements. The earliest forms of society were primitive economies in which land is collectively owned. Having slight economic growth, they started using simple technologies (like stones, sticks, arrows, etc.) and goods were exchanged on a barter system. These kinds of economies were self-sufficient in fulfilling their economic needs despite lacking of any kind of specialisation (including division of work). It is believed that the beginning of those simple economy dates back to primitive times that arose with the humans' need to satisfy living and hunger.

In primitive societies, humans satisfy their needs mainly through food gathering and hunting. The collecting or food-gathering economy consists of humans' direct utilisation of the products of nature for their consumption, such as collecting fruits, nuts, and all other plants or hunting of animals for their survival. These economies were called hunting and gathering economies since they entirely depended upon their immediate environment for survival. Therefore, it is the oldest known kind of economy that processes the goods consumed primarily through this simple sustenance collection, wherein they largely meet their needs.

Pastoral Economy

Later on, apart from hunting and gathering, pastoring animals for food and transportation permitted them to produce a surplus of goods even for consumption in future. Hence, domestication of animals and using them as a significant food source becomes the distinctive feature of pastoral economies. Few societies remain primarily pastoral with no permanent settlements. Instead, they moved from one place to the other for the traditional keeping of animals. Such economies are usually nomads since they change their place of residence based on the availability of food,

water, and pastures. Goats, sheep, donkey's, cattle and chicken were the animals used by the pastoral economy. This type of economy also followed a "barter system" that relied on exchange of goods. For example, they exchange cattle for maize or goats for millets and so on. During its initial stages, they engaged in trade to produce surplus goods even between other economies.

Agricultural/ Subsistence Economy

The majority of the people either directly or indirectly depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. The distinctive nature of the agricultural economy is remarkable with the cultivation of various crops such as paddy, coconut, pepper, cardamom, and tea, coffee, tapioca etc. The characteristic features of these types of economies include higher cultivation of crops and greater food production. Thus, agriculture becomes the stable economic activity that earmarks huge food surpluses. Advancement in crop cultivation, irrigation, manuring and rotation of crops using animal carts, hand hoe, axes etc., becomes associated with agriculture.

One of the major characteristics of a subsistence economy relied on the principle that goods produced were not meant for exchange, instead, they consumed what they had produced.

Feudal Economy

Have you ever heard of a system of relationships that flourished in medieval times where the chiefs or lords hold the land? Its possession was granted to the vassals who, in exchange, offered their service to the lord. The transformation from agrarian system to feudal economy earmarked on the importance of a money-based economy, where the prime source of income becomes land ownership. It was more of a structure of contract.

The 'rule of lord' characterised the feudal or manorial system. Thus, the economic system where the tradition ruled by the feudal landlords based on their ownership of land evolved. Under which the peasants (farmers or the vassals) were tied to the land of the feudal lords. Under feudalism, peasants were always bound to cultivate their lord's land. In exchange for the service, the lords exploited the serfs by providing food, crops, crafts, tribute, and other services to the landlords. Thus, the serfs tenanted the vast tract of land for their landlords. Hence, under the feudal system, tenants were devoted to work in their lord's land, they were compelled to serve him and forced to give a part of their cultivated products to the lord.

Though feudalism had commenced as a contract with the exchange of land tenure, the lords could not lend new lands to their serfs, nor could they claim their right to redistribute lands which in practice was not considered a working relationship. The economy's transformation results in the gradual decline of the feudal system based on land ownership and service and gives rise to more advanced developments. Increasingly money-based exchange changed the way the feudal system worked.

Industrial Economy

The primary mode of production that relied on agriculture was replaced with machines and the advent of new technologies. The industrial revolution marked greater transformations in the economies with increased production and considerable growth in the division of labour, trades and increased specialisations. This economic system is significantly different from other systems. The most peculiar features of industrial economies represent factories and machines, followed by adopting new inventions in the industry, accumulating capital with increased production and distribution, and intensifying trade activities. These necessary



conditions bring economic effects to the system in various forms.

Capitalistic Economy

A new economic system emerged that replaced feudalism, from a kind of economy in which capital interest based on profit motive became the primary driving force of the society. The key aspects of the capital economy consist of 'private property' and 'ownership of resources.'

Thus the concept of Capitalism, introduced by the social theorist Karl Marx, accords:

within the system, the capitalists (primarily called Bourgeoise) were those who own and control the means of production (machines, factories, or materials required for production) and on the other end, there are workers (known as Proletariat) who sell their labor to the capitalists. Hence, the absolute domination of the capitalists to control the means of production exploits the proletariat in terms of their labor. Thus, in the capitalist system, those who own the means of production extract more advantage, which symbolises extreme inequality and exploitation.

Table. 3.3.2 Types of Economy and Characteristics

Types of Economy	Key Characteristics
Collecting(Hunter-gatherers)	One of the oldest known types of economy consists of food– gatherers or hunters. Early humans depend upon their immediate environment for survival.
Pastoral	The major consumption pattern of this kind of economy includes the domestication of animals. They pasture animals for food and transportation to produce a surplus of goods.
Agricultural	Abundance of cultivation of crops and greater food production increase the supplies to yield a greater surplus.
Feudal	An economy purely based on the ownership of land is called a feudalistic economy. Feudalism, the tradition ruled by a feudal lord in which the peasants were tied to their lord's land.
Industrial	Industrial economies are based on the use of machines to produce goods. Therefore, Industrialisation is characterized by an increase in production and considerable growth in the division of labour.
Capitalist	The economic system of production in which private individuals own goods or capital.

3.3.3 Political Institutions: Definitions and Types

In all economies, the political system plays a central role in having the right to rule. Broadly, examining, it is all about what we call the state, government or polity that exercise power, subject to law-making or precedes its jurisprudence within a society. Politics as a social institution may be regarded as a formal organisation that distributes power, sets goals and makes decisions that direct political life. Politics has been observed in all human interactions involving civics, corporates, academia, and other social realms. In every society of any magnitude, these organised forms of political institutions tamper overall social control. Primarily political institutions are concerned with the distribution of power in society. The political system serves some necessary functions, such as exercising authority or power, controlling political units, and interfering with formulation and applying social policies. This agency can also exercise other primary functions by considering various duties and responsibilities that deal with maintaining internal order and external security, ensuring justice, safeguarding individual freedom, regulating individuals' actions, and promoting citizens' general welfare.

Political systems of any nation mean its government, which directs the state's political affairs or the rule it imbibes to run the state ahead. It is the political unit vested with power and authority. Moreover, it is regarded as the guardian to maintain the internal social order that protects persons, property, and rights through laws. As a social institution, it ensures the peace and safety of its citizens. In any society, if the government is unable to perform its proper functioning, the system outbreaks by disintegrating law and order. Such disintegration often leads to anarchy (without firm government or law) in all facets of society.

"Political institutions are defined as those institutions concerned with the social structure of 'power' and the most prominent political institution is regarded as the state." In a general sense, political institutions include those institutions concerned with any nation's power structure, which entails many of the institutions of society such as family, workplace, school, and even religious centers that have structured social inequality in decision making. Thus, we can regard the state as a prominent political institution.

There are different conceptions of political institutions in a society. It often equates its agreement on the meaning based on several concepts. The following are the key concepts that are often equated with political institutions.

◆ Government

In each society, an organisation functions with the power and authority that controls a group of people living within a particular region. This ruling body must be recognised or elected by the people. You may have come across news related to a country's policy, welfare, law and order, and many other affairs. All these revolve around its political system. So, do you know what a government is and how this organisation functions in society? It is a system responsible for the welfare of the citizens, which manages the entire law and order of a country or a state. You can experience it right from framing the policies to having the basic civic amenities. As you already know, in India, each state is governed by a state government. In addition, there are separate governing bodies like municipal corporations, villages, or grama-panchayaths for ensuring governance at its various levels.

A set of formal organisation or institutions by which a society is ruled represents a government. It directs the political life of society as well as demands compliance on

the part of the people. Moreover, regarded as the absolute body that can enforce laws in a country as a whole, its people and organisations. The institution also specifies legitimate use of power to control human behaviour within its boundaries. It is considered the pivotal institution or the acting arm of any economy or state that protects, controls and maintains order. Beyond that it is embodied with the political process within which a body of representatives gains authority and power to take up and carry out decisions for society.

◆ State

Usually, when you say your place, you say, 'I belong to this state, or I am from Kerala'. You might also be aware about state authorities, state universities and state administrations controlled and operated by the state. So, what constitutes a state? Most broadly, a state is a political organisation of a society or government institution. The state is more or less used as a synonym for nation, society and government. The state as the dominant political institution is broader than that of other institutions. At the same time, it also controls the use of coercion in society.

The state is a political division that possesses a degree of autonomy. It is an abstract embodiment of political institutions. The source of ultimate power in any economy is the state because it is the body with the monopoly to exercise authority. The state is the formal representation of government where the functions are carried out by law. It is viewed as a political form that entitles legitimate sovereignty over a territorial area and claims authority over its members of the society.

◆ Power

You might have studied power as the strength or energy required to run or move forward such as physical abilities. It is

also defined as the ability to act or exert influence over others. For example, the means of government to collect taxes and the judiciary takes action when law and order are disobeyed viewed as an examples of power. Power is central to the political process and is defined as achieving the desired ends. It is generally perceived as the ability of one person or group to direct the behaviour of another. It is the act of having influence or domination over others.

Political power is concerned with the type of power held by a group in a society that allows the particular group to administer control over the distribution of public resources, labour or wealth. The state generally exercises power through its governments. However, it should be noted that political powers are not alone limited to the head of states or ruling parties, it extends to persons or groups such as extremist groups, multinational organisations, religious corporations or military authorities.

◆ Authority

The concept of authority is often substituted with 'power', however, they differ from each other. Authority denotes the right to exercise power or is said to be the state of legitimacy. In other words, it represents the legitimate possession of power. Henceforth, the control or power over the individuals, which is socially accepted as right, is authority. In political institutions, the government holds the authority to be accepted by its citizens and is willingly obliged to obey its commands. Therefore, authority denotes the set of rules, procedures, traditions and norms that binds the given social unit.

◆ Political Party

Can you name a few examples of political parties that you might know? Socialist and Communist parties, Peoples Party, National Liberal Party, the Republican Party,

Revolutionary Party, and Democratic Party are few examples. You are also familiar with the elections contested for selecting representatives to Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Members from various political party's contest and win elections to hold power in government. Numerous political parties function across the world. These are organised at national, state, and local levels. Usually, every party has their party leaders and activists. Do you know why we need such political parties in a country? Let us know more about the significance of this in a political system.

Political parties represent organised association or collectivities of people. They are organised for specific political purposes or shared visions. This group of people organise themselves to acquire and exercise political power. Thus, its primary function constitutes the propagation of ideas and principles for attaining political power through elections. In addition, each political party aims to mobilise voters to unite with each other for common interests, goals, and ideals.

◆ Sovereignty

Sovereignty is the state's most essential distinguishing feature to have the supreme monopoly of authority within its boundaries. It emphasizes the state's supreme power over the citizens and subjects them to unconditional law and order.

Despite these attributes of the political institution, elections and voting remain indispensable to the political system. Voting for electing the representatives forms a significant political process, and people's right to vote has become a fundamental right guaranteed by each country's constitution.

a) Types of Political System

Now from the preceding discussions about the meanings and essential functions

of political institutions is made clear. But, as you can see, though it serves many functions, over the development of the political system, the ways and the functions carried out by governments changed drastically, resulting in various forms of governments. Therefore let us understand a few types of government.

Historically, various forms of government have evolved to outfit the numerous needs of the citizens. In addition, to various cultural differences and the many means of holding power, different states differ from several forms of government. Thus, we now discuss distinct forms of political systems, each typifying one that is from better than the other. The first of its kind was the emergence of democratic and non-democratic governments named monarchies, technocracies, oligarchy, and others such as totalitarianism and authoritarianism.

◆ Monarchy (Kingship)

During the earlier and medieval times, the power of a single- family is passed over from generation to generation. For example, kings, princes, princesses, and others officially rule the state until their death or they decided to abandon their throne. People valued such kinds of government due to their traditional significance and ceremonial rites. The most familiar forms of monarchy are evident within the rule of Queen Elizabeth in the United Kingdom and countries like Saudi Arabia and Oman.

In a political system, if the supreme power rests in the hands of a single individual or ruler who has unrestricted power over its people and the state. Such forms of government are the monarchical government. Therefore, such persons who head or control the state are referred to as monarchs with absolute or supreme power.

◆ Theocracy



Are you familiar with the form of government in which a specific religious ideology determines leadership and authority? Perhaps, Iran is the best example of a theocratic state (ruled by religious leaders) in the world. Hence, in such a form of government, a supreme religious leader functions to serve as the supreme authority of the state.

Therefore, theocracy is a form of government that considers a god or deity as the state's supreme civil ruler. In this kind of government, it is believed that the control of the state lies in the hands of immediate divine guidance of religious leaders. Thus, they are commonly stated as state-sponsored religions since religious law controls the state's legal system. These differ from other secular forms of government in terms of moral and theological ideas.

◆ Oligarchy

Can you point out any country where you notice the power and authority rests upon the hands of a small class of privileged people who share the same interests? Countries like Russia, China and Iran are few examples that follow oligarchies. In the ruling systems, the oligarchs make all decisions. Unlike the king's rule, an oligarchy is a different form of government as the power is concentrated within the hands of a few people.

Suppose the power effectively rests within a small elite segment or group of society. In that case, such forms of government are known as Oligarchy. It means the power of a few people that gives authority for the dominant group to rule. Such power is generally gained through wealth, family, nobility, religious, military, or economic controls.

◆ Autocracy

Let us now look at another form of government in which the rule is vested in the hand of one individual. Are you familiar with any country where people are denied their rights and not have a say in the decision-making process? Such governments include the People's Republic of China (Communism), Cuba, and North Korea. Nazi Germany, Mussolini's rule in Italy also form a prominent example of autocratic rule.

Autocracy represents a form of government in which a single person (individual dictator) or a small group (a dominant political party) claims unlimited power. The political power is vested in a single person known as an 'autocrat'. This kind of government exists independently beyond the will of the citizens. Thus, all economic, social, political, and military power is vested in an autocrat's hands with limited choices to people.

◆ Democracy

When we say that India is a democratic country, what does it entail? How does a democratic country function? How is it different from other types of political systems? A country in which people are involved in the formation of a government is a democratic country. We have the free will and right to cast our vote for a particular party. Once people elect them, it comes into power as the ruling party.

Democracy is the most popular form of government or political system whereby all citizens participate equally and have an equal role in the decision-making process, either directly or indirectly. Democracy means 'rule of the people.' This type of government is based on following the popular voting system and the election process to decide who will endure in power. Apart from their voting rights, people in a democracy have greater freedom compared to other political

systems.

The most distinguishing feature of democracy describes the right to govern. All members of the society (citizens) have equal access to power and enjoy universally recognised freedom and liberty. Thus, democracy gives better representation and greater freedom to their citizens in comparison to various other political institutions.

♦ **Authoritarianism and Totalitarianism**

In the next categorisation of the political system, you can see someone having complete control over the people. What do you mean by authoritarian? Just think of your parents. Some parents are very permissive who do not insist on any rules and allow you greater freedom. As contrast to this category, some parents insist on strict rules, commands and demand excessive parenting styles to their children. Accordingly, for instance, rather than giving freedom to people, a government that is more concerned with having people obey their laws is authoritarian. For example, a dictator forms an authoritarian system where everyone should follow what the dictator says or orders. Individual's freedom of judgement and action is always questioned.

The examples for non-democratic political systems like Authoritarian and Totalitarian regimes concentrate on highly centralised

power marked by arbitrary laws. In both political systems, the government has total control of its populace through forceful means. The term authoritarian denotes either the hold of a single power, usually an individual called 'dictator' or a group of people referred to as 'political elite'.

As against democracy, it is a system wherein the total authority is vested in individuals. Thus, such forms of political system suppress or prohibit people's participation in governance. Compared to authoritarian states, totalitarianism exhibits more repressive characteristics. They emphasise greater regulation and control over all aspects of citizen's lives. More likely, it adopts violence and coercive suppression methods to defeat oppositions, which may lead to massive rebellions and widespread revolutions.

Under totalitarian regimes, every aspect of the state, from its socio-political to economic facets were controlled by a single leadership. There are several examples to point out totalitarian regimes in many countries. You would think of the rule of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, the reign of Adolf Hitler in Germany, Communist dictatorship in Soviet Russia and China or Military dictatorship in Iraq, Iran, Egypt and so on as a representation of totalitarianism

Table. 3.3.3 Forms of Government and Characteristic Features

Forms of Government	Characteristic Features
Monarchy	A political system in which a single-family rules from generation to generation. The supreme power typically remains with an individual, often for life or till abdication.
Theocracy	The control of the state lies in the hands of immediate divine guidance or typically by a state-sponsored religion.
Oligarchy	A form of government in which power rests within a small elite group of society such as royalty, wealth, family or religious hegemonies.
Autocracy	A type of government in which a single person (an autocrat) or a small group of people (dominant political parties) claims unlimited political, social, economic and military power.
Democracy	It is the most common political system of modern society that gives power to the people.
Authoritarianism	It refers to any political system that denies people's participation in government.
Totalitarianism	In this form of the political system, the political power is concentrated in the hand of one centralised leadership that extensively regulates people's lives.

Recap

- ◆ Religion implies the relationship between man and the supernatural order of beings or entities.
- ◆ Commonly shared beliefs and rituals, all-encompassing the supernatural.
- ◆ The meaning of religion involves beliefs, myths, rituals, symbols.
- ◆ The religious belief system is commonly connected to myths and theologies, ritual practices.
- ◆ Myths, beliefs, rituals and symbols are the common elements of religion.
- ◆ Sacred refers to extra- ordinary, supernatural entities.
- ◆ Profane includes anything ordinary or unholy objects in everyday life.
- ◆ The social functions of religion help to legitimise norms and values.
- ◆ Animism and Totemism were found in primitive culture.
- ◆ A 'totem' is perceived to possess supernatural powers.
- ◆ Monotheism and Polytheism are the two most influential religions across the world.
- ◆ Monotheists comprise religions that believe only in one god.
- ◆ Polytheism is defined as the belief in several gods.
- ◆ Economic institution refers to the ordering and organisation of human relations and human effort to procure the necessities of daily lives.
- ◆ Man's social life confronts the functional imperatives of production, distribution and consumption.
- ◆ The basic structure of the economy in primitive societies was hunter-gatherers.
- ◆ The private ownership of the capitalist and vigorous growth of means of production gave rise to a capitalistic economy.
- ◆ Political institutions form a necessary mechanism that accounts for the power structure.
- ◆ Democracy is the most common political system of modern society.
- ◆ Democracy means 'rule of the people.'

Objective Questions

1. Which religion worships multiple deities?
2. Which are the two forms of religion common among primitive cultures?
3. Which is a human resource that becomes one of the factors of production?
4. Which economy relies on the cultivation of crops and greater food production?
5. What is an example of pastoral economy?
6. Which system relations of production are based on the feudal lord's ownership of serfs or peasants?
7. Which economy characterises mass production and specialisation?
8. In which economy, does the domination and exploitation of serfs by feudal lords occur?
9. Which institution maintains social order in a society?
10. Which is the formal representation of Government?
11. Which is the most essential characteristic of a state that promises supreme authority within a territory?
12. Which form of government does a single person rule until he or she dies or abdicates the throne?
13. What is it called when an organised government is absent in any society without laws?
14. What is the most defining feature of a democracy?
15. Which political system is more repressive as they regulate and control all aspects of an individual's life?
16. Which is the system of government in which the supreme authority is concentrated in the hands of a single person or within a small group?
17. What type of government is it called when the power structure is distinguished by royalty, wealth, family bonds, and military control?

Answers

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Polytheism | 10. State |
| 2. Totemism and Animism | 11. Sovereignty |
| 3. Labor | 12. Monarchy |
| 4. Agricultural Economy | 13. Anarchy |
| 5. Domestication of animals | 14. Voting |
| 6. Feudalism | 15. Totalitarianism |
| 7. Industrial economy | 16. Autocracy |
| 8. Feudal economic system | 17. Oligarchy |
| 9. Government | |

Assignments

1. What are the major components of political institution
2. Describe the different elements of religious institutions
3. What are the main characteristics of economic institution
4. Elaborate the features of different types of political institutions
5. Distinguish between profane and sacred

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BLOCK

Group Behaviour and Social Control



UNIT

Social Groups: Definition, Characteristics and Classification

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To introduce the concepts of group behaviour and social control
- ◆ To narrate the features and agencies of social control
- ◆ To explain the characteristics of social conformity and deviance

Prerequisites

Hope you have seen groups of trees in a forest, a group of birds or a herd of animals. What makes them stay together? What are the natural binding forces that decide their spaces and gestures? Researchers have proved that the plant and animal world follow a common pattern with respect to the environmental cycles and climate. Similarly in the social world, human beings observe a sequence that decides the way of common behaviour and activities. As social beings we are into family, peer group, neighbourhood, workplace, political parties etc. The members of an assemblage are closely associated with the day to day life.

We belong to respective groups just because we practice certain norms related to it. We perform our actions knowingly or unknowingly. A family structure expects cooperation, empathy, love and support from us. Similarly a workplace demands discipline, assurance and obligation. It is the practice of these rules or norms, which confirm our membership in the groups. Once we violate the norms, we are subjected to scrutiny, warning, discomposure, conflict and in the end rejection. In this unit we shall discuss such collectivistic perceptions and social groups. Deviance and the aspects of social control would be an interesting topic of discussion as we all are part of some group in every day social life.

Keywords

Group, primary group, secondary group, reference group, Proximity

Discussion



Image 4.1.1



Image 4.1.2

Consider the aggregates of people gathered in a stadium. Many people in that stadium have brown hair in common or some may be studying sociology for their degree. These people do not make up a group or they may not even be aware of one another. People who share some similar characteristics or status in common are called category in Sociology.

Individuals in an aggregate or a social category become a social group, only if they share a sense of belonging with each other.

4.1.1 Social Groups

Do people in proximity always constitute a group? Then how is a group different from mere collection of individuals?

Consider Image 4.1.1 where people are gathered to watch a soccer cup match in a stadium. All the people present in the stadium on that day just happened to be at the same place at the same time. They are called an aggregate. On the other hand the national football team players in that ground playing soccer (Image 4.1.2) is an example of a social group. The team members will share meaningful relationships with each other and they interact regularly sharing common interest and purpose.

Our life begins as a member of the group called family. As we grow up, we come across a number of other groups to fulfill different needs in our life.

As a person, you may belong to many groups such as an ethnic group, your workplace/colleague group, your college class, a sports team or a political party etc. All these constitute a social group. Our survival in this society is closely associated with these groups. They play an important role in shaping our values, attitude and personality.

These collective bodies of individuals enjoying meaningful relationships are called social groups and this concept is one of the central ones in Sociology.

In this unit, we will move further to understand the basic concepts of social groups and different classifications of social groups. In other words we will start to explore, how individuals as part of society function in groups.

Take a minute, think about other groups in which you are a member of. List down any five groups you are a member of.

The term group consists of a minimum of two individuals or the society as a whole. Therefore we cannot define a group with a single definition. Following are some of the definitions by different sociologists on social group and they deal with different aspects of social group.

2. MacIver and Page define social group as “any collection of human beings who are brought into human relationships with one another.”

4. Horton and Hunt in their book *Sociology* (1984) asserted “social group as an aggregate of categories of people who have consciousness of membership and interaction.”

Concept of social group is central one in Sociology, which has the following basic elements:

b) Members of a social group have definite relationships and interaction among them.

d) Mutual awareness among the members.

Each group has its own peculiarities. For them to be a social group, they should have the following characteristics:

ii. Interaction among members: How individuals act and react in relation to others is important in social groups. The way we interact by means of speech, gestures or even through writings make us connected with other members of the group.

We join educational institutions for learning, join political parties based on our interest, or join a particular organisation to earn money. Other members in that group also join with a similar purpose or interest.

v. Similar behaviour: Members of a group behave more or less in a similar way. In a university classroom, students will arrive more or less on time, sit in an orderly manner, listen to lectures and take notes and leave

at a certain time, thus their behaviours are somewhat similar.

vi. Mutual awareness: Every individual member in a group is aware of others in the group. It does not imply every individual should know about each other personally, but there exists an understanding and they are aware of their roles, statuses, responsibilities, obligations and privileges from group experience.

vii. Size of the group: Two members constitute the smallest possible group called dyad. Sometimes we may use the word 'group' to refer to the entire human race as well. With each additional member, the size of the group also increases. More members in a group mean more stability, but less will be the individual loyalty and responsibility to the group.

viii. Acceptance of common norms and values: Family or an organisation you belong to has its own written or unwritten sets of rules, rituals and values. They are supposed to be followed by every member in that group. These rules and values vary with the purposes of the group. Members will have a consensus about the rules of behaviour, values and goals they should follow in their group environment.

ix. Group practices social control: A group expects certain acceptable behaviour from its members and exerts some control over its members. This type of controlling can be direct or indirect. Violating those guidelines could bring punishment. A person who violates them is called deviant or non-conformist.

x. Groups are dynamic in nature. Social groups are flexible to adapt changes in their functioning. This means groups are not static. Groups adapt to certain changes in their surroundings. They may add or expel members. These changes reflect in

the behaviour of individual members in the group as well.

Think how your family is getting adapted to the technological advancements of the modern world. Are interactions in your family the same as before ten years ago when there were no modern facilities and internet?

xi. Stability of Group: Social groups can be permanent or temporary in nature. Some social groups are permanent. For example, family is a permanent group whereas a crowd or an enquiry committee is temporary in nature.

Why Social Groups are Important?

Groups have become an integral part of our everyday lives knowingly or unknowingly. One is born into this world free but he chooses to live with groups for his survival. We acquire the necessary skills for our survival through the process of interaction with groups of different types. They keep us engaged with our surroundings and with our dear ones.

Groups are essential for meeting our basic physical and psychological needs. Different groups have different functions. Groups of different kinds satisfy our different safety needs such as financial and personal security. Thus groups ensure the overall wellbeing of an individual.

Psychological Needs: Groups such as family, close friends etc provide us with necessary emotional support and recognition. These groups contribute towards the required emotional and intellectual growth.

Engagement in social groups gives the opportunity to express one's talents. Thus an opportunity to achieve one's full potential including one's creative activities is provided by a group. In other words, groups contribute



to the development of the personality of an individual.

Social groups are based on some common interests and shared objectives. Group members will share a sense of belongingness and persistent interaction with each other. Groups will practice social control over their members and they in return will exhibit adherence to common norms and rules of the group.

4.1.2 Classification of Social Groups

There exists an innumerable number of groups around us, but no two groups are equal. Sociologists classify groups in a systematic way based on several factors such as size, occupation, territory, membership, nature of group interests, organisation structure, and nature of interaction and so on.

Based on the extent of relationship among group members, groups are mainly classified into two as primary and secondary groups.

Primary and Secondary Groups

It was Charles Horton Cooley an American sociologist who first mentioned about primary group in his book 'Social Organisation' (1909). Concepts of secondary group emerged in a later period.

i) Primary Groups

Think about your family or circle of friends. Usually this group consists of only a few members and you may have an enduring relationships and affection with them. Won't they last for a long period of time? This kind of group with primary relations is called primary group.

Primary groups mainly influence us during early stages of our life and they stay with us for most of our lifetime. For example, a

husband and a wife share household chores. Roles and responsibilities of members in primary groups are interchangeable.

A nuclear family and peer groups are the typical examples of a primary group.

Take those examples of primary groups such as family or your friends. Let us look into some general characteristics of primary groups.

Characteristics of Primary Group:

i. Primary groups are relatively smaller in size and consist of a limited number of individual members sharing intimacy. They have personal commitments and relationships within the group.

ii. Members in primary groups will be in closer proximity (physical nearness of members) and mostly they make direct face to face interactions with each other. Being in proximity makes exchange of ideas and opinions easy.

iii. Members of the primary group will share close, personal and enduring relationships with each other. Members know everyone's name, status, education and personal information in detail and hold face-to-face relations.

iv. Intense interaction among members are mostly driven by emotional concerns. This holds them together as a group.

v. Primary groups have relatively longer and stable duration because members hold informal understanding with each other.

vi. Primary group members will have commonness in their interests and have limited self-interest. Welfare of the group is considered more important than interest of individual members.

vii. Think about your family, close friends or neighborhood, members of these groups are not only near to each other but also more

or less equally experienced. They have similarity of background.

Similarity in experience helps them to express their opinion freely in the group and to consider the view-point of others.

Importance of Primary Group:

Primary groups play an important role in the process of socialisation, from which one learns to live a successful social life. Members of these groups will share close, personal and intimate social relationships with each other. It gives them the required emotional support, security and contentment. Thus a primary group fulfills different psychological needs of an individual. Moreover the personality of an individual is largely influenced by group settings. Before getting employed in an organisation or engaging with a certain trade union, you spend most of the early stages of your life with groups such as family, peer group, neighbourhood etc. One learns the initial lessons of social norms, standards, beliefs, morals, sacrifice, co-operation, sympathy, culture and values from their interaction with these kinds of primary groups. They will contribute to the development of self-identity and personality of an individual. A primary group expects its members to follow certain values, rituals and rules. They act as an agent of social control by regulating their activities, behaviours and relations in a group. But remember all primary groups need not always satisfy an individual and there may be instances of conflict among group members.

Primary group is a small group of people who share common interests and personal relationships with each other. Family or close friends of peer group constitute the best example of a primary group.

ii) Secondary Groups

Another major classification of groups

is secondary group. Mostly they share characteristics that are opposite to that of primary groups.

Do the organisations you are employed and the primary group of family influence you the same way?



Image 4.1.3

Employees of a large corporate company is an example of secondary group. See image 4.1.3

We all know in large multinational companies, individuals are more focused on the task at their hand, rather than on enduring personal commitments. Although they share similar interests, company as an organisation has less significance on the lives of workers involved. These kinds of groups with less personal relations and intimacy are called secondary group.

Generally we involved with these groups in the later stages of life i.e. mostly in our adulthood or in old age.

Compared to the primary group, members of secondary groups hold more formal, impersonal and limited relationships with each other.

Characteristics of Secondary Groups:

i. Secondary relations: Membership in a secondary group holds an impersonal and formal relationship. For example, a clerk in a bank counter interacts with customers

in a daily basis but both are not concerned about each other in a personal level.

ii. Membership is voluntary: Interestingly memberships in secondary groups are optional, interchangeable and can be replaced by another participant. One chooses to be a member of a secondary group. If you leave an organisation or a class, you will be replaced with another employee or a student.

iii. Special interest groups: Secondary groups generally come together to accomplish a specific purpose by individuals with same interest or needs. Trade unions are formed for the betterment of employers. Universities and colleges are established for providing education and thus secondary groups are goal oriented.

iv. Indirect communication: Communication in secondary groups is mostly impersonal and indirect in nature. Communication in a secondary group may use mass media sources such as newspaper, internet, telephone etc., to connect with other members. Think how information is communicated in a factory to its employees.

v. Relatively larger in size: Political parties, religious organisations, multinational companies are examples for secondary groups. And they all are bigger in size.

vi. No physical basis: Secondary groups are not limited to a definite area and do not require its members to be in physical proximity. For example secondary groups like the International Red Cross and Rotary Club are international in character.

vii. Formal and Organised structure: Status and roles of group members are clearly specified in a secondary group. There will be a formal authority to control the behaviour of its members. Secondary groups often practice formal means of written social control such as law, legislation, police, court etc.

viii. Limited influence on personality:

People in a secondary group interact on a less personal level than in a primary group. Individuals join a secondary group for acquiring personal, academic, economic achievements and recognition.

ix. Interaction within a secondary group is formal, temporary and specialised in nature. For example consider a Parent Teacher Association, where they assemble with a specific agenda at hand. Interactions in that group will be formal in nature. A secondary group of parents and teachers association can form a primary group among themselves, if they start to develop a kind of personal affiliation and interaction with each other.

Importance of Secondary Groups

Secondary groups are important because they tend to meet specific goals of individuals in society. Joining in certain secondary groups such as universities, business corporations, political parties etc. provide opportunities for achievement and recognition to an individual. Also these large groups bring them on a platform for expressing their talent as well.

In present day society, individuals show more commitment and loyalties towards the larger secondary groups. Political, economic, commercial, educational and cultural fields are familiar with groups of secondary type. Qualities of full commitment to our employment organisation, identification with a political party or sense of duty towards society are found commonly in many secondary groups.

Relatively larger groups that are established to accomplish some specific purpose are called secondary groups. Secondary groups are oriented on some specific goals or common interests.

Differences between Primary and Secondary Groups:

Elements of primary relations such as loyalty, sympathy, cooperation can be found

in secondary groups as well. But we can differentiate these two groups mainly based on the following grounds.

Table no: 4.1.1

Primary Group	Secondary Group
1. Members will have face to face relation	1. Lack intimacy in relation.
2. There will be a spirit of companionship	2. Relatively bigger in size
3. Primary groups are smaller in size	3. specifically restricted to a physical area
4. They are confined to a definite area, thus face to face communication will be there	4. Special interest groups
5. Welfare of the group is more important than interest of individual member.	5. Mostly formal in nature
6. Informal in nature	6. These groups are regulated by a set of formal rules and control
7. These groups are not much organized and mostly will have informal sets of rules and regulations.	7. Secondary groups are largely organized
8. Significant influence on personality development	8. Less influence on personality

Other classifications

Apart from the above-mentioned classifications of Primary-secondary group, sociologists have made many other classifications as well.

Sociologist William Sumner (1840–1910) classified groups into two as In-group and Out-group.

1. In-group and Out-group

Since you are a member of a number of social groups, think about what groups you

identify with and feel attached to?

Let us assume a student pursuing commerce stream in higher education. Even if he had many friends in the science stream, he would find it meaningless to be with a group of science students. On the other hand, being with his friends in the commerce class would be more meaningful to him.

The groups in which we identify and feel a sense of belonging is called an in-group. In out-groups we do not feel a sense of belonging and often feel a sense of competition or even disdain towards each other.



3. Reference Group

Muzafer Sheriff has defined reference groups as those groups to which an individual relates himself as a part or to which he relates himself psychologically.

We consciously or unconsciously are influenced by norms and dominant values of many reference groups in our surrounding. These groups can be based on many factors such as race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, region, ethnicity, age and so on. We use these reference groups as a standard of comparison to guide our behaviour, beliefs, attitudes and values in society. According to Robert K. Merton, reference group behaviour theory aims to systemize the determinants and consequences of those processes of evolution and sub appraisal, in which the individual takes the values or standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference.

Characteristics of Reference Group

Major characteristics of reference groups are:

a) The individual or group compares himself or itself with other individuals or groups.

- b) The individual or group considers the behaviour of the other group or individual as ideal and tries to imitate it. For example a teenager may imitate seniors for adopting their dressing style.

c) In reference group behaviour the individual or group desires to rise higher in a social scale like their group of reference and the individual or group are aware of its defects or weakness.

- d) The feeling of relative weakness or defects leads to the relative deprivation in the individual or group. i.e., an individual



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or group may feel inferior or may be treated unfair compared to another individuals/ groups.

The groups in which we identify ourselves are called In-group, we are outsiders in the Out-group concept. Groups with members of the same status are called horizontal groups. Vertical group include members from different strata and are usually a larger group.

The groups to which an individual relates himself as a part of is called a reference group. An individual or a group aspires to be like a member of a reference group and uses them as a standard representing opinions, attitudes, or behaviour patterns to emulate.

We have learned that a group is a collection of human beings with meaningful interaction. Interactions in groups make him connected with other fellow humans.

The group experiences make an individual a social being. Groups are mainly classified into two, primary and secondary groups. In-group-out group, horizontal-vertical are

the other classifications of groups we learned in this module. Different groups give you different experiences and without groups our survival in this society could have become problematic.

Social groups as an integral component of society always inspires sociologists to explore more. As society is getting more and more complex, the significance of social group also changes with time.

Now you have got a basic understanding of the concepts of a social group. When we look around our socio-political environment, we might have noticed many fractions of groups exist within a large group. Sometimes these groups can act as pressure points on the large group or on society as a whole. The way students union association, labour union, professional associations, religious and political parties influence our large groups is interesting. Read further on pressure groups and identify these groups in your surroundings. Sociologist Robert K. Merton has elaborated the theory of reference group, which may be referred for further understanding.

Recap

- ◆ The collective bodies of individuals with meaningful relationships are called social groups.
- ◆ Social Group may be thought of as a number of persons, two or more, who have some common objects of attention.
- ◆ Group members have common loyalty and participate in similar activities.
- ◆ Social group is an aggregate of categories of people who have consciousness of membership and interaction.
- ◆ Charles Horton Cooley an American sociologist, first mentioned about Primary Group in his book *Social Organisation*.
- ◆ Members in primary groups will be in closer proximity.



- ◆ Sociologist William Sumner (1840–1910) classified Groups into two as In-Group and out-group.
- ◆ In-group/out-group distinction can be used to build group Identity or solidarity (i.e, we feeling) among Group members.
- ◆ Sociologist Robert Merton elaborated the theory of reference groups.
- ◆ Sorokin and Miller differentiated social groups into two major types as horizontal and vertical groups.

Objective Questions

1. Who defined social group as ‘any collection of human beings who are brought into human relationships with one another’?
2. What is the basic unit of a group?
3. Which are the examples for social groups?
4. Which is the smallest possible group of two?
5. What are the major classifications of groups?
6. Who introduced the concept of primary group?
7. Which are the two characteristics of the primary group?
8. What type of membership is the feature of a secondary group?
9. Which group has the ‘sense of belongingness’?
10. Who developed the reference group theory?
11. Which group relates to the individual himself and as a part or to which he relates himself psychologically?

Answers

1. MacIver and Page
2. Individual
3. Family, neighbourhood
4. Dyad
5. Primary and secondary group
6. C.H Cooley
7. proximity, Intense interaction
8. Voluntary
9. In-group
10. Robert K Merton
11. Reference group

Assignments

1. Briefly classify social groups with examples
2. Describe the difference between in-groups and out-groups
3. Define social groups with needed examples
4. Narrate the characteristics of Reference groups

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UNIT

Social Control: Definition, Characteristics, Agencies of Social Control

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To introduce the concept of social control
- ◆ To explain the characteristics of the agencies of social control
- ◆ To narrate the types of the social agencies of social control

Prerequisites

Individuals are unique in their attitudes, ideas, interests, and values. Even zygotic twins, do not hold the same attitudes, habits, or interests. Think about this complex society made of 7.9 billion individuals. What will happen if you have unrestricted freedom to act and behave in your society? What will happen if tens of thousands of people behave the same way as you do? If one gets infinite control over his choice, does he care about basic rules of civility or the needs of others? Would people feel really safe if others are not following rules?

Our behaviours are largely controlled by the rules and values that govern a societal situation and environment. For example, you won't rush into a pharmacy counter in a hospital. Rather, you would get a token number and wait for your turn in the queue. Here individual behaviours are controlled through an external mechanism to avoid chaos. Similarly we are constantly obliged to behave in a particular way to get accepted in society and those who refuse to accept societal expectations are considered divergent. To avoid undesirable acts and behaviours, the groups or society in which we live exerts regulations in the form of laws and etiquette. Society itself is a complex system of organisations, associations, institutions and groups of diverse kinds and to bring harmony and order in social life, individuals are expected to behave in accordance with socially accepted conventions and therefore a type of control is essential.

When we hear the term ‘control,’ what comes to our mind is generally one of the policemen, law, courts, prison, laws, and coercion. Right? These all constitute integral components of social control, but Sociologists use the term ‘social control’ in a much broader sense. This unit will discuss basic concepts, definitions, characteristics, and social control agencies. After finishing this unit you will be able to identify how social control functions in your surroundings as well.

Keywords

Social control, Agency, Coercion

Discussion

4.2.1 Social Control

If there are no vacant available seats in a KSRTC bus, you may offer your seat to a woman holding a baby. Our individual morals and values influence how we treat the vulnerable people around us. We all agree, however, that women, children, and the disabled should be given priority seating, especially on public transportation. Despite this universal understanding, some people stray from the social norm, and sanctions such as being confronted, questioned, or asked to leave can be used to persuade conformity, causing personal embarrassment, tension, and even anger. The agents of control in this case are the public transportation- providers, the people who use the service, and society as a whole.

Society exerts specific pressures on its members to conform to the norms of society. Such types of pressures are known as ‘Social control’. These controls can be in the form of ‘internalised’ values or pressures from an ‘external source’. We come across different situations in our life that teach us what is right and what is wrong. For example, you won’t talk too loudly in a library or

a hospital because you know it is wrong. These values and norms that we internalised within ourselves refer to the internal control we all have. Social control mechanisms are required in any society or social group. They serve as means of directing or influencing members' behaviour in order for them to conform to the group's values and norms. Sociologists distinguish between internal and external control mechanisms.

As we saw in the previous unit, people are socialised to accept the norms and values of their group, especially in smaller and more personally important groups such as the family. People follow moral standards not only because they are aware of them, but also because they have internalised them. When they break these rules, they experience uneasiness, which often manifests as guilt. To put it another way, a group's moral code must be internalised and integrated into each individual's mental and emotional processes in order for it to function properly. As a result, people begin to pass judgement on their own actions. In this way, the moral code of a group becomes an internal control mechanism for an individual. That is, even

when there are no external reactions, the individual is subject to internal control.

Also, you may have noticed that in pre-primary classes, children are apprised and gifted for their excellent conduct. Teachers use this as a kind of external pressure for keeping their students under control. Similarly, we all adhere to pressures and influences from outside sources or authorities around us, including the government, to behave in a specific way. These are external controls. The reactions of others to a person's behaviour are examples of external means of control. External control can be positive or negative, in the form of rewards or punishments. They include external social forces that direct behaviour toward societal norms and values. They make an individual behave in the best possible manner in society. Getting imprisonment for illegal drug trading, getting incentives for better performances, and getting a fine for violating traffic rules are other examples of external control. Some of these controls prevent the deviant behaviours of individuals that are damaging to others.

We all conform to the expected norms and values of the group or society we live in. Social control refers to the various means and methods used by society or groups to bring its members into a standard line. In another sense, society enforces or pressurizes its members to conform to the already established values, expected behaviour, and norms. Edward A Ross, an American sociologist, brought the concepts of social control as a domain for sociological discussion through his famous book entitled 'Social control' in the year 1901.

This unit will explore social control, its essential characteristics, and different agencies of social control.

i) Definition of social control

We all seek approval and acceptance from the society or group in which we belong. You

would most probably try to fit with particular values of your family, code of behavioural conduct of a particular educational institution or of any other group you are a member of. You would get ridiculed or rejected from a group if you try to challenge these values. Consider some instances; smoking is legally prohibited in any educational institution. But you can get suspended if caught for smoking or taking illicit drugs inside a college campus. You will get fined, if you are not wearing a helmet while driving a two-wheeler. Similarly you would get teased if you behave creepy at a family function. Thus sanctions, punishments or rewards can control individual behaviour in a social situation. Therefore social control can be inferred as the sum of those methods by which a society tries to influence human behaviour to maintain a given order. Behaviour of individuals who conform with the existing standards of values are not usually questioned and they remain accepted with the majority. Henry Pratt Fairchild refers social control as the, "sum total of the processes whereby society, or any sub-group within society, secures conformity to expectation on the part of its constituent units, individuals and groups." From the above discussions, one may have noticed the stress on words like conformity and order. Individuals or groups conforming to existing values and patterns of behaviour maintain a given order in any society. Thus we can conclude social control as the system of procedures whereby society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour. The group mentioned here can be the family, the church, the state, organisation or any other group you can relate with. Sometimes it can refer to the control from the society as a whole. From the above discussion, it may be clear to you that social control implies, those methods by which a society attempts to influence human behaviour in order to maintain a given order and harmony in any society.



ii) Characteristics of social control

From the beginning of group life in prehistoric time itself, man practiced control and influence over those around him. The group and society, in turn, expected him to conform to specific values and accepted behaviour.

Take an instance from our school life, students are instructed to obey standard behaviour and code of conduct within their institution. These rules ensure the overall wellbeing of everyone in that institution. Students know that they are being watched and assessed by their parents and teachers, and most of them 'self-regulate' and perform better because of this. Violating code of conduct can bring on punishment. For instance, bullying or ragging can lead to disciplinary action. Similarly society exerts influence or pressure and influences our social behaviour, attitude and values.

Here in this section, we will take a closer look at the essential characteristics of social control.

a) Social control denotes some kind of influence

All of us are constantly exposed to social control in various forms. For example, a student might change his or her behaviour to fit in with the rest of the class. The majority of a group of friends' opinions are likely to influence the perspectives of newcomers to that social group. Likewise, we all tend to conform to the opinions and values of society as a whole. Therefore social control does not always mean direct and overt societal pressure from an external source. Sometimes social control may result from the unconscious influence that can change attitudes, values, or even behaviour. For example, a movie or motion picture can significantly influence one's life and values

at an unconscious level. Likewise, the eldest member in your family who directly controls your behaviour constitutes another example of social control. Thus, social control can be also described as various types of external and internal influences that are used to guide behaviour and values in our social lives.

b) Social control is a universal phenomenon

Another characteristic that distinguishes social control is that it is a universal phenomenon. No society exists without social control. The family in which we belong, the state we live in, the organisation we are working for, the political organisation we are affiliated with, or any other institution and social group we belong to, practices social control. The mechanisms may vary, but it is everywhere. Our friends and family have a significant influence on our behaviour and beliefs, and we are controlled by the various institutions to which we belong. When there is a disease outbreak, the state government and international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) step in to guide and regulate community behaviour. They will provide guidance on social distancing, vaccination and disease control. For example, when Cholera, Ebola, the Sars virus, or Covid-19 became widespread, various forms of social control were implemented in different parts of the world. Without these safeguards and controls, the entire population could have become extinct. Therefore, we can see that social control exists in a variety of forms, significantly influencing our thoughts and beliefs. The groups and institutions choose the kind of social control they need to enforce on individuals in society. It can be in the form of rules and regulations or it can be in the forms of rewards and punishments.

c) Social control is practiced by society

There are many groups around us, and all these groups exert various kinds of control and influence on us, either knowingly or unknowingly. For example, the decisions of the OPEC countries in the east have an impact on your life. That is, how they determine the price of oil in barrels, which has a significant impact on our state policies, commodity prices, and our entire way of life. For another example, when you refuse to use a plastic product or plant a tree, you are unknowingly participating in a global effort to reduce global warming and promote sustainable living. In this case, your behaviour is unknowingly influenced by information obtained from an outside source. Therefore society itself can be viewed as a large group consisting of individuals and social groups of various types. Generally, the dominant group or individuals direct the behaviour, attitude, and values of members in the inferior group. For example, in a family, all members do not participate equally in the decision-making process. Younger ones are obliged to follow the rules and values prescribed by their elder ones. To state another example, look at the way the state controls the behaviour of its citizens through various agencies.

d) Social control is as old as human society

The concept of social control as a subject matter of sociological debate emerged only in the mid-19th century, but the practice of social control can be traced back to the beginnings of our social lives right from ancient times. From the prehistoric time of hunter-gatherer life to the modern world, the groups in which man lived have always exerted some pressure on its members. In primitive ages, belief in an unseen power watching humans in all their deeds controlled their actions, behaviour, and attitude. It was approximately around 3,000 B.C, human began to live in villages and cities which eventually led to the formation of organised government, law and warfare, as well as

the beginnings of religion. Social control evolved into more sophisticated forms, such as formally established laws, among other things. In the modern world, we adhere more to the formal laws and rules of groups or society.

e) Promote welfare of the group or society as a whole

Individuals choose life in groups based on particular interests and purposes. The theory of evolution supports the survival of the fittest. Accordingly, the one with more power and resources in any society or group can exploit and sabotage the lower strata. Have you ever thought about why our constitution ensures equality before the law? The federal laws in our land guarantee that no one is more privileged or can be discriminated. Thus to curb the selfishness of powerful groups and individuals, society practices different controlling mechanisms, and the law is one such mechanism.

f) Ensures Continuity of Society

Throughout much of our social experience, we expect continuity. We expect our fundamental economic, social, and political institutions to retain their core characteristics over long periods of time. We anticipate a gradual shift in social attitudes and values rather than an abrupt shift. And we expect the same from a variety of social conditions, such as highway safety, crime rates, and other similar social features. In this case, social control is used as an essential mechanism to guide this progress in a non-harmful manner. Social control ensures smooth functioning and continuity of society through various controlling mechanisms and different agencies. These are culturally transmitted from one generation to another. Naturally, they are subjected to modifications but are essential for creating harmony and order in the society.



iii) Need for social control

We have talked about the characteristics of social control. So, do we need such control to regulate our behaviour in social situations? Conventionally we all follow the rules and behaviour of the social group or society to which we belong. We are supposed to follow the established norms and particular rules in our family. Our family is obliged to conform to specified values and behaviours of our neighbourhood association. They, in turn, make compliance with certain control, responsibilities, and duties imposed by the state. Thus men or women in their social life are always bound by various controls from the environment. From the above discussion it is clear that social control is supposed to perform some important functions in society. Here we will discuss why we need social control for ensuring social harmony and order.

- a. Social control brings essential order and harmony in the society and it ensures that individual members agree to certain standards, values and norms in a society. Some norms and values define acceptable boundaries of behaviour of individual members in society or groups. They can be used to mitigate tensions and conflicts between different components of social groups. External social controls such as formal laws are mainly applied to control harmful deviant behaviour.
- b. Social control can also be used as a mechanism to check whether an individual's behaviour meets the cultural or societal expectation or not. It regulates individual behaviour in accordance with established norms and laws of the particular group he or she belongs to.

You are expected to behave in accordance with common rules and values within your educational institution, family and employment organisation. For example, in the office we have punching or registry, in school we have sick books to assess absenteeism.

- c. Social control can bring unity and solidarity to the society or group. Social control brings a reasonable balance between individual differences and preferences and thus unites individuals together. For example, the family maintains its unity because its members behave consistently in accordance with established family norms and values. Consider a summer adventure camp in a college. They march forward as a group, singing their leading chorus. In their eagerness to move forward as one, they overlook minor differences that could have resulted in negative exchanges and issues in college. The teachers and their mentors will guide them in all their deeds. Lack of social control, not only brings the downfall of the camp, but also may bring chaos.
- d. Social control ensures conformity and prevents deviant behaviour in any society. The way we fit-in with common patterns of behavioural expectations is called conformity and violation of those standards behaviour is called deviance. The absence or negative influence of social control system can bring deviance in any society. Can you imagine a rush hour

traffic situation without any traffic rules and motor vehicle authorities? Just remember, what is considered normal, valuable, or deviant varies across different societies and from group to group. Therefore the notion of social control also changes accordingly.

4.2.2 Agencies of social control

A simple nod of disapproval from a parent or a school headmaster is enough to control a child's behaviour. Individual behaviour or values are enforced through various methods such as sanctions, rewards and punishment and can effectively regulate behaviour of a small group with personal relations. Rewards and sanctions often take the form of praise or compliments, promotions, popularity and good grades. Punishment involves teasing or ridicule, mockery, poor grades, being terminated from work, withdrawal or ending of personal relations, etc

Larger groups such as the state or a corporate organisation on the other hand demand control of formal nature. Situations that involve unlawful or hazardous acts require intervention from formal bodies such as police, military or any other higher authority to regulate individual misconduct.

Society establishes control over society through various formal and informal agencies. The behaviour of individuals and groups are regulated by enforcing values, customs, and practices to maintain order in society. Informal social control is self-restraint mechanisms that are exercised because of fear of what others will think. Formal social control is administered through sanctions such as fines, imprisonment etc. Here we will discuss different agencies through which social control is practiced.

1. Informal agencies of social control

2. Formal agencies of social control

a) Informal Agencies of Social Control

1. Family: When we are growing up, our family teaches us the foundations of acceptable behaviour and what our values should be. For instance, we learned essential table manners from our parents. Similarly, our parents instilled in us the importance of respecting the elderly and teachers from a young age. Some of these behaviours and values are specific only to our family, and others are particular to society. To be more precise, the family has a predominant role in shaping the personality of their younger generations. Parents provide children with direct guidelines on acceptable behaviour in society. Family practices as a social institution enforce social control mainly through positive and negative sanctions. Children obey rules and values in the family to gain praise and approval from their parents while avoiding punishment through any form of disobedience. In a family, physical enforcement of control is no longer valid. For example, earlier times, physical punishment was thought to control undesired behaviour in children, but today physically abusing someone is considered offensive and psychologically damaging. Apart from teaching them societal expectations and values, they prescribe the rules and regulations that they must follow. Family teaches the younger generation about the expected social behaviour and values. However, the traditional concept of family is no longer relevant in modern society and the methods of social control practiced within the family are also changing

2. Public opinion: Sometimes you may have been involved and participated in a number of surveys and polls that ask for voting your opinion. Do you think the opinion of a collection of individuals in any



community, national group or the world as a whole can have any significance in controlling individual behaviour and preferences? Public opinion reflects some kind of consensus with direct or indirect influence among a significant number of individuals in a group or society. It is powerful enough to bring a person or a firm in favour of a group. You may have read about changes in institutional and governmental policies after a strong public opinion was formed against it.

Agencies such as press, radio, television, movies, legislations are the leading controlling agencies for the formulation and expression of public opinion in society. Press (includes newspapers, magazines, and journals of various kinds), radio, and television has increasingly become an essential news source about everyday events and policies. For example, pre-poll surveys on elections can influence an individual to make a decision on a particular issue or decide the voting pattern choice for a specific candidate. The information expressed through these agencies greatly influences decisions, preferences, and value judgments of an individual or a community. Similarly the movies can also influence our values and preferences at an unconscious level.

3. Religion: When we talk about religion, it refers to the system of beliefs, values, and practices concerning what a person holds sacred or considers as spiritually significant. Religion as a means of social control is powerful enough to regulate individuals' impulses and selfish desires. The commandments and testimonials we find in religions aren't just rules about how to worship or pray, but many emphasize societal norms like respecting your parents or not committing crime and theft, etc. Ideas of some higher source of power have significant influence on controlling individual behaviour. People perform well out of a desire to remain in the grace of superior power. Values and norms of religion are practiced through

different agencies such as family, church, monasteries, etc.

4. Folkways: If you receive a gift from friends or colleagues, it is customary to say thank you in return. Failure to do so is considered ungrateful and impolite. Similarly the way we greet our friends or respect our elders all constitute folkways. Therefore, Folkways are norms that allow for a wide range of individual interpretation as long as certain limits are not exceeded.

People who violate folkways are perceived as odd or eccentric, but they rarely elicit a strong public reaction. They represent the behaviour patterns of our everyday life which generally arise unconsciously in a group. It contributes to an integral part of social structure where they present to us the most accepted or most standardised values and behaviours. Folkways distinguish between rude and polite behaviour, and as a result, they exert a form of social pressure that encourages us to act and interact in certain ways. These are passed down from generation to generation through their interaction in social groups. Furthermore, folkways can be manifested in their specific patterns of behaviour, rituals, or worship. Generally, people accept already existing practices in each society. These are neither compulsive nor enforced by anyone. One can ignore them if one wants to do so. We could, for example, break a folkway by neglecting to say 'thank you' without causing major outrage, or you can skip one meal from your routine and not be punished. However, they have no moral significance, and there are rarely serious consequences or sanctions for breaking them. Sometimes, folkways are powerful enough to control the behaviour of individuals even more than the state action.

5. Beliefs: If a person believes that one gender is superior to the other, this will undoubtedly manifest in his or her behaviour and language. On the other hand, some others

believe that women, transgender people, and people of any gender should be given equal access to all jobs. People hold various kinds of beliefs in multiple ways. Why are 'beliefs' regarded as a social control agent?

Belief represents the feeling of certainty regarding something that exists, true or good. These beliefs can be rational, or unproven. Individuals or groups hold their own particular beliefs and these are later manifested in the attitudes and values that regulate their social behaviour. These beliefs vary across different cultures, regions, gender, or age. For example, if an individual believes that smoking is bad for health, it represents a core belief that controls his behaviour.

6. Customs: If you have an infectious fever, it is customary in general to take precautions to avoid infecting others. For example, wearing a mask, using sanitizer etc. If that fails, the typical reaction from others may range from ignoring the individual's behaviour to verbally disappointing them or even excluding them for endangering the health of other members. Customs are derived from social norms, which are the rules or standards that guide, control, or regulate a group's proper and acceptable behaviour. These norms define a group's shared expectations and allow people to predict how others will interpret and respond to their words and actions if they deviate from a custom. There are some traditional ways of behaviour that are specific to a particular society, place or time. For example, we won't wear fancy or glittery dresses for a funeral function. Customs represent long-established patterns of behaviour that members of a particular society widely accept. These practices regulate social life and bind individuals together in a society. The way we worship, shaking hands upon meeting someone, certain religious ceremonies etc. constitute customs. They act as adequate social control and thus they foster social harmony and unity within a group.

7. Ideologies: Ideologies are typically shared by a group of people and serve as the foundation for how those people think and behave. Democracy, for example, is a political ideology based on the belief that people have the right to choose their leaders, laws, and other aspects of their lives. In a democracy, you have the right to choose and vote for the authority of your choosing, whether that is your Panchayat member, MLA, or MP. But what exactly does an ideology represent? And how can it be used as an agency of social control?

Ideologies are belief systems that are based on ideas and constructs about the world and the people who live in it. They represent ideas and beliefs that are dominant in society. For example, Marxism or Taoism represents political ideologies. Whereas, gender equality, feminism, equality of opportunity, etc. represents cultural and social ideologies. Ideologies make an individual explain how the world works in the changing scenario. It also has a significant impact on our behaviour, particularly in terms of what is and what isn't acceptable. Given this, it's difficult to imagine a society enacting laws or establishing social order without an ideology dictating what's right and wrong.

8. Arts and Literature: You may be familiar with the story of Kunjan Nambiar, who was mocked by the Chakyar after unintentionally dozing off during a performance of Chakyar Kootu. In response to the insult, Nambiar developed the art form of Ottamthullal, which addresses social and political issues.

Do you believe that various forms of art and literature can be used as a tool for social control? They are, indeed. Arts and literature of various forms are powerful enough to captivate our minds in two ways. By its content and the way it is presented. Moreover, they reflect societal realities and manifest changes in individuals' perspectives on the world.



Remember how literature contributed to the renaissance in the 18th century? And how Rabindranath Tagore effectively used arts and literature to bind Indians together to fight against British colonialism?

b) Formal Agencies of Social Control

Employees in an organisation or people in a metropolitan city may not actually listen to what a village head says or what myths propagate. Informal control is no longer sufficient to bring order and harmony in modern urban societies. They consist of a complex structure of groups, organisations, institutions with vested interests, and formal relations. It is now necessary and possible to regulate individual behaviour through laws backed by the legal, administrative and political machinery with legitimate power. The formal means of social control come from institutions such as the state, law, and education, which become the regulators of behaviour and ensured social order and control. They apply coercive measures in extreme situations.

1. Law: In our daily news, we see numerous reports of people being arrested for crimes and fraudulent activities. Why is our society's crime rate increasing? We've seen that in today's society, relationships are more secondary. As a result, a type of control in the form of written and formal laws is required. The security of life and property, as well as the systematic ordering of relationships, necessitate the formalisation of rules. Law establishes consistent norms and penalties throughout a social system. What was previously in mores and customs has now been formalised into a body of law. Certain actions are prohibited by law, such as the anti-touchability act, which forbids untouchability in any form and punishes those who engage in it. Similarly, we have laws that prohibit child labour, sexual exploitation,

dowry, and other forms of exploitation. There are also laws in place to protect the most vulnerable members of society, such as the Maintenance Act for the Elderly and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities etc.

Laws are the most powerful means of social control in modern society. It consists of a written body of rules enacted by legally authorized bodies such as the government or an organisation. Laws are based on existing concepts of justice and rights in a given community. Individuals abide by laws either in fear of punishment or conforming for their wellbeing and prosperity.

Features of law as an agent of social control are

- a. Law prohibits or controls certain harmful acts and deviant behaviour. For example, the law bans smoking in public places and criminal activities such as theft, homicide, etc.
- b. It clearly defines the rights, duties of an individual in a society or group.
- c. Laws are enforced upon people.
- d. They persuade others to bring conformity with norms.
- e. Laws apply equally to all.
- f. Violation of the law is followed by punishment. For example, not wearing a helmet or seat belt while driving could bring legal penalties.

For example our constitution ensures no person shall be deprived of his or her life or personal liberty without the due process of law and lays down special provision for the protection and empowerment of vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly, trans-genders and disabled in our

society. Law as a means of social control is enforced by authorized agencies such as Police, Judiciary, Armed forces, Government Agencies and Bureaucracy etc.

2. Education: Do you know the purpose of education? Getting a job, personality development, socialisation etc. may be your answers. Do you think the sole purpose of education is to get you a job with a high paid salary?

Education is referred to as a process of socialisation in which one acquires the necessary knowledge, skill, values, and behavioural patterns for their survival and success. Education will correct the negative biases an individual holds. It instills the qualities of honesty and a sense of right and wrong. Education is a continuous and lifelong process. It teaches us the values of discipline, social cooperation, tolerance, and others essentials for maintaining harmony in society. It promotes the internalization of values and leads to self-control.

You may have realised that education is much more than the simple learning of facts or information. Instead, it helps you to attain the necessary survival skills in society and discover your true potential. Education is not always imparted from schools or colleges, but also through the informal contacts in the various social, economic, political, and organised groups in which they are part of. Directions from your family, school, community, religious organisations, clubs and societal pressures have a significant influence on behavioural changes. It helps an individual to develop the correct attitude and contributes to peaceful coexistence on this planet. To become a law abiding citizen is one of the major purposes of education. For example, teachers can enforce the students to obey the laws and rules of the departments which are the back bone of the society.

3. Coercion: Coercion refers to the practice of compelling or manipulating an individual to behave involuntarily using threats, intimidation, force, or external pressure. It is used to achieve the desired end by that one who practiced it. Coercion involves physical or psychological harm in an individual or a society. Physical coercion includes practices such as extortion, imprisonment and even death sentences in extreme cases. Instances of police using tear gas to disperse violent crowds is another example of physical coercion. Coercion brings about immediate effects but does not always have a long-term impact.

In short, social control consists of the forces and pressures that encourage conformity, including self-control, informal control and formal control. Self-control occurs because individuals internalise the norms and values of their group. Informal social control is self-restraint exercise because of fear of what others will think. Formal social controls are administrative sanctions such as fines, imprisonment etc. The definition for social control has significantly changed over the period of time. We always remain under the close monitoring and surveillance of others in every nook and corner of our social life. For example, increasing fear for safety needs have resulted in a hasty growth in the use of various security measures such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) to facilitate social control and have important ethical implications. Similarly state and social media giants have gained more control over individual behaviour and action. You may have noticed that the traditional concept of religion, family or neighbourhood controlling individual behaviour in their social environment has significantly changed and been replaced by more formal means of social controls.

In the above discussion, we understand that social control is essential to bring conformity with the norms and standard of life. Even though there are formal and



informal means of social control, some of them are deviating from the social mainstream of life. For example, atrocities towards women are increasing in the name of dowry. Even though there are laws, some

people continuously demand more money and gold. The sociology students can further enquire about such incidents and suggest solutions to curb such issues.

Recap

- ◆ Law is used as an essential mechanism to control individual behaviours.
- ◆ The mechanisms of social control is transmitted from generation to generation.
- ◆ Sometimes social control is a self-regulatory mechanism.
- ◆ Social control is a standard of behaviour.
- ◆ Social control is essential in any society or a group to bring solidarity and unity in society.
- ◆ Social control can be used to check cultural maladjustments and to maintain order in any society or social group.
- ◆ Formal and informal agencies of social control are the major classifications of social control.
- ◆ Informal agencies of social control are effective in small, rural, primitive communities.
- ◆ Formal control is used in modern, complex urban societies.
- ◆ Family, religion, folkways, beliefs, public opinions are the informal agencies of social control.
- ◆ Law, education, and coercion are the formal agencies of social control.
- ◆ Conformity to the norm is the foundation of social control.
- ◆ Social norms are necessary to practice self-control.
- ◆ Media plays a vital role in social control.
- ◆ Education brings about self-control.

Objective Questions

1. Who introduced the concept of social control as a major domain for discussion in sociology?
2. What is the type of control in which values and norms are internalised?
3. What kind of social control uses influence and pressures from outside sources or authorities?
4. What are the ultimate objectives of social control?
5. Which form of social control was prominent in primitive ages?
6. Which type of social control guarantees that no one is more privileged or discriminated against the powerful?
7. How is social control transmitted?
8. What will happen if the social control system is absent or influenced negatively?
9. What is the way we fit-in with common patterns of behavioural expectations called?
10. Who brought the concepts of social control as a domain for sociological discussion?
11. What is the term denoting the common pattern of behavioural expectations?
12. Who is the author of the book 'Social control' (1901)?
13. What is the term denoting the violation of the standard behaviour called?

Answers

1. Edward A Ross
2. Internal control
3. External control
4. To bring order and harmony
5. Beliefs in an unseen power
6. The federal laws
7. From one generation to another
8. Causes deviance
9. Conformity
10. Edward A Ross
11. Conformity
12. Edward A Ross
13. Deviance

Assignments

1. Describe the characteristics of social control
2. Explain deviance and conformity with real life examples
3. Briefly narrate the types of social control
4. Compare and contrast the different modes of social control with everyday examples

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Social Conformity and Deviance

UNIT

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To introduce the definitions of social conformity and deviance
- ◆ To explain the importance of social conformity
- ◆ To narrate the dimensions of social deviance

Prerequisites

Recall those experiences in the written examinations in your higher secondary class. It is important to remain quiet and not to interrupt others while writing your exam. You would follow examination procedures and instructions from your teachers like everyone else. The way in which an individual adopts norms and values of the group or society is called conformity. You have shown conformity with exam guidelines along with other students.

Deviance is the opposite of conformity. An act which violates norms, rules and values of the group are called deviant behaviour. How would you consider someone who purposefully disturb and make annoying noises in an examination hall? Definitely, he or she will get into some trouble and have to undergo disciplinary action. Here, the act of the student who made trouble in the examination hall is deviant behaviour.

There is no single factor explanation for human behaviour. Social interpretations of human behaviour help us to focus exclusively on the nature of individual interaction within particular social processes in which they are involved. Various regulatory mechanisms ensure that individuals remain fit within societal expectations. We had our discussion on how society or a group ensures control of individual behaviour in the previous unit. This unit will familiarize you with the various factors which make an individual 'conform' or 'deviate' from societal values. Studying deviance and conformity has essential implications for successful programs and policies to reduce deviance and crime in our society.

Keywords

Norms, Conformity, Deviance

Discussion

4.3.1 Social Conformity

In the previous unit, we saw how social control is used as a regulatory mechanism in society to maintain order and harmony. Individuals and social groups utilise social control to establish norms and rules in society. Also, we have briefly discussed informal and formal agencies which are used to enforce social control. We have seen how agencies like family, customs, folkways, and religion are used to impose certain values and beliefs in our society and teach us about acceptable behaviours. Also, you may recall how law, coercion, and education are used in our society to enforce formal control. In society, there are some norms and values that teach us, what we should believe in and what we should do. This unit will look at what motivates us to conform and deviate from such norms and values. In the first session, we will inquire into the factors that motivate us to conform to certain standards and values. In the second session, we will delve into the concept of deviance, its relative nature, and theoretical perspectives in detail.

Let's begin our discussion on conformity with some instances from our life. Our parents and teachers taught us certain behaviours and values that are necessary to behave appropriately to society. You always greeted your teachers before and after their classes. You have waited for the green light in the traffic signal. You may have chosen a particular stream in plus two because of peer or parental pressure. You usually stand in line along with others in a ticket counter

at a railway station or in a movie theater. What motivated you to do such gestures? Breaking these rules and norms could make you an offender or be punished.

Conformity makes us adaptable to our environment and help us function efficiently. Social influence is a general concept that comprises the ways in which individuals change their behaviour, attitude and values in order to meet the demands of their social environment. Conformity is one form of social influence where an ‘individual follows the rules and behaviours of the social group to which he or she belongs.’ Sometimes we all agree to the views, values and attitudes of the majority to get accepted in society, even if we privately disagree. For example, we conform to the collective group decision regarding an event or a problem solution even if we have our own personal opinions. Fear of getting ridiculed and a desire to belong to a group can also make us conform to others.

a) Types of Conformity

There are some beliefs or behaviour to which we conform for a very short period of time and some acts of conformity result in permanent changes in our behaviour. We all have faced many situations in our life where we go along with the majority of the group. We can achieve conformity either through compliance, identification or through internalization.

i) Compliance

Compliance means an individual agrees



to the viewpoint or attitude of the majority in order to get socially accepted even if they personally disagree. These changes in attitude, behaviour and values are for a short period of time and only bring changes in their public behaviour. For example, we Indians mostly prefer eating food with our hands. Suppose you are going to America for your summer vacation, there you might start eating all your meals with a fork and spoon. There you go along with the behaviour of the majority to get accepted in their culture. However, when you return to Kerala, you continue to eat your favourite meals using your hand.

ii) Identification

Identification refers the process in which individuals alter their behaviour in order to fit into their expected roles. The person may change both their public behaviour and private beliefs to identify with the group in which he or she belongs. These changes in behaviour are for a short period of time. Take for example, an errant child who significantly changes his/her behaviour when assigned as a class leader for a short period.

iii) Internalization

Internalization is a process where beliefs and values of a certain group become a part of an individual's own belief system. Once an individual conforms to those norms and beliefs of the particular group they belong to, they will continue even without the presence of the group. For example, an individual may become a vegetarian for lifetime after living with a group of vegetarians.

Why do We Conform?

People usually conform either to act appropriately or to avoid standing out alone in a crowd. We refer to it as normative and informational influences.

Suppose a person gets into a flight for the

first time, he/she may observe the nearby person to see the procedures to get ready for take-off and later. This is an example of informational influence. Informational influence refers how the insecurity of one's own beliefs and knowledge make an individual dependent on others for information.

The second kind of influence, 'normative' refers to the way people conform to get accepted by others in their group. We usually get uncomfortable if we think others will reject us or are likely to do so in the future. Another factor that increases conformity is the surveillance of group members and social institutions. People are concerned about evaluations from others and they ought to conform more in their public behaviour.

Hierarchy of norms, existing patterns in social control, self-interests, and identification with group or even socialisation can cause an individual to conform to existing social norms and values. An individual or a group conforms to certain norms and values in society because of a number of reasons. Following are some of the reasons.

- a. **Socialisation:** We are trained to conform to norms and values in society through the process of socialisation. Values and norms that are imparted from different institutions or socialisation such as family, educational institutions or religion etc. help us to cope up with the expectations of society. Socialisation helps us to act appropriately in a situation and identify with the group we belong to.
- b. **Social control:** Conforming to existing norms, values and rules of any society or group can make an individual acceptable in society. Conforming to the existing rules and values help us

to avoid possible conflicts and punishment in the future. For example, we usually conform to the system of paying taxes to avoid legal complications in future.

- c. **Vested interest:** Sometimes, we conform to the majority to achieve a desired end. Conforming to societal expectations or what group prescribes can bring rewards in the form of appraisal, job promotion or even good grades. This can promote productivity and cohesion in any society. E.g. Friends wearing similar dresses with the same colour, generates a sense of identity and emotional attachment. Similarly conforming to expect behaviour of academic performance can bring you good grades in examinations.
- d. **Hierarchy of norms:** We conform to the norms of the particular organisation to get accepted in the group and it can be in the form of an existing hierarchy of norms.
- e. **Ideology:** People conform to the norms of the group based on the beliefs and personal ideologies they hold. For example, if someone holds a personal ideology of non-violence, they always conform to the situation that demands it.
- f. **Group identification:** If an individual wishes to be liked in the group or social environment they belong to, they most probably conform to existing values and accepted behaviour patterns. Groups may also require members to conform to certain norms, values, and

behaviours within the system. Sometimes even if we disagree privately, we conform to standard rules and rituals of the majority for getting accepted in a group. For example, peer pressure to smoke or to follow certain fashion trends show our desire to fit in with the majority. Informed with accurate information: When people feel the need to be informed with accurate information and lack confidence in their own knowledge, they probably would conform to views of other individuals whom they think have superior knowledge. For example, in a classroom, if a teacher asks you a question and you don't know the correct answer, you will agree with the response made by a student who is perceived as intelligent.

- g. **Utility:** To meet the demands of their social environment, individuals change behaviour, attitude, and values. So that they can conform to the expectations of the group in which they belong. To act with the existing situation, an individual will make an analysis of the possible outcome of their act. For example, conforming to situations that demand silence such as in a library or in a hospital, represents environmental demands to oblige to certain behaviour.

To conclude, conformity is an essential component of our social life and a person who behaves or acts against the standard or norm of a society is considered non-conformist. However, it can be relative, and some non-conforming activities are considered

deviant behaviour which we will discuss in the next section.

4.3.2 Social Deviance

What do you think about a government official accepting bribes while in service and another person picking one's nose in public? What about a student who is late for her seminar presentation? What will you say about a person arrested for shooting an elderly man for stealing his pension? All these behaviour are outside the boundaries of societal expectation. In other words, these behaviour are not expected by other members of the group or society.

When we think about deviance, the first thing that comes to our mind is always about acts that are criminal in nature. But deviance does not always mean crime, and both are not the same. Everyone, including you and me, are deviant to some extent or other, but not everyone is a criminal. For example, if you dye your hair with fluorescent green, people may give strange looks because it is against what the majority presumes as normal. Similarly sneezing out aloud in a meeting can also invite bizarre looks or not wearing your uniforms in school can bring on fines. These acts constitute mild forms of deviation and they won't harm anyone. Sometimes we can refer them as non-conforming too. But there are some acts that cause a threat to peaceful co-existence and they are called deviance of major types. E.g. murder, juvenile delinquency, etc. Therefore deviance in a sociological context denotes violation of norms and values outside the boundaries defined by society.

a) Definition

The term deviance can refer to failure to conform to the customs and norms that are laid down by society. However, all violations do not come under deviant behaviour. For example, a person violating traditional family

rules is not in the same category of deviance as one arrested for burglary. According to Louise Weston, 'Deviance can be defined as behaviour that is contrary to the standard of conduct or social expectations of a given group or society.'

Some forms of deviation are a severe violation of our socially defined values and mores. Violating formally enacted laws and rules, including robbery, theft, sexual assault, murder, etc., are major deviances that hurt. They are unacceptable and prohibited through formal means of social control. Thus deviance can be inferred as follows:

- ◆ It refers to the violation of norms and values outside the boundaries defined by society.
- ◆ Deviance can vary from milder forms of disobedience to acts of major deviances that hurt others.

Deviance can bring punishment or discontentment.

b) Types of Deviant Behaviours

A typology of classification structures are designed to simplify our understanding regarding certain phenomenon. We can classify deviance based upon two criteria: 1) Person's motivation or adherence to cultural goals such as acquiring financial and material wealth, power etc by any means.

2) Person's belief in how to attain his or her goals or institutional means to achieve cultural goals. Honesty and hard work are such socially acceptable means to achieve these goals.

Most people in our society conform to these acceptable means to achieve their goals and the luxuries of life. While others, those who do not have legitimate means to obtain these things will deviate from socially

accepted means to obtain their societal goals. Robert K Merton has proposed four types of adaptations to deviant behaviour as follows:

1. Innovation

Innovators are those people, who accept culturally approved goals but disregard the institutional means to achieve them. Those who commit crimes to achieve monetary success belong to this category. For instance, crimes committed by individuals in higher authority or reputation to achieve a higher standard of life and assets are called white collar crimes. The most common types of white collar crimes include insider trading, bribery etc. and the ones who commits these crimes disregard honest means to achieve their financial income.

2. Ritualism

Those who give up on cultural goals but follow prescribed norms and means for achieving the goals constitute ritualists. Ritualism occurs when someone is unsuccessful in achieving societal goals, but still continues to adhere to social expectations for their achievement. Lower-level bureaucrats or an employee (disillusioned bureaucrats) who lost their societal goals of acquiring prosperity in life, but reports to work and routinely follow the rules of their institution, are examples of this circumstance.

3. Retreatism

Those who abandon both cultural goals and the traditional institutional means of achieving them are called deviants. It involves a kind of complete escape from the external pressures and demands of organised society to which they belong. A 'homeless person' who is homeless more by choice than by force or circumstance is a kind of deviant of retreatism type.

4. Rebellion

Those people, who reject both societal

goals and prescribed means to achieve them but try to set up new norms and values, are called rebellions. The rebels not only reject societal goals and means of the established society but attempts to substitute new goals and means in their place. This adaptation refers to the role behaviour of political deviants, who attempt to greatly modify the existing structure of society. Revolutionaries, hippies, and some religious groups represent deviants of the rebellion type.

c)Relative Nature of Deviance

Deviance is culturally defined. Society redefines cultural norms and values depending on the situation. So the definition of deviance also changes over time. Anything that is considered unusual or non-conforming, is deviance. Rules and norms vary across cultures and time, making sense that notions of deviance also change. Tattooing one's body, for example, is considered a deviant behaviour in some cultures.

In the same way, behaviour that is considered appropriate in one situation may be regarded as deviant in another condition. For instance, the universal taboo on purposefully killing other human beings is considered as an act of major deviance, but soldiers in the warfront are justified for their act. Also, some activities that were once considered deviant later become accepted by part of the society.

An individual who challenges existing social structure or values is considered deviant. Some new norms can actually emerge from the deviant activities of past. Thus deviance varies according to the circumstances, age, time, place and culture. No one is born as deviant but becomes deviant through their interaction with groups, institutions, authorities, and the social environment in which they are born and brought up. So far we have discussed the general characteristics and factors that



influence deviant behaviours. Now we will move on to our next discussion on theoretical introspection of deviant acts in brief

d) Theoretical Explanations of Deviant Behaviour

Sociological explanations are necessary to understand the relative nature of deviant behaviour in our society. The theory of anomie, strain theory and labelling theories are the important sociological theories that discuss deviant behaviour.

i) Theory of Anomie

Emil Durkheim, a renowned sociologist, explained anomie as an essential condition of normlessness. Individuals are vulnerable to deviance when existing norms are no longer valid or weak. A sudden change in societal values and norms or unpredictable life with uncertain rewards could bring about deviance in society. Durkheim opines that anomie leads to suicide because of the inadequate regulatory mechanisms in society.

ii) Structural- Strain Theory

Robert Merton has further expanded the concepts of anomie and he argues that deviance occurs when cultural goals are not achieved through legal, institutional means. When the social structure does not provide equal access to economic success but compels for financial success, the result is a social strain. This social strain can result in a variety of reactions. For example, society defines a wealthy man as a successful person. But some people have been denied access to wealth through acceptable ways. As a result, these people may experience anomie. And in frustration, they turn to various forms of deviance and socially unacceptable behaviours such as robbery or murder to achieve the desired societal goals of becoming wealthy. Strain theory sees deviance as a product of society,

not of individuals. Thus, strain theory argues that society creates crime and criminals.

iii) Labeling Theory

There are some violations of social norms that go undiscovered or are considered excusable by others. For example, a student sleeps in between class time. Although the violation of norm for remaining attentive in a class occurs, no label is attached to the behaviour. When someone with the power notices the behaviour and labels it deviant, it can impact the way others see the person who committed the behaviour as well as the labeled person's behaviours and self-perceptions. When a person is labeled 'deviant', this deviant behaviour is what other people expect of them and he/she may respond by engaging in additional deviance. For example, a child labeled as lazy in class will develop the self-concept of a lethargic person and may continue to remain inactive in all academic activities. Howard Becker is regarded as the major proponent of labeling theory. Labeling theory views that individuals become deviant when a deviant label is applied to them. Those who are labeled as deviant, adopt the label by exhibiting the behaviour, actions, and attitudes associated with the label.

Deviance and Social Control

You have learned about various means of social control in the previous unit and how they function as institutions that inhibit deviance. Prohibited deviant actions such as crime could be contained only through enactment of laws and through other formal means of social controls. In primary groups as well as in small groups such as families or in a neighbourhood groups, they may control deviance through direct or immediate sanctions over their members. In a family a parent can respond immediately if a child is disobedient and there is a high level of primary control. For major deviant

activities membership in a primary group can get cancelled. Secondary group control deviant behaviours through formal means of controlling mechanisms and established code of conduct for its members. Both formal and informal agents of social control such as family, state, judiciary will help us to remain united and follow a common pattern of behaviour against major deviant actions. The absence or negative influence of social control system can also bring deviance in society.

Deviants are ordinary people who violate social norms and have been influenced by the social environment they belong to. Studying deviant behaviour is important to formulate successful programs and policies to reduce deviance and crime in our society. As cultural norms and values change, activities that were once considered deviant can also be redefined as non-deviant. They become an accepted part of society. Sociologists use deviance specifically to things that are outside of the boundaries of established cultural norms and values.

Social control is the way in which society protects itself from various internal threats. By establishing patterns of behaviour and norms that individuals must adhere to.

Understanding the concept of social control is essential for understanding crime, its causes, effects, and surroundings, as it may lead to methods of preventing crime and any other social disorders. People usually resist the urge to commit a crime due to the costs associated with such behaviour. One of the most significant costs of crime is the disapproval of those who care about the potential offender. To put it succinctly, crime and delinquency occur when an individual's bond with society is weak or broken. To reduce crime in our society, the criminal justice system is used as an important means of social control. The criminal justice system includes police, courts, prison system and other rehabilitation mechanisms. They foster trust in its effectiveness by reducing subsequent criminal involvement. Do enquire further on how social control is used as an essential mechanism to regulate crime in any society

Recap

- ◆ Conformity represents a form of social influence.
- ◆ Individual following the rules and behaviours of the social group to which he or she belongs is called conformity.
- ◆ Conformity may bring relative or permanent changes in private beliefs and public behaviour.
- ◆ Conformity refers to the way in which we behave, following the norms, values, and expectations of society.
- ◆ Socialisation, identification with a group and social control can cause one to conform to societal expectations.
- ◆ An individual may conform appropriately in a situation in order to gain

acceptance from other members of the group.

- ◆ Confirming can be rewarding.
- ◆ Sometimes, people also conform to the demands of their social environment in order to avoid punishment or conflict.
- ◆ Deviance in a sociological context denotes violation of norms and values outside the boundaries defined by society.
- ◆ Innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion represent the four major deviance types.
- ◆ Innovators are one who reject accepted means to obtain cultural goals and a ritualist conforms the institutional means but are unsuccessful in achieving their societal goals.
- ◆ Retreats and rebellions reject culturally defined goals and institutional means to achieve them.
- ◆ Deviance can vary from milder forms of disobeying social standards to major deviant activities like crime and juvenile delinquency.
- ◆ Three major theories in sociology to explain deviance includes -Theory of anomie (Emil Durkheim), Strain theory (Robert K Merton) and labelling theory(Howard Becker).
- ◆ Theory of anomie states that deviance is formed from the sudden changes in societal values and expectations.
- ◆ Structural strain theory argues structural disparities create deviance in any society.
- ◆ According to labelling theory, an individual becomes deviant when people attaches a deviant label on them.
- ◆ Strain theory sees deviance as a product of society, not of individuals.

Objective Questions

1. What is departure from social norms that are perceived negatively by the majority?
2. How are deviances of major kinds regulated?

3. What do you call an individual, who rejects societal goals but conform institutional means?
4. Who rejects the societal goals and institutional means but attempts to substitute new goals and means in their place?
5. Who introduced the theory of anomie?
6. Who is the proponent of strain theory?
7. What will happen if social structure does not provide equal access to economic success but compels for financial success?
8. Give one example for deviance.
9. Who defined deviance as the behaviour that is contrary to the standard of conduct or social expectations of a given group or society?
10. Who proposed four types of adaptations to deviant behaviour?

Answers

1. Social deviance
2. Formal social control
3. Ritualists
4. Rebellions
5. Emile Durkheim
6. Robert Merton
7. Social strain
8. Juvenile delinquency
9. Louise Weston
10. Robert K Merton

Assignments

1. Describe the dimensions and relevance of social conformity
2. Relate the theoretical explanations of deviant behaviour to contemporary society
3. Explain the types of deviant behaviours
4. Why do people conform to social norms or rules?

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Culture and Society



UNIT

Culture: Definition, Elements, Cultural Lag and Cultural Diffusion

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To introduce the definition and different aspects of culture
- ◆ To explain the importance of culture in a globalised world
- ◆ To understand the changes taking place in culture as society evolves

Prerequisites

Human beings are the only species in the animal kingdom capable of producing culture. We use the word culture to mean beautiful or refined. That is a commonsensical usage. But this interpretation does not establish its scientific definition. Evidence of man leading a social and cultural life leads back to 75, 0000 years and possibly even further. Man attained the capacity to build culture during this period. This led to man's secure adaptation to his social and physical environment. He derived satisfaction from the constant interaction with his environment. He began to live in the company of others and formed groups. This gave rise to the concept of society. He started sharing his experience with his fellow human beings and established relations with his fellow beings to fulfil his needs. Man started to organise his experience and behaviour giving rise to a structured form of life. The culmination of this led to the development of culture. Culture is unique to mankind. Man cannot create culture in singularity. Culture is a product of human society. It is impossible to understand society without culture. Members of society usually take their culture for granted, as it has become a part of their day to day life. Suppose you got admission for a P.G. course in a North Indian University and have taken admission in the hostel where you share a room with a student from Bengal whose cultural traits and characteristics are different from yours, in such a situation you adjust to these differences which will result in the assimilation of both cultures.

Thus, culture is shaped and integrated. From this example, you now may have a better understanding of how culture works. The term 'Culture' is given a wide range of meanings and explanations. In Sociology 'Culture' does not mean personal refinement. The Sociological meaning of the word is quite different.

Keywords

Multiculturalism, Cultural integration, Cultural relativism, Ethnocentrism, Material and Non-material culture

Discussion

As you have studied in the previous unit the study of human society is essentially the study of groups and a social group is a system of social interaction. Society consists of groups of innumerable kinds and variety. Social control assures the continuity of a social group or society. It influences individuals or groups towards conformity to established or desired norms. The main purpose of social control is to bring about social conformity. By conformity to the norms, we express our identification with the groups. But when people go against the norms, they become deviants. Deviance poses a danger to the stability of the social order. Some deviations are socially useful for they help us to forecast tomorrow's norms.

Many of you are familiar with the term 'Culture'. The term 'Culture' is given a wide variety of meanings and interpretations. Some of them are purely non-sociological. People often speak of culture as synonymous with education. Everyone holds their culture with high regard. Culture is one of the most important concepts in social science with significant use in psychology, political science, and economics. It is a fundamental concept in anthropology and sociology. The study of human society immediately and

necessarily leads us to the study of its culture. Culture is one of the distinguishing traits of human society. Every society has its own culture and it differs from society to society. Many societies have cultural practices that are so unique that it is questionable. Now we will look at the topic of culture in sociology in greater depth.

5.1.1 Culture

Now you know that Culture is a product of human society. What does the word 'Culture' mean? Does it refer to music, dance, and art or is it broader-based? Does it refer to a particular region or does it cover a wider geographical area? The word Culture has its origin in the Latin word 'cultura' which emerged from the word 'colere' meaning 'to cultivate'. Culture is a word that is used vaguely by people in everyday life. Simply we may say culture is a way of life. It consists of belief, behaviours, values, communication, practices and ideas which are common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people conform to society's shared values and work together for the betterment of society. Culture is also dependent on the capacity for learning through the use of tools, languages, and

systems of abstract thoughts. It includes everything that humans have created and it impacts the way people think, act and behave in a situation.

Culture refers to how we understand ourselves as members of society. It is a learned behaviour. No one is born with a specific understanding of culture; they learn as they grow with time. It consists of the customary ways of behaving in everyday life, religious beliefs, moral standards, the way family life is organised, the methods used to provide food and shelter, language, government, and forms of artistic expressions.

Culture is learnt and developed through social interaction with others in society. A common identity of the group gives them a sense of belongingness. Culture is constantly changing and evolving. This makes culture dynamic as functional units. We learn the use of tools, techniques, symbols, signs etc. through interaction with other members of society in different social settings like with family members, friends, colleagues and sports activities etc. Therefore, culture constitutes the spiritual, material, emotional, intellectual aspects of society which is inclusive of language, arts, values, beliefs, ideas, customs, traditions and the like.

a) Definitions of Culture

The concept of Culture has been defined in different ways by different thinkers. We may consider some of these definitions so that you will get a clear understanding of them.

Edward B. Tylor, the English anthropologist, stated that “Culture... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a person] as a member of society.”. He was the first who specified that culture is learned and acquired and not a biological trait.

B. Malinowski has defined Culture as the ‘cumulative creation of man’. He also regards culture as the handwork of man and the medium through which he achieves his ends. Robert Bierstedt opined that ‘Culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as members of society. According to the above definitions, the concept of Culture is inclusive of both ideas and artefacts which has human intervention and operates within a defined territory.

b) Characteristics of Culture

You have read through some of the definitions of culture stated above. They reveal some of the characteristics of culture. We have already learned that culture is dynamic and adaptive. For a clear understanding of the concept of culture, you must know its main features.

1. Culture is learnt

Culture is a learned behaviour. Aspects of culture are learnt from those around us like friends or family. Our distinctive food habits or clothing style are part of such an unconscious learning through which we intake certain cultural practices. Reading the newspaper, shaking hands, worshipping, etc., are all ways of behaviour learnt by man culturally.

2. Culture is shared

Culture is shared which allows us to be sociable. Even though culture is shared it is not homogeneous. It is shared in many ways like communication, duties, responsibilities and values etc.

3. Culture is social

Culture is the product of society. It develops through social interaction. It is shared among the members of the group.

10. Culture is dynamic

Culture is not static. Culture is subject to slow but constant changes. Change and growth are latent in culture. The present Indian culture has amazing growth when compared to Vedic times. So, culture is dynamic.

11. Culture is ideational

Every society considers its culture as ideal. It is regarded as an end in itself and it is intrinsically valuable. The people are aware of their culture as an ideal one and they are proud of their cultural heritage.

12. Cultural Trait

It refers to a small bit or aspect of culture. Daily we are acquiring small bits of culture from others behaviour, language, interaction etc thus the qualities observed from another person, group or setting may be attributed as cultural traits.

c) Elements of Culture

Culture is shared and practised in all societies of the world. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another. Each culture has some basic elements. The major elements of culture are symbols, language, norms, values, and artefacts.

1. Symbols

Every culture has symbols. These symbols stand for various reactions and emotions. Some are nonverbal communication while others are material objects. Different societies have different symbols. Gestures for example a handshake conveys mutual respect or friendship in the west but in India the young are often encouraged to touch the feet of the elderly as a way to seek their blessings as well as to show respect towards them. These constitute nonverbal symbols. Material objects are symbols too. The Indian Flag is an example. For all Indians, the Tricolor flag

Aspects of culture are acquired from different languages. We are acquiring cultural bits from other languages. The different usage of language or predominance of a slang particular to a certain geographical area exhibits cultural traits that are dominant in that locale.

is not just a piece of cloth of three colours but a symbol of freedom and democracy. It symbolises national pride for the Indians. Shared symbols are an important part of any culture.

2. Language

Human beings have the capacity to handle languages. Languages allow for communication and interpretation which allows for the functioning of society. Children learn language from their culture. Language is crucial to any communication. Differences in languages make it very difficult to communicate. So, language is an important part of human existence. 'Book' may be conveyed differently in different languages but as long as there is an understanding that it means the same object in different languages it makes for shared languages and society to be possible.

3. Norm

Norms are rules or standards of behaviour that are acceptable and appropriate within a culture. These are specific to culture, time and place. They regulate the behaviour of members of society or a group. Without norms, there will be disorder and chaos in society. Certain social situations demand we follow certain rules or behave in a particular manner. There is an accepted and expected behaviour a student shall display while in a classroom as opposed to how he or she may behave while in a park. These accepted behaviours are based on norms.

4. Values

Values play an important role in guiding human action. It is a motivating element for the personal and collective identity of an individual. They are a source of social integration. But the conflict of values paves for division in society. The Indian Parliamentary Committee on Value Education in February 1999 identified five core universal values: (a) Truth (b) Righteous conduct (c) Peace (d) Love and (e) Non-violence. These

values are derived from different sources of Indian culture and tradition.

5. Artefacts

These are material objects like the clothes we wear, tools we use and houses we live in. Wireless artefacts (computers, mobiles, tabs etc) are nowadays common due to technological development, these are the artefacts of the modern age. Children learn the use of it even before they start to read or write.

Subculture

A subculture is part of the total culture of the society but it differs from the larger culture in certain aspects. For example, within the culture, a small area shows different cultures. India as a whole has a collective culture but within the same country the states have different cultures which may be considered as subcultures within a larger culture.

Culture Change

Culture change means any change in any aspect of a culture, whether by addition, subtraction, or modification of cultural traits or complexes.

Multiculturalism

It is used to describe a society where a variety of different cultures coexist. A country can be culturally diverse by having different religious groups, different linguistic groups, and variant racial groups, etc.

Cultural Integration

A form of cultural exchange in which one group assumes the beliefs, practices and rituals of another group without sacrificing its own culture.

Cultural Relativism

The customs of a culture can be judged or evaluated only by considering what values are associated with them, what needs are being satisfied, and their general relationship to other obligations, expectations, and moral codes of the particular culture under study. Thus, cultural relativism holds that the customs of one culture cannot objectively or validly be judged superior to those of another.

Ethnocentrism

The feeling that one's own culture is better than the other one or judging another culture which is not your own to be strange or incorrect: The term was introduced by William G. Sumner in his book '*Folkways*'. Common example for ethnocentrism may be the cultural differences between the West and East which is evident in the food habits, dressing or even gestures observed.

Cultural Evolution

The development of cultures from simple to complex form is known as cultural evolution. The fundamental idea of cultural evolution is that cultural change constitutes an evolutionary process.

Culture and Society

In everyday conversation, people rarely distinguish between the terms "culture" and "society," but the terms have slightly different meanings, and the distinction is important to a sociologist. A society describes a group as people who share a common territory and a culture. By "territory," sociologists refer to a definable region, as small as a neighbourhood. Culture represents the beliefs, practices and artefacts of a group, while society represents the social structures and organisation of the people who share those beliefs and practices. Neither society

nor culture could exist without the other.

Culture and society are closely related to one another. To survive, one must learn the skills, knowledge and accepted ways of behaving in society. One must learn the way of life, that is to learn the culture of society. Ralph Linton states that "culture is the way of life of its members: the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation". Without a shared culture, members of society would be unable to communicate and cooperate. Culture is learned and practised within society.

5.1.2 Culture and Civilisation

You studied about Indus valley civilisation while in school. What is it? Can you recollect it? It is simply the inventions and discoveries adopted by people. It is something different from culture. Civilisation refers to those devices and instruments by which nature is controlled. It includes technical and material equipment like a printing press, locomotive, tractor, radio, television, teleprinter, typewriter, aeroplane machine gun etc. It also includes the whole apparatus of economic activity and other organisations like our colleges, schools, banking system, stock markets, currency systems, parliament, insurance schemes etc. The terms culture and civilisation are often distinguished on various grounds.

a) Distinction between Culture and Civilisation

People often confuse the terms culture and civilisation and end up using them synonymously. Culture is everything about human society, i.e., it refers to the knowledge and features of a specific group of people living in a region. On the other extreme, civilisation is the breakthrough of human society meaning that it is the advanced level of social and human development. Both



represent two broad fields of human activity.

b) Classification of Culture

W.F. Ogburn, the famous sociologist, divides culture into two types such as 'material culture' and 'non-material culture'. Ogburn has used this distinction as the basis for a theory of cultural change. According to H.T. Mazumdar, "Culture is the sum total of human achievements material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically i.e., by tradition and communication, vertically as well as horizontally." There are two types of culture:

1. Material Culture
2. Non-material Culture

1. Material Culture

Material culture is man-made. A large portion of culture is visible and tangible. It consists of a huge number of products conceived and manufactured by humans. These are used for the convenience and progress of society. It refers to books, chairs, tables, furniture, tools, telephone, schools, churches, mosques, temples, factories etc. The constructions show their culture. These things are concrete, tangible and observable. It changes faster. All material objects like the stone axe of our prehistoric ancestors to the complex computer of modern days belong to the category of material culture. They come into being when one individual has an idea that is grabbed by others who may modify it or change the idea. Automobiles for instance is one such example of industrial society and the computer is another example of modern post-industrial society.

2. Non-material Culture

Non-material culture consists of cognitive and normative components. The cognitive components include knowledge, beliefs and

technology. The normative components consist of values, norms, folkways, mores and laws, institutions, and sanctions. Non-material culture does not have physical existence. We cannot touch, hold or taste them. These are abstract and intangible. Some of the examples of non-material culture are customs, values, goodwill, habits, morals, ethics, norms etc. The normative component is an important feature of culture because it includes rules of behaviour. Human societies could not exist if people did not follow rules. Non-material culture changes very slowly.

5.1.3 Cultural Lag

Cultural lag is the slowness in the rate of change of one part of a culture to another resulting in maladjustment within society. As discussed above changes in material culture moves faster than changes in non-material culture. Non-material culture changes very slowly. Non-material culture lags behind the material culture in the rate of change. This difference in the rate of change of material and non-material culture is termed as cultural lag. Technology often results in cultural lag.

'Cultural Lag' was coined by an American Sociologist William Fielding Ogburn (W. F. Ogburn) in 1922 in his work on "Social Change with Respect to Culture and Original Nature." According to William F. Ogburn, "Cultural lag is a common societal phenomenon due to the tendency of material culture to evolve and change rapidly and voluminously while non-material culture tends to resist change and remain fixed for a far longer period of time." A period of maladjustment occurs when the non-material culture struggles to adapt to new material conditions. But the changes in the adaptive culture do not synchronise exactly with the change in the material conditions. Technology has a tremendous impact on society and in creating social change. It changes society by three processes: invention, discovery, and diffusion. There is a "lag" in social changes

that results from any of the three processes. It takes time for people to catch up with technology. William Ogburn referred to this as 'Cultural Lag'.

5.1.4 Cultural Diffusion

Now you have the whole world in the palm of your hand. So, what is happening in America, England, France or Dubai, can be known to you immediately without any delay. Physical barriers such as mountain ranges and oceans no longer hinder people's movement, and there is a resultant spread of cultural ideas. The internet and advertising through the many forms of mass media have allowed people worldwide to see what is popular in other countries. As a result, blue jeans and Coca-Cola can be found in remote villages. Direct diffusion has certainly played a role in this new spread of cultural values and products, and people are now moving around frequently because of today's ease of travel. Let us understand the meaning of cultural diffusion in the following section.

Cultural diffusion is the spread of cultural traits, beliefs, and social practices from one society to another. These cultural traits are transferred through trade, migration, war, and other social contacts. Human interaction around the world often leads to cultural diffusion. Globalisation, the internet, and other interactive networks are enabling cultural diffusion across the globe at a faster pace. George Murdock has estimated that about 90% of the contents of every culture have been acquired from other societies. Diffusion is one of the main sources of cultural and social change. Each culture accepts elements from other cultures selectively. Material artefacts that are useful are more readily accepted than new norms, values and beliefs. Innovations must also be well-suited with the culture of society into which they diffuse.

Diffusion is always a two-way process.

Traits cannot diffuse unless there is some kind of contact between people and these contacts always entail some diffusion in both directions. It is a selective process. A group accepts some cultural traits from another group and at the same time rejects others. People are not prepared to borrow from other cultures, because they are quite conservative and love their own culture. Any cultural traits which strain a social relationship or try to disturb social cohesion or unity of the social group will be strongly resisted.

The following factors may be influential in the process of diffusion.

1. Availability of transportation and communication
2. Resistance of cultural change such as taboo, sense of superiority and general cultural inertia
3. Migration
4. The prestige of diffused culture and its people
5. The need for some new element of the new culture
6. The adaptability of the recipients of the new culture

a) Characteristics of Cultural Diffusion

1. Selective Process
2. Two Way Process
3. Continuous Process
4. Rapid Material Diffusion

Cultural diffusion is one of the main sources of cultural and social change. Even though diffusion is common, each



cultural and political terrains. There are considerable implications for societies due to interactions between Globalisation and culture. Globalisation created a materialist culture, where everybody is concerned with his own interest and benefit. Transnational flows of people for trade and commerce have recently been increasing in a drastic way, influencing culture and transforming the lives of the people. A culture of consumerism and pop culture has influenced cultures of the world. People now interact across continents in seconds. Thus, culture is transmitted from one nation to another within seconds. Therefore, culture transmission is happening in a wide range of manner.

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- ◆ Culture is learnt and developed through social interaction.
- ◆ Culture is always changing and evolving. New elements are being added, some cease to exist, and others are rearranged.
- ◆ Cultural trait refers to a small bit or aspect of culture.
- ◆ The major elements of culture are symbols, language, norms, values, and artefacts.
- ◆ Multiculturalism is used to describe a society where a variety of different cultures coexist.
- ◆ The doctrine of cultural relativism asserts that all cultures are for the most part equally valid.
- ◆ The feeling that one's own culture is better than the other one is known as ethnocentrism.
- ◆ Material culture and nonmaterial culture are the two types of culture.
- ◆ Material culture is manmade. They are visible and tangible. Nonmaterial culture consists of cognitive and normative components.
- ◆ Cultural lag is the slowness in the rate of change of one part of a culture to another resulting in maladjustment within society.
- ◆ Cultural diffusion is the inclusion of cultural traits, beliefs, and social practices from one society to another.

Objective Questions

1. How is the meaning of 'colere' related to the emergence of culture?
2. Who defined culture as the cumulative creation of man?
3. What is the smallest unit of culture?
4. Who first specified that culture is learned and acquired not a biological trait?
5. Who opined that 'culture is the complex whole that consists of all the ways we think and do and everything we have as members of society'?
6. Which sociologist said "Culture is the sum total of human achievements material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically i.e., by tradition-and communication, vertically as well as horizontally."?
7. Which type of culture is man-made, visible and tangible?
8. Which approach holds that the customs of one culture cannot objectively or validly be judged superior to those of another?
9. Who introduced the term ethnocentrism?
10. Which term is used to describe a society where a variety of different cultures coexist?
11. Who coined the term Cultural lag?
12. What are the two types of culture?
13. What are the two components of nonmaterial culture?
14. What is a "common societal phenomenon due to the tendency of material culture to evolve and change rapidly and voluminously while non-material culture tends to resist change and remain fixed for a far longer period of time"?
15. What is the process by which cultural traits spread from one culturally distinct group to another is called?

Answers

1. Cultivate
2. B. Malinowski
3. Cultural trait
4. Edward B. Tylor
5. Robert Bierstedt
6. H.T. Mazumdar
7. Material culture
8. Cultural relativism
9. William G Sumner
10. Multiculturalism
11. William Ogburn
12. Material and non-material
13. Cognitive and normative components
14. Cultural lag
15. Cultural diffusion

Assignments

1. Define culture and discuss the different types of culture in society with examples
2. Discuss the concept of culture and elaborate on the characteristics of culture
3. Examine the elements of culture and furnish operative examples from the Indian society for each element that you state
4. Discuss the role of culture and civilisation in society and differentiate the differences between culture and civilisation
5. Explain Cultural lag, giving emphasis to its origin and operation in the context of society
6. Discuss cultural diffusion and explain the characteristics of cultural diffusion

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UNIT

Socialisation: Definitions, Significance and Agencies

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To understand the concept of socialisation
- ◆ To familiarise the agencies of socialisation
- ◆ To explain the significance of socialisation

Prerequisites

We have already learned from the previous module the meaning of culture and some of the concepts associated with it. Now it has become clear that man is not only social but also cultural. Development of personality is not an automatic process but culture and ways of socialisation helps to develop personality. Every society has its own culture and prescribes its own ways and means of giving social training to its new born members. This social training is called socialisation. In the following section, we will explore the meaning and importance of socialisation and how socialisation is not only critical to individuals as they grow, but how it becomes a lifelong process through which we prepare for new social environments and expectations in our daily lives.

The social order is maintained largely by socialisation. Unless the individuals behave in accordance with norms of the group, it will be destructive.

Have you heard of socialisation? Where does it start? Who socialises you? It is interesting to note that the child comes into the world as a biological organism with animal needs. The direct socialisation of a child begins only after his birth. The newly born child as an organism has some internal factors which limit or help in his socialisation. These internal forces are categorised into reflexes, instincts, urges and capacities.

A child has a genetic makeup and biological traits when he is born into this world. However, the child becomes a human being through social interaction and a variety of experiences. He is gradually molded into a social being and learns the social way of acting and feeling. The individual becomes socialised by learning the rules and practices of social groups. By this process the individual develops a personality of his own. Socialisation means the process whereby an individual becomes a functioning member of the society.

Keywords

Behaviour, Social being, Personality, Development, Social function

Discussion

5.2.1 Socialisation

Socialisation is a process by which a biological organism gets converted into a social being. Through the process of socialisation an individual becomes an active participant and a responsible citizen of society.

Socialisation is often referred to as the transmission of culture and social learning. It is the process by which one learns the rules and practices of a social group. The process of socialisation is life long and therefore perfection in social learning is rarely achieved. There is no stage in learning during which a person has learnt everything about their social group and so stops to learn. We begin as a child, pass through adolescence into adulthood, marry, become parents, retire and grow old. In each stage, we must learn new patterns of behaviour. We are involved in the socialisation process throughout our life. Socialisation is a process of inducting the individual into the social world.

The heart of the process of socialisation is the gradual development of the self or ego.

It is through the process of development of self that personality takes shape and the mind comes to function in an individual.

According to E.S. Bogardus “Socialisation is the process of working together, of developing group responsibility or being guided by the welfare needs of others.” Similarly, A.W. Green explains that “Socialisation is the process by which the child acquires a cultural content, along with selfhood and personality.”

a) Stages of Socialisation

Socialisation is a continuous process of social learning. A new born child learns social values, standards and norms to lead a productive life through the process of socialisation. It proceeds from simplicity to complexity. Social scientists have identified four different stages of socialisation from infancy to adulthood. These are:

1. The oral stage
2. The anal stage



2. Socialisation is a continuous process:

Socialisation is a social learning which is not intermittent but a continuous process. Through the process of socialisation, a child is inducted into the social world. There is no stage at which one stops to learn.

3. Socialisation helps in the development of personality:

Socialisation is the process through which the personality of the child is shaped and molded. Personality is a product of social interaction and cultural adjustments

4. Socialisation leads to internalisation of norms:

Internalisation of norms refers to the process in which the norms of the group become a part of the personality of an individual. The individual learns culturally approved habits, ideas, and attitudes. They are taught the rights and duties of their position. These cultural rules and restrictions are so internalised that they become part of their personality.

5. Socialisation helps to enact different social roles:

Every individual has to perform different roles in their lives. The process of socialisation helps an individual not only to learn the norms associated with the roles but also to develop proper attitudes to enact those roles.

6. Socialisation provides the knowledge of skills:

The new born are trained in certain skills to lead a normal social life in society. This training paves the way for the individuals to play economic, professional, educational, religious and political roles in their future life.

7. It helps to become disciplined:

Social learning is the learning of rules of social behaviour expected from an individual. Socialisation disciplines an individual and assists them to live according to social expectations.

8. Helps to reduce social stance:

By giving proper social training and guidance to the children in their early years, it is possible to reduce the social distance between people of different races, castes, religions and professions.

9. Socialisation helps to develop right aspirations:

Every individual may have their own aspirations, desires and ambitions in life which may be opposed to common interests of society. In the process of socialisation an individual learns to develop those aspirations which contribute to the interests of society. It helps them to channelise their whole energy for the realisation of these aspirations in life

5.2.3 Types of Socialisation

In the forgoing discussions you have understood the meaning and importance of socialisation. Now we are going to discuss the various types of socialisation.

a) Primary Socialisation

It occurs during infancy and childhood. This is the most crucial stage of socialisation as the child learns basic behaviour patterns at this stage. It usually takes place within the family. Family is called the primary institution because it satisfies the basic needs of human beings. Foundations of latter learning are laid during this stage. During this stage infants learn language and basic knowledge or behaviour forms



of the society from the family in which he or she lives. Toilet training is an example of primary socialisation. Internalisation of norms is important in this stage.

b) Secondary Socialisation

The school and friends' group play a prominent role in socialising the child. During this stage a child learns the moral standards, customs and principles of their society and culture. This level runs parallel to primary socialisation. Family also plays a role in this stage but children are trained in schools to conform to authority. A school is a secondary social institution because it meets the divergent needs of the children.

c) Anticipatory Socialisation

It is a process of socialisation in which a person prepares for future positions, occupations, and social relationships. It comes from an individual's desire to join a group. An individual starts emulating the values, norms, behaviour patterns of another group in anticipation of being accepted as its member. This kind of socialisation is called anticipatory socialisation. This type of socialisation was first defined by sociologist Robert K. Merton. Realising how to act in accordance to certain roles like a doctor, lawyer, policemen, teacher etc these roles demand that the person behave in a particular manner and when the individual acts in accordance to their roles and responsibility it may be defined as anticipatory socialisation. Pre-marital therapy for couple, preparation for becoming adoptive parents or rehearsing for a job interview are examples of anticipatory socialisation.

d) Resocialisation

Resocialisation refers to the process of discarding the past behaviour patterns

and learning new ones. It is imposed upon an individual by a group. The individual will give up some of the norms and values that they already practice. For instance resocialisation occurs when new recruits join the army, resocialisation of inmates who come out of prisons to bring them back into mainstream society etc.

e) Adult Socialisation

You may understand by the heading itself that this kind of socialisation takes place in adulthood. This is related to individuals' needs and wants. They want to adapt to new roles such as that of a husband, wife or an employee. It explains how adults adjust to life circumstances or new roles and their expectations from these roles. For example, a newly appointed or promoted employee must learn to act as the manager.

5.2.4 Agencies of Socialisation

The process of socialisation is a continuous process. It begins at birth and continues until the death of the individual. A child starts learning right from the beginning and continues to learn throughout his life. The major agencies of socialisation are:

a) The Family

The family is the first agency of socialisation for the child. They learn how to behave from the members of their family such as parents, relatives, and friends. They learn speech and language from parents and near ones. The child learns all social virtues like cooperation, tolerance, self-sacrifice, love, and affection in the family. They acquire good habits from the family, and learn various happenings of the family. The parents are the first persons to introduce to the child the basic lessons of social life. The role of siblings i.e., brothers and sisters are of great importance as the child receives additional communication and care.

b) The School

The school is the second agent of socialisation. A family cannot fulfil all the needs of the children and youngsters. Education molds their ideas and attitudes here teachers play a very significant role. The school teaches the students to develop themselves, to be disciplined, to cooperate with others, to obey rules and to test their achievements through competition. It is in the school that the culture is formally transmitted and acquired. The communication they receive from their teachers help them to socialise and thus make them mature members of society.

c) Peer Groups

Children and youngsters in similar age groups (Peer-groups) by direct and inter-personal contacts get socialised in society easily. They develop behaviour in conformity with social norms. They acquire sharing skills, morality and some of the informal aspects of culture such as fashions, fads, crazes, modes of gratification. and sharing of ideas, jokes, experiences, games, group work etc. The principle of equality among the play groups is prominent in the process of socialisation. Peer culture becomes more important than parental culture in the adolescent years.

d) Religious Institutions

Religious institutions play an important role in the socialisation of the individual and groups. It is a great moral force and it binds individuals to society. Religious practices are observed on different occasions. The children observe their parents performing religious ceremonies and going to the temple, mosque and church as the case may be from their younger days. They listen to various sermons which may shape their ideas and beliefs. From primitive society to modern times people have faith in super-natural

power beyond human thinking. Religious ideologies inculcated in the children's mind will develop future thinking and development systems.

e) The Law

The state molds an individual's behaviour as a law-abiding citizen. It lays down the modes of conduct expected from the members of the state. The state reinforces and regulates appropriate behaviour by rewards and sanctions. It upholds important concepts such as duties and responsibilities. Citizens work together to enforce laws and other regulations in society.

f) Media

Mass-communication like advertisement, newspapers, radio, television, smart phones, internet, and the like influence individuals at all levels from childhood to old age. Media plays a vital role in the socialisation of an individual. The media of mass communication gives us their messages in a capsule form which influences the premises of our culture, its attitudes and ideologies. These words are always written by authors, editors, advertisers etc. which tend to have significant influence on the socialisation process. In some individual cases, these influences are more important than others.

5.2.5 Culture, Socialisation and Personality

Culture and socialisation are inextricably linked. Culture refers to the social heritage of a group of people. It consists of the shared behaviour, beliefs, and material objects belonging to a society or are part of society. It is more or less organised and persistent patterns of habits, attitudes and values that are transmitted from generation to generation. Every human infant is not only exposed to culture but assimilates it and in turn transmits it.



Socialisation can be understood as the experiences by which the newly arrived young members learn the culture of the society. Culture influences not only the process of socialisation, but also the formation of personality. It is mainly through the process of socialisation that a child develops a personality in a cultural context. It is interesting to note that different cultures provide for different ways of socialisation. These ways of socialisation have an impact on the formation of personality.

5.2.6 Failures of Socialisation Process and the Problem of Faulty Socialisation

Socialisation imparts an individual with moral norms, motives, values, attitudes, languages, symbols and social roles. It is the process through which one learns his or her culture and how to live with it. It is true that socialisation is a powerful factor that helps to bring about social conformity. It is equally true that socialisation is an effective instrument of creating a new generation of our expectations. It has its own limitations like any other social mechanism.

The socialisation process often fails even with the help of all modern techniques and the knowledge of human psychology. Failure of socialisation means that one does not learn the ways of being in the society as in the values, norms or behaviour patterns are lost. In such cases it alienates them from their own cultural values as well and they ultimately fail to live with it. Failures of socialisation and inappropriate or wrong way of socialisation, often lead to serious consequences including problems of personality. These are crucial aspects to any individual's life and they represent all key fields that guide one's entire life. Let's explore the consequences of failure of socialisation.

a) Culture cannot be understood completely

Socialisation consists of the teaching that culture is something one must acquire and share. But no individual can internalise the total culture of society. Further, no individual can know and put into practice all the norms of the group or society. The expected result of socialisation is no doubt conformity. But some deviation from what is considered proper behaviour is always found everywhere.

b) Damage to the self-image

Failure in socialisation would damage the self-image of the child. Development of proper self-image is vital to successful socialisation. Self-image is highly active in shaping one's behaviour. An unsatisfactory self-image often leads to unpleasant, anti-social or delinquent behaviour. According to Horton and Hunt, "a great deal of behaviour ranging from mildly annoying habits to serious neurosis and delinquencies can be viewed as desperate attempts to repair an intolerable image of 'self' as incompetent, unworthy, or unimportant". The ultimate response to feelings of unworthiness is suicide.

c) Resistance to excessive control

Parenting styles and behaviours are means through which parents socialise their children to function competently in their community. Successful socialisation requires parents to be supportive of their children and at the same time exert control as well. Teenagers who got little support but a great deal of control were often found to be non-conformists particularly in religious matters. Many children rebelled by adopting values that were opposed to those of their

parents and the larger society.

d) Failure of socialisation and mental illness

The sociological investigation of mental illness can be traced back to Durkheim and his study on suicide. Several sociologists have studied the relationship between socialisation and mental illness. Such studies have revealed that communication problems between the child and parents, and the child and others often lead to mental illness on the part of the child. Wrong parenting is often the cause of mental illness in children. According to Neil Smelser, "Children must learn how to use anger, joy and sorrow to deal with tension". Further, lower-class parents also do not stress self-control and autonomy as much as middle class parents do. This fact suggests a link between socialisation methods or ways and mental illness.

e) Failure to prepare children to face the challenges of life-cycle

Socialisation often fails to prepare people for the challenges of life cycle. In most civilised societies it does not equip people properly for the challenges of adolescence. The media, for example, glorify the virtues of sexual satisfaction and the value of money. But adolescents are usually denied full access to either even though they have physical maturity to do both. Thus, in modern society, adolescents often experience a stage of confusion and personality crisis.

f) Confusions of mature adults

In some societies, mature adults face problems particularly during the middle years close to their forties and fifties. People tend to experience positive effects when they

are goal oriented, see them as attainable, feel that they are progressing towards them and achieve them. These processes can be referred to as the actualisation of goals. But a person who has not achieved these goals by the early forties faces an uncomfortable situation. Their self-concept may suffer very badly.

g) Inability to equip people to face old age and death

As individuals grow older, they are faced with numerous physical, psychological and changes in social role that challenge their sense of self and capacity to live happily. The greatest failure of the process of socialisation is, perhaps, its inability to equip people sufficiently to face old age and death.

Further, socialisation for death is absent even in modern societies. In preindustrial societies deaths used to take place at home, that is with families and young people around. Thus they were getting a close understanding of it through experience. But in modern societies old people and also severely diseased people die in formal organisations such as hospitals, old-age homes, palliative care homes etc. The young do not get a first-hand experience of it.

We already learned that family plays a crucial role in the process of socialisation. Nowadays, the number of broken families is increasing alarmingly. This kind of family is expected to have adverse effects on the child because of lack of proper role models, failure to control the child and insufficient paternal or maternal love. Do you think the socialisation and personality development of the children are adversely affected? Surely, it will negatively affect children, which need further substantiation.



Recap

- ◆ Socialisation is the process through which a biological organism is transformed into a social being.
- ◆ Oral, anal, oedipal and adolescence form the stages of socialisation.
- ◆ Socialisation is significant as it helps the individuals to conform to the ways of the society and the roles expected of them.
- ◆ Anticipatory socialisation is the process by which an individual learns to behave and anticipate the behaviour according to their designated role.
- ◆ Anticipatory socialisation was first introduced by Robert K Merton.
- ◆ Resocialisation is the process by which an individual learns new norms, values and behaviour patterns to facilitate their transition from one role to another.
- ◆ Family is the primary agent of socialisation where a child learns the basic behaviour patterns and norms.
- ◆ Family, peer groups, schools, religious institutions, law, media form the agencies of socialisation.
- ◆ Socialisation and culture are codependent: effective socialisation takes place when an individual is able to include their cultural values onto their behaviour.
- ◆ Failure of socialisation means that the individual is left without the norms, values and skills necessary to function properly in society, such a circumstance maybe fatal for an individual.

Objective Questions

1. Who defined that “Socialisation is the process by which the child acquires a cultural content, along with selfhood and personality”?
2. What is the first stage of the socialisation process?
3. What is the main focus in the anal stage of socialisation?

4. What is the process of socialisation in which a person prepares for future positions, occupations, and social relationships?
5. What are the four different stages of socialisation?
6. What is the cause of deviance in society according to sociologists?
7. Which is the most important agent of socialisation in early childhood?
8. What is the process of discarding one's past behaviour patterns and learning new ones?
9. What is the process of inducting the individual into the social world called?
10. Which are the important agencies of socialisation?

Answers

1. A.W. Green
2. Oral stage
3. Toilet training
4. Anticipatory socialisation
5. The oral stage, the anal stage, the oedipal stage, and adolescence
6. Failure of the socialisation process
7. The family
8. Resocialisation
9. Socialisation
10. Family, school, peer groups, religious institutions, law and media

Assignments

1. Define socialisation and discuss the stages of socialisation in molding an individual to a functional social being in the society
2. Discuss the types of socialisation in detail and furnish each with an example
3. Examine the agencies of socialisation and illustrate each with examples
4. Explain anticipatory socialisation and resocialisation
5. Narrate the consequences of failure of socialisation

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UNIT

Norms, Folkways, Mores and Values

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To understand the concepts of Norms, Folkways, Mores and Values
- ◆ To familiarise the definitions of norms, folkways, mores and values
- ◆ To explain the dimensions in the functioning of norms, folkways, mores and values

Prerequisites

In the previous module you had learned about Socialisation, its importance and the different agencies. Now you have understood that the social order is maintained largely by socialisation. It is clear that socialisation is described as the process whereby an individual internalises the norms of the group. The primary task of sociology is to discover the source of order in society. Norms here, represent such a source of social order. In each and every society, there are certain unwritten rules of behaviour which are necessary for the proper functioning of the society.

No society or social group can exist without norms. It constitutes the very foundation of social structure. Norms here, denote a source of social order that society manifests. Norms have made it possible for an orderly social relations among people in societies. Norms guide the individuals in their conduct or behaviour. Norms are standards of group behaviour. The term social norm was first used by M. Sherif in “The Psychology of Social Norms”, in 1936 to describe the common standards or ideas which guide members’ responses in all established groups.

Social norms are rules of action shared by people in a given society or group. They define what is considered normal and acceptable behaviour for the members of that group. They can influence, for instance, how people dress for a wedding, stand in line when buying something, shake hands when meeting someone or speak quietly at the library etc. In the following sections, we shall discuss norms, folkways, mores and values which account for the stability of social order.

Keywords

Standardised generalisation, Sustaining forces, Informal enforcement

Discussion

5.3.1 Norms

Social norms guide every aspect of our life. Let us consider classroom behaviour in a college setting. Sometimes we do not realise that norms exist until someone breaks them. A classroom norm would be how to speak while in class. If students want to say something, they should discreetly raise their hands and wait to be called upon. Once acknowledged, students can then offer their input with several limitations. They should not ask unnecessary questions and disturb the class. What happens if they continue? It is not acceptable to the teacher and it creates problems. Another norm is how students should sit during class. They should sit in the chairs provided, facing forward. Students should give the appearance of paying attention by making minimum eye contact with the professor. Students should engage in a behaviour that is appropriate for a classroom. It is usually considered bad behaviour to order a pizza and then share it with your friends during lecture hours.

Suppose you want to leave the class early. You can do so if you follow the rules. You should approach the professor and seek permission. So, when the time comes, quietly pack up your belongings and slip out of the door. Social norms tell you what you are supposed to do in any given situation. We have internalised social norms so well that we automatically follow as we go through our everyday life.

Let us imagine the following situations. What kind of dress would you wear if you

want to go to the gym for workouts? or What would be your possible behaviour if you are attending a friend's birthday party? In the first case you would go to the gym in casual wear. In the second one you would go to your friend's birthday party in formal wear and give him attractive gifts and share his happiness and greet him with good wishes. Imagine you are coming to the regional centre to attend your sociology contact classes in a car. On the road, you hear the siren of an ambulance coming from behind. What would you do now? You would make way by taking to your extreme left to let the ambulance go first, thinking that someone is in need of immediate medical care. All these behaviours which are considered proper under given situations in our society are known as social norms. We shall study about these social norms, its characteristics and importance in this module.

a) Meaning and Definitions of Norms

Norms are group-shared expectations based on social values. They represent 'standardised generalisation' concerning expected modes of behaviour. The word 'norm' comes from the Latin word 'norma' which means a carpenter's square, a pattern or a rule. This instrument is used by a carpenter as a guide to create standard lines for cutting lumber likewise Norms in society, determine, guide, control and also predict behaviour.

Human society presumes and relishes remarkable order and stability. Social



norms help society to maintain the unity of social order. Hence they are called the 'sustaining forces' of a society. Social norms are numerous, diverse and their influence on individuals and society has not been uniform. They differ in terms of their severity and durability. The social reaction to the violation of these norms, vary in strength and intensity.

Sherif explained Norms as the jointly negotiated rules for social behaviour, the "customs, traditions, standards, rules, values, fashions, and all other criteria of conduct which are standardised as a consequence of the contact of individuals' ". According to H.M. Johnson, "A norm is an abstract pattern held in the mind that sets certain limits for behaviour". Both these views point out the necessary constraints in social behaviour. The following are the main characteristics of norms.

i. Social norms serve as a guiding principle

Social norms serve as a guiding principle for all the members of a society. It showcases the way to behave in a social situation.

ii. Social norms are universal

Social norms are present in all societies. They are the very basis of social order. In the absence of social norms, no society can function smoothly. Even in uncivilised and barbaric societies we find some norms.

iii. Norms are relative to situations and groups

Norms vary from society to society and sometimes in the same society they differ from group to group. There is no social group without norms. Within the same society they differ with age, sex, occupation and social status of the individuals. Behaviour patterns

meant for married people cannot be followed by unmarried people. Norms of behaviour meant for old people are not applicable to children. Norms meant for officers in the army or police are different from that of teachers and lawyers. In multicompex societies wide variations in norms are found. But in primitive societies, a single set of practices and norms are found because their culture exhibits a high degree of integration.

iv. Norms incorporate value judgments

Norms are normally based on values. A norm is a standard or behavioural expectation shared by group members. It is in terms of norms that we judge whether some actions are good or bad, right or wrong, expected or unexpected. Norms signify expected behaviour or even ideal behaviour from the members of the group.

v. Norms keep control over violators

Social norms help to maintain control over the behaviour of an individual directly as well as indirectly. Through direct control, each society has its own measures to punish violators who deviate from the established social norms. People also feel shame and guilt when they violate those norms (indirect control). Norms and sanctions go hand in hand. Norms are the groups' rules for proper behaviour and sanctions are the groups' punishment for violation of the norms. In addition to being punished for violation of social norms, people tend to be rewarded for proper observance of them.

vi. Norms are not always obeyed by all

Some obey some norms sometimes and they disobey or ignore some other norms

parks, workplace, classroom, party, wedding, theatre, market place, etc.

3. Norms permit efficient functioning

Most of our responses are habitual ones and norms ensure such habitual responses. Our responses come automatically to us and we perform complex learnt tasks efficiently with ease. How we conduct ourselves while in a court or classroom is based on certain norms that has defined our habitual and learned responses. We should be able to do only a few tasks in a day. But norms reduce the necessity for decision in the numerous social situations which we face and in which we participate. Even cooking becomes difficult if cooking norms are not known. Norms thus provide practical solutions to everyday problems.

4. Norms give cohesion to society

Norms provide an internal cohesion without which social life is not possible. This unity or cohesion contributes to co-operation and mutual help.

5. A normless society is an impossibility

A society without norms would be as Hobbes pointed out, ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’. Norms constitute an important element of society. Norms and society go together. Man cannot live alone thus depends upon society for his existence. The collective and cooperative life is made possible because of norms.

Norms guide behaviour in all aspects of social life. There are norms governing behaviour with friends, family, neighbours, teachers and strangers. There are norms which define acceptable behaviour in



6. Norms help the maintenance of social order

The social order is established and maintained through social norms. Drivers of vehicles are bound to meet with accidents if they fail to conform to traffic rules in a busy street. Human culture is a vast integrated normative system which permits more variability and flexibility of behaviour than what a biological structure does. Therefore a common understanding is necessary to maintain social order. Norms help in self-control

7. Norms help in self-control

Norms influence an individual's attitude, his motives and impulses. They determine and guide his intuitive judgments of others and his intuitive judgments of himself. They lead to the phenomena of conscience, of guilt feelings, of striving, of elation and depression. The individual is able to exercise discipline by himself by his own actions and behaviour.

Norms are called the 'sustaining forces' of a society because it helps society to maintain the unity of social life. Social norms are numerous and they differ in terms of severity and durability. They assume different forms but their effect and influence on the individual and society have not been uniform.

5.3.2 Folkways

By now it is clear from the previous section that human behaviour is guided by prevailing social norms. It interacts with the human environment and affects the social wellbeing of the people in society. You would have noticed that people tend to wait in lines especially in super markets or in other areas like railway ticket counters, cinema theatres etc. This practice brings order to the process of buying things or receiving services. It allows us to easily perform functions in our

daily lives. What would you do if you have any doubts during the Sociology lecture? You will raise your hand to ask questions. How will you dress to attend this lecture? You will probably wear an appropriate dress to attend the Sociology lecture. All these are examples of folkways which are quite useful for the ordered functioning of society. The folkways are the foundation of every culture. When you fully assimilate, they become personal habits. They save much of our energy and time. We shall go through some of the definitions and the nature of folkways in the following section.

Folkways are the accepted ways of behaviour. The word literally means "the ways of the folk". 'Folk' means people and 'ways' refers to behavioural habits of people. The term was introduced by W. G. Sumner in his book 'Folkways' published in 1906. According to Sumner, "Folkways represent man's unique means of adapting himself to the environment".

Gillin and Gillin opined that "Folkways are behaviour patterns of everyday life which generally arise unconsciously in a group". According to Lundberg, "Folkways are the typical or habitual beliefs, attitudes and styles of conduct observed within a group or community".

Here let us go through some examples of folkways so that you will get a clear understanding of it. You respect your teachers when they enter the classroom or when you see them on the streets. When you meet someone on the road you say namaste by folding your palms together. You wash your clothes daily and take regular baths to keep yourself clean and tidy. You express your love to the younger ones when you see them at a party or a function. You show respect when you see elders at a family function. These folkways exert a form of social pressure that encourages us to act and interact in certain ways. However, they do not have moral

significance, and there are rarely serious consequences or sanctions for violating them.

a) Nature of Folkways

Let us look at the nature of folkways in the following section. We shall discuss them one by one.

i. Folkways vary a lot

Folkways vary from group to group and society to society and they may undergo change within the same group or society in the course of time.

ii. Social in nature

Folkways are created by groups for their sustenance and maintenance. They are products of man's group life. Social recognition is achieved for individuals by conforming to folkways.

iii. Unknown origin

Folkways are not the result of any advance planning. Someone in the group starts a new way and other people may start following it. By the time it becomes folkways neither the originator nor the time can be traced. For example, we do not know who invented greeting styles like handshake or 'namaste'. We cannot trace its time of origin. Sumner believed that folkways arise automatically and unconsciously.

iv. Informal enforcement

Conformity to folkways is not obligatory though they are considered necessary. For example, one who does not take bath, wash his clothes regularly, is not going to be punished by law. But such a person is ridiculed by others in society. No sane person can neglect and violate all folkways in a society. So, folkways constitute one of the types of social control.

v. Repetitive in nature

When the majority of people observe a social practice constantly and regularly, it becomes a folkway. Such practices by the majority become standardised practices by constant repetition. It represents a mass phenomenon and not an individual attribute.

vi. Folkways are numerous

Folkways are so diverse and numerous that it is impossible for anyone to enlist all the folkways. No encyclopedia could contain all of the folkways practised by all.

vii. Folkways are subject to change

Some folkways undergo rapid change. Sumner called them Fashions. Fashions relating to dress, hairstyle, art, designs etc., go through fast change. Folkways associated with beliefs and practices regarding family, property etc. resist change very often.

Folkways are the foundation of every culture and they save much of our energy and time. They are generally observed by people and help them to handle social relations in a comfortable way. Folkways help people to strive towards individual and collective goals. They contribute to the order and stability of social relations. No society could exist without them.

5.3.3 Mores

From the previous section you understood that folkways contribute to the order and stability of social relations. Folkways have assumed importance in the study of social control. But all folkways are not equally important. Some of them become more compulsive and regulative in character. The folkways which become regulators of behaviour are normally referred to as 'Mores'. In our society cohabitation with a romantic partner before marriage is viewed as immoral. Nowadays many young people live together before they get married.



Is a live-in relationship valid in India? The Supreme Court of India held that live-in relationships are permissible and the act of two major persons living together cannot be considered illegal or unlawful. In spite of this judgement many Indians view cohabitation with a romantic partner before marriage as immoral and unacceptable. Mores enact a greater coercive force in shaping our values, beliefs, behaviour, and interactions than do folkways. Mores normally receive the sanctions and backing of values and religion. Mores backed by religious sanctions are strongly justified by people. In the following section we shall discuss the meaning and functions of mores in detail.

The term 'mores' are derived from the Latin word 'mos' which stands for 'customs'. It represents yet another category of norms. Sumner applied the term mores to those folkways which are considered by the group to be of great significance and therefore rather indispensable to its welfare. The mores relate to the fundamental needs of society more directly than folkways. They express the group sense of what is fitting, right and conducive to social welfare. Mores are stricter than folkways. They are the measuring rod of right and wrong. All folkways are not equally important but some of them are more compulsive and regulative in nature. The folkways which become regulators of behaviour are usually referred to as mores. Mores determine what is considered morally acceptable or unacceptable within any given culture. For example, one group does not condemn polygamy, another condemns it. A swimming suit is fit for beachwear but it is not fit to wear in a classroom.

R. M. MacIver and C. H. Page have pointed out that "when the folkways have added to the conception of group welfare, standards of right and wrong, they are converted into mores". According to Gillin and Gillin, "mores are those customs and group routines which are thought by the

members of the society to be necessary to the groups continued existence".

a) Types of Mores

There are two types of mores:

- a) Positive Mores
- b) Negative Mores

a) Positive mores

Positive mores represent 'dos' for the people in a group or society. They give instructions and provide guidance for the people to behave in a particular way or pattern. Examples are protecting children, caring for the aged, doing social work, respecting elders, speaking the truth, etc.

b) Negative Mores

Negative mores represent the 'don'ts' for the people in a group or society. They are often called taboos. Taboos forbid or prohibit certain behaviour, ways or patterns which are harmful for the general wellbeing of society. Examples are: do not steal, do not tell lies, do not commit adultery, do not appear nude before people, do not be irreligious, etc.

b) Functions of Mores

In order to understand mores in an appropriate manner, let us look into their functions. Mores denote behaviour patterns which are not only accepted but are prescribed. According to MacIver and Page the following are the social functions of mores:

i) Mores are the guardians of Social Solidarity

Every group has its own mores which bind people together and weld them into one strong cohesive group. There are mores for each sex, for all ages, for all groups from the

family to the nation. They help to maintain the solidarity of the group.

ii) Mores direct much of our individual behaviour

Mores are powerful instruments of social control as they exert direct pressure on our behaviour. They mold our character and restrain our tendencies.

iii) Mores identify the individual with the group

Mores help the individual to gain identification with his fellows in his group. He maintains social relations with other group members that are essential for satisfactory living and promoting social harmony.

5.3.4 Values

Previous sections of this module focused on folkways and mores, which represent different kinds of social norms. The term 'Value' has different meanings in economics and sociology. In economics, 'value' is assessed in terms of monetary basis. In Sociology, the term 'values' signifies constituent parts of social structure. Stories have been a mode of instruction to emphasise values and morals from the time immemorial. Mahabharata and Ramayana

are popular not only because of the character but also for the abundant source of life lessons and moral values. What were your favourite bedtime stories in your childhood? It might be Panchatantra stories, Jataka Tales, Tenali Raman Tales, Vikram and Vedhal or Arabian Nights etc. Mostly every story is concluded with an appropriate moral. The stories will not only entertain the children but also inculcate the sublime virtues and worldly wisdom in them. Each story gets deep rooted in the hearts of children with values. In the following section, you will learn about the meaning of values and definitions given by some sociologists. You will also learn the functions of values and the aspects of

values, in the subsequent sections.

We come across different values in our day-to-day life. For example, equality of opportunity is a value, which is accepted everywhere. Indian culture values spirituality as a leading quality. It is not easy to define social values. The term 'value' is derived from the Latin word 'valere' meaning 'to be strong', 'to prevail' or 'to be of worth'. It is an important part of the culture of a society. Values may be defined as the criteria and moral judgement or certain subjective standards through which individuals or groups distinguish between good or bad. It shapes individual personality, social morality and guides individuals to be a part of or function within a distinctive socio-cultural system. Values account for the stability of the social order. They provide the general guidelines for conduct.

Values explain the purposes of life and the means of achieving them. It gives social stability for the society. Values maintain cultural stability of the society and institutions. Social values provide the general guidelines for the behaviour of the people. Thus, values such as humanity, patriotism, sacrifice, helpfulness, freewill, loyalty, fundamental rights, social equality, democracy, co-operation, respect for human dignity etc., guide our behaviour in various ways.

According to Radhakamal Mukerjee, "Values may be defined as socially approved desires and goals that are internalised through the process of conditioning, learning or socialisation and that become subjective preferences, standards and aspirations."

H. M. Johnson says that "Values are general standards and may be regarded as higher order norms". Another sociologist Michael Haralambos argues that "A value is a belief that something is good and worthwhile. It defines what is worth having and worth striving for".



a) Functions of Values

Let us see what the functions of values are? Indian sociologist R.K. Mukherjee studied in detail about the Indian value system and said that by their nature, all human relations and behaviour are embedded in values. He suggested seven functions of values:

1. Values play a crucial role in guiding human behaviour.
2. Values provide goals or ends for the members to aim for.
3. Shared social values provide a base for commonalities and trustful communication.
4. They serve as markers of personal and collective identity.
5. They serve as a potent source of social integration.
6. Values bring legitimacy to the rules that govern specific activities.
7. They provide 'vocabulary of motives'.

1. Values exist at different levels of generality or abstraction.
2. Values tend to be hierarchically arranged.
3. Values are explicit and implicit in varying degrees.
4. Values often are in conflict with one another

Value Conflict

Value conflict arises only when people attempt to force one set of values on others or lay claim to exclusive value systems that do not allow for divergent beliefs. In complex societies we find more than one value system. We can find multiple, overlapping and sometimes even opposing value systems in the same society. The right to dissent, conformity, respect for authority and respect for elders are some of the examples of values that are in conflict. There are some potentially conflicting values which are so pervasive that it is virtually impossible to pursue some of them without violating others. There are less value conflicts in small homogeneous societies than in large heterogeneous one.

Aspects of Values

There are four other aspects to the sociological concept of value. They are:

Recap

- ◆ A norm is a rule or standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate.
- ◆ Norms are called the ‘sustaining forces’ of a society because it helps society to maintain the unity of social life.
- ◆ Norms assist survival, guide behaviour and give cohesion to society. Norms help to maintain social control.
- ◆ Folkways are behaviour patterns of everyday life which generally arise unconsciously in a group.
- ◆ Folkways vary from group to group and society to society.
- ◆ Folkways help people to strive towards individual and collective goals. They contribute to the order and stability of social relations.
- ◆ Folkways which become regulators of behaviour are usually referred to as mores.
- ◆ Mores are the guardian of ‘Social Solidarity’.
- ◆ There are two types of mores – positive mores and negative mores.
- ◆ Values are general standards and may be regarded as higher order norms.
- ◆ Values are assumptions, largely unconscious, of what is right and important.
- ◆ Values play a crucial role in motivation and guiding human behaviour. They serve as a potent source of social integration.
- ◆ Values are often in conflict with one another. There are less value conflicts in small homogeneous societies than in large heterogeneous one.

Objective Questions

1. Who defined “norm as an abstract pattern held in the mind that sets certain limits for behaviour”?



2. What has been set as an acceptable behaviour for a student to engage in while attending a class?
3. Who and when was the term 'Folkways' introduced?
4. What exerts a form of social pressure that encourages people to act and behave in a particular way?
5. When Folkways become regulators of behaviour they are known as what?
6. What are the two types of mores?
7. What may be defined as the criteria for moral judgement or subjective standards that define good and bad?
8. When less value conflicts are found in small homogenous societies than in large heterogeneous societies, State whether true or false?
9. Who defined "values as socially approved desires and goals that are internalised through the process of conditioning, learning or socialisation"?
10. What is the term used when one set of values is forced upon another?
11. What has led to the decline of the traditional norms and values that were rooted in traditional social groups?
12. How does the individual internalise the norms of a group?

Answers

1. H.M Johnson
2. Norms
3. W.G Sumner in 1906
4. Folkways

5. Mores
6. Positive mores and Negative mores
7. Values
8. True
9. Radhakamal Mukerjee
10. Value Conflict
11. Globalisation
12. Socialisation

Assignments

1. Define norms and elaborate on the main characteristics of it
2. Describe the functions of social norms
3. Explain the concept of 'Folkways' and the nature of folkways
4. Discuss value and the functions of value
5. Describe value conflict and furnish functional examples
6. Examine mores and explain in detail the types of mores

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Social Change and Mobility



UNIT

Social Change: Definitions, Factors and Relevance

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To have a basic understanding of social change
- ◆ To differentiate between social change and social progress
- ◆ To know about the causes of social change

Prerequisites

The pace of social change has continuously risen throughout the history of human social evolution. Despite significant differences in the nature and complexity of each group's cultures, each group's customs and traditions had been well-established for many generations. The pace of technological development is quickening, and the number of contacts across cultures is growing. West-oriented science and technology are rapidly spreading globally, resulting in the increasing Westernization of emerging countries. Cultural distinctions continue to persist among all people and may never vanish from the world. Positive transformations and negative transformations are the two kinds of transformations that may occur—the old set of conditions replaced with a new set of circumstances.

It is possible to describe sociological change as a process in which cultural and social institutions change due to their interaction with human people. The social changes that have taken place have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences. The liberation struggle against the British Empire for Indian independence was a significant social transformation that all Indians can look back on and connect with today. What you saw yesterday will be very different from what you see tomorrow. All of these factors are important to sociologists because they assist in the identification of the principles of social change. We will be better able to comprehend what it means to be a part of social change.

Keywords

Social progress, Social organisation, Transformation

Discussion

Social change is a term that is often taken for granted in today's culture and is challenging to comprehend when considered in its entire context. This discussion will explore social change and mobility from a variety of perspectives. From the previous module, we can understand that culture and society are neither static nor immutable but are instead highly dynamic and vulnerable to modification. Although culture and society are constantly changing, people may detect a noticeable shift over a few months to many years. The consequence is that no human civilisation in the world has stayed unaltered due to this process. Most of us think that societies develop due to natural selection and that change is an inevitable consequence of human interaction. We believe that change is both impending and inescapable and that we must prepare for it. You should be aware of many other variables and insights if you are interested in understanding societal change. We will go into more depth about what social changes are and how they are researched in sociology in the next part of this unit.

A civilisation's culture is constantly developing to meet the demands of changing circumstances. For example, in the event of a war, a nation's willingness to participate, the channeling of financial resources, and the mobilisation of human resources may all be directed toward a single objective, which is victory, resulting in virtually instantaneous change. A narrow range of war-related activities rather than a broader range of activities

is emphasized. The postwar society is radically different from what existed before the World War II, regardless of whether a country succeeds or fails. Depending on the circumstances, some of these changes will be brought about by an enemy's war effort, while contacts with individuals from different cultures will bring about other changes

6.1.1 Meaning and Definitions of Social change

People have a natural tendency to romanticise the past. When compared to the present, many young people believe that the good old days were preferable. According to some Greek thinkers, humanity previously lived in an ideal golden era that we should all strive to achieve. We started with the silver era, progressed to the Bronze Age, and finally arrived at the Iron Age.

In contrast to the concepts of social change explored in the previous century, the ideas of social transformation presently contested are radical. In this case, the concept of inevitable development describes the belief that society is rapidly advancing in all directions. Even the World War II and a host of more minor conflicts have failed to disrupt the success of this philosophy.

Let us think over a few real-life contexts to understand the nature of social change. Aspects of agricultural progress, irrigation, the plow, and the cotton gin are just a few examples. It results from more than food production and security, leading to population expansion and urbanisation. People were



allowed to labor in places other than the farm. Industrialisation is the process of transitioning from an agrarian-based economy in which food is the primary product to an industrial or post-industrial one in which commodities, services, and information are the primary goods. The transition from a manual workforce to a technology-driven labor force, in which robots play a significant role, is known as digitisation. It had an impact on people from different walks of life. In the workplace - individuals work outside of the house or community, which results in gender differences. The nature of labor began to be focused on and structured around mechanical devices—the alienation of industrial workers. This era saw a boom in the manufacturing of firearms and nuclear weapons, the information based society saw an overwhelming growth in the amount of information.

A model of societal change developed by Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee is based on cycles. Institutions, communities, and civilisations all go through phases of development, peak, and fall at various points in their histories. Modern society will inevitably come crashing down. Following the cycle theory of social change, it has been said that narrative follows a cyclical pattern. The school of thought which holds that contemporary civilisation is on the verge of extinction asserts that the previous historical civilisations, such as ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, have already succumbed to the same fate. Even though ideas differ, most cycle theories refer to civilisations' development, reaching its zenith performance and eventually declining. Other approaches for societal change have focused on supernatural occurrences, ethnic traits, or economic circumstances in the past, among other things. There are just too many variables to account for using a straightforward formula. Unavoidably, change will take place in the world. Humans' perception of their environment

is continuously shifting, regardless of where they are.

The phrase "social change" refers to the process of altering the social order of a society, and it is defined as follows: In this environment, social institutions, social behaviours, and social relationships are all subject to change, as are other aspects of daily life. Human interactions and relationships are responsible for the changes that occur in society. In other words, any kind of changes, transformations, and variations that impact social institutions and people are considered part of social transformation. As a network of social connections, society enables social change, which occurs due to a shift like in social relationships. We may think of social connections as a collection of social processes and social interaction rolled into one. Consequently, when social change occurs, there is a simultaneous shift in social interaction, social functions, and social structure, resulting in additional structural and functional changes in society.

It is possible that when we speak about social change, we are referring to the ideas of social progress and sociocultural evolution, both of which are related to the philosophical view that humankind progresses via evolution. For example, in the social and economic system, the transition from feudalism to capitalism or post-capitalism are both instances of paradigmatic shifts.

Among the many instances of societal transformation are the industrial revolution, the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, and the women's suffrage campaign. The social change represents a substantial and long-lasting shift in how society acts and how norms and values society adheres to in both the short and long terms.

There are several definitions of social change however we will look into the important ones for developing a foundational understanding of the concept. According to

MacIver and Page, “Social change refers to a process responsive to many types of change; to change in the artificial condition of life; to change in the attitudes and beliefs of men, and to the changes that goes beyond human control to the biological and the physical nature of things”. Kingsley Davis states that “Social change means an alteration of current social organisation, that is, structure and function of society.” M E Jones argues that “Social changes are a term used to describe variations in or modifications of, any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interactions or social organisation.” H T Mazumdar professes that “Social change may be defined as a new fashion or more, either modifying or replacing the old in the life of people – or in the operation of society.”

6.1.2 Social Progress

What exactly should we do to "make the world a better place"? When we talk about improving society, what exactly do we have in mind? I guess there are a variety of things we might be referring to when we say this. On the surface, society would amend when its people are better off; but, is there more to the story? Following many distinct lines of thinking seems to be a viable option.

Social progress is a society's capacity to fulfill the most fundamental human needs of the population, determine the essential components that enable community members to improve and maintain the living standards and create an environment that allows all human beings to grow and develop.

Social progress means a movement toward a more polished, refined, or otherwise desirable state. It is the position of a progressive to believe that advancements in technology and science, as well as social organisation, have improved and will continue to improve the human condition; this can be the result of direct human activities such

as social enterprise or activism, or it can be a natural consequence of sociocultural evolution.

Progress was introduced by several early nineteenth-century social ideas, especially social evolution as expressed by Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, and by the Industrial Revolution. It was evident in the historical concepts that were established throughout the Enlightenment period as well. Various political philosophies have championed social development as a goal, with each having its own ideas on how to achieve it.

According to Condorcet, social development components have included the abolition of slavery, the expansion of literacy, the elimination of inequalities between the sexes, and the reduction of poverty in developing countries. One way to define a society's social progress is in terms of characteristics such as its capacity to fulfill basic needs, help inhabitants better their lives, and provide opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential.

A primary goal of the Social Progress Projects is to enhance the conditions of people throughout the world, particularly for those less fortunate. It assis governments in the private sector, and the non-profit sector to collaborating more productively and make excellent use of the resource base available to address urgent social and environmental problems, especially for those less fortunate. The aim is to bring about this transformation by giving people involved valuable, timely, and accurate information that will enable them to make wise decisions.

Economic data, technical advances, changes in political or legal systems, and problems relating to human life changes, such as life expectancy and the risk of illness or disability etc. may be used as important indicators to assess progress.



In most cases, increase in GDP is linked with gains in social development but other variables are also significant. A disparity between economic and social development obstructs future economic growth and can lead to political unrest. Whenever there is an imbalance between economic development and social advancement, political instability and unrest are more likely to emerge than in other circumstances. Thus other nations that cannot satisfy human needs, create social capital, and offer opportunities for their citizens as a drag on economic growth since social advancement lags behind economic growth.

The definition of progress is the act of moving ahead in the direction of a goal. It entails a shift in one way or the other. Because of this, it is a journey in the pursuit of specific strategic outcomes.

In the words of MacIver, "By the word progress, we suggest not just a direction but a direction toward some ultimate objectives, some destination is chosen ideally and not only by the objective considerations at work."

a) Progress and its Characteristics

A couple of factors influence its character: the nature of the final goal and the distance between ourselves and the plan

itself. As a result, whenever we claim that we are advancing, we refer to the fact that humanity is expanding in both moral and material terms.

The essential features of Progress:

- ◆ It is the reversal of a phenomenon.
- ◆ Changes can only occur when it achieves the intended result or outcome.
- ◆ It is collective in that it includes the whole community to effect a transformational result.
- ◆ There is more benefit than loss in this situation.
- ◆ It is voluntary in the sense that it does not occur as a result of inaction. Progress is only possible with the motivation and determination of the individual.
- ◆ The concept of progress is a moving target. As a result, what is now a representation of development may eventually be a symbol of regression.
- ◆ There are no boundaries to human advancement.

The Differences between Social Change and Social Progress.

Social Change	Social Progress
Social change may or may not result in social progress.	Social progress is contained within social change: Social progress occurs as a result of social change.
Social change is both aimed and aimless and has no clear direction. It appears both intentional and unintentional.	Social progress has specific objectives and goals.

Society undergoes social change; it can include societies from all over the world; it can also include particular communities within a nation, it may be lengthy and complex process.	Social progress is specific and occurs within a community or a group of communities.
A set of values can't be attached to social change because it is a process that is happening all the time.	Social progress can be measured in terms of a shift in value systems.
Social change is both an abstract concept and an objective concept.	Social progress cannot be measured in absolute terms, against a scale, or any other way.

Table no. 6.1.1

6.1.3 Factors of social change

In this section, we will discuss the factors that affect social change. As you know it is the nature of society is dynamic and in a constant flux or change. Two major factors influence change. One factor is the occurrence of random or one of a kind occurrences, such as the climate, or the presence of particular groups of people. Systematic factors are yet another source of information. For instance, sustainable development generally necessitates the same conditions, such as a stable and flexible government, ample free and easily accessible resources, and a diverse social structure. In general, social change is a result of a combination of systematic factors, as well as some random or other of a kind factors. Several frameworks have tried to understand societal development in the last several decades. According to one point of view, theoretical components of change should contain structural characteristics of change (such as population changes), processes and patterns of social change, and the pathways of transformation. We will now discuss the four distinct elements that are the most important contributors to social change in today's society. In this context, it is essential to emphasize that these variables are "Intervening variables"

rather than "determining factors" or "causal factors." We will discuss various factors of social change that is found in different sectors. Let's explore more:

a) Physical Environment and Geographic Factors of Social Change

We will discuss the physical environment and how it impacts social change. It is a scientific fact that the surface of planet Earth is never stationary. There is change happening all the time. There are at times slow changes or fast and sporadic changes. Geo-climatic events like floods, hurricanes, landslides, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, etc. have an immediate impact on society and invoke changes relatively fast. Besides that, there is a seasonal variation of climate regarding temperature, humidity, wind, rainfall, snowfall etc. which may render parts of earth uninhabitable. Declining soil fertility causes changes in agricultural productivity. Irregular climatic changes add to the factors that hinder human activity. Sometimes it's temporary and rarely permanent. Collectively, these events have profound effects on human society and social activities.

For example, There are no cities in the polar regions or the middle of Sahara desert, the extreme weather conditions limit vegetation and they are without sufficient sources of water. Meanwhile, all great civilisations have emerged around water bodies like rivers, sea coast etc. The social changes that have happened in these areas are purely an operational response. Hence, we find one-way causation. Natural changes can result from climatic differences, environmental catastrophes, or spread of disease. Throughout fourteenth-century Europe, for instance, the increasing meteorological circumstances and the Black Death epidemics were thought to have led to the feudal crises. Changes in the natural environment might be autonomous or driven by human actions. The second group includes deforestation, erosion, carbon emissions, and current climate change, with far-reaching societal outcomes. Geographical factors also exert influence upon human societies. Although they are not determining, they have limited control over social change. Geography alone cannot explain the rise and fall of any human society.

b) Biological Factors of Social Change

Social change is possible through biological factors. The biological aspects of social continuity brings about social change. Here continuity means the population change whether it is stable, growing, or declining. It has direct implications on the human race and the succession of the new generation. Natural elements determine the structure and form of human society. Animals and plants around us have huge implications on social change in human communities. Human beings use plants and animals to meet their basic requirements of life which includes food, shelter, and clothing. The biological factors control the number, the compositions, the birth rate, the death rate, the fertility rate, and the hereditary

quality of successive generations.

Factors like heredity are critical agents of variation. The genetic makeup influences the bond between children and their parents. There is no consecutive generation replica of the previous one. All life is a different distribution of personalities, potentialities, and attributes that are present in each generation. Population change has a far-reaching impact on the ability of people to meet their most basic requirements. Problems regarding food security, inadequate housing, unemployment, poor health, poverty, low standards of living, or social issues all have direct implications upon the outcome of the size and composition of the population. Increase and decrease in population, change in the sex ratio, changing birth and death rates affects the social system. The relation between human beings and the biological environment is more dynamic than the relation between human beings and the physical environment.

c) Cultural factors of social change

Cultural factors such as various values, beliefs, ideas, ideologies, morals, manners, customs, and traditions contribute to social change. Social ideals transform society. Change takes place throughout time and has an impact on social order. Social change is accelerated and directed by cultural factors. The field of social change is constraint in comparison to the area of cultural change. Social values influence human behaviour, ideas behind thinking, nature of living, and performance in our everyday activities. The changes in social values caused by cultural factors lead to social change.

Cultural elements established in one society can spread to others. Cultural diffusion is known as the transmission of cultural traits across a population. Everything found in the cultural heritage of a group wasn't developed or invented within that

group—the vast majority of the substance of every civilisation is appropriated from other cultures. Cultural diffusion is essential in almost all societies. Social isolation tends to lead to cultural stagnation, whereas easy inter-connectivity encourages cultural mixing.

Cultural diffusion has played the most significant role in the development of Western civilisation. The center of Western civilisation still exists in Europe. Despite being founded in Europe, much of this civilisation's essential elements are borrowed from other societies worldwide. We got our modern, more flexible number system from the Arabs, who got it from India. It would be nearly impossible for us to continue with the mathematical calculations required for business and science without this system. The alphabet, our ancestors borrowed from the Phoenicians of Africa was also used to write and print all European languages.

d) Technological factors of social change

Technological factors have a remarkable influence on human life and social change. Technical factors are interventions that are inevitable aspects of human life. Technology assists human beings in fulfilling basic needs and making it change the world according to human will. Technological intervention happens through scientific knowledge. When scientific knowledge is incorporated to find solutions to problems of human life, it becomes technology. In other words, we can define technology as a systematic body of knowledge that practically serves human needs. Several social evolution theories highlight technology innovations as fundamental determinants of social change. Remarkable technological triumphs like the smelting of iron, plowing, steam locomotive creation, internet, and computer advancement have already had long-term social outcomes.

The formation of social relations, mental conceptions, and attitudes depend on technology. At times, technology is considered the sole explanation for social change. It works through making humans adapt to the changing environment around us. Although it might be a material change, it might have enormous implications for modifying customs and social institutions. Technology begins with discovery and invention. A finding is something new learned about the physical or social environment. Before discovering other continents, the world cartographers mapped and explored astronomical laws and found the intriguing differences between primitive cultures. The findings of science serve as the basis for innovation. The breakthroughs regarding electricity made Thomas Edison develop the incandescent light bulb and several other practical devices. An invention is something new and designed to fulfill a specific purpose. It is a social innovation designed by a single member of a social group. It can be material or nonmaterial. Lawn tractors and airplanes are examples of material inventions. The non-material alphabet is one of humanity's most fabulous creations. When speaking of discoveries, we are all interested in findings with applications. The making of fire by striking flint together is either a discovery or an invention.

Mechanical inventions involve discovering how different materials are combined and used to produce specific results. Innovations result in technical advancements, and technological advancements profoundly impact contemporary cultures. An instance is a computer, which has had major effects on our lifestyle and culture. The internet revolutionises the way we shop and communicate with others, and computerised robots have replaced workers in many jobs. Biotechnology developments affect our lives and influence our medical treatment.

Technology has an immense influence on

The reasons for social change are various,



and change processes can be identified either as short-term trends or as long-term trends. Change can be one-way or cyclical. There are different and interrelated mechanisms of societal change. One explanatory model of social change incorporates several agencies. Competition and government regulation may, for example, foster innovation. Regular and linked change processes characterize social change, and social change is structured because it follows predictable patterns. In the study of society, the focus for change occurs at several levels — social dynamics in daily life and short-term changes and long-term changes in society.

6.1.4 Relevance of social change

Social change is defined as any substantial shift in behaviour patterns and cultural values, and standards that occur through time. Sociologists define "substantial" modification as a change that has considerable significance on the social environment. The industrial revolution, the end of enslavement, and the women's rights movement are examples of major societal transformations that have had long-term consequences on society. Sociologists today easily recognise the critical role that social movements play in mobilising dissatisfied individuals of humanity to effect social transformation. Through efforts to explain the nature of long-term social change, including the search for patterns and causes, social scientists came up with theories of change such as evolutionary, functionalist, and conflict theories. In addition, many theories of social change acknowledge the possibility of opposition to change, particularly when individuals with entrenched interests feel disturbed and frightened by future changes.

Social change, according to sociologists, is described as the transformation of cultural practices, institutional structures, and functions. The majority of changes do not

occur instantly. Change occurs at a glacial pace in most societies. There are several different parts and forces in action, some of which are adamant about maintaining the current status quo. This type of transformation occurs in all societies at some point. It is not necessary to be an avid student of history to understand this. Consider the following scenario: you live in a contemporary society, and you want to remember what life was like many decades ago. Society is becoming more challenging to comprehend.

What are the explanations that help us understand how social change operates? What are the underlying causes and consequences? Although it is entirely predictable for all civilisations to undergo some changes, the reasons for these changes are not always self-explanatory. Sociologists have come up with a variety of viewpoints and concepts throughout history. There are three schools of thought of social change: evolutionary, functionalist, and conflict theories. Evolutionary theory is the most widely used of the three. The next unit will cover it in great depth.

However, we will briefly elucidate the different strains of thought into a coherent whole to the narrative of the sociological approach to understand social change. In the nineteenth century, the theory of social evolution gained widespread acceptance. Sociologists have applied Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory to the study of human society. Comte, who is recognised as the "*Father of Sociology*" believed that the idea of evolution was legitimate and should be explored further. Society changes to "higher levels" as per this hypothesis. Societies, like living things, grow in complexity. Those who fail to respond will be left behind. Western countries are "advanced," which has led numerous sociologists to conclude that they are superior. New theorists and researchers have debunked this perspective. Initially, social evolutionists claimed that almost all civilisations should indeed progress in

the same way. Transformation is multilinear, according to modern theory. Societies can transform in many multiple directions”.

The structural-functional social change theory equates the social system to a living organism. Every part is an organ, elements can't live according to their own. A society, according to social scientist Emile Durkheim, must be harmonious. Society is “no more than a pile of sand” if they aren't united. When one part fails, the others must adapt. Why? According to functionalist theory, the social system strives for stability. Troubles are temporary but require attention from other parts. So social transformation is a consequence. Structuralism has doubtful. In reality, the elite invariably creates a false sense of harmonious relationship and consistency. The theory ignores race, class, and gender. Structuralism peaked in the 1940s and 1950s before fading in the 1960s.

According to the conflict perspective, society is inherently unequal and violent. Karl Marx promoted this idea. Marx believed in evolution to a point, but not that each phase produced some improvement. The wealthy and powerful invariably control society by seeking to exploit weaker groups. It causes conflict and action. As a result, society changes. The conflict perspective evolved. Feminist, queer, and critical race theories all use it.

a) What causes social changes?

However, what precise cause drive a society's evolution is unknown. Three factors influence social change:

From a glance at our collective history, it is clear that conflict is a catalyst for social change. Unequal treatment and treatment based on class, caste, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, and other characteristics contribute to dissatisfaction and irritation. To address their predicament, individuals and

organisations come together to fight for change. Overthrowing or restructuring governments is possible. Change can occur quickly in some cases, but it is more common to advance progressively in different steps.

Whenever the demographic composition of a society alters, social change will inevitably occur. Demographic trends often change by rising birth rates and increasing life expectancy. The distribution and access to resources are affected by an increase in population. An increasing trend in either immigration or emigration has an impact on society as well.

Change in cultural norms

Technological innovations, scientific breakthroughs, and the generation of ideas all contribute to the evolution of culture. Take, for example, the impact of the internet. It has altered not only the culture of individual countries but also the entire world's culture. As a result, it has changed the way we communicate and the structure of numerous industries. Discoveries have an impact on a society's culture as well. Consider how much changed when the European settlers ‘discovered’ America and brought it under their control. The above example demonstrates that social change is not always beneficial to all parties involved. Gender, ethnicity, caste, race, religious faith, work, literacy, and other essential issues influence the understanding of culture.

Social movements are frequently responsible for bringing about social change. Every nation on the globe has a history riddled with instances of this phenomenon. There have been several notable examples (many of which are ongoing and evolving):

Reformation is when a group of people come together to form a new way of life.

- a. The abolition of the trans-atlantic slave trade is a historical event.



- b. The Civil Rights Movement across the globe
- c. The feminist movement is a movement that advocates for women's rights.
- d. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights activists
- e. Green activism is on the rise.

b) What is the significance of social change?

When significant changes occur in social systems, structures, and cultures, social change occurs. Social change is, more often than not, a slow process. That is particularly true in today's globalised society.

i) The rise of social change brings the world nearer to gender equality.

Taking a look at the current state of gender equality could be overwhelming, if not downright disheartening. It is critical to remember that social change begins with simple modifications. As more people, communities, and organisations join in, the movement gains momentum and becomes much more influential. These individuals help move the global community forward, one culture at a time and one country. Actions such as closing the wage gap between men and women, expanding educational opportunities, and working to improve women's health all make a significant contribution to long-term revolutionary reform on a massive scale.

ii) Rights for workers are improving as a result of social change.

Throughout much of history, greed has exploited and put employees in danger in every industry, including the manufacturing industry. When it comes to how social change influences workers and labor rights, we

have witnessed the establishment of labor unions, child labor laws, the minimum wage, and laws governing family and medical leave. In this area of social development, workers' rights are still being fought for and will continue. They go on strike to demand higher wages and stronger constitutional protections. Consumers can also make a difference by boycotting businesses that engage in corrupt practices.

iii) The LGBTQ+ community is better protected as a result of social change.

The LGBTQ+ community is one of those highly vulnerable communities, and it is also one of the most marginalised. There are higher numbers of suicide, violence, and marginalisation among this community than in the general population. Many historical and contemporary social movements worldwide focused on the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Social change appears when there is the legalisation of same-sex marriage, legal protections against discriminatory practices, and transitions in world views. Individuals are protected, and they are afforded equality within society.

iv) Racial equality is improving as a result of social change.

The majority of societies have to deal with racial inequalities. Groups and individuals are forms of discrimination and disempowerment based on race. For example, a social movement (for example, the civil rights movement in the United States) is an organisation dedicated to organising protests current conditions and advocating against legislative change. When addressing the public's attitude toward race, social change is also essential. Education and creating awareness might be just as critical as enacting legislation.

v) Social change is beneficial to business.

According to research, work environments

with a greater diversity of employees are more productive. If every working environment is given priority more significant equity and participation, it would positively impact the economy of both businesses and the social benefit of all. Social changes encompass closing the wage gap between men and women, establishing legal rights for workers, and adopting fair and equitable business practices, among other things. These factors contribute to the development and diversity of a work environment.

vi) Social change is good for the environment.

Humankind has had the most significant environmental impact on any other sentient creature. According to findings, we are causing unprecedented damage to the earth's atmosphere, water, and soil. It would impact us as individuals and the well-being and stability of everything and everyone on the planet. Activists from environmentally-conscious social movements have responded by launching environmentally conscious projects such as conserving vulnerable and endangered species. Aside from that, they encourage personal responsibility and raise awareness about critical environmental problems such as climate change, among other challenges.

vii) Governments are made responsible for social change.

Power has a corrupting effect on society, as history has demonstrated. Governments frequently violate human rights. Social change can potentially draw focus to these unfair treatments, tear down destructive structures, and aid societies in transforming to more fair and equitable governmental systems. These transformations can occur swiftly as a result of civil war or armed conflict. Progress can occur gradually through the process of elections and legislative assembly.

viii) Social change aims to examine issues at their source.

One of the indicators of social change is the ability to have a long-term impact. It is not sufficient to treat only the symptoms and not the underlying wound. Rather than focusing solely on the consequences of social issues, the most impactful social movements address the underlying causes of those issues. When dealing with homelessness, for example, we must first determine why people become homeless and destitute. Only offering relatively temporary solutions will not address the root cause of the issue. Furthermore, long-term remedies are needed. Looking to the core of the problem and enabling lasting improvements saves a society's time, effort, and resources.

ix) Citizens are empowered as a result of social transformation.

When people decide to work together toward a common goal, social change is frequently the result. They pay attention to what is damaging or ineffective in social structure and take active steps to bring about change in that area of life. The majority of activists can identify a particular movement or individual from the old days that has influenced them. Citizens are empowered as a result of social change, demonstrating that solid determination pays off even in the context of serious opposition.

x) Social transformation improves the quality of life for current and future generations alike.

It's widely accepted that social change is gradual, and many social movements trust this belief. These change agents understand that they may not enjoy the rewards of their efforts but that future generations will. Activists working to combat climate change are well mindful of this. There is an acknowledgement among them that the preservation of the earth is crucial at this time.



Today, the act of fighting wars on behalf of people who haven't even been born yet is a noble gesture. Society is better prepared for future prosperity as a result of this initiative.

A major societal transformation is taking place in the twenty-first century due to the impact of free-market capitalism, especially multinational companies that connect economies all over the globe. A major transformation occurred in connection with the creation of global telecommunications networks. It is worth looking at how these two variables have led to the enormous societal shift that we are now seeing in

the world. It has a significant impact on the economy through advertisements, and individual outreach as a result of enabling communication between humans who could not have thought of communicating before the advent of these technologies has a significant impact on the economy through advertisements and individual outreach as a result of enabling communication between humans who could not have thought of communicating before the advent of these technologies.

Recap

- ◆ Social change refers to alterations in society that happened via human interactions into relations.
- ◆ Social change is anything that influences social institutions and individuals.
- ◆ Social change means altering the current social organisation's structure and function.
- ◆ Social change means changes to aspects of social processes, social patterns, and social interactions.
- ◆ Social change further means a new fashion of modifying or replacing the older people's lives or society's operations.
- ◆ Some of the causes of social change include geographical, physical, biological, cultural, and technological factors.

Objective Questions

1. What are the effects on society caused by changes in human interaction during social change?
2. What are the other critical and essential ideas associated with social change?
3. What happens to norms and values during social change?
4. Who defined social change as a “process responsive to many types of change; To change in the artificial condition of life; to change in the attitudes and beliefs of men, and a change that goes beyond human control, biological, physical nature of things”?
5. Who professed that “Social change means an alteration of current social organisation, that is, structure and function of society”?
6. What does social isolation do to humanity?
7. What are the two categories of social change brought by technology?
8. What are the examples of physical and geographical factors of social change?
9. What is the relevance of social change?

Answers

1. Structural and functional changes
2. Social progress and socio-cultural evolution
3. Alteration
4. MacIver and Page
5. Kingsley Davis

6. Cultural stasis
7. Long term trends and short term trends
8. Earthquake, Tsunami, Flood
9. Achieve equality

Assignments

1. Narrate the concept of social change and state its relevance
2. Examine geographical factors of social change
3. Pen down major definitions of social change
4. Discuss the role of government in the social change
5. Explain the new currents of social change in the contemporary society

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Suggested Readings

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UNIT

Theories of Social Change: Evolutionary, Diffusionist, Linear and Cyclical

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To analyse the theoretical discourse on social change
- ◆ To narrate the relevance of theories in comprehending a process like social change
- ◆ To explain the social currents using the theoretical framework of social change

Prerequisites

What is social change? How do you understand this? What do you visualise when you think of changes in your society? Could you give an example of a change that happened in your immediate society? How does this happen? Have you ever thought about this? We articulated these aspects in the form of the characteristics and significance of the social change in the previous unit. We also dealt with many examples. Now it is time to have a look at the theories of social change.

In Sociology and other social sciences, new theories emerge that help us to understand new phenomenon: natural or social. What is a theory? It is an attempt to generalise based on several occurrences of an event or an experience. A well-constructed theory can help us get a relatively complete picture of the phenomenon in the social world. Having a solid theoretical foundation adds to the scientific nature of a discipline.

Our subject matter here, the social change, has been a favourite object of interest for theorists in the field of Sociology, Social Anthropology, and History. By the way, even fictions based on historical events that portray social change resort to theories to show its prevalence. Theorists, like any other field, differ in their opinions on social change. Hence many theories exist on social change. Let us consider some such prominent theories below.

Keywords

Evolution, Organic Analogy, Diffusion, Cyclical, Speculators

Discussion

6.2.1 Evolutionary Theories

What is evolution? You must have heard about the word evolution in many contexts. As students, we learnt about the theory of Evolution proposed by Charles Darwin. It is generally known simply as Darwin's Theory or Darwin's Principle. That was in the Biology class if you remember. What did he propose in his theory? He was talking about the slow change or evolution in biological organisms and species, which was known as the Theory of Organic Evolution.

Charles Darwin argued that evolution happens through natural selection. Individual animal differs in its characteristics and abilities in comparison to other members of its group and species. Those who fit well in their surroundings survive, and the rest perish. Slowly the species flourishes through those who survived.

Many social thinkers and theorists of that period were captivated by this Theory of Organic Evolution. They applied it to human society. Social thinkers, thus, reasoned that similar to organisms or living beings, societies must have gradually evolved from simple to complex forms. Since natural and physical sciences were considered models for social theorising, laws developed by them were taken as examples for social laws. Social thinkers of the time were desperately looking to emulate the laws of the natural sciences. Darwin's theory therefore was very favourably accepted and emulated by them.

Do you know that colonialism also had helped them in certain ways? Most of the social scientists were from colonising countries and they had the opportunity to observe many societies in their colonies. Some societies they observed were very traditional and backward in terms of their material advancement and cultural practice in comparison to their own societies in Europe. Some were passing through certain stages in their development. Overall, European society seemed more developed and fitting in the scheme suggested by Darwin. So they looked at Western societies as the optimal level of advancement.

Social thinkers worked on this and came out with Evolutionary theories. These theories base themselves on the hypothesis that societies progressively transform from simple to more complex forms. Social theorists of the early days believed that human societies evolve like a single line. In other words, societies progress in a unilinear way that is they develop in a similar form in a single line.

Did we mention above that Darwin's Theory of organic evolution had a great impact on the above evolutionary analysis of social change? The British Sociologist Herbert Spencer's organic analogy was the best known among these. He argued that society like an organism and used Darwin's principle of 'the survival of the fittest.'

There are two points we should keep in mind while we use the term evolution in this



in more than one line- that is multilinear evolution. They consider that progress may not always follow a single line but may progress in many directions. But they also think of evolution as a gradual and progressive process.

6.2.1 Activity

1. Take a paper and write down the changes that occurred in the dressing pattern and sense of fashion of people children included in your locality in the last 20 years. You can discuss the matter and take the help of the older people around you for.
2. What are the restaurants that are available in the town next to your place? What dishes do they serve? Did these restaurants exist 10 years ago? Has the menu been the same for the last few years?

Make a list and compare.

6.2.2 Diffusionist Theory

Some other theorists look at the evolutionary process of society as progressing

Most probably this is one of the most relevant theories in the modern world. Ideas and cultures diffuse or spread widely and at great speed in modern times. What are the means and ways through which culture spreads? What are the factors that are favourable for cultural diffusion and thereby social change in our times in comparison to the olden days? Take a minute and think.

In these times of globalisation, ways of living and culture are open to being seen throughout the world but there are countries where restrictions are imposed. There social change through diffusion happens much more slowly. Therefore the diffusionist theory of social change is more than ever relevant during our times. This Theory argues that culture spreads from one society to another. Diffusion may be defined as the social process by means of which components of culture reach from one social group to another or from one society to the other. This indicates the process of social change.

According to this theory, humans are in essence conformists and lack ingenuity. British theorist Elliot Smith was one such scholar with an extreme position regarding the spread of civilisation. This is one important means by which modern societies developed to the present state. Diffusion creates change as trade, migration, and mass communication spread cultural elements throughout the world. Ralph Linton recognised that many familiar elements of culture have been brought to us from far-off places. By means of migration the western world has steadily changed as a response to cultural diffusion.

Through diffusion new ideas and even material advancements reach societies. Values, concepts, knowledge, behavioural patterns, materials for daily use and even cultural symbols spread to a new culture and get adapted by them. Take the example of food that you eat? Think of the wedding functions that you attended in the last 5

years. What are the new elements adopted in them? Do you know how unaware we are in adopting them? We are unknowingly becoming part of cultural change and thereby social change. The question here is not whether these changes are good or not. The important issue is to understand that the changes happens through us to slow but steady.

Innovations that are adopted in a society cause social change. Technological innovation, latest scientific knowledge, new thinking and most modern fashion are part of this adoption. Can you even count the changes a technological innovation like the internet caused in our life? Nevertheless, it must be noted that the process of diffusion is not automatic or mechanical; rather it is a selective process. It is no secret that an innovation is adapted only by people who are motivated to do so. In addition, innovation must be well-matched with the other essential features of their culture and society.

6.2.3 Linear Theory

Are you familiar with this term? This indicates a movement forward and in a sequence, isn't it? Theorists who observed the changes in many societies wondered about its direction. How do you think that societies change? Do you think that they move rather slowly? Some societies may move faster than others and some may adopt visible changes while others may not.

Let us look at the linear theory of social change in this section. Linear theories emphasise the concept that society gradually advances in the direction of improvement in a linear fashion. That is, societies progress from one stage to another in a sequential way in a line. Two points are of utmost importance here. One is that the movement is gradual. The other point is that the change in society is in the direction of progress and improvement. And therefore social change

is towards a higher state of civilisation.

In the case of the Linear Theory of Social Change, it is very important to know the context of its origin. That will help us to have a better understanding of this theory. European countries colonised countries across the world during the 19th century. This meant that European citizens of different social strata like warriors, missionaries, traders and explorers came in contact and familiarised themselves with people who were hitherto unknown to them in Europe. Since the ways of life and customs of these people in the colonies were not known to them, they considered the former as 'primitive'.

European Anthropologists attempted to study such primitives and their societies. They considered the culture and society of these primitive people as static. That is they considered them as not progressing but as almost standing still. But it is important to know that they were comparing these societies with their own societies. That is, when they studied these societies, they did this in comparison to the changes that were happening in their own societies. They were not exposed to the global realities as they would have been in today's world. Naturally they based their assumptions and hypotheses on their limited scrutiny, mistaken, unverified facts and unprincipled thoughts.

According to them there was a universal direction in which the process of social change happened. They declared with certainty that all societies passed through these stages in their development. This process, as per their arguments, began in a primitive state and concluded in a state called civilisation. This ultimate form of existence was that of the Western society. For example, according to L.H. Morgan, the eminent Anthropologist, three basic stages in the process of social change that occurred in societies were: savagery, barbarism and

civilisation.

The most prominent figures of the time were influenced by this school of thought. Auguste Comte was one such theorist who was influenced by and contributed to the Linear Theory of Social Change. To substantiate the linear growth of society, he proposed Law of three stages of the development of human thought and society. His Law of Three Stages will be learned during our course and let us look at it very briefly now. Comte discussed these three stages as—theological (society dominated by beliefs in supernatural forces), metaphysical (period of abstract thinking), and scientific or positive. This theory is an important milestone in explaining social change. Later additions to the Linear Theory of social Change propose that the social changes may not necessarily be in the form of a single line. Changes may occur in a multilinear fashion also. Changes, according to this branch of the Linear Theory, occur in a linear mode but there may be many directions and not necessarily only a single direction in which the social change occurs. Thus there are unilinear and multilinear theories that constitute the Linear Theory of Social Change.

6.2.4 Cyclical Theories

Do you observe nature? How do we see it moving forward? In seasons which are in phases or cycles, isn't it? Spring, summer, fall, and winter are the four typical seasons whereby nature shows us that it moves on. These happen in cycles that recur after a fixed time. Similarly, nights and days cycle themselves. Observing this fact, some theorists ventured to develop the cyclical theory of social change. Cyclical means the end brings a new beginning and that the process repeats itself.

Theorists who developed the cyclical theory of social change proposed that human society goes through certain cycles.

According to them societies and civilisations change according to cycles: rise and fall. Some of them compared this cycle to the lifecycle of a human being: a person is born, matures, grows old, and dies. Prominent among them were Oswald Spengler, Arnold J. Toybee, and Vilfredo Pareto. They are considered as the champions of cyclical theories in social change. Having discussed these, let us consider the points discussed by these thinkers in the following sections. We are going to deal with them in brief.

a) Oswald Spengler: Destiny of Civilisations

Think about the life of an individual. It will be easy to understand this theory if you compare the life cycle of a human being with that of his society. Can you try doing it now? German philosopher Oswald Spengler propositioned that civilisations and societies have a predetermined cycle governing their life. They have stages in their lifespan -birth, growing stage, maturity, and stages of disintegration. He identified eight great civilisations and found that they all had a similar pattern of development and a similar destiny. These civilisations included Babylonian, Classical Greek, Roman, Arabian, European, and so on.

He concluded that each of these civilisations or societies was similar to that of living organisms. Each of them passed through the cycle of events associated with life: birth, adolescence, youth, maturity, decline, and decay. He referred to the rising phase of society as 'culture' and its declining phase as 'civilisation'. Spengler further argued that western civilisation which is also known as European civilisation is now on its stage of decline. All modern societies are in their last stage, according to Spengler. However, history will repeat itself and it will rise again. After passing through each of the stages, society will die a natural death and

that is inevitable. From the ashes of that, a new culture and society will be formed. In short, the cycle repeats itself.

b) Arnold J. Toybee: Challenges and Responses

Have you read about the different cyclical theories of social change? Of course, Spengler had talked about the cycle of development and decay that each society necessarily undergoes. But many other theorists found this Theory inadequate and therefore unacceptable. Most prominent among them was the English historian and author Arnold J. Toybee.

Toybee spotted twenty-one cultures with a similar history of progress and pattern of growth. He disagreed with the view of other Cyclical Theorists on the point of the unavoidable death and decay of civilisations. In its place, he proposed the Theory of Challenges and Responses. According to him, a society can grow and survive only if it can constructively respond to the challenges arising from its socio-political milieu. In such a situation who will survive? And who will perish? Those who are constantly efficient in responding to the challenges met by them will survive. Those who fail to do so will breathe their last.

c) Vilfredo Pareto: Theory of Circulation of Elites

Other theorists disagreed with the above views on social change. But they all agreed on the cyclical nature of the changes that happened to societies. Therefore it is important to understand the differences in each of the prominent ones. Let us look at the very famous views expressed by Vilfredo Pareto here.

Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian Engineer and a Social Scientist who contributed to more than one discipline in his lifetime. He



words, the cycle repeats itself. This brings essential changes in social and economic structures.

It is clear from our discussion above that many theories discuss the process of social change. These theories and some others that we may learn in the future also try to elucidate upon the causes of social change. When it comes to social change many causes and processes constitute that and thus many theories exist. Conflict theory that elaborates on social change due to the rivalry of groups in a society is one such important Theory. Then there is another important theory called the Functionalist Theory of Social Change.

Do you remember the first unit in our course? We discussed the emergence of Sociology in that unit. And didn't we talk about the changes that happened in the European society due to the revolution that happened rather forcefully and quickly and the changes that happened due to the slow percolation of new ideas like Enlightenment? Now, don't you have an idea about how various causes and processes are part of what we call social change?

In addition to the four theories mentioned in this unit, other theories analyse social change. For example, Conflict Theory, made widely popular by Karl Marx explained that the continuous class conflict between haves and have not ultimately will bring the necessary change in societies. It will be interesting to analyse how conflicts bring about changes in our societies.

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Recap

- ◆ Evolutionary theorists state that societies transform steadily.
- ◆ Evolutionary theorists were influenced by Darwin's theory of Organic Evolution.
- ◆ The species continues to exist through the ones that endure their surroundings.
- ◆ Herbert Spencer's theory of evolution states that evolution indicates society's progress to a better state.
- ◆ Early Sociologists like Auguste Comte and Emile Durkheim believed in the evolution of societies.
- ◆ Theory of diffusion helps to understand various social changes that happen in our times.
- ◆ The process of diffusion is selectively done and it is selected by those who are motivated to adopt the same.
- ◆ Linear theories emphasise that society gradually moves linearly and this movement is in the direction of improvement.
- ◆ According to L.H. Morgan there are three stages in social change savagery, barbarism, and civilisation.
- ◆ Cyclical Theory states that human society passes through cyclical phases.
- ◆ Spengler's theory is known as the Destiny of Civilisation.
- ◆ Spengler considers the decay of society and civilisation as inevitable.
- ◆ Pareto's theory of the Circulation of Elites categorises members of a society into two rentiers and speculators.

Objective Questions

1. Who is the proponent of the theory of organic evolution?
2. Who had applied the popular theory of organic evolution to the process of social change for the first time?
3. What are the two kinds of evolutionary theories?
4. Which sociologist considered moral density as the cause of social change?
5. What is the kind of solidarity developed in a society that is transformed, according to Durkheim?
6. What is the process through which the fittest organisms in a species survive in the theory of organic evolution?
7. What is the type of solidarity found in early societies of Durkheim's evolutionary theory?
8. Which social thinker in the 19th century argued that society is like an organism and evolves like it?
9. Which theory states that societies evolve from a simple to a more complex stage like an organism?
10. Who is the theorist who recognised that many of our familiar cultural elements have come to us from distant lands?
11. What, in accordance with the theory of diffusion, causes social change?
12. Who is an important theorist of the diffusionist theory of social change?
13. What is the meaning of the word diffusion?
14. What was the cause of western world being subjected to cultural diffusion?
15. Which sociologist proposed the Law of Three Stages?
16. What is the final stage in the evolution of society according to Auguste Comte?

17. What is considered as one of the earliest theories of social change?
18. What is the final stage in societal change according to L.H. Morgan?
19. What term did the colonial anthropologists use to denote less advanced people?
20. What is the first stage of societies' development according to L.H. Morgan?
21. Which society is at the final stage of development according to linear theorists?
22. Who named the declining phase of society at the end as a civilisation?
23. Who brought out the theory of challenges and responses?
24. Who propounded the popular circular theory of elites in social change?
25. Which theorist proposed the theory called 'Destiny of Civilisation'?
26. Who constitutes the group with traditional nature in societies according to Pareto?
27. How many societies did Toynbee compare to propose his theory of social change?
28. How many civilisations did Oswald Spengler compare in his study of social change?
29. Which theorist stated that great civilisations have common patterns of growth and decay?
30. How many classes exist in a society according to the theory of circulation of elites?

Answers

1. Charles Darwin
2. Herbert Spencer
3. Unilinear and Multilinear



4. Emile Durkheim
5. Organic solidarity
6. Natural selection
7. Mechanical solidarity
8. Herbert Spencer
9. Social Darwinism
10. Ralph Linton
11. Innovation
12. Elliot Smith
13. Spread
14. Migration
15. Auguste Comte
16. Positive or scientific
17. Law of Three Stages
18. Civilisation
19. Primitives
20. Savagery
21. European society
22. Oswald Spengler
23. Arnold J. Toynbee
24. Vilfredo Pareto
25. Spengler
26. Rentiers
27. Twentyone

28. Eight

29. Spengler

30. Two

Assignments

1. Describe Pareto's theory on social mobility and change
2. Explain the linear theory of social change
3. Differentiate evolutionary and diffusionist theories of social change
4. Relate theories of social change with contemporary society
5. Describe cyclical theories of social change

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Suggested Readings

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UNIT

Social Mobility: Definition and Forms

Learning Objectives

- ◆ To understand the importance of social mobility
- ◆ To familiarise the theories, definition and forms of social mobility
- ◆ To narrate the dimensions of social mobility

Prerequisites

In society it is not unheard of for a night watchman to become an IIM Professor or a businessman to go bankrupt or for a police constable to become an IPS officer, all these changes are recurrent in the society. An individual is recognised by society for their status and role. And have you noticed the societal tendency to reproduce social status? For example, a family of bureaucrats has a better chance to reproduce a next generation of bureaucrats; a Vocalist-family has the privilege to nourish the next generation of singers. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu explains that social mobility is difficult among classes. That is, it is very difficult for a cobbler to become a bureaucrat; as the socio-economic standards are very diverse between the classes. Hence, social mobility could be simply defined as the movement of individuals, families, or groups through a structure of social hierarchy or stratification.

As mentioned above, the ability of people to move between socio-economic strata during their lifetime and between generations is referred to as social mobility. In societies with low social mobility, individual outcomes are strongly determined by their starting point in life. That is, children from privileged homes are more likely to grow up to be privileged in terms of education, income, wealth, and occupation; on the other hand, children from poor families tend to grow up poor themselves. Low social mobility erodes the foundations of prosperity, decreases wellbeing, and exposes social cohesion and democratic participation. In societies with high social mobility, where you come from or who your parents, have little impact on your life chances. In high-mobility societies, children from less privileged households will have the same opportunities as those from more privileged upbringings

to achieve their goals. The concept of social mobility is significant to the study of societies because it implies equality of opportunity: the idea that while no two people will have the same outcomes, they should have the same chances. Increasing equality of opportunity requires tackling the several layers of disadvantage experienced by various groups within a population.

Keywords

Intergenerational mobility, Intra-generational mobility, Migration, Modernisation, Sanskritisation

Discussion

The meaning of social mobility to an individual or a group is to accept new positions, locations, or professions after leaving his or her previous one. According to Bogardus any change in social posts is social mobility. Thus, social mobility might either refer to the individual movement or group movement within a stratified system. In his famous work *'Social and Cultural Mobility'*, P. A. Sorokin elaborates on the concept of social mobility and its significance. According to him, "social mobility is understood as any transition of an individual or social object or value – anything that has been created or modified by human activity – from one social position to another"

We shall scroll through some of the definitions given by sociologists on social mobility to get a clear understanding of the topic. According to WP Scott "the moment of an individual or group from one social class or social stratum to another". According to Horton and Hunt, "social mobility refers the movement to superior and inferior status." Fairchild has called the movement of one group of people to another group as social mobility. Wallace and Wallace say that "Social mobility is the movement of a person or persons from one social status to another".

Thus, it is evident from the above definitions that, (a) Social mobility is related to a person's or group's post or status; (b) Social mobility changes a person's or group's social status; (c) This change comes under the structure of a group or a society; and (d) Social mobility has no fixed direction, it may be up or down or horizontal. A person becomes a minister, a student becomes a judge after completing his study, a farmer becomes a millionaire, and all these conditions indicate the concept of social mobility.

The chances of social mobility in a democratic society are higher as compared to a caste-based society. Every society or group has a structure with several posts or statuses that are structured in an inferior to superior hierarchy, which is referred to as social stratification. Social mobility is the result of changes in stratification. According to Talcott Parsons, "The division of people in a regular setting of superior and inferior in a social system is stratification." For example, if a person changes his caste status and shifts to a lower status, it is social mobility. Brahmins are superior to Kshatriyas, whereas Vaisyas are lower to Kshatriyas. When a lower division clerk becomes an administrative officer, his status changes, and this is an example of social mobility.

In the previous unit, you learned about the concept of social change and the significance of the concept in the field of sociology. Now you know that social change is a universal and ever-continuing social phenomenon. No sociological analysis is complete without reference to social change. It is a change in the institutional and normative frameworks of society. Social evolution, progress, and development, as well as changes in the physical environment, technological breakthroughs, innovations, and changes in economic and political institutions, all, have an impact on social change. Now you realise that social change is inherent in all the physical and social environmental changes. Social change is a modification or alteration in the social structure, social system and life patterns of people. Social change is expressed in social attitudes, social values, social relationships and interactions among the members of society. Social change is complex, limitless, and valueless. To summarise social change, MacIver and Page accurately noted that putting social structure in a museum will not rescue it from the ravages of time.

Individuals are usually identified in society by the positions they hold and the tasks they play. Individuals are dynamic in the same way that society is dynamic. Men are typically involved in an endless effort to improve their social status, move from a lower to a higher position, and secure a superior job from a lower one. People of higher rank and position may be forced to downgrade their status and position for a variety of reasons. As a result, people and society continue to climb up and down the social ladder. This is referred to as social mobility. In this unit, we will study and learn about social mobility. First, we will learn about the meaning of social mobility, its various forms and the factors responsible for social mobility and finally, we will focus on the importance and consequences of social mobility in society.

6.3.1 Social Mobility

Is it possible for people to ascend the social ladder in a society? Is there any potential for social mobility, or movement from one socioeconomic level to the next? Yes, although the extent to which this is achievable varies greatly among societies. As we all know, all societies that exist in the world are stratified, i.e., societies are divided into different strata or layers.

Although the strata in different societies might vary, every society displays some form of stratification. It is difficult to imagine an entirely equitable society. Furthermore, societies rarely remain static. Societies are always evolving, and there is always some movement between the different strata. In layman's terms, social mobility refers to the movement of individuals or groups from one stratum/layer to another.

As we know in modern times, the priestly class does not enjoy the same high prestige as it did in the past due to changes in the political and economic system. A priest has less status than a doctor or engineer. Similarly, a person's prestige rises when he/she becomes a minister from a common shopkeeper. If, on the other hand, the minister loses his job and returns to their old shop, he/she loses their ministerial status. As a result, it is worth noting that people in society continue to move up and down the status scale as society's ideals change. This movement of people and the groups from low to high and high to low in a given social structure is called social mobility. Miller states that by studying social mobility, we may understand the changes in social hierarchy and social structures. Accordingly, the study of social mobility is extremely significant from a sociological perspective. Let us go through some of the definitions of social mobility so that we can have a clear understanding of the concept.



6.3.2 Types and Forms of Social Mobility

We will now go through forms and types of social mobility. The dimensions of social mobility are many and the time taken to effect the change of social position may vary from society to society. A change of social position may take place either along a horizontal axis or a vertical axis.

a) Vertical Social Mobility

Vertical social mobility means the movement of an individual or people or groups from one status to another. In simple words set an upward or downward change in the rank of an individual or group. It involves a change in class, occupation or power positions. Movement of people from the poor class to the middle class, or vice versa, from a farmer to a bank manager, promotion or demotion, a change in income, marriage to a person of lower or higher caste are examples of social mobility. It involves a change in an individual's position to a higher or lower status than the person had to begin within his lifetime.

Sorokin has defined vertical social mobility as the relations involved in a transition of an individual or a social object from one social stratum to another. There are two types of vertical social mobility according to the direction of the transition – ascending and descending or social climbing or social sinking respectively. Antony Giddens states vertical mobility as moving up or down the socio-economic scale. Those who gain in property, income or status are said to be upwardly mobile and those who move in the opposite direction are downwardly mobile. According to Bertrand, "The up and down movement from one stratum to another is vertical social mobility."

From the definitions given above, it becomes clear that vertical social mobility is

the up and down movement from one stratum to another. This social level can be high or low. For example, to become a rich from a poor, to become a factory owner from a labour to become a wholesaler from a cart puller are vertical mobility. When an entrepreneur suffers losses and is declared bankrupt, he is regarded as a low-status individual. On the other hand, if a common individual with money and manipulation abilities becomes an industrialist, they rises up the social ladder. As a result, his place in the hierarchy improves.

b) Horizontal Social Mobility

Horizontal social mobility is a change in the position of an individual without a change in status. It means movement by individuals or groups from one position to another in society that does not involve a shift into a higher or lower stratum. It specifies a change in position within the range of the same status. Transitions of individuals from one citizenship to another, from one factory to another in the same occupational status, an engineer in a factory to work as a professor in an engineering college in the same capacity, a researcher in a research department to a faculty in a college are examples of horizontal social mobility. In all these examples there is a change in the workplace and work but the general status of the person does not change much.

Sorokin has said that horizontal social mobility is the transition of an individual or social object from one social group to another situated at the same level. Anthony Giddens sees a great deal of mobility along lateral direction in modern society. He prefers to define horizontal mobility as lateral mobility involving geographical movement between neighborhoods, towns or regions. Horizontal mobility can cause disruptions in family life and community ties. Now people are aware of these disruptions and they are resistant to unwanted job changes. Most Indians are not prepared to take a risk

to change their jobs and usually they cling on to jobs whenever they get one.

According to Bertrand, horizontal mobility means movement from one social post to another, without affecting the social scenario. The movement of a villager from one village to another, a worker from one factory to another, a professor from one university to another, and a mechanical engineer from one to another on the same salary and the same kind of work is horizontal social mobility. In horizontal social mobility, there is no noticeable change in the status of a person or a social group.

c) Upward Mobility

In modern societies, acquiring income and property is the primary means of advancement, but there are alternative options. Entering an honorable profession such as judge or collector, obtaining a doctorate degree, or marrying into an aristocratic family are a few such examples.

Upward mobility denotes social ascendance or upward movement on the part of the individual or group. It reflects social improvement, a forward march. When a person or a group of persons move from a lower social position or status to a higher social position or status it is called upward mobility. Example: A retail business owner may become a wholesaler. In the same way, the son of a farmer through education may become a university professor. Both examples indicate an improvement or ascendance in the status of the concerned persons.

The child may inherit property, employment, educational opportunities, a way of life, family connections, and even titles and legal rights through the family. In pre-industrial societies, this may constitute the major process for locating individuals in the social structure. In industrial societies, inheritance procedures do not ensure the transmission of social position by kinship

to nearly the same extent as they do in traditional societies, yet such societies do not completely remove inheritance as a significant factor in social development. It is important to highlight those imitations of upper-class lifestyles and behaviour have also proven to be an effective means of upward mobility in both traditional and modern societies.

d) Downward Mobility

Downward mobility indicates social descendance or social failure on the part of the individual or group. Sometimes individuals despite their attempts to go up in society lose their statuses. They fail to maintain their social, political or economic positions and go down in the status scale. For example, a wealthy businessman may incur heavy losses and even become a pauper, people in high positions might be demoted or lose their jobs due to corrupt practices like bribery, nepotism etc. Downward mobility is more stressful for persons who suffer a drastic decline in status position. Some individuals are more vulnerable to the most extreme form of personal disorganisation – namely suicide in cases of extreme decline in status position.

Anthony Giddens asserts that although downward mobility is less common than upward mobility, it is still a widespread phenomenon. Downward intra-generational mobility is also common. This trend is frequently associated with psychological distress and anxiety, as individuals struggle to maintain the lifestyles to which they have grown used. Downward mobility can also be caused by redundancy. Middle-aged individual who lose their jobs, for example, have a difficult time finding new work, or can only find work at a lesser wage than before.



e) Inter-generational Social Mobility

Mobility across the generation is called inter-generational social mobility. It refers to a change in the status of family members from one generation to the next. Example: A farmer's son becoming the chairman of a multi-national company, or taxi driver's daughter becoming the prime minister of a country. Inter-generational social mobility throws much light on the extent of inequalities present in society. It is important because the amount of inter-generational mobility in society tells us to what extent inequalities are passed on from one generation to the next. A high level of intergenerational mobility is often considered praiseworthy and can be seen as a sign of equality of opportunity in a society. People can achieve new statuses through their efforts, regardless of their birth circumstances. If there is very little intergenerational mobility, it shows that there is a high level of inequalities deeply built into the society hampering one's growth.

f) Intra-generational Mobility

Intra-generational mobility refers to social mobility that takes place during one's lifespan. It refers to the advancement in one's social level during one's lifetime. According to Wallace and Wallace, it is "a change in social status which occurs within a person's adult career". Example: A person working as a clerk in a bank becoming its manager after promotion, a lawyer becoming a judge after passing the qualifying exam. Intra-generational social mobility is the ability of a specific individual to move up or down the ladder within his or her lifetime.

Intra-generational mobility is also known popularly as career mobility. We can find out about career mobility by asking people to identify the jobs they held at various points in their lives. Intra-generational mobility or career mobility is a short-term study that

focuses on changes in a person's working life. It does not give much information about how class is inherited and the nature of society. It is always best to compare the positions of parents and children at similar stages in their careers or at similar ages to determine the extent to which a society is open or closed. In social research, intergenerational mobility studies are more fruitful.

g) Structural Mobility

Mobility at an individual level or collective level may be termed as 'Structural Mobility'. Stratum or Structural Mobility is a kind of vertical mobility. Structural mobility refers to mobility that is brought about by changes in the stratification hierarchy itself. According to Richard T. Schaefer, it is "the vertical movement of a specific group, class or occupation relative to others in the stratification system". Structural mobility is a type of forced mobility that takes place because of structural changes not because of individual attempts. In modern days computer professionals and information technologists receive greater respect than doctors and advocates of yesteryears.

6.3.3 Factors Responsible for Social Mobility

As you can see from the preceding paragraphs, social mobility is a complicated and multi-faceted topic. Exploration of the range of factors influencing social mobility reveals some important themes, but because of the complicated interaction between them, it is inappropriate to make clear judgments about the relative importance of one or the other. In reality, they work in overlapping ways and different combinations for different individuals. Let us look at each of these characteristics separately to see how they contribute to social mobility.

1. Motivation

Each person aspires to increase not only

his or her quality of life but also his or her social standing. It is possible to obtain any status in an open system. This openness inspires people to work hard and enhance their talents to rise in social standing. Social mobility is impossible without such motivation and effort on the part of the person.

2. Achievement and Failures

The term "achievement" refers to an out-of-the-ordinary, typically unexpected performance that draws the attention of a larger audience to a person's ability. Not all accomplishments will lead to social advancement. Only exceptional accomplishments have an impact on one's status. A poor individual who gains wealth or an unknown writer who wins a literary prize, for example, will increase the status.

Failures and transgressions have a comparable effect on downward mobility. A member of the upper classes who files a fraudulent bankruptcy will be removed from blue books; who will no longer receive dinner invitations from their peers, and he / she will be ineligible as a marriage partner. The partner may divorce, if they are already married. He /she will have to resign from all the clubs and posts. They will not, however, fall into the lowest stratum, although forming new associations will be tough.

3. Education

Education not only aids in the acquisition of knowledge but also serves as a passport to a higher-ranking occupational position. To become a doctor, one must have a background in science. Similarly, to sit for an I.A.S. competitive examination, one must be a graduate. Individuals can only aspire to higher positions after receiving a minimal formal education. It is through education that in modern India the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are not only able to change their traditional occupation but

have also started occupying jobs of higher prestige. Education is a basic prerequisite in today's industrial society, where status can be attained.

4. Skills and Training

Every society provides provisions for the younger generation to get education and training. To gain competence and training, one must invest a significant amount of time and money. Why are these people wasting their money and time? The reason for this is that such people are rewarded by society. When they complete their training, they are eligible for high-level employment that is far superior to those that they could have obtained without such instruction.

People with these skills are not only given higher social prestige but also larger cash benefits and other perks by society. With these incentives in mind, people participate in these programs in the hopes of moving up the social ladder. In other words, skills and training help people advance in their careers, which leads to social mobility.

5. Migration

You have heard about migration but what is migration? Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Migration can be within a country or between countries. Though migration is not a new phenomenon, it takes on a new significance in an increasingly interconnected world. Why are there so many Bengali laborers in Kerala? They received higher wages than what they could earn elsewhere in India and enjoyed the work and the peaceful life in Kerala. Social mobility is also aided by migration. People migrate for a variety of reasons, including both pull and push influences. A location may lack the resources and chances to improve. As a result, people are forced to relocate to other locations to make a living. They may have distinct openings and opportunities in new places when they migrate



These individuals take advantage of these possibilities and improve their social standing. They return to their villages and acquire land after amassing a large sum of money. They cultivate their property and become landowners. As a result of their traditional employment as scavengers or Chamars, they gain rank and become cultivators. Asians migrating to various European countries and the United States of America face a similar problem.

People are drawn to the pull factors because they lack certain amenities at their current domicile, and the new location entices them by giving these amenities, allowing them to advance in their careers after learning new skills and information.

People migrate from villages to cities because cities have higher-status organisations and more career prospects. People migrate to cities to obtain greater education and skills and to advance in their careers in comparison to their parents and brothers, who remain in villages. In this way, we can see how both push and pull forces contribute to migration, which then allows social mobility.

6. Industrialisation

The industrial revolution ushered in a new social order in which people are classified based on their talent and education. Their caste, race, religion, and ethnicity were all ignored. As a result of industrialisation, mass production became more affordable. The artisans were compelled to leave their jobs as a result of this. They moved to industrial towns in quest of work.

They received fresh vocational training and were placed in various industries. They progressed up the social ladder as a result of their expertise and training. Statuses are attained in modern society, whereas statuses are conferred due to birth in traditional societies such as India. As a result, industrialisation allows for more social mobility.

7. Urbanisation

There are more individuals in cities, and they have formal relationships. People do not have a deep understanding of one another. Anonymity is prevalent in urban areas. Only their friends and relatives are close to them. Individuals' caste and background are kept hidden in urban areas. Rather than his origin, an individual's status is mostly determined by his education, occupation, and money.

Regardless of caste, an individual with greater education, more money, and a better-status career has a greater social position. Urbanisation enhances social mobility by removing the barriers to social mobility.

8. Legislation

New laws can also help people move up the social ladder. Most tenant cultivators became owner cultivators when the Zamindari Abolition Act was approved, indicating an improvement in their status from tenants to owner cultivators. Similarly, the legislative provision for job reservation and advancement for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has aided social mobility.

A huge number of people from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have used reservations for admission to professional colleges, job reservations, and promotions to better their position. In this way, we can see how legal provisions aid social mobility.

9. Politicisation

People have become more conscious of their rights as a result of increased education and exposure to mass mediums of communication, as well as increased interactions. People are also educated about their rights by political parties. People get together to demand that the authorities recognise their demands to attain their rights. These individuals may employ agitations, strikes, and other tactics to achieve their objectives.

To gain votes, a political party makes several concessions. They increase their social rank with the help of these additional privileges and facilities. A few persons may become political leaders, ministers, cabinet ministers or chief ministers of a state. In today's Indian politics, there are numerous examples of this. As a result, they have been able to move up the social ladder

10. Modernisation

You usually hear the word 'modern' in your society. Currently, millions of people go around with their heads cocked toward a small device in their hands. Perhaps you are using your phone or tablet to read this textbook. In sophisticated societies, communication technology is now taken for granted. What impact has technology had on social transformation in our and other societies?

What do you mean by modernization? Some would say that improving technology has made our lives easier. Imagine what your day would be like without internet, the automobile, or electricity. Modernization is a process of social change that is based on a scientific approach and logic.

Modernization entails the application of scientific knowledge and modern technology. It also relates to reason and a secular lifestyle. People involved in low-status occupations such as scavengers are abandoning their conventional employment in favor of activities that are not dirty and do not pollute the environment as a result of technological advancements.

They move their position upward in this way. Similarly, a country's level of development influences whether or not social mobility is possible. Less developed and traditional societies maintain their old stratification systems and accretive statuses. While developed and contemporary cultures have prepared the path for more chances

and competition, only developed countries have a stronger chance of achieving certain classifications. To put it another way, modernity promotes social mobility.

Aspirations for advancement can lead to frustration and a variety of mental and psychological issues. An individual is taught that he can attain any level of success. However, in actuality, his social background, birth into a race, and ethnicity all help or hinder his chances of social mobility. Similarly, countries that lack opportunities for social mobility suffer from stagnation and underdevelopment. In a nutshell, social mobility has both positive and negative implications.

6.3.4 Social Mobility in India

In India, both horizontal and vertical mobility are evident. Because it is a traditional society, vertical mobility is limited. Inter-family, inter-kinship, internal and external professional mobility, inter-state, inter-religious, and inter-party mobility are all the more common in India. People have higher ambitions and strive harder to accomplish them. Social mobility is also a result of social change.

Vertical and horizontal mobility are less common in India due to the caste system. Despite this, middle castes try to climb the caste ladder. Srinivas refers to this process as Sanskritization. According to him, "sanskritization is that process by which a lower caste or sub-caste accepts the traditions, ways, and values of the twice born caste". The caste that does so climbs above the surrounding castes, despite the fact that there is no change in caste structure other than a positional shift in the prestige of the caste that does so. Many people adopt Brahman lifestyles, Kshatriya habits, or Vaishya ways of living as a result of sanskritization.

Several new dimensions of mobility emerged throughout the British era.



terms of occupational rankings, income and consumption patterns of the upwardly or downwardly mobile groups or individuals. Social mobility is the manifestation of the dynamic nature of society. Societies are not static but dynamic. Individuals who constitute the basic units of society are also moving up and down in the status hierarchy. They also move from one place to another and from one occupation to another. Social mobility has led to some consequences or effects. Have you heard about the Gulf migration? About 20-30 years ago, a lot of youngsters migrated to the Gulf countries in search of employment. They earned money and came back to their native places. Some started small businesses, while others put their money into small-scale industries, and so on. As a result, their economic status significantly improved. Upward mobility happened in these families and a lot of people worked in these institutions and got employment. Thus, a drastic change has happened in certain areas in Kerala due to the Gulf migration.

In this following section, we will be looking at yet another aspect of social mobility i.e., its 'consequences'. By 'consequences' we mean- the impact or effect of social mobility. Now the question arises, impact on what? Here, we study the impact of social mobility not only on the individual or groups but also the society as a whole.

The social importance of mobility comprises of its positive consequences. They are referred to as the “gains of mobility or benefits of mobility”. The so-called gains of mobility may be examined here:

1. Opportunity for the expression of individual talents

According to P.M. Blau and O.D Duncan,
Social mobility becomes inevitable if

the most important functions of society are to be performed by the most capable persons. Social mobility makes it evident that a talented individual is bound to achieve social ascendance using his talents and efforts irrespective of the stratum to which he belongs.

2. Acts as a safety valve

Social mobility virtually means creating a 'safety value' to escape from the dangers. Since the lower classes are provided with an open chance to enhance their social status or to enter into the status-positions of other upper classes using their performances; they do not normally organise themselves to dislodge the upper-class people of their statuses. Social mobility becomes inevitable and essential from this point of view.

3. Social justice

Social mobility provides social justice for all social classes. D.V Glass and others have felt that providing equal chances or opportunities for social mobility for all social classes is a democratic commitment. According to them, democratic society has to depend upon "an egalitarian opportunity structure".

4. Job satisfaction

Most of the instances of social mobility are occupational. In traditional societies, occupations are normally hereditary and hence children are obliged to follow the occupations of their parents whether they have a liking for it or not. Now in modern industrial society, things are different. People need not stick to their parental occupations. They have vast opportunity and freedom to change their occupations. This opportunity for job selection or change has contributed to their job satisfaction.

5. Improvement in the lifestyles

A person who gets into an occupation

or profession as per his capacities and expectations is likely to be more satisfied with it. For the very same reason, he may work sincerely, put in more effort and earn a good income also. This higher income or economic rewards help him to improve his "life styles". For example, a lower-class man after obtaining a middle class status, will pay attention to improve his way of life. He may purchase a vehicle, wear relatively costly dresses, get a better education for his children, construct his own house, and so on. Social mobility, many times, helps economic improvements.

6. Opportunity for competition

Social mobility is of great importance in helping individuals to improve their capacity and work efficiency. It provides motivation for progress and higher attainments. It makes individuals active, alert and dynamic. It keeps the individuals fit for life in a competitive society. It is important to note that here that the societies that provide greater opportunities for social mobility are also those that entertain and encourage competitive values.

7. Confidence in the established system

People always expect some chances or the other to improve their positions in society. They constantly strive towards attaining higher positions and improving their present conditions. People in the higher strata also expect better opportunities. Individuals who feel that their social system is providing them opportunities to grow well are the ones who toil and struggle for improvement. They do not lose faith in the system. They believe their hard work would yield them due rewards, if not immediately, at least, soon. Because of this faith, they would remain as the supporters of the system even if their actual mobility involves difficulties and challenges.



b) Negative Consequences or costs of Mobility

Now let us look at some negative consequences of mobility. It is normally believed that social mobility is good and supportive of democratic ethos. Supporters of democracy and social equality strongly advocate that opportunities for social mobility must be provided for all. Social mobility permits society to fill its occupational positions with the ablest people and offers the individual a chance to attain his or her life goal. But such a provision which society makes involves certain costs. Some of them may be noted below.

1. Dissatisfaction and frustration

A mobile society arouses expectations that are not always advantageous for society. A mobile society arouses expectations that are not always fulfilled, thereby creating dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Even in societies where upward mobility is both valued and highly visible, expectations may be over-aroused. Although many want to be upwardly mobile, not everyone can succeed. So upward mobility is not always advantageous for society. In a traditional society as long as the social structure remains intact there is no such dissatisfaction or frustration.

2. Penalties

One who moves higher and higher in social status as a result of promotion may feel less and less secure. Since terrorism of different types is becoming widespread nowadays, people in top positions seek the support of security guards for they feel that they may be attacked at any time. Thus, one who is passed over for promotion to a higher position may envy the security of a less mobile society. Social attitudes of such persons change to such an extent that their parents, friends and relatives may appear to be strangers. High Court and Supreme Court judges in India, for example,

are expected as a matter of legal norms, to minimize their social contacts with the people.

3. Geographic mobility

People feel the loss of treasured social relations when they move from one geographic area to another for a new job. Further, a new physical and social setup demands new adjustments. These adjustments may often bring in new fears and anxieties. Such anxieties and tensions are bound to be very high especially at present when the whole world is experiencing the complex process of globalisation.

4. A high rate of mental illness

A person who is ready to accept an offer of promotion must be mentally ready to shoulder new responsibilities, face new challenges, and compromise with new situations. Any failure in these areas brings tensions, anxieties, mental worries. Even marriages may be threatened when spouses are not equally interested in mobility. Downward mobility also creates mental disturbances. In fact, a number of studies have found that downward mobility is related to a variety of unpleasant consequences, such as poor health, marital discord, and feelings of isolation and social distance.

The level of economic development and condition of the economy influence the range of social mobility in the society. It has been observed that some societies impose greater restrictions on changes in status than other societies. The mobility of women is relatively lower than that of men. In a country like India, the lower caste people still suffer from disabilities. Several studies have reported that downward mobility is associated with many unpleasant accompaniments, such as poor health, marital discord and feelings of alienation and social distance. Some studies have even found that a high rate of mental problems may accompany either upward or downward mobility.

Recap

- ◆ Social mobility is the change in position of people within the social hierarchy.
- ◆ Vertical mobility is the movement of an individual or groups from one status to another.
- ◆ Horizontal mobility is a change in the position of a person without a change in status.
- ◆ Upward mobility denotes social ascendance on the part of the individual or group.
- ◆ Downward mobility indicates social descendance on the part of the individual or group.
- ◆ Mobility across the generation is called intergenerational social mobility.
- ◆ Intragenerational mobility refers to mobility that takes place during one's lifespan.
- ◆ Structural mobility is caused by changes in the stratification hierarchy.
- ◆ Skills and training help people advance in their careers, which leads to social mobility.
- ◆ Modernisation entails the application of scientific and modern technology.
- ◆ The caste system limits vertical and horizontal mobility in India.
- ◆ Sanskritisation is the process of lower castes adopting upper caste lifestyles.
- ◆ Social mobility provides social justice for all social classes.

Objective Questions

1. Who said that any change in social positions is social mobility?
2. Who authored the book '*Social and Cultural Mobility*'?



3. What is the movement of people from one social status to another called?
4. What is the division of people in a social system known as?
5. Who defines vertical mobility as moving up or down the socio-economic scale?
6. What are the types of vertical mobility based on direction of transition?
7. Who prefers to define horizontal mobility as lateral mobility?
8. What denotes social ascendance on the part of the individual or group?
9. What indicates social failure on the part of the individual or group?
10. What is mobility across generations known as?
11. What is the term for the mobility that takes place during one's lifespan?
12. Which is the most popularly used term to describe intra-generational mobility?
13. Which mobility is brought by changes in the stratification hierarchy?
14. What contributes to reservations for weaker sections?
15. What is the application of scientific and modern technology known as?
16. Which one hinders or helps social mobility?
17. Who coined the term Sanskritisation?
18. What is the process whereby people of lower castes acquire higher status?

Answers

1. Bogardus
2. P.A. Sorokin
3. Social Mobility
4. Social Stratification

5. Antony Giddens
6. Social Climbing and Social Sinking
7. Antony Giddens
8. Upward mobility
9. Downward mobility
10. Intergenerational mobility
11. Intra-generational mobility
12. Career mobility
13. Structural mobility
14. Legislations
15. Modernisation
16. Race or ethnicity
17. M.N. Srinivas
18. Sanskritisation

Assignments

1. Define social mobility and the different types of it
2. Examine the different factors responsible for social mobility
3. Describe the negative consequences or costs of mobility
4. Discuss the positive consequences of social mobility
5. Differentiate between upward and downward mobility
6. Describe the theories of social change
7. Explain social mobility in India



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1. Sharma, K. L. (2006). *Social Stratification and Mobility*. India: Rawat Publications.
2. Sorokin, P. A. (1941). *Social and Cultural Mobility*. United States: Free Press of Glencoe.
3. Giddens, A. (2000). *An Introduction to Sociology*. United States: W. W. Norton.

Suggested Readings

1. Giddens, A. (1989). *Sociology*. United Kingdom: Polity Press.
2. Singh, Y. (1986). *Modernization of Indian Tradition: A Systematic Study of Social Change*. India: Rawat Publications.
3. Steunenberg, B. & Vught, V. F. (2012). *Political Institutions and Public Policy: Perspectives on European Decision Making*. Netherlands: Springer.

Model Question Paper Set-01



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

B. A. SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION- SEMESTER I

DISCIPLINE CORE - 1- B21S001DC- INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

(CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Objective Type Questions

Answer any ten of the following

Each question carries 1 mark

1. Which social group gives impersonal and formal relationships?
2. Who referred to Sociology as “the science of social institutions”?
3. ‘Ethnocentrism’ was introduced by whom?
4. According to Freud in the Oedipal stage the girl develops _____ complex.
5. ----- are general standards and may be regarded as higher order norms
6. The term folkways was introduced in which year?
7. Specific pressure exerted by society on its members to conform to the norms is called
8. Which is the smallest possible social group?
9. ‘Sociology and Anthropology are twin sisters’ are the words of ----- .
10. In which form of marriage does a man of higher caste marry a woman of lower caste?
11. ----- is the system of government in which the supreme authority is



12. What are the two principal forms of marriage?
13. According to role is a function of social status.
14. Robert K Merton divided the function into two types which are
15. _____ indicates social descendence or social failure on the part of the individual or a group.

34. Can you differentiate consanguineous and conjugal kinship relationships?
35. Describe in your own words the Oedipal stage of socialisation?
36. Explain briefly the types of socialisation?
37. Explain Pareto's circulation of elite theory. Would you think that cyclical theories are better to interpret social change?
38. Do you think that technological factors are important for social change? Explain.
39. Present the nature and characteristics of an organization.
40. Identify the elements of social structure.

Section – D

Long Answer/Essay

Answer any two of the following

Each question carries 10 marks

41. What solutions would you suggest for severe social deviance?
42. Based on your understanding of value, how would you integrate them to avoid value conflict?
43. What is the AGIL paradigm? Discuss the four functional prerequisites for all social systems.
44. Evaluate the Nature and Scope of sociology to understand human relations in Society.

Model Question Paper Set-02



SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE:

Reg. No :

Name :

B. A. SOCIOLOGY EXAMINATION- SEMESTER I

DISCIPLINE CORE - 1- B21SO01DC- INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

(CBCS - UG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

Section A

Objective Type Questions

Answer any ten of the following

Each question carries 1 mark

1. Liberty, equality and freedom are the overarching principles of -----?
2. Identify the common method adopted in Economics to collect the primary data.
3. Who classified groups as in-group and out-group?
4. In which group does an individual take values or standards of other individuals and groups as a comparative frame of reference?
5. Domestication of animals is an example of ----- society.
6. Material culture evolves rapidly and voluminously while non – material culture resists and remains unchanged for a long time this phenomenon is known as _____?
7. ‘Folkways’ was authored by whom?
8. Realizing how to act in accordance to a certain role is termed as _____?
9. _____ determine what is considered morally acceptable or unacceptable within any given culture.
10. AGIL scheme was developed by?
11. Organic analogy was proposed by?
12. The essential feature of society is ?



13. Mobility across generations is termed as _____ social mobility.
14. Who stated that “opportunities of social mobility for all social classes is a democratic commitment”?
15. _____ refers to the social mobility that takes place during one’s life span.

Section B

Very Short Answers

Answer any ten of the following

Each question carries 2 marks

16. In-group/out-group distinction brings group identity among its members. Why?
17. Name the main theories related to social deviance (type: easy- knowledge)
18. What is Enlightenment?
19. What is Positivism?
20. Multiculturalism promotes peaceful coexistence, agree or disagree, state your reason?
21. Describe the features of the two forms of polygamous marriage?
22. How do you distinguish the concepts “sacred and profane”?
23. Is the media a boon or a bane in the process of socialisation? State your opinion?
24. How important is Durkheim’s theory of Anomie in the sociological explanation of deviant behaviour?
25. Are mores normalized customs? Evaluate.
26. “A community is specific while society is an abstract idea” substantiates the argument.
27. How do you differentiate between an association and an organization?
28. ‘Social status is hierarchical’ justifies the sentence.
29. How does social structure vary from social system? Identify the components of social structure?
30. Relate migration principles and the flow of Bengali laborers to Kerala.

Section C

Short Answers

Answer any five of the following

Each question carries 4 marks

31. In-group and out-group conflicts may be dreadful at times. Validate the statement.
32. Do ideologies serve as foundations of social control?
33. ‘Sociology and Anthropology are twin sisters’. Evaluate the interdependence of these

sciences.

34. Can you illustrate the function of religious institutions with an example?
35. Locate the major differences and similarities between Sociology and Political Science.
36. How do you evaluate the social mobility trends in India?
37. 'New laws can also help people move up the social ladder'. Validate the statement.
38. Describe the role of the primary agent in socialisation?
39. Briefly elaborate on how cultural diffusion holds value in a globalized society?
40. Define society and discuss its characteristics.

Section – D

Long Answer/Essay

Answer any two of the following

Each question carries 10 marks

41. What is the role of social control in our social life?
42. How would you classify the degree of kinship relationship based on the blood and marriage ties principles?
43. Evaluate the accuracy of common-sense beliefs and scientific methods to understand human behaviours?
44. Examine the social relevance of evolutionary theories of social change.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യായാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

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സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം
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Introduction to Sociology

COURSE CODE: B21SO01DC



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ISBN 978-81-963283-0-6



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