

B.A. First Year
Sociology, Paper - II

INDIAN SOCIETY



मध्यप्रदेश भोज (मुक्त) विश्वविद्यालय – भोपाल
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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Indian Society

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UNIT-II: Caste, Class, Family, Marriage, Kinship	Unit-2: Basic Institutions of Indian Society (Pages 29-97)
UNIT-III: Structure of Indian Society, Village, City, Rural-Urban Continuum, Diversity of Indian Society-Demographic, Cultural, Religious and Linguistic	Unit-3: Structure of Indian Society (Pages 99-129)
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UNIT-V: Social Problems, Casteism, Regionalism, Communalism, Cyber-Crime. Gender Inequality.	Unit-5: Social Problems (Pages 157-226)



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INTRODUCTION

In India, languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food and customs differ from place to place. However, they possess a unity in diversity. The culture of India is a mix of these varied sub-cultures. India happens to be the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Family plays an important role in the Indian culture. For generations, India has had a prevailing tradition of the joint family system. Rig-Vedic Sanskrit is one of the oldest languages of the world. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the oldest preserved and well known epics of India. Family, religion, caste, class and kinship constitute the basic institutions of the Indian society.

After Independence, the Indian society has undergoing gradual transformation. The rural landscape has evolved with the coming up of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Still, Indian society is plagued by several problems such as poverty, dowry, gender inequality, human trafficking and communalism. In addition to these problems, India is also going through issues such as development induced displacement, regional disparities, climate change and sustainable development. There are a number of factors which are responsible for continuity and change in Indian society namely, globalization, industrialization, urbanization and modernization.

This book, *Indian Society*, has been written in the Self-Instructional Mode (SIM) wherein each unit begins with an Introduction to the topic followed by an outline of the Objectives. The detailed content is then presented in a simple and an organized manner, interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to test the understanding of the students. A Summary along with a list of Key Terms and a set of Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit for effective recapitulation.

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UNIT 1 DHARMA AND OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

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Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Basic Elements of Hinduism
- 1.3 Hindu View of Life
 - 1.3.1 Varna and Jati System
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Hinduism is not one religion but a combination or collection of various sects (a sect refers to a group with distinctive religious, philosophical or political beliefs). It has no central doctrinal authority and many practising Hindus do not claim to belong to any particular denomination or sect. However, academicians categorize contemporary Hinduism into four major denominations, which are as follows:

- Vaishnavism
- Shaivism
- Shaktism
- Smartism

The denominations differ primarily in the God worshipped as the supreme one and in the traditions that accompany worship of that God.

According to K.M. Panikkar, the social structure of Hinduism rests on two fundamental institutions: the caste and the joint family. Prof. Y. Singh holds the view that the normative principles of Hinduism are based on beliefs, ideas and logic of permissiveness, creation and destruction, being and becoming, liberalism, utilitarianism and spiritual transcendence.

The bases of Hindu social organisation can be classified as follows:

1. **The Life Cycle:** Traditionally the Hindus believe in *Punarjanma* or rebirth, immortality of soul, *Pap* (Sin), *Punya* (Merit), *Karma* (deeds), Dharma (morality) and Moksha (Salvation).
2. **Harmony:** It is believed in Hinduism that as there is harmony between the various parts of the body, harmony is also evinced among various aspects of social life.

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- 3. Hierarchy:** Hierarchy is also another base of the Hindu social organisation. In Hinduism hierarchy tends to persist in terms of the caste system as well as in the charismatic quality or gunas such as 'Sattva', 'Rajas' and 'Tamas'. Hierarchical arrangements are also noticed in respect of the 'Purusarthas' or goals of life.
- 4. Segmental Division of Society:** The entire Hindu society is divided into different segments on the basis of division of labour and differential privileges and disabilities of various groups.
- 5. The concept of purity and pollution:** The idea of purity and pollution has sufficiently influenced the Hindu social life. Of course regional variations are marked in respect of the concept of purity and pollution. These concepts are considered important in matters of commensal relation, in touching or maintaining physical distance, in inter-caste marriages and in personal life of the Hindus. Purity and pollution are considered important on occasions like birth, marriage, menstruation, death, offering of prayer etc.
- 6. Idol worship:** Idol worship is the most noticeable common feature of the Hindu religion. The Hindus are divided into different sects. Therefore, uniformity is not maintained in worshipping a particular idol.
- 7. Male ascendancy:** Indian society, from the very beginning, has been patriarchal and the male ascendancy has been unquestionably accepted by all throughout the ages. The Hindu society has always accorded emphasis on male. This is not to say that women are not respected among the Hindus, but it only indicates that males had dominated the social and religious life of the Hindus throughout the ages.
P.H. Prabhu says, "Thus, during Vedic period, we have reasons to believe that so far as education was concerned the position of the women was gradually not unequal to that of men." He further says, "but in the same (Satapatha) Brahman there is another passage which shows that woman is regarded as the more emotional and less rational by virtue than man. Therefore, she is apt to fall an easy prey to external appearance, she lacks the ability for true appreciation or balance of mind and does not possess depth of reason."
- 8. Transcendentalism:** Hindu social organisation believes that life transcends the existence of the earth. The Hindus believe that the soul and life hereafter represent higher level of existence whereas 'maya' or illusion represents the earth as a thing.
- 9. Intellectualism:** From the Vedic age the Hindu attitude has always been directed towards the tradition of intellectualism.
- 10. Non-violence:** Non-violence or Ahimsa is the pivot around which moves entire social life of Hindus. The concept of Dharma is based on the conception of non-violence which presupposes that man should not do harm to any living being whether man or animal or tree.

All the major philosophical concepts of Hinduism are discussed in detail in this unit.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the basic elements of Hinduism
- Describe various theological ideas in Hinduism such as Dharma
- Explain the concept of Purushartha
- Describe Varna-Ashrama Vyavastha
- Assess the notions of Varna and Jati
- Analyse the meaning of Karma and Sanskar

1.2 BASIC ELEMENTS OF HINDUISM

According to historians like Romila Thapar, the origin of the word 'Hindu' is geographical and is related to those residing in the Indian sub-continent. The Indus river was called Hindu by the Persians and the Greeks. The Arabs called it the Al-Hind. Thus, the inhabitants around the Hindu or Al-Hind were known as the Hindus. The term was first used to connote all those who lived in that geographical area but were not Muslims. The Persian sources referred to various Hindu religions with the maximum number going up to forty-two and the minimum five. Some sources have suggested that Brahmanism was the Hindu religion while others have held that sects like Shaivism and Vaishnavism are Hindu religions.

The Western conception of what Hinduism is has been defined by the *Smarta* view. Many Hindus, who may not understand or follow Advaita philosophy invariably, follow the *Shanmata* belief of worshiping many forms of God. One commentator, noting the influence of the *Smarta* tradition, has remarked that although many Hindus may not strictly identify themselves as *Smartas* but, by adhering to Advaita Vedanta as a foundation for non-sectarianism, are indirect followers of it.

Other denominations like *Ganapatya* (the cult of Ganesha) and *Saura* (Sun worship) are not so widespread. Further, there are movements that are not easily placed in any of the above categories, such as Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Arya Samaj, which rejects image worship and veneration of multiple deities. It focuses on the Vedas and the Vedic fire sacrifices (*Yajna*).

Problems with the single definition of what is actually meant by the term 'Hinduism' are often attributed to the fact that Hinduism does not have a single or common historical founder. Hinduism does not have a single system of salvation and has different goals to achieve as decided by each sect or denomination. A definition of Hinduism is further complicated by the frequent use of the term faith as a synonym for religion. Some academics and many practitioners define Hinduism as *Sanatana Dharma*, a Sanskrit phrase meaning the eternal law or the eternal way.

Hinduism or the Hindu religion does not have a unified system of belief encoded in a declaration of faith but is rather an umbrella term comprising the

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plurality of religious phenomena originating from and based on the Vedic traditions. Hinduism refers to a religious mainstream, which evolved organically and spread over a large territory marked by significant ethnic and cultural diversity. This mainstream evolved both by innovation from within, and by assimilation of external traditions or cults into the Hindu fold. The result is an enormous variety of religious traditions, ranging from innumerable small, unsophisticated cults to major religious movements with millions of adherents spread over the entire sub-continent.

Hindu philosophy or view of life is that man is always full of desires (*kama*). To get rid of desires and get salvation (*Moksha*) one has to do good deeds (*Karma*) during his lifetime. But this is not the only view of life. There are alternative routes to achieve the ultimate reality of life, i.e., *Moksha*. The *Gita*, which is believed to be part of the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, presents a new philosophy of life — the philosophy of *Karma*. The *Gita* talks about the sublimation of desires and not the eradication of the same. This sublimation can be achieved by knowing the true nature of *Karma*.

Hindu philosophy also believes in certain theological ideas like *Papa* (sin), *Punya* (merit), *Punarjanma* (rebirth), etc. which are considered to be a basic tenet of Hinduism.

Some of the basic elements of Hinduism are as follows:

- **Theological ideas:** Hinduism believes in certain theological ideas like immortality of the *Atma* (soul), *Punarjanma* (rebirth), *Papa* (sin), *Punya* (merit), *Karma* (deeds), *Dharma* (morality) and *Moksha* (salvation).

The idea of *Karma* makes a Hindu realize that whatever he has got in this life is the result of his deeds in his previous life. He also realizes that if he does good deeds in this life and leads a life of *Dharma* (morality), he would be rewarded in his next birth. This reward could be in the form of his birth in a high social group.

A Hindu also realizes that he can get *Moksha* (salvation) from the cycle of birth and death and his *Atma* (soul) can be set free if he leads a life of morality. His morality would depend upon the balance of the sins that he commits and the merits/blessings that he receives.

These theological ideas determine the manner in which Hindus lead their lives.

- **Pollution and purity:** The ideas of pollution and purity are very important in Hinduism. The rules of pollution and purity may vary from one part of the country to another, but they do affect a large number of people. These ideas are very important in commensal relations, in inter-caste marriages, in maintaining physical distance from other groups and in one's individual life on occasions like birth, death, worship, etc.

Purity of an individual is said to be violated when he breaks the rules governing his group. He has to face the punishment accorded by his caste council to regain his purity. It must be noted that pollution here is determined by birth and not cleanliness. A low caste person is considered to be more polluted than a high caste person.

The concept of purity has got wider implications. It is not only confined to the action of men, but also extends to their level of thinking. Thinking ill of others is also considered impure and sinful. Violation of the rules necessitates purificatory rites. The rigorousness of the rites depend upon the seriousness of the act of violation.

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- **Hierarchy:** There are different types of hierarchies existing in Hinduism. The Hindus are placed at different positions in the following hierarchies: varna and caste hierarchy.

Hierarchy based on individual qualities (*guna*) with the highest and most virtuous being *sattva*, i.e., brightness and virtue associated with sages and Brahmins. The next category being *rajas*, i.e., commitment to action and valour as seen in kings and Kshatriyas and the lowest level being *tamas*, i.e., people associated with profane activities and general dullness.

Hierarchy on the basis of values assigned to life goals like kama (sexual desire and sensory pleasure-seeking); *artha* (wealth acquisition); Dharma (discharge of moral obligations) and Moksha (pursuit of salvation from the cycle of birth and death). Hierarchy constitutes an essential element of Hinduism.

- **Idol worship:** A very apparent and common feature of the Hindu religion is the worship of idols. It is a fundamental element of Hinduism. Idols of various Gods and Goddesses (Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Ganesh, Hanuman, Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, etc.) are worshipped in temples and at homes. Different sects worship different idols in various temples. At home, Hindus often create a shrine with idols or icons dedicated to their chosen form(s) of God. Temples are usually dedicated to a primary deity along with the associated subordinate deities. Visiting temples is not obligatory and many visit temples only during religious festivals. Hindus perform their worship through these idols. The idols serve as a tangible link between the worshipper and God. The image is often considered a manifestation of God. Each God has been given a definite look and image and is worshipped in that form. Hinduism cannot be imagined without idol worship. It is interesting to know that though Hindus worship Gods in numerous forms and images, Hinduism also postulates that God is one.
- **Not monolithic in nature:** An important feature of Hinduism is that it is not a uniform monolithic religion. Rather, it is a combination of numerous religious sects and groups with different sets of beliefs. This flexibility is good as it allows the religion to absorb diverse views of various groups including anti-Vedic groups and non-caste groups.
- **Tolerance:** One of the basic questions facing Hinduism is that whether Hinduism is a tolerant religion. One view is that it is so. This view springs from the belief that Hinduism is a secular and tolerant philosophy as it embraces diverse groups and sects within its fold.

But the contrarian view is that there is religious intolerance within Hinduism. Sectarian violence and communal passions are pointers of

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such intolerance. In the ancient Indian history, you will find references of the Shaivaites attacking Buddhists and Jains and destroying their monasteries and killing monks.

On balance, it appears that tolerance is a basic element of Hindu religion; notwithstanding some recent disturbing developments like the emergence of saffron terror. But more evidence is required before anything can be said with certainty.

- **Segregation:** Hinduism supports segregation of its members into social communities. This is manifested in the construct of the caste system. The belief that the four varnas were created from Lord Brahma's body only strengthens the view that Hinduism supports the caste system because it lends a touch of divinity to such segregation. Almost all Hindus, including those belonging to the lower castes, believe that membership of a caste is divinely ordained through birth and cannot be changed.
- **Non-violence:** Another basic question facing Hinduism is whether non-violence is an element of Hinduism. Does Hinduism preach non-violence? One view is that Hindus are non-violent people and, therefore, Hinduism is characterized by non-violence. However, there is a different school of thought that believes that violence is a part of Hinduism. The latter holds that the message given in the Gita is definitely violent. The ritual of animal sacrifice is also an example of violence. It can be said that violence of the form described here was seen only in ancient India. In fact, non-violence became an important feature of Hinduism with the emergence of the Vaishnavas and the Shaivas after the twelfth century AD. The Bhakti cult comprising saints like Kabir, Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Meera Bai, Tukaram, Guru Nanak, etc. also spread the spirit of non-violence and rid the religion of the burden of orthodox rituals.
- **Existence of various sects:** India, known as the land of spirituality and philosophy, was the birthplace of some religions. There are many religious sects in India. The most dominant religion in India today is Hinduism (accounting for about 80 per cent of Indian population). Hinduism is a colorful religion with a vast gallery of Gods and Goddesses. Hinduism developed about 5,000 years ago. There are many sects of Hinduism. Vaishnavism (worship of Lord Vishnu), Shaivism (worship of Lord Shiva) and Shaktism (worship of Mother Goddess) are considered the major sects of Hinduism. There are sub-sects within a sect. For example, within Saivism, we have Trika or Kashmiri Saivism, Vira Saivism, Pashupatya sect, Kalamukh sect and Kapila sect. Of all the sects of Hinduism, Vaishnavism is currently the most popular.

Around 500 BC two other religions developed in India-Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are seen as the molders of the India philosophy. In 'modern' period, new religions were also established in India. One relatively new religion in India is Sikhism, which was established in the 15th century. There are other religious philosophies whose believers see themselves as a separate religion. Lingayat of south

India, for example, consider themselves as a different religion. However, others consider them as a sect of Hinduism. The largest non-Indian religion in India is Islam followed by the Muslims. They account for about 12 per cent of India's population. Christians account for more than 2 per cent of India's population. There are also Zoroastrians and Jews in India.

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1.3 HINDU VIEW OF LIFE

Let us begin our discussion with the perception of Hindu view of life. Hinduism is not one religion but a combination or collection of various sects (a sect refers to a group with distinctive religious, philosophical or political beliefs). It has no central doctrinal authority and many practising Hindus do not claim to belong to any particular denomination or sect. According to Hinduism, the significance of life is four-fold, i.e., to attain Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Another important aspect of Hinduism is the varna system. Let us begin our discussion on the Hindu way of life by examining it.

1.3.1 Varna and Jati System

Let us begin by understanding the importance of varna and jati to Indian society.

Importance

One of the most significant features of Hindu society is that it is divided based on caste. The word 'caste' has originated from the Portuguese word 'casta' that literally means breed or race. The Sanskrit word 'Varna' is used to denote the social groups in the society. 'Varna' means many things but is normally interpreted to signify colour. In a verse from the sage Bhrigu, in the first millennium epic, the Mahabharata explains, 'The Brahmins are fair in colour; the Kshatriyas are reddish in colour, the vaishyas yellow while the Sudras have blackish coloured skin. In fact, in the Indian social system, the caste system helps in division of labour and power and rights for deferent sections in human society. The government of India recognizes historically discriminated communities of the Indian society, specifically Untouchables and Sudras under the designation of Scheduled Castes and certain castes that are economically backward are kept under the Other Backward Castes category. The Indian caste system is also called the jati. The word jati appears in all the Indian languages and is connected to the idea of traditional lineage, blood group or kinship group. There are more than 3000 jatis in Indian social system. In each local area, jati ranking exists and is very much related to purity and pollution of tradition.

In ancient Indian society, Varna existed to signify an endogamic social group of the society, and its members linked with each other by means of heredity, kinship, marriage, traditional custom, their work and profession. Work and profession became diversified with the cyclic evolution of the Indian society and the whole social group of population took on a new identity that was connected with the economic relation of their 'gotra' or clan and became further subdivisions of the basic Varna. The rules and laws that govern the social Varna and particularly the

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tradition on relations and inter caste marriages have maintained their purity of the breed, thus denoting the word caste.

Today, caste and occupation in traditional Indian villages are close to each other. Thus, the caste and occupation stratification in the village structure provided leadership position which is occupied mostly by those who enjoy a higher rank in the caste and occupational hierarchies. Leadership plays important role in forming political groups. The role of caste is not confined to elections alone. It extends to the actual operation of the state apparatus. The penetration of caste in society has made the state apparatus biased in favour of some castes and against others. The role of caste in the Indian society has distorted the processes of development at a large scale, which dominates social structure.

Landowners belonging to the upper and middle caste employ the state apparatus to extract surplus value by oppressing landless agricultural labourers and exploitative agrarian relations, specifically of the lower castes. The basic activity of social exploitation is undertaken by the rural rich, by means of caste factors in Indian society. However, in the early 90s, the globalization and economic policies of the Government of India brought many changes in the traditional Indian society and have helped break barriers of caste.

Hierarchy and Duties

The caste system, having four main Varna (also called classes), is based mainly on personality, profession and birth. In descending order, the hierarchy of Indian castes and their duties are as follows:

- **Brahmin:** People doing work of scriptural education and teaching, essential for the continuation of knowledge.
- **Kshatriyas:** Defence, public service, including administration and maintenance of law and order.
- **Vaishya:** Commercial workers and businessmen.
- **Sudras:** Workers and labourers.

It is now agreed that all social divisions in India were not hereditary in the beginning; rather they were only functional divisions. In Hindu social organization, *varna* is only the reference category: it is not a functioning unit of social structure, and only refers broadly to the ascribed status of different *jatis*. It is also a method of classification (Dube, 1990). So far as the etymological meaning of *varna* is concerned, it has come from Sanskrit root, *Vri*, which means colour. The *varna* system evolved as a result of the conflict between the different races. Fair skinned Aryans entered the Indian sub-continent through its north-west borders around 1500 BC, conquering the dark-complexioned original inhabitants and, laying the foundation for a class system based on birth. It is also stated in the *Purusasukta*, a hymn in the *Rig Veda*, that the four categories of society come out from the four parts of *Purusa* who is the supreme being. The professions of these *varnas* or groups are related figuratively to the parts of the body of *Purusa*. It is an anatomical analogy between man and society to illustrate the various ranks and functions of different groups.

According to the *Rig Veda*, the oldest scripture, the words Rajanya, Vaishya and Shudra are present only in the *Purusasukta*. The four castes can be classified into Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. The Brahmins are thought to have emerged from the mouth of the Purusa and are therefore placed at the highest strata of society. Their particular tasks relate to speech. The second level is that of the Kshatriya (Rajanya) who emerges from the arms of the *Purusa* and therefore has the honour of handling weapons. The Vaishyas are thought to come out of the thighs of Purusa making their profession agriculture and trade. Last, the Shudras emerged from the feet of the Purusa making them the lowest part of the body, Shudras are therefore placed in the depths of this four-fold division of society.

The *Purusasukta* is apparently the contribution of the Aryans as it came into being after the Aryans had already settled down in India. As the Aryans needed labour to pursue the agricultural tasks, they employed *dasas*. Slowly *dasas* became a synonym for Shudra. Both these words have their roots in the Iranian language. The word *Dasa* is an adaptation of the Iranian word *dahae* or common man. The word Shudra relates to the word *kurda*, which is the name of a pre-Aryan tribe which still exists in Iran. As per the sayings in the *Rig Veda*, the profession of a priest and warrior is considered higher than the profession of the agriculturalist. People employed as agricultural labourers or slaves came to occupy the lowest position in society. The constitution of the *Purusasukta* and its insertion in the *Rig Veda* was the initial effort to organize and make official the mistreatment of non-Aryans by the Aryans.

Difference Between *Varna* and *Jati*

Varna and *jati* (caste) may appear synonymous but are two separate categories. The inter-changeability of these terms has created confusion in the sociological analysis of the institution of caste. Caste is a confusing word; in different contexts it has been used to convey different meanings and social categories. It is better to use the term *jati* to denote an endogamous community with a more or less defined ritual status, and some occupation traditionally linked to it (Dube, 1990). *Jati* is a social group, a unit of great importance and a basic component of the social system. *Varna* is frequently mentioned in Sanskrit scripture, *jati* less often. Emile Senart warned that the two terms are confused in the literary tradition which, he wrote, 'is less concerned with the faithful record of facts than with their arrangement in systems conforming to the tendencies of a strongly biased group' (Senart, 1930).

However, the origin of castes has no semblance to the origin of *varnas*, though in the process of development of castes, they came to be associated with *varnas*. Srinivas (1962) holds that *varna* has provided a common social language which holds good or is thought to hold for India as a whole, that is, it has enabled ordinary men and women to grasp the caste system by providing them with a simple and clear scheme which is applicable to all parts of India. He further holds that importance of the *varna* system consists in that it furnishes an all India frame into which the *jatis*, occupying the lower rungs, have throughout tried to raise their status by taking over the customs and rituals of top *jatis*. Caste is tied to locality but *varna* functions on an all India basis.

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The crucial distinction between *varna* and *jati* is that, where *varna* is a system of differentiation in the epoch of Asiatic mode of production, which was characterized by general exploitation, the *jati* system developed later in the epoch of feudalism and was characterized by localized exploitation in a closed village economy, where the ruling class lived off the land (Gupta, 1995). *Varna* may be described as an abstract classification of people on the basis of a mythical origin; *jati*, on the other hand, is a concrete grouping based on ritual and occupational criteria. *Varna* should be understood as a symbolic framework within which diverse castes or *jatis* are grouped together. Caste belonging to the same *varna* may have no social ties with each other. For instance, a Kashmiri Brahmin and a South Indian Brahmin belong to the same *varna*, but they do not inter-marry or inter-dine. Castes have regional, linguistic and communal diversities incorporated in them. As a consequence, castes having the same *varna* rank are quite distinct from each other. The *varna* framework has served as a means of caste mobility but mobility is restricted among *jatis*. However, it can be said that *varna* is a reference group to various *jatis* of Indian society.

1.3.2 Ashrama System

The life of an individual under Hinduism is a kind of schooling and self-discipline. During this schooling, he has to pass through four stages of life. This four-fold division of his life is known as the *Ashrama Vyavastha* or system. The word *Ashrama* is derived from the Sanskrit word *Shrama*, which means effort or to exert oneself. Thus, the word *Ashrama* by derivation means a place where exertions are made and the action of performing such exertion. Literally, the term *ashrama* means a halting place. In this sense, the *ashramas* may be regarded as the resting places of the individual during his journey towards final liberation.

Importance of the Ashrama System

According to Hindu tradition, the entire life span of a Hindu can be divided into four ashramas: brahmacharya, grihasthya, vanaprastha and sanyasa. The Ashrama system teaches Hindus that during each stage, one is enjoined upon to achieve a goal specific to that stage and at the same time one has to prepare for the next stage and the goal related to it. After that, one enters the state of sanyasa and devotes one's time solely to self-realisation.

According to Brahmacharya, the first ashrama, a Hindu is ordained to devote the first 25 years of his life to studies, to ascertain, assess and assimilate values (which sustain society) of dharma. The next 25 years have been set apart for the grihasthya ashrama, during which a man has been enjoined to preserve, enhance and observe mundane values rooted in wealth and desires towards the maintenance of the family. Vanaprastha and sanyasa and are both renunciation-oriented ashramas. Both eventually lead a man towards the path of salvation. In the vanaprastha ashrama, the individual, after giving up family attachment in all respects, becomes active outside the pale of family.

The four stages are discussed in detail below.

Stage	Age	Description
Brahmacharya	Till Age 24	This is the stage of student life.
Grihastha	Ages 24-48	This is the stage of household life.
Vanaprastha	Ages 48-72	This is the stage of renounced life.
Sannyasa	Ages 72 and above	This is the stage of renunciation.

Let us discuss these four stages in detail.

I. Brahmacharya Ashrama

The first stage in the life of a Hindu is *Brahmacharya Ashrama* or the student life. It starts with a ceremony called the *Upanayana* or the initiation ceremony. Life prior to the initiation is undisciplined and unregulated and without a purpose. The initiation ceremony brings about discipline and self-control into the life of the individual. The age of initiation differs from one varna to another. While it is eight years for the Brahmins, it is ten years for the Kshatriyas and twelve years for the Vaishyas. The Shudra child is not at all initiated into the first stage as he was traditionally not allowed to have education.

During this stage, an individual is expected to be devoted to learning and has to stay away from *Artha* and *Kama*. In the ancient times, the child had to go and stay with his Guru (teacher) in the Gurukul (teacher's house/ashram) and learn the Vedas during this stage of life. In modern times, this can be equated with the acquisition of knowledge through school and college education. The *Brahmacharya* (young student) is expected to observe total celibacy till his marriage. It is interesting to know that no education was formally prescribed for the young girls.

II. Grihastha Ashrama

After completing the first stage of his life, a Hindu individual enters the second stage, i.e., the *Grihastha ashrama* or the life of a married man. This phase of life starts with the marriage ceremony. The aim of marriage, according to the Hindu sages, was Dharma, *Praja* (progeny) and *Rati* (sex). Biological gratification is one of the ends of marriage, but the last place assigned to it indicates that it should not be the guiding rule of life. Marriage is more of a social obligation as its main purpose is the performance of Dharma and the perpetuation of the family.

As a householder, a Hindu is expected to perform the *Pancha Maha Yagnas* (five great sacrifices). These sacrifices are as follows:

- (i) The *Brahma yagna*
- (ii) The *Pitri yagna*
- (iii) The *Bhuta yagna*
- (iv) The *Deva yagna*
- (v) The *Athiti or Nara yagna*

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Brahma yagna is performed by chanting the Vedas daily at home. *Pitri yagna* is performed by offering *Shraddha* to ancestors. *Bhuta yagna* is accomplished by offering food to the *Bhuta*. *Deva yagna* is done by burning oblations to the Gods. *Nri yagna* is performed by receiving and entertaining guests. The important duties of a householder are reproduction, acquisition of wealth, to educate the children, to help other members of society, to fulfil his own desires within the four corners of Dharma, etc. Besides these, he is also required to repay all the *Rinas* (debts), which he does by performing the *yagnas* (sacrifices).

Grihastha ashrama is considered to be the most important *ashrama* because the basic trilogy of Dharma, *Artha* and *Kama* are to be put into action in this ashrama. All the remaining three ashramas acquire totality through this ashrama. Manu is of the view that this ashrama is full of bliss and blessings.

III. Vanaprastha Ashrama

This ashrama is the third stage of life and prepares the Hindu individual for ultimate retirement. The householder hands over the responsibility of the family to his grown-up children and goes and resides in a nearby forest. He devotes his time to religious pursuits and his family links get weakened even though his wife is allowed to go with him to the forest. However, sexual relationship between them is completely prohibited. It is important to remember that a person in this ashrama is still not totally detached from his worldly life.

IV. Sanyasa Ashrama

The last stage of a Hindu's life requires him to adopt *sanyasa* and to completely detach himself from this world. He is required to devote his entire time towards meditation and try to achieve *Moksha*. Kautilya said that an individual who enters this stage of life without financially securing his family deserves to be punished. Significantly, the *Gita* does not subscribe to the view that *Moksha* can only be achieved by renunciation of the world. Rather, it believes that the *Karmayogi* (man of action) is also a *sanyasi* (one who renounces the world) and he does not need to formally adopt *Sanyasa* to get *Moksha*.

Contemporary Society

In contemporary Indian society, the *Ashrama* system seems to have lost its relevance. Modern education cannot be imparted through the traditional Gurukul system. It is impossible for a Guru and his few disciples to impart modern education to a large multitude of students in highly specialized subjects. Under the impact of sensate culture, and the strains of modern society, the student cannot be expected to be like the one contemplated in the *Ashrama* scheme of life. The modern student is more volatile and less disciplined than the traditional *Brahmachari*.

Under the *Ashrama* system, the Hindu householder is advised to treat *Artha* and *Kama* as means and not as ends. However, in the present society man cannot but view *Artha* and *Kama* as his ultimate goals of life. Besides, the meaning of Dharma has also undergone tremendous changes as compared to the ancient Indian society. Secularization of the people of this country has resulted in *Moksha* getting relegated to the background.

Thus, *Purusharthas* has changed in the contemporary society with *Artha* and *Kama* taking precedence over *Dharma* and *Moksha*. Modern man has only two ashramas – *Brahmacharya* and *Grihastha*. He has forgotten the other two because he remains active for a long period and carries on with his worldly affairs. It would be impractical to expect him to retire from life at such an early stage. In view of this, it can be said that the ashrama system has lost its relevance in contemporary society.

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1.3.3 Purushartha

In order to understand the psycho-moral basis of the ashramas it is advisable to look into the theory of the Purusharthas, which concern themselves with the understanding, justification, management and conduct of affairs of the individual's life in relation to the group, in and through the ashramas. According to Hindu philosophy, the theory of Purushartha determines the values and a measuring-rod according to which human actions are to be performed or to be avoided.

Literally speaking, Purushartha means those actions which are proper and correct. The goal of life of a Hindu is determined by the doctrine of Purushartha. It also decides the course of life of man and lays down norms and values for the behaviour patterns. Purushartha means 'Purusharthate Purushartha', which refers to the efforts made by the individual to achieve the aims, goals and ultimate values of life. The ultimate end of Hindu culture is to attain 'Moksha' or salvation and hence, man should behave in such a manner that this aim may be achieved. By Purushartha we mean the pursuance of those actions which lead to the fulfillment of socially approved values and goal.

According to the sociologist P.N. Prabhu, 'the theory of Purusharthas concern themselves with the understanding, justification, management and conduct of affairs of the individual's life in relation to the group in and through the Ashramas'. While sociologist Prof Kaniyalal Motilal Kapadia states, 'the theory of Purushartha thus seeks to co-ordinate material desires and spiritual life. It also tries to satisfy the sex of instinct in man his love of power and property, his thirst for an artistic and cultural life, his hunger for reunion with paramatman. It comprehends life as a whole, its hopes and aspirations, its acquisitions and enjoyment, its sublimation and spiritualization.'

There are four Purusharthas or aims of life namely *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. The Purusharthas are regarded as the psycho-moral basis of the ashrama theory because, on the one hand, the individual receives psychological training through the ashramas regarding the use and management of the Purusharthas; while on the other hand, in actual practice, the individual has to deal with the society in accordance with these lessons. It is clear that Purushartha, according to Hindu Sastras, is the basis of Human life and it is to be regarded as basis on which the life of a man rotates. It is an amalgam of this worldliness. It coordinates the activities of a man for the realization of spirituality as well as for the maintenance of day to day life. The theory of Purushartha thus covers the total life of man. It finds concrete expression through the Ashrama system.

Let us now discuss the four Purusharthas in detail.

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Dharma

The word Dharma is derived from the Sanskrit word *Dhri*, which means to hold together, to preserve. Although normal fulfillment of man's acquisitive and emotional urges is essential and desirable, unrestrained satisfaction of such urges is undesirable and dangerous. Therefore, these activities of man should be kept under control. Dharma controls these activities of man by defining the proper quantum, place and season for the right functioning of *Artha* and *Kama* keeping *Moksha* in view.

The social implications and meaning of Dharma as a principle for maintaining the stability of society is brought out by Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata. While advising Arjuna as to what is Dharma, he explains that 'Dharma is created for the well-being of all creation. All that is free from doing harm to any created being is certainly Dharma. For indeed, Dharma is created to keep all creation free from any harm.' He further explains that, 'Dharma is so called because it protects all; Dharma preserves all that is created. Dharma then is surely that principle, which is capable of preserving the Universe.'

Artha

Artha refers to the acquisitive instinct in man and signifies his acquisitions such as wealth and power. It is regarded as one of the goals of man because he cannot conduct his life in its absence. Accordingly, the pursuit of wealth and power is not only viewed as necessary but also as a legitimate and desirable activity of man. Thus, the Hindu social thinkers have recognized the fact that spirituality in a man can be revealed only when he is economically and emotionally satisfied or content.

Kama

Kama refers to the instinctive and emotional life of man and provides for the satisfaction of his sex desires and aesthetic urges. Aesthetic nature in man expresses itself through the creation and appreciation of fine and sublime things. Man is creative by nature and a free expression of his creative urges is considered essential for the normal development of his personality. Life finds its greatest joy in this act of creation.

Similarly, suppression of man's emotion is not considered proper for the development of man. Hindu thinkers have recognized *Kama* as one of the goals of man. Therefore, *Kama*, even at its lowest expression i.e., sex, has been regarded as one of the aims of Hindu marriage.

Dharma, *Artha* and *Kama* refer to the moral, material and biological resources, respectively, available to man. Together they are known as *Tribharga* (three classes of needs) and, in the opinion of Manu, good humanity is dependent upon the harmonious coordination between the three.

Of these three, *Artha* and *Kama* refer to man's earthly possessions, while Dharma stands on a higher level. At its lowest level of manifestation, *Kama* is understood to be pure sex drive and is considered to be one of the six enemies of a human being. However, it is also true that a human being cannot conduct his life without these two goals of life because *Artha* provides the material needs of life and *Kama* helps in propagation of the species. Therefore, it is required that *Artha*

and *Kama* is pursued in correct quality and quantity at the right place and time in accordance with Dharma. By attending to this Dharma, a person is able to live a proper life even though it may have lived in terms of *Artha* and *Kama*.

Moksha

Moksha is salvation and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It also implies self-realization of one's identity. Hindu theology is largely concerned with the issue of achievement of *Moksha*. The *Upanishads* has likened this self-realization to the process of rivers joining the sea. Sound knowledge, good deeds and love and devotion towards God are the ways through which *Moksha* can be achieved.

Thus, the *Purusharthas* are value themes and goals of life, which are arranged in a hierarchical order to be pursued by all individuals and groups. They are concerned with the individual as well as the group. They enunciate and justify the kinds of relation between the individual and the group. They define the just relations between the activities of the individual and the group and they also state explicitly the improper relations, which should be avoided by the individual and the group. The *Purusharthas*, therefore, control both the individual and the group.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the *Purusharthas* or the four goals of man.
2. Define *Artha*.
3. What is *Moksha*?
4. Name the four factors that influence a man's life and actions, as per Hinduism.
5. What is the first stage in the life of a Hindu?

1.4 KARMA

The word Karma has been derived from the Sanskrit word *kru*, which refers to various activities. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, you will find the first clear statement of the theory of Karma. The doctrine of Karma has influenced different phases and aspects of Indian life. Its strong influence pervades the Indian philosophy, literature and culture. Almost all aspects of Indian life have adopted the conception of Karma in some form or the other. Although Buddhism and Jainism oppose the Vedic conventions and traditions from many points of view and refuse to accept the supremacy of the Brahmins in the social set-up, yet they also recognize the supremacy of the doctrine of Karma in so far as the material aspect of life is concerned.

In the *Upanishads*, there is a clear statement of the doctrine of Karma. The *Upanishads* contain an account of the symposium of several philosophers on questions relating to metaphysical interests. For instance, to the question as to what happens to the soul after death, Yajna Valkya replies that man's further life is determined by his own actions, i.e., Karma. Good deeds bring good results and vice versa.

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In the Upanishads, it has also been stated that ‘as his conduct and behaviour, so does the self-become. He whose deeds have been good becomes good; he whose deeds have been evil becomes evil. By the holy deeds, he becomes holy; by sinful deeds, sinful.’ In view of this, it has been said that a person consists merely of desires. As his desire is, so is his will; as his will is, so is his deed; as his deed is, so is his evolution. The remedy against this cycle of deeds and birth lies in becoming completely free from desire. When man becomes free from desires, he becomes immortal and achieves Moksha. So long as the person remains committed to Karma, he must be born again.

It is believed that those who do good deeds would be born again as Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Those who do evil deeds would be born as Shudras or animals or even plants.

The Vedas start with the idea of immortality of the Atma (soul), though the body taken up by the soul is mortal and perishable. The Vedas also take the view that the soul of a person suffers or enjoys in the next birth according to his deeds in the present life. The doctrine of Karma is based on the following beliefs and assumptions:

- **Definite result and indestructibility of Karma:** Every human activity, be it physical, mental or ethical; entails a definite result. The results of Karma are indestructible and affect a person in his present life and also in the next life. The theory of Karma also stipulates that the result of one’s actions or deeds can also be transferred to others like his sons, grandsons, etc. On the basis of this, people sometimes blame the king for any calamity that affects the kingdom.
- **Necessity of rebirth:** Since every action has a definite result, man cannot escape the consequences of his own deeds. ‘As he sows, so he reaps’ is a universal law and the consequences of one’s deeds follow him even after his death. It is the results of one’s own deeds that force him to take birth again and again.
- **Belief in the immortality of the soul:** The doctrine operates on this belief and postulates that the soul takes rebirth again and again as it is immortal. The form of rebirth depends upon the person’s deeds.
- **Determination of the general conditions of life:** The law of Karma explains why sometimes persons who deserve all happiness and success in life due to their deeds in this life, face failures and unhappiness. Conversely, it also explains why the seemingly unworthy get all happiness and success. This is due to their deeds in their past life. When Yudhishtira was shocked to realize that a virtuous person like him was asked to go to hell after his death, Sage Brihaspati explained to him that after death a man’s virtuous and vicious Karma follow him and determine his fate.
- **Supremacy of Karma:** It is believed that Karma is supreme and is the force behind the cycle of birth and death. It has been said in the Mahabharata that ‘a creature is bound by deeds and is liberated by knowledge.’ Thus, liberation can be achieved only by putting an end to Karma. This can be achieved by getting rid of all desires.

The doctrine of Karma has been criticized on the ground of being extremely fatalistic and leading to inaction. The theory is also held responsible for the general backwardness of the country.

A great thinker like Dr Radhakrishnan was of the opinion that the theory of Karma is not fatalistic. Fatalism assumes the existence of a mysterious power that controls the destiny of men. He says that the doctrine of Karma never postulates the existence of such a mysterious power. Rather, the doctrine encourages men to do good deeds to reap the rewards in their next life. In fact, it views man as the maker of his own destiny by sheer dint of his good work.

Types and Theories of Karma

As you know, the literal meaning of Karma is action. Action has got 3 forms:

- The action that is latent (sukma), which is going to become an action. This is called **Sanchita Karma**.
- The action itself (sthula). This is called **Prarabdha Karma**.
- The consequence of the present action (in the form of an impression) on the future. This is called **Agami Karma**. The impact or effect of an action is also Karma, because every effect becomes a cause in itself.

To explain this through an example. The text that you are reading right now is an action that is manifesting now. This is Prarabdha Karma. Let us say, you wanted to read this text several days ago, which made you come to this page. The thought of wanting to read this page in the future is called Sanchita Karma. After reading this text, you may remember some things and you may totally forget some things. The things that you remember may propel another action in the future. This is Agami Karma.

1.5 SANSKAR

In Indian philosophy *Samskaras* or *Sanskaras* are mental impressions, recollections, or psychological imprints. The Sanskrit word Samskara has various context-driven meanings that broadly refer to “the putting together, accomplishing well, making perfect, a form of solemn recognition and getting ready” and “mental impression, recollection”. The first context is at the etymological foundation of *Sanskara*: rites of passage, while it is the second context, as a form of disposition, impression or behavioural inclination, that is at the etymological root of *Sanskara* word as a psychological concept in Indian philosophies.

In Hindu philosophies, samskaras are a basis for the development of karma theory. In Buddhism the Sanskrit term Samskara is used to describe ‘formations’. In Pali it is referred to as *SaEkhâra*. According to various schools of Indian philosophy, every action, intent or preparation by an individual, leaves a samskara (impression, impact, imprint) on a person’s mind. These impressions then remain in the subconscious as hidden expectations, circumstances or a subconscious sense of self-worth. Over time these *Sanskaras* manifest as subliminal impressions, tendencies, karmic impulses, habitual potencies or innate dispositions.

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In ancient Indian texts, the theory of Samskara explains how and why human beings remember things, and the effect those memories have on people's happiness, suffering and contentment. The concept of Samskara is also discussed as *Vasana* (also meaning impression, inclination of anything remaining unconsciously in the mind), particularly in the Vaicēcika school of Hinduism.

Let us discuss the concept of Sanskara in Hinduism briefly. Sanskara in Hinduism also refers to the diverse rites of passage that vary in number and details according to regional traditions. They range from the list of 40 sanskaras in the *Gautama Dharmasutra* from about the middle of 1st millennium BCE, to 16 sanskaras in the *Grhyasutra* texts from centuries later.

The Sanskaras rites of passage begins with birth, celebrates certain early steps in a baby's growth and his or her welcome into the world in the presence of friends and family, then various stages of life (Ashrama (stage)) such as first learning day, graduation from school, wedding and honeymoon, pregnancy, raising a family, as well as those related to final rites associated with cremation. The following is the list of 16 Sanskaras in Hinduism according to the Grhyasutra texts:

- 1. The wedding rituals, Vivaha:** Vivaha is the rite of passage and rituals associated with marriage.
- 2. Intent to have a child ritual, Garbhadhana:** Garbhadhana, also called *Garbhalambhanam*, literally means attaining the wealth of the womb. It is a private rite of passage, marking the intent of a couple to have a child. It is a ceremony performed before conception and impregnation.
- 3. Quickening the foetus rite, Pumsavana:** Pumsavana is a ritual conducted when the pregnancy begins to show, typically in or after the third month of pregnancy and usually before the foetus starts moving in the womb. The ceremony celebrates the rite of passage of the developing foetus, marking the stage where the baby begins to kick as a milestone in a baby's development.
- 4. Parting hair and baby shower, Simantonnayana:** The significance of the ritual is to wish a healthy development of the baby and safe delivery to the mother.
- 5. Childbirth ceremony, Jatakarman:** Jatakarman is a rite of passage that celebrates the birth of the baby. It is the first post-natal rite of passage of the new born baby.
- 6. Naming the baby ritual, Namakarana:** Namakarana is usually done on the eleventh or twelfth day after birth, and sometimes the first new moon or full moon day after the 10th day of birth.
- 7. Baby's first outing, Nishkramana:** Nishkramana is the rite of passage where the parents take the baby outside the home and the baby formally meets the world for the first time.
- 8. Baby's first solid food, Annaprashana:** This rite of passage marks the first time a baby eats solid food, typically containing cooked rice.

9. **Baby's first haircut, Chudakarana:** Also known as mundan sanskar, it is the rite of passage that marks the child's first haircut, typically the shaving of the head.
10. **Baby's earlobe piercing rite, Karnavedha:** This is a minor rite of passage that is not mentioned in most Gryhasutras.
11. **Child's commencement to knowledge, Vidyarambha:** Vidyarambha is a ritual that celebrates as a milestone, the child's formal attempt to learn means of knowledge.
12. **Child's entrance into school, Upanayana:** Upanayana is a rite of passage symbolizes the leading or drawing towards the self of a child, in a school, by a teacher. In the ceremony, a Guru (teacher) accepts and draws a child towards knowledge and initiates the second birth that is of the young mind and spirit.
13. **Vedarambha:** Praishartha or Vedarambha is the rite of passage that marked the start of learning the Vedas and Upanishads in a school.
14. **Keshanta and Ritusuddhi:** Keshanta is a rite of passage associated with the first shave of a youth's facial hair. It is typically observed about age sixteen, and the emerging beard and moustache were shaved.
15. **Graduation ceremony, Samavartana, Samadhi, Mahasamadhi:** Samavartana is the ceremony associated with the end of formal education and the Brahmacharya asrama of life.
16. **Cremation ritual, Antyeshhti:** Antyesti, sometimes referred to as *Antima Samskaram* or *Antya-kriya* are the rituals associated with funeral.

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Check Your Progress

6. Why is the doctrine of Karma criticized?
7. What is fatalism?

1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The *Purusharthas* or the four goals of man are Dharma, *Artha*, Kama and *Moksha*.
2. *Artha* refers to the acquisitive instinct in man and signifies his acquisitions such as wealth and power. It is regarded as one of the goals of man because he cannot conduct his life in its absence.
3. *Moksha* is salvation and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It also implies self-realization of one's identity.
4. The four factors that influence a man's life and actions, as per Hinduism are *Desa* (place, region), *Kala* (time), *Shrama* (effort) and *Guna* (natural qualities).

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5. The first stage in the life of a Hindu is *Brahmacharya Ashrama* or the student life.
6. The doctrine of Karma has been criticized on the grounds of being extremely fatalistic and leading to inaction.
7. Fatalism assumes the existence of a mysterious power that controls the destiny of men.

1.7 SUMMARY

- Hinduism is not one religion but a combination or collection of various sects (a sect refers to a group with distinctive religious, philosophical or political beliefs).
- It has no central doctrinal authority and many practising Hindus do not claim to belong to any particular denomination or sect.
- However, academicians categorize contemporary Hinduism into four major denominations, which are as follows:
 - o Vaishnavism
 - o Shaivism
 - o Shaktism
 - o Smartism
- According to historians like Romila Thapar, the origin of the word 'Hindu' is geographical and is related to those residing in the Indian sub-continent.
- The Indus river was called Hindu by the Persians and the Greeks. The Arabs called it the Al-Hind. Thus, the inhabitants around the Hindu or Al-Hind were known as the Hindus.
- The term was first used to connote all those who lived in that geographical area but were not Muslims.
- The Western conception of what Hinduism is has been defined by the *Smarta* view. Many Hindus, who may not understand or follow Advaita philosophy invariably, follow the *Shanmata* belief of worshiping many forms of God.
- One commentator, noting the influence of the *Smarta* tradition, has remarked that although many Hindus may not strictly identify themselves as *Smartas* but, by adhering to Advaita Vedanta as a foundation for non-sectarianism, are indirect followers of it.
- Other denominations like *Ganapatya* (the cult of Ganesha) and *Saura* (Sun worship) are not so widespread.
- Further, there are movements that are not easily placed in any of the above categories, such as Swami Dayananda Saraswati's Arya Samaj, which rejects image worship and veneration of multiple deities. It focuses on the Vedas and the Vedic fire sacrifices (*Yajna*).

- Hinduism or the Hindu religion does not have a unified system of belief encoded in a declaration of faith but is rather an umbrella term comprising the plurality of religious phenomena originating from and based on the Vedic traditions.
- Hinduism refers to a religious mainstream, which evolved organically and spread over a large territory marked by significant ethnic and cultural diversity.
- The Hindu philosophy or view of life is that man is always full of desires (kama). To get rid of desires and get salvation (Moksha) one has to do good deeds (Karma) during his lifetime.
- The Hindu philosophy also believes in certain theological ideas like *Papa* (sin), *Punya* (merit), *Punarjanma* (rebirth), etc. which are considered to be a basic tenet of Hinduism.
- The idea of Karma makes a Hindu realize that whatever he has got in this life is the result of his deeds in his previous life.
- A Hindu also realizes that he can get Moksha (salvation) from the cycle of birth and death and his Atma (soul) can be set free if he leads a life of morality.
- There are different types of hierarchies existing in Hinduism. The Hindus are placed at different positions in the following hierarchies: varna and caste hierarchy.
- Hierarchy based on individual qualities (*guna*) with the highest and most virtuous being *sattva*, i.e., brightness and virtue associated with sages and Brahmins.
- The next category being *rajas*, i.e., commitment to action and valour as seen in kings and Kshatriyas and the lowest level being *tamas*, i.e., people associated with profane activities and general dullness.
- Hierarchy on the basis of values assigned to life goals like kama (sexual desire and sensory pleasure-seeking); *artha* (wealth acquisition); Dharma (discharge of moral obligations) and Moksha (pursuit of salvation from the cycle of birth and death).
- An important feature of Hinduism is that it is not a uniform monolithic religion. Rather, it is a combination of numerous religious sects and groups with different sets of beliefs.
- Varna is derived from the Sanskrit word *Vri*, which means choice or to choose. Literally, it means colour.
- Thus, varna refers to the right to choose one's occupation and also has a skin colour connotation with each varna being associated with a colour.
- The Aryans used the expression *Aryavarna* for the first time in the Rig Veda to signify a distinction between themselves and their non-Aryan enemies, the *Dasavarna*.
- The Varna *Vyavastha* is an integral part of the traditional Hindu social organization as it holds society together through a careful division of labour. This system lent order and efficiency to the society and recognized the qualities of the four different groups.

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- In Hindu social organization, *varna* is only the reference category: it is not a functioning unit of social structure, and only refers broadly to the ascribed status of different *jatis*. It is also a method of classification (Dube, 1990).
- According to the *Rig Veda*, the oldest scripture, the words Rajanya, Vaishya and Shudra are present only in the *Purusasukta*. The four castes can be classified into Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.
- *Varna* and *jati* (caste) may appear synonymous but are two separate categories. The inter-changeability of these terms has created confusion in the sociological analysis of the institution of caste.
- However, the origin of castes has no semblance to the origin of *varnas*, though in the process of development of castes, they came to be associated with *varnas*.
- *Varna* may be described as an abstract classification of people on the basis of a mythical origin; *jati*, on the other hand, is a concrete grouping based on ritual and occupational criteria.
- The *Purusharthas* or the goals of man are four, i.e., Dharma, *Artha*, Kama and *Moksha*.
- The *Purusharthas* are regarded as the psycho-moral basis of the ashrama theory because, on the one hand, the individual receives psychological training through the ashramas regarding the use and management of the *Purusharthas*; while on the other hand, in actual practice, the individual has to deal with the society in accordance with these lessons.
- *Artha* refers to the acquisitive instinct in man and signifies his acquisitions such as wealth and power.
- *Kama* refers to the instinctive and emotional life of man and provides for the satisfaction of his sex desires and aesthetic urges.
- Dharma, *Artha* and *Kama* refer to the moral, material and biological resources, respectively, available to man. Together they are known as *Tribharga* (three classes of needs) and, in the opinion of Manu, good humanity is dependent upon the harmonious coordination between the three.
- *Moksha* is salvation and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It also implies self-realization of one's identity.
- The ideas embodied in the *Purusharthas* find proper expression in the *Varna-Ashrama Vyavastha* (scheme of *varna* and *ashrama*).
- In Hinduism, a man has been considered as a social animal whose life and actions are said to be influenced by the following four factors:
 - *Desa* (place, region)
 - *Kala* (time)
 - *Shrama* (effort)
 - *Guna* (natural qualities)

- The first stage in the life of a Hindu is *Brahmacharya Ashrama* or the student life. It starts with a ceremony called the *Upanayana* or the initiation ceremony.
- After completing the first stage of his life, a Hindu individual enters the second stage, i.e., the *Grihastha ashrama* or the life of a married man.
- This ashrama is the third stage of life and prepares the Hindu individual for ultimate retirement. The householder hands over the responsibility of the family to his grown-up children and goes and resides in a nearby forest.
- The last stage of a Hindu's life requires him to adopt *sanyasa* and to completely detach himself from this world. He is required to devote his entire time towards meditation and try to achieve *Moksha*.
- In contemporary Indian society, the *Ashrama* system seems to have lost its relevance. Modern education cannot be imparted through the traditional Gurukul system.
- *Purusharthas* has changed in the contemporary society with *Artha* and *Kama* taking precedence over *Dharma* and *Moksha*.
- The word *Karma* has been derived from the Sanskrit word *kru*, which refers to various activities. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, you will find the first clear statement of the theory of *Karma*.
- It is believed that *Karma* is supreme and is the force behind the cycle of birth and death. It has been said in the *Mahabharata* that 'a creature is bound by deeds and is liberated by knowledge.'

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1.8 KEY TERMS

- **Religion:** It is the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
- **Deity:** It refers to a god or goddess (in a polytheistic religion).
- **The Vedas:** These are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism.
- **Cultural Diversity:** It refers to the existence of a variety of cultural or ethnic groups within a society.
- **Epic:** It is a long poem, typically one derived from ancient oral tradition, narrating the deeds and adventures of heroic or legendary figures or the past history of a nation.
- **Theology:** It is the study of the nature of God and religious belief.
- **Caste:** It refers to each of the hereditary classes of Hindu society, distinguished by relative degrees of ritual purity or pollution and of social status.

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- **Monolithic:** It means something that is (of an organization or system) large, powerful, indivisible, and slow to change.
- **Cult:** It refers to a system of religious veneration and devotion directed towards a particular figure or object.
- **Orthodox:** It means following or conforming to the traditional or generally accepted rules or beliefs of a religion, philosophy, or practice.
- **The Upanishads:** These are a part of the Vedas and are ancient Sanskrit texts that contain some of the central philosophical concepts and ideas of Hinduism, some of which are shared with religious traditions like Buddhism and Jainism.
- **Gurukul:** A gurukula or gurukulam was a type of education system in ancient India with shishya ('students' or 'disciples') living near or with the guru, in the same house.
- **Secularization:** It refers to the disassociation or separation from religious or spiritual concerns.

1.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is Hinduism? Where did it originate from?
2. Name the four major categories of Hinduism.
3. Write a short note on idol worship in Hinduism.
4. What does *Kama* refer to?
5. Briefly describe *Brahmacharya Ashrama*.
6. Name the *Pancha Maha Yagnas* that a Hindu is expected to perform.
7. What is Sankar in Hinduism?
8. Write a short note on the 16 rites of passage in *Sanskara*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Write a descriptive note on the Hindu philosophy or view of life.
2. Describe the theory of the *Purusharthas*. Elucidate each goal in detail.
3. Under the *ashrama* scheme of life, what are the four stages of the life span of an individual? Describe any two in detail.
4. Describe *Varna Vyavastha* in detail.
5. Differentiate between *Varna* and *Jati*.
6. What is Karma? Explain in detail.

1.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 BASIC INSTITUTIONS IN INDIAN SOCIETY

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Caste
 - 2.2.1 Theories of Caste
 - 2.2.2 Mobility in the Caste System
- 2.3 Class
- 2.4 Family
- 2.5 Marriage
 - 2.5.1 Changes in Marriage Structure
- 2.6 Kinship
- 2.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Key Terms
- 2.10 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.11 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will discuss the basic institutions of Indian society such as class, caste, marriage, kinship and family.

Class consciousness emerged in India during the British Rule as they introduced modern education, civil services, legal system, means of transportation, etc. in India. These new instrumentalities changed the mindset of the people and they started looking beyond caste. Post-independence, the Government's developmental initiatives accelerated the process of decline of the caste system. With industrialization around the country, intermingling among people grew and they aspired to achieve a higher social status. The class system of social stratification allowed people to have vertical mobility and the lower caste people, by sheer dint of their hard work and competence, could manage to climb up the class ladder. In today's era, though caste is still a strong factor in our society, class has been accepted as an alternative system of social stratification in India.

Indian caste society has undergone tremendous transformation in modern days and is still undergoing adaptive changes. M.N. Srinivas quite aptly referred to the changes brought about in independent India. In independent India, the provision of Constitutional safeguards to the backward sections of the population, especially the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, has given a new lease of life to caste. Many factors have been responsible for the transformation in caste system.

Marriage and family are very old institutions and are universally prevalent. In Hinduism, there are certain rules and regulations which govern the married and the family life (discussed in detail in this unit). In Indian society, marriage is considered

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not only an institution necessary for procreating but also essential for an ideal household.

According to P. H. Prabhu, Hindu marriage is a *Sanskara*, and the relations between the marrying parties are of sacramental character and not a contractual nature.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Assess the structural and functional changes in the caste system
- Discuss mobility in the caste system
- Define class
- Explain the concept of marriage and changes in marriage structure
- Analyse the characteristics and functions of a family
- Assess the types and importance of kinship

2.2 CASTE

The word caste has been defined from the Portuguese word *Casta*, which means race, breed or kind. Risley defines caste as ‘a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling and is regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous community’.

The caste system in India has been studied from the following three different perspectives:

- **Indological:** The Indologists have viewed caste from the scriptural point of view and believe that the ancient Hindu scriptures have given birth to the concept of caste. They maintain that the varnas have originated from Brahma—the Virat Purusha (the Great Man)—and castes are units within the varna system, which have developed as a result of hypergamy and hypogamy. The rituals to be performed by the four varnas are status bound and laid down in the Brahmanas (800 BC), while the customs and laws to be followed by each caste are laid down in the Smritis (100–200 BC).

The Brahmins were given the pre-eminent position in the society as it was believed that they had the divine right to interpret law and religion. The Indologists believe that the caste system would continue to exist as it was divinely ordained and cannot be dismantled by human beings.

- **Social-anthropological:** The social anthropologists have studied caste from the cultural point of view. The organizational and structural approaches of Hutton consider caste as a unique system found in India alone. The institutional approach of Kroeber and Risley does not view the caste system

as relevant only to India. They find it in ancient Egypt, medieval Europe and present Southern United States. The relational approach finds caste situations in Army, Business, Factory, etc. It states that the presence/absence of caste in a society depends upon the absence/presence of mobility in groups. If mobility is normal, there is no caste system and vice versa.

- **Sociological:** Sociologists have viewed caste from the stratificational point of view. They study caste in terms of social stratification in a society. They study it as a phenomenon of social inequality. According to them, society has certain structural aspects and it distributes its members in social positions. The interaction is the basis of social structures and types of interactions along with associated norms categorize social structures.

2.2.1 Theories of Caste

Though a number of theories explaining the origin of caste in India have been propounded, no one of them has managed to explain it properly. While Herbert Risley, a British ethnographer, explains the origin of caste with reference to racial differences, Abbe Dubois, author of *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, traces the origin of caste to the role played by the Brahmins. Some such theories are as follows:

- **Traditional theory:** Various scholars have described Hindu society as a supernatural-centred society. In it, people are attracted to abstract truths and try to find its reality through mysticism. There is no effort to analyse these things scientifically. These scholars have observed, and rightly so, that the Hindus try to explain every phenomenon in terms of God and religion. Even the origin of the institution of caste is sought to be explained in terms of religion by relating it to the body of Brahma.

The traditional theory believes that the Indian caste system has been divinely ordained. While the sociological theory views caste system as an artificially created system of stratification in which the role and status of an individual is determined by birth (ascriptive status), the traditional theory views it as a natural system of stratification. The traditional theory has two versions—mythical and metaphysical.

The mythical version treats the four varnas as the four castes and it believes that the four emerged from different parts of Brahma's body. This theory finds the caste system to be a completely normal and natural institution of social functions. It believes that membership of an individual in a caste is determined by the doctrines of karma and dharma. According to the doctrine of karma (actions), a man is born in a particular caste due to his actions in his previous incarnation. Srinivas (1952) summarizes the doctrine of Karma as the birth of a man in a particular caste. It is certainly not an accident. He was born in that caste because he deserved to be born there.

The doctrine of Dharma (religious duty) propounds that a person who accepts the caste system and regulates his life according to the norms of his particular caste, is living by his Dharma. On the other hand, one who questions a norm

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governing his caste is violating dharma. While the former is rewarded, the latter invites punishment. This reward and punishment would befall both in this life and in the next incarnation. Thus, a person who lives according to his dharma will be born in a high caste in his next life whereas somebody who violates his dharma would be born in a low caste.

The metaphysical version explains the function, hierarchy and other characteristics of caste. Each caste has a separate function, which is determined by the nature and qualities of the members of that caste. The Hindus believe that an individual's nature consists of two sets of qualities—*gotrika* and *namika*. The *gotrika* (lineage) qualities are the hereditary qualities, which an individual inherits from his *gotra* and shares with the members of his family. The *namika* (individual) qualities, on the other hand, are specific individual qualities that one does not share with any other member of his family. Thus, while the *namika* qualities differentiate an individual from others, the *gotrika* qualities identify him with a particular group. The *gotrika* qualities explain the characteristic of hereditary membership of the caste system.

Another characteristic of the caste system is fixed occupation. It is explained by the close connection between nature (*swabhav*) and occupation. The nature of a man determines his occupation and since people of a particular group have the same *gotrika* qualities, they tend to do the same kind of occupation. Thus, a particular caste gets limited to a particular occupation.

The traditional theory identifies two kinds of functions—ordinary and extraordinary. While ordinary functions require no specialized skills, extraordinary functions do. It further divides extraordinary functions into three types—techno-economic, politico-legal and cultural-religious. The traditional theory accords the highest status to cultural-religious functions. Politico-legal and techno-economic functions are placed after it. The lowest status is accorded to the ordinary functions. The Brahmins get the highest status in caste society because they discharge the cultural-religious functions. Kshatriyas follow them by performing politico-legal functions. Vaishyas are placed at the third place as they are engaged in techno-economic functions. The Shudras are placed at the bottom of the four-fold system because they perform the ordinary functions.

The traditional theory of the origin of caste has been rejected by many scholars because it considers caste as a natural phenomenon and it considers the four varnas as the four castes. If we accept this view, then it would mean that the varna and not the caste is the unit of the caste system. Refuting this view, M. N. Srinivas has stated that the idea of caste as the four-fold division of society is a gross oversimplification of facts. He says that the real unit of the caste system is not the varna but the *jati*, which is a very small endogamous group, practicing a traditional occupation and enjoying cultural and ritual autonomy.

- **Brahmanical theory:** Abbe Dubois feels that the caste system originated and developed in India due to the Brahmins. His view is that the caste system was designed by the Brahmins for the Brahmins. They devised

this system to place various restrictions (food, marriage, etc.) on non-Brahmins so that they can protect their purity, which is necessary to perpetuate their monopoly in matters of religious and sacred functions.

G. S. Ghurye also believed in the view professed by Abbe Dubois. He supports the Brahmanical theory. He maintains that the various factors that characterize caste society were the result of the efforts of the Brahmins to exclude the Shudras from religious and social communion with them. He concludes that caste in India is a Brahmanic child of the Indo-Aryan culture of North India and was thereafter transferred to other parts of the country.

- **Racial theory:** Herbert Riskey is the main proponent of this theory and finds support from scholars like Ghurye, Majumdar and Westermarck. According to this theory, the clash of cultures and the contact of races crystallized castes in India. This theory believes that the perceived superiority of the Aryans vis-à-vis the aboriginals and the social intercourse between the two groups laid the foundation for the caste system. Marriages between the Aryans and the aboriginals resulted in the birth of half-breeds and they were called the *chandals* who had to be confined to the lowest position in society. Riskey has referred to six processes in the formation of castes:
 - **Change in traditional occupation:** Adoption of a new occupation often resulted in the creation of a distinct caste.
 - **Migration:** Migration of a caste group to a new place often resulted in development of a distinct caste.
 - **Change in customs:** Adoption of new customs and practices led to the growth of a new caste.
 - **Preservation of old traditions:** Preservation of traditional customs by a group led to their moving away from those who had adopted new customs and resulted in growth of a new caste.
 - **Hinduization:** Sometimes a tribe enters the fold of Hinduism by adopting Hindu customs and beliefs and this results in the creation of a new caste that is distinct from the other caste Hindus.
 - **Role of religious enthusiasts:** Preaching of his own doctrines by a religious leader often resulted in the formation of a new religious sect, which gradually became a new caste.

Riskey's racial theory is supported by other scholars. According to Ghurye, the Aryans tried to show off their superiority because they were fairer in colour in comparison to the natives. Westermarck observes that India was inhabited by the dark people before the Aryans came and took control. The Aryans had bitter contempt for the original inhabitants of India and drew sharp distinctions between themselves and the latter. These distinctions gave rise to the caste system.

Acceptance of Riskey's racial theory would give rise to the question as to why then the caste system should be confined to India. Riskey himself believes that the caste system exists in other countries too. The discrimination on the

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basis of skin colour in countries like South Africa, South America, Canada, etc. has been put forward as a kind of caste discrimination.

- **Occupational theory:** Nesfield is the proponent of this theory and is ably supported by Ibbetson. This theory holds that caste has nothing to do with race or religion and its origin is due to occupations. Nesfield maintains that occupations were passed on hereditarily across generations and practising the same occupation resulted in the creation of occupational guilds. These guilds gradually came to be known as castes. The hierarchy in the caste system was due to the feeling of superiority or inferiority of occupations. Answering a question as to how the Brahmins got the highest status in this hierarchy, Nesfield explained that Brahmins had specialization in the occupation of sacrifices, hymns and rituals, which were of the greatest importance for the people of the society. Thus, the Brahmins acquired the highest position in the caste system.

Ibbetson, supporting Nesfield, says that tribes developed as occupational guilds and came to function on religious lines. Eventually, these tribes developed as castes in the process of social evolution.

Many scholars have criticized the occupational theory of Nesfield and Ibbetson. D. N. Majumdar has rejected the idea of hierarchy of castes in terms of the superiority or inferiority of occupations. He maintains that the status of castes does not depend upon the occupation but upon the degree of purity of blood and the extent of isolation maintained by the groups. Hutton too believes that the occupational theory does not explain the social status of various agricultural castes. The same agricultural caste has a higher status in North India than in South India. The occupational theory fails to explain this.

Characteristics of the Indian Caste System

According to Dr G. S. Ghurye, any attempt to define caste 'is bound to fail because of the complexity of the phenomenon.' He has outlined the following characteristics of the Indian caste society:

- Segmental division of society
- Hierarchy of castes
- Restrictions on commensality and social intercourse
- Differential civil and religious privileges and disabilities
- Restrictions on occupational choice
- Restrictions on marriage

Changing Nature of Caste

Caste has never been static. The caste system has been changing continuously and has always undergone adaptive changes. Though the pace of change might have been slow earlier, in the post-independence period the changes have occurred rapidly. The changes can be mainly categorized as follows:

- **Structural changes:** The following are some of the major structural changes in the caste system:
 - **Decline in the supremacy of the Brahmins:** Due to the forces of modernization and rapid economic development, Brahmins have lost their dominance of yore.
 - **Dilution of caste hierarchy:** Factors like migration to urban areas, diversification of jobs, etc. have reduced the gaps between different castes and there is greater intercourse amongst members of various castes.
 - **Socio-economic empowerment of Dalits and Harijans:** The Government's policy of affirmative action in case of the oppressed castes has led to an upwards movement of their social status.
- **Functional changes:** The functional changes in the caste system are as follows:
 - **Birth no longer the sole determinant of status:** Unlike earlier, birth is no longer the sole factor determining social status. Wealth, education, occupation, etc. have become the determinants of status and caste as an ascriber of status has been relegated to the background.
 - **Change due to occupational diversity:** Occupation is no longer hereditarily determined. The so-called high-status occupations are accessible to members of all castes. On the other hand, members of high castes have also taken to manual work to earn a decent and dignified living.
 - **Dilution of restrictions on marriage:** The Special Marriages Act, 1954 and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 have removed the restrictions on inter-caste marriages by legalizing them. Caste endogamy is no more the basis of choosing a mate.
 - **Change in commensality:** Restrictions on food intake by members of various castes have been virtually removed.
 - **Lifestyle changes:** Due to westernization and modernization, the sharp differences in lifestyle of various caste members have come down. A common lifestyle is emerging, which breaks the caste barriers.
 - **Educational restrictions removed:** Education is no more the preserve of the high caste people. Government policies have resulted in providing access to education to all citizens. The amendment of the Constitution to make the right to education a fundamental right is going to improve the situation further.
 - **Changes in political system:** Democracy and universal adult franchise have ensured that every citizen of this country exercise political power through the ballot. Reservation of seats for members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes to contest elections has also empowered them politically.

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- **Attitudinal changes:** The attitudinal changes in the caste system are as follows:
 - **Decline of the concept of ascriptive status:** The processes of modernization, westernization, industrialization, etc. have seriously eroded the hold of the caste system. People do not accept the notion of ascriptive status anymore as it is determined only by birth. Status is now achieved through ability, efficiency, wealth, political power, etc.
 - **Philosophical basis of caste system has become unacceptable:** The belief of people that caste system is divinely ordained has undergone change. They have no faith on the philosophical basis of the caste system because they have stopped accepting the doctrine of karma.

Factors Responsible for the Changes in the Caste System

The main factors responsible for the changes in the caste system are enumerated as follows:

- **Industrialization:** The process of industrialization has affected the caste structure to a remarkable extent. Caste system functions well in an agrarian economy because in such an economy there is interdependence among the various castes for economic reasons. For example, the cultivator has to avail the services of the carpenter and the weaver and the latter are dependent on the cultivator for food grains. Thus, the village economy functions as a self-sufficient unit.

The growth of industrial economy has weakened this bond of interdependence among the castes. Industrialization has provided new sources of livelihood to people and made occupational mobility possible. Due to this mobility, different castes come together to work at one place. For example, in a factory a Brahmin works alongside a Shudra and cannot avoid the latter's touch or shadow.
- **Urbanization:** Industrialization has resulted in the process of urbanization. New townships have emerged around factories and the rural people migrate to these townships to avail better employment opportunities. Development of modern towns and cities has eroded the hold of caste taboos and restrictions by forcing people to intermingle in their daily lives. Eating out in restaurants where the caste of the cook or the person sitting on the next table is not known, killed all notions of purity and pollution.
- **Modern means of transport and communication:** Modern means of transportation have increased mobility of the people and thereby put an end to the geographical isolation, which was a favourable condition for the creation and continuation of the caste system in India. Moreover, while travelling in the modern modes of transport like buses, trains and airplanes, it is impossible to observe caste rules regarding food, drink and social intercourse.

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- **Growth of materialism:** The caste system gets its strength from divine and religious sanctions. People believe in the doctrine of karma and the theory of reincarnation, which make them obey caste rules. But the modern age is dominated by scientific and technological knowledge and this has changed the consciousness of human beings to a great extent. Traditional beliefs, faiths and philosophies are no more the powerful moulders of human behaviour. Material considerations like wealth, power and prestige are given importance. A Shudra having wealth and political power would have a higher status today than a poor Brahmin who follows all the traditional customs rigidly. Such a change from spiritualism to materialism has gone against the caste system.
- **Modern education:** Modern liberal education introduced by the British has played a crucial role in undermining the importance of caste in Indian society. Modern education is accessible to all irrespective of one's caste or community. It popularized the idea of freedom of association, equality before law, equal rights of all citizens and equal freedom to follow any vocation. It also acts as a powerful force towards the removal of untouchability.
- **New legal system:** The new legal system established by the British has also played a vital role in weakening the influence of caste in India. This system has firmly established the concept of equality before law in India and has given a blow to the age-old legal discrimination against the lower castes, which is a main characteristic of a caste society. Further, with the establishment of modern judicial courts, the caste panchayats have lost their power and effectiveness. Besides, modern legislations like the Untouchability Offences Act, 1955 and Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 have proved to be disastrous for the caste system.
- **Social and religious reform movements:** Several religious and social reform movements also played their role. The Bhakti Movement and the Sufi Movement laid emphasis on oneness of mankind and exposed the idea of inequality as man-made rather than being divinely ordained. Though they could not eliminate the caste system, they definitely facilitated relaxation of caste rigidities.

Several social reform movements like the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj movements made direct attacks on the caste system, especially targeting its ritual aspect of purity and pollution.
- **Influence of Indian Constitution:** Last but not the least, the influence of the Indian Constitution in weakening the caste system has been universally recognized. Our Constitution confers fundamental rights to all our citizens irrespective of their caste, creed or colour. Article 15(2) of the Constitution directly attacks the caste system by declaring all citizens as equal.

2.2.2 Mobility in the Caste System

M.N. Srinivas draws out a distinction between traditional and modern caste which roughly coincides with the distinction between pre-British and Post-British period. It was indeed a matter of great significance to learn about the nature of rendering

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political power to Indians by the British. This was an important step in caste assuming political functions. There were territorial boundaries in the pre-British period which separated the castes by limiting their mobility. But later on, the interdependence of castes upon each other for economic and other functions somehow became instrumental in liberating caste from territorial filiations.

Srinivas also refers to the building of roads all over India, the introduction of postage, telegraph, cheap paper and printing - especially in regional languages - enabled castes to organize as they had never done before.

Ghurye has also reflected upon the impact of British rule on the Indian Caste system. The civil and penal codes introduced by the British over the subcontinent took away much of the power previously exercised by Caste Panchayats. However, the process of Sanskritization has also been instrumental in bringing about social mobility leading to fluidity in the caste structure.

Other factors like Western education, urbanization, industrialization and the new legal system further contributed in bringing about changes in the caste system. The expansion of industries and service sectors have led to expansion of occupational opportunities to many castes. So in spite of the ascribed status assigned to castes, people focussed on achieved status. Such occupational spaces have led to the abandonment of the principles of pollution and purity. Moreover, democratic decentralization of power right upto grassroots level has led to increased participation in the political process and besides economic success, access to political power has become another means of status enhancement.

Some of the prominent changes identified in the caste system are as follows:

1. There has been a decline in the supremacy of Brahmins. The Brahmins who used to occupy topmost position in the stratification system of India are no longer considered so. Modern occupation and urbanization have led to increased occupational mobility among other castes which has enhanced the status of castes lower than the Brahmins in the hierarchy. In the present day context, the Weberian notion of one's class position gains ascendancy over one's caste position.
2. The jajmani system has also weakened. The economic context of inter-caste relations which is termed as jajmani system has lost its significance. The monetization of economy and expansion of market system in rural areas has had a severe impact on the economic functions of castes.
3. The second important change is the position of castes due to processes like Sanskritization. Initially, it was observed that caste system had a rigid structure that strictly prohibited social mobility. But with occupational interdependence and opening of greater avenues for employment, the lower castes had an opportunity to pursue an occupation according to their choice. This led to fluidity in the caste structure and considerable positional changes were observed.
4. The Protective Discrimination Policy of the Government further led to the enhancement of status of many of the subjugated castes. Such

policies also led to the improvement in socio-economic conditions of various castes.

5. The enforcement of the Special Marriage Act of 1954 further brought about many changes in improving the marital alliances among the castes. Initially endogamy was strictly observed as an attribute of caste and people violating it were ostracized from the village. But the Special Marriage Act legalized inter-caste marriages which is a significant change in the entire system.
6. The notion of pollution and purity and restrictions on feeding and intercourse are no longer valid. The enactment of Untouchability Offences Act 1956 was an important milestone in this direction. Untouchability was considered a punishable offence and a person found practising it is severely punished either in terms of being fined or sentenced to imprisonment.
7. With industrialization, new occupational structures have developed in urban areas. These new occupations are caste free occupations. Recruitments to these occupations are solely based upon technical skills which can be acquired through modern education only. Thus, the traditional concept of caste occupation has lost its significance.
8. Contemporary society is undergoing massive transformation due to technological breakthrough and is witnessing many cultural changes. A new class of lower caste urban youth whom some scholars have termed the 'breakthrough generation' are playing a significant role in bringing about a sea-change by breaking the boundaries that had kept the Sudras in conditions of extreme poverty. This new generation of educated Sudras are positioning themselves for modern urban jobs.

Thus, the caste system has undergone many changes in the recent years. It is however difficult to predict the complete disappearance of such a system. It can be said that though there has been enough fluidity in the system due to many forces, the system still persists in India. The practice of politics through caste, the entire reservation issue and the recent debate about calculation of caste census has further stirred caste sentiments.

2.3 CLASS

Class is one of the most important bases of social stratification. Classes are groups of people into which a society is divided. These groups are ranked on the basis of specific criteria. Thus, classes are social groups that occupy specific high and low positions in a given society. Each class is a sub-culture with a set of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavioural norms, which differ from those of other classes. Class lines are not clearly drawn but represent points along a continuum of social status. The exact size and membership of a given class is difficult to establish.

Karl Marx defined a social class as 'all those people who share their relation to the means of economic production.' According to him, a class is determined by its possession of economic criteria like wealth, occupation and income.

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Max Weber has defined social class as ‘an aggregate of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods and the same exhibited standard of living.’

MacLver and Page define a social class as any portion of a community marked off from the rest by social status. Similarly, Ogburn and Nimkoff define social class as an aggregate of persons having essentially the same social status in a given society.

Class consciousness emerged in India during the British Rule as they introduced modern education, civil services, legal system, means of transportation, etc. in India. These new instrumentalities changed the mindset of the people and they started looking beyond caste. Post-independence, the Government’s developmental initiatives accelerated the process of decline of the caste system. In today’s era, though caste is still a strong factor in our society, class has been accepted as an alternative system of social stratification in India.

In the rural areas of the country, agrarian class structure has strong roots. It has been studied in detail by sociologists like Andre Beteille. The agrarian class structure was the creation of the British period but there was an agrarian hierarchy in the pre-British period. In this hierarchy, the high caste people were the large landowners while the lower caste people were landless labourers. In between were the members of certain castes who did the actual cultivation on these lands. Thus, it was a three-tier structure. Andre Beteille has observed that wherever the agrarian hierarchy is elaborate, the caste hierarchy is also elaborate.

The agrarian class structure in post-independent India is seen to possess the following four classes:

- (i) Landowners
- (ii) Tenants
- (iii) Labourers
- (iv) Non-agriculturists

Professor D. N. Dhanagre has suggested an alternative agrarian class structure, which has the following five classes:

- (i) Landlords
- (ii) Rich peasants
- (iii) Middle peasants
- (iv) Poor peasants
- (v) Landless labourers

Apart from the traditional agrarian class structure, modern rural India also has a non-agrarian class structure. It can broadly be classified as follows:

- Political functionaries and government officials
- Civil work contractors
- Village teachers and doctors
- Priests and astrologers
- NGO workers

Though pre-independent India had trade centres and port cities like Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai), urban India is mainly a post-independence phenomenon. In the last sixty-four years, large numbers of people from rural India have migrated to old and new urban centres in search of better education, employment and living standards. This has weakened the hold of the caste system and has given rise to a class system in urban India which is different from the agrarian class structure.

The modern urban class structure can be classified as follows:

- Political personalities like Ministers, MPs, etc. and civil servants
- Technocrats (software engineers, CEOs, etc.), Professionals (doctors, lawyers, sportsmen, media persons, etc.) and industrialists/entrepreneurs
- Educationists and academicians
- People in the organized sector other than the above categories (service men, traders, etc.)
- People in the unorganized sector (hawkers, daily labourers, etc.)

Characteristics of Social Class

The following are some of the important characteristics of a social class:

- **Class—a status group:** A social class is essentially a social group. Class is related to status. Different statuses arise in a society as people do different things, engage in different activities and pursue different vocations.
- **Achieved status and not ascribed status:** Status in the class system is achieved and not ascribed. Birth is not the criterion of status. Achievements of an individual mostly decide his status. Class system provides scope for changing or improving one's status. Factors like income, occupation, wealth, education, lifestyle, etc. decide the status of an individual.
- **Universal:** Class is almost a universal phenomenon. The class system appears in all the modern complex societies of the world.
- **Mode of feeling:** In a class system, you may observe three modes of feeling. Firstly, there is a feeling of equality in relation to the members of one's own class. Secondly, there is a feeling of inferiority in relation to those who occupy the higher status in the socio-economic hierarchy. Thirdly, there is a feeling of superiority in relation to those who occupy the lower status in the hierarchy. These kinds of feelings develop into class consciousness and finally result in class solidarity.
- **Element of prestige:** Each social class has its own status in society. Status is associated with prestige. Thus, the status and prestige enjoyed by the ruling or rich classes in every society is superior to that of the poorer classes. The prestige that a class enjoys depends upon our evaluations. In many societies, knowledge, purity of race or descent, religion, wealth, heroism, bravery and similar other traits confer a high degree of prestige on the persons possessing them.

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- **Element of stability:** A social class is relatively a stable group. It is not unstable like a crowd or mob. Though status of a class might change, it rarely does so in a radical manner. Radical changes occur in extraordinary situations like war, economic depression, etc. and such changes can alter the social position of the class suddenly.
- **A way of life:** Every social class tends to have a lifestyle of its own, which distinguishes it from other classes. Life style includes the type of dress one wears, the quality and location of residence in which one resides, the means of recreation one resorts to, the relationship one enjoys with close relatives, the books, magazines, etc. one reads, the cultural products one is able to enjoy, political affiliations, etc. Lifestyles reflect the preferences, tastes and values of a class.
- **An open group:** Social classes are open groups and represent an open social system in which vertical social mobility is possible. This means there are either no restrictions or very mild restrictions imposed upon the upwards and downwards movement of individuals in the social hierarchy.
- **Social class—more than an economic group:** Social classes are mostly economic but not merely economic groups or divisions. Subjective criteria such as class-consciousness, class solidarity and class identification on the one hand, and objective criteria such as wealth, property, income, education, occupation, etc. on the other, are equally important in the class system.

Classification of Social Classes

Traditionally sociologists have classified class into following types:

- Upper class
- Middle class
- Lower class

Warner and Lunt, in their study of a New England town, have divided each of the three traditional classes into two sub-classes. Thus, they have given the following six-fold classification of class:

- The upper-upper class
- The lower-upper class
- The upper-middle class
- The lower-middle class
- The upper-lower class
- The lower-lower class

Karl Marx, the champion of the theory of social class and class conflict, has spoken of only two major social classes — the haves and the have nots — or the rich and the poor, or the capitalists and the workers, or the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat.

Sorokin has spoken of three major types of class stratification. They are economic, political and occupational classes.

Differences between Caste and Class

The caste system is based on the principle of inherited inequalities. On the other hand, the class system is based on the principle of equal opportunities. Both are important systems of social stratification but represent two opposite poles.

The following are the major differences between caste and class:

- While stratification in a caste society is based on birth, it is based primarily on wealth in a class society. Therefore, caste provides an individual with a status that is ascribed whereas class status is an achieved one.
- While the structure of the caste system is closed, the class system has an open structure. Mobility is virtually impossible in the caste system but is very much possible in the class system.
- The caste system insists upon the observance of certain rules regarding eating, drinking and social intercourse among the members of different castes. However, such rules are conspicuous by their absence in a class society.
- The caste system is unique to India whereas, the class system is found all over the world.
- The caste system is believed to have had a divine origin. It is based on religious dogmas like karma and rebirth. Class system, on the other hand, is purely secular and has got nothing to do with religion.
- The idea of purity and pollution is associated with the caste system. However, it does not find place in the class system and there is no concept of untouchability as it is found in the caste system.
- Caste societies have strong caste panchayats, which maintain the caste structure by punishing those who violate the customs and traditions of their respective castes. No such organization exists in a class society.
- The caste system is conservative and orthodox whereas, the class system is liberal and progressive.
 - o Caste is an endogamous social unit whereas, a class is not so. Members of a class are free to select their life partners from any other class. Unlike the caste system, a class system never imposes restrictions on marriage.
 - o The caste system is a complex system. There are more than 800 castes and sub-castes in India and each one of them are complex categories. The class system is much simpler with only three broad categories, i.e., upper class, middle class and lower class.

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Check Your Progress

1. Define caste from the Indological perspective.
2. Name the different versions of the traditional theory.
3. State the doctrine of Dharma.
4. Define *gotrika*.
5. Define social class.
6. State one difference between caste and class.

2.4 FAMILY

The family is the most important primary group in society. It is often called the basic social institution because of its important functions of procreation and socialization. Robert Bierstedt is of the opinion that ‘the family, almost without question, is the most important of any of the groups that human experience offers. Other groups we join for longer or shorter periods of time for the satisfaction of this interest or that. The family, on the contrary, is with us always or rather more precisely, we are with it.’

Sociologists have defined the family in a number of ways. MacIver and Page hold that the family is a definite and long-term group defined by sexual relationships that reproduce and bring up children. It may include other blood relations also but it is mainly formed by living together of man, woman and their children. The unit formed by their living together is called family. Ogburn and Nimkoff held that the family is an association formed by the sex relations of husband and wife with or without children. They believe that husband and wife or only the woman and her children or only the man and his children by living together can form a family. But the family is not limited to these individuals alone. Its size can be large also. People of many generations and various relatives can also live together in a family.

Characteristics of family

The basic characteristics of family are as follows:

- **Mating relationship:** A family is based on mating relationship, that is to say that family comes into existence when a man and a woman establish mating relations between them.
- **A form of marriage:** The mating relationship is established through the institution of marriage. It is an institutional arrangement made by the society according to which the individuals establish marital relationships among themselves. Marriages may be of the following types:
 - o Monogamy
 - o Polygamy
 - o Group Marriage

- **A system of nomenclature:** Every family is known by a name and has its own system of recognizing descent. Descent may be traced through the male line, i.e., patrilineal or through the female line, i.e., matrilineal or through both the lines, i.e., bilateral.
- **Economic provisions:** Every family has certain economic needs and the head of the family looks into ways and means to satisfy these needs. He has to ensure the comfort of the family members.
- **Common habitation:** Each family has a common habitation that implies that the members of a family must reside together under one roof.

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Distinctive Features of Family

Family is a very important component of our social structure and occupies a central position. Its distinctive features are discussed as follows:

- **Universality:** The family is universal. There is no society in which some form or the other of family does not exist. A typical family consists of mother, father and their progeny. It is found in all communities.
- **Emotional basis:** The family is grounded in emotions and sentiments. It is based upon our impulses of mating, procreation, maternal devotion, fraternal love and parental care. It is built upon sentiments of love, affection, sympathy, cooperation and friendship.
- **Limited size:** A family usually means a small-sized organization. As a primary group its size is necessarily limited. Biological conditions are primarily responsible for the small size.
- **Formative influence:** Family helps in the formulation of the characters of its members and in shaping their personalities. Freud and other psychologists have proved that a child exhibits the same character and mental tendencies in adulthood, which he has acquired in the family.
- **Nuclear position in the social structure:** The family is the nucleus of all other social organizations and controls the social life of the individual. It influences the whole life of the society.
- **Responsibility of the members:** Every member of the family has certain responsibilities, duties and obligations. The smooth running of the family depends on how best the members discharge their responsibilities in coordination with the other members of the family.
- **Social regulations:** The family is guarded by social taboos and legal regulations. The society takes steps to safeguard this organization from any possible breakdown due to divorce, desertion or separation.
- **Permanent and temporary:** The family is a permanent institution. Since, it is based on the organic and emotional nature of man, it continues to exist. But family as an association may be temporary in character.

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Functions of Family

The family fulfills a number of functions. According to Goode, a family has the following functions:

- Procreation
- Socio-economic security to family members
- Determination of status of family members
- Socialization and emotional support
- Social control

Kingsley Davis talks about the following four functions of the family:

- Reproduction
- Maintenance
- Placement
- Socialization

Ogburn and Nimkoff have outlined the following six functions of the family:

1. Affection
2. Economic
3. Recreational
4. Protective
5. Religious
6. Educational

The functions of a family mentioned above can be divided into four broad categories:

1. Biological
2. Social
3. Psychological
4. Economic

The biological needs of an individual are satisfied in the family. Thus, it is a very important function of the family. Firstly, the family institutionalizes the need of sex satisfaction through marriage. Social sanction is accorded to this need by the family. Secondly, the family also fulfills the biological need of procreation. The existence of the human race is dependent upon procreation and, therefore, this is a very crucial function discharged by the family.

The family discharges the various social functions also. According to Goode, it brings up children and helps in their socialization. Children learn their language, customs, traditions, etc. while growing up in the family. The family also discharges the functions of imparting socialization to its members, regulation of their behaviour and ensuring social control. The family transmits the familial values to its members, and they do not deviate from the path of proper social behaviour.

In addition to biological and social functions, the family also satisfies psychological and emotional needs of its members. The members get love, adulation, sympathy and emotional support from within the family.

Another important function of the family is economic. In pre-industrial economies, the family is the unit of production. All members of a family contribute to the family occupation like agriculture, cattle-rearing, hunting, etc. The family provides economic security to its members. It takes care of their basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, education, health, etc.

Classification of Family

Though family is a universal institution, its structure or forms vary not only from one society to another but also from one class to another within the same society. Sociologists have spoken of different forms or types of families and they have taken into consideration different factors for the purposes of making such classifications. A few types of family classifications are discussed as follows:

- On the basis of marriage, family has been classified into two major types:
 - o Monogamous
 - o Polygamous
 - (i) Polyandrous
 - (ii) Polygynous

Monogamy is a system of marriage in which one man marries one woman. In almost all the modern societies, marriages are monogamous and such families are known as monogamous families.

- Polygamy is a system of marriage that permits the marriage of one man with more than one woman or the marriage of one woman with more than one man. Polygamous marriages or families are rarely seen in the modern societies.
- On the basis of nature of residence, family can be classified into three major types:
 - o Family of matriarchal residence
 - o Family of patriarchal residence
 - o Family of changing residence

When the wife goes to stay with her husband in his house after marriage, the residence is known as patriarchal residence. Such families are known as patriarchal families. Most of the families in all modern societies are of this type.

In cases where the husband stays in the wife's house after marriage, the residence type is known as matriarchal residence. Such families are known as matriarchal families and are predominantly found in tribal societies. In India, such families can be seen amongst the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo tribes of Meghalaya.

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A third type of residence system is the one where both the husband and wife stay in a new house after marriage and start a family. This kind of family is known as a family of changing residence.

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- On the basis of ancestry or descent, family can be classified into two main types:
 - o **Matrilineal family:** When descent is traced through the mother, we have the system known as the matrilineal system. Families that trace their descent through this system are known as matrilineal families. In such families, lineage and succession are determined by the female line.
 - o **Patrilineal family:** When descent is traced through the father or the male line, we have the patrilineal system. Families that follow this system are known as patrilineal families. Most of the families in the world belong to the patrilineal system and the lineage and succession in such families are determined through the father.
- On the basis of the nature of authority, family can be classified into two main types:
 - o **Matriarchal family:** The matriarchal family is also known as the mother-centred or mother-dominated family. In such families, the mother or the woman is the family head and she exercises authority. She is the owner of the family property and controls the household. The Khasis of North-Eastern India may be called mother-right people. Amongst them, descent is traced through the mother, not the father. Inheritance passes from mother to the daughter.
 - o **Patriarchal family:** A patriarchal family is also known as father-centered or father-dominated family. The head of the family is the father, or the eldest male member and he exercises authority. He is the owner and administrator of the family property. His voice is final in all family matters.
- On the basis of nature of relationship amongst its members, a family can be classified into two types:
 - o **Conjugal:** Ralph Linton has given this classification. He is of the view that a family based on blood relationship is known as **consanguine** family. For example, the relationship between a father and a son.
 - o **Consanguine:** On the other hand, a family in which there exists sex relationship between the members on the strength of marriage is known as a conjugal family. The sexual relationship between the husband and wife is a basic ingredient of the conjugal family.
- On the basis of the in-group and out-group affiliation, family can be classified into two types:
 - o **Endogamous:** It is one where the social norms make it compulsory for members of the family to marry within the larger social group to which it belongs. For example, a Brahmin family in India would be in the nature of an endogamous family because the rigid caste system does not allow inter-caste marriages. Therefore, an Indian family is usually endogamous.

- o **Exogamous:** In societies where there is no such restriction of marrying within one's own group, families are usually exogamous. For example, members of a family belonging to one class can marry members belonging to another class in an open society.
- On the basis of size, family can be classified into three types:
 - o Nuclear or individualistic family
 - o Extended family
 - o Joint family

Nuclear or individualistic family

In nuclear families, the members comprise the husband, wife and their children. This type of family has become more common with the advent of industrialization and urbanization, which has forced people to move out to new urban centers and seek employment. Further, factors like individualistic ideology, economic aspirations and housing problems in urban areas have strengthened the nuclear family.

Murdock has further sub-divided the nuclear family into the following two types:

- The family of orientation
- The family of procreation

The family of orientation is the family in which an individual is born and in which his parents and siblings reside. He grows up in this family of orientation and stays in it till his marriage.

Extended family

The extended family comprises members belonging to three or more generations. For example, a man living with his parents, his wife and their children is said to be living in an extended family. According to Murdock, an extended family 'consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship, i.e., by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of his parents.' Thus, the nuclear family of an individual and the nuclear family of his parents can combine together to form an extended family. This type of extended family can be seen in India, China, etc. The joint family of India is also a type of extended family.

An extended family can also be formed when an individual and his several wives live together with the families of his several sons. This kind of extended family is seen in some African and Arab societies.

Joint family

A joint family, though a type of extended family, is an important social unit of Indian society. Smt. Iravati Karve says that 'a joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular kind of kindred.'

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In brief, a joint family consists of members spanning horizontally (siblings) and vertically (generations) and living together with common goals and common assets.

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The Joint Family System

The joint family system can be seen across societies in various forms of extended families. However, it is more prevalent in India and has certain peculiar Indian characteristics.

The joint family has been defined as a mode of combining smaller families into larger units through the extension of three or more generations. It has also been defined as one which consists of members related through blood and spread over several generations living together under one roof and working under a common head.

C.B. Memoria has observed that the fundamental principle of the Hindu joint family is the tie of *sapindaship* without which such a family cannot be formed. He defines a joint family as a kin group consisting of all the male descendants from a common ancestor, their wives and their unmarried daughters. Daughters, on their marriage, become members of their husbands' families. Normally, a joint family is composed of members of three generations. However, at times it may include members of four or more generations. All the members of a joint family are related to one another as *sapindas*.

In the Hindu society in India, the joint family, the caste system and the village system are considered as the three pillars on which the social edifice is built. It is a very old system and is regarded by the Hindus as a sacred institution having been derived from religion.

There are two types of joint family:

- Patriarchal joint family
- Matriarchal joint family

Both types are found in India. The patriarchal joint family is father-dominated and matriarchal joint family is mother-dominated. The patriarchal joint families are found among the Nambudaris of Malabar, the Mundas of Chotanagpur and the Angami Nagas of Assam. The matriarchal joint families are found among the Nairs of Malabar and the Khasis and Garos living on the Garo hills of Assam.

Characteristics of the Joint Family System

The following are the important characteristic features of the joint family system in India:

- **Collection of generations:** The joint family consists of people belonging to at least three generations. Besides, it also has people related to each other and belonging to a particular generation.
- **Common roof:** Normally, the members of a joint family reside together under one roof. Due to housing problem, educational problem and employment problem, people are sometimes unable to continue with the

joint family under a common roof. But they still continue to maintain contact and relationships with each other.

- **Joint kitchen:** Merely living together under one roof does not constitute a joint family. There has to be a common kitchen for the family and all the members must eat food cooked at one hearth. Separation of kitchen implies breaking up of the joint family. Normally, in patriarchal families, the eldest female member is in charge of this joint kitchen. The womenfolk of the family serve the food to the male members first and eat only after the male members have finished eating.
- **Common property:** The members of a joint family hold property in common. Melley observes, 'a joint family is a co-operative institution similar to a joint stock company in which there is a joint property.' The earnings of the family are pooled together and household expenses are met out of the pool. The joint property is managed by the head of the family who is known as the *karta*.
- **Joint worship:** The Hindu joint family derives its strength from religion and is associated with various religious practices and rituals. Members of the family pray together and have a common family deity.
- **Exercise of authority:** In patriarchal joint families, the eldest male member is the head of the family and his directions are obeyed by all other members. He exercises complete authority in family matters. Similarly, in joint matriarchal families, this role is played by the eldest female member in the family. This exercise of supreme authority by one member is a key feature of the joint family.
- **Arranged marriages:** In the Hindu joint family, the head of the family arranges the marriages of the younger members by choosing the prospective bride or bridegroom, as the case may be. The individual members of a joint family in India do not have the freedom to choose their life partners. They rarely challenge the decisions made by the elders and the family head. However, this trend is slowly changing.
- **Procreation:** In a joint family, procreation is regarded as a religious duty. As a result, the rate of production in such families is higher. As no birth control measures are adopted by the married couples, the size of joint families is usually big. However, with modernization, this is changing, and family sizes are getting smaller.
- **Self-sufficiency:** In the past, joint families used to be fully self-reliant. The members of the families derived their economic, emotional, educational, recreational and other needs from the family itself. However, things have changed today and no family can remain self-reliant in that manner as interdependence has increased in society.
- **Family obligations:** Members of a joint family identify themselves strongly with their family obligations. They discharge their duties towards the family diligently and the family, in turn, protects their interests.

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Advantages of the Joint Family System

The joint family system has a number of advantages. Some of them are as follows:

- **Stable and long-lasting:** The joint family is more stable than a nuclear family and, therefore, it lasts for a long time. Even if a couple of members leave the family, it has no impact upon its stability and the family stands as a unit. Due to its durability, it is helpful in carrying forward the cultural traditions.
- **Ensures economic growth:** The joint family contributes to welfare and economic progress of the family members by providing the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter of its members. Further, it helps in productivity by contributing more hands to the labour force. Besides, in agricultural communities, the joint family prevents fragmentation of the family's land holdings.
- **Economizes expenditure:** Since, no member has an individual control over the family property, the family head ensures that they remain spendthrift. Joint purchases of household needs also result in savings.
- **Division of labour:** The joint family raises efficiency through division of labour. Due to the presence of a large number of members, a joint family divides various tasks amongst them. This is especially beneficial for a joint family in an agricultural community.
- **Provides social insurance:** The basic needs of relatively weak family members like orphans, widows, deserted, diseased, divorced, etc. are taken care of very well in a joint family. Thus, such a family acts as an insurance company for them.
- **Provides leisure:** Due to the advantage of numbers, work within a joint family is shared among the members and gets completed quickly. This allows the members to have more time for leisure and relaxation.
- **Provides recreation:** Due to the presence of a large number of persons of different age groups, a joint family is an ideal place for enjoyment and entertainment. The interaction between the young and the old, the games played by the children, the combined celebration of festivals, etc. all add up to provide valuable recreation to the members.
- **Provides social security:** A joint family, apart from acting like an insurance company for its relatively disadvantaged members, also provides social security to the aged, infirm and sick members of the family. In times of crises like accidents, the joint family takes care of the affected members. It is often said that a joint family takes care of an individual from his cradle to his grave.
- **Provides psychological security:** A joint family provides psychological security to its members by giving them a feeling of staying with one's own. It does not allow any member to develop strong individualistic mindset, thereby preventing him from becoming aloof and lonely.

- **Promotes co-operative virtues:** A joint family instills many virtues into the minds and characters of its members. Qualities like co-operation, discipline, sympathy, tolerance, sacrifice, loyalty, etc. are learnt and imbibed in such families. All the members get tied in a bond of love and sacrifice and promote the welfare of their family through their positive traits.
- **Ensures social control:** The joint family acts as an agency of social control by controlling the behaviour of its members. It teaches each member to think about the common interests of the family and sacrifice individual interests.
- **Develops a sense of tolerance:** The presence of a large number of members results in expression of divergent views on a variety of issues. The members learn to respect each other's views and this helps them in developing a sense of tolerance while dealing with the views of other members of the society. Such a sense of tolerance is good for any society as it leaves room for discussion and debate.

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Disadvantages of the Joint Family System

It is not that the joint family system only has positive things to offer. It also suffers from many demerits. Some of such demerits or disadvantages are as follows:

- **Retards personality development:** Due to the overbearing nature of the family head in a joint family, the younger members fail to develop any leadership quality. They remain protected and become weak and shaky in life. They never get a chance to show their talents or develop strong personalities.
- **Kills individual initiative:** The joint family does not allow its members to develop their talents. Individual enterprise gets killed in such an environment. The young members do not get a chance to show their originality or creativity.
- **Promotes lethargy:** The joint family does not provide much incentive for hard work because everybody is assured of his food, shelter and clothing. This results in promoting a dependency syndrome, which is bad for the economy and society.
- **Disincentive savings:** Since basic needs of every member is assured, there is no incentive to save money and invest the same in quality assets. Besides, savings is not easy for the earning members as there are a large number of non-earning members who have to be taken care of.
- **Hampers privacy:** Personal privacy is badly affected in the joint family system due to the presence of large number of family members in the house. This is especially true in case of newly married couples who do not get the desired privacy to know each other intimately and share their feelings of love. This affects them both emotionally and psychologically.
- **Promotes quarrels:** In a joint family, chances of frequent quarrels among the family members are more due to the presence of a number of persons. This is truer in case of married women of the family as they come into this

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large family from different families with different upbringing. They usually do not get along well with each other and end up spoiling their relationships.

- **Adversely affects children's socialization:** Since, the parents are not able to devote exclusive time to their children in a joint family set-up, the socialization of the children does not take place in a proper way. Children remain aloof to their parents and get more attached to their grandparents. The values instilled by the grandparents may sometimes be not in tune with the modern times.
- **Promotes higher reproduction:** A joint family system promotes higher reproduction as there is no disincentive of giving birth to more children. Irrespective of the number of children that they have parents are assured that the basic needs of their children – food, health, education, clothes, etc. – would be automatically taken care of by the family.
- **Adversely affects status of women:** A joint family system is unfavourable for women. They are treated badly in the patriarchal joint families and are made to work like servants of the household. They do not get any respect for the work they do and have no financial or social autonomy. Sometimes, they do not even have a say in matters personal to them like their health, higher education, visits to their parental homes, etc.
- **Promotes litigation:** Due to the presence of common property in a joint family system, there is bound to be a lot of litigation and it does happen. A plethora of cases are filed by family members against each other to gain control over the family assets.
- **Limits social mobility:** Joint families restrict the social mobility of their members. They are not encouraged to adapt to the modern world and are forced to remain bound by traditions. This prevents them from accepting changes and moving ahead in life.
- **Delays decision-making:** Due to the presence of a large number of family members, decision-making is very slow in a joint family set-up. There are discussions and deliberations before taking any major decisions. While such discussions are good and help in taking the right decisions, its slow pace frustrates the younger members.

Changes in Structure and Functions of Family

The institution of joint family has started undergoing change and is moving towards disintegration. This is primarily the result of the forces of modernization, which is transforming Indian society.

Industrialization and urbanization have resulted in the breakdown of the joint family because the latter is better placed to handle agricultural societies. With industrialization, family has ceased to be the unit of production as it used to be in an agrarian set-up. People leave their villages in search of employment in new industries coming up in urban areas and break their link with their joint family. Thus, the new industry-based economy has shaken the foundations of the joint family system.

Industrialization has been helped further by the modern means of transportation and communication. Bus and train services from rural areas to the towns and cities have enabled people to travel to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. This has quickened the pace of the decline of the joint family. With the spread of telecom facilities, especially with the easy availability of mobile telephony, people can stay connected with their families without staying together under a common roof. Due to this, the dependence of people on their traditional family occupation, which was a major factor for the survival and importance of the joint family, has reduced. They are migrating to urban areas for better employment opportunities.

The influence of the Western countries on our thinking and way of life is also an important factor that has changed the joint family system in India. The family structure of the Western world is characterized by the nuclear family. This is so because they base their family on the ideas of freedom, equality, love between husband and wife and communication. The Indian joint family has very little scope for all of these. Therefore, the younger generation in India prefers the nuclear family. The joint family is trying to adapt to this situation and the family heads are trying to provide more space to all the members by decentralizing power. Notwithstanding this, westernization has resulted in greatly reducing the importance of the joint family system.

Indian women have managed to break the shackles of male-domination upon them to a significant extent. This has happened due to the empowerment of women through the forces of education and employment. For women to come of age, it was important for them to get out of the conservative and oppressive environment prevalent in joint families. The status of women was very low in joint families and an enhancement in their status is directly linked to the decline of such families. Thus, higher status of women can be said to have adversely affected the joint family system in India.

The joint family system has faced serious challenges from progressive social legislations enacted during the British Rule and after independence. Legislations like The Civil Marriage Act, 1872; The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 have eroded the pre-dominant position of the joint family system in the Indian society. These acts resulted in empowering women by giving them various rights relating to marriage, divorce and inheritance of property. This empowerment of women shook the joint family system in which women used to be treated with scant respect. As a result, joint families in India are reinventing themselves and women are being given the respect that they deserve. But the trend is towards more individualistic or nuclear families as they provide greater freedom and privacy to the young couples.

Another reason for the decline of the joint family is the shortage of residential space in urban areas. Since, houses are small; it is not possible for a large number of family members to cohabit. In villages, even if the houses were small, there were vast open spaces in and around the house, which is not the case in towns and cities. Therefore, the family size had to be necessarily small in urban areas. This aspect goes against the joint family system.

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The quarrels among the members of the joint family are yet another reason for its decline. The presence of many members, especially the women members hailing from different families, often resulted in such quarrels. Nuclear families became the preferred option for people as they wanted to avoid such frequent quarrels.

The changes and the causes of those changes discussed above would indicate that the joint family system in India is disintegrating. However, scholars have pointed out, it would be wrong to say that joint family has been or would be completely replaced by nuclear families. Empirical studies by eminent sociologists like I.P. Desai, K.M. Kapadia, Aileen Ross, M.S. Gore, A.M. Shah and Sachchidananda have shown that the jointness in the joint family is decreasing whereas the nuclearity is increasing. They have pointed out that joint families would continue to exist in their evolved forms and would never fade away.

These scholars have found out from their studies that the joint family continues to exist, but their sizes have come down. They are no longer the huge families with large number of members spread vertically and horizontally. The joint family has evolved to give way to a trimmer joint family wherein a maximum of three generations reside. It is now a compact and functional unit. It now includes only the siblings and the father's brothers.

Therefore, it can be concluded that so long as the old cultural values persist among the people, the functional type of joint family would continue to thrive in the Indian society. The residential type of joint family would be under strain as people tend to move out in search of employment, freedom and privacy.

2.5 MARRIAGE

According to Edward Westermarck, 'marriage is the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring'. It is 'a contract for the production and maintenance of children', as per Malinowski. 'Marriage is a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex, whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth of children', opined Duncan Mitchell. It is 'the public joining together, under socially specified regulations of a man and woman as husband and wife' according to Alfred McClung Lee.

Characteristics of Marriage

The general characteristics of marriage are as follows:

- **Universality:** Marriage is more or less a universal institution. It is found among the pre-literate as well as literate people. It is enforced as a social rule in some of the societies. Among the Hindus, marriage is a sacrament which is regarded as more or less obligatory. According to the Chinese philosopher Confucius, an individual who remains unmarried throughout his life commits a great crime.

- **Relationship between man and woman:** Marriage is a union of man and woman. It indicates relationship between one or more men to one or more women. *Who should marry whom? One should marry how many?*—are the questions which represent social rules regarding marriage which differ significantly.
- **Marriage bond is enduring:** Marriage indicates a long-lasting bond between the husband and wife. Hence, it is not coextensive with sex life. Marital relationship between man and woman lasts even after the sexual satisfaction is obtained. The Hindus, for example, believe that marriage is a sacred bond between the husband and wife which even the death cannot break.
- **Marriage requires social approval:** A union of man and woman becomes a marital bond only when the society gives its approval. When a marriage is given the hallmark of social approval, it becomes a legal contract.
- **Marriage is associated with some civil or religious ceremony:** Marriage gets its social recognition through some ceremony which may have its own rites, rituals, customs, formalities, etc. It means marriage has to be concluded in a public and solemn manner. Sometimes it receives as a sacrament the blessings of religion. Marriage among the Hindus, is connected with rituals such as—*Homa, Saptapadi, Panigrahana, Mangalya-Dharana, etc.*
- **Marriage creates mutual obligations:** Marriage imposes certain rights and duties on both the husband and wife—both are required to support each other and their children.

Significance of Marriage

The importance of marriage reflects in the following functions that it performs:

- **Regulation of sex life:** In conservative societies, it is considered that marriage an important method to regulate the sex life of man. Sexual impulse, in considered to be, very powerful in man. He is exposed to its influence throughout his life. This impulse must be controlled and regulated in a proper manner to avoid chaos and confusion in society. Marriage has come to be such a regulative means. In fact, it is often called the ‘licence for sex life’.
- **Regulation of sex relations:** Marriage prohibits sexual relations between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister, etc. Such a kind of prohibition is called ‘incest taboo’. Marriage also puts restrictions on the pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations.
- **Marriage leads to the establishment of family:** Sexual satisfaction offered by marriage results in self-perpetuation i.e., marriage insists on the couple to establish a family of procreation. It is marriage which determines the lineage of the newborn individual. Inheritance and succession follow the rule of descent.
- **Provides for economic cooperation:** Marriage makes division of labour possible on the basis of sex. Partners of marriage distribute work among

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themselves and perform them. In the modern industrial societies, we find husband and wife working outside the family to get more income to elevate their economic status.

- **Marriage contributes to emotional and intellectual inter-stimulation:** Marriage brings life-partners together and helps them to develop intense love and affection towards each other. It deepens the emotions and strengthens the companionship between the two.
- **Marriage aims at social solidarity:** Marriage is not only a union of two individuals of the opposite sex, but also their respective families, groups and kindreds. Friendship between groups is reinforced through marriage. It has been said that by encouraging marriage between different groups, castes, races, classes, religious, linguistic and other communities, it is possible to minimize the social distance between groups and strengthen their solidarity.

Forms of Marriage

The main forms of marriage are discussed below:

1. **Polygyny:** It is a type of marriage in which one man marries more than one woman. Though monogamy was the rule fixed by the *Rig Veda*, **polygyny** was in practice in ancient times and persisted till the beginning of the present century. Until the passage of the Hindu Marriage Act in 1955, every Hindu was theoretically free to marry a number of women. In fact, however, a very small percentage of Hindus were polygynous. It had become a social custom to have many wives as it increased the prestige of a person in society. It was usual for the princes and the aristocratic people to practise polygyny. The Nawabs and rich landlords used to have a number of wives. Muslims are permitted to take four wives each, even at present, provided all are treated as equals. However, the actual incidence of polygyny among Muslims is very small; only the rich and the powerful occasionally take a second wife. Christians are forbidden to take a second wife. Polygyny among the Hindus has become a thing of the past as The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, strictly prohibits it.

- Polygyny is not in practice in present times due to the following reasons:
- People no more stick on to the philosophy that one should have a son to attain *moksha*.
- The idea that the sons are required to give support in the old age has also died out.
- Maintaining too many wives is highly expensive, and hence not possible for the majority to do so.
- Under the changed socio-economic and educational conditions, women themselves are not ready to accept the status of a second wife at home. Most of the women are not ready to lower their social status by giving consent to polygyny.
- People are highly convinced that monogamy is the most ideal and, at the same time, the most practicable form of marriage.

2. **Polyandry:** It is a form of marriage in which one woman is married to more than one man. It is very less common than polygyny. A few Kerala castes practised polyandry until recently and it is not unlikely that it still continues to be practised to some extent in remote places. The Todas and Kotas of the Nilgiris, the Khasa of Jaunsar Bawar (Dehradun district) and a few other North Indian castes also practice polyandry. The Todas formerly practised female infanticide, and this meant that there were fewer women than men, a condition which compelled them to practice polyandry.
3. **Monogamy:** It is a form of marriage in which one man marries one woman. It is commonly practised in Indian society, except in case of Muslims. Ever since the *Vedic* times in India, monogamy has been the dominant form of marriage being practised by the Hindus. In fact, every modern society supports monogamy as the most suitable form of marriage. Monogamy produces the highest type of love and affection between husband and wife which contributes to family peace, solidarity and happiness.
4. **Hypergamy/Anuloma marriage:** During the *Vedic* age, inter-class marriages used to take place in the form of *anuloma*; a social practice according to which a boy from upper varna/caste/class can marry a girl from lower varna/caste/class. *Anuloma* marriage was recommended by the ancient Hindu *shastrakars* for the *Brahmins*, the *Kshatriyas*, and the *Vaishyas*. But marriage of a *Shudra* girl with a higher *varna* boy was condemned. *Manu* had stated that twice-born men who wed wives of a low *varna* would soon degrade their families and their children to the state of a *Shudra*. It was also enjoined that Gods would not eat the offerings of the men who perform rites in their honour with a *Shudra* wife's assistance. Hypergamy occurs in different parts of India; among the Brahmins of Bengal; Anavali Brahmins and Leva-Patidars of Gujarat; Rajputs in Gujarat and Rajasthan; Marathas of Maharashtra; and Nairs, Kshatriyas and Ambalavasis of Kerala.

According to M.N. Srinivas, 'hypergamy tends to occur where the structural gulf is narrow, in fact, it may be said to occur among the different sections of a single caste rather than between castes which are widely separated'. Educated Indians are critical of hypergamy, and especially, of the large dowries associated with it. Hypergamy has almost disappeared in castes such as the Nairs and Nambudiris, whereas it continues to flourish in some castes such as the Patidars.

5. **Hypogamy/Pratiloma marriage:** It is a type of marital practice in which a man of lower class/caste/varna marries a girl of higher class/caste/varna. Such cases of *Shudra-Aryan* connections are also recorded in the *Vedic* texts.

Anuloma or *pratiloma*, as a rule of marriage is an inseparable part of the caste system. According to Kapadia, 'that the rule of *anuloma* and *pratiloma* marriages has greater significance for the caste structure of Hindu society than for the marriage pattern of the Hindus'.

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Legislation and its Impact on the Institution of Marriage

With the transformation in the norms and traditions of the society as discussed above, it is only fitting that the legislature accompany it as well. One can also say that the judiciary has made this transformation, swift by enacting laws in a timely manner. People, who are hesitant towards new forms of marriages or relationships, at least cannot hurt anyone. Another important effect is the psychological one, as the imposition of law more often than not make it acceptable among people's minds; if not consciously then at a subconscious level. Gradually, they begin to see the point of view of the people, who are in these unconventional relationships and accept them. Along with this, laws also safeguard the rights and safety of the people involved in a marriage. Thus, in every religion, laws are of primary importance.

Legislations Affecting Hindu Marriage

Many of the beliefs, values, ideals and rules of marriage laid down by the Hindu *Shastrakar*s have lost their original meaning and purpose now. Due to which, the Hindu marriage system had developed some defects. Attempts were made by some social reformers to remove these defects and correct the system. During the British rule, and also after Independence, legislations were passed in order to bring about desirable modifications in the Hindu marriage system. Some important legislations relating to various aspects of marriage passed from time to time are briefly explained below.

1. **The Prevention of Sati Act, 1829:** The glorification of the ideal of *Pativratya* had led to the inhuman practice of Sati. Widows were often forced to make a *sankalpa* to die after their husbands. Some were forcibly pushed to their husbands' funeral pyres. Raja Ram Mohan Roy took up the cause of women and impressed upon Lord Bentick, then Governor General of India to bring out a legislation prohibiting the practice of Sati. The Prevention of Sati Act, 1829, made widows' burning a homicidal act, punishable with fine and/or imprisonment. This legislation saved the lives of a number of widows, though it could not totally stop the practice.
2. **The Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856:** This legislation was complementary to the Prevention of Sati Act of 1829. Though widows were saved from the jaws of death, they were subject to exploitation and humiliation. To improve the deplorable condition of the Hindu widows, the leading social reformer, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar pressurized the British Government to make legal provision for widow marriages. As a result, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 was passed.
3. **The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929:** This Act restrains the marriage of a child. According to this Act, marriage of boys under 21 and girls under 18 years of age is an offence. The violation of this Act prescribes penalty.

4. **The Special Marriage Act, 1954:** This legislation treated Hindu marriage as a civil marriage and provided legal permission for inter-caste, inter-religious and even registered marriages. According to this Act, the parties interested in registered marriage must notify the marriage officer at least one month before the date of the marriage. It insists on the presence of two witnesses for marriage.

5. **The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955:** This Act brought revolutionary changes not only in the marital relations but also in various other social aspects. The word “Hindu” in the Act includes Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and the Scheduled Castes. The main provisions of the Act were:

(a) Conditions for valid marriage

- Neither party (bridegroom or bride) has a spouse living.
- Neither party is an idiot or a lunatic.
- The groom must have completed 21 years and the bride 18 years of age.
- The parties should not be *sapindas* of each other unless the custom permits such a marriage.

(b) Conditions under which divorce is permitted

- The spouse must have been impotent at the time of marriage and continues to be so even afterwards.
- Party to the marriage was an idiot or lunatic at the time of marriage.
- Consent of the petitioner or of the guardian was obtained by force or fraud.
- The wife was pregnant by some person other than the petitioner at the time of marriage.

The dissolution of marriage may be obtained on the grounds of adultery, conversion of religion, unsound mind, leprosy, venereal disease, renunciation, desertion for seven years and cohabitation not resumed after two years after judicial separation.

(c) Other important aspects of marriage:

- this Act gives permission for inter-caste and inter-religions marriages;
- provides for equality of sex;
- provides equal rights for men and women in marriage, divorce or separation;
- permits divorce on the ground of incompatibility and mutual consent;
- during judicial separation and after divorce, both husband and wife have the right to claim maintenance allowance.

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6. **The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:** This Act which prohibits the practice of dowry does not apply to Muslims. It prescribes the penalty of imprisonment or a fine, or both for its violation. This Act was amended in 1986 and thereafter its rules have become still more stringent.

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Christian Marriage

There is stratification among Christians as in Hindus and Muslims. The two groups in which Christians are divided are: Protestants and Catholics. The latter are further subdivided as Latin and Syrian Christians. All these groups and sub-groups are endogamous. The main object of marriage among Christians is to get social sanction for sex relations and procreation. Also, religion also has great significance in Christian marriage. Christians believe that marriage takes place because of the *will of God*, and after marriage, man and woman submerge themselves in each other. The three objectives of Christian marriage are believed to be: (i) procreation, (ii) escape from sex relations without marriage, and (iii) mutual help and comfort.

The marriage partners are selected either by parents, or by children, or jointly by parents and children. While selecting partners, the focus is on avoiding blood relations, and giving importance to social status of family, character, education, physical fitness, etc. Restrictions on consanguinity and affinity among Christians and Hindus are almost the same. After the engagement ceremony, the formalities to be fulfilled before the marriage are: producing a certificate of character, and submitting an application for marriage in the church three weeks before the due date. The church priest then invites objections against the proposed marriage and when no objection is received, marriage date is fixed. The marriage is solemnized in the church and the couple declares that they take each other as wedded partner in the presence of two witnesses and in the name of Lord Christ.

Christians do not permit polygyny and polyandry. The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, covers all aspects of marriage. Christians practise divorce too, though the church does not appreciate it. The Indian Divorce Act, 1869, refers to the conditions under which divorce may be obtained. The Act covers dissolution of marriage, declaring marriage null and void, decree of judicial separation and restitution of conjugal rights. There is no practice of dowry or dower among Christians. Remarriage of widows is not only accepted but also encouraged. But it is observed that the grounds for divorce are too limited and harsh. Even as between husband and wife, there is discrimination in as-much-as the husband has simply to prove adultery whereas the wife has to prove another matrimonial offence along with adultery for getting relief. Even when both parties wish on mutual consent basis to separate and the courts are convinced that living together is an impossibility, no relief can be given. The wife is considered to be a property of the husband as the provision in the Divorce Act entitles a husband to claim damages from the wife's adulterer. The Christian law as it exists today encourages perjury, collusion, and manoeuvring. Christians need a law which should cater to the changing needs of time.

Muslim Marriage

Let us discuss some of the legalities related to Muslim marriage.

Marriage which is held contrary to the Islamic rules is called *batil* or invalid marriage. Some of the conditions of invalid marriage are discussed below:

- **Polygamy:** A woman cannot marry second time as long as she has a living husband who has not divorced her. A man also cannot marry the fifth woman as long as the first four are alive and not divorced.
- **Marriage with idolaters:** Islam opposes marriage with idolaters. However, a man can marry a non-Muslim girl if he believes that her idolatry is only nominal. But a Muslim woman under no circumstances is permitted to marry Non-Muslims.
- **Marriage within the circle of close relatives:** Marriage with relatively close kin such as mother, mother's mother, sister, sister's daughter, mother's sister, father's sister, daughter, wife's mother, wife's daughter born to the first husband, son's wife, is not allowed.
- **Marrying a woman during her *iddat* period:** No Muslim woman is allowed to marry a man as long as she is undergoing *iddat*.
- **Sisters becoming co-wives:** As per the Islamic rule, sororate is not allowed. Sisters cannot be married simultaneously by the same person. However, one can marry one's wife's sister only after the death of the wife or only after giving divorce to the wife.
- **Marriage with people of premature age and unsound mind:** Marriage with a man of unsound mind is regarded as invalid. Marriage of premature persons without the prior consent of their parents is also treated as invalid marriage.

Difference between irregular marriage (*Fasid*) and invalid marriage (*Batir*)

Fasid marriage is one which could be converted into *sahi nikah* by removing its irregularities. *Batir* marriages, on the contrary, cannot be converted to *sahi nikah*.

Examples for *Fasid*:

- Absence of witnesses at the time of making or accepting the proposal
- Muslim man marrying the fifth woman
- Marriage with a woman who is undergoing *iddat*.

Example for *Batir*:

- Marriage within the close circle of relatives.
- Muslim woman marrying an idolater.
- Muslim man marrying two–three women who are his sisters.

Importance of *Mehr* or Dower in Muslim marriage

Dower is the sum of money or other property which a wife is entitled to get from her husband in consideration of the marriage. As per the Muslim law, dower is an

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obligation imposed upon a husband as a mark of respect for wife. Its main purposes are—(i) to put a check on the husband to divorce wife, and (ii) to enable a woman to look after herself after her husband's death or divorce.

Marriage proposals and *Mehr* discussions normally go together. The bride's relative called *wali* plays an important role in the discussion. He only keeps the account of *Mehr*. Normally, a part of *Mehr* (in majority of the instances 1/3 of the amount agreed upon) is paid by the bridegroom to *wali* (an elderly relative of the wife who may be her own father or any other such responsible person) on the third day of the marriage. The balance is generally paid when the husband dies or divorces the wife. It is the right of the wife to claim the *Mehr* from her husband. She may even refuse to accompany him if the agreed-upon instalment of *Mehr* is not paid.

The Muslim law does not fix the amount of *mehr*. The husband is obliged to pay some amount as *mehr*. The amount to be paid as *mehr* is normally decided before or after or at the time of the marriage ceremony. The amount of *mehr*, depends upon the social position, descent, age, intelligence, beauty and other qualities of the bride.

The amount of *mehr* cannot be reduced but it can be increased at husband's will. A wife can voluntarily agree to reduce the amount or make a gift of whole of it to her husband or to his heirs. The amount of *Mehr* varies from one *dinar* upwards. There is no maximum limit for that. According to the Islamic law, the wife has absolute right over the *mehr* amount. A widow's claim for *mehr* is normally regarded as her claim over her husband's property. She can retain the property till her *mehr* is paid; she need not wait for the consent of heirs for the possession of her husband's property. In case the divorce takes place through mutual agreement, or by wife's initiative, her right to *mehr* gets extinguished.

Divorce as recognized by Shariah Act, 1937

This Act provides for following three forms of divorce:

- (a) ***Illa***: If the husband swears by God to abstain from sexual relations with his wife for a period of four months or more, or for a specified period, he is said to make *illa*. If he sticks on to his words, then marriage gets dissolved.
- (b) ***Zihar***: In this type, the husband of sound mind declares in the presence of two witnesses that his wife is like his mother to him. Though marriage is not dissolved with this, it gives scope for the wife to go to court on this ground.
- (c) ***Lian***: In this type, the husband accuses his wife of being guilty of adultery. This, however, gives an opportunity to the wife to go to court insisting on her husband either to withdraw such an allegation or prove the same.

Provisions for divorce as per the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939

This Act entitles a Muslim woman to seek the dissolution of her marriage on the following grounds:

- Whereabouts of husband not known for 4 years.
- Failure of husband to provide for her maintenance for 2 years.

- Imprisonment of husband for 7 years or more.
- Impotency of husband since the time of marriage.
- Failure of husband to fulfil marital obligations for 3 years.
- Insanity of husband for a period 2 years and husband's incurable diseases like leprosy, venereal diseases, etc.
- Husband's physical and mental cruelty.
- Marriage being pushed upon her before she attained 15 years, but she has to seek divorce before she completes 18th year.
- Any other valid ground which the Muslim law permits.

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Legal Effects of *Iddat*

- In a divorce case, the wife involved is bound to wait for *iddat* period.
- During the period of *iddat*, the husband is obliged to provide for her maintenance.
- The wife is not supposed to give her consent for another marriage till the *iddat* period is completed.
- On the completion of *iddat* period, the wife can legitimately demand the *deferred mehr*.

Social effects of *iddat*

- *Iddat* serves as a restraining influence on inconsiderate haste on the part of the husband and on the tempo of divorce. It gives time for the husband to think and act. The husband may simply take back the wife during the period of *iddat* and suspend the divorce.
- *Iddat* makes it clear whether the wife is pregnant or not, as the fact of pregnancy sometimes brings reconciliation between them.
- If it becomes apparent during *iddat* that the divorced wife is pregnant, the husband is recommended to take her back and treat her with consideration till the child is born. The child belongs to the husband if it is not born out of adultery. The wife also cannot marry anyone else until her delivery.
- The *iddat* period is normally three months. In the case of a widow, the duration is 4 months 10 days. According to Muslim Women's Protection of Rights on Divorce Act, 1986, a wife can demand from her husband her maintenance during the *Iddat*.

The unilateral divorce and polygyny among Muslims is so much criticized that many people clamour for uniform civil code regarding marriage. The Muslims oppose it because they not only consider it an interference in Muslim personal laws, but also because the content of the UCC will be mainly drawn from the Hindu Act. The arguments normally given in favour of the UCC are:

- National integration and secularism will be promoted.
- Growing communal and caste violence will be contained.
- The process of civil justice will be strengthened.

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- The gender biases will be mitigated and feelings of equality among women will be perpetuated.

The arguments normally given against the UCC are:

- Muslims themselves do not feel any necessity for the change.
- The political groups are exploiting the religious sentiments of the people for creating their vote bank.
- Muslims hold that Hindus are trying to impose their cultural values on Muslims as the provisions in the UCC are mainly taken from the Hindu law.
- The UCC will generate heat, discontent and intolerance among different religious groups, particularly among minorities.
- Most Muslims hold that the UCC will tantamount to a denial of the fundamental right of freedom to religion and will hamper the development of the concept of 'unity in diversity'.

It may be concluded that if the UCC is not perceived from the religious perspective but is viewed as a measure to check evils of polygyny and easy verbal divorce, a detailed discussion with non-orthodox religious leaders of different communities can help in the formulation of legislation.

2.5.1 Changes in Marriage Structure

The practice of marriage is not uniform throughout the country of India. It varies from place to place, religion to religion, caste to caste, and even class to class. There are multiple customs and rituals, which are performed in these marriages, which could have common elements or differs completely. This section discusses the different meanings of marriage according to major religions.

Hindu Marriage as a Sacrament

In Christian faith, sacrament is a token custom, where any common person connects oneself with the Almighty Lord. The Baltimore Catechism defines a sacrament as 'an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace'. That connection, called inner grace, is transmitted to a parishioner by a priest or bishop and he makes uses detailed rules of phrases and actions in one of seven particular rituals.

In Hindu culture, marriage is a *samskara* (purificatory ceremony or sacrament). According to the Hindu religious practices, this rite is the last in the list of ten sacraments, which is used for admonishment by a person for cleaning one's body from inherited taints. This perspective has also been agreed upon by a number of courts of laws across the country. In practical terms, a Hindu wedlock or marriage is considered more of a spiritual obligation and little of a physical comfort. In one of the judgements of Calcutta High Court relating to Hindu Marriage in the case of *Sandhya Chatterjee vs Salil Chandra Chatterjee* in 1980, the court has stated that it is 'more religious than secular in character'.

'Vivah', which is a Sanskrit term, literally means the commemoration of 'carrying away' the wife to the home of the husband. Indicating a contrast from

the above-mentioned judgement, it is clear that marriage has travelled a great distance from just being a simple ceremony to an entire bunch of wedlock ceremonies, sometimes even extending to a few days. In the view of the above context, the most suitable description of a Hindu wedlock is the one, which was given by R. N. Sharma. According to him, marriage is “a religious sacrament in which a man and a woman are bound in permanent relationship for the physical, social and spiritual purposes of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure”.

The marriage has also been defined in the Vedas, according to which, “the union of flesh with flesh and bone with bone”. The Vedas give further clarity about the institution of marriage and state that “It is a union which the Vedas regard as indissoluble. As long as her husband is alive, the wife is enjoined to regard him as her God; likewise, the wife is declared to be half the body of her husband (Ardhangini) and shares with him equally, the fruits of all his acts, good or bad.”

Manusmriti (Laws of Manu) state that that a man who is not married cannot develop his personality entirely and must be called an unfinished and flawed man. Moreover, the women are only created to become mothers and men are created to become. According to Manusmriti, a man who is not married will not attain peace even after his death. The epic Mahabharata makes one believe that if a girl is not married, then she won't be able to go to heaven and she will not be able to do so because she has not been in married life.

The perception of Hindu marriage as only a civil association or social contract is completely unfamiliar to the Hindu mentality. In the words of K.M. Kapadia, “Hindu marriage continues to be a sacrament; only it is raised to an ethical plane”. In common language, marriages in the context of Indian culture or more specifically in Hindu culture, is a divine association between a man and a woman for divine attainment. The concept of Hindu marriage as a sacrament means that “as marriage is said to be sacred it is irrevocable, the parties to the marriage cannot dissolve it at will. They are bound to each other until the death of either of them; and the wife is supposed to be bound to her husband even after death.” After the performance of the marriage ceremony, the wife and husband are considered as one individual and for this reason the ‘Gotra’ of the wife is combined into the status and personality of the husband. In the ancient times, marriage was treated as so holy that the disbanding of marriage caused by reasons other than death was considered to be blasphemous and against the nature.

It also has to be acknowledged that the conception of a Hindu marriage as a sacrament is still carrying on even after the legislation of the Hindu Marriage Act, which was passed in the year 1955. The concept of Hindu marriage as a sacrament is in no manner contradictory to the provisions of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 as this legislation was only made to specify precise circumstances leading to a valid Hindu wedlock and some justification for getting a separation and divorce validated by law. The theory and conception of divorce was never accepted or documented by the ancient laws of Hindu culture and thus, this legislation was a very important step towards modernization introduced in the Hindu society.

In Hindu law, marriage is considered as a sacrament, which is an unbreakable unification of a husband and a wife, without an end, but the culture has transformed

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through the course of time and so has the notion of marriage. Various authors in the ancient world have stated that a Hindu marriage is principally a sacrament but also has a characteristic of a contract. Additionally, a Hindu marriage is one of the few sacraments that are common to all classes of people. With the passage of time the institution of marriage has seen numerous changes. People these days do not consider marriage as a religious duty but mainly marry for companionship. Marriages are not even considered as permanent because separation is publicly and officially allowed.

It will also not be wrong to say that a marriage as per the Hindu law is neither just a *samskara* nor sacrament but the single *samskara* approved for women under the Hindu Law. As per *Manusmriti*, the Hindu marriage is essentially a gift of the bride. So, an important component of a Hindu wedlock is the ritual of *Kanyadan*. The ritual of *Kanyadan* completes all the obligations of a gift under the relevant Hindu Laws. Up to a certain extent, a Hindu wedlock is a gift and therefore, it is also a contract. Even though sometimes there are different viewpoints regarding the concept of 'Hindu marriage as a sacrament', but it is unanimously agreed that Hindu marriage is definitely a contract.

Traditional Forms of Hindu Marriage

The Hindu scriptures admit the following forms of marriage:

- **Brahma marriage:** Here, the girl, decorated with clothes and ornaments, is given in marriage to a learned and gentle bridegroom. This is the prevalent form of marriage in Hindu society even today.
- **Prajapatya marriage:** Here, the daughter is offered to the bridegroom by blessing them with the enjoyment of marital bliss and the fulfillment of *Dharma*.
- **Aarsh marriage:** Here, a *rishi* used to accept a girl in marriage after giving a cow or bull and some clothes to the parents of the girl. These articles were not the price of the bride, but indicated the resolve of the *rishi* to lead a household life.
- **Daiva marriage:** Here, the girl, decorated with ornaments and clothes, was offered to the person, who conducted the function of a *Purohit* in *yajna*.
- **Asura marriage:** Here, the bridegroom gets the bride in exchange for some money or articles given to the family members of the bride.
- **Gandharva marriage:** This form of the marriage is the result of mutual affection and love between the bride and the bridegroom. An example of this type of marriage is the marriage of the King *Dushyanta* with *Shakuntala*. In this form of marriage, the ceremonies can be performed after sexual relationship between the bride and the bridegroom.
- **Rakshas marriage:** This type of marriage was prevalent in the age, when women were considered to be the prize of a war. In this type of marriage, the bridegroom takes away the bride from her house forcibly after killing and injuring her relatives.

- **Paishach marriage:** This type of marriage has been called to be the most degenerative form. In this type, a man enters into sexual relationship with a sleeping, drunk, or unconscious woman. Such acts were regularized after the performance of marriage ceremony, which took place after physical relationship between the man and woman.

According to D. N. Majumdar, 'Hindu society now recognizes only two forms, the Brahma, and the Asura, the higher castes preferring the former, the backward castes the latter, though here and there among the higher castes the Asura practice has not died out'. This view rightly describes the present position of the traditional forms of Hindu marriage.

Among the Hindus, marriage is of great individual and social significance. It is a socially approved union of man and woman aiming at procreation, pleasure, and observance of certain social obligations. The Hindu marriage has undergone changes in the last few decades. Three significant changes in the Hindu marriage may be noted as:

- The Hindu young men and women today marry not very much for performing religious ties but for lifelong companionship.
- The marital relations are no longer treated as unbreakable, or irrevocable, as divorce is socially and legally permissible.
- The ideal of *pativrata* has lost its significance for there is legal provision for widow remarriage and divorce.

Endogamy

Endogamy is the form of marriage in which one must marry within one's own caste or other group. This rule does not permit marriage of close kin. Endogamous marriage is that which is confined within the group. As a matter of fact, endogamy and exogamy are relative words. That which is endogamous from one viewpoint is exogamous from another viewpoint. In the sub-caste exogamy of Hindus, the marriage is contracted outside the sub-caste but the same marriage would be endogamous from the viewpoint of the race or nation.

In India, the following kinds of endogamy can be found:

- **Divisional or tribal endogamy:** Here, no individual can marry outside his own tribe or division.
- **Caste endogamy:** Here, the marriage is contracted within the caste.
- **Class endogamy:** Here, the marriage can take place between people of only one class or of a particular status.
- **Sub-caste endogamy:** Here, the choice for marriage is restricted to the sub-caste.
- **Race endogamy:** Here, one can marry in the race.

Advantages of endogamy

Following are the advantages of endogamy:

- Purity in the group is maintained.

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- Other people do not gain authority over the group's wealth.
- It tends to maintain the sense of unity within the group.
- Women are happier within their own group.
- The business secrets of the group are kept intact.

Disadvantages of endogamy

Following are the disadvantages from which endogamy suffers:

- It shatters the national unity because the nation is divided into small endogamous groups.
- The scope for choice of a life partner is limited due to which malpractices such as unsuitable marriages, polygamy, dowry system, bride price, etc. are fostered.
- It generates hatred and jealousy for other groups. This is the main root cause of casteism in India.

Exogamy

It is the opposite of endogamy. In exogamy, marriage in one's group is not permitted, and brides are sought from other groups. While endogamy exhibits conservative attitude, exogamy is progressive. Exogamy is also approved of from the biological viewpoint as it leads to healthy and intelligent offspring. But this fact applies only to marriages outside the wider group. In the Indian society, more harm than benefit has resulted from exogamous marriages. Most people do not intentionally approve of marriages within groups but do so only when the group is considered as limited only to the children of one's parents or to two of their future generations. There can be no benefit in declaring marriage within group unlawful, when the group includes a greater number of people.

Forms of exogamy

The following forms of exogamy are found in India:

- **Gotra exogamy:** Among the Brahmins, the prevailing practice is to marry outside the *Gotra*. People who marry within the *Gotra* have to repent and treat the women like a sister or mother. This restriction has been imposed since people of one *Gotra* are believed to have similar blood.
- **Parivar exogamy:** Besides the *Gotra*, the Brahmins also forbid marriage between persons belonging to the same *parivar*. People who utter the name of a common saint at religious functions are believed to be from the same *parivar*. Thus, *parivar* is a kind of religious and spiritual bond. Marriages within the *Gotra* and *parivar* have been forbidden from the time of *Dharmasutras*.
- **Gotra of Purohit exogamy:** Among the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaisyas*, it is the *Gotra* of the *purohit* which is taken into consideration for the purpose of exogamy. In these, the ancestry is carried on not through the saint but some follower. Sometimes, the *Gotra* takes the name of the village where this first person lived. In this way, thousands of *Gotras* have come into being.

- **Village exogamy:** Among many Indian tribes, it is the recognized custom to marry outside the village. This restriction is prevalent in the Munda and some other tribes of Chhota Nagpur. Among some tribes of Baroda, marriage is forbidden within the village. For example, the Naga tribe of Assam is divided into Khels. 'Khel' is the name given to the residents of the particular place, and people of one Khel cannot marry each other. The Garo tribe is divided into two *Katchis* or *Phratries* called *Marak* and *Sangama*; between them inter-marriage is prohibited.
- **Pinda exogamy:** In Hindu society, marriage within the *pinda* is prohibited. According to Brahaspati, offspring from five maternal generations and seven paternal generations are *sapinda* and thus, they cannot marry. However, in several parts of India, the generation of the mother is not considered to be *sapinda*. At some places, the prohibition extends over three maternal and five paternal generations. According to the *Baudhayana Dharmasutra*, marriage with the offspring of the maternal uncle or father's sister is improper. Among the Brahmins in the South, with the exception of Namboodari Brahmins, it is considered good to marry the daughter of one's maternal uncle. The Velum caste of Madras does not forbid marriage with one's niece, while in the Telugu-Tamil districts and among the lowly Brahmins, this union can be contracted with the daughter of one's sister-in-law.

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Muslim Marriages as a Contract

The Indian Contract Act, 1872 details the acts describing contracts in the country of India. This law was enacted by the British and it defines the contracts constituting conditions in which promises are made by the people. It has a legal validity and is enforced through constitutional rights and duties. It is described under the section 2(H) Indian Contract Act, 1872, which states the contract as "an agreement which is enforceable by law."

A marriage in the Muslim religion is called a Nikah, which is both a contract of civil nature and also a religious subject, which can be discontinued through the process of divorce. In the Muslim society, marriage is ubiquitous as it ensures chastity. The religion of Islam has made it nearly binding for its followers to marry, for a variety of reasons. Prophet Mohammad has also emphasized that a married life is better than an unmarried life.

Muslim Marriage Act

In the year 1954, the Muslim Marriage Act was designed for the Indian legal system. This legislation manages the performance and commemoration of marriages in the Muslim society in India. As per the provisions of this legislation, both a husband and a wife have to give their free consent for the marriage out of their free will. A legal and conclusive contract either verbally or written is acknowledged as necessary for a credible Muslim marriage, which also gives a framework for the rights and duties of both the husband and wife. If one considers this from a religious viewpoint, the marriage in the Muslim society has generally been considered as a holy and sacred ceremony. Marriages in the Muslim context as is the case in other cultures are not free from various sacred and pious morals. Together with its worldly

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and materialistic facet, Muslim marriages even share the features of a holy union of two individuals meant to accomplish sacred ends.

As per the sacred books of Islam, like Quran and Hadith among others, married couples are rigorously required to be with each other and also have affection, devotion, and respect for each other. Gratification, affection, and devotion to one another has been said to be a noble act in Islam. Muslim marriage as per Islamic culture and tradition is treated as a sacrament as per the views given in the Quran and the traditions, along with the rites and rituals of Islam.

According to the observation of Justice Mahmood, “Marriage among Muhammedans is not a sacrament, but purely a civil contract and though it is solemnized generally with the recitation of certain verses from the Quran, yet the Muhammedan law doesn’t positively prescribe any service peculiar to the occasion”. As per the description of Justice Mahmood, marriage in Islam is dependent on the offer from one person and the agreement or the approval from the other person. As per the above lines, Justice Mahmood’s viewpoint marriages in Muslims shouldn’t only be taken as a contract of the civil nature. According to him the Mahr (dower), in the context of marriages in Muslim culture, makes the marriages civil in nature.

Marriages in the Muslim community have always been considered as a contract and not a sacrament. Nevertheless, it has always been considered as authorised for various classes of people to have a valid and legal relationship and to give birth. In Muslim marriage, all the elements of a civil contract can generally be seen. Marriage as a civil accord is filed by two individual persons or by those people representing these two persons. Since the Muslim marriage is a civil contract, it also gives legitimate privileges and responsibilities to both the individuals. The principal intention of a marriage in a Muslim culture is to validate a legitimate (halal) intercourse between a man and a woman so that their children have legal identity whenever they take birth.

The contract of a Muslim marriage also imposes additional privileges and responsibilities for both the wife and the husband. Separately from the fundamental obligations of a ‘mutual good treatment’, which is of course not constitutionally described, the privileges and responsibilities are different for both the wife and the husband. These privileges and responsibilities in some cases are also mutual for example non-performance by one individual to carry out any particular responsibility may endanger their right for a specified benefit. One of the primary responsibilities of a man in a Muslim marriage is to grant compensation to a woman as and when Mahr (dower) takes place. The concept of Mahr (dower) is also quoted in the Quran, which is the holy book of Islam. Further, due to the concept of Mahr (dower), the married women are further entitled to a variety of privileges such as accommodation, clothing, and assistance, which is of course not been defined by the provisions of the relevant laws. If the circumstances permit, the married woman also get the assistance of a minimum of one attendant or helper to assist her in household tasks and be with her throughout the day as these kinds of customs were prevalent in the ancient times. According to the contract of a Muslim marriage

if a husband has more than one wife, then all the women are entitled for an equal share of husband's property and time or in simple words, all wives get equal share of whatever their husband has.

If one considers the various judgements and orders in the different courts of law in India, the one conclusion that can easily be drawn is that the institution of marriage is generally a contract of civil nature as per the Muslim law in the country. As this accomplishes each and every requirement of a civil contract as per the Indian Contract Act, 1872 such as acceptance, free consent, and consideration among others. Finally, on further examination and scrutiny of Muslim marriage as a contract, it can be said that the marriage as per the Muslim traditions and law is neither a contract of civil nature nor it fulfils the conditions of being a sacrament. The marriages in Muslim culture are a combination of both a civil contract as well as a sacrament.

Practices in Christian Marriage

The church in the Christian faith has invariably stated that marriage has a significant status for the Almighty. As per the code of United Church of North India, marriage is a holy ceremony and is sanctified by the Lord himself. According to the traditions of the Christians, marriage is a sacrament in which husband and wife are destined with each other for good or bad. Marriages in Christian culture are commemorated in Churches and the approval of the Bishop is needed for the marriage to be valid.

Christian marriages in India

The Christian marriages in India are both a blend of Indian and Western cultures. The fundamental spirit of marriage remains same as per conventional traditions, but in India an array of indigenous Indian practices has influenced the ceremony over the last few decades. In India, marriages are a captivating combination of tradition and Hollywood fashion. Generally, the pre and post wedlock ceremonies that take place are Indian. Below is the list of certain essential practices that are a part of Christian weddings in India.

Pre-Wedding Rituals

- **Engagement:** Engagement is predominantly the most important pre-wedding ritual in a Christian marriage. It is generally a sober and small-scale ceremony with only close family members and associates invited. The ceremony of a man putting a ring on left ring finger of a lady indicating the marriage of both the individuals. The rings have to be sanctified by the pastor either in the Church or at the place of engagement. These days even the ladies put a ring on the right ring finger of a man. The ceremony normally concludes with the exchange of gifts between the two families.
- **Bridal Shower:** This ceremony is a party given by the girl's relatives and close acquaintances before her marriage. A gathering is organized where a number of activities take place and the bride is showered with gifts, which might be useful for her upcoming married life. A pink cake is given to the bride in which a silver thimble is concealed. The friend who eats the silver

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thimble is assumed to be the next bride. This day is said to be the day, when the bride gets to fulfill all her desired wishes, before she begins her journey for a sincerely devoted relationship.

- **Bachelor Party:** This practice is equal to the bridal shower but in this a party is given to a boy by his relatives and close acquaintances before the marriage. This has been a traditionally western event but nowadays, this has found its way in India. In these events, the entry of girls is not permitted and male members of a family bond before the marriage ceremony takes place. Bachelors' party can take a number of forms from a sporting event to an adventure activity to just a visit to the boy's favourite destination and so on.
- **Rose Ceremony:** This is kind of a baptism ritual that takes place in some Indian Christian families, generally in the Southern part of India. This ceremony takes place just before the wedding and is equal to the Haldi ceremony in a Hindu wedding. In this, both the husband and wife take a ceremonial bath in their respective houses. They are anointed with oil, their relatives and close acquaintances soak their hands in the oil and makes a cross sign on the forehead. Oil is even splashed in the ears and head, followed by coconut juice or rose, which is applied on the various parts of the body. This is then accompanied by a rose prayer and dinner.

Wedding Rituals

- **Welcoming of the bride:** On the wedding morning, relatives and friends of the bride go to her home with the wedding dress, which is sanctified by the pastor before it is given to her. The bride then gets ready and goes to the Church in a car which is arranged by her husband and is accompanied by their close relatives and friends. At the entrance of the Church, the bride is welcomed by the boy's relatives and is accompanied inside by the boy's best man.
- **The Wedding Mass:** Just before the actual marriage ceremony, a wedding mass takes place in the Indian Christian community. In this wedding mass, a number of sacred songs are sung by the pastor. The mass begins with a prayer and the persons present inside the Church can join the prayer, if they wish to do so. This is followed by the reading of the Bible from both the New and the Old Testament. The verse from the Bible is selected by the pastor, but any guest present inside the Church can read the same. This is then followed by singing the Psalm by the guests and finally, the pastor delivering the sermons.
- **The Wedding vows:** Once the wedding mass takes place, the pastor begins the actual wedding ceremony by giving an opening speech, in which, the importance about the institution of marriage is discussed. After this, both the boy and girl have to speak the marriage vows. Generally, in India, the marriage vows are selected by the pastor and the couple just have to speak after him. In the vow, they usually assure each other that both of them will never leave each other in all the good and bad phases of life.

- **Solemnizing the marriage:** The marriage ceremony is blessed in the first place by exchanging rings by the bride and the groom. Among the South Indian Christians, the boy ties a Thali around the neck of the girl. Thali is simply a Mangalsutra with a cross sign embed on it, which is attached in a gold or silver chain. The wedding dress known as Matrakodi is given by the boy's side to the girl, who wears it over her head. Then, the pastor blesses the couple and declares them to be husband and wife. Then, the couple seeks blessings from all those, who are present in the Church.

Post-Wedding rituals

- **Reception:** After the conclusion of the marriage, the husband and wife leave the Church, which is usually followed by a lunch for relatives and friends. In the wedding buffet, speeches are given by parents of the couple, and a wedding cake is cut in the honour of the newlywed couple. This is usually followed by a dance and singing performance by the relatives and close friends of the bride and groom.

Changing Trends in Marriages

Since last two decades or so, the Indian society has seen an epic transformation in terms of its norms and traditions. This transformation has been observed among all people irrespective of their religions, caste, or class. The traditions are no longer upheld in the strictest of terms. The new kinds of relationships and marriages have been officially/constitutionally as well as culturally being recognized. Some of these major transformations are discussed in this section.

Inter-Caste Marriages

Inter-caste marriage is the union of a husband and a wife belonging to two diverse castes. The Indian society restrains marriage of an individual outside their own caste. In our country, marriages still take place mainly on the basis of Jatis (caste) and Up-Jati (sub-caste). The meaning of the above sentence is that marriages in India are inevitably associated with Jati Vyavastha (caste system), with its background in the religion. This certainly does not mean that inter-caste marriages do not take place in the country. They are on the rise because of a variety of factors such as schooling, employment, rise of middle-class, economic background, and rural to urban migration.

The country of India is still mainly a conventional society with stiff social class and religious arrangements. Two very important parts of this conventional society are caste and religion, which play a dominant role in the marriage of an individual. For an average Indian to even consider marrying in some other caste is still a distant dream. As per the survey in 2014, only about 5% of the total marriages that are conducted in India are inter-caste marriages. Though small, this survey clearly shows that a step has been taken towards the elimination of the rigid caste and class-based society in the country. This marriage system in the country is a very modern aspect of the society and still a great distance has to be covered before a visible change is noticed. Marriages of inter-caste nature in the country can proved to be a method of removing caste system from the cities as well as the rural areas.

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Types of inter-caste marriages

As you have seen in the earlier section, there are two types of inter-caste marriages:

- (i) **Hypergamy or Anuloma:** These types of marriages take place between men of higher caste (Varna) and women of lower caste (Varna). These marriages were not common but were accepted by the society in general conditions. These types of marriages were allowed by the society but there were some conditions attached to it. These types of marriages were common in the ancient Indian society. The most important aspect of these kinds of marriages was that Brahmins had the permission to marry lower caste women including Sudras.
- (ii) **Hypogamy or Pratiloma:** These types of marriages take place between men of lower caste (Varna) and women of higher caste (Varna). Hypogamy marriages were considered to be doomed by all the sections of the Hindu social class. Even in the present-day society, hypogamy marriages are not encouraged among the different sections of the society. As far the rules of endogamy are concerned a good number of changes have been noticed. These types of inter-caste marriages have increased over the last few years.

Legal validity of inter-caste marriages

A number of laws have been enacted in India to help inter-caste marriages. One of the main laws was the Hindu Marriage Validity Act, which was enacted in the year 1949, according to which the marriages among Hindus will not be null or void if it is between different castes and the caste of the individuals will make no difference in any kind of marriage. This was followed by Special Marriages Act 1954 to help marriage among various castes and religions. Further, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 was passed to validate inter-caste marriages.

Inter-caste marriages are on the rise in India. One of the main reasons regarding the increase is the decline in the social barrier among the people. In the Hindu culture, castes, and sub-castes were very much central to the theme of living a life. In the ancient Indian culture, the persons of each caste and sub-caste wanted to tie the knot within their own castes. Any infringement of this rule was considered a grave crime, the penalty for which was usually the expulsion from the community. Of late, however, the society is doing away with such strict codes in the name of love.

Pattern of inter-caste marriages

The recent modification in the marriage pattern in the country is just a new occurrence because of a number of factors such as transformation, growth, and worldwide integration of the economy. A number of social, economic, and cultural aspects have also contributed to the increase in such types of marriages. In such types of marriages, a very important dimensional fluctuations is also taking place in the recent decades. Inter-caste marriages are generally more in economically developed states of the country than the under-developed ones. It is generally believed that with the advancement of the society, the number of inter-caste marriages will increase further. But these kinds of marriages in India have still a

long way to go before they are completely free of caste bias. As such there is no general approval for these kinds of marriages and they still have not become very common in the Hindu culture, but the matter of fact is that their number has increased over the years.

The idea of caste integration should start from the big towns and cities and move towards the villages as the cities have a cultured, well-informed and conscious residents, who can make the transition very smooth. In India, inter-caste marriages, of late have received public encouragement and have been backed by authorities and celebrities. Even the Supreme Court of India has stated that these kinds of marriages are beneficial for the country and can also be a unifying aspect for India. Basically, there is no kind of bias to stop inter-caste marriages in the country. With the advancement of internet, the concept of inter-caste marriages has received a boost as in the online matrimony sites the individual has to declare that he or she is ready to marry outside his or her caste.

Inter-Religion Marriage

Inter-religion Marriage also acknowledged as Inter-Faith Marriage have been customarily known as 'mixed marriages'. These kinds of marriages take places between a man and woman, who belong to different religions or faiths. In general circumstances, inter-religion marriages in legal terms are a civil contract between two different individuals, but in some cases, they may also be termed as religious marriages. One point to be noted here is that these kinds of marriages are different from the notion of spiritual integration, social integration, sacred secession, and apostasy. In spite of the above differences, the above-mentioned points remain connected to the various aspects of inter-religion marriages in some way or another. Most of the faiths do not acknowledge these kinds of marriages but allow them to take place under certain conditions.

Special Marriage Act

In India as such there is no law to regulate inter-religion Marriages in the country. In the absence of any law, a legislation was enacted by the name of Special Marriage Act in the year 1954. This Act was a special form of law to help people of different castes or religions to marry. One of the highlights of this law is that persons who marry under this act are not even administrated by any personal laws. The Special Marriage Act is unique in itself as this law is not troubled with the person's religion. This law is applicable to all persons who wants to marry out of their religion or caste. One of its distinctive features is that this law is not only applicable to those persons who marry or register under this law, but also to all the Indian citizens, so that every person has a better idea of the law and marriages and inter-caste or inter-religion gains legal validity and social acceptability.

Challenges faced

In any society or country if one goes against the rules, regulations, or established norms, it is natural that issues will arise as no one wants to be seen different from their league. Some of the peculiar challenges are as follows:

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- **Objection of parents and in-laws:** The greatest issue of inter-caste, inter-state, or inter-religion wedlock is that the newlywed husband and wife face serious condemnation from parents and denunciation from the society. Also, the husband and wife do not feel comfortable in their respective in-laws; families and houses. Every now and then, it develops into something terrible and upset the harmony of the family. It can build a condition, in which even the death of a senior family member may take place. It gets complicated for all the family members to give love, warmth, support and assistance to each other.
- **Mental challenges:** These kinds of marriages are generally based on passionate and emotional relationship. After the wedding, if the dreams/wishes of the man or the woman do not get fulfilled or if they are not able to adjust themselves in relation to social environment, approach or holy practices, they start finding fault with each other and starts fighting leading to all sorts of problems.
- **Volatility in family life:** The chances that these kinds of marriages will not survive are much more real and practical as all sorts of problems occurs in such types of cases. According to Elliot and Merrill in their book, *Social Disorganization* (1961), in these kinds of marriages the chances of separation are much more factual because of unavoidable effects of passionate wedlock. Hence, it becomes very complicated to have a steady family existence by cooperating in the married life.
- **Adjustment of children within the society:** Customs, traditions, and religion dissimilarities between the couple develop complication for the children, as they fail to understand which religion to follow and what to do when a dilemma arises. These kinds of marriages in the future may also create problems for the marriages for such kind of children. Even other cousins in the family and children in the society do not like to mix with them. Such children in most of the cases does not receive love and affection from other members of the family, especially their grandparents.
- **Additional liabilities on couple:** The husband and wife most of the times have to bear all their monetary expenses, in addition to their household tasks. The couple cannot anticipate or even think of approaching their parents or in-laws when a difficulty or situation arises. Sometimes these couples are also not given a right to inherit their parents' or family's property.
- **Deterioration of unity in society:** These kinds of marriages deteriorate the caste stringency and religious harmony among the different sections of the society. Due to inter-religion marriage the society loses many thinkers to the mass, which ultimately will stop the growth and development of the nation in the days to come.

Present scenario in India

Inter-religion marriages have never been painless and straight-forward for the couples and their family members because these kinds of marriages tend to increase the feeling of communalism, which in turn makes the social environment more

polarized. But in the recent years with the advancement of the social media, people are resisting such kind of marriages as they feel that they have to protect their religion at any cost.

However, the Supreme Court of India has said that no individual has the right to meddle in inter-religion marriage if the marriage takes place between two adults, who have given their consent to marry each other. The court while cautioning the role of community groups that generally functions as quasi-judicial corporations, stated that they have no legal validity in the legal and social framework of the country. The court even gave punishment to public authorities who did not fulfil their duty to help or take action against those individuals who did create issues.

Live-in Relationship

Live-In relationship is an understanding, in which, the unmarried couples stay with each other in the same living house for an extended period of time. This arrangement is the same as the institution of marriage and the couples live as if they are married to one another. This type of living arrangement is not acknowledged by the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 or any other personal law in the country. The basic difference between marriage and live-in relationship is that while marriage advocates adaption to one another, live-in relationships are all about personal freedom. The only law that gives rough legal protection and sustenance is the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

Legal status of live-in relationship

In a normal wedlock, the individuals have some privileges and obligations towards each other and society. In India, there are many personal laws for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and Christians that administer and conserve the marital relationship of the husband and wife. Live-in relationship for the Indian society is an incongruous concept as neither the Indian legal nor the social system recognizes such couples; in India without being married, you are not considered a couple. The theory of live-in relationship is also surrounded by controversial issues such as physical relations before marriage and children being born out of wedlock. The children which are born during the course of live-in relationship, have no right over the property and wealth as they are not considered legitimate. However, recently, the apex court of the country has stated that children born out of live-in relationships are not illegitimate and have full rights over the family property and wealth.

Till 1978 such relationship was mainly said to be illegal but the apex court of the country in its judgement stated that these relations are legal and have the same rights as marriages performed under various personal laws. The court further stated that if the basic conditions are satisfied of a normal marriage in these relationships then there is no reason as to why these are illegal. The Supreme Court has even given five categories of live-in relationship in the important order in Indra Sarma vs V.K.V.Sarma case in 2013. According to the court such relationship comes under the preview of Section 2(f) of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. It further stated that in live-in relationship all aspects of the relationship should be studied careful before making any decision.

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Pros of live-in relationship

- In these relationships, both the partners have sufficient time to know each other and hence, can decide whether they want to get married or call off their relationship.
- Rapport and harmony in relationship are important for any successful married life and the live-in relationships provides the couple with enough time to understand each other. Even the experts state that the couple should know each other well, before making the most important decision of their life.
- In today's fast-moving world, people want their space and freedom and hence do not like to commit to a full-fledged relationship and here is where live-in relationship can help the people to make informed decisions about their life and future.
- For today's rapid and swift life, live-in relationship is a blessing in disguise as individuals do not want to give up their privileges and want no liability on their shoulders.
- In a conventional marriage, one cannot leave and break the relationship anytime, but this privilege is available 24*7 in the case of a live-in relationship. This is much better than the prolonged process of divorce, which is very painful for both individuals and their families.
- Live-in relationship gives equal privileges in terms of legal and social framework to both the parties. Both the persons know they can end the relationship, without much of a problem. Hence, both respect each other in all facets of life.
- The pressure of society, family members among other things are not an issue in these kinds of relationships as the couple is not bound by any social or legal framework.

Cons of live-in relationship

- Live-in relationships involve full disclosure to each other, which can create a problem in their relationship. Impractical anticipation about each other can ruin the life of both the partners.
- These kinds of relationships are temporary in nature, in which, the partners' basic assumption is to just have a good time and move ahead in their lives, but in conventional marriages the focus is on long term commitment and hence is more stable in nature.
- Live-in partners are good for short term duration, but for a long-term relationship these kinds of living arrangement, can prove to be a disaster, especially in terms of emotional stability.
- The temporary nature of such relationships leads to break-up even in the smallest of the problem between the couple, but if the couple are married then they will make all efforts to sustain their relationship and life.
- Generally, the life of an individual changes after marriage, but the live-in partners expect that their respective partners remain the same, which is not

possible and hence these relationships are not recommended for a stable life.

- The fairer gender is often at the wrong end of such relationships, if this experiment is not a success. After a long-term live-in relationship, it is very difficult for a girl to find a life partner who will understand the girl, especially in a conventional society.
- The kids born out of such relationships are the one, who suffers the most if the relationship broke off. Additionally, there are various legal and social problems that the child has to face, which can have a negative effect on the health and mind of the young child.

Present scenario of live-in relationship

When the concept of live-in relationship was introduced in the country, it was unthinkable for the people to follow this kind of alien theory. But due to the advancement in the society and a number of factors, the thinking has gradually started to change, and more and more young people are coming forward to embrace this alien theory. The recent surveys and polls conducted on this issue, have shown the change in the perception of the young generations. It is clear that they want to adopt new methods of lives and be free from the conventional method of living.

Still a majority of the society thinks that live-in relationships are not good for the future generations as these children will not follow their culture and traditions, which in turn will weaken the nation. A good number of people still choose conventional marriage over the live-in relationships as they do not want to follow the unconventional way of life. Even the judiciary efforts to legalize this system has not made it acceptable to the society as a whole. The bottom-line is that live-in relationship is still a prohibited social practice among the majority of the society.

Gay Marriages

Marriage with the same gender is called gay marriages or homosexual marriages. In these types of wedlock, there is a union of two individuals belonging to the same gender, which is basically a kind of marital union between two girls or two boys. Most of the countries across the world do not acknowledge these kinds of marital unions, even when all the legal rules have been followed. The end result is that the partners do not gain the legal status of a spouse in the legal framework.

Section 377

As per Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, consensual sexual activities between the persons of the same sex is a crime. This provision was made in the year 1861 by the British in all their colonies. This provision made consensual sexual activities between the same sexes, a criminal offense as according to them, it was opposed to the natural law. The persons caught indulging in such activities had to face a jail sentence that was even extended to the life-sentence.

In the year 2018, the apex court of the country reversed this British era provision that made consensual sexual activities between the persons of the same

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gender, a crime. The full bench of the Supreme Court in an undisputed judgement stated that LGBTQ persons have the same fundamental rights as any other citizens of the country. Further, according to the judgement, the basic distinctiveness of an individual is very essential so any injustice should be subdued, changes should be adopted, and equal rights should be guaranteed. With this judgement on Section 377, the country became a part of 17 commonwealth nations that reversed such acts, making homosexuality legal and did away with the tradition that was left by the British in their former colonies.

The Supreme Court of the country while giving its judgement on Section 377 was also of the view that an adult in the country has the privileges to enter into wedlock by their own choice, without anyone forcing them to do so. After the judgement on Section 377 by the honourable Supreme Court, experts have stated that the act of displaying any prejudice against the gay marriages or persons should be held illegal.

Gay marriages in India

One of the famous proverbs about marriages is that they are made in heaven but nowadays this seems to be a very banal description because the word 'heaven' means something that is very sacred instead of a legal agreement in which two individuals wish to stay with one another and be a part of each other lives. Hence, gay marriages from a religious point of view, is considered repugnant as they are said to be of unorthodox nature. The resistance may result in deportation or exile of the concerned persons or in some extreme instances, even a death, in the name to save the religion or to follow the order of God. Gay marriages are generally said to be sacrilegious because wedlock are sacred and these kind of relationships are said to be of nefarious nature and the devil's work.

In our country, people who indulge in same-sex relationships are often considered as criminals both in the legal and social framework. If the relationship becomes public, then the society even banishes them for lifetime. Such actions by the society compel the individuals to hide their orientation as they do not want to face society's offensive behaviour and be treated as fugitives. But the historical judgement last year by the apex court changed the very definition of same gender marriage in the country and decriminalized such offences in the country. Due to the Supreme Court judgement, the same gender wedlock was given legal sanction. Although even without such legal sanction to these kinds of relationship, these people still lived with one another knowing that they have to face all kinds of hardships and embarrassment in each and every aspect of their life, but this in turn increased their promises to live with one another.

At the end of the day in spite of all the legal sanctions and Supreme Court judgement, gay marriages in the country has a long way to go before it becomes an accepted norm of the society. Before the concept of gay marriages becomes a reality in our country the society needs to have an exemplar change in its thinking in all the aspects. It is high time the society makes a sea change in its thinking and understand that everything should not be considered from the viewpoint of religion, but some issues should also be taken from the view of humanity and equity.

Check Your Progress

7. State one distinctive feature of family.
8. What is marriage?
9. Define exogamy.

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2.6 KINSHIP

In every society, a male at some time in his life, plays the roles of a husband, a father and a son and a brother in some family; and a female plays the roles of a wife, a mother and a daughter and a sister. But due to the *incest taboo*, a man cannot play the roles of a father and a husband in the same nuclear family in which he is a son and a brother. Similarly, a woman cannot play the roles of a mother and a wife in the same nuclear family in which she is a daughter and a sister. Hence, every adult individual belongs to two nuclear families—the *family of orientation* in which he was born and reared, and the *family of procreation* which he establishes by marriage. This fact of individual membership in two nuclear families gives rise to kinship system.

Because of the fact that individuals belong to two nuclear families, every person forms a link between the members of his family of orientation and those of his family of procreation. Such links bind individuals to one another through kinship ties.

According to Theodorson, 'kinship is a social relationship based upon family relatedness'. The nature of relationship which may be consanguineal or affinal determines the rights and obligations of related persons. A **kin group** is group united by ties of blood or marriage. Most kin groups, other than the family, are consanguineal. According to Theodorson, 'kinship system is the customary system of statuses and roles that governs the behaviour of people who are related to each other through marriage or descent from a common ancestor'. According to Mudrock, 'kinship is a structured system of relationship in which kin are bound to one another by complex inter-locking ties'.

Types of Kinship

There are mainly four kinship categories: primary kin, secondary kin, tertiary kin, and distant kin. The *primary kin* are those kin who belong to the Ego's nuclear families of orientation and procreation. Thus, father (Fa), mother (Mo), sister (Si), and brother (Br) in one's family of orientation, and husband (Hu), wife (Wi), son (So), and daughter (Da) in one's family of procreation, are one's primary kin. Each of Ego's primary kin will have his/her own primary kin, who will not be primary kin of Ego. These will be called Ego's *secondary kin*. For example, FaFa, FaMo, MoFa, MoBr, etc. There are 33 types of secondary kin. The primary kin of the secondary kin are called *tertiary kin*. There are 151 types of tertiary kin. Lastly, the primary kin of tertiary kin are called *distant kin*. Their number is very large. Kinship relationship characterizes every relationship between kin, and it determines reciprocal behaviour.

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Part of the reciprocal behaviour characterizing every relationship between kin, consists of a verbal element, i.e., the terms by which each addresses the other. In some cases, people use personal names, in others they use kinship terms, and in a few cases, they employ what Tylor has called 'teknonymy', i.e., combination of personal and kinship terms; for example, Suresh's father, Pinki's mother, and so forth. Murdock has classified kinship terms on three bases:

- (i) **Mode of use of kinship terms:** This refers to the kinship term employed either in direct address (*term of address*) or in indirect reference (*term of reference*). Some people have distinct set of terms for address and reference, for example, *pita* (*term of reference*) and *baba* (*term of address*) for father, or *mata* and *amba* for mother, but others make only grammatical distinctions or none at all. Terms of address tend to reveal more duplication and overlapping; for example, just as in English language the term 'uncle' is used for a number of people (like FaFa, MoBr, father's elderly cousin, and for all elderly persons). Similarly, in Indian languages, the term *bhai* is used not only for one's own brother but also for cousin and many other persons.
- (ii) **Linguistic structure of kinship terms:** On this basis, kinship terms are distinguished as elementary, derivative and descriptive. *Elementary* term is one which cannot be reduced to any other term, for example, English terms 'father', 'nephew', etc. or Hindi terms *sali*, *jeth*, *mata*, *pita*, *bhai*, *kaka*, *chacha*, *taoo*, *bahen*, etc. *Derivative* term is compounded from an elementary term, for example, grandfather, sister-in-law, stepson, or Hindi terms *pitamaha* (FaFa), *prapitamaha* (FaFaFa), *duhitr* (daughter), *mausa* (MoSi Hu), *bahnoi* (SiHu), etc. The *descriptive* term is one which combines two or more elementary terms to denote a specific relative, for example, wife's sister, brother's wife, sister's husband, or Hindi terms *bhratra-jaya* (BrWi), *arya-putra* (father-in-law), *mauseri-bahen*, (MoSiDa), *phuphera-bhai* (FaSiSo).
- (iii) **Range of application of kinship terms:** On this basis, kinship terms are differentiated as denotative and classificatory. *Denotative* or isolative term applies only to one kin as defined by generation, sex and geneological connection, for example, father, mother, brother, sister, or Hindi terms *pati*, *patni*, *bhai*, *bahen*, etc. The *classificatory* term applies to persons of two or more kinship categories, for example, grandfather (used both for father's father and mother's father), cousin (used for father's brother's son and mother's sister's son), brother-in-law (used for sister's husband and wife's brother). It is through the liberal use of classificatory terms that all societies reduce the number of kinship categories from the thousands to a very modest number. A term arises only by ignoring one or more fundamental criteria of distinction between kins, for example, criterion of sex (cousin refers to both male and female), generation (*bhai* ignores ego's own generation as well as first ascending or descending generation), affinity (whether kin related through blood or marriage), collaterality

(consanguineal relative of same generation, for example, brother and cousin), bifurcation (whether kin is secondary, tertiary or distant, for example, *pitamaha*), age (whether younger or older for example, *bhai*) and decedence (whether alive or dead).

Importance of Kinship

Next to family, kinship group plays a very crucial role in the daily life, rituals and social ceremonies of Hindus. People turn to their kin not only for help in exigencies of life but even on regular occasions too. The kinship group may consist of 4 to 5 families or as many as 20 to 35 families. The important kinship groups after the family are *vansh* (lineage) and *gotra* (clan).

Vansh is an extension of family. It is a consanguineous unilateral descent group whose members trace themselves from a known (and real) common ancestor. *Vansh* is based on more precise and specific genealogy. It may be either patrilineal or matrilineal.

The *Vansh* members are treated as brothers and have fraternal allegiance to each other. It ties lapse after several generations, but the number of obligated generations is not usually specified clearly. The *Vansh* fellows who live in the same neighbourhood or same village exchange economic aid, pool labour at harvest, help in dispute settlements, and cooperate with each other almost on all important occasions.

A main link among the families of a *vansh* is common participation in ritual functions. They participate together in each other's life-cycle observances like birth, death, etc. They worship the same deities and follow the same restrictions. The *Vansh* fellows also cooperate for economic purposes.

The *vansh* passes into *gotra* which is also a unilateral kin group but is larger than the *vansh*. It has a mythical ancestor and is exogamous. Each person inherits the *gotra* of his father. According to T.N. Madan, 'the separation of a lineage is usually a gradual process and comes about through the slow, piecemeal relinquishing of mutual exchanging—sometimes under protest and sometimes mutually accepted—rather than in an abrupt, explosive break'. The exogamous principle is, however, not relinquished, even after abandoning lineage cooperation.

The *vansh* relations are limited in time and space, whereas the *gotra* relations endure through time and across space. The members of a *gotra* usually have an origin story linking all of them to the same supernatural or mythical source. Cooperation within the *gotra* depends on economic factors as well as distance in place of residence. Today, the functions of *gotra* are minimal and is now limited for regulating marriage.

A man's relations with his feminal kin, *i.e.*, kin related through his mother, his married sisters, his wife and his married daughters, are equally important in his life. The exchange of gifts, periodic visits, reciprocal support in personal emergencies, and regular communication strengthen their relations with each other. Mother's brother has many obligations to perform for his neices and nephews on different occasions. The feminal kinsmen, are more concerned with the individual and his problems as a person than as a member of a group. Hence, we can say

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that feminal relationships help to integrate each person and each village into a social network of villages that affect many aspects of village life.

Features of Kinship in Different Zones

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Let us begin by looking at the features of kinship in the northern zone.

Northern zone

The socio-cultural correlates of kinship system are *language, caste* and *region* (plain and hilly). In addition to these three factors, it is possible to talk of kinship organization on the collective bases of caste and zone. Though kinship behaviour in the northern zone changes slightly from region to region and within each region from caste to caste, yet comparative study shows that it is possible to talk of an *ideal* northern pattern referring to practices and attitudes generally found to be common among the majority of castes. Some important features/folkways of the kinship organization of the northern zone are as follows:

- (i) Kin junior to 'ego' are addressed by their personal names and senior to ego by the kinship term.
- (ii) All children in ascending and descending generations are equated with one's own sibling group (brothers and sisters) and all children of one's sibling group are again equated with one's own children.
- (iii) The principle of unity of generations is observed (for example, great-grandfather and grandfather are given same respect as father).
- (iv) Within the same generation, the older and the younger kin are kept distinct.
- (v) The duties and behaviour patterns of the members of three generations are strictly regulated.
- (vi) Some of the ancient kinship terms having Sanskrit origin have been replaced by new terms; for example, *pitamaha* is replaced by *pita*. Suffix '*ji*' is added to kinship terms used for kin older than the speaker (for example, *chachaji, tauji*, etc.) In Bengal, instead of '*ji*' suffix '*moshai*' is added.
- (vii) Marriage among close kin is not permitted.
- (viii) After marriage, a girl is not expected to be free with her parents-in-law; but when she becomes a mother, she achieves position of respect and power, and restrictions on her are lessened.
- (ix) The family is so structured that children, parents and grandparents either live together or social kinship obligations towards them are clearly met.
- (x) Apart from the joint family which represents a person's intimate and nearest circle of relations, there is always a larger circle of kin who play a part in his life. This kindred represents the circle of his *patri*-kin or *matri*-kin who may stand by him and help him when the immediate family no longer suffices.

Central zone

The important features of kinship in Central India are:

- (i) Consanguinity is the main consideration which rules marriage.

- (ii) The kinship terminology shows intimacy and closeness between various kin. The relations between kin are governed by the custom of *neota*-gifts according to which cash-gift is given equivalent to cash-gift received. The *neota*-registers are maintained and preserved for generations.
- (iii) Many castes are divided into exogamous clans. Among some castes, the exogamous clans are arranged in hypergamous hierarchy.
- (iv) Some castes like Marathas and Kunbis practice bride-price too, though dowry custom also exists among them.
- (v) In Gujarat, *mamera*-type of cousin marriage (with mother's brother) and levirate (marriage with husband's brother) are practised by some castes.
- (vi) The custom of periodic marriages in Gujarat has led to child marriages as well as unequal marriages. Such marriages are practised even today.
- (vii) In Maharashtra, the clan organization of the Marathas is similar to that of the Rajputs which is arranged in a ladder manner. Clans are grouped into divisions and each division is named according to the number of clans it comprises; for example, *panch-kuli*, *sat-kuli*, etc. The clans are arranged in hypergamous order, the highest being the *panch-kuli*, followed by the *sat-kuli*, etc. The *panch-kuli* can marry among themselves or can take a girl from the *sat-kuli*, etc., but do not give their daughters outside the *panch-kuli*.
- (viii) Though the kinship terms are mostly northern, yet some terms are borrowed from the Dravidians in the south; for example, use of the term *anna* and *nana* for brother along with the term *dada*. Similarly, use of term *akka*, *tai* and *mai* for sister.
- (ix) Though the family system in Maharashtra is patrilineal and patrilocal, yet in castes like Marathas, the wife moves to and from her father's house very frequently. Once she goes to her father's house, it is difficult to get her back to her husband's house.
- (x) The kinship system of the tribals in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is somewhat different from that of the caste Hindus. The difference exists in terms of kinship terminology, marriage rules, inheritance system, and clan obligations.

Southern zone

The southern zone presents a complicated pattern of kinship system. Though patrilineal and patrilocal family is the dominant family type for the greater number of castes and communities like Nambodris, there are important sections of population which are matrilineal and matrilocal like Nayars; also, there are quite a few castes whose systems possess features of both patrilineal and matrilineal organizations like Todas.

Similarly, there are some castes/tribes who practise only polygyny like Asari, Nayars and yet others, who practise both polygyny and polyandry like Todas. Then there are polyandrous patrilineal groups like Asari and also polyandrous

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matrilineal groups like Tiyan, Nayars; and polygynous patrilineal groups like Namboodris but no polygynous matrilineal groups. There are patrilineal joint families and also matrilineal joint families. Matrilineal joint family, called *Tarwad*, is found among the Nairs of Malabar in Travancore and a few other groups.

The important characteristics of *Tarwad* are:

- (i) The property of *Tarwad* is the property of all males and females belonging to it.
- (ii) Unmarried sons belong to mother's *tarward*, but married sons belong to their wife's *Tarwad*.
- (iii) Manager of *Tarwad* property is oldest male member in the family, called *Karnavan* (his wife is called *Ammayi*).
- (iv) *Karnmavan* is an absolute ruler in the family. On his death, the next senior male member becomes *Karnavan*. He can invest money in his own name, can mortgage property, can give money on loan, can give land as gift, and is not accountable to any member in respect of income and expenditure.
- (v) When *Tarwad* becomes too large and unwieldy, it is divided into *Tavazhis*. A *Tavazhi* in relation to a woman is 'a group of persons consisting of a female, her children, and all her descendants in the female line'.

The following changes may be noted in *Tarwad* after the 1912 Act:

- (a) The *Tarwad* property can now be divided.
- (b) The authority of *Karnavan* has now become limited.
- (c) The members of *Tarwad* have now become entitled to maintenance outside the ancestral house.
- (d) The ancestor worship of *Karnavan* is now no longer common.
- (e) The relations between husband and wife have now become informal and personal and closer and more intimate.
- (f) The self-acquired property of a member of a *Tarward* after his death, now goes to his widow and children, and in their absence to mother and mother's mother.

Clan organization and marriage rules in south: A caste is divided into five exogamous clans. The important characteristics of clan organization are:

- (i) Each clan possesses a name of some animal or a plant or some other object.
- (ii) A person from one clan can seek a spouse from any other clan except his own. However, this choice is theoretical because of the rule of exchange of daughters.
- (iii) In marriage, there is not only the rule of clan exogamy but also of family exchange of daughters.
- (iv) Because of the marriage rule of exchange of daughters, many kinship terms are common. For example, the term used for *nanad* (HuSi) is also used for *bhabhi* (BrWi); the term used for *sala* (WiBr) is also used for *bahnnoi* (SiHu); the term used for *sasur* (HuFa) is also used for *bhabhi's father* (BrWiFa).

- (v) Marriage between children of two sisters, is not permissible.
- (vi) The marriage with wife's younger sister is practised. Also, two sisters can marry two brothers in one family.
- (vii) There is a system of preferential mating in the south. In a large number of castes, the first preference is given to elder sister's daughter, second preference to father's sister's daughter, and third preference to mother's brother's daughter. However, today cross-cousin marriage, especially the uncle-niece marriage, is a thing of the past.
- (viii) The taboos prescribed for marriage are: a man cannot marry his younger sister's daughter; a widow cannot marry her husband's elder or younger brother; and a man cannot marry his mother's sister's daughter.
- (ix) Marriage is dependent on the chronological age differences. One example is that the marriage of grandfather and granddaughter is possible in south.
- (x) Marriage is not arranged with a view to widening a kin group, but each marriage strengthens already existing bonds and makes doubly near those people who were already very near kin.
- (xi) A girl has to marry a person who belongs to the groups older than her, i.e., *tam-mum*, and also to the group younger than her parents, i.e., she can marry any of her older cross-cousins. A boy must marry in a *tam-pin* group and to one who is a child of a group of *tam-mum*.
- (xii) In south, a girl after marriage does not enter the house of strangers. One's husband is one's mother's brother's son and so on. Marriage in the south, does not symbolize separation from father's house for a girl. A girl moves freely in her father-in-law's house.

Comparison of kinship system of North and South India

- (i) In the south, organization of kin is arranged according to age categories in the two groups, i.e., older than Ego (*tam-mum*) and younger than Ego (*tam-pin*).
- (ii) No special norms of behaviour are evolved for married girls in the south; whereas in the north, many restrictions are imposed on them.
- (iii) In the north, marriage is to widen the kinship group while in the south it is to strengthen already existing bonds.
- (iv) Marriage does not symbolize woman's separation from her father's house in the south but in the north, a woman becomes a casual visitor to her parents' family.
- (v) In the south, an Ego has some kin who are his blood relatives only and others who are his blood relatives and affinal kin at the same time.
- (vi) In a southern family, there is no clear-cut distinction between the family of birth and family of marriage as found in the northern family. In the north, no member from Ego's family of orientation i.e., of father, mother, brother and sister can also become a member of his family of marriage; but this is possible in the south.

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(vii) In the south, kinship organization is dependent on the chronological age differences; while in the north, it is dependent on the principle of generational divisions.

(viii) In the north, every kinship term clearly indicates whether the person referred to is a blood relation or an affinal kin; but this is not so in the south.

Eastern zone

There are more tribes than caste Hindus in eastern India (consisting of parts of Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa). The more important tribes are: Khasi, Birhor, Ho, Munda and Uraon. The kinship organization here has no one pattern. People speaking Mundan languages have patrilineal patrilocal families. However, joint families are rare in this zone. Cross-cousin marriages are rarely practised though bride-price is common. Woman is addressed as *dual* (you two). Kinship terminology is borrowed both from Sanskrit and Dravidian languages. Khasis and Garos have matrilineal joint family system. After marriage, a man rarely lives with his parents and establishes a separate house.

The kinship organization in India is influenced by caste and language. In this age of sharp competition for status and livelihood, a man and his family must have kin as allies. Caste and linguistic groups may help an individual from time to time but his most staunch, trustworthy and loyal supporters could only be his nearest kin. It is, therefore, necessary that a person must not only strengthen his bonds with kin but should also try to enlarge his circle of kin. Cousin marriages, preferential mating, exchange rules and the marriage norms which circumvent the field of mate selection are now so changing that kinship relations through marriage are being extended and a person is able to get their help in seeking power and the status-lift that power can bring.

Kinship Usages

We now study the behaviour patterns of different kins. Every relationship involves a particular type of behaviour. The behaviour of a son towards his father is one of respect while the behaviour of husband towards wife is one of love. There are some usages which regulate the behaviour of different kin. These usages are called 'kinship usages'. Some of these usages are the following:

- (i) **Avoidance:** In almost all societies, the usage of avoidance is observed in one form or another. It means that the two kins should remain away from each other. They should not only avoid sexual relationship but in some cases avoid seeing the face of each other. Thus, a father-in-law should avoid daughter-in-law. The *pardah* system illustrates the usage of avoidance. Different explanations have been given for the usage of avoidance. According to Radcliff Brown and G. P. Murdock, 'avoidance serves to forestall further and more serious trouble between relatives'. According to the Freudian explanation, avoidances represent a sort of institutionalized neurotic symptom.
- (ii) **Joking relationship:** Under it, a relation is permitted to tease or make fun of the other. The relationship between *devar-bhabhi*, *jija-sali* is joking

relationship. The joking may amount to exchange of abuse and vulgar references to sex.

- (iii) **Teknonymy:** The word 'teknonymy' is a Greek word. According to this usage, a kin is not referred to directly but he is referred to through another kin. A kin becomes the medium of reference between two kins. Thus, in traditional Hindu family a wife does not utter the name of her husband. She calls him through her son or daughter. He is referred to by her as the father of *Munni* or *Sonu*.
- (iv) **Avunculate:** This kinship usage is a peculiar feature of matriarchal system. It gives to the maternal uncle (*mama*) a prominent place in the life of his nephews and nieces. He has special obligations towards them which exceed those of father. The maternal uncle has a prior right over their loyalties. He comes first among all male relatives.
- (v) **Amitate:** When a special role is given to the father's sister (*bu*), it is known as amitate. The father's sister gets more respect than the mothers.
- (vi) **Couvade:** This queer usage is found among many primitive tribes like the Khasi and the Toda. Under this usage, the husband is made to lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child. He refrains from active work and takes sick diet. He observes the same taboos which are observed by his wife. This kinship usage thus involves the husband and wife.

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Check Your Progress

10. Define kinship.
11. What is amitate?

2.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The Indologists have viewed caste from the scriptural point of view and believe that the ancient Hindu scriptures have given birth to the concept of caste.
2. The traditional theory of caste has two versions—mythical and metaphysical.
3. The doctrine of Dharma (religious duty) propounds that a person who accepts the caste system and regulates his life according to the norms of his particular caste, is living by his Dharma.
4. The *gotrika* (lineage) qualities are the hereditary qualities, which an individual inherits from his *gotra* and shares with the members of his family.
5. Max Weber has defined social class as 'an aggregate of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods and the same exhibited standard of living.'
6. The caste system is based on the principle of inherited inequalities. On the other hand, the class system is based on the principle of equal opportunities.

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7. The family is universal. There is no society in which some form or the other of family does not exist. A typical family consists of mother, father and their progeny.
8. According to Edward Westermarck, 'marriage is the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring'.
9. In exogamy, marriage in one's group is not permitted, and brides are sought from other groups.
10. According to Theodorson, 'kinship is a social relationship based upon family relatedness'.
11. When a special role is given to the father's sister, it is known as *amitate*.

2.8 SUMMARY

- The word caste has been defined from the Portuguese word *Casta*, which means race, breed or kind.
- Risley defines caste as 'a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine, professing to follow the same hereditary calling and is regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogenous community'.
- The Indologists have viewed caste from the scriptural point of view and believe that the ancient Hindu scriptures have given birth to the concept of caste.
- They maintain that the varnas have originated from Brahma—the Virat Purusha (the Great Man)—and castes are units within the varna system, which have developed as a result of hypergamy and hypogamy.
- The social anthropologists have studied caste from the cultural point of view. The organizational and structural approaches of Hutton consider caste as a unique system found in India alone.
- Sociologists have viewed caste from the stratificational point of view. They study caste in terms of social stratification in a society. They study it as a phenomenon of social inequality.
- The traditional theory believes that the Indian caste system has been divinely ordained.
- While the sociological theory views caste system as an artificially created system of stratification in which the role and status of an individual is determined by birth (ascriptive status), the traditional theory views it as a natural system of stratification.
- The traditional theory has two versions—mythical and metaphysical.
- The mythical version treats the four varnas as the four castes and it believes that the four emerged from different parts of Brahma's body. This theory finds the caste system to be a completely normal and natural institution of social functions.

- The metaphysical version explains the function, hierarchy and other characteristics of caste. Each caste has a separate function, which is determined by the nature and qualities of the members of that caste.
- The Hindus believe that an individual's nature consists of two sets of qualities—*gotrika* and *namika*.
- The *gotrika* (lineage) qualities are the hereditary qualities, which an individual inherits from his *gotra* and shares with the members of his family.
- The *namika* (individual) qualities, on the other hand, are specific individual qualities that one does not share with any other member of his family.
- Abbe Dubois feels that the caste system originated and developed in India due to the Brahmins. His view is that the caste system was designed by the Brahmins for the Brahmins.
- Class is one of the most important bases of social stratification. Classes are groups of people into which a society is divided. These groups are ranked on the basis of specific criteria.
- Thus, classes are social groups that occupy specific high and low positions in a given society. Each class is a sub-culture with a set of attitudes, beliefs, values and behavioural norms, which differ from those of other classes.
- Max Weber has defined social class as 'an aggregate of individuals who have the same opportunities of acquiring goods and the same exhibited standard of living.'
- Class consciousness emerged in India during the British Rule as they introduced modern education, civil services, legal system, means of transportation, etc. in India.
- A social class is essentially a social group. Class is related to status. Different statuses arise in a society as people do different things, engage in different activities and pursue different vocations.
- Karl Marx, the champion of the theory of social class and class conflict, has spoken of only two major social classes — the haves and the have nots — or the rich and the poor, or the capitalists and the workers, or the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat.
- The caste system is based on the principle of inherited inequalities. On the other hand, the class system is based on the principle of equal opportunities. Both are important systems of social stratification but represent two opposite poles.
- The family is the most important primary group in society. It is often called the basic social institution because of its important functions of procreation and socialization.
- Robert Bierstedt is of the opinion that 'the family, almost without question, is the most important of any of the groups that human experience offers.
- In nuclear families, the members comprise the husband, wife and their children. This type of family has become more common with the advent of

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industrialization and urbanization, which has forced people to move out to new urban centers and seek employment.

- The joint family system can be seen across societies in various forms of extended families.
- According to Edward Westermarck, 'marriage is the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring'.
- It is 'a contract for the production and maintenance of children', as per Malinowski.
- Marriage is more or less a universal institution. It is found among the pre-literate as well as literate people.
- Polygyny is a type of marriage in which one man marries more than one woman. Though monogamy was the rule fixed by the *Rig Veda*, polygyny was in practice in ancient times and persisted till the beginning of the present century.
- Polyandry is a form of marriage in which one woman is married to more than one man. It is very less common than polygyny. A few Kerala castes practised polyandry until recently and it is not unlikely that it still continues to be practised to some extent in remote places.
- Monogamy is a form of marriage in which one man marries one woman. It is commonly practised in Indian society, except in case of Muslims.
- During the *Vedic* age, inter-class marriages used to take place in the form of *anuloma*; a social practice according to which a boy from upper varna/caste/class can marry a girl from lower varna/caste/class.
- Endogamy is the form of marriage in which one must marry within one's own caste or other group. This rule does not permit marriage of close kin.
- Inter-religion Marriage also acknowledged as Inter-Faith Marriage have been customarily known as 'mixed marriages'.
- As per Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, consensual sexual activities between the persons of the same sex is a crime. In the year 2018, the apex court of the country reversed this British era provision that made consensual sexual activities between the persons of the same gender, a crime.
- With this judgement on Section 377, the country became a part of 17 commonwealth nations that reversed such acts, making homosexuality legal and did away with the tradition that was left by the British in their former colonies.
- According to Theodorson, 'kinship system is the customary system of statuses and roles that governs the behaviour of people who are related to each other through marriage or descent from a common ancestor'.

2.9 KEY TERMS

- **Homogenous community:** It is one in which all of the members share a similar set of beliefs, values, and demographic characteristics.
- **Indology:** It is the study of Indian history, literature, philosophy, and culture.
- **Anthropology:** It is the study of human societies and cultures and their development.
- **Supernatural:** It is (of a manifestation or event) attributed to some force beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature.
- **Mythical:** It means occurring in or characteristic of myths or folk tales.
- **Metaphysical:** It is relating to the part of philosophy that is about understanding existence and knowledge.
- **Incarnation:** It refers to a person who embodies in the flesh a deity, spirit, or quality.
- **Bhakti movement:** In Hinduism, it refers to ideas and engagement that emerged in the medieval era on love and devotion to religious concepts built around one or more gods and goddesses.
- **Sufism:** It is mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God.
- **Arya Samaj:** It is a monotheistic Indian Hindu reform movement that promotes values and practices based on the belief in the infallible authority of the Vedas.
- **Brahmo Samaj:** It is the societal component of Brahmoism, which began as a monotheistic reformist movement of the Hindu religion that appeared during the Bengal Renaissance.
- **Endogamy:** It is the practice of marrying within a specific social group, caste, or ethnic group, rejecting those from others as unsuitable for marriage or other close personal relationships.
- **Sapinda:** It is a term used in context of cousin marriages in Hinduism.
- **Secularism:** It is the principle of separation of the state from religious institutions.
- **Gender:** It refers to either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.
- **Casteism:** It refers to the prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of caste.

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2.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the caste system in India as given by Indologists, sociologists and social anthropologists.
2. Describe the metaphysical version of the traditional theory of caste.
3. Write a note on the characteristics of the Indian caste system.
4. What was the agrarian class structure in post-independent India?
5. Differentiate between caste and class.
6. What is marriage? State its characteristics.
7. Write a short note on Muslim Marriage Act.
8. Briefly describe the various types of inter-caste marriages.
9. What is the joint family system?
10. What are the types of kinship? Why is it important?
11. State the features of kinship in different zones.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss all the theories of caste in detail.
2. What are the factors responsible for the changes in the caste system? Analyse the mobility in the caste system that has occurred through the years and list prominent changes.
3. Why is marriage important? Has the concept of marriage changed or evolved over time? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Describe the various forms of marriage in detail.
5. Explain the importance of *Mehr* or Dower in Muslim marriage.
6. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of endogamy. How is it different from exogamy?
7. Examine gay marriages in India.
8. What do you understand by family? Describe its characteristics, distinctive features and functions in detail.

2.11 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 STRUCTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETY

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Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Village
- 3.3 City
- 3.4 Rural-Urban Continuum
- 3.5 Diversity of Indian Society: Demographic, Cultural, Religious and Linguistic
- 3.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Key Terms
- 3.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.10 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the unit will examine an important feature of Indian society, that is the migration of people from the village to the city. This is known as urbanization and it is not a new phenomenon.

Evidence of urbanization in India is available from the Harappan times and throughout the history of India. The cities of Mohenjodaro and Harappa (presently in Pakistan) were established in the Indus river valley way back in 2,500 BC. It has been pointed out by archaeologists that urbanization in Harappa could be ascertained from archaeological findings of brick technology, agriculture and irrigation facilities. Other examples of urbanization in the ancient period of Indian history are the cities of Pataliputra (Patna) and Vaishali during the Magadh rule around 300 BC. In the medieval period of Indian history, cities like Kannauj, Delhi, Agra, Daulatabad, Hyderabad, etc. had acquired importance. With the advent of the British colonialism from the seventeenth century onwards, there was a growth of urban centres like Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Except Delhi, all the other urban centres were port cities and facilitated trade and commerce undertaken by the British rulers.

During the nineteenth century, when the British firmly established themselves politically in India, urbanization in India entered a different phase. Cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras evolved from mere trading centres to political centres. This period also saw rapid technological advancements, new modes of transport and communication, emergence of new economic institutions, etc. All this made the process of urbanization quicker and smoother.

While urban centres gained in prosperity, the rural areas of India became neglected. Cottage industries and rural artisans suffered a lot because of the exploitative economic policies of the British. This forced the rural artisans and

other workers to migrate to cities in search of wage employment. Thus, it can be said that the process of urbanization strengthened the cities at the expense of the villages.

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With the spread of education in these urban centres, the educated sections joined the bureaucracy or took up jobs as teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists, etc. They became the intelligentsia and the elites of the Indian society and aligned their world view with the western world. They also brought about new political and economic ideas.

The new process of urbanization provided ample scope for occupational and social mobility and slowly broke the stranglehold of the caste system. This process, which got a boost during the nineteenth century, gathered greater momentum in the twentieth century.

From the beginning of the twentieth century and especially after independence, urbanization in India has taken place at a fast pace. The modern Indian cities have become centres of economic, political, administrative and cultural power. The pattern of urbanization in the twentieth century can be understood in terms of its demographic, spatial, economic and socio-cultural aspects.

The final section of the unit will describe the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of Indian society.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Examine community living in villages and cities
- Discuss the rural-urban continuum
- Analyse the classification, geographical distribution and features of tribal communities
- Assess the demographic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in India

3.2 VILLAGE

A rural community is defined as a group of people living in a definite geographical area. It is characterized by common beliefs, common practices, common lifestyle and various types of social interactions. The term 'rural' refers to a small area with a small population, which practices agriculture not only as an occupation but also as a way of life.

The famous French sociologist Louis Dumont refers to the following three meanings of the term rural community:

- A political society
- A body of co-owners of the soil
- The emblem of traditional economy and polity

The rural society is, simply put, an aggregation of village communities. In other words, a rural society is a collection of village communities and has the same features and characteristics that a village community has.

The village exists even today as a cohesive territorial unit. The number of people staying in villages bears testimony to this. However, village identity, solidarity and loyalty sometimes get affected by caste and religious considerations. There are factions and feuding groups within villages and between villages. Land reforms, Panchayati Raj, Sanskritization and other structural and cultural changes have brought about significant changes within its social structure and its relation with the wider world. A village is clearly an important and viable social entity to its people, who also take part in the larger society and share in the pattern of the civilization.

A village signifies the transition from nomadic settlement to stable and stationary settlement. The village is the oldest permanent community of mankind. Villages and village communities have existed in every part of the world and they were the earliest examples of permanent and stationary settlement of the human race.

Evolution of Rural Community

A village community has passed through different stages of evolution. Some of them are as follows:

- **Primitive village community:** The primitive village community was very small in size and consisted of only ten families or thereabouts. The families were very close to each other. Social relationships amongst them were quite strong. In earlier times, due to lack of transport and communication facilities, the members of one village community were cut-off from the other village community. The community was organized on a collectivist basis in so far as land was concerned. Land was jointly owned by all the members of all the families. The bond of kinship and close ties that existed between the families ensured that there was a high degree of community feeling in them.
- **Medieval village community:** In this type of community, neither joint ownership of land was there nor did kinship play an important role in binding the people together. The land was owned by the kings or the nobles. The common villagers cultivated the land and were paid wages by the owners of the land. They were the tenants and the land owners were their masters. The feudal system came into existence during this period where the masters exploited the tenants and expected complete servility and loyalty from the tenants.
- **Modern village community:** Modernization and industrialization brought a halt to the growth of the village community. Instead, urban communities began to develop and flourish. However, despite this, villages and village communities continue to exist across the world. In India, it is still the dominant form of settlement with 69 per cent of Indians residing in villages as per the provisional figures of Census 2011. In India, after independence, with the spread of transport and communication, village life has been brought closer to the urban life. Villages got connected with cities due to the building of

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new roads and railway tracks. This helped the market reach the villages and provide the villagers with the opportunity of using the market for getting better prices for their produce. Thus, the process of modernization started in the villages.

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Growth of Rural Community

The following factors are responsible for the growth of village communities across nations:

- **Topographical factors:** Topographical factors include land, water and climate. Land is the most important factor and significantly contributes towards the establishment and growth of village communities. Village communities can survive and grow only on fertile land because agriculture thrives on such land. Therefore, historically, villages have come up on fertile land tracts and rocky and sandy lands have been avoided.

The availability of water also plays a crucial role in the settlement of village communities. The villages that have a river or stream nearby are usually heavily populated. Water provides life to human beings, animals and crops. It would be impossible to survive if water is unavailable or is available at a great distance. Easy availability of water and presence of irrigation facilities helps the villagers in earning higher incomes through higher agricultural produce. Higher incomes bring prosperity and the village community adopts modernity and features of capitalism.

A favourable climate is also essential for the growth of the village community. People cannot lead a normal and healthy life in places having extreme heat, cold or rain.

- **Economic factors:** A village community's growth and development depends upon the condition of its agricultural sector. If this sector does well, then the villagers earn more and move forward in life. It also depends upon the overall village economy and how it enables farmers to get a better return on their agricultural produce. A third economic factor is the status of the cottage industries. If the cottage industries sector do well then the villagers get to earn some additional income.
- **Social factors:** Social factors have a very important role in the growth of a village community. Factors like peace and security, cooperation, celebration of festivals together do go a long way in securing the growth of the village community. These factors ensure safety of the villagers' lives; assure cooperation in economic and other matters and promote a feeling of oneness amongst them.

In the ultimate analysis, it is evident that it is knowledge and intelligence that can ensure growth and development of villages and village communities. With low levels of literacy and poor quality of education, village communities in developing and under-developed countries are not able to raise their farm productivity. This results in low incomes and keeps them perpetually in a state of deprivation. In contrast, the village communities in the advanced western countries are far more developed and prosperous.

Characteristics of the Rural Community

A village community has certain characteristics or features, which are unique to it. They are as follows:

- **Community feeling:** Village communities have a very strong feeling of togetherness and stand up for one and all in trying times. They also have common practices, beliefs, rituals and customs. This ensures that their bonding becomes stronger.
- **Strong neighbourhood:** The village life is one of togetherness and sharing of joys and sorrows. People come to each other's help and live as one big family. Thus, neighbours matter a lot to them, and a strong neighbourhood is an important feature of the village community.
- **Joint family:** While urban growth and industrialization has managed to break up the joint family, the scenario is different in rural areas. The joint family continues to be an integral part of the village communities. One major reason for this is their practice of agriculture. The entire family works on the field and there is a division of labour amongst them. The men plough the field, the women help in transplanting the seeds and harvesting the crops, and the children look after the cattle.
- **Simple lifestyle of people:** People in villages are generally simple and lead a life of simplicity. They are unaffected by the rapid changes happening in the urban areas. They are hardworking, trustworthy, sincere and honest. It is also a fact that they do not earn very much and, therefore, do not get an opportunity to adopt a more affluent lifestyle. Thus, their simplicity is mostly voluntary and partly involuntary. However, with the spread of communication, villagers are getting exposed to urban and modern lifestyles and have started adopting them in a very gradual manner.
- **Agrarian economy:** Village communities generally thrive on agriculture and the village economy is essentially an agrarian economy. People cultivate crops, vegetables and fruits. A major part is consumed by the family itself and the surplus is either bartered for some other goods or it is sold off in the local market.
- **Small size:** Village communities usually comprise a small number of people who can manage to stay in a village with peace and contentment. The number of people comprising a village community is not fixed as such.
- **Definite locality:** A village community has a definite physical basis, which is the village in which they reside. Every such community is identifiable from the locality or village in which they reside.
- **Influence of religion:** Religion plays a very important role in the life of village communities. They are God-fearing and worship a lot. Their belief in religion is very strong and they have faith that their troubles would be sorted out by the Almighty.
- **Importance of kinship and primary relations:** Kinship is an important part of the village life. Personal relations are very durable, and people are always keen to spend time with their relatives.

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- **Conservative behaviour:** People in villages are very conservative in their thoughts and deeds. They are influenced by the socialization that they had been exposed to. There is no drive in them to bring about sudden changes or to adopt modernity. Village communities essentially remain the same for years together.

Types of Rural Community

Across the globe, different types of village communities have emerged and existed in different periods of our collective history. Village communities differ from each other in various aspects like social systems, folk-cultures, traditions, economy, value systems, etc. Thus, an American village is different from a German village and an Indian village or *Gram* is different from a Russian village.

These differences have been studied by sociologists and different types of village communities have been identified. Some of the major types of village community are as follows:

- **On the basis of residence:** Residence is a very important parameter for classifying the village communities. On the basis of residence, following classifications are as follows:
 - **Migratory village:** Such a community resides for a certain period of time at one place and arranges its daily needs (food and shelter) from that place. Once the food supplies get exhausted, the community moves on to another place and again sets up a village.
 - **Semi-permanent village:** In this village, the community resides for a number of years and then leaves the place when the productivity of the land dwindles. Lower productivity is detrimental to their survival and, therefore, they move out in search of more fertile lands.
 - **Permanent village:** The people live in such villages permanently. Generations spend their lives here. Permanent houses exist in these villages and families continue to live and earn their livelihood here.
- **On the basis of settlement:** Meitzen has classified village communities into the following two types on the basis of their settlement:
 - **Nucleated village:** In this type of a village, the community lives in close proximity and the houses of the members are in one cluster. This physical proximity fosters the leading of a common life by the community and also lends a sense of security to them.
 - **Scattered village:** In this type of settlement, the village community lives in a dispersed manner and the houses of the members are away from one another. Due to this, the physical proximity is less but they do celebrate common festivals and functions.
- **On the basis of organization:** Village communities can be classified into the following three types on the basis of the manner in which they are organized:
 - **Cooperative village:** In this type of village, though land is owned individually, the members of the community decide to pool their land

and practice common cultivation. Each family is provided with its necessities from the common stock of the cooperative.

- o **Semi-collective village:** In this type of villages, the land is jointly owned, and the members of the community cultivate this joint holding. Families are provided with supplies in accordance with the income of the village. Families get their share on the basis of their numerical strength.
- o **Collective villages:** The village community in this village lives in a communal settlement where all property is collectively owned, and all the affairs of life are collectively managed. The members only render their labour to the common pool and all necessities of life are provided to them. They have common dining hall, common store, etc. The old and infirm are also taken care of by the community as a whole. This kind of organization provides complete security to every member of the village.
- **On the basis of land ownership:** On this basis, the village community has been classified into the following two types:
 - o **Landlord village:** In this type of a community, land is owned by a few families on an individual basis and they are the landlords. They rent out their land to tenants for cultivation. The rent that they charge from the tenants is largely retained by them and a share is given to the king or ruler. Such type of villages existed in India till the time the intermediaries in the agricultural sector were abolished.
 - o **Ryotwari village:** In such villages, the farmers are the owners of the land and they themselves cultivate it. They pay the land revenue to the government directly and no intermediary is involved.

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Rural Community in Indian Society

Villages are an integral part of Indian society. The rural landscape of India is dotted with lakhs of villages. There are 6.41 lakh villages in India, which is a huge number. Rural society in India is nothing but the study of the village communities of India. Though urban population in India is increasing, about 69 per cent of Indians still reside in its villages. Thus, the expansion of the village community in India is enormous. The sociological study of the communities of India reveals the true nature of the rural society in India.

Common characteristics of Indian villages are as follows:

- **Isolation and self-sufficiency:** Villages in India were, and still are to some extent, isolated from the rest of the country. They have a self-sufficient existence wherein they grow their own food, build their own houses and carry out social relationships amongst each other within the village.

However, post-independence, things have changed quite a lot. With the growth of means of transport and communication and the laying of an extensive road and rail network, the distance or barrier between villages and towns has been removed. Political and economic factors have also contributed towards diminishing the isolation of Indian villages. Economic development has made the people of the villages more mobile and they are

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moving out to urban centers in search of new employment opportunities. Their dependence on agriculture has come down significantly. Political parties have also made villages the epicentre of their political activities. Many people from rural areas have actively joined politics and made frequent visits to their party headquarters in the cities.

- **Peace and simplicity:** Indian villages are generally peaceful wherein people reside together with a spirit of togetherness and have a fellow feeling. An atmosphere of calm and simplicity prevails in our villages. The hectic pace of activities prevalent in our cities is conspicuously absent from the villages. Life moves along at a slow but fulfilling pace. The villagers lead a simple life characterized by frugal eating, simple dressing, small houses, etc.
- **Conservatism:** Indian villagers are very conservative in their thoughts and deeds. They do not accept change very easily. They prefer to hold on to their old customs and traditions.
- **Poverty and illiteracy:** The poverty and illiteracy that exists in our villages on a massive scale is one of the most depressing features of our villages and also a very shameful aspect of modern India. Despite independence and rapid economic progress, we have failed in eradicating poverty and illiteracy from our villages. The per-capita income might have increased, and the literacy rate might have climbed up, but the fact remains that the levels are abysmal by global standards. The per-capita income is so low that people at the bottom of the pyramid cannot think beyond their survival. Similarly, the quality of education is so poor that the literacy rates mean nothing significant.

Economic growth of the last twenty years has not percolated down to our villages. The availability of educational and health facilities is very poor. Lack of money forces them to depend upon local facilities, which are of very poor quality. Ignorance does not enable them to take advantage of modern techniques of agriculture. Thus, they continue to remain in poverty. A vicious cycle of poverty–ignorance–poverty engulfs the life of our villagers.

- **Local self-government:** In ancient India, villages were models of self-governance and autonomy. They used to run their own administration and judiciary through the institution of Panchayat. The British altered the scenario by resorting to a highly centralized form of governance. However, post-independence, efforts were started to revive the institutions of local self-governance under Gandhiji's vision of Gram Swaraj. This culminated in the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act in 1993 by which the Panchayati Raj institutions were strengthened. Thus, a prominent feature of the Indian villages has been restored with constitutional backing.

Changing Nature of the Village Community in India

Though change occurs more in urban society, it also does take place in the rural society. The village community undergoes change but at a gradual pace. The changing nature of the village community in India can be understood from the following perspectives:

- **Economic system:** The village economy in India has changed. It no longer remains an agricultural economy alone. The educated youth do not stay back in the villages anymore. Rather, they move out to cities in search of employment. Besides, the farmers have started to employ modern tools and technology in their fields to get more out of their land. Thus, the mechanization of agriculture is also taking place. Rural banking has encouraged the village community to put their savings in the bank and also to avail credit facilities. They use this credit in starting small business ventures and also in meeting some emergency expenses in the family.
- **Political system:** The revival of the 'Panchayati Raj' system in Indian villages through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1993 has truly changed the political landscape in rural India. Political consciousness and participation in electoral politics has increased tremendously. People have become very aware about local, state and national politics. However, the negative impact of this change is that people have become divided on lines of political affiliations. The fellow feeling of our village community has been adversely affected.
- **Marriage system:** Indian villages have slowly accepted the reality of love marriages. Even though majority of marriages in our villages are arranged by family elders, a few love marriages are indeed taking place. Besides, even in arranged marriages, the boys and girls are being asked to give their views or consent. Child marriage has been almost abolished.
- **Family system:** The joint family system is no more the dominant family type in Indian villages. Nuclear families have also started coming up. Though the extended family stays in close vicinity, the nuclear families have been established through separate hearths. Girls in the family are being educated and their status in rural society has improved.
- **Caste system:** The caste system used to be followed very rigidly in Indian villages in earlier times. However, modern education, social and administrative reforms, impact of modernization, etc. has resulted in reducing its hold over the village community. The restrictions imposed by the caste system on choice of occupations, choice of spouses, mode of living, etc. have weakened.

From the above, it is clear that Indian villages are not static but are constantly changing.

3.3 CITY

According to Thompson Warren, 'Urbanization is the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger, whose activities are primarily centred in government, trade manufacture or allied interests.' He observes that urbanization not only involves a movement from villages to cities but also involves a change in the attitude, values, beliefs and behaviour of the migrants.

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Urbanization is universal and brings about economic development and social change. It can also be defined as a process of concentration of population in a particular territory. According to Mitchell, 'Urbanization is a process of becoming urban, moving to cities, changing from agriculture to other pursuits common to cities.'

The eminent Indian sociologist, Dr. G.S. Ghurye, has defined urbanization in a functional manner. According to him, 'urbanization means migration of people from village to city and the effect of this movement upon the migrants and their families and upon fellowmen in the villages.'

It is important to distinguish the concept of urbanization from the concepts of urbanity and urbanism. As we have seen, urbanization is a process which refers to change in values, attitudes and beliefs of people who migrate from villages to cities and the impact of this movement on people who are left behind in the villages. Urbanity, on the other hand, is the state of the people living in an urban area which is distinct from those living in the villages. It refers to a pattern of life in terms of work, food habits and the world view of people living in the urban areas. Urbanism is characterized by a system of values, norms and attitudes towards the inter-personal relations in terms of individualism and anonymity.

Demographic aspect

Population has always been an important aspect of urbanization in India. The Indian population growth exploded in the twentieth century and, as a result, urban population also grew rapidly. The share of urban population in India has grown from 10.8 per cent in 1901 to 31 per cent in 2011. The steady growth in urban population over the last 110 years has been partly due to rapid economic development in the cities and towns and partly due to the slow agricultural growth in the rural areas.

Spatial aspect

The Indian urban scenario has witnessed a lot of spatial disparities. These disparities are the result of regional disparities, imbalanced concentration of population in certain areas and changes in the definition of urban areas in the census. These disparities can be observed from the following facts:

- Increase and decrease in the number of towns and cities due to changes in the definition of urban areas
- Variation of urbanization amongst different states with urban domination in states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu
- Concentration of urban population in the big cities with the population in such cities growing much faster than in other smaller towns
- Growth of metropolitan cities with population of more than one million

It is important to know about the following two concepts while talking about the spatial aspect of urbanization in India:

- **Over-urbanization:** Cities and towns do not have an unlimited capacity to accommodate the growing population and providing them with civic amenities,

medical facilities, schools, etc. Thus, when the population of a city goes beyond a certain limit, the administration of that city fails to provide its citizens with the requisite facilities. It is at this juncture that a city is said to have become over-urbanized. Cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata are examples of such over-urbanization.

- **Sub-urbanization:** When cities and towns get over-populated, they expand beyond their boundaries and take the adjoining rural areas within their fold. This phenomenon is known as sub-urbanization. Thus, sub-urbanization refers to the urbanization of rural areas around the towns and cities and it is characterized by the following features:
 - o A sharp increase in the urban uses of land
 - o Inclusion of the surrounding areas within the municipal limits of the towns and cities
 - o Intensive communication of all types between the town or city and its surrounding areas

Economic aspect

Urbanization is both a cause and a consequence of economic development. It is more of a consequence because economic development entails a huge movement of labour and other inputs from the rural areas to the towns and cities. The National Commission on Urbanization of India recognizes the importance of the Indian cities and towns. It considers urbanization to be a catalyst for economic development.

When we look at the various cities in India, we see that some have come up at places where there was no habitation at all. One of the earliest steel cities in India was Jamshedpur. It was the result of the setting up of the Tata Steel Plant, which has provided employment to members of the Santhal tribe that stayed nearby. Apart from Jamshedpur, three more steel cities also emerged after independence. They were Rourkela in Orissa, Bhilai in Chhattisgarh and Durgapur in West Bengal. These steel cities and steel factories completely modified the whole socio-economic scenario of that area. They progressed from being backward areas to cosmopolitan and prosperous urban centres. Thus, you see the important and crucial role played by industries in urbanizing India.

Features of Urban Society

Urban society all over the world has a few common features. Let us discuss them briefly as follows:

- **Large population:** The urban society is characterized by a large population in any particular area. Since, urban society comprises cities and towns, and they have high population levels, large population becomes its inherent characteristic. Along with large population, there is the prevalence of high density of population.
- **Non-agricultural occupation:** In any urban society, the occupational pattern reveals that most of the people are engaged in non-agricultural economic

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activities like government jobs, entrepreneurship, jobs in factories or other service industries (banks, colleges, etc.), retail business, etc.

- **Heterogeneity:** This is an important feature of all urban societies. The existence of a large population with diverse backgrounds is bound to result in heterogeneity. Thus, urban societies have a great deal of variance in so far as customs, festivals, lifestyles, ideologies, etc. of its members are concerned.
- **Tolerance:** Urban areas comprise members from various castes, religions, regions, languages, etc. For all of them to live peacefully together, a high degree of mutual tolerance is absolutely essential. Since, urban areas have been largely peaceful and prosperous; it implies that tolerance is a significant feature of the urban society.

Features of urbanization in ancient and medieval India

The process of urbanization in ancient and medieval India had certain distinct features, which can be classified under the following three broad categories:

1. **Political, demographic and spatial factors:** The processes of urbanization in ancient and medieval India had a very close relationship with the rise and fall of political regimes. Cities emerged on the basis of political considerations and were built around the ruler and his kinsmen. An important physical feature of these early cities was the fortification that was undertaken to protect them. High walls, deceptive ditches and secret tunnels were part of the elaborate steps taken to defend the cities and its people.
2. **Economic factors:** Despite the fluctuating fortunes of the political dynasties of those times, the economic institutions have shown some degree of stability. Guild formation was an important feature of the cities of that time. These guilds performed important functions in the traditional towns in terms of banking, trading, manufacturing, etc.
3. **Religious and socio-cultural factors:** Religion was an important aspect of statecraft in the ancient and medieval times. The rulers patronized a particular religion or sect and their capital cities acquired the culture of that particular religion or sect. For example, when Pataliputra was ruled by Chandragupta Maurya it reflected a Brahmanical Hindu civilization. However, when the reins of the kingdom went to Ashoka, Buddhism flourished in the same city. The traditional towns were heterogeneous in terms of multiplicity of religious, sectarian and caste groups.

Re-urbanization

The term re-urban was introduced by the sociologist C.J. Galpin. It referred to the composite urban settlements wherein the urban and rural population intermingled and stayed connected with and dependent upon each other. These composite settlements were characterized by a blending of rural and urban life. Thus, 'Re-urbanization' was the process that resulted in the development of a composite settlement.

The blending of urban and rural life is not a new phenomenon. The rural–urban fringe has always been a composite area where the rural and urban folks interacted and intermingled. In contrast to ancient times, the distinction between the city and the village has blurred. The city has expanded and passed into the countryside. Beyond the city there is a large area where farms and urban homes are completely mixed, and it is not possible to demarcate between them. These composite regions are called re-urban.

In these regions, most of the facilities enjoyed by the urbanites are also enjoyed by the farmers. The farmers use the banking services available in the cities and send their children to the city schools. Similarly, the urbanites grow vegetables and raise poultry in their backyards. Thus, the re-urban region is a distinct ecological type, which is not entirely urban but is city-dominated or city-centred. This kind of an ecological setting, according to some sociologists, is the most desirable for human beings. They believe that the re-urban areas would replace the city and large scale ‘Re-urbanization’ would take place.

However, there are others like Professor Bergel who thinks that is not going to happen. Their reasoning is that the industries need large number of labourers who are required to stay on the factory premises. Such labourers cannot be allowed to stay far away from the factories. Thus, ‘Re-urbanization’ would not get the support of industrialisation.

Causes of Urbanization

The factors that are mainly responsible for urbanization are as follows:

- **Industrialization:** Industrialization is considered to be the single most important cause for urbanization to have taken place. The emergence of modern industries has proved to be a turning point for the global economic and social development and change. The great impetus to urbanization came with the industrial revolution in England followed by the one on the European continent and finally in the United States of America. With the setting up of industries, there was a demand for labour and people moved in from rural areas to fulfil this need and also to satiate their desire for new and more remunerative employment opportunities. Thus, began the process of urbanization.

New habitations developed in and around industries, which had modern amenities like good houses, schools, hospitals, parks, roads, electricity, piped water, public transport, etc. The people who had moved in from the villages found the urban areas better and more comfortable and settled there. They also brought their families in due course of time. Thus, industrialization gave the initial push towards the process of urbanization and reinforced it thereafter.

In the modern era, it is the pace of economic development that determines the growth and development of a country. Industries have fuelled this growth and taken many countries to great heights. Industries cannot operate without men and machines. Therefore, labour and capital are imperative for the growth and success of any industry. This demand for labour is a very

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significant pull factor for the people living in isolated rural areas to migrate to areas in and around the industries. Similarly, the poverty and lack of employment opportunities proved to be a push factor for the rural populace to move towards these industrial towns.

Thus, industrialization started the process of urbanization and it continued unabated due to its own momentum and the desire of people to lead a modern and comfortable life.

- **Social factors:** Another reason for urbanization is the social factor. The rural folks got attracted by the educational, health and other infrastructural facilities available in the cities. Besides, the cities provided them with more privacy and a great degree of anonymity, which helped them lead their lives without the constant interference of family members and neighbours as it used to happen in villages.

Urbanization fuels many aspirations of the rural population and results in rapid migration of people from the countryside to fulfil these aspirations. This further quickens the pace of urbanization.

- **Modernization:** Modernization is also an important cause of urbanization. Modern facilities in cities like better roads, excellent communication systems, schools and hospitals, etc. attract the rural people to come to the cities in search of a happy and comfortable life. Modernization is a process of adopting the new and better options that are available so as to make human life comfortable. Quite naturally, it brings forth urbanization because it is the city that gets modernized much before the villages.

Modernization and westernization are sometimes used interchangeably. Urbanization is an important feature of the western world and, therefore, it is natural for it to be influenced by modern developments.

- **Employment opportunities:** People from the rural areas migrate to urban areas in search of work opportunities and contribute to the process of urbanization. The villages are mostly agricultural and there is no requirement of a big labour force to work on the land. In fact, the agricultural sector in the rural areas gives rise to a phenomenon called 'disguised unemployment'. This means that though people appear to be employed in the agricultural sector, they actually contribute nothing because their labour is not at all required. They are unemployed from the productivity sense of the word but such unemployment is disguised by the fact that they are engaged in the fields.

Modern manufacturing and service industries that come up in the cities are big attractions for the rural population. They believe that they can improve their lives by moving out towards the urban centres.

Check Your Progress

1. What does the term 'rural' refer to?
2. What does a village signify?
3. Which factor influences a village community's growth and development?
4. What is a migratory village?
5. Define urbanization.
6. Define sub-urbanization.
7. Who introduced the term re-urban?

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3.4 RURAL-URBAN CONTINUUM

While studying about the rural and urban society, it is imperative for us to know about the concepts of rural–urban continuum and rural–urban contrast. Briefly put, while the first analyses the similarities between rural and urban areas, the second does so about the differences.

Both rural and urban societies are part of the same human society and do share a lot of features of each other. There is no clear demarcation between the two. There is no sharp demarcation to tell where the city ends, and the country begins. It is very difficult to actually distinguish between the two societies in the geographical realm. While theoretically we talk about the two societies, the dichotomy between the two is not based upon scientific principles.

Since, no concrete demarcation can be drawn between the 'rural' and the 'urban', sociologists take recourse to the concept of rural–urban continuum. The bottom line of the concept is that rural and urban societies do not exist in water-tight compartments but do have a lot in common. They share lifestyles, value systems, traditional festivals and customs because they, ultimately, belong to the same society. The difference between them is usually of degree rather than of kind. They are not mutually exclusive.

The differences between them are getting further blurred with the advent of modernization and industrialization. Countries where these processes have become universal are good examples of similarities between rural and urban areas. Universal modern education, modern means of transportation, access to television and computers, etc. have radically changed the lifestyle in rural areas and have reduced the differences that were earlier visible between rural and urban areas. Countries like India still have huge differences between these two areas because of poverty and illiteracy continuing to dominate the rural landscape (Figure 3.1).



Fig. 3.1 The Rural–Urban Continuum

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The extreme left depicts a remote village and the extreme right a metropolitan city. Such sharp differences do not usually exist between villages and cities and, in reality, rural and urban areas can exist at any point on the above line or continuum. Thus, there is no clear-cut demarcation and the difference can be seen to be one of degree and not kind.

The fringe at the centre of the diagram is an interesting concept. It is also known as the rural–urban fringe. It is some sort of an overlapping geographical area between a city and a rural area. The cities have expanded and penetrated into rural areas. This is due to haphazard and unplanned growth of the cities. As one moves out of cities, one can see some residential colonies, a few factories, open sheds storing marble, timber or other construction material, automobile showrooms, petrol/diesel filling stations, etc. In between these structures, one can see large tracts of agricultural fields. These areas are known as the rural–urban fringe. The fringe is defined as an area of mixed urban and rural land users between the point where city services cease to be available and the point where agricultural land users predominate.

Rural–urban contrast

There is a different school of thought among sociologists, which believes that a strong dichotomy exists between rural and urban areas. Notwithstanding the wide acceptability of the concept of rural–urban continuum, this group believes in the other concept, i.e., rural–urban contrast. This concept seeks to highlight the differences between the rural and urban areas and some of these differences are as follows:

- **Differences in social organization:** The systems of family and marriage are quite different. While joint families and arranged marriages are the order of the day in rural areas, urban areas see a lot of nuclear families and love marriages. Besides, the status of women is higher in urban areas.
- **Differences in social relationship and interaction:** Rural society exhibits greater cooperation and fellow feeling amongst individuals whereas; in urban areas people are very self-centered. While rural areas have personal relationships, urban areas have impersonal ones.
- **Homogeneity vis-à-vis heterogeneity:** Villages are small in size and, therefore, the inhabitants develop many identical characteristics due to physical proximity. Cities are much bigger in size and there is a great deal of heterogeneity.
- **A difference in economic life:** Agriculture is the predominant economic feature of the rural society. It results in low income and, consequently, low standard of living. On the other hand, there is a great deal of variety in the economic life of the urban society. Most people are engaged in industries or pursue their own business. The standard of living of the urban people is higher.
- **Differences in cultural life:** Rural culture is relatively static and is dominated by traditions and age-old customs. The urban areas have a dynamic culture and less room for superstitious beliefs.

- **Differences in social mobility:** Since hierarchy in the rural society is based upon the caste system in a country like India, social mobility in the rural society is almost impossible. In other countries, where hierarchy is based upon class, social mobility in rural areas is relatively easier. However, it is in the urban areas that social mobility does take place most easily as the people have the freedom to choose their occupation and move up in life.
- **Differences in social change:** The process of social change in rural areas is very slow. The reasons for this are predominance of traditional thinking and conservatism, less innovation and competition and a high degree of stability. On the contrary, urban areas see rapid social changes due to the influence of modernization and westernization.
- **Differences in social control:** In rural societies, primary institutions like the family, caste, neighbourhood, etc. exercise a great deal of control on the behaviour of individuals. In contrast, there is hardly any control on the members of the urban society. A man in an urban society is free from all primary controls.

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3.5 DIVERSITY OF INDIAN SOCIETY: DEMOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL, RELIGIOUS AND LINGUISTIC

India is a vast country with a geographical area of 3,287,240 sq km and a population of over one billion. The society in India is quite old and complex in nature. Many scholars have diverse opinions on the origin of Indian society. However, the old heritage of Indian society has shown enough evidence of immigrants from various racial, ethnic and religious groups. 'India's cultural heritage is one of the most ancient, extensive and varied among all those who make up the cultural heritage of mankind. Throughout the ages many races and peoples contributed to India's culture. Some came into contact with her only temporarily, others settled permanently within her borders. The keynote of the distinctive culture thus evolved was synthesis on the basis of eternal values'. So, India has a long history and its cultural tradition is very rich.

Indian society has undergone crises and turbulences in the past. Various aspects of Indian society have contributed to its dynamic character. T.K. Oommen rightly says:

The social formation of the Indian society is the end product of a long historical process. The more important elements which moulded the process are: one, the Aryan invasion estimated to have occurred about 3500 years ago which brought Hinduism, the caste system and Sanskrit to the Indian subcontinent. Before this intervention the land was occupied by pre-Aryan adivasis (early settlers) and non-Aryan Dravidians; two, the emergence of Hindu protestant religions such as Jainism and Buddhism, some 2600 years ago; three, the advent of Christianity in the first century and Islam in the 7th century. These were pre-colonial and pre-conquest intrusions which occurred through immigration and the conversion of local upper castes; four, arrival of

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tiny immigrant religious communities such as Jews, Zoroastrians, and later the Bahai's; five, Muslim conquest of North India which began in the 8th century and continued till the 18th century turning the Indian subcontinent into the largest Muslim congregation in the world; six, the emergence of youngest Indian religion, Sikhism, nearly 450 years ago with Punjab at its epicentre; seven, Western Christian colonialism which started in South India and gradually spread to the rest of the subcontinent.

Demographic composition of Indian society

The population of India on 1 March 2001 stood at 1,028,737,436 (i.e. more than 102 crore or more than 1,027 million or more than one billion), according to the provisional results released by the office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Of this, 532,223,090 were males and 496,514,346 were females. Thus, India became the second country in the world after China to officially cross the one billion mark. India's rich cultural heritage is reflected in its 28 states, each unique in its own way and contributing to the glory of India. Among the states in India, Uttar Pradesh is the most populous with a population of 166,197,921 and the state with the lowest population is Sikkim with 540,841 as its population. India's sex ratio is 933 females per 1000 males. The state with the highest sex ratio is Kerala, which is 1,058 per thousand, slightly more than the national average. However, Haryana has the lowest sex ratio which is 861 per thousand males. The sex ratio is an important social indicator of the equity prevailing between males and females. Though India has witnessed women being accorded a high status during the Vedic times, this has deteriorated with the passage of time. Muslim invasion during the medieval period was also an important factor for the deploring condition of women today. A lot of effort was made by social reformers to enhance the status of women. But gender equality still has a long way to go since patriarchy is deeply embedded in the Indian social structure.

Mahatma Gandhi had said, 'India lives in its villages'. The majority of the population in India lives in villages with agriculture as the main means of livelihood. The Census from the office of Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2001 shows India's rural population as 742,490,639 (72.2%) while, the urban population is 286,119,689 (27.8%). Therefore, Gandhiji envisioned 'Gram Swaraj' wherein there would be social and economic changes in the villages. About Harijans he remarked, I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages. We town dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister our needs. We have hardly ever paused to inquire if those poor folks get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain (Gandhi, 1936:63). This illustrates how the entire edifice of Indian culture and civilization is built on a platform of tradition.

Social and Cultural Aspects as per Census 2011

- The population of India stands at approx. 1,21,01,93,422. Of this 62,37,24,248 are males and 58,64,69,174 are females.

- Uttar Pradesh leads in being the most populous state with 16,61,97,921 people and the state with the lowest population is still Sikkim with 540851 people.
- India's sex ratio stands at 943 females per 1000 males. The state with the highest sex ratio is Kerala with the 1084 per thousand. Haryana is the worst performing state with 879 per thousand males.
- 83.3 crore live in rural areas while 37.7 crore stay in urban areas and the population distribution percentage is 68.84% and 31.16% respectively.
- Literacy rate now stands at approx. 74.04%. The female literacy levels are 65.46% whereas the male literacy rate is over 80%. Kerala is the only state in India to have 100% literacy rate.
- At the national level, the proportion of currently married women to total number of women is reported to be 49.9% in Census 2011 as against 47.7% in Census 2001. In case of males it is 46.0% in Census 2011 as against 43.6% in Census 2001. Proportion of Widowed has increased from 6.4 % in Census 2001 to 7.4 % in Census 2011 for females and in males it is increased from 1.8% to 2.0%. It is observed that the female mean age at marriage has increased from 18.3 to 19.3 years, whereas the increase in male is from 22.6 to 23.3 during Census 2001-11.
- Population of Scheduled Castes in Census 2011 is 201.4 million as against 166.6 million in 2001 registering an increase of 20.8% whereas Scheduled Tribes population increased to 104.3 million in 2011 from 84.3 million in 2001.

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Indian Society as a Pluralistic Society

It is often said that there is no other country that offers the same cultural diversity as India. India is indeed unique when it comes to diversity, with 29 different states each with their own distinct traditions and character, and a population rich with diverse religious faiths, dress and accents. Such a level of diversity could perhaps be found elsewhere in an entire region such as Europe; however, in India this diversity is contained within the boundaries of a single nation.

India is a vast country and from north to south and east to west various cultures have amalgamated, promoting cultural pluralism amidst cultural diversity. It is essential to remember that the bulk of the Indian population represents racial admixture in varying degrees. Racial origins, however tenuous, are a part of the ethnic memory of most of the communities. This plays a significant role in shaping their identity and self-image. In this unit we will discuss the religious, linguistic and cultural composition of India and observe how these act as diversifying factors and at the same time have an underlying unity. Diversity in India is found in terms of race, religion, language, caste and culture. Sociologists say that Indian unity has been both politico-geographic and cultural in nature. The diversities have remained, but simultaneously provided for a mainstream culture.

Geographical Diversity

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India's geography is very diverse and for the purpose of study it can be divided into six different regions. Each of these regions have different climates, different vegetation which leads to different lifestyle and the growth of different cultures and societies. The six different geographical regions constitute:

- The Himalayan region extending from the northern most states to the north east states of India.
- The Indo-Gangetic plains comprising of the northern and some parts of the central, eastern and north-eastern states.
- The Thar dessert which is a stretch mainly in the state of Rajasthan
- The Peninsular plains including the Deccan region including the southern states and the central plateaus comprising of the central and mid-western states
- The Coastal Plains including the eastern and the Western Ghats and,
- The islands comprising of Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep among others

Religious Composition and Diversity

Indian society is divided into a large number of religious communities. Broadly there are seven major religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. In India, Hindus constitute the majority of the population (80.5%). The Muslims are the second largest religious group (13.4%). The Christians about (2.3%), Sikhs (1.9%), Buddhists (0.8%), Jains (0.4%), and other religions like Jews, Zoroastrians, Parsis, etc., comprise (0.6%). All these religions are further divided into various sects. Though the other religious communities are numerically less, yet their contribution to India's cultural heritage is noteworthy. Table 3.1 illustrates the distribution of different religious communities in India.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Different Religious Communities in India

<i>Religious Composition</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Hindus	827,578,868	80.5
Muslims	138,188,240	13.4
Christians	24,080,016	2.3
Sikhs	19,215,730	1.9
Buddhists	7,955,207	0.8
Jains	4,225,053	0.4
Other religions and persuasions	6,639,626	0.6
Religion not stated	727,588	0.1
Total	1,028,610,328	100.0

Source: 2010-11, Office of The Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, New Delhi.

Note: Excludes figures of Paomata, Mao-Maram and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur State.

As per the Census 2011, Total Population in 2011 is 121.09 crores ; Hindu 96.63 crores (79.8%); Muslim 17.22 crores (14.2%); Christian 2.78 crores (2.3%); Sikh 2.08 crores (1.7%); Buddhist 0.84 crores (0.7%); Jain 0.45 crores (0.4%), Other Religions & Persuasions (ORP) 0.79 crores (0.7%) and Religion Not Stated 0.29 crores (0.2%).

All religious groups are further divided internally. The Muslims make up a large proportion of the total population in Jammu and Kashmir. Some coastal districts in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and in Lakshadweep comprise entirely of Christians. Sikhs are more numerous in Punjab. Buddhists are mostly found in Maharashtra and Arunachal Pradesh and the Zorastrians in and around Mumbai. The Christians are more numerous in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and the North-East Region. They make a large proportion of the total population in the North-East.

Traditionally, different religions have existed in India in peaceful coexistence. The secular nature of Indian society was well acclaimed worldwide. But the British policy of ‘Divide and Rule’ and the partition of the country led to various communal tensions. Communalism, which is blind loyalty towards one’s own religion, has created conflicts and tensions among various religious communities. Politics practised in the name of religion has further aggravated the problem as such politics is based on narrow vested interests. Article 25 of the Constitution gives all religious communities the right to ‘profess, propagate and practice their religion’. It is pertinent to know that the right to propagate one’s religion was included in deference to the concerns of the minority communities, particularly Muslims and Christians, who maintained that preaching and propagating their faith was an essential part of their religion.

Hinduism is the oldest religion and is divided into various sects and cults. Hinduism is basically divided into Shaivite (worshippers of Lord Shiva), Vaishnavite (worshippers of Lord Vishnu), Shakta (worshippers of Shakti or Mother Goddess in different incarnations like Durga, Kali, Parvati, etc.) and Smarta (worshippers of all the three Gods). Even among these there are further sub-divisions making Hindu religion more complex. Moreover, the Hindu religion has accommodated many Gurus, saints and their followers like Swami Chidanand, Shivanand, etc. Some sects like Satnami, Kabirpanthi, Radhaswami, Swaminarayan, etc., are also prevalent in Hinduism. Brahma Samaj and Arya Samaj are also a part of Hinduism. Therefore, Hinduism with its diverse cults, sects, rituals and doctrinal differences accommodates many believers.

Muslims are divided into two major groups, Sunnis and Shias, out of which Sunnis have a larger population than Shias. Indian Christians are divided into Catholics and Protestants; whereas Buddhism is also divided into two, Mahayana and Hinayana based on differences in religious doctrines. The Jains in India are divided into Digambara (unclothed) and Svetambara (white robed). The Jains do not practise untouchability and no restrictions are observed with regard to commensality and social intercourse. It is interesting to note that both Buddhism and Jainism evolved as a protest against the Brahminical social order and the superior position ascribed to Brahmins.

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Sikhism is a synthesizing religion and the majority of the Sikhs are found in Punjab. However, after partition there has been a large-scale migration and now Sikhs are found almost everywhere in India and even in other countries like U.K. and U.S. Their unique tradition of *Langar* has brought together many religious communities and also inculcated the feeling of community and service to mankind. Sikh places of worship, Gurudwaras, are found everywhere in the country.

The Parsis and Jews in India are small religious communities who have contributed a lot towards the industrial development of India, e.g., Jamshedji Tata who founded the Tata group of industries. The Parsis are mostly found in Mumbai and Jews are found in Kerala and Maharashtra. While the religious composition of Indian society has also resulted in the diversifying of religion, there is no denying the fact that religion has also acted as a unifying force. While most societies grant individuals the right to religious belief, in India communities enjoy the right to continue with their distinct religious practices. Perhaps the most significant part of this is that in all matters of family, individuals are governed by their community personal laws (Larson, 2001). Religious communities also have the right to set up their own religious and charitable institutions; they can establish their own educational institutions, and above all, these institutions can receive financial support from the state. Taken together, these are the ways by which public recognition has been granted to different religious communities and space given to them to continue with their way of life (Mahajan, 1998).

India has many religious festivals which are celebrated amongst all religious communities. Festivals like Diwali, Id-ul-fitr and Christmas are celebrated by all religious communities. Centres of pilgrimage such as Badrinath, Rameshwaram, Kedarnath, Ajmer Sharif and many more attract people from every corner of India across religious lines and strengthen the process of national integration. The tourist places portraying beautiful Muslim architecture like the Taj Mahal, Lal Quila, Qutub Minar, etc., attract people from all walks of life.

Linguistic Diversity

India has always been a multi-lingual country. Language has also been an important source of diversity as well as unity in India. According to the Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India, 1903–28) (the first Linguistic survey during the colonial times) there are 179 languages and as many as 544 dialects in the country. As per the Peoples Linguistic Survey (2010), there are 780 languages of which 50 are extinct in the past 5 decades. The Constitution of India, in its 8th Schedule recognizes 22 official languages with English as an important associate language. All the major languages have different regional variations and dialects. Some of the dialects of Hindi are Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, and Haryanvi. Originally, only 14 languages were included in the 8th Schedule. Bodo, Dogri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Nepali, Santhali and Sindhi were recognized later. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had remarked, ‘The makers of the Constitution were wise in laying down that all the 13 or 14 languages were to be national languages.’ The languages listed in this schedule have acquired different names at different stages and are better known as the scheduled languages now. The Minorities Commission report and the official Language Resolution 3 of 1968

considered languages listed in the schedule as major languages of the country. The 'Programme of Action' Document, 1992 of the National Policy on Education, 1986 considered them as modern Indian languages.

The highest literary awards in the country are given to 24 literary languages in India by the Sahitya Academy, and newspapers and periodicals are published in 35 languages every year. English is recognized as an important instrument of knowledge dissemination, commerce and maintenance of international relations. A provision was made to extend the use of English language in the Article 343 as 'Official language of the Union' for all official purposes of the Union even after a period of fifteen years with a provision that 'the President may, during the said period, by order authorize the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language'.

Table 3.2 provides a list of 22 languages arranged in descending order of speakers' strength. Originally among the scheduled languages, the speakers of Hindi had the highest percentage (43.63%). However, it is noticed that the linguistic regions in the country do not maintain a sharp and distinct boundary; rather they gradually merge and overlap in their respective border zones.

Table 3.2 Scheduled Languages in Descending Order of Speakers' Strength, 2011

S. No.	Language	Persons who returned the language as their mother tongue	Percentage to total population
1	2	3	4
1	Hindi	52,83,47,193	43.63
2	Bengali	9,72,37,669	8.03
3	Marathi	8,30,26,680	6.86
4	Telugu	8,11,27,740	6.70
5	Tamil	6,90,26,881	5.70
6	Gujarati	5,54,92,554	4.58
7	Urdu	5,07,72,631	4.19
8	Kannada	4,37,06,512	3.61
9	Odia	3,75,21,324	3.10
10	Malayalam	3,48,38,819	2.88
11	Punjabi	3,31,24,726	2.74
12	Assamese	1,53,11,351	1.26
13	Maithili	1,35,83,464	1.12
14	Santali	73,68,192	0.61
15	Kashmiri	67,97,587	0.56
16	Nepali	29,26,168	0.24
17	Sindhi	27,72,264	0.23
18	Dogri	25,96,767	0.21
19	Konkani	22,56,502	0.19
20	Manipuri	17,61,079	0.15
21	Bodo	14,82,929	0.12
22	Sanskrit	24,821	N

N - Stands for negligible.

Source: Census of India 2011.

Though all the languages spoken in India are different from each other, yet they may be grouped into four linguistic families; the Austric Family (Nishada), Dravidian family (Dravida), Sino-Tibetan Family (Kirata) and Indo-European

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Family (Arya). The languages of the Austric family are spoken by tribal people in Meghalaya, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and in parts of Central Indian tribal belts like Ranchi, Mayurbhanj, etc.

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The languages of the Dravidian family are spoken in southern parts of India. The dialects and languages of the Sino-Tibetan family are spoken by the tribal people of the North-Eastern region and in the sub-Himalayan region in the North and North-West. People in the Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh also speak these languages. The speakers of the languages of Indo-European family are found in North India. The majority of the people in the North Indian plains speak Indo-Aryan (Indo-European family). Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh also have large population of speakers of these languages.

The degree of linguistic diversity in India is perplexing, not only for visitors but also for Indians. Each of the country's 29 states has adopted one or two of the 22 official languages. India's linguistic barriers are compounded by the fact that each language also has a unique written form, with an alphabet that is unrecognizable to people who are ignorant of that language.

The linguistic diversity found across India stems from a history that saw numerous ancient kingdoms, each with its own language. These languages remained distinct to the area even after a kingdom was dissolved or merged with another. State lines later drawn by the colonial rulers often crossed former political and linguistic boundaries.

After Independence, many of the southern states in India opposed the installation of Hindi as India's national language. Simultaneously there was a strong lobby across different regions of the country for organization of states on a linguistic basis. This has resulted in the protecting and encouraging of linguistic diversity. The formation of groups based on common linguistics, each with the political rights to administer itself within the structure of the federal system, resulted in that particular linguistic community becoming the majority in that specific region. The recent Telengana issue is an important example where there was a demand for a separate linguistic province. 'Language also becomes a diversifying factor when it is used as a vote bank for politics' (Kamraj Nadar).

Slogans like 'Tamil Nadu for Tamils', 'Maharashtra for Marathis', and so on further aggravated the language problem.

Although there is a great diversity of languages and dialects in India, fundamental unity is found in the ideas and themes expressed in these languages. Sanskrit has influenced many languages in India. However, in spite of diversities Hindi continues to be the national language and people of one State can communicate with people of another State and a national language generates national sentiment.

Cultural Diversity

India is a multi-cultural society and is a fine example of diversity and unity in cultures. India's rich natural resources have attracted many from across the world bringing about great diversity in human cultures. Powerful kingdoms and empires contributed to the shaping of India's cultural regions. The various conquests in the historical

past have also been responsible for creating diversity. The bulk of the Indian population represents racial admixture in varying degrees. Unlike several other lands where the dominant human cultures have tended to absorb or eliminate others, in India the tendency has been to nurture diversity, which has been favoured by the diversity of the country's ecological regimes. (Gadgil and Guha, 1992)

From the beginning, Indian civilization has witnessed a pluralistic culture. This pluralistic culture which has its roots in the Vedic period, was enhanced by the upsurge of Buddhism and Jainism, and was further reinforced during the early medieval period, which saw the founding of the Bhakti Movement. Vedic society was an admixture of different cultures. It was a combination of Aryan and non-Aryan, with a mix of tribal elements added. There are many cultures which co-exist simultaneously in India. Communities in India demonstrate commonalities in culture traits irrespective of which religious background they belong to, even though these religious groups are further subdivided.

Many studies on cultural diversity and syncretism have been conducted by sociologists and anthropologists like Y. Singh, N.K. Das, Madan, Majumdar, etc., which adhere to various sociological approaches like Structural Functionalism of Radcliffe Brown or Functionalism of Malinowski. However, all this research proves that in spite of there being so many contrasts and diversities, there exists an underlying thread of unity which is seen in cultural and regional traits. India has undergone many cultural changes since independence. On one hand, where ethnic and regional groups or castes, tribes, minorities and other groups are fighting for their individual identities, there is a pervasive commonality of many integrative cultural processes. In India we can now increasingly see a rise in 'inter-regional migration' which results in the merging of regional cultural traits, cooking patterns, cultural performances, ritual forms, styles of dress and ornamentation. A sense of synchronization is evolving which helps in dissolving prevailing differences and contributes towards cultural consistency.

Moreover, the role played by Indian religion, philosophy, art and literature in strengthening India's unity is praiseworthy. India celebrates various festivals together which reflect the solidarity of people of India amidst cultural diversity. Thus, it is to be noted that diverse societies in India have evolved through dialogue and interactions at different levels. The multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious society in India is the result of a constant exchange of ideas amongst the various groups. India is the best example of portraying various diversities and within this diversity a peculiar thread of unity prevails making India a unique nation.

Unity in Diversity

When India became independent in 1947, freedom fighters and those who framed our Constitution worked on a document which provided for a culturally diverse state. Independent India had to allay the fears of its people and the leadership was urged to keep to its promise of providing equality to all the people of India. Respect for the individual could only come about through respecting the diverse beliefs and traditions that the people represent.

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Unity in diversity expresses the opinion that India can remain a strong and unified country while retaining its cultural diversity. As a result of the geographical mobility of people, various parts of the country are found to have commonalities in their ways of life. Religious communities share many common cultural rights but this does not extend to them having any separate political rights, whereas recognized linguistic communities enjoy cultural and political rights. These rights have simultaneously encouraged diversity and strengthened democracy.

Other areas like judiciary or law are also based on the principle of equality. A single Constitution, a national flag, common currency, national anthem, etc., further strengthen the unity of India. All Indians are conscious that they have a distinct national identity amidst various diversities. The various historical monuments, temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras attract lot of tourists and reinforce the bond of unity.

Check Your Progress

8. State one difference between rural and urban society.
9. Name the various sects in Hinduism.

3.6 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. The term ‘rural’ refers to a small area with a small population, which practices agriculture not only as an occupation but also as a way of life.
2. A village signifies the transition from nomadic settlements to stable and stationary settlements.
3. A village community’s growth and development depends upon the condition of its agricultural sector.
4. Migratory village refer to a community that resides for a certain period of time at one place and arranges its daily needs (food and shelter) from that place.
5. According to Thompson Warren, ‘Urbanization is the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger, whose activities are primarily centred in government, trade manufacture or allied interests.’
6. When cities and towns get over-populated, they expand beyond their boundaries and take the adjoining rural areas within their fold. This phenomenon is known as sub-urbanization.
7. The term re-urban was introduced by the sociologist C.J. Galpin.
8. Compared to rural society, the urban society in India is far more heterogeneous.
9. Hinduism is basically divided into Shaivite (worshippers of Lord Shiva), Vaishnavite (worshippers of Lord Vishnu), Shakta (worshippers of Shakti or Mother Goddess in different incarnations like Durga, Kali, Parvati, etc.) and Smarta (worshippers of all the three Gods).

3.7 SUMMARY

- A rural community is defined as a group of people living in a definite geographical area. It is characterized by common beliefs, common practices, common lifestyle and various types of social interactions.
- The term 'rural' refers to a small area with a small population, which practices agriculture not only as an occupation but also as a way of life.
- The rural society is, simply put, an aggregation of village communities.
- In other words, a rural society is a collection of village communities and has the same features and characteristics that a village community has.
- A village signifies the transition from nomadic settlement to stable and stationary settlement.
- The primitive village community was very small in size and consisted of only ten families or thereabouts. The families were very close to each other. Social relationships amongst them were quite strong.
- In medieval village community, neither joint ownership of land was there nor did kinship play an important role in binding the people together. The land was owned by the kings or the nobles.
- Modernization and industrialization brought a halt to the growth of the village community.
- Topographical factors include land, water and climate. Land is the most important factor and significantly contributes towards the establishment and growth of village communities.
- A village community's growth and development depend upon the condition of its agricultural sector.
- Village communities have a very strong feeling of togetherness and stand up for one and all in trying times.
- While urban growth and industrialization has managed to break up the joint family, the scenario is different in rural areas. The joint family continues to be an integral part of the village communities.
- Residence is a very important parameter for classifying the village communities.
- Migratory village community resides for a certain period of time at one place and arranges its daily needs (food and shelter) from that place.
- In nucleated village, the community lives in close proximity and the houses of the members are in one cluster.
- In cooperative village this type of village, though land is owned individually, the members of the community decide to pool their land and practice common cultivation.
- In semi-collective village this type of villages, the land is jointly owned, and the members of the community cultivate this joint holding.

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- The village economy in India has changed. It no longer remains an agricultural economy alone. The educated youth do not stay back in the villages anymore. Rather, they move out to cities in search of employment.
- According to Thompson Warren, 'Urbanization is the movement of people from communities concerned chiefly or solely with agriculture to other communities, generally larger, whose activities are primarily centred in government, trade manufacture or allied interests.'
- The eminent Indian sociologist, Dr. G.S. Ghurye, has defined urbanization in a functional manner. According to him, 'urbanization means migration of people from village to city and the effect of this movement upon the migrants and their families and upon fellowmen in the villages.'
- Population has always been an important aspect of urbanization in India. The Indian population growth exploded in the twentieth century and, as a result, urban population also grew rapidly.
- The share of urban population in India has grown from 10.8 per cent in 1901 to 31 per cent in 2011.
- The Indian urban scenario has witnessed a lot of spatial disparities. These disparities are the result of regional disparities, imbalanced concentration of population in certain areas and changes in the definition of urban areas in the census.
- When cities and towns get over-populated, they expand beyond their boundaries and take the adjoining rural areas within their fold. This phenomenon is known as sub-urbanization.
- The term re-urban was introduced by the sociologist C.J. Galpin. It referred to the composite urban settlements wherein the urban and rural population intermingled and stayed connected with and dependent upon each other.
- Thus, 'Re-urbanization' was the process that resulted in the development of a composite settlement.
- The Census of India defines urban area as 'all places with a Municipality, Corporation, Cantonment Board, notified town area committee, etc., and all other places satisfying given criteria.'
- There is a different school of thought among sociologists, which believes that a strong dichotomy exists between rural and urban areas.
- The Republic of India aims to secure to all its citizens justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It denies giving any official recognition to the traditional system of stratification of various castes and tribes into numerous sub-divisions.
- Though tribal populations are found across the world, the largest concentration of tribal population is found in India.
- In 1960, the Scheduled Tribe Commission was set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of U.N. Dhebar to work for the advancement of the tribal people. In 1980, the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) strategy was devised.

- The population of India on 1 March 2001 stood at 1,028,737,436. Of this, 532,223,090 were males and 496,514,346 were females.
- The population of India now stands at approx. 1,21,01,93,422. Of this 62,37,24,248 are males and 58,64,69,174 are females.
- Indian society is divided into a large number of religious communities. Broadly there are seven major religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.
- Hinduism is the oldest religion and is divided into various sects and cults.
- Hinduism is basically divided into Shaivite (worshippers of Lord Shiva), Vaishnavite (worshippers of Lord Vishnu), Shakta (worshippers of Shakti or Mother Goddess in different incarnations like Durga, Kali, Parvati, etc.) and Smarta (worshippers of all the three Gods).

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3.8 KEY TERMS

- **Sociology:** It is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society.
- **Sanskritization:** It is a particular form of social change found in India. It denotes the process by which caste or tribes placed lower in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by emulating the rituals and practices of the upper or dominant castes.
- **Primitive:** It means something relating to, denoting, or preserving the character of an early stage in the evolutionary or historical development of something.
- **Kinship:** It is the sharing of characteristics or origins.
- **Feudal system:** In a feudal system, a peasant or worker known as a vassal received a piece of land in return for serving a lord or king, especially during times of war. Vassals were expected to perform various duties in exchange for their own fiefs, or areas of land.
- **Tenant:** It is a person who occupies land or property rented from a landlord.
- **Industrialization:** It is the process by which an economy is transformed from primarily agricultural to one based on the manufacturing of goods.
- **Capitalism:** It is an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state.
- **Agrarian:** Relating to cultivated land or the cultivation of land.
- **Folk culture:** It refers to the unifying expressive components of everyday life as enacted by localized, tradition-bound groups. Earlier conceptualizations of folk culture focused primarily on traditions practiced by small foot, homogeneous, rural groups living in relative isolation from other groups.

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- **Nuclear family:** It refers to a family consisting of two parents and their children.
- **Migration:** It refers to the movement from one part of something to another.
- **Demography:** It is the study of statistics such as births, deaths, income, or the incidence of disease, which illustrate the changing structure of human populations.
- **Metropolitan:** Relating to or denoting a metropolis or large city.
- **Materialism:** It refers to a tendency to consider material possessions and physical comfort as more important than spiritual values.
- **Dichotomy:** It is a division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different.
- **Ecology:** It is the branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings.

3.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. State the three meanings of the term rural community as given by French sociologist Louis Dumont.
2. Briefly trace the evolution of rural community in India.
3. State the characteristics of a rural community.
4. Describe the features of urban society.
5. What do you understand by re-urbanization?
6. What was the impact of urbanization and industrialization on the tribal community in India?

Long-Answer Questions

1. What are the various types of rural community? Give a detailed background of rural community in the Indian society and trace its growth with time.
2. What is urbanization? What are its causes. Explain demographic, economic and spatial aspect of urbanization in detail.
3. Urbanization is universal. Elucidate and give reasons for your answer.
4. Write a descriptive note on rural-urban continuum and contrast.
5. Examine the demographic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of the Indian society.

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UNIT 4 FAMILY PROBLEMS

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Dowry and Domestic Violence
 - 4.2.1 Movement Against Dowry
 - 4.2.2 Domestic Violence
- 4.3 Family Disintegration: Divorce, Separation and Widowhood
- 4.4 Problems of the Elderly
- 4.5 Youth Tension
- 4.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.7 Summary
- 4.8 Key Terms
- 4.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.10 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

A thorough examination of diverse and wide-ranging literature on Indian society and culture, particularly generated by historians, ethnographers, Christian missionaries and subsequently by anthropologists and sociologists, implies that the twentieth century witnessed certain changes of far reaching importance in the family system under the influence of industrialization, westernization, modernization and greater population mobility across the sub-continent.

And since then, the Indian family has gradually confronted and tackled various kinds of problems and challenges. Despite having said that, India does not have any family policy yet though the Government of India has indeed taken several useful legislative measures relating to widow remarriage, women's right to property, practice of child marriage, succession, adoption and maintenance, dowry, dissolution of marriage affecting different communities and most recently domestic violence, which have impacted the Indian family system in more ways than one.

As the process of family formation and dissolution has become relatively faster now than before, households are progressively more headed by relatively younger people. Census data from 1971 onward have clearly borne out that at the national level over three fifths of the households are headed by persons aged less than 50 (Singh 1984: 86-95). There is every reason to believe that proportion of households headed by younger persons is likely to constitute a larger proportion than this in urban areas where the proportion of extended family is much smaller than that of rural areas.

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Once the authority within the family was primarily in the hands of family elders commonly known as Karta in Hindi. The general attitude of members of the family towards the traditional patriarch was mostly one of respect. Loyalty, submissiveness, respect and deference over the household were bestowed on him. These attributes also encompassed other relationships in the family, such as children to their parents, a wife to her husband, and younger brothers to their older brothers (Gupta, 1978: 72).

This unit discusses family disintegration, its types, causes and effects in detail. The prevalent system of dowry, domestic violence, problems of the elderly and youth unrest are other topics that are covered in this unit.

4.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the types, causes and effects of family disintegration
- Analyse the effects of dowry and domestic violence
- Assess the problems of the elderly
- Analyse the causes of youth tension and agitation

4.2 DOWRY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Dowry refers to ‘the property, money, ornaments or any other form of wealth which a man or his family receives from his wife or her family at the time of marriage.’ The wider definitions of dowry include what a woman’s natal family spends on the marriage celebration, the feasting and the gift giving associated with it. The real curse of the dowry system appears to lie with what the leading Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas has called the new dowry—property or cash demanded or in various forms expected by the groom’s family. This often turns out to be a grave burden on those families who have agreed to be trapped into unequal exchanges along hypergamous lines.

The problem of dowry related violence is clearly a thoroughly modern phenomenon. Thus, there is no need to re-write Hindu scriptures, because one cannot undo the past. The Hindu cultural texts are arguing from within the sphere of the *dharma*, and do not endorse cruelty to women for the sake of material possessions, that is, *arth*. Most writings use dowry in at least three senses. The first is in the form of presents, jewellery, household goods and other properties taken by the bride to her new home or given to her during the marriage rituals. These are items to be used by her, or by the couple, as a sort of foundation for the new nuclear household unit.

A second form of dowry may be constituted by what families, particularly the bride’s family, conspicuously spend on the occasion of the marriage celebration. In this respect, Srinivas stated ironically that Indian weddings are occasions for conspicuous spending, and this is related to the maintenance of what is believed to

be the status of the family. Such expenditure on the marriage benefits the couple indirectly, probably in terms of status rather than in a financial sense directly.

The third type of dowry is property expected or even demanded by the husband, more often by his family, either as a condition for the marriage itself, or at a later stage. There is much scope for these three forms of dowry to become intertwined and mixed up in the minds of writers as well as in social reality.

Under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, a demand made for dowry is an offence. Section 498 of the Indian Penal Code specifically deals with a situation when coercion is a wilful conduct of the husband or a woman's in-laws of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or cause grave physical or mental injury to her.

4.2.1 Movement Against Dowry

The first campaign of the contemporary feminist movement was against dowry. Dowry is the sum of all the money as well as other items such as jewellery, car, furniture, house, so on, given by the bride's family to the groom and his family. It was in Hyderabad in 1975 that the Progressive Organization of Women organized formal protests against dowry. These protests were not allowed to grow into full-fledged campaigns because of the imposition of the Emergency in 1975. After Emergency was lifted in 1977, a new movement against dowry started in Delhi. This movement focused upon the violence inflicted upon women for dowry, including bride burning and abetment to suicide. Delhi has remained the place for sustained agitation against dowry and related issues. This may be because Delhi has witnessed a high number of dowry deaths and dowry harassment cases.

The Mahila Dakshata Samiti was the first women's organization in Delhi's contemporary feminist movement to take up the issue of dowry harassment and dowry deaths. In June 1979, another women's organization, Stri Sangharsh, drew public attention to the problem of dowry and dowry-related crimes by organizing a demonstration against the death of Tarvinder Kaur, who had given a dying statement blaming her parents-in-law for killing her, as her parents could not fulfil their ever-increasing demands for dowry. This demonstration gained wide publicity and resulted in a number of demonstrations against dowry deaths, including a large demonstration led by the Nari Raksha Samiti (Women's Rescue Committee). These demonstrations sparked off public debates on dowry and dowry-related crimes.

Death of women by fire (doused in kerosene and set on fire) was termed suicide, and many of these cases were not reported. Even suicides were not considered to be the result of harassment for dowry. These deaths were neither investigated nor categorized by the authorities. They were considered to be private family affairs, and authorities did not interfere in such family matters. But as a result of the demonstrations and agitations in Delhi and other parts of the country, this problem was brought to the attention of the authorities as well as the public. This made the public realize that many official female suicides were in fact deaths due to dowry harassments. There was an increase in the number of complaints with the police against dowry harassment. Feminist organizations tried to help by recording the dying declaration of women, testimonies of family members and

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encouraged friends and neighbours to come forward with their testimonies and evidence.

Feminist groups devised strategies to increase public awareness regarding the problem of dowry, dowry harassment and dowry deaths. This included organizing debates, public demonstrations and enacting street plays. Manushi, a Delhi-based feminist magazine, organized a number of public meetings. People, both women and men, were encouraged to make a pledge that they would neither take nor give dowry.

The government passed a law against dowry and related crimes in 1980. This law recognized the abetment to suicide because of dowry demands as a special crime. It made police investigation into the death of any woman within five years of marriage mandatory. However, though the law recognized that dowry harassment could be construed as abetment, it did not specify the kinds of evidence that could be used to prove harassment, nor did it make abetment a cognizable (liable to be judicially examined or tried) offence. In 1982, the first positive judgement of this law took place. A Delhi sessions court magistrate found two people guilty of dowry murder and sentenced them to death. In 1983, the Delhi High Court reversed this judgement. There were widespread protests and demonstrations against this judgement. In 1985, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict, but converted the verdict from death sentence to life imprisonment. In the same year, the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act was passed. This made cruelty to a wife a cognizable, non-bailable offence, punishable by up to three years imprisonment and fine. The Act also redefined cruelty to include mental as well as physical harassment. Section 113-A of the Evidence Act was also amended to enable the court to draw an inference of abetment to suicide. Technically, this shifted the burden of proof and, thus, lessened the burden upon the complainant. The Act also amended Section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which makes a post-mortem examination of the body of a woman who dies within 7 years of marriage compulsory.

In spite of these laws being passed, it has been difficult to secure convictions for dowry deaths. Hearsay evidence is not enough to be accepted as evidence for conviction. Women themselves hesitate to bring charges against their husbands and in-laws. Moreover, post-mortem examinations need not necessarily show evidence of murder. It is difficult to prove that kerosene burns are the result of intention to murder. Moreover, there are still many loopholes in the laws regarding dowry, and most culprits manage to get away without detection. Feminists discovered that though they could muster massive public support for campaigns against certain crimes against women, it was very difficult to get the support of the legal system for their efforts.

4.2.2 Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a serious problem of the Indian society. Domestic violence refers to violence against women, especially after marriage. Therefore, it is recognized as a significant barrier in women's empowerment. There are many types of domestic violence. These include physical attacks, sexual assault, emotional abuse, threats, economic hardships and threats of violence.

A majority of violence committed against women occurs within the home. A classic sociological study of violence against wives (Dobash and Dobash, 1979) provided some insight into 'domestic violence'. Now what is usually known as 'family violence,' it includes more types of violence, and it tends to obscure the fact that women are much more likely to be harmed (Nazroo, 1999). The analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data from several countries clearly shows that women and girls are more likely to experience violence when they are married at a younger age in adolescence (UNICEF, 2005). The precursors of domestic violence are marital conflict, male control over household wealth and decision-making, poverty and unemployment (Heise, 1998).

Domestic violence is of several kinds:

- Foeticide and infanticide
- Spouse abuse/Wife battering

Foeticide and Infanticide

Girl children are neglected in society even prior to birth. The development of modern techniques such as amniocentesis and sex discrimination tests has facilitated people to know the sex of the foetus. These have contributed to the female foeticides. According to a study, it has been reflected that among 1,000 foeticides, 995 are those of girl foetuses. In the prosperous cities, there are provisions of sex discrimination tests and the people of upper and middle class are using these tests. This has increased the number of female foeticides.

The Census data of India, 2011 revealed that in the age group 0–6 years, the gender ratio is 914 girls to 1,000 boys. This indicates that for every 1,000 boys, there are at least about 60–70 girls under the age of 6 years who were killed before or within 6 years after birth. This is the lowest gender ratio recorded since India achieved Independence in 1947. Historically, children are regarded as the property of their parents. A girl is considered as a burden by parents. Since customs bound a woman to move to her husband's place on marriage, the parents did not want to waste their resources on her upbringing. Again, the demand for dowry and the huge wedding expenses caused a lot of hardship to parents. So, male children were preferred, because they would be the receivers of large dowry. These considerations led to the practice of killing the girl child once she was born. Female infanticide continues to be common. Statistics also show that there is still a very high preference for a male child in states like UP, MP, Chennai and Punjab. Incidentally, the male to female ratio is very high in these states.

The earliest efforts to stop female infanticide were made in Kathiawar and Kutch. In 1795, infanticide was declared to be murder by Bengal Regulation XXI. The evil of female infanticide was ended by propaganda and the forceful action on the part of the British Government. Through the efforts of Keshab Chandra Sen, the Native Marriage Act of 1872 was passed, which abolished early marriages, made polygamy an offence, sanctioned widow remarriages and inter-caste marriages. In 1901, the Government of Baroda passed the Infant Marriage Prevention Act. This Act fixed the minimum age for a girl's marriage at 12 years and for a boy's marriage at 16 years. In 1930, the Sarda Act was passed to

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prevent the solemnization of marriages between boys under the age of 18 years and girls under the age of 14 years. However, even today, the Act remains merely on paper on account of several factors. The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) came into effect on 1 November 2007. According to this Act, any male over 18 years of age entering into a marriage with a minor, or anyone who directs or conducts a child marriage ceremony can be punished with up to two years of imprisonment or a fine.

Wife Battering and Abuse

Spouse abuse involves an exchange of physical and psychological abuse between husbands and wives. According to Ram Ahuja, author of books on social problems in India, wife battering refers to ‘wilfully striking wife by her husband with or without injury’.

Dobash and Dobash acknowledge that women are usually the victims of violence within relationships and argue that this is the case because we live in a patriarchal society that has traditionally allowed men to treat women as their property. The 2005–06 National Family Health Survey (NFHS III) reported that one out of every three women between the age of 15 and 49 years had undergone physical violence, and at least one in ten had experienced sexual violence. The survey also revealed that only one out of four abused women had ever sought help and that 54 per cent of women considered it legitimate for a husband to beat his wife.

In India, domestic violence is widespread across cultures, religions, classes and ethnicities. The abuse is often allowed by social custom and regarded as a part and routine of married life. Statistics reveal a grim picture of domestic violence in India. The National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India reports a shocking 71.5 per cent increase in instances of torture and dowry deaths during the period from 1991 to 1995. In 1995, the torture of women constituted 29.25 per cent of all reported crimes against women.

Women are generally victims of the vicious circles of economic dependence, insecurities regarding their children’s lives in addition to their own, lack of awareness of their legal rights, absence of self-confidence and excessive social pressures. These factors effectively leave a woman with no option but to lead a life of mistreatment from which she often does not have the means to escape. The sanctity of privacy within the family also makes it difficult for authorities to intervene. Spouses consider women as their belongings. Husbands consider that this supplementary role allows them the authority to abuse their wives in order to restrict their movement and activities.

A number of studies have concluded that men who were more traditional in their attitude towards women were found to be more violent towards their wives. The data on traditionality and wife abuse reveals that there is a progressive decrease in the percentage of victims from a low level of traditionality to a high level of traditionality. There is also a direct relationship between substance abuse and family violence. Domestic violence is so pervasive that three states have adopted alcohol prohibition laws in response to women’s lobbying.

Dependency is also treated as a cause of physical violence in a conjugal relationship. Researchers have utilized this explanation in two ways. In case a wife is completely dependent, both physically and socially, her husband exploits her dependency and uses violence at her to reinforce his dominant position in the conjugal relationship. A few scholars are also of the opinion that when a husband is dependent upon his wife, he resorts to physical violence as a last resort against his wife as he is afraid of losing his spouse or a person on whom he can exert his dominant position. Hence, dependency of a husband over his wife is also treated as a cause of wife abuse.

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Check Your Progress

1. What is desertion?
2. Define marital separation.
3. State a characteristic feature of separation.
4. Mention one effect of divorce.
5. What does widowhood mean?
6. Define dowry.
7. Name the first women's organization in Delhi's contemporary feminist movement that addressed the issue of dowry.

4.3 FAMILY DISINTEGRATION: DIVORCE, SEPARATION AND WIDOWHOOD

Families are a universal phenomenon. Family has an important function to play in the society, but it does not always remain intact as a unit. Today, family break-ups and feuds or family disorganization are evident truths that we cannot afford to ignore. The consequences of the family disorganization today are seen in the increasing numbers of marital breakdowns—divorce, separations, desertions and empty shell family; family violence; substance abuse; single parent households; widowhood and unmarried status. In every case, the functionality of family ceases and it suffers.

The section that follows focusses on these aspects of family disorganization, including desertion, separation, divorce, widowhood and unwed mothers.

I. Desertion

Desertion from the military usage can be understood as the abandonment of a duty or post without permission and is mostly done with the intention of not returning. Referred also to as abandonment in some statutes, desertion becomes a ground for divorce in a majority of nations across the world. Mamoria defines desertion as 'deliberate abandonment of conjugal society'.

The special Joint Committee of the State and House of Commons on Divorce defined marital desertion in 1967 as a separation of the spouses which is against

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the will of one spouse and which is accompanied by an intention on the part of the other spouse without just cause to permanently end their married life together.

Desertion or abandonment at the family level may be defined as a relationship dynamic that occurs when an adult (either husband or wife) or child voluntarily denies or ignores the key responsibilities (a role) that someone expects them to fulfil and choose to end an existing relationship with someone else despite their partner(s) not wanting such a thing.

Types of Family Deserters

(i) Spurious deserter

The spurious or fake deserter is one of the most distinctive products of city life and is not a result of family friction or unhappy family life. This type of deserter disappears automatically once the city life gets systematically organized. Spurious deserters are the ones who leave their family in order to escape some financial responsibility.

(ii) Gradual deserter

The gradual deserter is mostly evident in individuals who travel out of home for employment reasons for extended time periods, hereby entering gradually into desertion from the spouse.

(iii) Intermittent husband

The intermittent husband is a type of deserter who comes into the category of work-related family absences. It is further divided into the following two types:

- The periodic deserter is the one who departs at stated intervals or upon certain occasions.
- The temperamental deserter, unlike the periodic deserter, is not so regular in his habits of desertion and is triggered by a domestic quarrel to do so. His departure can safely be predicted, but its duration cannot be forecasted accurately.

(iv) The ill-advised marriage type deserter

There have been instances when low ideals of marriage, lack of training for its responsibilities, too brief acquaintance, hasty or unconsidered marriage, diseased or unfit physical condition are present which may lead naturally to an early desire to be freed from the bond. In such a case, the deserter is termed to as the ill-advised marriage type.

(v) The last resort type deserter

The last resort type deserters are the ones who have tried their best to adjust themselves in difficult family situations but have failed. They, therefore, have thoughtfully and consciously decided upon desertion as the last resort.

II. Separation

Marital separation is a prelude to divorce and refers to a situation when either the husband or wife decide not to live together anymore and can do so without taking

a legal divorce. This is as simple as walking out on your spouse and does not require any legal formalities.

The characteristic feature of separation is that the couple remains legally married, and thus, it gives them time to think about issues pertaining to the division of assets and debts, child custody and child support, visitation schedules and spousal support.

III. Divorce

One of the most common and increasing cases of family disorganization is that of divorce, referred to as the legal termination of a marriage. The past few decades have witnessed a steady rise in divorce rates, particularly in the industrial society.

Divorce (or the dissolution of marriage) is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties. Divorce may be partial and absolute. Partial divorce is called judicial separation. It does not dissolve the marriage, and as such the spouse cannot remarry till the case is finally decided. Absolute divorce is the legal dissolution of marital ties. It leaves both partners to regain the status of single unmarried persons.

Causes of Divorce

No society prefers divorce and, in fact, has not encouraged this type of marital breakdown.

Perry and Perry in their work *The Social Web* noted that no society has ever encouraged divorce.(v) However, every sociologist has recognized that instances of divorce are steadily increasing. They assert that it reflects some source of conflict between the husband and wife and that it becomes so strong and intolerable that they decide to terminate the relationship.

Goode in his work *Women in Divorce* presented a detailed account of divorce and argued that divorce occurs among people in a particular situation and with particular backgrounds listed as follows.(vi)

- They live in urban areas.
- They get married between 16–19 years of age.
- They get married after a short span of acquaintance or engagement.
- They grew up with a poor model of marriage presented by their parents.
- They belong to different faiths.
- Their marriage evoked disapproval from their family and friends.
- Their backgrounds are dissimilar.
- They have different definitions of their roles and obligations.

Working further on exploring the reasons for divorce, Horton and Hunt have presented six reasons for the marital breakdown. These are as follows(vii):

- Decline in attitudes of subservience of women to men
- Decreasing economic dependence of women on men

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- Growing attitudes of individualism
- Growing acceptability of divorce
- Growing specialization, individuation and mobility of modern society, making it less likely that a couple would share the same tastes and values for a lifetime
- Phenomenon of no-faults divorce simplified legal divorce

Effects of Divorce

The effects of divorce can be seen in the following aspects:

- **Emotional breakdown:** Emotions like anxiety, anger, sadness, and feelings of isolation, frustration and loneliness are bound to creep in among the divorced couple.
- **Added responsibility:** One of the effects of divorce can be seen as accruing to added responsibilities on both the partners who have been legally divorced. This is very obvious in terms of child-care which requires a lot of effort. Other added responsibilities might include daily chores, finances, etc.
- **Effect on children:** Marital breakdown through divorce has a strong impact on the couple as well as children. Children are mostly affected, especially psychologically. Some of the issues that might surface among them and have strong bearing upon their personalities include the following:
 - o Sense of being deprived of parental love
 - o Separation from siblings
 - o Sense of guilt, embarrassment, insecurity and loss of self-confidence
 - o Depression
 - o Anxiety
 - o Loss of concentration in studies
 - o Tendency towards negative attitude and behaviour
- **Finances:** It is not necessary that both the partners are working. In such a case, the partner who was dependent on the other economically will have tough time ahead. She/He might have to reduce expenses in lieu of the reduced income. Children's expenses will have to be reduced which may also affect them negatively.
- **Social stigma:** Divorce as a kind of marital breakdown is on an increase and is now also acceptable. However, it still has social stigma attached to it. In a country like India, the remarriage of divorced women is very difficult. Children of such broken family are treated differently. The couple ends up losing wonderful friends, relatives and social life that add more suffering to their lives.

IV. Widowhood

A widow/widower is a woman/man whose spouse has died. The state of having lost one's spouse to death is termed as widowhood.

In contemporary societies, family disorganization due to widowhood has gained the least interest as is evident from the missing records of many developing countries. The widows have been victims of sinful omissions on our end.

In one of the United Nations Publication titled, 'The World's Woman 2000: Trends and Statistics', it has been agreed that in developing countries no data exists on the subject of widowhood. The report writes:

Whereas for developed countries substantial statistical information exists on the ages and numbers of widows, the data available on the subject of widowhood for developing countries are extremely limited.

The above discussion is a simple account of issues that women confront in the developing world. Faced with rules, patriarchal customs and religious laws, many widows undergo abuse and exploitation almost at every front. This issue demands critical and urgent attention by the governments and international community in order to stabilize the legal, economic, social and cultural aspects of widows.

According to a study undertaken by World Bank titled *Voices of the Poor: Case Study 9: Widows*, millions of widows worldwide of all ages undergo extreme poverty, ostracism, violence, homelessness, ill health and discrimination in law and custom. Furthermore, these widows face human rights violations represented through the lack of inheritance and land rights, widow abuse and the practice of degrading and life-threatening mourning and burial rites.

India, the second largest populated country of the world, is home to the largest recorded number of widows in the world with 33 million widows. According to Martha Chen, 'Fifty-four per cent of women aged 60 and over are widows, as are 12 per cent of women aged 35-39. Remarriage is the exception rather than the rule; only about 10 per cent of widows marry again.

Problems of Widowhood

In India, widowhood is held as a social institution rather than being a personal status as in other developed countries. A widow, in the absence of her husband, faces social disgrace and wrath. As an individual, she is almost invisible and lack an identity.

Widowhood is a state which is characterized by several problems. These are discussed as follows:

- **Poverty:** Widows make up a sizeable percentage of the world's poorest people. In traditional societies like ours, widows do not have any rights especially those of inheritance. Thus, they are often found in impoverished conditions.
- **Lack of education and training:** Another problem faced by women is the lack of education and training. Several programmes have been designed and been implemented to enhance the life skills of widows. But such programmes need proper enforcement and acknowledgement.
- **Health:** Poor nutrition, lack of shelter, lack of access to health care, vulnerability to violence, etc. make widows suffer both physically and mentally.

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- **Violence:** Widows of all ages are vulnerable to violence. They are often the victims of both emotional and physical abuse in their own homes and institutions. In many parts of Asia and Africa, these widows become victims of extreme violence while demanding their rights of land and property. Even if they are not physically abused, several words in vernacular language are used for them to denote them as a witch and beggar that have lasting impact on their emotional well-being.
- **Exclusion from the economy:** Lack of ownership of land and property, absence of credit schemes, lack of employment opportunities and many other factors have reduced the ability of widows to become economically independent. The work they have been doing informally and at times in the unorganized sector often go unnoticed.

V. Unmarried Mothers

A new dimension to family disorganization has emerged in the recent times and has been increasing alarmingly. This new dimension of family disorganization, that of unmarried mothers, is evident across the regions and depicts the misconceptions, vulnerability and violence against the women amidst the much talked and hyped issue of women empowerment. Unmarried or unwed mothers refers to women who have become pregnant without marriage, i.e., without the legal sanctity for establishing physical relationship between a man and woman.

Various sociological researches in the past have established concerns over the children born out of wedlock. It has been established that these children will suffer significant educational and emotional disadvantages as compared to the children reared by married couple. The life skills of these children will not be strong enough, and they are less likely to shoulder the burdens of the competitive world. Also, these children are likely to repeat their parents' behaviour and even engage in criminal behaviour, thereby providing impetus to family disorganization. In many researches undertaken to understand the life course of children born out of wedlock, authors have explained, 'Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to grow up in a single-parent household, experience instability in living arrangements, live in poverty, and have socio-emotional problems'(ix). In one of the same researches, the author writes, 'As these children reach adolescence, they are more likely to have low educational attainment, engage in sex at younger ages, and have a premarital birth'(x). In one of the recent studies undertaken in 2005, the author says, 'As young adults, children born outside of marriage are more likely to be idle (neither in school nor employed), have lower occupational status and income, and have more troubled marriages and divorces than those born to married parents.'(xi) Unmarried mothers lead a more difficult life than their married counterparts. It has been observed that they tend to have lower incomes, lower education levels, and greater dependence on welfare assistance than the married mothers.(xii) Financial hardship may be followed well into the old age, with women who are single mothers for a period of at least ten years during their life at greater risk of being poor at ages 65 through 75.(xiii) In addition, women who have a non-marital birth have reduced marriage prospects when compared with single women without children.(xiv)

In a country like India, which is male dominant and patriarchal, the issue of unmarried mothers is always taken from a myopic perspective and poor women are only and always blamed for the cause and left to suffer the wrath of society along with burden of a child.

Causes of Becoming Unmarried Mothers

Several factors are responsible for increasing the numbers of unmarried mothers in the recent times. Some of the dominant factors are as follows:

- **Poverty:** Instances of illicit trafficking of young women are a common practice now, particularly in poverty struck parts of Asia including India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Poor parents sell their young daughters who are physically exploited, and many of these become unmarried mothers.
- **Gender desensitization:** In a male dominant and patriarchal society like ours, males are insensitive towards issues that women face. It is important to organize workshops and trainings to sensitize both men and women about the consequences of increasing instances of unmarried mothers.
- **Changing opinion towards marriage and family:** The newer relationship status like those of live-in relationships has increased, and this is also responsible for higher instances of unmarried mothers.
- **Lack of proper sex education:** In many of the developing nations, talking about sex is a taboo and sex education is not mainstreamed in the education curriculum. The young adolescents are often confronted with many issues concerning the physical and hormonal changes that remain unanswered. This might result into experimentation and the problem of unmarried mothers.
- **Prostitution:** Women engaged in prostitution often give birth to children after maintaining physical relationship with a client, who naturally will never take the responsibility of the child.
- **Broken families:** The children of broken families suffer from social and emotional setback throughout. Such children may develop phobias against the social institutions of family and marriage, and eventually might not be willing to take up responsibilities of the relationship.

The problem of unmarried mothers is increasing at an alarming rate and needs critical attention as it manifests into several economic, social, cultural and health issues. The issue is also a precursor to several other problems including domestic and workplace violence. Several schemes exist to combat the conditions of these women, but the implementation of the same is questionable alongside their scope and scale. It is high time that synergies among the various institutions including the government, NGOs, business and media are developed to tackle the problem.

4.4 PROBLEMS OF THE ELDERLY

The biological and sociological problems of aging, although complementary, are quite disparate. Biological research on the progressive changes taking place in the

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aging organism deals with objective anatomical and physiological phenomena directly measurable by physically standardized instruments. Sociological investigation of the interrelationships of the aging organism and the sociocultural environment, on the other hand, is concerned with covert or subjective attitudes and values that are only indirectly measurable by instruments.

These, in turn, involve various culturally conditioned judgments in their construction, and require constant revision and re-standardization with advances in theory and changes in cultural value systems, if they are commensurable at all. Furthermore, as we pass from the biological to the sociological investigation of aging, the locus of research shifts from the more static conditions of the laboratory and clinic to the more dynamic settings of fieldwork where scientific controls are at best crude, and often impossible. In no field is it more difficult to transmute the particularities of individual case study into the generalities of statistical analysis.

Again, unlike biological systems, human social systems are structured not by the genetically determined reaction patterns of the biological units that compose them, but by behaviour patterns invented and acquired in social interaction. These socially derived patterns constitute the systems of cultural values which determine the social structure of human groups. Such structures do not age and die. They either commit suicide by man's inability to devise new patterns capable of dealing with the problems generated from within, or they are murdered by his inability to repel conquest from without. A social system is simply the blueprint according to which interpersonal and social functions have occurred in the past, are occurring in the present, and may be predicted to recur in the future.

Therefore, the aging of an individual, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, is defined not by physical deterioration or by time but by the value system of his society. A person is sociologically old when he is so regarded and treated by his society. The problems of personal and social adjustment confronting the aged are the resultants of the role and status accorded them by the group, the social provisions for their continuing prestige and security, and the opportunities afforded them to achieve these ends by their own initiative.

Sociologically, the problem of aging in contemporary western culture is a new phenomenon in human history in at least four ways. Two of these, the increasing number of the aged and the extension of the time during which they enjoy (or suffer) that status, are too well-known to require more than passing mention.

Two other circumstances have so completely changed the sociological character of the problem that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that prior to their emergence the problem did not exist. These are the abruptness of the social transition from productivity to retirement and the loss of role and status that accompanies it. In the simpler cultures, as well as in our own until the last 2 or 3 generations, the gradualness of the physiological changes was paralleled by

Tradition and Status

In societies with ascribed status there are at least six distinct roles ascribed to the aged that give them a recognized and assured social position:

First, the aged are the preservers and disseminators of the knowledge of the group. They are its library as well as its teachers, for the sacred lore is stored only in their memories. As a Yoruba proverb states, 'A man may be born to fortune, but wisdom comes only with length of days.'

Second, by virtue of this monopoly the aged hold a strategic position in deciding the policies of the group. The maxim, 'Old men for council, young men for war,' is practically universal in traditionally oriented societies.

Third, and closely associated with the foregoing, are the rights and privileges associated with parental authority and the ownership and management of family property. These prerogatives may persist long after death through the sacred and binding character often accorded by the culture to the dying wishes of family heads with regard to property and other matters within their jurisdiction.

Fourth, the aged are often the magicians, witch doctors, priests, and seers as well as the sages of the group. This role also frequently survives death through the prevalence of ancestor worship and fear of ghosts.

Fifth, they possess the experience and skill required to supervise the industrial and decorative arts. All these are roles that require little physical strength or stamina. They can be performed as long as accurate memory, sound judgment, and social skill in managing interpersonal relationships continue. They are also highly honorific roles whose prestige usually outlives the person's capacity to perform them and give to age as such a respect and dignity that redounds to the benefit of less competent contemporaries. For the latter there remains a sixth role. The lighter auxiliary tasks of field and herd, of hearth and household fall to their hands. By these activities they release mature adults of both sexes for more strenuous work and so maintain their status as participants in the common life.

Old-Age Institutions

Old-age homes are meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute. States in India such as Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal have developed good quality old age homes. These old age homes have special medical facilities for senior citizens such as mobile health care systems, ambulances, nurses and provision of well-balanced meals.

There are more than a thousand old-age homes in India. Most of them offer free accommodation. Some homes work on a payment basis depending on the type and quality of services offered. Apart from food, shelter and medical amenities, old age homes also provide yoga classes to senior citizens. Old-age homes also provide access to telephones and other forms of communication so that residents may keep in touch with their loved ones. Some old-age homes have day care centres. These centres only take care of senior citizens during the day.

For older people who have nowhere to go and no one to support them, old-age homes provide a safe haven. These homes also create a family like atmosphere among the residents. Senior citizens experience a sense of security and friendship when they share their joys and sorrows with each other.

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Home-Based Care

As more and more people reach retirement, many are wondering what their options are for long-term care. While many will use nursing homes and other institutionalized care, home and community-based care is becoming a popular option for aging senior citizens.

As more and more elderly adults live longer, there is an accentuated need for elder care. For centuries elderly adults have needed and received long-term care from family and friends. The mid-1900s saw an increase in nursing homes and other institutionalized care. However, recent shifts in long-term care indicate that while nursing homes are still used, community and home-based long-term care seems to be taking prominence in long-term elder care.

In studies conducted by AARP, elderly adults indicate that they would rather stay in their own homes to receive long-term care. Greater resources in the community have made it possible for many elderly adults who would typically need nursing home services to stay in the comfort of their own home for long-term care. Elderly adults need care in varying degrees. Typically, elderly adults receive help from family and friends. However, as their health declines older adults rely on skilled nursing services and other long-term care options.

Elderly adults receiving long-term care in their community are sure to use a variety of services. Most often elderly adults receive some kind of skilled nursing or home health services. These services help elderly adults with their medical needs as well as help with bathing and hygiene. Many older adults also receive some sort of cleaning and/or meal service. Other services that are offered in the community include services such as assisted living, hospice, adult day services, and physical therapy and senior centres.

Elderly adults who use community and home-based services for their long-term care will experience several advantages to using this type of care over nursing home care. Most notably community-based long-term care allows elderly adults to stay in their homes for care. Community services also give many elderly adults the opportunity to attend social events with other older adults. In many cases, elderly adults receiving home and community-based long-term care continue to stay active in their communities.

Older adults in need of long-term care services are frequently turning to home and community-based care for their needs. This shift from nursing home care to home-based care allows many elderly adults to continue living in their own homes. The many services offered to elderly adults in the community help them with their needs as they age.

4.5 YOUTH TENSION

Youth tension can also be termed as youth unrest. The term ‘unrest’ simply refers to the ‘disturbed condition of the present’. For instance, the lack of proper education may lead to social unrest in society. Social unrest is an indication of collective disillusionment and frustration of a particular group in a society. For

example, if there is unrest among the students of a particular educational institute or university, then it is not perceived as the problem of student unrest as such. However, when students all over the country express their frustration on a particular issue, for example, examination, placement in jobs, content of any syllabus, and so on, then the unrest prevailing due to these problems are termed as student unrest. In the same way, youth unrest exists in our society where there is a disagreement or frustration on common social issues in the society.

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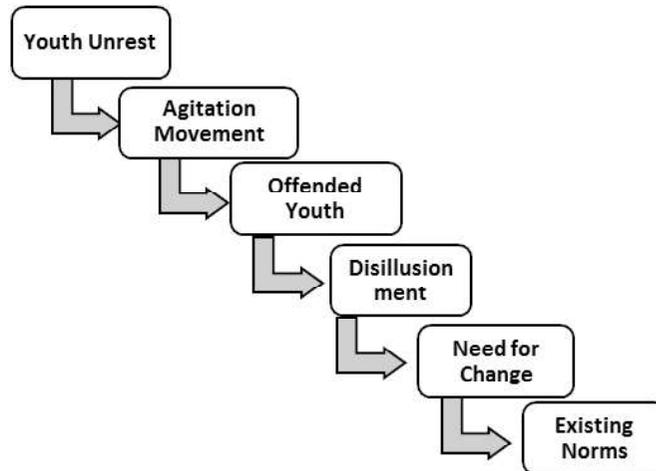


Fig. 4.1 Youth Unrest

Classification of Youth Unrest

The characteristics of youth unrest are based on four important standards. These are as follows:

- (i) Public concern
- (ii) Collective discontent
- (iii) Change in the existing norms
- (iv) Activity based on the feelings of injustice

In order to better understand the concept of youth unrest, let us classify it into the following groups:

1. Resistance agitation

The primary aim of resistance based on agitation is to keep the power holder in his/her place. For example, if university shows reduced marks on the mark sheet of some students, after a re-evaluation. This step can be resisted by students' group through agitation, which may force the university to keep the original marks (i.e., the marks would not be reduced). Such a resistance agitation expresses the disappointment and concern of the students at the direction in which the university is moving or acting.

2. Persuasive agitation

In this case, the youth make an effort to change the attitude of the power holders towards a particular issue by generally discussing their problems with them directly and making them accept their points of view. This type of agitation ranges from

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relatively minor issues to major issues. The anger and injustice expressed through this method of agitation not only provokes support for the students, but also mobilizes the passive youth to actively participate in the movement and express their discontent through harmless emotional outlets.

3. Revolutionary agitation

The major objective of revolutionary agitation is to bring unexpected extensive changes in the educational and social system. For example, in this type of agitation, the students may force the authorities to decide that no student will be declared as failed and will also be promoted to higher classes. Moreover, the student should also be given opportunities to appear in the failed paper or the subject till the time he/she clears it. In this type of agitation, the revolutionary leaders believe in overthrowing the existing system and replacing it with a new system. Some examples of revolutionary agitation are the youth agitation in china in 1987, the AASU (All Assam Students Union) agitation in Assam in 1994, Uttarakhand agitation in Uttar Pradesh in 1994 and Bodo agitation in Assam during 1989-96.

Generally, there are five types of youth who take up agitational activities. These are as follows:

- (i) **Socially isolated:** Youth who feel alienated and cut off from the larger society.
- (ii) **Unattached to family:** Youth who lack intimate relationships with their families are encouraged to participate in agitation. Young persons with warm and satisfying family bonds have no emotional need to join an agitation.
- (iii) **Personally maladjusted:** Youth who have failed to find a satisfying life role, for example, those who have not developed an adequate interest in studies, are unemployed or under-employed, or are unsuccessful, join agitation because of an emotional need to fill the void in their lives.
- (iv) **Migrants:** Such youths have little chance of getting integrated into the larger community, thus, joining an agitation acts as refuge for them.
- (v) **Marginals:** Youth who are not fully accepted and integrated with their caste, religious and linguistic group feel uneasy, insecure and resentful. They find it difficult to resolve the discrepancy in their self-image and public image which necessitates them to join agitation to get some recognition.

Major Theories on the Cause of Youth Agitation

Generally, there are three important theories which clearly explain the concept of youth unrest. These theories are discussed as follows:

- (i) **Personal maladjustment theory:** It is true that there will be no youth agitation if there is no discontent amongst the youth. If the youth is satisfied with whatever they have then they are likely to have no interest in agitation. However, the angry and the discontent youth who are not satisfied with the existing systems or norms, or those who feel even slightly annoyed with the existing structure will collectively act to pressurize the power holder to

introduce some changes. In reference to this kind of youth behaviour, the personal maladjustment theory sees agitation as a refuge from personal failure. It is possible that young people who feel maladjusted and unfulfilled are generally more involved in agitational activities. In short, the agitational supporters are those people who are frustrated misfits in the society.

- (ii) **Relative deprivation theory:** The prominent American sociologist Samuel Andrew Stouffer introduced the relative deprivation theory. According to Stouffer, a group feels deprived if it is prevented from achieving its goal. He further believes that attractive relative deprivation is increasing all over the underdeveloped world. In India, the youth in general, feels deprived of opportunities, experiences unemployment, faces the system of reservation, lacks scope of higher education, and so on. As a result of such deprivations, youth agitation increases, which is easy to infer but difficult to measure.
- (iii) **Resource mobilization theory:** According to the views of eminent sociologists in this theory, in the absence of grievances and discontent, there would have been few agitations. However, mobilization is required for directing the discontent amongst the youth towards an effective and harmless agitation. However, this theory does not explain all kinds of youth agitation. If we categorize agitation as persuasive, revolutionary and resistance agitations, then this theory does not fit into resistance-based agitation.

Process of the growth of agitation due to youth unrest

Youth agitation can be defined as a social protest wherein the behaviour of the youth is not aimed at either injuring a person not destructing public property. It is a learned behaviour. The preconditions of youth agitations are as follows:

- To create collective consciousness
- To organize the youth to work for new programmes and new plans
- To provide opportunities to young individuals for expressing their feelings and make some impact on the course of social change

However, in today's scenario, student-oriented agitations are actually problem-oriented agitations and not value oriented. For example, students will start an agitation for the removal of a particular vice chancellor of a university but will not fight for a change in the system of selecting the vice chancellors of universities in India as a whole. In the same way, in a society-oriented agitation, they will stand and raise their voice against any form of wrong treatment of any state administrator but will hardly stand for changing the system of the state.

Check Your Progress

8. State how human social systems are different from biological systems?
9. What is social unrest an indication of?
10. What is the major objective of revolutionary agitation?
11. Who introduced the relative deprivation theory?

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4.6 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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1. Desertion or abandonment at the family level may be defined as a relationship dynamic that occurs when an adult (either husband or wife) or child voluntarily denies or ignores the key responsibilities (a role) that someone expects them to fulfil and choose to end an existing relationship with someone else despite their partner(s) not wanting such a thing.
2. Marital separation is a prelude to divorce and refers to a situation when either the husband or wife decide not to live together anymore and can do so without taking a legal divorce.
3. The characteristic feature of separation is that the couple remains legally married, and thus, it gives them time to think about issues pertaining to the division of assets and debts, child custody and child support, visitation schedules and spousal support.
4. One of the effects of divorce can be seen as accruing to added responsibilities on both the partners who have been legally divorced.
5. The state of having lost one’s spouse to death is termed as widowhood.
6. Dowry refers to ‘the property, money, ornaments or any other form of wealth which a man or his family receives from his wife or her family at the time of marriage.’
7. The Mahila Dakshata Samiti was the first women’s organization in Delhi’s contemporary feminist movement to take up the issue of dowry harassment and dowry deaths.
8. Unlike biological systems, human social systems are structured not by the genetically determined reaction patterns of the biological units that compose them, but by behaviour patterns invented and acquired in social interaction.
9. Social unrest is an indication of collective disillusionment and frustration of a particular group in a society.
10. The major objective of revolutionary agitation is to bring unexpected extensive changes in the educational and social system.
11. The prominent American sociologist Samuel Andrew Stouffer introduced the relative deprivation theory.

4.7 SUMMARY

- Dowry refers to ‘the property, money, ornaments or any other form of wealth which a man or his family receives from his wife or her family at the time of marriage.’
- The problem of dowry related violence is clearly a thoroughly modern phenomenon. Thus, there is no need to re-write Hindu scriptures, because one cannot undo the past. The Hindu cultural texts are arguing from within the sphere of the *dharma*, and do not endorse cruelty to women for the sake of material possessions, that is, *arth*.

- Under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, a demand made for dowry is an offence.
- Section 498 of the Indian Penal Code specifically deals with a situation when coercion is a wilful conduct of the husband or a woman's in-laws of such a nature as is likely to drive the woman to commit suicide or cause grave physical or mental injury to her.
- The first campaign of the contemporary feminist movement was against dowry.
- The Mahila Dakshata Samiti was the first women's organization in Delhi's contemporary feminist movement to take up the issue of dowry harassment and dowry deaths.
- Domestic violence refers to violence against women, especially after marriage. Therefore, it is recognized as a significant barrier in women's empowerment.
- There are many types of domestic violence. These include physical attacks, sexual assault, emotional abuse, threats, economic hardships and threats of violence.
- Families are a universal phenomenon. Family has an important function to play in the society, but it does not always remain intact as a unit.
- Desertion from the military usage can be understood as the abandonment of a duty or post without permission and is mostly done with the intention of not returning.
- The special Joint Committee of the State and House of Commons on Divorce defined marital desertion in 1967 as a separation of the spouses which is against the will of one spouse and which is accompanied by an intention on the part of the other spouse without just cause to permanently end their married life together.
- Desertion or abandonment at the family level may be defined as a relationship dynamic that occurs when an adult (either husband or wife) or child voluntarily denies or ignores the key responsibilities (a role) that someone expects them to fulfil and choose to end an existing relationship with someone else despite their partner(s) not wanting such a thing.
- The spurious or fake deserter is one of the most distinctive products of city life and is not a result of family friction or unhappy family life. Spurious deserters are the ones who leave their family in order to escape some financial responsibility.
- The gradual deserter is mostly evident in individuals who travel out of home for employment reasons for extended time periods, hereby entering gradually into desertion from the spouse.
- The last resort type deserters are the ones who have tried their best to adjust themselves in difficult family situations but have failed. They, therefore, have thoughtfully and consciously decided upon desertion as the last resort.

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- Marital separation is a prelude to divorce and refers to a situation when either the husband or wife decide not to live together anymore and can do so without taking a legal divorce.
- The characteristic feature of separation is that the couple remains legally married, and thus, it gives them time to think about issues pertaining to the division of assets and debts, child custody and child support, visitation schedules and spousal support.
- Divorce (or the dissolution of marriage) is the final termination of a marital union, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between the parties.
- Divorce may be partial and absolute. Partial divorce is called judicial separation.
- Perry and Perry in their work *The Social Web* noted that no society has ever encouraged divorce. However, every sociologist has recognized that instances of divorce are steadily increasing.
- Emotions like anxiety, anger, sadness, and feelings of isolation, frustration and loneliness are bound to creep in among the divorced couple.
- One of the effects of divorce can be seen as accruing to added responsibilities on both the partners who have been legally divorced.
- A widow/widower is a woman/man whose spouse has died. The state of having lost one's spouse to death is termed as widowhood.
- According to a study undertaken by World Bank titled *Voices of the Poor. Case Study 9: Widows*, millions of widows worldwide of all ages undergo extreme poverty, ostracism, violence, homelessness, ill health and discrimination in law and custom.
- India, the second largest populated country of the world, is home to the largest recorded number of widows in the world with 33 million widows.
- According to Martha Chen, 'Fifty-four per cent of women aged 60 and over are widows, as are 12 per cent of women aged 35-39. Remarriage is the exception rather than the rule; only about 10 per cent of widows marry again.
- In India, widowhood is held as a social institution rather than being a personal status as in other developed countries. A widow, in the absence of her husband, faces social disgrace and wrath.
- In a country like India, which is male dominant and patriarchal, the issue of unmarried mothers is always taken from a myopic perspective and poor women are only and always blamed for the cause and left to suffer the wrath of society along with burden of a child.
- The analysis of Demographic and Health Survey data from several countries clearly shows that women and girls are more likely to experience violence when they are married at a younger age in adolescence (UNICEF, 2005).
- The Census data of India, 2011 revealed that in the age group 0–6 years, the gender ratio is 914 girls to 1,000 boys.

- This indicates that for every 1,000 boys, there are at least about 60–70 girls under the age of 6 years who were killed before or within 6 years after birth.
- The earliest efforts to stop female infanticide were made in Kathiawar and Kutch. In 1795, infanticide was declared to be murder by Bengal Regulation XXI.
- Through the efforts of Keshab Chandra Sen, the Native Marriage Act of 1872 was passed, which abolished early marriages, made polygamy an offence, sanctioned widow remarriages and inter-caste marriages.
- Spouse abuse involves an exchange of physical and psychological abuse between husbands and wives.
- According to Ram Ahuja, author of books on social problems in India, wife battering refers to ‘wilfully striking wife by her husband with or without injury’.
- Aging of an individual, as a socio-cultural phenomenon, is defined not by physical deterioration or by time but by the value system of his society. A person is sociologically old when he is so regarded and treated by his society.
- Old-age homes are meant for senior citizens who are unable to stay with their families or are destitute. States in India such as Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal have developed good quality old age homes.
- In studies conducted by AARP, elderly adults indicate that they would rather stay in their own homes to receive long-term care.
- The term ‘unrest’ simply refers to the ‘disturbed condition of the present’.
- Social unrest is an indication of collective disillusionment and frustration of a particular group in a society.
- The primary aim of resistance based on agitation is to keep the power holder in his/her place.
- The major objective of revolutionary agitation is to bring unexpected extensive changes in the educational and social system.
- The prominent American sociologist Samuel Andrew Stouffer introduced the relative deprivation theory.
- According to Stouffer, a group feels deprived if it is prevented from achieving its goal.
- Youth agitation can be defined as a social protest wherein the behaviour of the youth is not aimed at either injuring a person not destructing public property.

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4.8 KEY TERMS

- **Individualism:** It is a social theory favouring freedom of action for individuals over collective or state control.

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- **Depression:** It is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.
- **Anxiety:** It is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.
- **NGO:** It means a non-profit organization that operates independently of any government, typically one whose purpose is to address a social or political issue.
- **Feminism:** It is the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.
- **Foeticide:** It is the crime of killing a baby that has not yet been born.
- **Infanticide:** It is the intentional killing of infants.

4.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What is desertion? What are its types?
2. State the various causes and effects of divorce.
3. Write a short-note on widowhood.
4. Briefly define foeticide and infanticide.
5. Briefly describe the problems of the elderly in India.
6. Define and classify youth unrest.

Long-Answer Questions

1. What is family disintegration? What are the various ways in which family disintegration takes place?
2. Analyse the growing phenomenon of unmarried mothers? How does society treat women who give birth outside of marriage? Shed light on underlying causes of becoming unmarried mothers.
3. Write a detailed description of dowry and domestic violence. Give a historical background of both the concepts and discuss the process of reformation.
4. Examine the prevalence of female abuse, in various forms, in the Indian society and the changes that occurred to tackle such abuse.
5. Analyse the major theories on the cause of youth agitation.

4.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 5 SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Social Problems: An Overview
- 5.3 Casteism
 - 5.3.1 Stratification
- 5.4 Regionalism
- 5.5 Communalism
- 5.6 Cyber-Crime
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- 5.8 Social Problems of Children in India
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- 5.9 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.10 Summary
- 5.11 Key Terms
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- 5.13 Further Reading

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5.0 INTRODUCTION

C. Wright Mills (1959) had stated quite aptly that the structure and culture of a society, its history, and what happens within it at any time and place affect everyone within it more or less directly. When personal troubles take on the status of mutually recognized and shared difficulties for a sufficient number of people, these exigencies may be perceived as social problems that require social action.

From a broader sociological perspective, social problems are defined through a process of social construction in which a situation or condition is collectively perceived as harmful to a sufficient number of people or society itself. The process of constructing a social problem entails gaining public attention and legitimacy for recognizing the troubling aspect of the situation or condition, proposing and obtaining acceptance for solutions, and implementing strategies for change. What is constructed as a social problem differs by society, historical time, place and culture. Thus, the same condition may be defined as a social problem at one point in time or for one group of people, yet as non-problematic at other time periods or for different constituencies.

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Contemporary Indian society is flecked with numerous issues that are labelled as social problems. Some of them are age-old, and some are of recent origin that have erupted owing to the change in global socio-political order.

A social problem starts with the awakening of people in a given locality, with the realisation of certain cherished values that are threatened by the conditions which have become acute.

Sociology has emerged as a discipline which systematically studies social behaviour or society, including its origins, development, organisation, networks, and institutions and problems. To understand social problems, sociologists look “from outside” at individuals rather than looking them “from inside”, to examine the thoughts, cause, and action. This is due to the fact that for the sociologist, many problems that appear as personal are actually social problems, because personal experience in one way or another is influenced by social forces. Prominent American sociologist C. Wright Mills uses the term “sociological imagination” to refer to this ability to see the impact of social forces on individuals, especially on their private lives.

This unit discusses the various types of social problems that are prevalent and the concepts of casteism, regionalism and communalism in India and also elucidates the gender inequality that exists. The issues related to violence against women and cyber-crime are also explained in this unit.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the various types of social problems
- Describe the issues related to casteism, regionalism and communalism in India
- Define cyber-crime
- Examine gender inequality in India
- Discuss the issues of LGBTQ communities
- Assess violence against women in India

5.2 SOCIAL PROBLEMS: AN OVERVIEW

Social problems are behaviour patterns or conditions that are considered objectionable or undesirable by many members of a society. These members recognize that the corrective policies, programmes and services are necessary to cope with and reduce the scope of these problems (Fuller and Meyers, 1941). Merton and Nisbet consider social problem as a way of behaviour that is regarded by a substantial part of social order as being in violation of one or more generally accepted or approved norms (Merton and Nisbet 1971). Social problems involve actions or patterns of behaviour that are viewed by a substantial number of persons in the society as being harmful to the society or in violation of societal norms, and about which ameliorative action is seen as both possible and desirable.

Therefore, social problems are undesirable situations or conditions or behaviour concerning society, social institutions, social relationships, social structure, social organization, etc. It is always disintegrating and disorganizing. Moreover, it is pathological in nature and requires proper attention for its cure.

Social Problems as Social Constructions

As stated, social problem is a situation or condition in a society that is constructed through human agency as something worthy of being perceived of as a social problem. The same phenomenon may be defined differently or even not considered as a social problem across and within societies and at different points in time. In this regard, Blumer (1971) cautions that social problems are not the result of intrinsic malfunctioning of a society, but are result of a process of definition in which a given condition is picked and identified as a social problem. A society does not exist for a society unless it is recognized by that society to exist.

Lopata (1984) extends this position by arguing that certain aspects or characteristics of any society are likely to be defined as 'conditions' that can be constructed as social problems. In the history of a society, the same situation can be converted through claims-making activities by some members of that society into a social problem in many different ways with a variety of proposed 'solutions' (Spector and Kituse, 1987).

Like the course of human life, the process of constructing a social problem typically follows a 'natural history'. Fuller and Meyers (1941), Blumer (1971), and Spector and Kituse (1987) propose five stages of this history:

1. A social problem begins when a number of persons or key authoritative persons organise claims-making activities to define the situation as harmful to individual or social life.
2. The legitimacy of these claims is accepted by official agencies, fear is communicated, and blame is assigned.
3. The condition becomes publicly recognized and defined as a social problem.
4. Procedures to deal with the claims and competing solutions are suggested.
5. Solutions are implemented. Assignment of a label to a newly identified problem, such as the term 'child abuse', 'divorce' or 'juvenile delinquency' is common.

Thus, a social problem may consist of many layers and involve multiple components. In this regard, Fuller and Myers (1941) note that at one level:

A social problem is a condition that is an actual imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of persons. The objective aspect or phase of a problem consists of a verifiable condition, situation or event. The subjective aspect consists of an awareness of definition of certain people that the condition, situation or event is inimical to their best interests and a consciousness that something must be done about it.

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Characteristics of Social Problems

These discussions make it apparent that social problem is a condition creating crisis and upheaval in generally established and current values of society. In order to understand the characteristics of social problems, various viewpoints are taken into consideration.

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According to Weinberg (1960) social problems have six characteristics.

1. Social problems arise by being collectively defined as objectionable by many members of the community. Thus, adverse conditions not defined by the community as reprehensible are not considered as social problems. For instance, taking alcohol is not regarded as objectionable by society; it is not considered a social problem. However, as society recognizes and discusses the problems inherent in alcohol consumption, studies its consequences and devises a plan of corrective action to control it, this comes to be defined as a social problem even though the original situation may not have changed.
2. Social problems change when the concerned behavioural patterns are interpreted differently. For instance, till a few decades ago, mental illness was viewed as insanity and it was considered so disgraceful that the families kept the member's mental illness as a secret. Now, the behaviour of a mentally ill person is seen only as one type of 'deviant behaviour' which requires psychiatric and social treatment. Thus, the problem of mental illness today is met more realistically and effectively.
3. Mass media (newspapers, magazines, television, radio, movies) play an important role in creating awareness about the scope and urgency of social problems.
4. Social problems have to be viewed in the context of society's values and institutions; for example, the problem of racial conflict in the United States is different from the problem of untouchability in India.
5. Social problems need to be analysed in terms of the influence upon them by group processes and social relationships.
6. Since social problems vary historically, contemporary social problems are the society's concern; for example, the problem of refugee settlement in India in 1947-48 was different from the problem settling refugees from Assam in 1968 (Ahuja, 2001).

Apart from the aforementioned characteristics, the following characteristics of social problems can be outlined:

- Social problems are disintegrative: Social problems disintegrate the social system directly or indirectly. Social problems adversely affect social values and since the values of every society differ they are affected differently.
- Social problems generate out of multiple causes: There can be many causes of social problems.
- Social problems are inter-connected: There is a close correlation between various social problems. For instance, problems like unemployment, poverty and crime are inter-related.

- Social problems leads to both individual and community maladjustment.
- All social problems arise due to pathological social conditions.

Types of Social Problems

Social problems can be of various types and it is difficult to categorize. However, Fuller and Myers (1941) have given three types of problems:

1. Physical Problems: These problems emerge in society, but their causes are not based on values or emotions.
2. Ameliorative problems: There is consensus about the effects of these problems, but there are differences pertaining to their solutions.
3. Moral Problems: There is no consensus pertaining to the nature or causes of these problems.

Social Problems and Social Disorganization

Social problems are a result of social disorganization. It can be said that social problems and social disorganization are closely inter-related. When the functioning of society is threatened due to the emergence of social problems, it can be said that social disorganization is in existence. In fact, social problems bring about social disorganization. In simple words, social disorganization implies some breakdown in the social organization resulting from forces of social change. The concept of disorganization occupies a prominent place in modern sociological literature. It was developed by Thomas and Znaniecki in their '*The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*' where they defined social disorganization as decrease of the influence of the existing rules of behaviour upon individual members of the group.

On the other hand, social disorganization is defined by Elliot and Merill as a breakdown in the equilibrium of forces, decay in the social structure, so that old habits and forms of social control no longer function effectively.

Nature of Social Disorganization

Social disorganization is an indication of the existence of diseased or disruptive elements of society. The nature of social disorganization is discussed below:

- **Conflict of mores and institutions:** Every society has its own mores and institutions which regulate the life of its members. However, with the passage of time such mores become obsolete and old ones are replaced by new ones. As a result of this, there is conflict which destroys the consensus of social organization and social disorganization ensues; for instance, the difference of opinion in respect of many social institutions and social laws such as divorce, joint family, inter-caste marriages, etc.
- **Reversal of function from one group to another:** In an organized society the functions of different groups are predetermined. Since the society is dynamic, the functions of one group are transferred to another. For instance, most of the functions of family are transferred today to nursery schools and clubs which have caused family disorganization which further results in social disorganization.

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- **Individuation:** In a traditional society people accommodate everyone's interest. However, modern age places high premium on individualism or individualistic tendencies. Men and women take decisions on important matters like marriage, occupation, recreation and morality in accordance with individual prejudices, interest and attitudes. Such a trend can set in dangerous process of disorganization.
- **Changes in the social structure:** Change in social structure refers to changes in roles and status of individuals. In an organized society, the roles and status of individuals are defined and fixed. The possibility of conflict between role and status becomes less due to simple division of labour and mechanical solidarity as reiterated by Durkheim. However, when society passes from simple to complex division of labour and organic solidarity there is conflict between status and role. For instance, the multiplicity of roles which a modern woman plays can often lead to role conflict and thereby bring about family disorganization.
- **Maladjustment:** In an organized society there is considerable degree of harmony among individuals as a result of which they welcome any change. However, in a disorganized society, people do not accept change and are reluctant to adjust with new developments.
- **The society becomes functionally stagnant:** Here, a disorganized society becomes functionally paralysed. The smooth functioning of society is hampered as a result of which the entire social system is affected including the individual therein. For instance, the toppling down of governments or the creation of an 'anomic' situation can functionally paralyse the society and bring about economic breakdown.
- **The central authority loses its controlling power:** When disorganization reaches its climax, the central authority loses its controlling power. And to maintain order, the society has to rest upon an authority which may be a single individual (monarchy), a group of individuals (aristocracy) and may be masses (democracy). When authority is unable to make and implement laws there comes sharp resistance from the society resulting in revolutions which jeopardizes the functioning of government.

Causes of Social Problems and Social Disorganization

Social problems have been present in every society. Since the dawn of civilization, man has been confronted with social problems of diverse nature. Rienhardt (1952) has referred to three factors in the development of social problems.

1. **Differentiation and multiplication of interests and functions:** In a complex society there is increased opportunity for the collision of interests of various individuals, groups, institutions and systems. Untouchability, communal riots and political crimes are social problems which are the result of the clash of interests of different castes and classes.
2. **Accelerating frequency of social change or growth of civilization:** The growth and development of science and technology has destroyed

many old forms of employment resulting in the migration of millions of people and has given rise to class conflicts. It is thus the structural and functional maladjustments arising from revolutionary interventions which create many social problems.

- 3. Man's developed insight to make a scientific analysis:** Ever since man has developed his social insight of looking into the working of nature, issues which were formerly regarded as simple are now perceived as a result of various kinds of natural conditions which influence man and society.

Elliot and Merill have ascribed four main causes of social disorganization: the social processes under the three main heads—cultural, political and economic; cultural lag; conflicting attitudes and values; and social crisis.

Check Your Progress

1. What are social problems?
2. State one characteristics of social problems.
3. Name the three types of social problems.

5.3 CASTEISM

Caste is the main social institution of Indian villages. Referred to as *jati*, *jat*, *zat* or various other local terms, it is a collectivity of people, related also by the ties of kinship and marriage, which has a 'monopoly' over an occupation. It provides its specialized services and the products of its occupation to other caste groups. Harold Gould characterizes caste as a 'monopolistic guild'.

Under the ideology of caste, one's merit lies in subscribing as conscientiously and diligently as possible to the duties prescribed for one's caste. The political bodies of the village strictly deal with any case of usurping the occupation of other castes. Among other things, the occupation related to it gives identity to a caste. Sometimes, the castes are also named after the corresponding occupations. For example, those who 'supply oil (*tel*)' belong to the *teli* (oil-man) caste; those who beat drums (*dhols*) are *dholis*; and those who dye (*rangna*) clothes belong to the *rangrez* caste. The occupations are hereditarily transmitted.

The important features of caste may be summarized as follows:

- Caste is determined by birth.
- Caste groups are endogamous, which means that marriage is restricted to members of the group. The marriage between the members of two different castes is not permissible.
- The members of a caste have to adhere to the rules about food and food-sharing prescribed for their caste.
- Caste involves a system comprising many castes arranged in a hierarchy of rank and status.

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- Castes are segmented into sub-castes and sometimes sub-castes into sub-sub-castes.
- Castes were traditionally linked to occupations.

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Caste and class

Caste and class are polar opposites, as understood by the Western scholars, and in particular by the British administrators and ethnographers. They observe that caste and class are different forms of social stratification. The units ranked in the class system are individuals, and those ranked in the caste system are groups. According to this view, change is taking place from caste to class, hierarchy to stratification, closed to open, and from an organic to segmentary system. Such a distinction between caste and class is more of a heuristic nature.

A narrow view of class is taken by considering it a result of objective rating of positions based on certain attributes. Considering a class as a case of fluidity and a caste as a case of rigidity is very simplistic and unrealistic depiction of these two systems of social stratification. Acceptance of such a distinction would obviously mean defining caste through the concepts of status rigidity, organic solidarity, functional interdependence and pollution–purity.

Caste as a ‘closed system’

Some scholars view caste as a ‘closed system’ of social stratification. Others consider it both ‘closed’ and ‘open’. As a closed system, caste has an ‘organic’ character. It implies that different castes depend upon each other for fulfillment of various socio-cultural and economic needs. Caste, as an open system, has segmentary character. It implies that different castes become somewhat independent of each other because of the emergence of ‘differentiated structures’ in India.

Caste and class in rural India

Agrarian society in India can be best understood in terms of its class structure. But here we try to understand it through the structure of caste system. In rural areas, there is a complex relationship between caste and class. This relationship is not always straightforward. We might expect that the higher castes have more land and higher incomes. There is a correspondence between caste and class as one moves down the hierarchy. In many areas, this is broadly true but not exactly. For instance, in most areas, the highest caste, the brahmins, are not major landowners, and so they fall outside the agrarian structure although they are a part of rural society. In most regions of India, the major landowning groups belong to the upper castes. In each region, there are usually just one or two major landowning castes, which are also numerically very important. Such groups were termed by the sociologist M.N. Srinivas, who is mostly known for his work on caste and caste system, as dominant castes. In each region, the dominant caste is the most powerful group, economically and politically, and dominates local society. The examples of dominant landowning groups are the Jats and Rajputs of Uttar Pradesh., the Vokkaligas and Lingayats in Karnataka, Kammas and Reddis in Andhra Pradesh, and Jat and Sikhs in Punjab.

While dominant landowning groups are usually middle or high ranked castes, most of the marginal farmers and landless farmers belong to lower caste groups. In official classification, they belong to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) or Other Backward Classes (OBCs). In many regions of India, in ancient times, untouchables or *dalit* castes were not allowed to own land and they accounted for majority of the agricultural labourers for the dominant landowning groups. This also created a labour force that allowed the landowners to cultivate the land intensively and get higher returns.

Gandhi's View on the Caste and *Varna*

Gandhi was a defender of the caste system till 1922. However, in the year 1925, he became critical of the caste system. He observed:

‘I gave support to caste because it stands for restraint. But at present caste does not mean restraint; it means limitations. Restraint is glorious and helps to achieve freedom. But limitation is like a chain. It binds. There is nothing commendable in castes as they exist today. They are contrary to the tenets of the *shastras*. The number of castes is indefinite and there is a bar against intermarriage. This is not a condition of elevation. It is a state of fall.’

Alternatives of caste according to Gandhi

As an alternative, Gandhi suggests the best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into one big caste. There should be four such big castes so that we may reproduce the old system of four *varnas*. Thus, Gandhi became an upholder of the *varna* system. However, the *varna* system Gandhi supported was different from the traditional *varna* system. Gandhi's *varna* system has the following features:

- Division into *varnas* was based on occupation while caste divisions were based on birth.
- Shudra is equally authorized to learn or study military art of offence or defence.
- The *varna* system is linked with the way of earning a living. A person belonging to one *varna* should be allowed to acquire the knowledge or science and art specialized in by persons belonging to other *varnas*. However, for earning his living, he must follow the occupation of the *varna* to which he belongs. It implies that he must follow the hereditary profession of his forefathers.
- The object of the *varna* system is to prevent competition and class struggle and class war. The *varna* system should be supported because it fixes the duties and occupations of persons.

Ambedkar's Criticism of Gandhian Philosophy

B. R. Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb, observed that Gandhi's change-over from the caste system to the *varna* system does not make any significant departure from the concept of caste system. In the first place, the idea of *varna* is the parent of the idea of caste. If the idea of caste is a pernicious idea, it is entirely

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because of the viciousness of the idea of *varna*. Both are evil ideas and it matters very little whether one believes in *varna* or in caste.

According to Ambedkar, 'The old *varna* system has at least two merits; it does not say that it is based on birth. Indeed, it makes a special point that each man's *varna* is fixed according to his innate qualities. But Gandhi has given a new interpretation of the *varna* system and changed it out of recognition. Under the old orthodox interpretation, caste connoted hereditary occupation but *varna* did not. Gandhi by his own account has given a new interpretation of a *varna* where it is determined by the principle of heredity so that *varna* is merely another name for caste. Gandhi's change from caste to *varna* does not indicate the growth of any new revolutionary ideology.'

Rajni Kothari's Views on Caste System

The view of Rajni Kothari, a renowned Indian scholar and activist, on the caste system is more or less based on second strategy (discussed later in this unit) of national leader who thought that caste system is essential characteristics of Indian society and it would not be possible to reject it outrightly. Therefore, while discussing the role of caste system in modern Indian politics, he criticizes modern intellectuals who reject the caste system.

He begins with the question: is caste disappearing? His answer is that no social system disappears in this manner. We should think on the working of the caste system in modern India on these two lines: what form is caste taking under the impact of modern politics, and what form is politics taking in a caste-oriented Indian society? Many of us complain of casteism in politics and are actually looking for a short of politics which has no basis in society. Many of us also perhaps lack a clear conception of either the nature of politics or the nature of caste system.

According to Kothari:

Politics is a competitive enterprise; its purpose is the acquisition of power for the realization of certain goals, and its process is one of identifying and manipulating the existing and emerging allegiances in order to mobilize and consolidate positions. The important thing is organization and articulation of support, and where politics is mass based, the point is to articulate support through the organizations in which the masses are to be found. It follows that where the caste structure provides one of the principle organization clusters along which the bulk of the population is found to lead, politics must strive to organize through such a structure. The alleged casteism in politics is thus no more and no less than politicization of caste. It is something in which both the forms of caste and the forms of politics are brought nearer each other, in the process changing both.... Politicians mobilize caste groupings and identities in order to organize their power. They find in it an extremely well articulated and flexible basis for organization, something that may have been structured in terms of a status hierarchy, but something that is also available for political manipulation – and one that has a basis in consciousness. Where there are other types groups and other bases of association, politicians approach them as well. And as they everywhere change the form of such organizations they change the form of caste as well....

It is very much clear that in Kothari's view as a social institution caste system is not disappearing from India. Its form and shape may change, but as a institution it will continue to exist as it serves many purposes of individuals at societal level. In concluding remarks Kothari says: 'It is not politics that gets caste ridden; it is caste that gets politicized.' The operation of competitive politics has drawn caste out of political context and has given it a new status and identity. As far as mobilization of the people on the basis of castes is concerned, Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (the authors of *Explaining Indian Democracy: A Fifty Year Perspective, 1956-2006*) have also supported the Kothari's viewpoint that there are three types of mobilization, namely vertical, horizontal and differential. Political implications of this development are legitimization of the traditional authority pattern and creation of group consciousness and divisions along narrow sectarian lines.

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Several other Views on Caste

Besides the aforementioned views on the caste system in India, some other thinkers and scholars have also their own views on the topic.

- Karl Marx's belief is that the Asiatic mode of production was related to the stability of the caste system in India.
- H.J.S. Maine's view is that caste is an example of a non-contractual 'status society'.
- Senart's focus is on the purity of descent and purity of occupations.
- Louis Dumont's view refers to pollution–purity as the ideological basis of Hindu society reflected through the caste system.
- Hocart's belief is that the performance of certain rituals and ritual services to the deity and the feudal lords was the basis of the caste system.
- Max Weber's view is that caste is based on the other-worldly doctrines of Hinduism.
- C. Bougie's view on the caste system emphasizes on hereditary specialization and hierarchy and mutual repulsion (social distance).

Strategies Adopted to Tackle the Issue of Caste System

Two strategies have been adopted by nationalist leaders as well as political scientists to solve the problems arising due to caste system in India.

1. Denying the suggestion that caste is essential to the characterization of Indian society: This position has been especially favoured by the nationalist left as well as by Marxists. Caste, according to this argument, is feature of the superstructure of Indian society. Its existence and efficacy are to be understood as the ideological products of the specific pre-capitalist social formation. With the suppression of this pre-capitalist formation, caste too would disappear. One implication of this argument is that by refusing to ascribe to caste any fundamental significance, it is possible to:

- Uphold without qualification the legal political principles of the modern state

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- Dispute the rule of colonial differences in the public sphere
- Boldly advocate the cultural project of modernity

2. Retaining caste as an essential element of Indian society: According to this strategy, the presence of the caste system makes Indian society essentially different from the Western society. What is denied, however, in this argument is the charges that caste is necessarily contradictory to and incompatible with a modern and just society. Ideally caste system seeks to harmonize within the whole of a social system the mutual distinction of its parts. This is required by any stable and harmonious social order, and in India, the caste system is the way this is achieved.

Of the two strategies, the second one has been getting more prominence in Indian politics. Sometimes, caste consideration becomes very significant in the electoral calculation and political parties distribute party tickets and posts solely on the basis of caste equation. Caste alliances or caste appeals by our politicians and the caste-based voting by voters have become regular phenomena in Indian politics. Media representation to political parties also highlights these issues at the national level. Sometimes caste becomes a big political issue in an electoral battle. Although scholars like Kothari and Rudolph have found some positive points in this development, overall the caste system has been creating lot of problems in present day political system.

Caste System and Nation-Building Process

We have learned in the preceding section that not only Constitution-makers but also our national leaders were divided on the relevance of caste system. During the freedom struggle, the British Raj encouraged the continuity of the caste system by favouring some caste groups with higher status and by granting them titles and land. The system was basically not egalitarian, and the British never discouraged caste-based inequalities, injustices and discriminations. British administrators and ethnographers defined caste in terms of its 'functionality' to society and culture in India. They put emphasis on inter-caste and intra-caste harmony and discipline with the sole objective of keeping people divided into castes and sub-castes and thereby preventing them from being united against British colonial rule in India.

The post-Independence Indian state inherited and reflected these contradictions. On the one hand, the state was committed to the abolition of caste and explicitly mentioned it in the Constitution. On the other hand, the state was both unable and unwilling to undertake radical reforms which would have undermined the economic basis for caste inequality. At yet another level, the political leadership assumed that if it operated in a caste-blind manner, this would certainly undermine the caste-based privileges and would ultimately result in abolition of the institution itself. Caste affiliations, for example, had nothing to do with the appointments to government jobs. This left the well-educated upper castes and the ill-educated or often illiterate lower castes to compete on 'equal' terms. However, there was an exception to this in the form of reservations for the SCs and STs. In other words, in the decades immediately following the Independence, the state was indifferent to the fact that the upper castes and the lower castes were far from equal in economic as well as educational terms.

However, it is not wholly true that state has not taken measure for other castes to improve their social and economic status. There were some states like Tamil Nadu where even before the implementation of the Mandal Commission report, seats were reserved for backward castes in government jobs. The Mandal issue started with V. P. Singh's attempt to put it on the political agenda of the country. The announcement of the implementation of the Mandal Commission report led to large scale social unrests and violence and contributed indirectly to political polarization in the country. V. P. Singh had to quit the chair of the Prime Minister of the country and there occurred a split in the ruling Janata Party. Ever since the Mandal Commission report was implemented, politics of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh has been completely changed. These states have divided themselves on the basis of forward and backward castes. The politics of the politicians like Lallu Prasad and Mulayam Singh is largely based on Mandal politics. This has created a lot of problems of governance in these states. People of these states have started casting their votes on caste affiliations and the issue of development has become a secondary issue. There has been mass migration of people from these states. Economic institutions and educational organizations have started decaying and suddenly the developmental process has halted in these states. Present socio-economic crisis and ethnic strife in metropolitan city of Mumbai and Delhi are the results of these caste politics.

Another noticeable presence of caste politics can be observed in the rise of Dalit Movement in India. The Dalit movement which has considerable political significance marked its presence in Indian political strata through the political victory of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in Uttar Pradesh. BSP, through raising the consciousness level of dalit groups and doing opportunistic alliances with other political parties, has shown the world that even using caste plank and mobilizing certain social groups, one can grab the power. However, the BSP's assertion to power may be supportive to the argument that favours caste as an essential characteristic and a mobilizing factor of Indian politics.

A number of books written, particularly in the pre-Independence period, refer to the advantages and disadvantages of the caste system. Its advantages are division of labour, respect for authority and moral restraint. Its disadvantages are physical degeneracy, national poverty, hindrance to intellectual progress, hostility to social reforms, curbs on individual liberty, hindrance to the growth of nationality, discord between classes, human suffering, socio-economic exploitations, cruelty, etc. Caste was and is considered to be a tyrannical system.

However, if we assess these advantages and disadvantage in the context of modern Indian society, we find that all the aforementioned advantages of the caste system have become meaningless. Now no occupation is reserved on caste lines. Even in many parts of urban India one can find brahmins doing the menial jobs. However, this is true that in marriages and community dinners, people still prefer to call their own caste and community. This community dinner system is also breaching its code in urban India. Inter-caste marriage is still not common either in urban or rural India. However, one thing has become common in the present Indian political system: no institution or social set up has been left untouched by caste system. Whether you visit an educational institute or a government office,

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you will be handed over a list on caste line. Politicians and bureaucrats have also formed their alliances on caste lines. Whether a person is competent or not for a position, it has become an irrelevant issue in the present political and institutional set up. What matters is that if the person belongs to the social group the position is reserved for, then he must be offered that position. But what about the situation when the seats are few and applicants belonging to the same social class are in thousands, or even in lakhs? How will the government accommodate them all? Politics of dividing the Indian social structure into numerous heterogeneous fragments on caste lines is a big hindrance to the nation-building process.

5.3.1 Stratification

The disorganization of the caste system leads some to infer that in the future the caste system will cease to exist. But many scholars have dissolved this doubt. According to G.S. Ghurye, there is no sign of extinction of the caste system in the near future due to the following reasons:

- (i) **Election:** Due to the establishment of a democracy in India, the administrative machinery is operated by representatives elected by the people. The method of election has done much to encourage the caste system because the candidates want to achieve their end by drumming the cause of casteism among the voters. This is how people are asked to vote for their caste candidate, and this casteism is maintained by the elected leaders after the elections are over. Political parties also sponsor only that candidate for election in a particular area whose caste population is the highest in that area.
- (ii) **Protection of backward classes:** The Constitution of India has provided for the protection of the backward and scheduled castes. Some posts are reserved for them in government services. Some seats are also reserved in legislative assemblies for backward classes. They are given all types of facilities and special scholarships for education. All such special rights have encouraged casteism very much in the backward castes since the castes is proving very beneficial to them because of these prerogatives.

State of class consciousness in India

On one hand, the caste is becoming weaker due to the influence of factors like industrialization, urbanization, technology enhancement, better transportation and means of communication, popularity of English education, political and social awakening, democratic government and laws abolishing untouchability, and so on. But on the other hand, new organizations such as labour unions on the basis of occupation, post, capacity etc., are being established. Due to an increase in the desire for money caused by the influence of Western education, the sense of superiority or inferiority is now based on wealth and social power rather than on caste. Nowadays, the class consciousness based on occupations etc., is replacing the caste consciousness.

For people who are specially gifted in a particular occupation, other occupations are very limited in India and the paths to those that are available are

closed. Children of those parents who have a small income or who have no wealth look out only for service. In reality, in India casteism is being transformed into classism.

It is not an easy task to predict the future of the caste system. It is certainly true that the restrictions on marriage, diet, lifestyle, and so on, based on the caste system are breaking down. But, as explained earlier, casteism is increasing and caste system is being encouraged by the method of election and the government protection of backward classes for political motives. Actually, it seems more or less definite that there is no possibility of the caste system being eliminated from the Indian society in the near future.

The roots of the caste system goes deep in Hindu society and at its base are the important and beneficial principles of division of labour, specialization, etc. Foreign invaders made their best efforts to wipe out the Hindu caste. In spite of all efforts of Muslims and Christians, not much has changed in the caste system. It has definitely been affected somewhat by the influence of Western education and Western culture, and its form has undergone a vast change.

There is no room for doubting that this form of the caste system will change further in future, it may even change beyond recognition. It may also be influenced by the development of the sense of democracy and nationalism, industrial progress and by new political and economic movement.

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Exhibit 5.1

Khaph Panchayats: Reinforcing Caste Hierarchies

The recent killings/threats to kill in the name of honour and social ostracism have once again brought caste-based discriminations, hierarchies, conflicts and cleavages in society to the fore. To challenge the undermining of caste authority and principle of ascribed status, the caste councils/Khaph Panchayats in particular regions of Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in north India have become active and assertive during the recent past.

The assertion of Khaph Panchayats to legitimize their role and relevance in dictating social justice based on traditions and customs of the caste system reflect: (1) the confrontation between the traditional and feudal hierarchy of power relations and the modern democratic and egalitarian relations, (2) despite rapid socio-economic and political transformation over the years, hierarchy and domination rooted in the caste system has not become irrelevant, (3) inter-caste and intra-caste conflicts and contestations are not only vertical (up and down the hierarchy) and horizontal (across the same ranking order), but are also multidimensional (in practice), and (4) such conflicts and their dynamics are key to the understanding of social inequality and injustice.

The significance of understanding caste conflicts increases when the subordinated castes resist the structure and ideology of dominance and the dominant castes counter/oppose the resistance from below. Therefore, one of the pertinent ways to understand the social reality is to look at the substantive question of subordination of certain sections of society and underline the underlying factors that make them subordinates. And caste is one of the structural factors in perpetuating subordination of those who are at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Both as a concept and practice, caste retains critical importance in terms of its multiplicity, complexities and dynamics.

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Caste in India is an extremely variable phenomenon. Relations based on castes are asymmetric and upheld by institutions such as marriage, family, kinship ties, occupational structures, status mobility and the political systems. Each caste has built its own consciousness, which makes India a plural society. Since castes in India are culturally distinct (Karve)/functional entities with special distinguishing set of cultural characteristics (Leach) and caste systems are living environments for those who comprise them (Berreman), a more comprehensive approach to understand caste should look at its three dimensions: (i) stratification, (ii) pluralism, and (iv) interaction.

Caste: A powerful social cleavage

Caste got a new lease of life with the coming of democracy (Srinivas), and new alignments challenged the rigidity of the system. With the economic advancement and socio-political changes, caste mobility has always been a constant threat to the status quo and traditional dominance of certain castes. The caste councils/ Khap Panchayats are opposed to the progressive, non-hierarchical, non-stratified, non-status quo, open and equal society. They are against the weakening of collective identity of the *jati* and the strengthening of individual identity and mobility. This strengthens the argument that 'group identity supersedes individual identity' and 'the position of an individual in society cannot be separated from the position of the *jati* or social group to which he or she belongs' (Shah, 2002).

Caste and caste identity can prove to be both secular and oppressive: (1) they are secular in countering communal parties and ideologies for political purposes (Kothari, 1970) and provide a basis for struggle against oppression and exploitation, and (2) they are oppressive when they object to change in the hierarchical order both in the inter-caste and intra-caste relations. Thus as a social phenomena, 'the caste system have had a long pedigree and have been the source of both identities and animosities, both horizontal alignments and vertical exploitations and oppressions' (Kothari, 2008). The socio-culturally defined norms by the caste system contribute to the multiple inequalities and hierarchies in society. Therefore, caste 'is the purveyor of collective identity and annihilator of the same hierarchical order from which its collective identity is drawn'.

Experiences across regions illustrate that the lower castes are not only treated as subordinate to the higher castes but are also subject to discriminations, humiliations, exploitations, oppressions, controls and violence. Within castes, the clans/*gotras*/*gots*/sub-castes are structured hierarchal as dominant and subordinate. The *got* is an exogamous patrilineal clan (most commonly used as *gotra*) within a *jati*. All members of a *gotra* share patrilineal descent from a common ancestor. People from different *jatis* might carry the same *gotra* name and claim descent from the same legendary sage or deity (Mehta, 1999). *Gotras* impose higher and lower ranking within the caste-fold and strengthen the iniquitous power relations which are hierarchical, discriminatory and exploitative. *Gotra* is the nomenclatural identity, an exogamous unit within an endogamous *jati*, and serves the function of regulating marriages in terms of exclusion.

In a caste system, the most stringently regulated areas of behaviour are marriage and sex relations. Marriage within the same *gotra* is tantamount to incest and is a breach against the time honoured cultural practices, which indicate the prejudice against such marriages. Such a marriage is considered immoral as it violates a traditional practice—*bhaichaara/biradari*/the ideology of Hindu brotherhood. The principle of brotherhood extends beyond a village/territory and some higher *jatis* in north India prohibit marriages into four *gotras*, namely, one's own, that of the mother, the father's mother and the mother's mother.

Today, the increasingly combative Khaps are projecting themselves as democratic, united and a representative body to gain their relevance and legitimacy in a society where their role has become less relevant.... By mobilizing larger numbers in support

of customs and rituals based on family, kinship, *gotras*, caste, community and village, the Khap Panchayats (with large vote-banks) also enjoy wider and higher political support from the gram panchayats as going against them is electorally suicidal. Therefore, the *sarpanches* do not oppose the diktats of the Khap Panchayats. By redefining their image as catalysts of social change, they have been successful in generating support from certain politically powerful sections of society.... Thus, assertions of caste identities, hierarchies and dominance in social, economic, political and cultural space are common in the society undergoing social change. While the castes placed at the bottom of the hierarchy want to improve their status, those at the top are opposed to change in the hierarchical order and assert their power. Caste conflicts are therefore always settled by the dominant castes in their favour to preserve the status quo.

The social predicaments of increasing female foeticide, declining sex-ratio (lowest in Haryana—821 in the age group of 0–6), dowry system and illiteracy are consequential effects of traditions which need to be addressed urgently by panchayats rather than banning marriages within the same *gotra*. The Khap Panchayats with their feudal legacy reinforce caste hierarchies and patriarchies. Thus, the diktats of Khap Panchayats based on *gotra* identities need to be scrapped as illegal medieval practices.

Source: <http://www.mainstreamweekly.net/article2205.html>

Accessed on: 19 June 2012

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5.4 REGIONALISM

India is the largest country in the Indian subcontinent, deriving its name from the river Indus which flows through the north-western part of the country. Indian mainland extends in the tropical and subtropical zones from latitude 8°4' north to 37°6' north and from longitude 68°7' east to 97°25' east. The southernmost point in Indian territory, the *Indira Point* (formerly called *Pygmalion Point*), is situated at 6°30' north in the Nicobar Islands.

The country thus lies wholly in the northern and eastern hemispheres. The northernmost point of India lies in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and it is known as *Indira Col*. India stretches 3,214 km at its maximum from north to south and 2,933 km at its maximum from east to west. The total length of the mainland coastline is nearly 6,100 km; and the land frontier measures about 15,200 km. The total length of the coastline, including that of the islands, is about 7,500 km. With an area of about 32,87,782 sq. km, India is the seventh largest country in the world, accounting for about 2.4 per cent of total world area.

At the time of Independence in 1947, India was divided into hundreds of small states and principalities. These states were united to form fewer states of larger size, and finally organized in 1956 to form 14 states and 6 Union Territories. This organization of Indian states was based upon a number of criteria, the language being one of these. Subsequent to this, a number of new states have been carved out to meet the aspirations of the local people and to meet the developmental goals. At present, there are 28 States, and 9 union territories.

It is customary to divide India into three landform regions—the Himalayas and the associated ranges; the Indo-Gangetic plain to the south of the Himalayan

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region; and the peninsular plateau to the south of the plains. These three landform regions have experienced different geological processes and sequences of events.

The Himalayas and the associated ranges to the north are made up primarily of *Proterozoic* and *Phanerozoic* sediments that are largely of marine origin and they experienced great tectonic disturbances. These mountains have resulted from diastrophic movements during comparatively recent geological times. The rocks in these mountain ranges are highly folded and faulted. The geological evidence that is available in abundance suggests that this extra-peninsular region has remained under the sea for the greater part of its history, and therefore has layers of marine sediments that are characteristic of all geological ages subsequent to the Cambrian period.

The second unit, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, is geologically a very young feature of the country. This plain has been formed only during the Quaternary Period. The region has very limited relief and much of the surface of the plain is about 300 metres above the sea level. This unit consists of typical undulating plains created by highly developed drainage systems. The surface of the plains is covered by sediments of Holocene or recent age. The western part of the plain is occupied by the vast stretches of desert.

The peninsular plateau is geologically as well morphologically a totally different kind of area from the former two units. According to the available geological evidence, the peninsular region has since the Cambrian period been a continental part of the crust of the earth. It is a stable mass of Pre-Cambrian rocks, some of which have been there since the formation of the earth. In fact, this is a fragment of the ancient crust of the earth. This region has never been submerged beneath the sea since the Cambrian period, except temporarily and that too locally. The interior of the peninsular plateau has no sediments of marine origin dating back to period younger than Cambrian. During their long existence, the rocks of this region have undergone little structural transformation.

Among the few *Phenozoic* events that have affected the peninsular block include the sedimentation during the Gondwana times of the Mesozoic era along with outpourings of the Deccan lavas. Though the topography of this region is rugged, like that of the Himalayan region, it is entirely different. The mountains of the peninsular region, except for the Aravallis, do not owe their origin to tectonic but to denudation of ancient plateau surfaces. They are thus relict features of the old plateau surface that have survived weathering and erosion for a long time. From a geomorphological viewpoint, this can be considered as *tors* of the extensive plateau. The only impact of tectonic movements on the rock strata in the peninsular region has been fracturing and vertical and radial displacement of the fractured blocks. The rivers flowing over this plateau surface have flat, shallow valleys with very low gradient and most have attained their base level of erosion.

Formation of New States and Alteration of Boundaries

Since federation in India was not the result of any compact between independent states, there was no particular urge to maintain the initial organization of the states as outlined in the Constitution even though interests of the nation as a whole

demanded a change in this respect. The Indian Constitution, therefore, empowers Indian Parliament to reorganize the states by a simple procedure, the essence of which is that the affected state or states may express their views but cannot resist the will of Parliament.

The reason why such liberal power was given to the national government to reorganize the States is that the grouping of the Provinces under the Government of India Acts was based on historical and political reasons rather than the social, cultural or linguistic divisions of the people themselves. The question of reorganizing the units according to natural alignments was indeed raised at the time of the making of the Constitution, but then there was not enough time to undertake this huge task, considering the magnitude of the problem.

In this regard, Article 3 of the Constitution says:

“Parliament may by law:

- (a) form a new State by separation of territory from any State or by uniting two or more States or parts of States or by uniting any territory to a part of any State,
- (b) increase the area of any State,
- (c) diminish the area of any State,
- (d) alter the boundaries of any State,
- (e) alter the name of any State:

Provided that no Bill for the purpose shall be introduced in either House of Parliament except on the recommendation of the President and unless, where the proposal contained in the Bill affects the area, boundaries or name of any of the States, the Bill has been referred by the President to the Legislature of that State for expressing its views thereon within such period as may be specified in the reference or within such further period as the President may allow and the period so specified or allowed has expired.

Article 4 provides that any such law may make supplemental, incidental and consequential provisions for making itself effective and may amend the First and Fourth Schedules of the Constitution, without going through the special formality of a law for the amendment of the Constitution. These Articles, thus, demonstrate the flexibility of Indian Constitution.

Therefore, by a simple majority and ordinary legislative process, Parliament may form new States or alter the boundaries, etc., of existing States and thereby change the political map of India. The only conditions laid down for the making of such a law are:

- (a) No Bill for the purpose can be introduced except on the recommendation of the President.
- (b) The President shall, before giving his recommendation, refer the Bill to the Legislature of the State which is going to be affected by the changes proposed in the Bill, for expressing its views on the changes within the period specified by the President.

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The President is not, however, bound by the views of the State Legislature, so ascertained. Here is, thus, a special feature of the Indian federation, viz., that the territories of the units of the federation may be altered or redistributed if the Union Executive and Legislature so desire.

Regionalism in India

Regionalism in India has both a positive and a negative dimension. In positive terms, regionalism embodies a quest for self-identity and self-fulfillment on the part of the people of an area. In negative terms, regionalism reflects a psyche of relative deprivation on the part of people of an area not always viable in terms of rational economic analysis, let alone too prone to rationalization. More often than not, it is also believed that deprivation is deliberately inflicted by the powerful authorities, and this leads to acuteness of feeling on the part of those who carry the psyche of deprivation. The belief is easily cultivated in a milieu characterized by politics of scarcity as in India. The redeeming feature, however, is that to the extent the psyche of deprivation is the consequence of specific grievances, its growth could be halted and even the process reversed if the grievances are addressed.

Regionalism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon in terms of its following components:

- (i) **Geographical component:** The factor of geographical boundaries to which the people of an area usually relate their quest of a regional identity also differentiates, at least in degree, if not in kind, the phenomenon of minority nationalist movements from regionalism. The point of differentiation is that minority nationalist movements may have a somewhat diffused geographical underpinning in comparison to regionalism, where it is rather concrete, though only in a relative sense.

In spite of the relatively concrete geographical underpinning of regionalism, at times people are tempted to hypothesize that the territorial orientation is not central to its being, let alone to its becoming. The geographical boundaries, though still clung to, are historically speaking, symbolic, at least in the Indian context, of overlapping and vanishing footprints on the sands of time, which need economic and political props for their retrieval from time to time in the increasingly hazy memories of succeeding generations.

- (ii) **Historical-Cultural components:** Historical-Cultural components constitute the bedrock of the phenomenon of regionalism in India. The several components in this category are not only important individually but also in conjunction with each other. This is also true of other groups which have more than one component.
 - (a) *History:* The factor of history supports regionalism by way of cultural heritage, folklore, myth and symbolism. But history cannot always withstand the onslaughts of rugged politico-economic realities.
 - (b) *Caste and religion:* Caste and religion play only a marginal role in the context of regionalism. Caste *per se* is not so important except when combined with dominance or when working in conjunction with

linguistic preponderance or religion. Similarly, religion is not so significant except when it is combined with dominance/linguistic homogeneity or fed on a sense of religious orthodoxy and economic deprivation. Altogether it can even be argued that regionalism is a secular phenomenon in a relative sense because it tends to encompass caste and religious loyalties and bring together people with differing castes and varied caste affiliations to work together for a common cause.

- (c) *Language*: Language is perhaps the most important mark of group identification. It is more precisely discriminating than either colour or race. Linguistic homogeneity strengthens regionalism both in positive and negative senses; in the former in terms of strength in unity and in the latter through emotional frenzy. Language as an expression of shared life, through structures and value patterns has the potential to unite people emotionally, and make them work to improve their common destiny and also add to their bargaining strength.

But common language is no bar to intra-state regionalism. The very fact that language helps a group to forge an emotional identity also tends to make it highly inflammable. Experience has shown, however, that the thrust of linguistic regionalism can be contained; if not neutralized altogether, with a relatively equitable sharing of the economic cake, tactful political and administrative management and firm handling by a nationally-oriented leadership.

- (iii) **Economic component**: Economic component is the crux of regionalism. It is common knowledge that India is underdeveloped economically in spite of the many achievements registered since Independence. The resources are scarce and demand disproportionately heavy and ever-growing on account of continued population explosion.

There is thus acute competition among individuals, groups and regions within a state. As population mounts, densely populated regions cry *lebensraum* (additional territory deemed necessary to live, grow and function) at their neighbours. To this, one could add the story of regional economic imbalances to which the political elite in general, and the ruling elite in particular have contributed in no small measure. Demands for distributive justice thus get generated and assume the form of a movement. The tensions between migrants and 'sons of the soil' are still another manifestation of the economic component.

However, it should be noted here that, simultaneous to these natural, pulls and pressures for distributive justice, the processes of economic integrative have also been at work in the wake of nationally planned economic development. As a result of these processes, even relatively "have not" regions have come to realize that their ultimate salvation lies in remaining a part of the union and not in seceding from it. Thus, while regions within a state try to forge a separate identity as a new state, they do not want to leave the union.

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(iv) Politico-Administrative components: The political component of regionalism is also important. Politicians, in their not always so enlightened self-interest, exploit situation of regional deprivation and unrest and convert them into movements to forge and strengthen their individual and factional support bases. Regionalism always thrives on real or fancied charges of political discrimination which has, in fact, become an important facet of politics of regionalism itself. As far as administration is concerned, it is more often than not, easily, if not willingly, becomes the instrument of political discrimination. It also does not always succeed in rising above the regional psyche in favour of the national sentiment. This is true both in case of both—All-India and State Services.

(v) Psychic component: Regionalism in India, as elsewhere, is a psychic phenomenon and in the ultimate analysis its roots lie in the minds of men. Each individual, by and large, carries a split personality: he is in part regionalistic and in part nationalistic. There is always a natural tendency towards the primacy of the regionalistic over the nationalistic, though one does not usually, pose the two as either/or situation. Thus, it should not be surprising if emotional overtones get easily attached to regionalism which, in turn, can be traced to its cultural moorings and economic roots. The fact that patterns of socialization more often tend to be more parochial than national also contribute to psychic component.

Types of regionalism

Like the components, the types of regionalism also overlap. Though regionalism is not always coterminous with present-day state boundaries, a state can still be treated as a unit for evolving types of regionalism. On this basis, one could identify three major types of regionalism as follows:

- (i) Supra-state regionalism:** This is built around and is an expression of group identity of several states which join hands to take common stand on an issue of mutual interest *vis-à-vis* another group of states or even the union more the former than the latter the group identity thus forged is usually negative in character: it is usually against some other group identity. It is also issue-specific in the sense that it is confined to certain matter on which the group would like to take a common and joint stand. It is not at all a case of a total and permanent merger of state identities in the group identity; in fact, rivalries, tensions and even conflicts continue to take place at times, even simultaneously, with group postures.
- (ii) Inter-state regionalism:** This is conterminous with state boundaries and involves juxtaposing of one or more states identities against another on specific issues which threaten their interest.
- (iii) Intra-state regionalism:** This embodies the quest of a part within a state for self- identity and self-development in positive terms and negatively speaking, reflects of a part in relation to other parts of the same state.

Inter-State Comity in India

Though a federal Constitution involves the sovereignty of the Units within their respective territorial limits, it is not possible for them to remain in complete isolation from each other. The very exercise of internal sovereignty by a Unit would require its recognition by, and cooperation of, the other Units of the federation. All federal Constitutions, therefore, lay down certain rules of comity which the Units are required to observe, in their treatment of each other. These rules and agencies relate such matters as:

- (i) **Recognition of Public Acts, etc.:** Since the jurisdiction of each State is confined to its own territory, the acts and records of one State might have been refused to be recognized in another State, without a provision to compel such recognition. The Constitution, therefore, provides that: 'Full faith and credit shall be given throughout the territory of India to public acts, records and judicial proceedings of the Union and every State'. This means that duly authenticated copies of statutes or statutory instruments, judgements or orders of one State shall be given recognition in another State in the same manner as the statutes, etc., of the latter State itself. Parliament has the power to legislate as to the mode of proof of such acts and records, or the effects thereof.
- (ii) **Extra-judicial Settlement of Disputes:** Since the States, in every federation, normally act as independent units in the exercise of their internal sovereignty, conflicts of interest between the units are sure to arise. Hence, in order to maintain the strength of the Union, it is essential that there should be adequate provision for judicial determination of disputes between the units, and for settlement of disputes by extra-judicial bodies as well as their prevention by consultation and joint action. While Article 131 provides for the judicial determination of disputes between States by vesting the Supreme Court with exclusive jurisdiction in the matter, Article 262 provides for the adjudication of one class of such disputes by an extra-judicial tribunal. Article 263 provides for the prevention of inter-State disputes by investigation and recommendation by an administrative body.
- (iii) **Coordination between States:** The power of the President to set up inter-State Councils may be exercised not only for advising upon disputes, but also for the purpose of investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States or the Union and one or more of the States have a common interest. In exercise of this power, the President has already constituted the Central Council of Health, the Central Council of Local Self-Government, the Central Council of Indian Medicine, and Central Council of Homeopathy.

Check Your Progress

4. Which component is the crux of regionalism?
5. What is the main social institution of Indian villages?

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5.5 COMMUNALISM

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Indian society has a long history of external aggression. But it is adequately adept in accommodating and assimilating the alien cultures in spite of resentment to the outside forces. In a plural society like India, such cooperative activities sometimes have been reasons for insecurity. The period of the Mughal dynasty that preceded colonial rule was a turbulent period witnessing numerous wars and upheavals. Moreover, the divide and rule policy of the British sowed the seeds of communalism in India.

Communalism can be conceptualized as an ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one's own religion, and at the same time, antagonism against the other religions. Such an ideology divides the society into religious groups who have differing—and sometimes conflicting—interests. Communal people practice politics through religion.

The term 'communalism' came to be first used by the British in the context of colonies like India where substantial religious minorities existed alongside a religious majority. This specific connotation had a certain element of divisiveness and bigotry and the term—with its negative specifications—continued much after the Partition and Post-Independence era. The issue of communalism was debated during the Minto-Morley and Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. It was at this debate that the delegates referred to the existence of 'communal feelings' and 'communal principles' in India, and issues pertaining to the representation of the various religious groups were talked about.

Communalism has been a problem in India for quite some time. As the national liberation movement drew near its goal, communalism spawned the pernicious 'two-nation' theory. It ultimately led to the Partition of India. The upsurge of communalism based on the *mandir-masjid* issue distorted the feelings of nationalism among the Indian masses, thereby undermining the spirit of harmony.

Historical constructions were clearly part of a more general assertion of community and status by many different groups and classes. What such assertions and counter assertions did paradoxically was to transform the very sense of 'community', and redefine it at every level. In an earlier period, the discourse of community had perhaps been stronger, in the sense of being more universal and unchallenged by any other discourse. At the same time, however, the notion of the individual community was weaker since it was applicable at many different levels of sub-caste, sect, dialect and other regional and religious groupings, and was not much concerned with numbers or the precise boundaries that separated different communities from each other. Much of this survived into the late nineteenth and even the twentieth century. But the balance of forces was against its long survival in its old form. The new 'communities' were now territorially more different than earlier, less tied to a small locality and less parochial on account of the changes in communication, politics and society more generally. They were at the same time historically more self-conscious, and much more aware of the differences between themselves and others, the distinction between 'us' and 'them' (Pandey, 1990).

It can be said that such a construction of differences culminates in communal violence. Communalism has many connotations. Prof. Emeritus T.K. Oommen, while addressing a gathering at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi, on intervention into such problems said that ‘these are recurring events nowadays and one needs to look at the root cause’. Communalism and such terrorisms have different manifestations.

He agreed that there are six dimensions of communalism, and three of them are variants of a political force which are a threat to the state. They are as follows:

- **Secessionist communalism:** This form of communalism is characterized by a religious community claiming to establish its own territory or state. It functions as an independent political community that wishes to withdraw its support from the existing government and form a national identity separate from it. Hence, these kinds of communal feelings may be designated as secessionist communalism. The Khalistan Movement is an example of secessionist communalism.
- **Separatist communalism:** Another form of communalism refers to the tendency of religious groups to form a separate territory based on their religious identity. It wishes to integrate culture and territory in the form of a separate province or district. Such communists believe that it is important for them to maintain cultural specificity, and so, there should be a separate politico-administrative arrangement, which could be a district or a province within the federal polity. When the Sikhs demanded a separate Punjabi Suba—even though it was couched in linguistic terms—it was chiefly seen as a demand for a separate Sikh province within India. When such demands are coloured by a need to maintain the cultural specificity of a religious group and a separate province is seen as an instrument that can make this possible, we can say that the group is practising separatist communalism.
- **Welfarist communalism:** Welfarist communalism refers to the claims of a religious collectivity to be acknowledged as a community that has suffered at the hands of the society by being subject to financial and other hardships. They claim that they should be provided welfare schemes in matters of employment, land distribution industrial licenses and so on; they seek political representation. In this context, the mobilization of the religious collectivity is attempted as an interest group geared to the welfare of its members. Hence, this form of communalism is defined as welfarist communalism.
- **Assimilationist communalism:** This kind of communalism relates to claims that small religious groups are assimilated into big religious groups. The forced conversions are included in this category. The incidents of re-conversion can also be termed as assimilationist communalism.
- **Retreatist communalism:** In this kind of communalism, a small religious community avoids participating in or separates itself completely from political activities of the state. The example of this kind of communal practices is seen in the Bahati community.

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- **Retaliatory communalism:** The practitioners of this kind of communalism adopt practices that are intended to harm those belonging to religious communities other than themselves; for example, killing of priests, maulvis and so forth.

Incidence of Communal Violence and Riots

Communalism culminates in communal violence, and these riots have become a distinctive feature of communalism. The clash of two religious groups and their internal tension results in communal riots. While communalism breeds communal politics, riots are a clear manifestation of communal tension. Communal riots mainly stem from communal ideology. We can classify an event as a communal riot:

- When violence is perpetrated.
- The main groups identified as the participants in the riot face each other or members of the other group at some point during the violence. (Varshney, 2002)

Violence operates through what Brass calls 'institutionalised riot systems' (Brass, 1997). This means that riots are deliberate, planned and calculated, and they take place because of certain objectives in mind. Brass argues that the Indian politics is steeped in communal discourse and is marked by hegemony. (Brass, 2003)

In this context, Brass argues that riots are produced through a series of dramatic events which can be analysed through the following three stages:

- (i) Preparation/rehearsal
- (ii) Activation/enactment
- (iii) Explanation/interpretation

The preparation or rehearsal is the initial stage of instigating a riot. Riots are enacted or activated in certain circumstances that can range from political agenda to electoral competition. They might be perpetuated to reinforce the strength of certain ethnic, religious, or other culturally marked groups by highlighting the need for solidarity in face of the opposing communal group. Then, the riots and communal violence are analysed in a broader struggle within, but also outside the local community to control the explanation or interpretation of the causes of violence (Brass, 1997). The third phase involves the wider elements of society like journalists, politicians, political commentators and social scientists. In fact, the need for explaining and analysing riots is as important as the first phase in which it was produced.

The chronology of communal riots reveals that such riots are not caused spontaneously or due to any religious differences. In fact, such riots are the results of political and economic interests. During the Partition, it was the conflicting political interests of the elites of two opposing religious groups that led to communal violence. In the 1960s and 1980s, the involvement of local economic and political factors played a crucial role in the production of riots. The Hyderabad riots in 1981; Meerut riots in 1982; Hazaribagh riots in 1983; Delhi and Bhiwandi riots in 1984; Ahmedabad riots in 1985; Meerut, Berhampur and Amritsar riots in 1986 and

again Meerut riots in 1987 reveal that communalism and communal violence are being deeply embedded into the Indian political scenario. The 1990s marked the changing political equations within the country. The killing of the Australian missionary Sir Graham Staines and his two sons by Dara Singh (a Bajrang Dal activist) and his associates is also an example of rare cases where people are considered guilty for communally driven crimes. Godhra carnage in 2002 was the first Indian riot to get extensive media coverage. Riots also took place in Dhule, Maharashtra between the Hindus and Muslims in October, 2008. The Assam (Kokrajhar) violence of 2012 also impacted the entire nation with the exodus that resulted from the ethnic conflict. Similarly, there has been a spate of communal violence in the Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. Riots also occurred between the Hindus and Muslims in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh in April, 2013. However, these riots were controlled much before they could intensify.

In the present day context, the reality is quite complex as communalism involves a complex interplay of many factors taking in both communalizing of politics and the politicization of religion, the jostling by different communities and the tensions created by mass conversion.

Theoretical Approaches to the Origin of Communal Violence

There has been no attempt to develop the theories of collective violence which specifies the general approaches to understand such violence. Some of the theories on the origin of collective violence are explained as follows:

(i) Structural strain theory

In Neil J. Smelser's (1963) theory of collective behaviour, which can be considered to follow on from the tradition of 'theories of social disintegration or breakdown,' he not only develops a theoretical framework, but also makes his theory specific to the analysis of 'hostile outbursts'. He regards six factors as the determinants of collective behaviour. These are as follows:

- (a) Structural conduciveness
- (b) Structural strain
- (c) The growth and spread of generalized belief
- (d) Precipitating factors
- (e) Mobilization of participants
- (f) Deployment of social controls

Smelser formally defines a 'hostile outburst' as mobilization to action based on a hostile perception. The strain is further increased by the development of a hostile belief and generalized aggression when it comes to be directed against particular groups.

(ii) Collective violence as a form of social control

An attempt to explain collective violence in terms of the theory of social control was made by Roberta Senechal de la Roche (1996), who considers certain forms of violence as the exercise of social control. A group moves to self-help by violence

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when it defines a form of conduct as deviant and reacts to it. Roberta distinguishes the following four types of collective violence depending on the degree of organization and whether the deviant behaviour is attributed to an individual or a group:

- (a) Lynching (relatively unorganized and directed against individuals)
- (b) Pogrom/riot (relatively unorganized and directed against a group)
- (c) Vigilantism (highly organized and directed against individuals)
- (d) Terrorism (highly organized and directed against a group)

(iii) Power approach to inter-group hostility or competitive ethnicity

The conflict theory regards rioting as an extreme form of the expression of ethnic conflicts: 'we may say therefore, that race riots are extreme forms of racial conflict in which two racial groups struggle in a particular kind of political, social, economic and legal conflict setting, using riots as an alternative and ultimate technique to establish, maintain or change power relations in society' (Swan, 1980). Since pogroms are instituted by the dominant group, the aim of that group is generally not to bring about change, but to maintain or restore a particular social, economic or political power and/or to prevent the minority obtaining an advantage.

(iv) Culturalist approach

Harvey E. Goldberg (1977) stresses the ritualized character of pogroms. He stresses the cultural and symbolic logic of collective action in pogroms, which displays parallels to ritual activity. According to this approach, the destructive activities involved in pogroms:

- (a) Should not be described negatively as 'unstructured' because there are existing cultural expectations among the actors regarding the course the action will take;
- (b) Should not simply be regarded as a random expression of aggression because it follows condensed symbolic forms which originate in existing cultural traditions that often emphasize the polarity of social categories;
- (c) The symbolic forms may simultaneously be aimed at the creation of a new order or the restoration of the old;
- (d) This symbolic aspect places pogroms in a historical context and hence gives them a significance extending beyond the individual motives of the participants.

Religious riots are often an extension of religious rituals, and in some cases their course too is ritualized.

Causes of Communal Violence

The intense and unprecedented barbarity witnessed during many of the communal riots in India cannot be assigned to any single factor. Various perspectives have emerged from scholars who have different ways of interpreting their causation. On the one hand, sociologists perceive the problem of communalism as a result of 'relative deprivation,' whereas the Marxist scholars analyse the class dimension

involved in communalism. Some political scientists view the problem resulting from power struggle and establishing hegemony over a particular group. There are other groups of scholars who perceive the problem of communalism as resulting from religious fundamentalism. Communal group conflicts and religiously inspired violence are seen by these scholars as defensive reactions against experiences of alienation, anomie, relative deprivation and exclusion in the face of rapid socio-economic changes. Some perceptions on causative factors can be analysed in the subsequent sections.

I. Bipan Chandra: Communalism and false consciousness

Bipan Chandra, a leading scholar in the field, uncovers the class analysis on communalism in his book *Communalism in Modern India*, 1984. He focusses on the middle class or the petty bourgeoisie base of communalism under the conditions of relative economic stagnation. The distorted pattern of colonial economy produced a large middle or service or tertiary class which neither integrated with the productive sectors nor was capable of being productively absorbed by the colonial economy or by underdeveloped capitalism today. Owing to economic stagnation, the middle classes were compelled to compete with each other for scarce opportunities and resources. The crisis of the colonial economy and society constantly generated two opposing sets of ideologies and political tendencies among the petty bourgeoisie. On the one hand, when social change and revolution appeared as immediate possibilities, the petty bourgeoisie enthusiastically joined the struggle for radical transformation of their existing social condition. On the other hand, when revolutionary change receded into the background, the petty bourgeoisie shifted to short-term considerations and advantages to the struggle for individual survival, to egoistic and selfish politics, that is, to the strategy of trying to recover or maintain the existing social position. Groupings around religion leading to communalism, and other similar groupings and ideologies, could and did play an important role in this struggle (Chandra, 1984).

II. Steven Wilkinson

Wilkinson opines that ethnic riots should not be regarded as spontaneous eruptions of anger. More often than not, they are planned by vested interests such as the politicians. This means that these same politicians will also try to prevent riots if it suits their interests. Therefore, most communal outbursts are mechanized by political pundits who try to increase their political mileage by playing on existing communal tensions (Wilkinson, 2003).

Wilkinson offers three reasons for variations in state performances. Firstly, India has had a history of corruption, criminalization, politicization and general lack of state capacity which has reduced it to a mere spectator in the riots. Secondly, since the minorities are not represented adequately in the administration, they do not feel protected by the Indian state governments. Thirdly, the degree of party competition determines whether the government tries to attract 'Muslim swing voters', which in turn, decides whether the government will instruct the respective administrations to ensure the safety of the minorities.

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III. Ashutosh Varshney

Societies that appear to be living in peace are characterized by the existence of institutionalized peace system that leads to the integration of various civic organizations. The local administration requires the help of these social organizations at various points. Therefore, if these organizations are inter-ethnic and associational, they can easily deal with ethnic conflicts that arise in their territory. However, with multi ethnic societies, one finds that relations between various communities are weak.

Varshney gives the example of Hyderabad where there is a lack of association between the Hindus and Muslims, that hinders the formation of mutual relations. This lack often leads to the perpetration of violence where even the lawful authorities become mere spectators.

However, the above arguments have explored the various means of interpreting the causes of communal violence in India. While analysing the causative factors for communalism, a close correlation between religion, communalism and communal riots are established. In this regard, there are four main categories which can be explored and underscored in terms of aspirations, attitudes and actions.

The first is the religious category. People in this category have the traits of tolerance, compassion and humility instilled in them. These traits spring from their religiosity. These people are rooted in the religious culture, rituals, customs and traditions. They seek solutions to personal problems with the mode of religious thinking.

The second category is that of the communalists who politicize religion. They belong to that religious stream or tendency which is highly self-conscious, and they promote strong and proud identification with their religion. They seek solutions to social and political questions on the basis of the principles enshrined in religious texts and scriptures. They are self-righteous and, therefore, lean towards moral and religious fundamentalism.

The third category is that of militant communalism that primarily emerges as a result of political mobilization of the communalists. The militant communalists glorify their religion to the extent of decrying other religious communities. Keeping in view the political mobilization of the communalists in colonial and post-colonial periods, the emergence of militant communalism was almost inevitable.

The fourth category is that of the 'rioteers'. Though they are absolutely unrelated to the first, they are indirectly related to the second category and ideologically aligned with the third category. They succeed in isolating the religious category by making them ineffective. Lacking in socio-cultural and political assertiveness, the religious categories are marginalized and frequently surrender to the dreaded actions of the rioteers. The rioteers are sometimes part of the political machines manipulating electoral politics in conformity with the interests of specific, powerful, social and local groups in the society (Puri, 1991).

However, this analytical framework helps one to recognize the various underlying forces which are instrumental in causing communalism. So, communal tensions are the outcome of many inter-related factors in a country like India, which is marked by enormous religious, linguistic and regional diversity.

Factors that have affected Communalism

Communalism distinguishes people on the basis of religion and uses violence to harass and violate the 'other'. The following is a list of ten factors that have affected communalism:

- (i) **Social factors:** Those who have a communal mindset give precedence to their ethnic or cultural belongingness rather than to the society. Besides, the social conditions are an important determinant of communal harmony or hostility.
- (ii) **Religious factors:** Various religious organizations try to incite conflicts to serve their own ends. They propagate their own religion and belittle those belonging to other religions. Their aim is to create hatred among different religious groups.
- (iii) **Political factors:** Many political parties fan feelings of zealous bigotry for their political interests. They try to win votes by privileging one religion over other and this may give rise to communal hatred.
- (iv) **Economic factors:** Certain religious communities have been seen to enjoy better economic standing than others. This may give rise to feelings of marginalization among the less privileged, and they might see a revolt or rebellion as a valid means of getting what they want.
- (v) **Legal factors:** Sometimes, the legal system of a particular area, region, or state fails its inhabitants. It fails to protect their interests, and they decide to take law into their own hands and resort to violence.
- (vi) **Psychological factors:** Often, psychological repression on account of being discriminated against or being marginalized may seek an outlet in violence against the oppressors.
- (vii) **Administrative factors:** When public administrators and holders of government positions show preference for one religion, it is bound to result in feelings of antagonism between two religious groups.
- (viii) **Historical factors:** There are certain groups that share a history of communal violence such as the Hindus and Muslims, and Arabs and Jews. When one group refuses to look past their history, and focusses too much on the history of antagonism, it lays the foundation for ceaseless communal hatred.
- (ix) **Local factors:** The relationship between two communities at the local level has much to do with communal violence. The differences in habits, culture, religious practices, beliefs and other factors may become too apparent and the clash of interests can lead to violence.
- (x) **International factors:** It has been seen that an international conflict can translate to local violence in another state.

Preventing Communalism

Communal frenzy and religious intolerance can pose a serious threat and danger not only to the integration and prosperity of the country, but also to our national

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unity. It is easier to argue that before Independence, the communal riots were the result of the British policy of divide and rule. Shifting the burden on someone else is, perhaps, the best strategy in such matters. But now the reality is different and known to be more complex, considering the communalizing of politics and the politicization of religion, the jostling by different communities for their own interests and the emergence of leaders who speak only for their own community. Several questions arise in this context. Why did the administration fail to combat such an important issue? What can be done to reverse the surging tide of communalism before it engulfs the entire country?

However, in this regard, a very pertinent question arises such as whether secularism is the most effective solution for communalism. Secularism may be described as a movement intentionally ethical, negatively religious, with a political and philosophical antecedent (Hastings, 1985).

All states confer upon its citizens the freedom to practise the religion of their choice. It regards individuals as autonomous entities regardless of the religion they belong to, and it cannot promote or interfere with religions.

D.E. Smith believes that the institution of a secular state concerns three different but inter-related sets of relationship concerning the following:

- (i) Religion and individual (freedom of religion)
- (ii) The state and the individual (citizenship)
- (iii) The state and religion (separating state and religion)

Freedom of religion implies that the state would not interfere as far as the process involving an individual's choice of religion is concerned. With the second set of relationship, the individual is seen as a citizen of the state, and not as belonging to a particular religious group. And in the last set of separation of state and religion, the chief assumption is that the state and religion are two different entities with entirely different objectives. The state should not try to promote, regulate, direct or otherwise interfere in religion (Smith, 1963).

This idea of secularism is boldly traceable in the basic framework of the Indian Constitution. However, in modern India, the meaning of secularism—as Ashish Nandy would claim—has two connotations.

The first meaning relates to the secularization of the state. The term is used to mean what it means in the English-speaking Western world. It implies that the public sphere is a place that is free from the specification of religion. In other words, one can be a follower of any religion, but when one enters the public space, one has to leave one's faith behind. In the Indian context, it manifests itself in such slogans as 'India first'. Contrastingly, the non-Western meaning of secularism centres around the notion that all religions deserve equal respect. This means that irrespective of whether the public life is free of religion, it should become a space where the religious and secular forces can interact freely. This should take place in a way that in the ultimate analysis, all important faiths in the state should contain within themselves an in-house version of other faiths, both as a source of internal

criticism and as a reminder of the diversity of the theories of transcendence (Nandy, 1990).

Many Indians regard secularism as a larger package that consists of a set of standardized ideological products and social processes—development, mega-science and national security being some of the most significant among them. This package often plays the same role in relation to the people of the society—sanctioning or justifying violence against the weak and the dissenting—that the Church, the ulema, the sangha and the Brahmins played in the earlier times (Nandy, 1990).

The above arguments emphasize on the complex character of the Indian secular state. Despite the different policies of India's immediate neighbours, India has achieved and sustained secularism, but not communal harmony. Secularism appears to be failing to eliminate sectarian conflicts fermenting the Indian society for decades.

Thus, secularism is not the only means of eliminating communalism. For dealing with communal violence, more effective measures are required. People who preach communal hatred from religious places and their sympathizers and those who glorify violence should be dealt with more strictly than the rioters themselves. A new consensus can be forged on the role of religion by adopting a democratic agenda which must include the following:

- Creating statutory mechanisms for resolving inter-community disputes
- Promoting unceasing democratic dialogue with communalists
- Mounting democratic pressures on communalists to understand the conditions instrumental for the formulation of ideology
- Making conscious efforts to posit religion as a critical and powerful ally of secularism and deepening the latter with egalitarian values

Moreover, respecting religious pluralism and recognizing democratic and cultural regionalism are important for strengthening the consensual political culture. Such a democratic agenda alone can halt the communalization of the state and enable it to curb communal riots decisively and firmly by creating a climate for intervention and for the assertion of the religions in combatting communal riots. The communal strains may not be eradicated, but the socio-cultural disturbances caused by communal riots may be stopped. This will also strengthen the resolve of the civil society to debate on communalism.

At the end, it can be said that a democratic, secular and socialist polity vigorously promoted can be an effective antidote to communal politics. This can be achieved only when the focus of politics is not merely winning elections, but the generation of strong pressures through political campaigns and mass mobilizations for solving people's socio-economic problems. In the Indian context, secularism cannot be completely divested of religious sensibilities. Our religio-cultural ethos does not yet permit any such approach. The question is of masses at large and their religious sensibilities. The secular leaders of various religious communities

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can come together and form solidarity committees to fight communalists in whichever community they might be. For this, it is important to do honest and rigorous criticism of what is bad in one's community and acknowledge with generosity what is good in the other community. Such an approach can build bridges of understanding and mutual confidence (Engineer, 1994).

Check Your Progress

6. Define communalism.
7. When was the term 'communalism' first used?
8. Who is the author of the book *Communalism in Modern India*?

5.6 CYBER-CRIME

Cybercrime may be defined as "Any unlawful act where computer or communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime".

Cybercrime can be classified into many different types. Let's learn the major categories as described by the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal of the Ministry of Home Affairs, in this section.

- Child sexually abusive material (CSAM) refers to material containing sexual image in any form, of a child who is abused or sexually exploited. Section 67 (B) of IT Act states that "it is punishable for publishing or transmitting of material depicting children in sexually explicit act, etc. in electronic form.
- Cyber bullying is a form of harassment or bullying inflicted through the use of electronic or communication devices such as computer, mobile phone, laptop, etc.
- Cyber stalking is the use of electronic communication by a person to follow a person, or attempts to contact a person to foster personal interaction repeatedly despite a clear indication of disinterest by such person; or monitors the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication commits the offence of stalking.
- Cyber Grooming is when a person builds an online relationship with a young person and tricks or pressures him/ her into doing sexual act.
- Online Job Fraud is an attempt to defraud people who are in need of employment by giving them a false hope/ promise of better employment with higher wages.
- Online Sextortion occurs when someone threatens to distribute private and sensitive material using an electronic medium if he/ she doesn't provide images of a sexual nature, sexual favours, or money.
- Vishing is an attempt where fraudsters try to seek personal information like Customer ID, Net Banking password, ATM PIN, OTP, Card expiry date, CVV etc. through a phone call.

- Sexting is an act of sending sexually explicit digital images, videos, text messages, or emails, usually by cell phone.
- Smishing is a type of fraud that uses mobile phone text messages to lure victims into calling back on a fraudulent phone number, visiting fraudulent websites or downloading malicious content via phone or web.
- SIM Swap Scam occurs when fraudsters manage to get a new SIM card issued against a registered mobile number fraudulently through the mobile service provider. With the help of this new SIM card, they get One Time Password (OTP) and alerts, required for making financial transactions through victim's bank account. Getting a new SIM card against a registered mobile number fraudulently is known as SIM Swap.
- Credit card (or debit card) fraud involves an unauthorized use of another's credit or debit card information for the purpose of purchases or withdrawing funds from it.
- Impersonation and identity theft is an act of fraudulently or dishonestly making use of the electronic signature, password or any other unique identification feature of any other person.
- Phishing is a type of fraud that involves stealing personal information such as Customer ID, IPIN, Credit/Debit Card number, Card expiry date, CVV number, etc. through emails that appear to be from a legitimate source.
- Spamming occurs when someone receives an unsolicited commercial message sent via email, SMS, MMS and any other similar electronic messaging media. They may try to persuade recipient to buy a product or service or visit a website where he can make purchases; or they may attempt to trick him/her into divulging bank account or credit card details.
- Ransomware is a type of computer malware that encrypts the files, storage media on communication devices like desktops, Laptops, Mobile phones etc., holding data/information as a hostage. The victim is asked to pay the demanded ransom to get his device decrypts.
- Computer Virus is a program written to enter to your computer and damage/alter your files/data and replicate themselves. Worms are malicious programs that make copies of themselves again and again on the local drive, network shares, etc. A Trojan horse is not a virus. It is a destructive program that looks as a genuine application. Unlike viruses, Trojan horses do not replicate themselves, but they can be just as destructive. Trojans open a backdoor entry to your computer which gives malicious users/programs access to your system, allowing confidential and personal information to be theft.
- A data breach is an incident in which information is accessed without authorization.
- Denial of Services (DoS) attack is an attack intended for denying access to computer resource without permission of the owner or any other

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person who is in-charge of a computer, computer system or computer network. A Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack is an attempt to make an online service unavailable by overwhelming it with traffic from multiple sources.

- Website Defacement is an attack intended to change visual appearance of a website and/ or make it dysfunctional. The attacker may post indecent, hostile and obscene images, messages, videos, etc.
- Cyber-Squatting is an act of registering, trafficking in, or using a domain name with an intent to profit from the goodwill of a trademark belonging to someone else.
- Pharming is cyber-attack aiming to redirect a website's traffic to another, bogus website.
- Cryptojacking is the unauthorized use of computing resources to mine cryptocurrencies.
- Online Drug Trafficking is a crime of selling, transporting, or illegally importing unlawful controlled substances, such as heroin, cocaine, marijuana, or other illegal drugs using electronic means.
- Espionage is the act or practice of obtaining data and information without the permission and knowledge of the owner.

Cyber Crime Safety Tips

The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal of the Ministry of Home Affairs has provided a good list of tips which can be followed to maintain safety from crime. Internet has become one of the integral part of our daily life. It has transformed the way we communicate, make friends, share updates, play games, and shop. They are impacting most aspects of our day-to-day life.

Cyberspace connects us virtually with crores of online users across the globe. With increasing use of cyberspace, cybercrimes especially against women and children such as cyber stalking, cyber bullying, cyber harassment, child pornography, rape content, etc. are also increasing rapidly. To stay safe in the online world, it is important to follow some cyber safe practices which may help in making our online experience and productive:

1. Cyber awareness and hygiene for parents

Talk to your children about the potential online threats such as grooming, bullying, and stalking, keep track of their online activities. Set clear guidelines for internet and online games usage.

Notice indicators of change in behaviour: If your child begins to spend more time online and starts being defensive or secretive about their online activities, it may be an indicator of cyber grooming. Talk to your child and engage him/ her in other activities.

Protect your child from Cyber Grooming: Grooming is a practice where someone builds an emotional bond with a child through social media or chat window with an objective of gaining their trust for sexual exploitation.

Children may remove privacy settings on social media to make more friends. Parents should discuss responsible use of social media. Also, they should educate and help them in selecting strong privacy settings.

Never click suspicious links or attachments: Never click on links or files received in e-mail, text message or social media from unknown person. This may be an attempt to infect computer with a malware.

Cover your webcams: A web camera (default in laptops) if hacked/compromised can be leveraged as a medium to observe/watch and record day to day activities. It is a recommended to cover webcam when not in use.

Install anti-virus software's with parental control functionality or parental control software's on the devices used by children and review their privacy settings of social media sites used by them.

Keep software updated: Keep your software and Operating system up to date. Hackers target software vulnerabilities to access private information and putting you at risk, so make sure to update all your software with the latest security patches. Never install software, games, music and apps from trusted sources.

Set Secure browser settings: Always choose updated version of the browser and install safe browsing tools for protection yourself from hackers and malware.

2. Cyber awareness and hygiene for teens and young adults

Secure your online presence just like you secure yourself: If you have not selected the right settings on your social media accounts, then photos and videos posted can be viewed, downloaded and used by others without your knowledge.

Select the right privacy settings and content sharing filters on social media so that you are sharing your information, photos and videos only with your trusted ones.

- Be selective about accepting friend request of strangers on social media.
- Learn how to block someone who is making you uncomfortable.
- Learn how to remove someone from your friends list.
- Remember to logout from social media websites after use.
- Secure your phone with password.
- If you notice your fake account has been created, you can immediately inform social media service provider so that the account can be blocked.
- Be mindful of your appearance on video chat & video calls.
- Your video chats on social media sites can be recorded by the person on the other side.
- There have been instances where video chats which were supposed to be private in nature have been recorded and shared on social media groups and websites.
- Be careful while accepting chat requests from strangers.
- Do not use Smartphone for taking sensitive personal photographs and videos.

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- Do not use Smartphone for taking sensitive personal photographs and videos. Most of the smartphones are connected to internet and cloud storage. If a picture or video has been clicked/ recorded by using smartphone connected with the cloud, it may get saved automatically into the cloud. Even if users delete their photos or videos from their phone, the same photo or video can be recovered from the cloud account or any other device/ PC connected to the cloud using same account.
- If someone has taken such photograph using Smartphone, then take it seriously and make sure to get it deleted from their smartphone, the cloud and any other device connected using the same account.

Protect yourself from Cyber stalking: Cyber stalkers show advances on a person repeatedly despite clear indication of disinterest by such person. They use internet, email, social media or any other form of electronic communication for stalking.

- Disable location services for social media sites, mobile devices etc.
- Refrain from sharing your personal information like Phone number, e-mail address, photographs with unknown persons.
- Consult your relatives and friends, if you think you are a victim of Cyber stalking.
- Beware of fake social media accounts- Not all the accounts are real and not all information provided on accounts are true.
- Be cautious while accepting friend requests from strangers.
- Be cautious with sensitive Browsing.
- One should browse shopping or banking websites or apps only on a device that belongs to him/ her or on a trusted network. Avoid using friend's phone, public computer, cyber cafe or free Wi-Fi for sensitive browsing as data can be stolen or copied.
- The deleted data on your communication devices can be recovered.
- Be careful while you give your mobile devices, PC's for servicing/ repairing/selling: Personal computers and mobile devices consists private information's which needs to be erased before sending it for repairing, servicing or selling.

Protect your communication devices: Prevent others from accessing your devices by providing password, PIN, Pattern or biometric information. Always install applications to your mobile phones, computers, etc. from a trusted source only e.g. Play store, App store or from official company websites.

- Report if you find content related to of Child Pornography (CP)/Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material
- Any content related to of Child Pornography (CP)/ Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material such as Rape/ Gang Rape (CP/RGR) content should be report to the concerned social media website

- If anybody of your acquaintance shares Child Pornography (CP)/ Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material with you, it is your duty as a responsible citizen to inform the concerned person that publication, collection and distribution of Child Pornography (CP)/ Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material is illegal and he should refrain from doing such activities.

You can also report it on National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in)

3. Cyber awareness and hygiene for organizations

All organisations should have clear and strong HR policies on how to deal with content on Child Pornography (CP)/ Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material.

- Organisations should have clear rules for use of electronic devices provided by the organisation.
- If any employee is found possessing obscene or indecent content, proper investigation and action should be taken against them.
- The organisation should report any incidence of sharing and storage of obscene content within the organisation to the police. The copy of the content should be saved as an evidence with restricted access.
- All other copies of the content should be deleted.
- They can also report through National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in).
- Publication, Collection and Distribution of Child Pornography (CP)/Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) or sexually explicit material is illegal.
- Under Section 67 and 67A of Information Technology Act, 2000 makes publication and distribution of any material containing sexually explicit act or conduct in electronic form a punishable offence.
- Section 67B of IT Act, criminalizes browsing, downloading, creation, publication and distribution of child pornography.

5.7 GENDER INEQUALITY

Since time immemorial, women have been forced to depend upon men for sustenance and financial support. The social conditions and social disabilities (early marriages, more number of children, lack of education and skills), superstitious beliefs and rituals, religious sanctions, and the overriding patriarchal value system prevalent in most parts of the world have ensured that women have continued to have a subservient position even in the 21st century. Women in India had always participated in the unorganized and the agricultural labour sector. However, in recent times, there has been a huge influx of women into the organized labour market in India and as a result of which the contributions of women are being given increasing importance in society. There are some reasons for bringing about these changes. Industrialization and the consequent economic growth have created

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a large market for them. Increased educational and other infrastructural facilities for women have opened up a number of avenues for them, resulting in a sharp rise in the proportion of women's employment outside the home. Legislations have paved the way for equal opportunities for women, and rising expectation levels in standards of living necessitate incomes from both husbands and wives. The occupations which have seen an influx of women include finance, services (teaching, nursing), publishing, retailing, banking and consumer products— these are all occupations that permit flexibility, and involve gradual flexible ascendancy with a lot of breathing space to accommodate family life.

The positive repercussions of women gaining education and a foothold in the labour market are many. It has been seen that the more educated and financially independent the women of a society are, the fewer will be the hurdles to growth and socio-economic developments of that society. In fact, in most of the developed countries, the literacy and educational levels of the female population, and their participation in the labour market, are considerably higher than that in developing and underdeveloped countries. This establishes a direct correlation between female education and employment, and the level of development in any society.

Economic Status of Women

Economic empowerment of women is one of the most vital conditions for the upliftment of women's social status. Unless women become economically independent or make nearly equal economic contribution to the family for its sustenance, they cannot be equal to men in the decision-making process. The problem of gender-based discriminations or subordination of women is very much rooted in the economic dependence of men. The economic empowerment of women is a vital element of strong economic growth in any country. Empowering women enhances their ability to influence changes and to create a better society. They are equal to men in all aspects. Women are more perfect in the power to create, nurture and transform. Today, women are emerging as leaders in growing range of fields be it aeronautics, medicine, space, engineering, law, politics, education, business, all that is needed in today's world, is their empowerment.

In India, the empowerment process has already begun. We are now witnessing a steady improvement in the enrolment of women in schools, colleges, and even in professional institutes. Due to the impact of increasing globalization and information-technology, women have broken new paths, i.e., of entrepreneurship. However, the progress is more visible among upper-class families in urban cities.

In Indian villages, the economic activities that are present include that of cultivators, artisans and people performing menial services. In each of these categories, women are involved in the process of earning a livelihood for the family, putting in an almost equal amount of labour both in production and marketing of products of agriculture and handicrafts. In most parts of India, women are still involved in the production and marketing of items such as vegetables, processed and semi-processed foodstuffs as well as handicrafts. In India, agriculture remains the major economic activity for women, since the majority of Indians are employed

in the agricultural sector. In rural areas, around 80 per cent of the female labour force is engaged in agriculture and related activities. In the agricultural sector, there has been a huge decline in the number of women cultivators and an increase in the percentage of agricultural labourers over the past few decades. This has resulted in a decline in the proportion of women who were earlier cultivators. Apart from agriculture, women are also employed in a number of industries, trades and services in the unorganized and organized sectors.

Women and Paid Work

Women's paid labour force participation has increased significantly in the last two decades. The increase in the labour force participation of married women with children has too increased dramatically. These trends are not only on account of an increase in part-time employment rather a majority of women work full-time round the year. However, most of this increase occurred in the informal sector. For women, who are characterized by limited skills, low education levels and low status, the informal sector is the only arena in which they can attempt to eke out a living. But less attention has been paid to gender differences within the informal sector.

Although it is commonly believed that paid employment benefits a woman's mental and physical health, it has been found that in contrast to such beliefs, employed women report more stress, depression, and psychological stress than their male counterparts. It does not, however, mean that men have a lesser degree of occupational stress. Quite often, men's jobs are challenging and demanding as well. However, studies have found that the strain associated with balancing the demands of work and family has disproportionately negative bearing on women. Moreover, the informal sector is characterized by poor bargaining power, lack of working capital or access to training and technology, and has little support from government. Formal sectors are also not spared by the gender disparity and inequalities, promotions, trainings are given to men first and only then to women. Disparity in salary also prevails though both men and women possess the same qualification and positions.

Women Working in the Informal Sector in India

The informal sector in India plays a large role in its development. However, simultaneously, it is affected by a number of problems like absence of practically feasible service rules, absence of wage rules and hindrances to career development. Another fact worth noting is that as much as 94 per cent of the total women workforce is part of the informal sector in India such as garment factory, domestic work, working as sales girls and so on. However, they are forced to suffer gender discrimination, which is nearly absent in the formal sector. In addition to this, the amount of income generated by them is lower than that generated by their male counterparts, which means that nearly 50 per cent of the population contributes to less than 50 per cent of the national income. Informal employment consists of both, self-employment in informal organizations (i.e., small and/or unregistered) and wage employment in informal work profiles (i.e., without secure contracts, worker benefits, or social protection).

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The concept of informal sector was first introduced by Hart, with the distinction between wage and self-employment as the essential difference between the formal and informal sectors. Later, the International Labour Organization broadened the scope of the informal sector. Informal activities are typically characterized by ease of entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership of enterprises, small scale of operations of labour-intensive and adaptive technology, skills acquired outside formal schooling system, and unregulated and competitive markets.

It is found that the majority of the women who are employed in the informal come from a section of society who require income to survive. Moreover, about 50 per cent of these women workers also happen to be the solitary income earners of their families. Another surprising fact is that only 7.5 per cent of all women workers are part of some sort of registered trade union. One has to note here that along with their employment outside of the home, most women also have to put in 5 to 7 hours of unpaid work within the household doing chores and bringing up children.

Most women workers have a small number of alternatives to choose from as far as lucrative jobs are concerned. A variety of studies conducted by Papola (1982, 1992), evidently and categorically reveal another shocking reality that women are discriminated against in the urban labour market rather than the rural labour market. This prejudice affects a drop in the contribution of women in economic activities.

Problems of Working Women

There are several problems faced by working women. Many problems have remained unsolved in their domestic as well as working place, from the time they stepped out of the four walls of their home for the first time. Their problems are different. Some of the problems faced by women workers are as follows:

- The age-old belief of male superiority over women creates several hurdles for women at their place of work.
- Most of the women tend to be concentrated in the poor service jobs whereas men are in an immediate supervisory position, which gives the superior male boss an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women. Moreover, enacting laws is not sufficient.
- Cyber-crimes that is cases of hacking, spamming, spoofing, cyber stalking and email fraud are rampant in India.

They have problems of adjusting to time schedules with other working adults in the family, wanting privacy and freedom. They also want a greater participation in the financial management and a desire for a balanced life (Kaur and Punia, 1981).

Some of the major problems that women face while working include the following:

- (i) **Glass ceiling/competition:** Breaking the glass ceiling is the greatest problem faced by women in their promotion. Despite performing well

year after year, they find it difficult to get promotion to the higher cadre. Despite achieving all the goals on time, very often it is found that a higher number of males get elevated to better posts and are the preferred candidates for promotion, resulting in humiliation for women candidates.

- (ii) **Time crisis:** Another problem a woman has to face at work is of time constraints to meet deadlines. At a managerial level, there are a lot of responsibilities and the expectation of the superiors from women in such positions is also very high. Since they have a family to look after, it is even more difficult for them to attend to their work responsibilities effectively. Several times, it leads to an injustice on their part towards either the home responsibilities or work responsibilities. They are affected by their problems both positively and negatively. In a negative manner, it brings about a lot of work pressure as they find themselves facing shortage of time and this makes it even more difficult for them to spend appropriate time on the assignments given to them by their superiors.

Let us look at some suggestions to help women balance work and family:

At Work

- Setting realistic goals at workplace.
- Ensuring that the company offers options such as flexi-time, telecommuting or job-sharing arrangements.
- Planning workweek with great care, prioritizing work on the basis of their importance.
- Making a conscious effort not to take home any work.
- Learning to say 'no' to work commitments that one cannot do justice to.
- Establishing a routine to mark the end of the workday and the start of the family time.
- Women workers are given more work but paid less especially in the unorganized sector.
- Women are discriminated with regard to recruitment, promotion, increment, training, over – time allowance, facilities at work place and so on.

At Home

- Organizing for the next day's routine the previous night (setting out clothes for oneself and children, setting out work).
- Asking spouse/partner to share with the work and responsibilities, instead of considering oneself to be a superwoman.
- Establishing a routine that is followed by the children and spouse/partner.
- Encouraging children to do as many things as they can by themselves.

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Domestic Problems of Working Women

Nature of other problems varies with the nature of category to which the working women belong, their personality dimensions, their capacity to work, their motivation ability to work and to adjust to the family conditions. Kalhan (1972) comments on problems of working women, that husband and wife both going for work is common today. This naturally gives rise to problems.

Essentially, it is a woman's problem because the working wife, when she returns from her work, has to ensure that her family does not face any deprivation. The family has to be fed and looked after. She observes, 'The Indian working woman's luck in this respect is much harder than that of her counterpart in many other countries, where entire industries are geared to take drudgery out of housework. There are hardly any crèche where she can place the children and expect them to be looked after until she can return from work and take care of them herself' (1972). For a happy home, it is essential that the job timings of women do not coincide with those of the husband and children. The husband and children feel neglected and irritated if the women's working hours are such as to keep them away from the home when their children and husband come from or go to school and office. These are the problems associated with work-family role conflict.

Unmarried working women also have several problems in this society. On taking up a job, they face the society more openly for the first time and this creates an adjustment problem. Their growing independence, both financial as well as in thought and action rebel against the method of choosing a life partner. The longer they work, the more difficult it becomes for them to settle for a match arranged by the parents. To find a suitable accommodation in a hostel, in a family, or with friends is another problem.

Women Entrepreneurs

Skill, knowledge and adaptability in business are the main reasons for women to plunge into business ventures. According to data, women account for about 1/3rd of all entrepreneurs worldwide. In Western nations, women are recognized and are more prominent in the business world. However, Indian women entrepreneurs face some major constraints. These are as follows:

- **Lack of confidence:** In general, women lack confidence in their strength and competence. The family members and the society are reluctant to stand beside their entrepreneurial growth.
- **Socio-cultural barriers:** Women's family and personal obligations are sometimes a great barrier for succeeding in business career.
- **Market-oriented risks:** Stiff competition in the market and lack of mobility of women make the dependence of women entrepreneurs on middleman indispensable.
- **Motivational factors:** Self-motivation can be realized through a mind set for a successful business, attitude to take up risk and behaviour towards the business society by shouldering the social responsibilities.

- **Knowledge in business administration:** Women must be educated and trained constantly to acquire the skills and knowledge in all the functional areas of business management.
- **Lock of awareness about financial assistance:** Various institutions in the financial sector extend their maximum support in the form of incentives, loans, schemes. Even then, every woman entrepreneur may not be aware of all the assistance provided by the institutions.
- **Identifying the available resources:** Women are hesitant to find out the access to cater their needs in the financial and marketing areas. In spite of the mushrooming growth of associations, institutions, and the schemes from the government side, women are not enterprising and dynamic to optimize the resources in the form of reserves, assets, mankind, or business volunteers. Highly educated, technically sound and professionally qualified women should be encouraged for managing their own business, rather than being dependent on wage employment outlets. The unexplored talents of young women can be identified, trained, and used for various types of industries to increase the productivity in the industrial sector.

These days there are many examples of successful entrepreneurs, for example, Indra Nooyi, the CEO of Pepsi Coke, Naina Lal Kidwai, Sulajja Firodia Motwani, the Joint Managing Director of Kinetic Motors and Managing Director Kinetic Finance and so on.

5.7.1 LGBTQ Issues

Gender identity and sexual orientation are important aspects of our selves and should not be used as a basis for discrimination and violence. Yet the LGBT community faces these challenges due to the prejudices and myths surrounding them. Any deviations from purported normal behaviour or appearance is subject to abuses such as killing and executions, torture, arrests under unjust laws, unequal treatment, medical abuses, censorship, discrimination in health and employment and housing, abuses against children, domestic violence, and denial of family recognition and rights.

The following are some of the areas in which the LGBT community faces challenges:

1. Healthcare

Studies conducted in US show that there is a higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), substance abuse, cardiovascular diseases, cancers, obesity, isolation, bullying, depression, anxiety, rejection, and suicide in LGBT youth when compared to the general population. They receive poor quality healthcare due to lack of awareness in healthcare providers, stigma, and insensitivity to the distinctive needs of this community. High-risk sexual behaviours are more common in LGBT youth resulting in an increased incidence of STDs. Hence, LGBT youth grapple with significant healthcare issues, both in terms of higher disease prevalence and lack of appropriate training for physicians leading to healthcare disparities. Also, discrimination in the delivery of healthcare at hospitals and clinics is another important issue, due to which LGBT youth find it difficult to reveal their sexual

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identities to clinicians. This reluctance in communication results in lack of appropriate disease-related education, poor therapeutic alliance, inadequate interventions to prevent STDs, and inadequate scheduled screening to detect communicable diseases.

There are many ways in which the LGBT community is excluded from sexual and reproductive healthcare, such as refusal of clinics to provide services to men who have sex with men (MSM) or a secondary school that does not include topics on LGBT in its sex education. LGBT exclusion from healthcare is not limited to sexual and reproductive healthcare but is prevalent throughout the healthcare spectrum. There are several examples for subpar healthcare for LGBT individuals. For instance, trans-people who seek to transition medically may find that facility to be either non-existent or harmful. Additionally, in some societies where access to healthcare is not allowed for women independently of male relatives, lesbian and bisexual women are at a distinct disadvantage. Research in India shows that MSM are less likely to have access to critical health services such as testing for HIV, treatment and condoms, due to discriminatory practices of healthcare providers. It was found that the mental health of MSM in Lebanon was directly shaped by the whole experience of stigma in their universities, schools, and work places.

2. Education

LGBT students face bullying and violence, which has a significant negative impact on their education and employment opportunities, along with their health and well-being. Homophobic and transphobic violence is directed towards students who are, or are assumed to be gay, lesbian, bi, or transsexual. It can also be directed towards students whose gender expression does not adhere to society's norms and expectations, such as 'masculine' girls or 'feminine' boys. This kind of violence includes sexual, physical, and psychological violence, as well as bullying. Such violence can be perpetrated not only by students but also school staff or educational authorities. The prevalence of bullying and violence is high in LGBT students when compared to non-LGBT students. For instance, a study based in New Zealand showed that LGBT students are three times more susceptible to bullying compared to their heterosexual peers, and transgender students are five times more susceptible to bullying when compared to non-transgender students. There are other implicit ways in which the school environment can be hostile. Examples include school administrators or teachers insisting that some subjects are more suitable to LGBT students, or reinforcing stereotypes in course materials. This can reinforce prejudice and a biased perspective of LGBT people, which is the cause of transphobic and homophobic violence.

Children and young people studying in discriminatory environments or those who go through bullying or violence because of their gender identity or sexual orientation are more likely to fear their safety at school, avoid activities at school, miss out on classes or drop out of school altogether, and achieve lower results in academics when compared to their peers. In US study, it was found that 70% of LGBT students feel unsafe in school premises, and in a China-based study, 59% reported that their academic performance was negatively impacted by bullying.

Transgender students are particularly at risk. A 2007 Argentinian study showed that 45% of transsexual students are school dropouts. In Australia, a 2015 study showed that 18% of intersex people did not complete secondary education, compared to 2% of the general population.

Students who attain lower academic achievement or drop out of school early have fewer qualifications, which negatively impacts their employment prospects. Homophobic or transphobic violence can have an adverse effect on mental and physical health, including fear, loss of confidence, increased risk of anxiety, stress, loneliness, low self-esteem, depression, self-harm, and suicide. Studies from the United States, Belgium, Poland, and the Netherlands suggest that LGBT students are 2-5 times more likely to attempt, or think about suicide than their peer group.

3. Employment and workplace discrimination

Although gender identity and sexual orientation have no relationship with workplace performance, research in the area reveals high levels of discrimination against LGBT people at work. The preliminary findings of a research project initiated in 2012 and conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in various countries around the world confirmed that it is common for LGBT persons to experience discrimination at their workplace on the basis of their gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Discrimination begins during education and continues in access to employment and all through the employment cycle, and can, in some extreme cases lead to LGBT workers being mobbed, bullied, and physically or sexually assaulted. This kind of treatment towards LGBT persons is often due to the social belief that being homosexual is abnormal and because of preconceptions with respect to how men and women are expected to behave and appear. Any deviation from what is considered normal is subject to discrimination and harassment. In some cases, LGBT workers reported that they were asked to “prove” their masculinity or femininity to be accepted and recognized for their contributions in their workplaces. Many LGBT workers do not reveal their sexual orientation for fear of discrimination and violence. This constant fear can cause anxiety and loss of productivity.

The most severe form of discrimination is faced by transgender people. Many transgender persons reported that they were rejected in job interviews on the basis of their appearance. Issues within workplace include the inability to get identity documents reflecting their name and gender, discouragement towards use of bathrooms which are appropriate to their gender, disinclination of employers to accept their dressing style, and increased vulnerability to harassment and bullying by workmates. In many cases, transgender persons are totally excluded from formal employment.

The ILO’s Decent Work Agenda has four pillars – employment promotion, fundamental principles and rights at work, social dialogue, and social protection, with a fifth pillar to assess specific challenges related to interplay of AIDS and HIV, and LGBT issues in workplaces. When conditions at work for LGBT are judged against these pillars, it can be concluded there is much that needs to be done so that they have equal opportunities, rights, and dignity at workplaces.

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On the legal front, many countries in the world do not have any protections against employment discrimination. Even though legislation alone does not put a stop to discrimination, research shows that countries with strong policies and laws against LGBT discrimination fare better.

Dialogue between employers' and workers' and government organizations play a significant role in ensuring equality, security, freedom, and dignity at workplaces. While International trade unions have declared their commitment towards LGBT workers' rights, the scene is different on the national level with regards to some countries. For instance, in Thailand and Hungary trade union members argued that LGBT was not even an issue of concern as they were a minority or not present in the membership at all.

Social protection is connected with civil relationships and marriage equality, and is absent for LGBT people in most countries. As of May 2015, only 17 countries provided legal status to same-sex marriages. Hence LGBT workers and their partners in other parts of the world are not entitled to pensions, medical care, parental leave and child benefits, and adoption rights, on the same terms as heterosexual couples.

Discrimination and stigma against people living with HIV in workplaces around the world is well-documented, including refusal of employment due to their HIV status. People with HIV are ostracized at work due to unfounded fear of transmission, and exposed to prejudiced and misguided assumptions of their sexual practices. People also believe in many dangerous myths which link gender identity and sexual orientation to HIV status. Gay men in both Hungary and Thailand reported that they are asked about their HIV status at their workplaces.

4. Housing

LGBT people around the world are denied their fundamental human right to adequate housing. Discriminatory treatment of LGBT people can lead to inadequate living conditions and increases their exposure to sexual and physical violence, ultimately making them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and suicide. The people of LGBT community cannot have complete and meaningful access to fundamental human rights without their right to adequate housing. According to Equaldex, a collaborative LGBTI rights website, 112 countries in the world do not have any protections against LGBT housing discrimination.

The rate of LGBT homelessness is high and is directly related to discrimination. For example, a quarter of UK's homeless population belongs to the LGBT community. Rejection or abuse by family members and bullying by friends are the main causes for LGBT people to leave their homes. Discrimination and prejudice from landlords can mean that for many LGBT individuals living on the streets remains the only option. While being homeless, LGBT people, especially the young and the elderly, are more likely to be the victims of sexual and physical violence, as well as mental and physical health problems. And they remain helpless in such situations due to poor understanding of their specific needs by providers and lack of apt support services.

Many instances have been reported which show blatant housing discrimination against LGBT. There have even been cases where the state machinery itself has been a party to discrimination. For instance, in 2008 in India, police sent eviction notices, accompanied by verbal threats, to 40 homeowners in Bangalore requiring them to evict *hijras* from their rented apartments. The homeowners reported that the *hijras* did not pose any problem, but they had to evict around 100 *hijras* for fear of the police. This instance clearly shows the deep-rootedness of bias and prejudice against LGBT people.

5. Equality

Laws, policies, and practices that either do not take into account the needs of the LGBT community or deliberately excludes them, reinforce discrimination of LGBT people in society. The laws help deepen negative societal attitudes towards LGBT, and encourage backlash against the LGBT community for making a case for equality.

There are many discriminatory laws and policies which essentially deny the LGBT community the right to equality. Some of them are: making same-sex conduct illegal, deliberately excluding trans and same-sex couples from accessing social services, forced sterilization of trans people before they can change their legal gender, failure in providing opportunities to trans persons to change their legal gender, prohibit LGBT people from forming non-governmental organizations in order to fight for their rights, etc. Even with all the activism, awareness campaigns, and declarations by various international bodies to commit to bringing about equal status to LGBT people, the situation on the legal front in most countries leaves much to be desired. For example, same-sex conduct is illegal in around 75 countries around the world, and is punishable by death penalty in 10 countries. Only 55 countries recognize the right of transsexual persons to change their gender and name on legal documents. Hence, laws and policies don't only fail to address the special needs of LGBT people but also deny them their fundamental right to equality among other rights.

5.7.2 Violence Against Women

There are several ways in which girls are facing violence in India. These are explained as follows:

Homicidal violence

A 2011 report on a study on homicides carried out by the Indian Council of Medical Research, along with the Harvard School of Public Health, established the abnormally high mortality rate of girls below 5 years of age in India due to exposure to brutal physical extremities at home by their families. The study concluded that girls had 21 per cent higher chances than boys of dying before their fifth birthday, due to violence. Baby girls, who were one year old or younger, had 50 per cent more chances of dying because of violence, than boys of the same age.

Rape

Rape is a humiliating and the most shocking crime against human conscience and morality. This crime is dealt with significant penal laws in every society. Sections

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375 to 376(D) of the Indian Penal Code deal with the issue of rape. Section 375 defines the statutory offence of rape. It denotes sexual intercourse with a woman:

- (a) Against her will
- (b) Without her consent
- (c) With her consent obtained by putting her in fear of death or hurt
- (d) With her consent when man knows that he is not her husband and consent is given under her misconception of his identity as her husband.
- (e) With her consent when at the time of giving such consent she is under the influence of unsoundness of mind or administration of some substances to make her give consent
- (f) With or without consent when she is under 16 years of age

Rape is not dealt with properly under the current legal system, and the number of rapes appears to be on the rise constantly. The act of rape is a violation against the very spirit of humankind, and is the most abhorrent crime against women. Men need to realize that women have every right to live in the manner they seem fit and that rape, eve teasing and sexual assault are forms of perversion which are extremely shameful and repulsive. In contrast to popular belief, rape is almost never perpetrated for sexual gratification, but rather for sexual subjugation of women.

Trafficking of women and children

Trafficking in women and children is the most abominable violation of human rights. In its widest sense, it includes the exploitation of girls by pushing them into prostitution, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and the trade in human organs. In the case of children who have been trafficked or have become victims of child marriages, it violates their right to education, employment and self-determination. The trafficking and exploitation of women and children results in their being forced to lead a life of indignity, social stigma, debt bondage, combined with a host of health problems including HIV/AIDS.

According to a recent survey, women are bought and sold with impunity and trafficked at will to other countries from different parts of India, only to be forced to work as sex workers. These women are the most vulnerable groups in contracting HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

In the face of a crisis, poor families often send their girl child to work as domestic workers, or sold into bonded labour to the moneylenders. Such girls are prone to suffer from the abuse of human trafficking.

Acute poverty and lack of employment opportunities have been abetting an increased voluntary entry of women into sex work. Trafficking is a complex challenge as it is an organized criminal activity. Kidnapping women and girls to force them to become prostitutes is a heinous instance of gender-based violence (GBV). Those who do not relent to the demands of the traffickers are often murdered mercilessly. We will learn more about trafficking later on in the unit.

Measures Pertaining to Violence against Women

Domestic violence in India takes place due to notions of gender bias and inequality. By and large, women are considered to be the 'weaker sex'. Various social and religious taboos have compounded to the unequal status that is extended to women. These inequalities have curtailed the freedom of women, and have created difficult conditions for them to survive. The concern with violence against women is not a recent preoccupation. It has always been a deep-seated problem with roots in the Indian culture. Many researchers have stressed the importance of awareness in combatting the problem of violence. The following are some of the measures that can help in curbing violence against women:

- (i) Enforcement agencies should be instructed in unambiguous terms that enforcement of the rights of the weaker and vulnerable sections including women and children should not be down played for fear of further disturbances or retribution, and adequate preparation should be made to face any such eventuality.
- (ii) The administration and police should play a more proactive role in the detection and investigation of crime against women and ensuring that there is no underreporting.
- (iii) The overall representation of women in police forces should be increased. The representation of women in police at all levels should be increased through affirmative action so that they constitute about 33 per cent of the police.
- (iv) Sensitizing the law enforcement machinery towards crime against women by way of well-structured training programmes, meetings and seminars etc., for police personnel at all levels as well as other functionaries of the criminal justice system. Such programmes may be incorporated in the syllabus of various Police Training Academies at all levels.
- (v) For improving general awareness on legislations, mechanisms in place for safety and protection of women, the concerned department of the State Government must, inter-alia, take the following steps:
 - (a) Create awareness through print and electronic media
 - (b) Develop a community monitoring system to check cases of violence, abuse and exploitation and take necessary steps to curb the same
 - (c) Involving the community at large in creating and spreading such awareness
 - (d) Organize legal literacy and legal awareness camps
- (vi) It is important to explore the possibility of associating NGOs working in the area of combatting crime against women. Citizens groups and NGOs should be encouraged to increase awareness about gender issues in the society and help bring to light violence against women

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and also assist the police in the investigation of crime against women. Close coordination between the police and the NGOs dealing with the interests of women may be ensured.

- (vii) There should be no delay whatsoever in the registration of FIR in all cases of crime against women.
- (viii) All efforts should be made to apprehend all the accused named in the FIR immediately so as to generate confidence in the victims and their family members.
- (ix) Cases should be thoroughly investigated and charge-sheets against the accused persons should be filed within three months from the date of occurrence of a crime against women, without compromising on the quality of investigation. Speedy investigation should be conducted in heinous crimes like rape. The medical examination of rape victims should be conducted without delay.
- (x) Proper supervisions at appropriate level of cases of crime against women from the recording of FIR to the disposal of the case by the competent court should be ensured.
- (xi) Help-line numbers of the crime against women cells should be exhibited prominently in hospitals/schools/colleges premises, and in other suitable places.
- (xii) The setting up of exclusive 'Crime Against Women and Children' desk in each police station and the Special Women police cells in the police stations and all women police thana is needed.
- (xiii) Concerned departments of the State Governments could handle rape victims at all stages from filing a complaint in a police station to undergoing forensic examination and in providing all possible assistance including counselling, legal assistance and rehabilitation. Preferably, these victims may be handled by women so as to provide a certain comfort level to the rape victims.
- (xiv) The specialized Sexual Assault Treatment Units could be developed in government hospitals having a large maternity section.
- (xv) The Health department of the State Government should set up 'Rape Crisis Centres' (RCCs) and specialized 'Sexual Assault Treatment Units' (SATUs), at appropriate places.
- (xvi) Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) set up by the Health Department could assist rape victims and provide appropriate level of coordination between the police and health department facilities for medical examination to establish forensic evidence, SAT Units and medical facilities to treat after the effects of sexual assault. Hence, these RCCs could act as an interface between the victims and other agencies involved.
- (xvii) The administration should also focus on the rehabilitation of the victims and provide all required support. Counselling is required for victim as

well as her family to overcome the trauma of the crime. The police should consider empanelling professional counsellors and the counselling should not be done by the police. The effectiveness of schemes developed for the welfare and rehabilitation of women who have been victimized should be improved.

- (xviii) For improving the safety conditions on road, the concerned departments of the State Government must take suitable steps to:
- (a) Increase the number of beat constables, especially on the sensitive roads
 - (b) Increase the number of police help booth/kiosks, especially in remote and lonely stretches
 - (c) Increase police patrolling, especially during the night
 - (d) Increase the number of women police officers in the mobile police vans
 - (e) Set up telephone booths for easy access to police
 - (f) Install people friendly street lights on all roads, lonely stretches and alleys
- (xix) It should be ensured that the street lights are properly and efficiently working on all roads, lonely stretches and alleys.
- (xx) The local police should arrange for patrolling in the affected areas and more especially in the locality of the weaker sections of the society. Periodic visits by Superintendent of Police will create a sense of safety and security among these sections of the people.
- (xxi) Special steps should be taken for security of women working in night shifts of call centres.
- (xxii) Crime prone areas should be identified and a mechanism be put in place to monitor infractions in schools/colleges for ensuring safety and security of female students. Women police officers in adequate number fully equipped with policing infrastructure may be posted in such areas.
- (xxiii) Action should be taken at the state level to set up of Fast Track Courts and Family Courts.
- (xxiv) Dowry related cases must be adjudicated expeditiously to avoid further harassment of the women.
- (xxv) Appointment of Dowry Prohibition Officers is important. The Rules under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 should be notified.
- (xxvi) All police stations may be advised to display the name and other details of Protection Officers of the area appointed under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
- (xxvii) Police personnel should be trained adequately in special laws dealing with atrocities against women. Enforcement aspect should be emphasized adequately so as to streamline it.

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- (xxviii) Special steps may also be taken by the police in collaboration with the Health and Family Welfare Department of the State to prevent female foeticide.
- (xxix) Special steps should also be taken to curb the ‘violation of women’s rights by so called honour killings, to prevent forced marriage in some northern states, and other forms of violence’.
- (xxx) Ensure follow up of reports of cases of atrocities against women received from various sources, including National Commission for Women and State Commission for Women, with concerned authorities in the State Governments.
- (xxxi) There are several women helpline numbers.

5.8 SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF CHILDREN IN INDIA

Some of the social problems of children in India are discussed below:

5.8.1 Child Labour

The term ‘child labour’ is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development. One of the most pressing social problems confronting India is the problem of ‘working child’ or ‘employed child’. In India, child labourers are actually children without a childhood, who can be seen employed in almost all spheres of formal and informal sectors of the economy.

Child labour is a serious and contentious issue throughout the developing world, and it is demeaning and damaging to a child’s health and intellectual development. Irregular working hours, working under hazardous circumstances, low wages, inhuman treatment, poor health conditions characterize child labour in many regions of the world. According to an International Labour Organisation Report (ILO), there are an estimated 245 million child labourers in the world. The problem of child labour is prevalent even in the industrialized and developed countries of the world.

Child labour is the basis of economic activities in many Asian developing countries, and many consumer goods including export commodities (such as carpets, clothing and agricultural commodities) are produced by children employed in various factories and manufacturing units. Child labour practices also occur in a range of potentially hazardous tasks such as gem mining, construction, commercial farming and transporting goods and services. Poverty, absence of accessible schools in the villages and the shortage of teachers prevent children from attending school, and keep them in employment with meagre returns (Ravallion and Woodon, 2004).

Defining Child Labour

The UNICEF and the International Labour Organisation (ILO)—along with some other organizations—have taken up the responsibility of defining child labour and

clarifying the concept of child work. According to the UNICEF, child work is children's or adolescents' participation in work and economic activity that does not negatively affect their health and development, or interferes with their education. The concept of child labour is based on the Minimum Age Convention (ILO Convention 138, adopted in 1973).

The ILO listed the following criteria for each country to identify the types of work regarded as 'hazardous' work that might expose children to:

- Physical, psychological or sexual abuse
- Work underground, under water at dangerous heights or in confined spaces
- Work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or work which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads
- Work in an unhealthy environment which would expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes or to temperatures, noise levels or vibrations which might damage their health

This ILO Convention has broadened the meaning of the concept of child labour in the sense that now it is not restricted to the working age of 14 or 15 years, but extends to all children below 18 years of age (Pawar, 2007). Children have been the main focus of attention especially after proclaiming the year 1979 as the International Year of the Child by the United Nation's General Assembly.

Types of Child Labour

According to the Census 2001 figures, there are 1.26 crore working children in the age group of 5–14 years as compared to the total child population of 25.2 crore. There are approximately 12 lakh children working in the hazardous occupations/processes which are covered under the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, i.e., 18 occupations and 65 processes. Child labour can be classified into various categories. Even the International Labour Organisation has provided a four-fold classification.

- (i) **Domestic non-monetary work:** Children in both rural and urban areas work within the family for which they are not paid. The largest group of working children is involved in this type of work which is generally 'time-intensive'. The activities included in this category are cooking, cleaning, washing, fetching water, babysitting, etc. Such work is done is mainly by girls. The girl child faces a lot of discrimination and is often involved in work that is non-remunerative.
- (ii) **Non-domestic and non-monetary work:** This type of work is mainly done by children in rural areas and is also time-intensive. It is often inter-mixed with domestic work. Activities included are protecting crops, tending to livestock, weeding, collecting fuel wood, etc.
- (iii) **Wage labour:** Children work as wage labourers in formal and informal sectors in both rural and urban areas. They work either as a part of a family group or individually in agricultural work sites, domestic services, manufacturing and services.

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- (iv) **Bonded labour:** Bonded labour is the most exploitative form of child labour. The child is sold for a small amount of money that is borrowed for various purposes. Once sold, he/she loses all basic rights. Children are bonded with families to work on the farms of landlords to pay off debt or as domestic and menial labour for moneylenders against the repayment of loans. Children may be sold off and lured into prostitution, pornography, begging, selling illicit liquor, petty crime, etc. They work in exchange of food or a nominal wage.

Causes of Child Labour

There are several social, economic, cultural and political factors operating in close relation to each other that perpetuate child labour. But the most prominent of these factors are as follows:

- (i) A high prevalence of child labour is linked to poor quality and availability of education (World Bank, 1995). Since most of the parents of these children are themselves illiterate, they do not realize the importance of education.
- (ii) Poor school infrastructure combined with monotonous teaching methods and dull atmosphere in schools repel children who end up as child workers.
- (iii) The large-scale migration of labourers takes place from rural to urban areas, and the labourers take their children and employ them in small establishments like hotels, service centres, etc. Indebtedness among families, especially in rural areas, is a major cause for families to keep their children employed as domestic servants, agricultural workers and daily wage labourers.

The ILO (2002) has also categorized some of the causes into three different categories, namely, immediate causes, underlying causes and structural or root causes.

(i) Immediate causes

- Limited or no cash or food stocks
- Increase in price of basic goods
- Family indebtedness
- Household shocks, e.g., death or illness of income earner
- Crop failure
- No schools or schools of poor quality
- Demand for cheap labour in informal micro-enterprises
- Inability of family business owners or farm owners to afford hired labour
- Children belonging to poor families are tempted to bad habits such as smoking, gambling, purchasing lottery tickets and consuming alcoholic drinks

(ii) Underlying causes

- Breakdown of extended family and informal social protection systems
- Uneducated parents and high fertility rates
- Cultural expectations regarding children, work and education

- Discriminatory attitudes based on gender, caste, ethnicity, national origin, etc.
- Perceived poverty, desire for consumer goods and better living standards
- Sense of obligation of children to their families and of rich people to the poor
- Lack of public awareness

(iii) Structural or root causes

- Low/declining national income and extreme unequal distribution of resources
- Inequalities between nations and regions and adverse terms of trade
- Societal shocks, e.g., war, financial and economic crises, transition, HIV/AIDS
- Insufficient financial or political commitment for education, basic services and social protection; bad governance and deep-rooted cultural practices
- Capitalist societies
- Social exclusion of marginal groups and/or lack of legislation and/or effective enforcement
- Lack of decent work for adults
- Factories secure more profits by extracting more work for less wages
- Failure of government machinery and legislative system

Working Conditions Faced by Child Workers

The child workers work under appalling conditions and are highly exploited and neglected. Studies conducted in various parts of India reveal that in spite of long working hours for children, they are not paid enough wages. Children work under inhuman conditions and suffer from dangerous diseases like tuberculosis and asthma. Some of the studies have revealed that children working in carpet industries in Kashmir were found to be suffering from tuberculosis and asthma. In the glass bangle industry of Ferozabad, child workers suffer from asthma, bronchitis and eye diseases. Children are also engaged in beedi-making industries in rural Tamil Nadu. In spite of much legislation and efforts of trade unions, the socio-economic conditions of beedi workers, particularly of women and children, continues to deteriorate.

The children engaged in construction work are prone to accidents and injuries. In machine shops and mechanical jobs, there are various factors such as the lack of training and experience in handling tools, use of unorganized machinery, unsafe use of electricity and shortage of protective equipment that can lead to accidents and diseases.

The participation of children in labour activities reduces the potential for children's participation in schools and educational development. Working children are also exposed to child and sexual abuse. In this respect, the girl child is more vulnerable.

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Major sectors where children work

Children work as a part of family labour or as wage earners, sometimes as migrant labour. Very often they remain invisible and in bondage. They are found in all the three sectors of the economy i.e. the agrarian, manufacturing and service sectors.

I. Agrarian Sector

In rural areas, children are engaged in agricultural and allied occupations as a part of family labour or as individual workers. They may work as paid or unpaid workers in different forms:

- Migrant labour
- Invisible labour
- Bonded labour

II. Manufacturing Sector

Children are engaged in various manufacturing processes of different home-based industries such as brassware, lock, match and fireworks, diamond cutting, gem polishing, glassware, carpet making and slate. Very often they work in sub-human conditions and in exploitative situations. They may be working as:

- Migrant labour
- Invisible labour
- Wage labour
- Self-employed children

III. Service Sector

- Self-employed labour
- Invisible labour
- Wage-based employment

Children work in different sectors of the economy. Census enumerates only those workers who are engaged in economically productive work, and working children are counted as part of the labour force. Among the male child workers, though about 52 per cent are agricultural labourers and in total about 83 per cent are in agricultural sectors. Thus, the concentration of female child workers in agricultural sector is more than that of male child workers. As an implication of this, their presence in non-agricultural sector is only 12.61 per cent. The overall picture reveals that more and more female children are engaged in low paid jobs as compared to the male children.

Strategies for the Prevention of Child Labour

The Government of India is generally concerned about the magnitude and plight of child labour in various sectors of employment. Several legislations have been passed from time to time to prohibit or improve the working conditions of child labour. The Government adopted the National Policy for Children (NPC) in August, 1974. The policy stated that 'it shall be the policy of the state to provide adequate service

to children both before and after birth through the period of their growth to ensure their full physical, mental and social development' (NPC,1979). In 1975, a National Children's Board was established to create greater awareness and promote the welfare of children including working children.

As far as constitutional and legislative provisions are concerned, there are three Articles that deal with child labour:

- (i) **Article 21:** Deals with the right to education for children aged between 6 and 14 years
- (ii) **Article 24:** Prohibition of employment of children in factories
- (iii) **Article 39:** Directs the state governments to form policies such that children are not abused and not forced by economic necessities to enter avocations unsuited to age and strength

However, the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986, prohibits children from working in thirteen occupations and fifty-seven processes. It defines any person under the age of fourteen years as a child. The Act was amended and made effective in October 2006, and included two more occupations, i.e., employment of children as domestic workers or servants and their employment in eateries, hotels and recreational facilities.

I. Directive Principles of State Policy

Under Directive Principles of State Policy, the state is directed to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people, to promote social and economic justice, provide just and humane conditions at workplaces, promote internal peace and security, etc. The idea of welfare state can be achieved if the states endeavour to implement them with a high sense of moral duty. The Directive Principles establish economic and social democracy. No government can afford to ignore them while formulating its plans and policies as it is responsible for all its actions to the people in general. Although there is no legal sanction behind these principles, the ultimate sanction lies with the people. The people will never let the ruling party to acquire power again if it fails to adhere to these guiding principles.

Clause (e) and (f) of the **Article 39** states that the State shall direct its policy towards securing the following goals:

- (e) That the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;
- (f) That children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Clause (f) of the Article was modified by the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 with a view to emphasize the constructive role of the state with regard to children. In case of *M. C. Mehta v State of Tamil Nadu*, (1991)1SCC283, the

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Supreme Court of India held that in view of Article 39, the employment of children within the match factories directly connected with the manufacturing process of matches and fireworks cannot be allowed as it is hazardous.

In another landmark judgment of *M. C. Mehta v State of Tamil Nadu*, AIR1997SC699 which is also known as (Child Labour Abolition Case), the Supreme Court held that children below the age of 14 years cannot be employed in any hazardous industry or mines or other work.

II. Legislative Action Plan

The first legislation for regulating the employment of children in factories was passed in 1881 in India. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 is the first comprehensive legislation which prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in organized industries and in certain hazardous works. It prevents children from entering into labour markets again. The most significant step in this direction was the adoption of National Policy on Child Labour (1987) which aims at rehabilitating the children withdrawn from employment, thereby reducing the incidence of child labour in areas known for their high incidence of child labour.

III. General Development Programmes

A general development action programme such as the National Policy on Child Labour envisaged the initiation of non-formal education (NFE) centres proposed under the National Policy of Education 1986, for continuing the education of child labourers, who have successfully completed NFE. Efforts were to be made to link the NFE institutions with open schools, or with the forward education system. India also ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1992. The charter on child's rights was drafted by the UN Commission on human rights and adopted by the UN General Assembly. The charter is a set of international standards and measures intended to protect and promote the well-being of children in the society. The Convention provides the legal basis for initiating action to ensure the rights of the children in the society.

IV. The National Child Labour Projects (NCLP)

Under NCLP, more than 18,000 special schools have been set up covering about 1.5 lakh working children. These schools provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition, stipend, healthcare, etc. to children withdrawn from employment.

V. Scheme of the Ministries of Welfare and Women and Child Development

The Ministry of Welfare has a grant-in-aid scheme for supporting and strengthening the NGOs engaged in the welfare and development of street children. The NGOs are supported by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. In order to supplement and pressurize the government initiatives at the national level, several NGOs have shown tremendous courage and enthusiasm to highlight the bondage and servitude conditions of working children. The formation of South Asian Coalition

on Child Servitude (SACCS) in 1989 and the campaign against child labour were attempts to protect the neglected children under conditions of bondage and servitude, and to restore the right to primary education to all children.

VI. International Labour Organisation

The efforts to eliminate child labour at a global level received a significant boost from the ILO and UNICEF in 1992. The following parallel programmes intended to build financial and human capacity of government and non-government agencies were started:

- (i) Child Labour Action Support Programme (CLASP)
- (ii) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) launched in 1992. India was the first country to join the programme.

VII. UNICEF

UNICEF acknowledges the need to advocate the implementations of the Convention of the Rights of Child. The objectives are as follows:

- (i) Promote compulsory primary education
- (ii) Advocate revision and enforcement of legislation to prohibit child labour, particularly in hazardous industries
- (iii) Assist Central and State Government for any action plan for the withdrawal and rehabilitation of child labour
- (iv) Strengthen alliance between NGOs, media, industry and legal set-up for social mobilization in support of elimination of child labour

Poverty alleviation and development strategies are being tried in order to help improve the overall living standards, and address the underlying and structural causes of child labour. Social protection and rehabilitation strategies have also been tried with varied local regional implementation and with different degrees of success.

5.8.2 Street Children in India

India has been home to many street children who are suffering not only due to a lack of education, but also due to a lack of nourishment. Millions of street children are vulnerable and are forced to work since they are deprived of education. In spite of adopting the policies of globalization and liberalization and the resultant booming economy, millions of children in India are homeless and living in deplorable conditions. It is quite difficult to provide a proper statistical evidence of the number of street children in the entire world. Because of their very lifestyle, the street children are not included in the official statistics. These statistics rely on data collected by surveying families or schools, and hence, any estimate is necessarily imprecise.

The UNICEF defines street children as follows: ‘street children are those for whom the street (in the widest sense of the word, including unoccupied dwellings, wasteland, etc.) has become his or her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood; and who is inadequately protected, supervised, or directed by responsible adults.’

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The street has become their real home. They live in a situation in which there is no protection, supervision or direction from responsible adults. They fall in the following three operational categories:

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1. Children on the street

Forming the largest category, these are the children who have homes. Most return to their families at the end of the day.

2. Children of the street

These children are a group who has chosen the street as their home, and it is there that they seek shelter, livelihood and companionship. They have occasional contacts with their families.

3. Abandoned children

These children have severed all ties with their families. They are entirely on their own, not only for material survival but also at a psychological level.

The children, who are in the streets, often end up doing jobs like collecting rags, cleaning train compartments, working in roadside *dhabas*, cleaning utensils in *dhabas*, and working as coolies, etc. Their lifestyle makes them vulnerable to many diseases like tuberculosis and even sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS. The street children in India are exposed to unhygienic living conditions and extreme poverty.

5.8.3 Child Trafficking in India

Trafficking of women and children has been a serious issue of human rights violation confronting India. It is a growing phenomenon regionally, nationally and internationally. While trafficking is a global problem and an integral part of the process of international migration, it does assume specific regional and national dimensions. Trafficking of women and children for prostitution is a vile and heinous violation of human rights. The statistics on 'trafficking' are often unreliable because they tend to over-represent the sex trade. However, a detailed 2005 study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found that, of the estimated 9.5 million victims of forced labour in Asia, less than 10 per cent are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. Worldwide, less than half of all trafficking victims are part of the sex trade according to the same report (Feingold, 2005).

Defining Trafficking

There is no universal definition of trafficking. An absence of consensus regarding the definition of trafficking has crucial implications on strategic planning and programme development since some of the definitions of trafficking which inform concrete practice may be contradictory to each other. However, there are some basic elements of trafficking that are widely agreed upon, such as violence, deception, coercion, deprivation of freedom of movement, abuse of authority, debt bondage, forced labour and slavery like practices and other forms of exploitation or use of force.

The most comprehensive definition is one which is adopted by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime in 2000, known as the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, 2000, Especially Women and Children under the UN Convention against Trans-national Organised Crime (UNTOC).

However, Article 3 of the Indian Constitution has defined trafficking as follows:

‘Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or of the giving off or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over other persons, for the purpose of exploitation...’

Incidence of Trafficking

In India, many children are trafficked every year for sex trade, domestic labour, organ trade, industrial labour, etc. Nearly 60 per cent of the children trafficked are below 18 years of age, proclaims the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2005). Based on this data, it is believed that Bihar, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are the three states where the maximum number of children is trafficked. The minor girls become soft targets. These girls are forced into prostitution. West Bengal and Karnataka are two important states that have largest number of girls sold into prostitution.

Trafficking and Migration

The trafficking of children is closely related to migration and more specifically illegal migration. Trafficking and migration are intertwined. The most common form of trafficking is ‘migrant trafficking’. Trafficking involves involuntariness on the part of the victim, and it involves deception or force, whereas migration involves willingness. In proven trafficking, the victim, during the process of recruitment or transfer, accompanies the agent willingly. Such willingness on the part of the victim is either through deception or through a false promise for a lucrative job.

The process of ‘migrant trafficking’ involves two phases:

- (i) Firstly, when the willing migrant and unsuspecting victim is actually delivered to a site of work which is different from the one promised by the agent, and may subjugate the victim to work under conditions which are degrading.
- (ii) Secondly, when the recruitment, transportation and confinement to the site of work is carried out under exploitative conditions.

Child trafficking and its forms

Child trafficking can take many forms, namely, sexual exploitation, which involves forced prostitution, sex tourism and pornography. In case of children, it is mostly forced prostitution.

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Interventions on Trafficking

The problem of trafficking is becoming a serious social problem, and needs to be addressed urgently. There have been a significant number of efforts undertaken in this direction in order to eradicate this problem by the government. In India, the Department of Women and Child Development as well as the National Commission for Women have put a lot of efforts in this direction.

The efforts of central and state governments include the following:

- The Government of India set up a Central Advisory Committee on Child Prostitution in 1994 which worked in collaboration with both governmental and non-governmental agencies to take up the issue of sexual exploitation of children, particularly the girl child and make necessary policy interventions. The state governments have also set up similar committees like State Advisory Committees to address the same issue at state level.
- Committee on Prostitution, Child Prostitutes and Children of Prostitutes headed by the Secretary of Women and Child Development was set up in 1997. It looks at the problems of prostitutes and also looks into the trafficking of women and children.
- The Central Social Welfare Board provides financial assistance to NGOs to establish care centres for the children of prostitutes.

Legislative Action

- Article 23 of the Constitution guarantees rights against exploitation; prohibits traffic in human beings and forced labour and makes their practice punishable under law.
- Article 24 prohibits the employment of children below 14 years of age in factories, mines or other hazardous employment.
- Under the Indian Penal Code, 1860, out of the twenty-five provisions related to trafficking; some are relevant, namely, Section 366 A, 366 B and 374. The procurement of a minor girl below 18 years from one part of the country to another is an offence.
- Immoral Traffic Prevention Act (ITPA), 1956 renamed as the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act (SITA), 1956 aims at abolishing traffic among women and girls.

Other initiatives

Apart from the governmental intervention and legal action, a lot of NGOs have worked for the eradication of child trafficking. More than eighty NGOs in ten states of India work actively among sex workers, and play a major role in influencing policy reforms (UNIFEM, 1998).

Check Your Progress

9. Define cybercrime.
10. List some problems faced by unmarried working women.
11. Define child labour.

NOTES**5.9 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’**

1. Social problems are behaviour patterns or conditions that are considered objectionable or undesirable by many members of a society.
2. Social problems change when the concerned behavioural patterns are interpreted differently.
3. The three types of social problems are physical, ameliorative and moral problems.
4. Economic component is the crux of regionalism.
5. Caste is the main social institution of Indian society.
6. Communalism can be conceptualized as an ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one’s own religion, and at the same time, antagonism against the other religions.
7. The term ‘communalism’ came to be first used by the British in the context of colonies like India where substantial religious minorities existed alongside a religious majority.
8. Bipan Chandra, a leading scholar in the field, uncovers the class analysis on communalism in his book *Communalism in Modern India*, 1984.
9. Cybercrime may be defined as ‘any unlawful act where computer or communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime.
10. Some problems faced by unmarried working women include:
 - On taking up a job, they face the society more openly for the first time and this creates an adjustment problem.
 - Their growing independence, both financial as well as in thought and action rebel against the method of choosing a life partner.
11. The term ‘child labour’ is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and mental development.

5.10 SUMMARY

- Social problems are behaviour patterns or conditions that are considered objectionable or undesirable by many members of a society.

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- Social problems involve actions or patterns of behaviour that are viewed by a substantial number of persons in the society as being harmful to the society or in violation of societal norms, and about which ameliorative action is seen as both possible and desirable.
- Social problems arise by being collectively defined as objectionable by many members of the community. Thus, adverse conditions not defined by the community as reprehensible are not considered as social problems.
- Social problems change when the concerned behavioural patterns are interpreted differently.
- Social problems need to be analysed in terms of the influence upon them by group processes and social relationships.
- Since social problems vary historically, contemporary social problems are the society's concern; for example, the problem of refugee settlement in India in 1947-48 was different from the problem settling refugees from Assam in 1968 (Ahuja, 2001).
- Social problems are disintegrative: Social problems disintegrate the social system directly or indirectly. Social problems adversely affect social values and since the values of every society differ, they are affected differently.
- Social problems are a result of social disorganization.
- When the functioning of society is threatened due to the emergence of social problems, it can be said that social disorganization is in existence.
- On the other hand, social disorganization is defined by Elliot and Merill as a breakdown in the equilibrium of forces, decay in the social structure, so that old habits and forms of social control no longer function effectively.
- In a traditional society people accommodate everyone's interest. However, modern age places high premium on individualism or individualistic tendencies.
- In a complex society there is increased opportunity for the collision of interests of various individuals, groups, institutions and systems.
- Untouchability, communal riots and political crimes are social problems which are the result of the clash of interests of different castes and classes.
- Delinquency is one way of achieving or gaining acceptance according to the expectations of this lower-class culture.
- Lower-class youth learn and act according to the central values or 'focal concerns' of lower-class adults, but the delinquent adolescents express and carry out these values in an exaggerated way.
- Caste is the main social institution of Indian villages. Referred to as *jati*, *jat*, *zat* or various other local terms, it is a collectivity of people, related also by the ties of kinship and marriage, which has a 'monopoly' over an occupation.
- Harold Gould characterizes caste as a 'monopolistic guild'.

- Caste and class are polar opposites, as understood by the Western scholars, and in particular by the British administrators and ethnographers. They observe that caste and class are different forms of social stratification.
- Some scholars view caste as a ‘closed system’ of social stratification. Others consider it both ‘closed’ and ‘open’.
- As a closed system, caste has an ‘organic’ character. It implies that different castes depend upon each other for fulfillment of various socio-cultural and economic needs.
- Caste, as an open system, has segmentary character. It implies that different castes become somewhat independent of each other because of the emergence of ‘differentiated structures’ in India.
- The disorganization of the caste system leads some to infer that in the future the caste system will cease to exist. But many scholars have dissolved this doubt.
- Inter-state regionalism: This is conterminous with state boundaries and involves juxtaposing of one or more states identities against another on specific issues which threaten their interest.
- Communalism can be conceptualized as an ideology which is based on blind loyalty towards one’s own religion, and at the same time, antagonism against the other religions.
- The term ‘communalism’ came to be first used by the British in the context of colonies like India where substantial religious minorities existed alongside a religious majority.
- Communalism distinguishes people on the basis of religion and uses violence to harass and violate the ‘other’.
- Cybercrime may be defined as “Any unlawful act where computer or communication device or computer network is used to commit or facilitate the commission of crime”.
- The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal of the Ministry of Home Affairs has provided a good list of tips which can be followed to maintain safety from crime.
- Gender identity and sexual orientation are important aspects of our selves and should not be used as a basis for discrimination and violence.
- Child labour is a serious and contentious issue throughout the developing world, and it is demeaning and damaging to a child’s health and intellectual development. So, child labour continues to be a problem whose form and meaning shifts with social, economic, geographic and cultural context.
- Child labour is the basis of economic activities in many Asian developing countries, and many consumer goods including export commodities (such as carpets, clothing and agricultural commodities) are produced by children employed in various factories and manufacturing units.

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- Child labour can be classified into various categories: domestic nonmonetary work; non-domestic and non-monetary work; wage labour and bonded labour.
- Street children fall in the following three operational categories: children of the street, children on the street and abandoned children.
- Trafficking of women and children has been a serious issue of human rights violation confronting India. It is a growing phenomenon regionally, nationally and internationally. Trafficking of women and children for prostitution is a vile and heinous violation of human rights.

5.11 KEY TERMS

- **Divorce:** It is the legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body.
- **Mass Media:** It refers to a diverse array of media technologies that reach a large audience via mass communication.
- **Juvenile delinquency:** It refers to the habitual committing of criminal acts or offences by a young person, especially one below the age at which ordinary criminal prosecution is possible.
- **Monarchy:** It refers to a country that has a king or queen.
- **Aristocracy:** It is the highest class in certain societies, typically comprising people of noble birth holding hereditary titles and offices.
- **Democracy:** It is a system of government by the whole population or all the eligible members of a state, typically through elected representatives.
- **Ethnography:** It is the study and systematic recording of human cultures.
- **Vigilantism:** It refers to law enforcement undertaken without legal authority by a self-appointed group of people.
- **Culturalist:** It refers to one that emphasizes the importance of culture in determining behaviour.
- **Corruption:** It refers to the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery.
- **Politicization:** It is the action of causing an activity or event to become political in character.
- **Post-colonial:** It refers to the historical period or state of affairs representing the aftermath of Western colonialism.
- **Linguistic:** It is the scientific study of the structure and development of language in general or of particular languages.
- **Bullying:** It means to seek to harm, intimidate, or coerce (someone perceived as vulnerable).
- **LGBTQ:** It is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.

5.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Define social problems. What are its characteristics?
2. Describe the nature of social disorganization.
3. What is caste? List the important features of caste.
4. Describe caste as a 'closed system' and 'open system'.
5. List the six dimensions of communalism.
6. Write a short note on cyber-crime and safety tips.
7. Define trafficking.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse various theories of deviance as given in this unit.
2. Assess caste and class in rural India. Discuss the views of Gandhi, Ambedkar and Kothari on caste system.
3. Discuss the strategies adopted to tackle the issue of caste system.
4. Elucidate the prevalence of regionalism and communalism in India.
5. Discuss the various theoretical approaches to the origin of communal violence.
6. Examine the extent of gender inequality prevalent in India. Mention possible changes that may have occurred over the years. Discuss how can we tackle gender inequality.
7. Write a descriptive note discussing LGBTQ issues.
8. Explain the extent of violence against women in India. Is there any improvement in the treatment of women over time? What best practices can we indulge in to make women safety a reality?

5.13 FURTHER READING

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