

B.A. First Year
Sociology, Paper - I

**BASIC CONCEPT
OF SOCIOLOGY**



मध्यप्रदेश भोज (मुक्त) विश्वविद्यालय – भोपाल
MADHYA PRADESH BHOJ (OPEN) UNIVERSITY – BHOPAL

Reviewer Committee

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr (Prof) Madhavi Lata Dubey Professor Govt Science & Commerce College Benazir, Bhopal | 3. Mrs. Archana Chauhan Assistant Professor S.N. Girls Autonomous (PG) College Bhopal |
| 2. Dr Sadhna Bisen Assistant Professor BSS College Bhopal | |

.....
Advisory Committee

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr Jayant Sonwalkar Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal | 4. Dr (Prof) Madhavi Lata Dubey Professor Govt Science & Commerce College Benazir, Bhopal |
| 2. Dr H.S. Tripathi Registrar Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal | 5. Dr Sadhna Bisen Assistant Professor BSS College Bhopal |
| 3. Dr L.P. Jharia Director Student Support Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal | 6. Mrs. Archana Chauhan Assistant Professor S.N. Girls Autonomous (PG) College Bhopal |

.....
COURSE WRITERS

Dr. Manoj Kumar Jena, Assistant Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi

Units: (1.0-1.1, 1.3, 1.3.2, 1.3.3, 1.5-1.9, 2.0-2.1, 2.2-2.3, 2.7-2.11, 4.0-4.1, 4.5-4.9, 5.0-5.1, 5.2-5.2.1, 5.2.3, 5.3-5.7)

Dr Prashant Shukla, Assistant Professor (Stage-III), Department of Philosophy, Lucknow University

Unit: (1.2, 1.3.1, 1.3.4)

Dr. Biswaranjan Mohanty, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science SGTB, Khalsa College, University of Delhi, Delhi

Units: (1.4, 2.4-2.6, 3, 4.2, 4.3.4, 5.2.2, 5.2.4)

Vivek Kumar, Freelance Academic Author

Unit: (2.3.1-2.3.2)

Dr Harish Kumar, Associate Professor, Amity Institute of Education, Amity University, Noida

Unit: (4.3-4.3.1)

Dr Namrata Prasad, Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Bapu Post Graduate College, Pipiganj, DDU Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur

Unit: (4.3.2-4.3.3, 4.4)

Copyright © Reserved, Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal

All rights reserved. No part of this publication which is material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or transmitted or utilized or stored in any form or by any means now known or hereinafter invented, electronic, digital or mechanical, including photocopying, scanning, recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without prior written permission from the Registrar, Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal.

Information contained in this book has been published by VIKAS® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. and has been obtained by its Authors from sources believed to be reliable and are correct to the best of their knowledge. However, the Madhya Pradesh Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal, Publisher and its Authors shall in no event be liable for any errors, omissions or damages arising out of use of this information and specifically disclaim any implied warranties or merchantability or fitness for any particular use.

Published by Registrar, MP Bhoj (Open) University, Bhopal in 2020



VIKAS® is the registered trademark of Vikas® Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.

VIKAS® PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT. LTD.

E-28, Sector-8, Noida - 201301 (UP)

Phone: 0120-4078900 • Fax: 0120-4078999

Regd. Office: A-27, 2nd Floor, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, New Delhi 1100 44

• Website: www.vikaspublishing.com • Email: helpline@vikaspublishing.com

SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Basic Concept of Sociology

| Syllabi | Mapping in Book |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNIT 1: Sociology-Meaning, Definition, Nature of Sociology, Subject matter, scope and importance, origin and development of sociology. Sociology and other social science. | Unit-1: Introduction to Sociology (Pages 3-31) |
| UNIT 2: Society, Social Groups, Community, Institutions, Association. | Unit-2: Society, Social Groups and Community (Pages 33-66) |
| UNIT 3: Social structure, Status, Role, Culture, Socialization. | Unit-3: Social Structure and Culture (Pages 67-122) |
| UNIT 4: Social control, values, Norms, Social stratification, social mobility. | Unit-4: Social Control and Social Stratification (Pages 123-186) |
| UNIT 5: Social change-Meaning, Types, Evolution, Development, Progress, Revolution. | Social Change (Pages 187-214) |



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY 3-31

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Meaning and Definition of Sociology
- 1.3 Nature, Scope and Subject Matter of Sociology
 - 1.3.1 Origin of Sociology
 - 1.3.2 Scope of Sociology
 - 1.3.3 Importance of Sociology
 - 1.3.4 Subject-Matter of Sociology
- 1.4 Sociology and Other Social Sciences
- 1.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Key Terms
- 1.8 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 1.9 Further Reading

UNIT 2 SOCIETY, SOCIAL GROUPS AND COMMUNITY 33-66

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Concept of Society
- 2.3 Social Groups
 - 2.3.1 Types of Social Groups
 - 2.3.2 Peer Groups in Modern Society
- 2.4 Community
- 2.5 Institutions
- 2.6 Association
- 2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Key Terms
- 2.10 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.11 Further Reading

UNIT 3 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE 67-122

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Social Structure
- 3.3 Status and Role
 - 3.3.1 Relation between Individual and Society
- 3.4 Culture
 - 3.4.1 Culture and Civilization
 - 3.4.2 Social Origins of Culture

- 3.5 Socialization
- 3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Key Terms
- 3.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.10 Further Reading

UNIT 4 SOCIAL CONTROL AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

123-186

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Social Control
 - 4.2.1 Values and Norms of Society
- 4.3 Social Stratification
 - 4.3.1 Theories: Functional, Marxism and Weberian
 - 4.3.2 Marxian Theory of Social Stratification
 - 4.3.3 Weberian Theory of Social Stratification
 - 4.3.4 Functions of Social Stratification
- 4.4 Social Mobility
- 4.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading

UNIT 5 SOCIAL CHANGE

187-214

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Meaning of Social Change
 - 5.2.1 Types of Social Change
 - 5.2.2 Evolution of Social Change
 - 5.2.3 Development and Progress
 - 5.2.4 Revolution
- 5.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Terms
- 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.7 Further Reading

INTRODUCTION

Sociology is a science based on the study of humans and their culture. It is a combination of the organized study of the growth, architecture, relationships and attitudes of systematic groups of human beings. Sociology paves the way for scientists, social thinkers and activists in understanding the society. It also helps them in improving the quality of life of the people living in the society.

The basic principles of sociology are as follows:

- The behaviour of individuals in social groups is different than that when they are independent.
- Individuals who are part of a social group follow the rules of that social group.
- These rules are created and implemented socially.
- Some people have more authority in the creation of rules than others.
- Those who follow the rules are awarded and those who break them are penalized.
- The rules of social groups have a scientific base.

In a society, culture is responsible for giving an identity to the individual. Culture is imbibed in an individual at the time of his birth and persists till his death.

This book—*Basic Concept of Sociology*—focuses on the scope, nature and definitions of sociology and society, behaviour of individuals in societies, effects of culture on the human personality, characteristics, and types and functions of culture. It also analyses the relationship between social interaction and socialization. It familiarizes the reader with the basic concepts in sociology, such as customs, competition and conflict, social institutions, roles, social control, formal and informal agencies of social control, and social conflict and social change.

This book is written in a self-instructional format and is divided into seven units. Each unit begins with an *Introduction* to the topic followed by an outline of the *Objectives*. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with *Check Your Progress* questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of *Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises* is also provided at the end of each unit, and includes short-answer as well as long-answer questions. The *Summary* and *Key Terms* section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

NOTES



UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Meaning and Definition of Sociology
- 1.3 Nature, Scope and Subject Matter of Sociology
 - 1.3.1 Origin of Sociology
 - 1.3.2 Scope of Sociology
 - 1.3.3 Importance of Sociology
 - 1.3.4 Subject-Matter of Sociology
- 1.4 Sociology and Other Social Sciences
- 1.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Key Terms
- 1.8 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 1.9 Further Reading

NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Sociology is one of the first social sciences to be acknowledged. The word 'sociology' owes its origin to the Latin word *socius* (companion) and the Greek word *logy* (study of). Sociology incorporates the study of social phenomena, social life, groups, institutions, associations and societies. It focuses on society from a scientific point of view. Sociology has a vast scope. It ranges from individual to grouped social systems. The principles of sociology explain the behaviour of human beings and their existence with respect to their mutual interaction. In fact, sociology has always studied societies, both taken separately and together, as 'human societies'. The balance between the two aspects may vary, but at the end, the study of the one absolutely requires study of the other. Neither of them makes sense independently. For instance, considering India as a society, one can think of it in terms of cities, factories, schools, farms or prisons. It is simple to connect all these factors. They can also be visualized as confined within the boundaries of Indian states and referred under the general heading of Indian society.

In this unit, you will study about the nature and scope of sociology. The relationship of sociology with other social sciences is also discussed in this unit.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand the meaning, definition and characteristics of sociology
- Discuss the nature and scope of sociology
- Analyse the importance of sociology

- Distinguish between sociology and other social sciences
- Examine the central problems of sociology and the ways to tackle them

NOTES

1.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIOLOGY

Since the beginning of human history, the observation, analysis and reflection of human-society have been topics of interest for thinkers and analysts. It was Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who, for the first time, introduced us to an independent, autonomous and systematic discipline for the study of societies and societal groups in which we live. This new discipline was termed as 'Sociology'. The term 'sociology' is derived from the Latin word *socius* and the Greek word *logos*, meaning the 'opinion and/or knowledge about the society'. As the etymological meaning of the term indicates, this new discipline is dependent upon two distinct sources: one social and the other philosophical.

It is to be noted here that in the beginning, Auguste Comte was a bit sceptical about this 'hybrid' character of sociology, though later, he clearly expressed his satisfaction by saying that this 'hybridization' of the discipline has been satisfactorily compensated by getting the benefits of the two traditional disciplines: social and intellectual.

Definitions

Let us now look at some major definitions of sociology:

- In 1839, Comte defined sociology as the science of human association or the study of gregarious life.
- Max Weber defined sociology as 'the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects'.
- According to Emile Durkheim, 'sociology is the study of social facts through social institutions.
- According to Harry M. Johnson, 'Sociology is the science that deals with social groups: their internal forms or modes of organisation, the processes that tend to maintain or change these forms of organisation, and the relations between groups.'
- According to Maclver and Page, 'sociology is about social relationships, the network of relationship we call society'.
- According to Georg Simmel, 'sociology is the study of social groups on the basis of social interaction.'
- According to the American Sociological Association, sociology is a 'social science involving the study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies the study of our behaviour as social beings, covering everything from the

analysis of short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to the study of global social processes.’

Central Problems of Sociology

Auguste Comte, for the first time, tried to demarcate the subject matter of sociology. He believed that the study of social sciences in his own time had the same kind of concerns for its future as once Alchemy had with modern-day chemistry or as astrology had with modern-day astronomy. He also believed that the sections and subsections of the discipline could be made only in the distant future where we are clear about facts, priorities and preferences; and nothing can be said about them right now. However, he suggested that the study of sociology should be done in two different parts:

- (i) the social statics
- (ii) social dynamics

Let us try to understand them:

In social statics, the primary concern of thinkers would be the major institutions working in and for the society, for example family, state, economy etc. The thinkers are supposed to understand the nature and interaction of these institutions in general. According to Comte, they cannot be understood individually and distinctly, for their existence depends upon the phenomena of mutual relationship. Therefore, they should be treated only in combination. That is why, Comte accepted ‘universal and social interconnection’ as the master-thought of this division.

The second division, known as the social dynamics, means the study of the different parts of society and how they relate with each-other, develop as per requirements and evolve over times.

Auguste Comte (1798-1857) was of the belief that almost every society moves through certain fixed stages. If we analyse these different stages, it might be possible to understand their nature as well.

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) discussed the concerned field of sociology in a more precise manner than Comte in his prominent work *The Principles of Sociology*. He believed that the subject-matter consists of certain familiar elements in a particular order. The division of sociological study as presented by Comte and its influence can be clearly seen in Spencer’s work.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was the next thinker in the line who talked about the special field of sociology and emphasized on the ‘era of specialization’ in sociology in his book. Like Comte and Spencer, Durkheim also focused on the values of interrelationship of different social institutions.

Max Weber (1864-1920) considered sociology as ‘...a science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects.’ (*Theory of Social and Economic Organization*).

NOTES

NOTES

All of the abovementioned thinkers, Comte, Spencer, Durkheim and Weber, are known as the ‘founding fathers of sociology’. All of them seem to have fundamental agreement on the central problems of sociology, which are as follows:

1. Sociology studies a wide range of institutions from family to the state. All of these institutions have to be analysed from a distinct sociological perspective and methodology.
2. All of the social institutions are always found to be in interrelationship with each other.
3. These institutions should be studied with a purpose of explaining/ understanding why society should be taken as a distinct unit of analysis and why societies are alike or different in nature.
4. Regardless of the institutional background, a sociologist should focus on ‘the social acts’ or ‘the social relationships’.

To understand the central concerns of the discipline, a broad review of problems and prospects of sociology was published in 1957. This was the kind of survey deliberately constructed to understand the major branches of sociology. Under the supervision of a special program committee, around thirty sociological specialties were chosen for the analysis and the result was finally published in one of the most widely referred book called *Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects* (1959).

With this work, the familiar issues of sociology were formally established: sociological theory, sociological methodology, individual and society, family, kinship, marriage, ethnic relation, and so on. Some of the other important problems are deliberately omitted for the lack of space. Overall, the subject-matter was exactly in accordance with what the founding forefathers of Sociology have already discussed. Later, the *American Sociological Review* (1959) established the central problems as social control and deviance, differentiation and stratification, scientific methodology etc.

Check Your Progress

1. How did Max Weber define sociology?
2. Who tried to demarcate the subject matter of sociology for the first time?

1.3 NATURE, SCOPE AND SUBJECT MATTER OF SOCIOLOGY

On a broader platform, sociology is the study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences. It is a type of science that comprises investigative techniques which are objective and systematic. It gives rise to the evolution of the social truth that is based on empirical evidence and interpretation. However, it cannot be directly based on natural sciences, since human behaviour is a unique phenomenon.

It also differs from natural sciences such that the contents of natural sciences are constant, while human behaviour, exhibits variations and flexibility.

Sociology as a branch of knowledge has its own unique characteristics. It is different from other sciences in certain respects. An analysis of internal logical characteristics helps one to understand its main characteristics, which are discussed as follows:

- (i) **Sociology is an independent science:** It is not treated and studied as a branch of any other science. As an independent science, it has its own field of study, boundary and method.
- (ii) **Sociology is a social science and not a physical science:** As a social science, it focuses its attention on man, his social behaviour, social activities and social life. It is related to other social sciences such as history, political science, economics, and so on.
- (iii) **Sociology is a categorical and not a normative discipline:** Sociology does not make any kind of value judgments. Its approach is neither moral nor immoral but amoral. It is ethically neutral. It makes no recommendations on matters of social policy or legislation or programme. Sociology cannot deal with problems of good and evil, right and wrong, moral and immoral.
- (iv) **Sociology is a pure science and not an applied science:** The main aim of pure science is acquisition of knowledge, irrespective of whether the acquired knowledge is useful or can be put to use. On the other hand, applied science applies acquired knowledge into life.
- (v) **Sociology is relatively abstract and not concrete science:** It is not interested in concrete manifestation of human events. It is more concerned with the form of human events and their patterns. For instance, sociology is not specifically concerned with wars and revolutions but in the general social phenomena, as types of social conflict.
- (vi) **Sociology is not based on particular subjects or individuals, but is a general science:** Sociology tries to find out general laws or principles about human interaction and associations about the nature, forms, and content and structure of human groups and societies. It adopts a general approach on the basis of a study of some selected events.
- (vii) **Sociology is a rational and empirical science:** There are two broad ways of approach to scientific knowledge: one is empiricism and the other is rationalism. Empiricism emphasizes experiences and facts that result from observation and experiment. Rationalism stresses on reason and theories that result from logical inference. In sociological inquiry, both are significant.

1.3.1 Origin of Sociology

Historically speaking, the discipline of sociology is still in its nascent phase. In fact, several prominent thinkers have expressed their opinion that ‘the discipline of

NOTES

NOTES

Sociology has still not come out of its infancy'. It is an agreeable fact that several thinkers have worked upon the understanding of social issues even before the discipline was born: Aristotle's *Politics* (during early Greek philosophy) and Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (during classical Indian age) are some of the relevant examples here which provided a systematic study of the socio-political systems and are of interest to the social thinkers even today.

Still, it can be rightly said that as an independent and autonomous discipline, sociology was introduced only in the 19th century. In his prominent text *Reason and Unreason in Society* (1947), M. Ginsberg has observed that,

Broadly, it may be said that sociology has had a four-fold origin in political philosophy, the philosophy of history, biological theories of evolution and the movements for social and political reform which found it necessary to undertake surveys of social conditions.

The historical background of the origin of Sociology (as an independent and autonomous discipline) may be traced back to the time between 1750 to 1850. Literally speaking, the above-mentioned duration ranges from Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* to the works of Auguste Comte himself, and from Herbert Spencer's earlier works to the theories of Karl Marx. The formative period of sociology as a distinct discipline is considered to range from the second half of the 19th century to the first part of the 20th century.

Characteristic Features of Sociology

As brief survey of the historical background of the emergence and development of sociology helps us in establishing some characteristic features of the discipline. These are as follows:

- 1. Sociology is *encyclopaedic* in nature:** The subject-matter of sociology ranges from the social life of man to the whole of human history. It does become synthetic, all-inclusive and encyclopaedic in nature.
- 2. Sociology is *evolutionary* in nature:** Being influenced by biology, the subject-matter of sociology becomes evolutionary in nature, as it tries to observe and understand the broad stages in socialization. It tries to change its nature, scope and methods in accordance with the changing needs and expectations of the society.
- 3. Sociology is a *Positive Science*:** Being influenced by Natural Sciences (like Physics and Mathematics), the subject-matter of sociology is claimed to have borrowed heavily from scientific methodologies of research. It is, therefore, considered a positive science.
- 4. Sociology is the *study of particularities*:** Though sociology attempts to construct some general laws of social evolution, it also studies particular social, political and economic issues of the 18th century. That is why, in the beginning, it was also considered as the science of 'particular societal problems'.

- 5. Sociology is scientific and ideological character:** Sociology, as an independent and autonomous discipline, claims to have both conservative and radical ideas at the same time, and has consistently learnt from the conflicting theories.

Development of Sociology

In their attempt to establish fixed and demarcating characteristic features of sociology (as an autonomous discipline), the earliest sociologists like Auguste Comte, Kim and Max Weber, and others tried to establish their primary objective as the explanation and analysis of social phenomena and change leading to some conclusion on the basis of sociology's relationship with other social sciences. Several thinkers attempted to show their inclination against the previous outlook. They tried to show their inclination towards those residual subjects which were not considered as the subject-matter of any other social science. In this way, they tried to pinpoint and narrow down the objectives of sociology as a discipline.

Let us examine chronologically some of the important events in the history of the academic discipline of sociology.

- In 1838 Auguste Comte, a Frenchman, coined the term sociology.
- In 1848 Marx and Engels coauthored *The Communist Manifesto*, which is one of the most influential political manuscripts in history. It presents Marx's theory of society, which differed from what Comte proposed.
- In 1853, Harriet Martineau was the first to translate Comte's writing from French to English and thereby introduced sociology to English-speaking scholars.
- In 1885, Emile Durkheim helped legitimize and define sociology as a formal academic discipline by establishing the first European department of sociology at the University of Bordeaux.
- In India, sociology had its formal beginning in 1917 at Calcutta University.
- In 1919, Max Weber established a sociology department in Germany at the Ludwig Maximilians University of Munich in 1919.
- By the 1930s, several sociological journals were well filled with research articles and scientific descriptions. Sociology became a body of scientific knowledge with its theories based upon scientific observation rather than upon impressionistic observation.
- In 1942, the Indian sociologist published his first sociological study *Marriage and Family in Mysore*.
- In the couple decades after the Second World War, sociology found some new directions influenced by the works of C.W. Mills such as the *White Collar* (1951) and *the Power Elite* (1956).
- In recent times, new aspects of sociology have led to historical and social anthropological studies. This is a result of the gradual development of third world countries and their respective societies.

NOTES

1.3.2 Scope of Sociology

NOTES

According to the British sociologist Morris Ginsberg, the scope of sociology includes a broad study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences. Some writers would restrict its scope to the relations arising out of acts of will, but this is an unjustifiable and unworkable limitation. Many interactions between individuals are not consciously determined or apprehended. One of the most interesting problems confronting the student of society is to determine the respective roles of reason or rational purpose, and of impulse and the unconsciousness in social life.

In this case, sociology must be capable of dealing with the complete issue or network of social relationships. However, these relationships are assumed to be dependent on the nature of individuals, to one another, to the community, and to the external environment. This can be explained if every social event can be traced back to its origin, as influenced by complex interactions. A combination of these interactions is comprised within a community, with respect to external influences. But this ideal, if generously conceived, is clearly too ambitious.

Sociology involves a systematic and objective study of human society. Sociologists study individuals' social actions. Social relationships, for instance, those between a husband and a wife, a teacher and a student, a buyer and a seller, and social processes, namely, cooperation, competition, conflict and organizations, communities and nations, and social structures (family, class and state), give rise to sociological queries. Explanations that are derived from norms and values result in the formation of social institutions. Thus, sociology can be defined as the study of social life. Sociology comprises a variety of apprehensions and interests. It is aimed at providing classified forms of relationships within societies, institutions and associations. These relationships pertain to economic, political, moral, religious and social aspects of human life. Although, so far no collective agreement has been reached on the essence of sociology, so far yet it is established that sociology deals with the study of interaction systems, which shape social institutions, the state and the non-native order. Therefore, in sociology, we study about social organization, social structure, institutions and culture.

Sociology was defined differently by two schools of thought, pertaining to its range and theme:

- (i) Formal school
- (ii) Synthetic school

(i) Formal school

The formal school defined sociology as a social science that has definite characteristics. This school was advocated by eminent sociologists including George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopold Von Wiese. On the other hand, the synthetic school with well-known sociologists, namely, Durkheim, Hobhouse and Sorokin attempted to bring together a type of coordination among all social sciences.

The formal school supported the idea of giving sociology a suitable subject matter to make it a distinct discipline. It stressed on the study of forms of social

relationships and considered sociology as independent. Simmel defined sociology as a specific social science that describes, organizes, analyses and visually explains the forms of social relationships. To put it in a different way, social interactions should be classified into various forms or types and analysed. Simmel argued that social interactions have various forms. He conducted researches on formal relationships such as cooperation, competition, sub and super ordinate relationships, and so on. He said, 'however diverse the interests are that give rise to these sociations, the forms in which the interests are realized may yet be identical.' His main emphasis was to conceptualize these forms from human relationships which are not affected by different scenarios. Vierkandt believed that sociology should pertain to people being extremely attached mentally or psychically. Von Wiese believed in the existence of two types of basic social processes in a human society. These are as follows:

- (i) Associative processes that are related to contact, approach, adaptation, and so on.
- (ii) Disassociative processes like competition and conflict

Additionally, a blend of associative and disassociative processes also exists. Each of these processes can be further segregated into subclasses. These subclasses result in 650 categories of human relationships. Sociology should concentrate on discovering a basic force of change and consistency, and should be influenced by the history of concrete societies. Tonnies suggested two types of societies, namely *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (association). These were based on the level of closeness between members of the society. Based on the types of relationships, he attempted to differ between community and society. German sociologist Max Weber outlined a particular field for sociology. He recommended that the aim of sociology was to identify or explain social behaviour. However, social behaviour does cover all aspects human relations, since all exchanges between of human beings cannot be called social. Sociology deals with learning and identifying the different types of social relationships.

Georg Simmel and Formal Sociology

As stated, one of the pioneers of the formal school of sociology was the German sociologist Georg Simmel. In his studies, Simmel was focused on forms of social interactions rather than content. This is why his approach to sociology became labelled as formal sociology. His major sociological work was *Soziologie* (1908), which was based on a pragmatic structure. In it, he pushed for a structural perspective. Social forms are to be analysed beyond their specific empirical contents and beyond a merely psychological outlook.

Hierarchy ('super-ordination and sub-ordination') was a fundamental topic for Simmel. He treated it early in the book and followed it with an analysis of conflict.

Criticism of formal school

The formal school has come under criticism because it has focused only on abstract forms and ignored the more feasible parts of social life. It is not possible to study abstract forms that have been alienated from concrete relations. According to

NOTES

NOTES

Ginsberg, the study of social relationships would never be complete if it is carried out in isolation, without a thorough knowledge of the terms that are associated with it. Sociology is not the only branch of social sciences that focuses on the types of social relationships. Political science and international law also study the same. Since it is not possible to study social sciences as a separate entity from other sciences, the concept of pure sociology is not practical.

(ii) Synthetic school of sociology

The synthetic school defines sociology as a combination of social sciences. It stresses on widening the range of sociology. Durkheim divided sociology into three main sections. These were social morphology, social physiology and general sociology. Social morphology pertains to the lifestyle of people on the basis of their location or region. It comprises factors like population, density, distribution and so on. One can further divide this into two categories: (i) analysis of density and type of population that influences social relationships and social groups, and (ii) learning about social hierarchy or details related to the main categories of social groups and institutions, along with their operation. Social physiology deals with the origin and character of different social institutions, namely religion, morals, law, economic institutions, and so on. The prime objective of general sociology is to frame general social laws. Efforts are still on to find out the links between different types of institutions that are treated independently in social physiology and the possibilities of emergence of general social laws as a byproduct.

Hobhouse, a British sociologist, defined sociology as a field of science which focuses on the whole social life of man. It relates to other social sciences in a way that can be regarded as a blend of mutual exchange and stimulation. Classical sociologist Karl Mannheim has explained sociology in terms of two key divisions: systematic, and general sociology and historical sociology. Systematic sociology provides a methodical review of the main factors of coexistence, such that they are evident in every kind of society. Historical sociology deals with the historical array and existence of general forms of the society. This can be divided into two sectors: comparative sociology and social dynamics. Comparative sociology basically deals with identical historical changes and tries to highlight the general features by comparing them. It also separates general features from industrial features. Social dynamics is concerned with the interrelations that exist among different social factors and institutions in a given society, for example, in an ancient society.

Ginsberg has combined the main features of sociology in a way that they classify the different types and structures of social relations, specifically those that are clearly specified as institutions and associations. He tried to find connectivity between various parameters of social life, for example, economic, political, moral and legal, intellectual and social elements. It attempts to make the basic conditions of social change and persistence simpler, and evaluates the sociological principles that influence social life.

Thus, on the basis of the viewpoints of many sociologists, the scope of sociology can be generally defined. To begin with, sociology should be concerned

with the analysis of various institutions, associations and social groups, which have resulted from social relationships of individuals. The second step is an understanding of the different links between various sections of the society. This objective is catered to by the functionalist school of sociology, as required. The Marxist school also exhibits the same opinion. Thus, the main area of discussion of sociology pertains to social structure. Sociology should also focus on aspects which are important in bringing about social stability and social change. Finally, sociology should also tackle issues related to the changes in pattern and the consequences of societal changes.

Sociology as a Science

The nature of sociology as a science has become a controversial issue. Some critics do not support the ideology of sociology being regarded as a science like all other social sciences. Sociology can be regarded as a science since it comprises objective and systematic methodologies of examination and assessment. It can also be evaluated as a social reality on the basis of empirical data and explanation. However, it cannot be directly compared to natural sciences, since human behaviour is not similar to natural sciences. A science may be defined in at least two ways:

- (i) A body of organized, verified knowledge which has been secured through scientific investigation
- (ii) A method of study whereby a body of organized and verified knowledge is discovered

However, if the first definition is accepted, then sociology can be termed as a science, based on the theory that it creates a body of organized and verified knowledge, after scientific investigation. To the extent that sociology forsakes myth, folklore and wishful thinking and bases its conclusions on scientific evidence, it is a science. If science is defined as methods of study, then sociology can be defined as a science because it uses scientific techniques of study.

In the history of human thinking, few of our actions have been based on verified knowledge, for people through the ages have been guided mainly by folklore, norms, values and anticipations. Recently, very few people accepted the idea of systematic observations and analysis. W. F. Ogburn, an American sociologist, opines that sociology is a science. According to him, science is to be judged on the basis of the following three criteria:

- The reliability of its body of knowledge
- Its organization
- Its method

Sociology depends on reliable knowledge. Thus, sociological studies of population, families, group behaviour, evolution of institutions and the process of social change are regarded as considerably reliable. Secondly, disjointed collection of facts cannot be a science. Science should be organized and the organization of science rests upon relationships. Sociology provides a scope for interrelationships, which is enough to encourage more discoveries. Moreover, with reference to method, a branch of knowledge can be called a science if it follows a scientific

NOTES

method in its studies and investigations. Sociological studies employ various methods such as the historical method, case study method, social survey method, functional method and statistical method.

NOTES

Though sociology can be considered as a science, its scientific character cannot be established because it is not as accurate as natural sciences. There is no denying the fact that sociology cannot experiment and predict in the same way in which physical sciences do because human behaviour and relationships are peculiar and uncertain. Objectivity in sociology is not possible as man has his own prejudices and bias. Social phenomena cannot be exact as it is too vast and human motivations are complex, and it is difficult to make predictions about human behaviour.

However, such objectives raised against sociology as a science are refutable. Sociology does make use of scientific methods in the study of its subject matter. Though sociology does not support laboratory experiments, yet it does employ the techniques of science, such as the measures of sociometry, schedule, questionnaire, interview and case history. These relate measures of quantity with social phenomenon. Moreover, a sociologist also uses observation and comparison. Sociology delineates the cause-effect relationship. So sociology is a scientific discipline which obeys the demands of validity that are implied by the word 'science'. It classifies the form of social relationships and determines the connectivity between different sectors of social life. American sociologist Robert Bierstedt in his book, *The Social Order*, considered sociology as a social and not a natural science.

Thus, it can be said that science is a way to find out the truth, and if sociology involves application of a range of techniques and methods in the right manner, then it will achieve a scientific character.

Human social activities can be observed through scientific exploration just like any other natural phenomenon. This exploration uses scientific techniques, such as scales of sociometry, schedule, questionnaire, interview and case history. These, in turn, apply quantitative measurements to social phenomenon. Hence, they can be compared to the technique of experimentation. Sociology attempts to identify the types and forms of social relationships, especially of institutions and associations.

It tries to establish relations between different factors of social life. It also involves the deduction of general laws through a systematic study of its material. The outcome of the study of sociological principles is used as a means to resolve social problems. Consequently, sociology can be compared to a science, such as social psychology, clinical psychology and other sciences that relate to the existence of mankind. A sociologist can also make optimum use of two other fundamental techniques of scientific reasoning, which are observation and comparison. Sociology can also be used in the building of laws and for futuristic calculations. These laws are usually relevant and are independent of cultural changes. Sociology also explains the cause-effect relationships by the analysis of social procedures and relationships.

1.3.3 Importance of Sociology

The discipline of sociology is recognized widely today. Nowadays, there is a growing realization about the importance of the scientific study of social phenomena and means of promoting what American sociologist and economist Franklin Henry Giddings calls 'human adequacy'. It is of great value in modern complex society.

- **Sociology makes a scientific study of society:** Sociology has made it possible to study society in a systematic and scientific manner. Scientific knowledge about human society is needed in order to achieve progress in various fields.
- **Sociology throws more light on the social nature of man:** Sociology delves deep into the social nature of man. It tells us why man is a social animal and why he lives in groups. It examines the relationships between individuals and the society.
- **Sociology improves our understanding of society and increases the power of social action:** The science of society assists an individual to understand himself, his capacities, talents and limitations. It enables him to adjust to the environment. Knowledge of society and social groups helps us to lead an effective social life.
- **Sociology has contributed generously to enhance the value of human culture:** Sociology has trained us in building a rational approach to questions that concern ourselves, our religion and customs. It teaches one to have an object-oriented and balanced approach. It emphasizes the importance of ignoring petty personal prejudices and ambitions that are influenced by ego and envy.
- **Sociology studies the role of institutions in the development of the individual:** The home and family, school and education, church and religion, states and government, and marriage and family are important institutions through which a society functions. Furthermore, they are conditioners of an individual's knowledge of sociology.
- **Sociological knowledge is indispensable for understanding and planning of the society:** Sociological planning has been made easier by sociology. Sociology is often considered a vehicle of social reform and social organization. It plays an important role in reconstruction of the society.
- **The need for sociology in underdeveloped countries:** Sociologists have drawn the attention of economists regarding the social factors that have contributed to the economic backwardness of a few countries. Economists have now realized the importance of sociological knowledge in analysing the economic affairs of a country.
- **Study of society has helped several governments to promote the welfare of tribal people:** Not only civilized societies but tribal societies also have several socio-economic problems. Studies conducted by

NOTES

sociologists and anthropologists regarding tribal societies have helped many governments in undertaking various social measures to promote the welfare of tribal people.

NOTES

1.3.4 Subject-Matter of Sociology

In the previous section, we learnt about the central problems that sociological study undertakes, All of the resources of sociology seem to agree on these central problems. We can therefore construct a general outline of the central problems of sociology on which everyone would agree. It is best expressed in Alex Inkeles *What is Sociology? An Introduction to the Discipline and Profession* as follows:

A General Outline of the Central Problems of Sociology:

I. Sociological Analysis:

- Human, Culture and Society
- Sociological Perspective
- Scientific Method in Social Science

II. Primary Units of Social Life:

- Social Acts and Social Relationships
- The Individual Personality
- Groups (including Ethnic and Class)
- Communities: Urban and Rural
- Associations and Organizations
- Population
- Society

III. Basic Social Institutions:

- Family and Kinship
- Economic, Political and Legal
- Religious
- Educational and Scientific
- Recreational and Welfare
- Aesthetic and Expressive

IV. Fundamental Social Processes:

- Differential and Stratification
- Cooperation, Accommodation and Assimilation
- Social Conflicts (including Revolutions and War)
- Communication (including opinion formation, expression and change)
- Socialization and Indoctrination
- Social Evaluation

- Social Control
- Social Deviance
- Social Integration
- Social Change

Most of the present-day sociologists agree with the above-mentioned central problems of sociology with minor alterations and omissions here and there.

Sociology as the Study of Different Aspects of Society

Each and every social study has its own distinct problem of study, which provides uniqueness to the discipline. For example, political science deals with the ways in which power is used in the societal set-up. It studies government and authority, power and responsibilities and the institution through which they are exercised. In the same fashion, sociologists are also supposed to have some distinct problems that are not supposed to be the subject matter of other established disciplines.

All of the important components of the society, for example, family, social class, ethnic group, racial group, rural and urban communities, social classes and even crime are the central problems for the study in the domain of sociology. All of these issues provide the subject matter for a specialized branch of sociology. Each of these issues help in sociological research and theory-building.

Some thinkers are even of the opinion that the central problem of sociology should be studied in the decreasing order of size and complexity 'societies, institutions and social relationships'. In this way, we can divide the central problems of Sociology in three subsections:

- (i) Sociology as a study of society
- (ii) Sociology as the study of Institution and
- (iii) Sociology as the study of social relationships

We shall study them one by one:

1. Sociology as the study of society: Sociology is primarily considered as a unique field of study that considers society as the subject matter of its study. The *prima-facie* objective of this study is to understand and analyse the different social institutions and their interrelationships in different social systems. Such a systematic study should have two different aspects:

- (i) the first aspect deals with the internal distinctions existing within a society, and
- (ii) the other aspect deals with different societies as a group of population with some distinct characteristic features and then tries to compare them with each-other .

In other words, it may be said that while the first aspect deals with intra-societal studies, the other aspect deals with inter-societal studies. When a government analyst asks the question about how the executive, judicial and legislative functions in a state, how they are related to each-other, how do they work for the central government? And so on, then such questions represent the first aspect of the study. When a

NOTES

NOTES

thinker asks questions about the different stages of development in different societies, or why do specific civilizations survived only for a specific time-period, while others did not? Then this represents the second aspect of the study. (It needs to be noted here that the contemporary sociological studies are more inclined towards understanding the internal structure of the state).

- 2. Sociology as the study of social institutions:** Those institutions which work as the building-blocks of the society (such as family, School, hospital, church or some political party) are the most significant subject-matter of the study here. This is simply because of the reason that society as a whole has already been accepted as the subject-matter of a study in the disciplines of history and anthropology. Emile Durkheim in his book *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1901) mentioned aptly: ‘Sociology is the science of institutions.’ Some of the widely posed questions here are:

What are the common social features prevalent in almost all the institutions of the society? What role does family, kinship or marriage play in the survival and growth of a specific society? etc.

- 3. Sociology is the study of social-relationships:** As the society is considered a well-knit and complicated system of various institutions, in the same manner, social institutions may also be considered as a complicated system of relatively simpler social relations. For example, the family is a social institution that comprises of several distinct sets of relationships between spouses, between siblings, between parents and children, between grandparents and grandchildren and so on. We may study such social relationships for understanding their common traits and their dependents on various factors like size, duration and context of the group etc. These can be referred to as the study of social relationships.

Just as different institutions are studied to understand their typical features, similarly, the study of social relationships is done to understand and analyse the identifying and differentiating features of social institutions. Max Weber has considered the study of social relationships and acts as the primary objective of any social study. Thinkers like Leopold have considered the study of social relations as the only, true and distinctive subject-matter of sociology. Contemporary thinkers like Georg Simmel and Talcot Parson have agreed to the same.

We shall be seen in the further studies that most of the problems studied in sociology are also the subject matter of other established disciplines and vice-versa. For example, as an academic discipline, History considers the study of societies, cultures and civilizations as its subject matter and Anthropology also considers most of them as its central problems. In order to discriminate between these disciplines, not only the central problems, but also their objectives and methodologies should be taken into account.

As an overview, it may be said that the central problem of sociology may be broadly expressed in three fundamental questions:

- (i) what the founding fathers said,

- (ii) what sociologists do, and
- (iii) what logic demands from such a study?

Conclusion

Even when an institution becomes the subject-matter of newly-developed specialized discipline, they still remain the central problems of sociological investigations. For example, even though economics and politics are two distinct disciplines now, their interrelationship still remains the central problem of sociology. It may be said that those aspect of any social process or institution which connects it to others is its typical character as the interlocking 'system of action'. That is why sociology is often referred to as 'the study of the systems of social action and off their interactions.'

As Alex Inkeles mentions clearly in his book *What is Sociology?* (1965):

Sociology is not merely a collection of sub-disciplines on all realms of life, but rather is the study of those aspects of the social life which are present in all social forms.

Check Your Progress

3. Why is sociology considered a positive science?
4. What was the primary objective of the earliest sociologists like Comte, Weber and Marx?
5. What is the subject matter of history?
6. Differentiate between empiricism and rationalism.
7. Define sociology according to the formal school.
8. Distinguish between comparative sociology and social dynamics.

1.4 SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

Sociology could be considered to be a method of objective inquiry that involves testing of beliefs against evidence. Sociology and other social sciences focus on certain aspects of human behaviour. All of us can claim to be familiar with human behaviour. All of us rely on our common sense to function in our daily lives. Even when faced with an obstacle, we tend to use our common sense to cross that hurdle. Common sense does not rely upon any specific education as it is believed to be shared by all. However, sociologists believe that this common sense that we depend upon may not always be reliable as it is based on commonly-held beliefs rather than a systematic analysis of facts. Sociology is the systematic study of society, its people and their behaviour.

Critics often claim that all that sociology does is repeat the obvious; things that we can witness and analyse through common sense, and as such, there is not

NOTES

NOTES

much difference between sociology and common sense. However, there are some major differences between sociology and common sense. They are as follows:

- Common sense views are built upon people's limited experiences and give an inaccurate view of society. Sociological views, on the other hand, are based on thorough qualitative or quantitative research and evidence.
- Common sense views are built upon social tradition and customs, and are resistant to change. Sociological views often raise serious questions that challenge the status quo.
- Common sense views are specific and particular to time and place, thus, they are culture-specific and full of stereotypes. Sociological views recognize the fact that many stereotypes are social constructs.
- Common sense views lack academic credibility and reliability. Sociological views, since they are based on data and research, have academic credibility and validity.

Sociologists, like other scientists, are unwilling to accept something as fact simply because it is common knowledge. They believe that all information must be tested and analysed in relation to the data at hand.

Ethnomethodology is a recent sociological theory. It is the study of 'folk' or common sense methods employed by people to make sense of everyday activities by constructing and maintaining social reality. It means that common sense is so important that it helps in understanding the methods of constructing reality.

Sociology and Social Anthropology

Sociology and social anthropology are related but different fields with dissimilar origins. While sociology has its roots in philosophy and history, anthropology began as a study of physical measurements of humans. However, the two subjects have developed hand-in-hand, especially when it comes to concepts and scientific methods.

Social anthropologists generally study small societies that are often considered primitive, such as in the Pacific Islands. They tend to live in the particular community they are studying, witnessing their daily activities and almost becoming a part of the community themselves.

Sociologists, on the other hand, study facets of a society, such as family or social mobility, and their organization and processes. A sociologist uses methods that are loaded with values, therefore, their conclusions are lined with ethical considerations.

Perhaps, the biggest difference between sociology and social anthropology is in their method of research. A social anthropologist uses qualitative methods to collect information, usually by immersing oneself into the society that is being studied (see Figure 1.1). Sociologists generally collect quantitative data based on which they make their conclusions.



Fig. 1.1 Social and Cultural Anthropologists often Immerse Themselves in the Subjects of Their Study

NOTES

Sociology and Social Psychology

Social psychology involves the study of social and mental processes, and how they act together to determine action. Essentially, it studies the interaction between psychological and sociological processes. It is the ground where sociology and psychology converge.

Psychologists look at the mental processes and personality characteristics that make people act in a certain manner. Sociologists tend to look at not just the social setting and structure, and the processes that go on within them but the influence they exert upon individuals. Sociology particularly looks at human connections and interrelationships.

Social psychologists look into the following factors to study how an individual's behaviour, beliefs, moralities and identity are determined by his/her position in social space:

- Culture
- Time period
- Gender
- Class
- Race
- Age
- Peers

Sociology and History

Sociology as a discipline owes a lot to history. History has influenced the way sociology views and classifies historical types of society. The two subjects interact and overlap with each other to a great degree. A large volume of data that

sociologists use is provided by historians. At the same time, historians also draw upon a lot of sociological research.

NOTES

Does that mean there is very little difference between the two disciplines? According to English social anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown, 'Sociology is nomothetic, while history is idiographic', which means that a historian describes unique events, while the sociologist derives generalizations.

A sociologist utilizes quantitative data to infer generalizations about the social forces at work. A historian, on the other hand, is concerned with the interplay of these social forces and personality. History is concerned with the past and looks at the changes that take place over time. A sociologist looks for patterns to build generalizations.

Sociology and Political Science

Political sociology lies at the intersection of the disciplines of political science and sociology. Giovanni Sartori, an Italian political scientist, had suggested that there was an ambiguity in the term 'political sociology' because it could be construed as a synonym for 'sociology of politics'. There was ambiguity concerning the objects of study and the approaches of inquiry within the field of political sociology. Therefore, there arose the need for clarification.

For Sartori, such a clarification would be possible only 'when the sociological and "politicological" approaches are combined at their point of intersection'. This point of intersection is a site of interdisciplinary studies. However, to understand the dynamics of such a site, one must delineate the contours of the two parent disciplines—political science and sociology. Although the discipline of political science traces its history back to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, it evolved into an academic field of study in the United States of America. According to American political sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, one of the earliest usages of the term 'political science' occurred with the founding of the Faculty of Political Science at Columbia University, New York, in the late 19th century. A few years later, in 1903, the American Political Science Association was founded. Not much later, the first issue of the *American Political Science Review* was published, and is now more than a century old.

Gradually, as the 20th century unfolded, political science acquired many a focus. It included a historical study of political thought, an analytic and comparative study of distinct polities as well as a normative approach to politics. Notwithstanding such a broad scope, if one were to narrow down the object of study of the discipline of political science to a single theme, it would be the State.

If political science is largely focussed on the study of the state, sociology may be understood as the study of the society. The latter discipline was the consequence of the Enlightenment—an intellectual epoch in the history of Europe that awarded primacy to the critical application of human reason as opposed to blindly following the dictates of human and divine authorities.

Nature: Political sociology seeks to understand the process of interaction between government and society, decision-making authorities, and conflicting social

forces and interests. It is the study of interactions and linkages between politics and society, and between the political system and its social, economic and cultural environment. It is concerned with problems regarding the management of conflict, the articulation of interest and issues, and political integration and organization. The focal point in all these concerns is the independence of the interplay of socio-cultural, economic and political elements.

The perspective of political sociology is distinguished from that of institutionalism and behaviouralism. The institutionalists have been concerned primarily with institutional types of political organization, and their study has been characterized by legality and formality. The behaviouralists have focussed on the individual actor in the political arena; and their central concern has been the psychological trait, namely, motives, attitudes, perception and the role of individuals. The task of political sociologists is to study the political process as a continuum of interactions between society and its decision-makers, and between the decision-making institutions and social forces.

Political sociology provides a new vista in political analysis. Yet, it is closely linked with the issues which have been raised in political philosophy. Political philosophy has a rich and long tradition of political thought that began with the ancient Indian and Greek philosophers, and that has amply followed since the Italian historian Machiavelli, who made a bold departure from Greek idealism and medieval scholasticism. It was German sociologist Karl Marx, however, who strongly focussed on issues concerning the nature of political power and its relationship with social or economic organization. The Marxist theory of economic determinism of political power laid the foundation for the sociology of politics. Marx was, however, neither the first nor the only thinker to conceive of government as an organ of the dominant economic class. The Arabian scholar Ibn Khaldun and several European predecessors of Marx had argued that ideology and power were superstructures of economy.

The early origins of sociology are often traced to Auguste Comte's six-volume work *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830–42). This work offered an encyclopedic treatment of sciences. It expounded positivism and initiated the use of the term 'sociology' to signify a certain method of studying human societies. Comte proposed a historical law of social development, and according to this scheme, human societies pass from an initial stage of interpreting phenomena theologically to an intermediate stage of metaphysical interpretation before arriving at the final stage of positivist interpretation (see Figure 1.2). This is known as Comte's law of three stages. In the theological stage, which Comte divided into three sub-stages of animism, polytheism and monotheism, humans blindly followed what they believed was the law of god and supernatural powers. In the metaphysical stage, humans started questioning such concepts and also started offering impersonal, abstract explanations of various concepts. In the positivist stage, humans started relying on what was called the scientific method, based on observation, experiment and comparison. This idea of a historical development of human societies obeying laws of nature was adopted by Karl Marx.

NOTES

NOTES

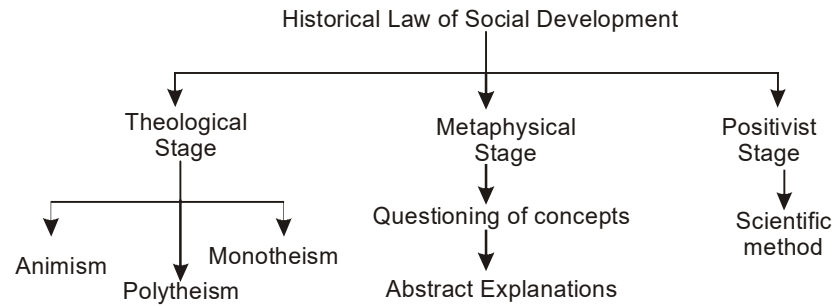


Fig. 1.2 Comte's Law of Three Stages

The work of Marx, which emphasized the role of capitalist mode of production, and Marxism in general were important stimuli for the development of sociology. The early Marxist contribution to sociology included the works of well-known philosopher Karl Kautsky on the French Revolution; German historian Franz Erdmann Mehring's analysis of art, literature and intellectual history; and German Marxist philosopher Carl Grunberg's early studies on agrarian history and labour movements. It is important to note that Marxist studies of society also developed independent of universities as they were intimately related to political movements and party organizations.

In the decades following the death of Marx, sociology was gaining ground as an academic discipline, and the critics of Marxism had an important role to play in its development. The most notable critics were Max Weber and Emile Durkheim. Weber's work on capitalism, the State, and methodological writings were largely directed against historical materialism. In the later works of Durkheim, an attempt was made to distinguish the social functions of religion from the explanation provided by historical materialism.

Given the inevitability of political role in society, thinkers from Aristotle to Tocqueville (French political thinker and historian) have rightly emphasized the point that instead of deploring the evils of human nature or social circumstances, it is more prudent and worthwhile to accept the 'given' and improve it for the good of man and society. It is wiser to face it and to manage it so as to achieve reconciliation and accommodation. Conflict, though apparently an evil, is a condition of freedom, as it prevents the concentration of power. This kind of political realism recognizes the necessity and utility of the political management of conflict through compromise and adjustment among various social forces and interests. Political sociology aims at understanding the sources and the social bases of conflict, as well as the process of management of conflict.

Scope: The broad aim of political sociology is to study and examine the interactions between social and political structures. The determination of the boundaries of what is social and political, however, raises some questions. The relevant question in delineating the scope of political sociology is of the kinds of groups which form part of the study of the discipline of political sociology. Some scholars believe that politics depends on some settled order created by the state. Hence, the state is political and is the subject matter of political sociology, and not the groups.

There is another school according to which politics is present in almost all social relations. Individuals and small groups try to enforce their preferences on their parent organizations, family, club or college, and, thus, indulge in the exercise of 'power'.

Sheldon S. Wolin, a political philosopher, takes quite a reasonable view of the word 'political', which according to him, means the following three things:

- (i) A form of activity that centres around the quest for competitive advantage between groups, individuals or societies
- (ii) A form of activity conditioned by the fact that it occurs within a situation of change and relative scarcity
- (iii) A form of activity in which the pursuit of advantage produces consequences of such a magnitude that they affect, in a significant way, the whole society or a substantial portion of it

Two groups of scholars have discussed the scope of political sociology in two different ways. According to Greer and Orleans, political sociology is concerned with the structure of the state; the nature and condition of legitimacy; nature of the monopoly of force and its use by the state; and the nature of the subunits and their relation with the state. They treat political sociology in terms of consensus and legitimacy, participation and representation, and the relationship between economic development and political change. By implication, whatever is related to the state is alone held as the subject matter of political sociology. Eminent sociologist Andreu Effrat takes a broader view of the picture and suggests that political sociology is concerned with the causes, patterns and consequences of the distribution and process of power and authority 'in all social systems'. Among social systems, he includes small groups and families, educational and religious groups, as well as governmental and political institutions.

Lipset and Reinhard Bendix (German American sociologist) suggest a more representative catalogue of topics when they describe the main areas of interest to political sociologists as voting behaviour, concentration of economic power and political decision-making; ideologies of political movement and interest groups; political parties, voluntary associations, the problems of oligarchy and psychological correlates of political behaviour; and the problem of bureaucracy. To sociologist thinkers Dowse and Hughes, one area of substantive concern for the political sociologist is the problem of social order and political obedience.

Sociologist Richard G. Braungart has pointed out that political sociologists are concerned with the dynamic association among and between (a) the social origin of politics, (b) the structure of political process, and (c) the effects of politics on the surrounding society and culture. Political sociology should include four areas that are as follows:

- (i) Political structures (social class/caste, elite, interest groups, bureaucracy, political parties and factions)
- (ii) Political life (electoral process, political communication, opinion formation, and so on)
- (iii) Political leadership (bases, types and operation of community power structure)

NOTES

- (iv) Political development (concept and indices of its measurement, its social bases and prerequisites, and its relationship to social change and modernization)

NOTES

To illustrate, it can be pointed out that on one hand, sociologists focus their attention on the sub-areas of the social system, and political scientists concentrate on the study of law, local, state and national governments, comparative government, political systems, public administration and international relations. On the other hand, political sociologists ought to be concerned with topics of social stratification and political power: socio-economic systems and political regimes, interest groups, political parties, bureaucracy, political socialization, electoral behaviour, social movements and political mobilization.

A significant concern of political sociology is the analysis of socio-political factors in economic development.

Importance: There are four main areas of research that are important in present-day political sociology. They are as follows:

- (i) The socio-political formation of the modern state.
- (ii) ‘Who rules?’ How social inequality between groups (class, race, gender, and so on) influences politics.
- (iii) How public personalities, social movements and trends outside of the formal institutions of political power affect politics.
- (iv) Power relationships within and between social groups (e.g., families, workplaces, bureaucracy, media, and so on). Contemporary theorists include Robert A. Dahl, Seymour Martin Lipset, Theda Skocpol, Luc Boltanski and Nicos Poulantzas.

This introductory purview of the disciplines of political science and sociology should allow us to now characterize the field of political sociology. The latter may be understood as the study of the varied and multiple relationships between the state and society. In this sense, political sociology evolved into an interdisciplinary field lying between the academic disciplines of political science and sociology.

Check Your Progress

9. Define ethnomethodology.
10. State the concept of social psychology.
11. What are the fields of concern of the institutionalists and behaviouralists?
12. State the broad aim of political sociology.

1.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Max Weber defined sociology as “the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects”.

2. Auguste Comte, for the first time, tried to demarcate the subject matter of sociology.
3. Being influenced by Natural Sciences (like Physics and Mathematics), the subject-matter of sociology is claimed to have borrowed heavily from scientific methodologies of research. It is, therefore, considered a positive science.
4. Being influenced by Natural Sciences (like Physics and Mathematics), the subject-matter of sociology is claimed to have borrowed heavily from scientific methodologies of research. It is, therefore, considered a positive science.
5. History considers the study of societies, cultures and civilizations as its subject matter.
6. Empiricism emphasizes experiences and facts that result from observation and experiment. Rationalism, on the other hand, stresses on reason and theories that result from logical inference. In sociological inquiry, both are significant.
7. The formal school defined sociology as a social science that has definite characteristics. This school was advocated by George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopord Von Wiese.
8. Comparative sociology basically deals with identical historical changes and tries to highlight the general features by comparing them. It also separates general features from industrial features. Social dynamics is concerned with the interrelations that exist among different social factors and institutions in a given society, for example in an ancient society.
9. Ethnomethodology is a recent sociological theory. It is the study of 'folk' or common sense methods employed by people to make sense of everyday activities by constructing and maintaining social reality. It means that common sense is so important that it helps in understanding the methods of constructing reality.
10. Social psychology involves the study of social and mental processes and how they act together to determine action. Essentially, it studies the interaction between psychological and sociological processes. It is the ground where sociology and psychology converge.
11. The institutionalists have been concerned primarily with institutional types of political organization, and their study has been characterized by legality and formality. The behaviouralists have focussed on the individual actor in the political arena; and their central concern has been the psychological trait, namely, motives, attitudes, perception and the role of individuals.
12. The broad aim of political sociology is to study and examine the interactions between social and political structures.

NOTES

1.6 SUMMARY

NOTES

- Since the beginning of human history, the observation, analysis and reflection of human-society have been topics of interest for thinkers and analysts.
- It was Auguste Comte (1798-1857) who, for the first time, introduced us to an independent, autonomous and systematic discipline for the study of societies and societal groups in which we live.
- Max Weber defined sociology as ‘the science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects’.
- According to Emile Durkheim, ‘sociology is the study of social facts through social institutions.
- On a broader platform, sociology is the study of human interactions, their conditions and consequences. It is a type of science that comprises investigative techniques which are objective and systematic.
- The historical background of the origin of Sociology (as an independent and autonomous discipline) may be traced back to the time between 1750 to 1850.
- In their attempt to establish fixed and demarcating characteristic features of sociology (as an autonomous discipline), the earliest sociologists like Auguste Comte, Kim and Max Weber, and others tried to establish their primary objective as the explanation and analysis of social phenomena and change leading to some conclusion on the basis of sociology’s relationship with other social sciences.
- In recent times, new aspects of sociology have led to historical and social anthropological studies. This is a result of the gradual development of third world countries and their respective societies.
- Sociology involves a systematic and objective study of human society. Sociologists study individuals’ social actions.
- Sociology comprises a variety of apprehensions and interests. It is aimed at providing classified forms of relationships within societies, institutions and associations.
- The formal school defined sociology as a social science that has definite characteristics. This school was advocated by George Simmel, Ferdinand Tonnies, Alfred Vierkandt and Leopord Von Wiese.
- The synthetic school defines sociology as a combination of social sciences. It stresses on widening the range of sociology.
- Sociology could be considered to be a method of objective inquiry that involves testing of beliefs against evidence. Sociology and other social sciences focus on certain aspects of human behaviour.
- Each and every social study has its own distinct problem of study, which provides uniqueness to the discipline.

- Some thinkers are even of the opinion that the central problem of sociology should be studied in the decreasing order of size and complexity ‘societies, institutions and social relationships’.
- Sociology is primarily considered as a unique field of study that considers society as the subject matter of its study.
- While sociology has its roots in philosophy and history, anthropology began as a study of physical measurements of humans.
- Social psychology involves the study of social and mental processes and how they act together to determine action. Essentially, it studies the interaction between psychological and sociological processes.
- Political sociology seeks to understand the process of interaction between government and society, decision-making authorities, and conflicting social forces and interests.
- The broad aim of political sociology is to study and examine the interactions between social and political structures.
- Although sociology may appear to be a rerun of common sense, there is a significant difference between the two. Common sense views are built upon people’s limited experiences and give an inaccurate view of society. Sociological views, on the other hand, are based on thorough qualitative or quantitative research and evidence.
- A social anthropologist uses qualitative methods to collect information, usually by immersing himself into the society that is being studied. Sociologists generally collect quantitative data based on which they make their conclusions.
- Psychologists look at the mental processes and personality characteristics that make people act in a certain manner. Sociologists tend to look at the social setting and structure, the processes that go on within them, and the influence they exert upon individuals.
- History is concerned with the past and looks at the changes that take place over time. A sociologist looks for patterns to build generalizations.
- Political science is largely focussed on the study of the state, while sociology may be understood as the study of society.

NOTES

1.7 KEY TERMS

- **Positive Science:** It presents models of aspects of reality which are not true or false but are evaluated in term of their scope of applicability, accuracy and reliability. It emphasizes the application of formal analysis to empirical science. For example, Physics is considered a positive Science.
- **Social Institutions:** It consists of a group of people who have come together for a common purpose. These institutions are a part of the social order of society and they govern behaviour and expectations of individuals.

NOTES

For example, family, school, hospital and church are considered social institutions.

- **Social Relationships:** In social science, a social-relation (or social-interaction) is any relationship between two or more individuals. Social relations are derived from individual agency and form the basis of social structure and the basic object for analysis by social scientists.
- **Social anthropology:** It is the immersive study of small, isolated societies.
- **Political sociology:** It is the study of the process of interaction between government and society, decision-making authorities, and conflicting social forces and interests.
- **Historical materialism:** It is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time first articulated by Karl Marx (1818– 1883) as the materialist conception of history.

1.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the different approaches in the study of sociology?
2. List the characteristic features of sociology.
3. List the main characteristics of sociology as a branch of knowledge.
4. Name the two schools of thought that had different perspectives with respect to the scope and theme of sociology.
5. Write a short note on the criticism of the formal school.
6. Outline the major differences between sociology and common sense.
7. Briefly describe Comte's law of three stages.
8. What are the four areas of political sociology?
9. Outline the four main areas of research in political sociology.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Give an ideal definition of sociology. What is the nature and scope of sociology as an intellectual discipline?
2. What are the different approaches to study sociology? Which one would you prefer over others and why?
3. Give a detailed account of the development of sociology as a discipline.
4. What are the central problems of sociology? Critically evaluate.
5. 'Sociology was defined differently by the two schools of thought, pertaining to its range and theme'. Explain in detail.
6. What is social anthropology? What can sociology learn from psychology?

7. What is political sociology? Explain the concept of political sociology in terms of its nature, scope and importance.

1.9 FURTHER READING

NOTES

- Ryan, Michael. 2018. *Core Concepts in Sociology*. London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Giddens Anthony, and Phillip Sutton. 2017. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (2nd Edition). London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Braham, Peter. 2013. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Stolley Kathy. 2005. *The Basics of Sociology*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Abel, Theodore. 1980. *The Foundations of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.
- Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. I and II. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Boguardus, Emory S. 1969. *The Development of Social Theory*. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffa and Simons.
- Ritzer, George. 1988. *Sociological Theory*, Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.



UNIT 2 SOCIETY, SOCIAL GROUPS AND COMMUNITY

NOTES

Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Concept of Society
- 2.3 Social Groups
 - 2.3.1 Types of Social Groups
 - 2.3.2 Peer Groups in Modern Society
- 2.4 Community
- 2.5 Institutions
- 2.6 Association
- 2.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 2.8 Summary
- 2.9 Key Terms
- 2.10 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 2.11 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have already studied that the study of human society or societies is known as sociology. Society, as a singular term, appears general and unlimited. The plural term, societies, sounds more like a set of container units distinct from each other, such that you can take them one by one to inspect their contents. Societies can undergo total social transformation as shown in the history of revolutions. In evolutionary terms, the human organism has not just adapted but has evolved adaptability. It provides for versatility and a collective freedom to draw on a vast repertoire of possible social behaviour in different conditions. The range of social relations which human behaviour can support extends from individual freedom of choice to the arbitrary rule of a few over others. Hence, the variations in human society are vast even while the biology remains stable.

A major area of study of sociology includes the social groups. A social group comprises of two or more people who share similar characteristics and, hence, a sense of identity. We all typically belong to a social group such as workplace, sports team, clubs, and so forth. There are basically two types of social groups namely, primary and secondary groups. Also, one should consider the fact that peer groups influence an individual by providing emotional support and providing opportunities to develop friendship.

In this unit, you will study about the concept of society, the types of social groups and the influence of peer groups in modern society. The elements and conceptions of community, and association have also been discussed in this unit.

NOTES

2.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Analyse the concept of society
- Describe the forms of social institutions and social structures
- Differentiate between communities and associations
- Interpret the meaning of social groups
- Discuss the types of social groups
- Analyse the position of peer groups in modern society

2.2 CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

The term 'society' is not easy to define. In general, it refers to people and their community. Man is a social animal who relies on others around him for his basic needs. People form society. The interaction between people brings them closer to each other and makes them mutually dependent. Society can, thus, be defined as a formal association of people having the same interests. British sociologist Morris Ginsberg has defined society, thus: 'A society is a collection of individuals united by certain relations or mode of behaviours which mark them off from others who do not enter into these relations or who differ from them in behaviour.' Well-known sociologist R. M. MacIver has defined society as 'Society is a web of social relationships'.

The origin or emergence of society may be viewed as one of the great steps in evolution. However, this step was taken only by a few species. Like other steps, it represents a new synthesis of old materials, possessing unique qualities that are not found in old materials which are considered separately. It is, thus, a true example of what is known as an emergent evolution. To realize that society is a true emergent, one needs to trace its independent origin in countless animal types. One merely needs to grasp the difference between it and the organisms which it is composed of. Several decades ago, it was normal to compare society with an organism. The idea was to demonstrate that a social system, after all, is a system. The analogy was helpful but never perfect. The cells of an organism are rigidly fixed in their mutual relations, completely subordinated to the organism and too specialized to be called members of the society. They are not spatially detached and independently mobile. So the organism is not, strictly speaking, a society of cells. The organism possesses a consciousness, which no society possesses.

Like an organism, a society is a system of relations between organisms themselves rather than between cells. Like the organism, a society has a determined structure and the parts of this structure, when in operation, contribute to the existence of the whole. This gives it continuity, which is apart from that of the constituent individuals. It is this possession of continuity and structure of its own that makes it impossible to reduce the study of society merely to a study of its individual members. It is like a house which, though composed of bricks, nails,

mortar and pieces of lumber, cannot be understood purely in terms of these materials, as it has a form and functions as a complete house.

A society, or a human society, is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social group, sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Human societies are characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals who share a distinctive institutions and culture. A given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent members. In social sciences, a society invariably entails stratification and hierarchy. A society helps its members benefit in ways not possible had the members existed individually. It consists of like-minded people governed by their own values and norms. Within a society one almost always finds smaller cultures or sub societies with their own idiosyncratic set of rules.

Broadly, a society may be described as a social, economic and industrial infrastructure made up with varied kinds of people. A society may constitute of different ethnic groups, a nation state or a broader cultural group.

Definitions

Society has been differently defined by different sociologists. Here are a few definitions:

The noted sociologists MacIver and Page, (1950) defined ‘society as a web of relations, a complex system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties’.

The British sociologist Morris Ginsberg defines society as a collection of individuals united by certain relations or mode of behaviour which mark them off from others who do not enter into these relations or who differ from them in behaviour.

According to the American sociologist Talcott Parsons, society is a total complex of human relationships in so far as they grow out of the action in terms of means-end relationship intrinsic or symbolic.

The American philosopher George Herbert Mead conceived society as an exchange of gestures which involves the use of symbols. While Cole saw society as the complex of organized associations and institutions with a community.

The American sociologist Gerhard Lenski defined society as a form of organization involving:

1. Relatively sustained ties of interaction among its members.
2. Relatively high degree of interdependence among its members.
3. A high degree of autonomy.

The American anthropologist A.L. Kroeber in his work *Anthropology* (1948) states, ‘the Latin word socius denotes a companion or ally, and in their specific sense, the words “society” and “social” refer to associations of individuals to group relations. When we speak of social structure, or the organization of society, it is clear what is meant: the way a mass of people is constituted into families, clans,

NOTES

NOTES

tribes, states, classes, sets, clubs, communities, and the like. A society is a group of interrelated individuals.'

Michael Howard and Patrick McKim in *Contemporary Cultural Anthropology* (1983) state, 'a society is a collection of people who are linked to one another, either directly or indirectly, through social interaction...The term society can be applied to the total human community, encompassing all of humanity. Alternatively, we may speak of American or Canadian society, or we may restrict ourselves to even smaller geographical or social groupings.'

Sir Raymond Firth, the ethnologist from New Zealand, in *Elements of Social Organization* (1951) stated, 'For convenience of study, aggregates of individuals in their relational aspects are arbitrarily isolated as social units. Where these show a number of common features in distinction from other such units, they are conveniently termed societies.'

Based on all these definition, we can say that a society is a group of people with common territory, interaction, and culture.

Elements of Society

Based on the definitions above, let us discuss some of the elements of society.

1. A society is a system of social relationships

According to Maclver, a society is 'a web of social relationships'. These social relationships could be within the family and outside the family. For example, the relationship between a mother and her child, or between a teacher and her student.

2. Likeness

Another elements of society is likeness. According to Maclver, society means likeness. It is this likeness or similarity which creates understanding between individuals. This understanding lies at the root of all social relationships.

3. Difference

A society also means difference. If everyone was alike, social relationships would be extremely limited. Individuals differ from one another in their attitude ability, talent; personality, and so on. People pursue different activities because of these differences.

4. Inter-dependence

Another vital element of society is interdependence. Without people depending on one another for their needs, a society would collapse.

5. Cooperation and Conflict

Both cooperation and conflict exist in society. They are also a society's essential elements. A society is based on cooperation. If individuals do not cooperate with each other, they cannot live a happy life. According to the author Pascual Gisbert, 'cooperation is the most elementary process of social life without which society is impossible'.

Along with co-operation, there is conflict in society. Conflicts cause societies to evolve, to change. MacIver states, 'Society is co-operation crossed by conflict'.

6. Culture

All societies have their own unique culture. Culture encompasses attitudes, moral values, beliefs, ideas, ideologies, and so on. Members of a society share a common culture.

7. Abstractness

Society is an organization marked by division of labour of some kind or other. It consists of social relations, customs, laws and mores etc. These social relations are abstract and intangible. Thus, we can say that abstractness is an essential element of society.

Check Your Progress

1. Define society.
2. How is likeness an essential element of society?

NOTES

2.3 SOCIAL GROUPS

Social interaction is the most important aspect of social life. When people live in a community they interact with each other, they communicate with each other. Such interaction is a continuous process. Social interaction is also essential for the survival of any community and culture.

One can study social interaction at two levels, micro and macro. Micro is limited to a person-to-person level. Micro interaction at a larger scale is within a community, state, nation and international level.

One can also argue that social interaction is the basic ingredient of social relationships. An aggregate of individuals becomes a community and communities form a society. Social interaction is the base of social relations. It also establishes cultural and physical relations.

According to Park and Burgess, social interaction has two essential aspects:

- (i) Social contact
- (ii) Communication

Social contact can be established through a medium of conversation, letters, messages, mobile phone/telephone and other modes of communication, even between people who are separated by thousands of miles. Social contact is also strengthened by physical contact.

The famous sociologist H.M. Johnson had remarked, 'Sociology is the science that deals with social groups.' This shows the importance of social groups in sociology.

When two or more people having common outlooks and identities, interact, they tend to form what is called a social group. It is human nature to seek the company of other human beings to live forming groups and seldom do we find someone living all alone in solidarity. Every human begins life as a member of a

NOTES

group called family, in which he grows and eventually passes away as part of the group. In the course of his lifetime, the individual forms associations to meet and attain shared aspirations of the group (family), which in turn play a key role in shaping one's personality throughout one's life.

Two words, 'social' and 'group' make up the term social group, by which, we essentially mean a collection or group of men and women or a mix of both. But, the term social refers to social relationships or shared behaviours. Likewise, in the words of E.S. Bogardus, well-known figure in the history of American sociology, the term, 'Group refers to a number of units of anything in close proximity with one another'. In case of human beings as Maclver and Page say, a group is 'Any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationships with one another'. In the same tone, a social group is an assemblage of people who interact and participate to carry out similar activities and have a realization of joint interaction. Some degree of reciprocity and mutual awareness among the individuals exists in this case.

Being organized is one of the key characteristics of a social group. The members of a social group have a definite relationship with each other and as such share reciprocal and a recognized pattern of interactions with each other. Sociologically, a group is a collection of individuals who have come together into a socially accepted relationship and establish and consolidate themselves so as to fulfil mutually shared aims.

In order to completely understand the term 'social group', a distinction must be made with similar sounding terms such as, 'Social Aggregates', 'Social Category' and 'Potential Group' or 'Quasi Group'.

Simply put, a social aggregate is a group of individuals who are in a specific place at a specific time but share no certain relationship with one another. For example; the passengers in a train or any form of public transportation. However, a social category refers to a collection of people who have some unique common characteristics. For example; members of a certain caste, sex, age and occupational groups constitute a social category.

A potential or quasi group involves a group of individuals who have some common characteristics, but, do not possess any recognizable structure. However, a **potential** or **quasi group** becomes a social group if/when it becomes organized. Firstly, a social group has an organisational aspect. This essentially means that it has rules, regulations, rivals and structure. Secondly, a social group has a psychological aspect. This means that there exists an awareness or consciousness among the members. The members of a social group are linked together in a system of varied social relationships with one another and they interact and co-operate with one other as per norms of the group. Furthermore, a social group is also very dynamic in nature.

Let us study some of the prominent definitions of a social group—as defined by renowned sociologists.

- As per Ogburn and Nimkoff: 'Whenever two or more individuals come together and influence one another, they may be said to constitute a social group'.

- As per A.W. Green, ‘A group is an aggregate of individuals which persists in time, which has one or more interests and activities in common which is organized.’
- As per Horton and Hunt, ‘Groups are aggregates or categories of people who have a consciousness of membership and of interaction.’
- As per Maclver and Page, a social group is ‘Any collection of human beings who are brought into human relationships with one another’.
- As per Williams, ‘A social group is a given aggregate people playing inter-related roles and recognized by themselves or others as a unit of interaction.’
- As per E.S. Bogardus, ‘A social group may be thought of as a number of persons two or more, who have some common objects of attention who are stimulating to each other, who have common loyalty and participate in similar activities.’

NOTES

The important characteristics of a social group are as follows:

- **Social groups have a certain given number of individuals:** A social group comprises of a given number of persons. It is not possible to form a social group without a given number of persons. A minimum of two individuals constitute a group. This number may vary depending on how large the group may be. These individuals are considered to be a unit of the group as they belong to the group as group members.
- **Reciprocal relations within social groups:** All group members have a reciprocal relationship with one another and this relationship is the very foundation or basis of a social group without which a social group will cease to exist. It is also important that group members must interact with one another.
- **Social groups have common goals:** Having common goals is another vital feature of a social group. The group members have common set of aims, objectives and principles and it is for the accomplishment of these common goals that social groups are formed. It is important to note here that an individual’s interests are always superseded by the group’s interests.
- **Social groups provide sense of solidarity and unity:** A sense of unity and a bond of unanimity, common goals amongst members of a group always characterize a social group. Moreover, mutual relationships further reinforce this bond of solidarity which generates a feeling of loyalty and consideration amid fellow members of group.
- **Social groups have a strong sense of a ‘we-feeling’:** ‘We-feeling’ is strongly imbibed amongst the members of a social group. It is actually the ‘we-feeling’ which cultivates sense of cooperation and a feeling togetherness

NOTES

between its members. Owing to we-feeling members feels associated with other group members and also consider other people who are not its member as an outsider.

- **Social groups have group norms:** Every social group has clearly defined its own set of guiding principles which need to be adhered to, by its members. Furthermore, these set of standards and rules help group in controlling its members. These rules might be in verbal or non-verbal forms but violation of rules results in punishment. The group norms also aid to nurture sense of unity and integrity among the members of social group.
- **Social group members have similar behaviour:** Members of a social group always exhibit similar behaviour since the interests, ideals and values of a group are common its members behave similarly. Similar behaviour aids in achieving of common goals.
- **Social group members have awareness:** The members of a social group are well aware of their membership which distinguishes them from other non-members. This is possibly due to 'the consciousness of kind' as opined by Giddings.

2.3.1 Types of Social Groups

Social groups may broadly be classified into two, namely, primary groups and secondary groups.

Small social groups whose members share personal and long-lasting or enduring relationships are called primary groups. The members of such groups share a relationship with each other that is primarily personal, intimate, informal and total in nature. These are the commonest kind of groups that human beings come across. For example, family, friends and play group. Primary groups provide a sense of security to its members. Primary group members are often emotionally attached and loyal in their relationships as that is the sole end for members of a primary group.

Quite the opposite of primary groups, a secondary group is one that is constituted by a large number of generally unrelated individuals who aggregate solely to pursue a specific activity or common interest. Such relationships involve little personal knowledge and weak emotional ties with one another. Impersonal, formal, utilitarian and segmental are some adjectives that typically characterize a secondary group. However, these groups are often created to attain certain goals and interactions are pleasant, although impersonal in nature. For example: co-workers at ones workplace or members of a political party.

In-Groups and Out-Groups

An in-group is that type of group to which members have a feeling of belongingness and loyalty for the group. On the other hand, an out-group is such a group whose members neither have a feeling of belonging nor feel loyalty for the group.

People are often judged to be members of a group based on factors which include caste, religion, race, nationality, job category, and level of education. When we meet a person for the first time, we often scrutinize them to see whether they

are 'one of us.' One person's observation of another to be a member of the same group can foster feelings of loyalty or shared identity. People, who meet by chance and who happen to share something in common, for example, their alma mater or hometown, often feel an immediate kinship.

Primary Group

A primary group, comprising of a small number of directly communicating individuals who interact 'face-to-face' for companionship and to help each other mutually, maybe said to be at the core of all social organizations. Members of such groups may be said to be living in the presence and thoughts of other members of the group.

Charles H. Cooley was the first sociologist to bring our attention to primary groups, adds further to what has been said above. He states that the primary groups are greatly responsible for shaping the personality, nature and ideals of an individual.

Psychologically speaking, the result of a close relationship is a certain amalgamation of personalities in a shared unit; so that the existence of the self is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the easiest way of describing the wholeness is by saying that it is a 'we'; it includes the sort of compassion and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural manifestation. The unity in a primary group is distinguished in that it is primarily competitive, admittance of self-proclamation and various appropriative desires. These desires or passions are mixed by sympathy, and come, or tend to come, under the discipline of the common spirit. The individual of a primary group will have ambition, but the main object this ambition will be to bear allegiance to common standards of service and fair play within the group. For example, in a school's cricket team—a boy may dispute with his teammates for a place in the team, but he will keep aside such disputes when the glory of his class or school is in question.

The most significant areas of the close association and co-operation are undoubtedly the play group of kids, the family and group of neighbourhood elders such as, the laughter club, amongst many others. These are universal for all times and for all development stages and forms the basis of what is common in human nature and in human ideals.

Colley, while defining primary groups, lays emphasis on 'face-to-face association' and on the association of 'consideration and shared identification,' i.e., the feeling of togetherness in form of 'we'. Cooley differentiates the two groups on basis of the ownership of the 'we' feeling and the value of 'sympathy and shared recognition'. However, it is also believed that all groups tend to possess varying degree of this 'we feeling' so his distinction might not be very relevant.

Additionally, this is evident that without existence of 'we' feeling no group can maintain its cohesiveness. Therefore, one cannot differentiate between secondary and primary groups on the basis of 'we' feeling. Also, it is important to

NOTES

NOTES

note that one cannot limit 'we-feeling' to 'face-to-face' relationships because there are many relationships, which do not involve face-to-face interaction but still remains pleasant and intimate, and on the contrary there are relationships which involves 'face-to-face' interaction but are still formal and neutral.

Thus, a closer analysis of Cooley's definition reveals certain ambiguities; yet, his differentiation of groups into primary and secondary ones is nonetheless, an important one.

Characteristics of a Primary Group

Feelings of intimacy, co-operation and close relationships are the main characteristics of a primary group. These are found aplenty in some concrete groups than many others.

Intimacy of relationship depends upon the following factors:

- **Physical proximity:** It is necessary for people's relationships to be close, it is imperative that their contacts should also be close. Being able to see and talk with one another makes exchanging ideas and opinions easy. It makes possible the 'conversation of gestures'.

Being physically close is not a requirement for the existence of a primary group. Being physically close only provides a congenial environment for fostering the growth of a primary group. The culture of the group defines whether or not physical proximity will foster the development of intimate relations within the group.

Development of intimacy owing to physical proximity may be hindered by factors like sex, language, occupation, status and even age. Hence, intimate relations may not flourish among people living at close quarters. It may, however, flourish even at great distances owing to regular communication through various channels.

- **Small size:** Only a small group can ensure intimate and personal relationships as there is always a point beyond which further expansion of membership would mean 'dispersion instead of concentration, dilution instead of reinforcement of the common interest.' As a group becomes larger it becomes increasingly difficult to be in sensory contact with many people at the same time as each person begins to count more as a sheer cipher or a unit, rather than as a unique personality.
- **Stability:** The primary group should be stable in order to promote intimacy of relationship.
- **Similarity of background:** It is imperative that members of a primary group should not only be close and near to each other, but also, be of approximately equally experience and intelligence. According to MacIver, 'There is a level on which every group must dwell, and the person who is too far above or below it, disturbs the process of group participation.' Every member must have a reciprocal relationship and must have something to give as well as to take. An example of this could be a group discussion

scenario, where each member presents his/her views on the given subject and takes the views of others.

- **Limited self-interest:** The group's common interest comes first over and above personal interests of individual members who undermine them in the spirit of togetherness. The real nature of primary group will not be established if members meet only to satisfy their personal ends. Rather they come together to address and do away with common grievances. This commonality of interest fosters mental peace, contentment and amity among members.
- **Intensity of shared interests:** Common or shared interests lies at the crux of a primary group. This infuses every member with the drive to share a devotion to realize the group's ends. This synergy, thus, created by the interest of a larger number of people is far greater than that of members in seclusion. It may further be added that a member, by himself, should not be construed as just a legal entity or an economic cipher or for that matter a technological cog, in fact, he is all these rolled up in one.

Camaraderie helps a person tide over hardships, as group members empathize with one another in unison. Such situations would otherwise be insufferable to deal with all alone.

A primary group not only endures the common interest of the group but also sustains the altruistic nature of the group itself. The common interest of group members is not a means to an end; rather it is intrinsically enjoyable as it is informal and personal, spontaneous, emotional, inclusive and non-transferable.

Face-to-face characteristic of a primary group does not mean that it exerts a compelling influence over group members. For example, the members of a family who may not necessarily influence one another's habits and may develop different and even divergent viewpoints and habits.

A family may be termed as a primary group because it exerts influence in the early life of a child i.e., it influenced the child before other groups could do so.

In primary group setting, members do similar things together and may often have similar desires and attitudes as they are striving for similar things. In other words, close identification results in direct co-operation. Group members look at the world through the same eyes in which each member views the welfare of the other as one of his ends. Thus, members achieve their common interest through direct and face-to-face co-operation with each other.

Group members of a primary group do not act independently; rather, they do so interdependently by participating in the same process to achieve common objectives. Although there may be segregation and distinction of labour in a primary group, yet it must act together. A good example may be a football team, in which there are center-forwards, midfielders, strikers and goal keepers—they all play together with the common objective of winning the match.

NOTES

NOTES

Similarly, for example, research associates working on a subject may begin working independently, however, they do come together when group activities commence. In this light it may be added that the members of a primary group are involved not just in the group but also in the process of creation of the group. The need for a society is satiated only in a face-to-face scenario.

Secondary Groups

Secondary groups are quite contrary to primary groups. The functions and activities of a secondary group are rather utilitarian and time and task oriented as it is structured around secondary relationships only. These interactions are relatively more formal, segmental, detached and functional than that of interactions in primary group.

In a secondary kind of group, the members of the group are not concerned with the other individual as a person per se, but as a representative who is taking on a part to do. For example from our daily life one can see secondary groups in the form of formal organizations and in the form of larger active associations such as clubs, political parties, labour unions, corporations, international cartels, clubs, and people travelling by means of public transport or in a modern concept of car-poolers.

It may be said that in the case of a secondary group one's segmental (partial) personality, and not one's total personality, is involved. These groups entirely lack intimacy of association as we generally find in primary groups. Sociologists Ogburn and Nimkoff (1950) define secondary groups as: 'The groups which provide experience lacking in intimacy are called secondary groups.' Kimball Young (1942) has termed these groups as 'special interest groups' as they are formed to fulfil certain specific end or ends.

Following are the main functions of secondary groups:

- Secondary groups help in fulfilling various kinds of collective human needs.
- Secondary groups aid in bringing about social responsiveness and social change.
- Secondary groups aid in eradicating traditionalism and misconception through means of education and balanced thinking.
- Secondary groups increase social mobility.
- Secondary groups help in satiating various special interests such as sports, dance, music and touring.

The main characteristics of secondary groups are as follows:

- **Large size:** Secondary groups are usually large in size and constitute a large number of members who may be spread the world over. Example could be the ISCKON society or The Art of Living or OSHO, whose members are spread globally. Due to of this large size indirect relations are found among the members.

- **Defined aims:** Secondary groups are formed to fulfil certain defined aims. One key parameter of judging the success of a secondary group is the extent by which it fulfilled its aims. For example, a school or a college opened to provide education. Or an IIT/Medical coaching institute whose students successfully cleared various exams.
- **Voluntary membership:** The memberships to secondary group are voluntary. One has the free will to become a member of a secondary group. No one can compel an individual to be a member of a secondary group. Example, it is not at all necessary that one should be a member of the Indian National Congress (INC) or any political party for that matter.
- **Formal, indirect and impersonal relation:** Group members of a secondary group share a formal, impersonal and an indirect relationship with one another where they do not develop personal bonds among themselves as such relations are not face-to-face and are rather casual. Interaction of members is in accordance with formal rules and regulations as individuals in large numbers cannot establish direct relations with one another. A member is not directly concerned with the other member's life as contact and relation are primarily indirect.
- **Active and inactive members:** Secondary group consists of both active as well as sedentary members owing to the lack of close and personal associations amid other members of a group. This can be better explained with an example of an online community where some members may actively participate in the interactions while some may prefer to remain inactive participants
- **Formal rules:** Formal and written rules which regulate and organize characterize a secondary group. These rules are meant to exercise control over members. A secondary group ensures a formal authority set-up and a well-defined division of labour. Those not obeying these rules and regulations lose their membership.
- **Status of an individual depends on their role:** In a secondary group, a member's status and position depends on the roles that they play in the group. One's birth or personal qualities have no bearing on one's status in a secondary group.
- **Individuality in person:** Secondary groups are also called 'special interest groups' because people became member in order to fulfil their personal interests. Hence, they always give stress on the fulfillment of their self-interests. As a result, the individuality of a person is reflected in the group. Furthermore, upon fulfilment of one's interests members may no longer be interested in the group.
- **Self-dependence among members:** Since secondary groups are large in size the members share an indirect and impersonal relationship with one another. Interestingly, members also selfishly safeguard and fulfil their own interests.

NOTES

NOTES

- **Dissimilar ends:** Secondary group members have different and diverse ends and people join such groups only to fulfil their diverse ends.
- **Relationship is a means to an end:** Secondary relations are a means to an end and not an end unto itself. One's personal interests are above group interests and people become friends for specific purposes only.
- **Formal social control:** A secondary group establishes control over its members through formal ways or implements such as the judiciary, the executive and so forth. Formal means of social control play a significant role in secondary groups.
- **Division of labour:** In secondary groups, each member has his share of duties, tasks and accountabilities and he is expected to accomplish the functions assigned to him.

Classification of Secondary Groups on the basis of culture:

I. Culturally organized groups

- (i) Status groups – for e.g., castes, social classes and so forth.
- (ii) Nationality groups – for e.g., states, nations and so on.
- (iii) Residence groups – for e.g., communities, cities and regional groups.
- (iv) Attention, interest and purpose groups – for e.g., religious bodies, publics, trade unions, institutional groups and corporations.

II. Groups not fundamentally organized by culture:

- (i) Biological groups – for e.g., age, sexes and racial groups.
- (ii) Casual groups – for e.g., gatherings, crowd, audiences and mobs.

Importance of secondary groups

Secondary groups play a pivotal role in the functioning of societies in an effective manner as they facilitate people who are not intimately familiar to accomplish various tasks to move ahead in their respective job roles, to achieve specific goals.

School institutions, universities, hospitals, labour unions, political parties are formed by quite a few secondary groups.

The impersonality and decorum of the secondary group enables its members to focus on skills and interests rather than on their personalities. Most job roles have visibly defined set of roles and goal expectations. Hence, the personal traits of the individuals satisfying the role and the needs of the people for emotional engagement with them takes a back seat.

Due to an irrelevant and narrow focus on issues and small emotional attachment invoked by secondary groups, they occupy a rather insignificant position in an individual's life. However, secondary groups are critical in efficiently running a society.

Differences between Primary and Secondary Group

Both primary and secondary groups can be distinguished from each other in the following ways:

- **Difference in meaning:** Face-to-face interactions and co-operation are the main elements of a primary group and lie at the core of all social organizations. An individual's social nature and ideals are shaped by primary groups. On the other hand, secondary groups are large-scale groups where relationships are comparatively casual, impersonal and competitive. Such groups are consciously formed to fulfill common goals or objectives.
- **Difference in structure:** Primary groups are very simple and are based on an informal structure. All group members participate in the same processes and are governed by informal rules and regulations. Secondary groups on the other hand, have very formal structures and are governed by a set of formal rules and regulations.
- **Difference in size:** Smallness of size and number characterize a primary group, whereas, largeness of size and global spread of members characterize a secondary group.
- **Difference in co-operation:** There exists direct co-operation among members of a primary group as they sit, play and discuss together and also due to face-to-face contact and personal relationships. The members of a secondary group co-operate only indirectly with each other since relations among the members is indirect.
- **Difference in stability:** Primary groups are pretty stable or durable. However, secondary groups may be temporary or permanent.
- **Difference in relationships:** Primary group members have a direct, intimate and personal relationship with one another. These relations are all inclusive as such groups are relationship directed. On the flip side, secondary groups are formal as there is an indirect and an impersonal relationship among the members.
- **Difference in goal:** In a primary group, members share the same or common set of objectives and goals. The goal of a particular group member transcends into goal of the entire group. While, members share different set of goals in a secondary group and each member has to play his/her part to achieve their respective goals. Fulfilling their respective agendas motivate an individual to be part of a secondary group.
- **Difference in the method of social control:** Customs and folkways are some of the means of exerting control over primary group members. However, the degree of social control is restricted in case of secondary groups and is controlled by state mechanisms such as police, jail, court and law.
- **Difference in effect on personality:** Primary groups have a greater influence on the development of its members' personalities. However, secondary groups have little bearing on the development of a member's

NOTES

NOTES

personality. The secondary group may only be concerned with a particular aspect of an individual's personality.

- **Differences in physical closeness:** Members of primary groups live in close physical proximity to each other and face-to-face relations are a norm, whereas, members of a secondary group may live far and wide and may rarely communicate face-to-face.
- **Relationship:** Primary group members exhibit camaraderie, contact face-to-face and share a direct, intimate and personal relationship with one another. As such, the primary group is concerned more with the total personality of an individual as the relations are particularly inclusive. On the other hand, a secondary group is regulated by official rules which imply a substitution of impersonal for otherwise personal relationships. The relations, thus, become secondary and formal. A secondary group does not exercise any primary influence over its members as members do not live in any physical or emotional proximity to one another. Secondary group members may do their jobs, follow orders, pay their dues and/or contribute to the group interest, and yet may never see each other.

In addition to the classification of groups as expressed above, there are some sociologists who are of the opinion that classification of groups as primary and secondary is not very convincing. No group, they stress, can be classified as wholly exhibiting primary characteristics or wholly exhibiting secondary characteristics. They add further, that, even a large scale group cannot work without a certain identification of its members with the organization as a whole. In the place of classifying groups into primary and secondary, it is more convenient to classify contacts.

Furthermore, the main distinction between primary and secondary groups is not one of size or structure, but of relationship among members. For example, if a country may be called a secondary group, it is, thus, called since its members (citizen) do not have a close, personal and warm relationship with one another.

Reference Groups

There is yet another important type of social group in sociology. Reference group refers to that social group to which the members may or may not belong but certain aspire to become a part of. The individual takes this group, as the name suggest, to basically refer to and correct or improve his/her own actions and behaviour pattern. These groups act like a yardstick with which to measure their own status and activities in the society. For example, suppose that Neha is a 14 year old who transfers to a new school. She may pay attention to what her schoolmates wear, how they speak, where they hang out, and how they behave. Neha uses this information in order to modify her speech, determine what she wears to school, how she does her hair, which shows to watch on television, etc. Her schoolmates would become her reference group.

Some examples include: our co-worker, celebrities, neighbourhood, teachers, etc. It was Herbert Hyman, who coined the term reference group for the

first time in *Archives of Psychology* (1942). The following points clarify the concept of reference groups in a better fashion:

- It is not necessary that an individual aspires or refers to only one reference group at a time.
- The reference groups might change over the period of a lifetime in tune with the changes in the lives of the individuals themselves.
- There are many factors apart from money and social status which affects the choice of reference group for the individual. This might include moral dictates, etc.
- Reference groups may be positive (ones whose acceptance is sought) or negative (one which is avoided).
- Reference groups have three functions: enforcing behaviour pattern or belief, yardstick for comparison and act as goal posts for what is to be achieved.

Reference groups are basically of two types: formal reference groups and informal reference groups. An example of a formal reference group would be a trade union, or a political organization. Informal reference groups include friends, family, peer groups and so on.

2.3.2 Peer Groups in Modern Society

Every society is accosted with the need for making a responsible member out of every child that is born into it. In order that a child's behaviour may be relied upon, one must learn the expectations of the society one lives in. The child must acquire the society's norms and in turn the society must socialize each individual such that their behaviour will be significant in terms of the adhering to group norms. In the process of such socialization, the individual member learns the mutual responses of its society.

Socialization is a way of cultural learning in which a new member (child) gains requisite skills and knowledge to belong to a particular society. Fundamentally, the process of socialization is similar in all societies despite their formal arrangements. Socialization shapes and builds personalities throughout one's life.

So all societies creates a set of guidelines within which socialization of a child can take place. The culture of the society is conveyed through communication which happens to be the essence of the process of culture transmission and sensitization. There are a number of 'agencies' which help a child to socialize. These include the following:

- Family
- School
- Peer group
- Occupation
- Religion
- State
- Mass media

NOTES

NOTES

These agencies have been discussed in Unit 5 of this block. In this section, we will discuss in detail about peer groups.

In conclusion, it may be said that environmental stimuli very often determines the development of an individual's personality. A congenial environment will ensure one's mental and physical capacities be developed as desired. Nonetheless, the family still plays the most important role in one's socialization process. The child learns so much from the family followed by his peers and school which wield influence on one's socialization. After completing his basic education, an individual enters the next phase of life, the occupational phase. Marriage brings a person into the phase of societal responsibility, which is one of aims of socialization. Thus, it may be said that socialization of an individual commences at birth and continues continually and ceases with an individual's death.

Peer Groups: Aspects and Influences

A peer group is a type of social group constituted by people who are equal in such aspects as age, education or social class. These individuals generally share a similar interest, social status and background. They can also be very different, with people from varied social and economic backgrounds, culture and race. Peer relationships in general provide a unique background for social and emotional development of a person while enhancing the persons' reasoning abilities, cooperating with people and concern for others. Modern research resonate such sentiments, depicting social and emotional gains as indeed being provided by peer interaction.

During an individual's adolescent years, his peer groups undergo intense changes as adolescents tend to spend more time away from their primary group, i.e., family and home, away from supervision of governing adults. During this time, adolescents develop new interest areas and are keen to explore what the future hold for them. The way they had been communicating prior to adolescence, changes, as they grow up and prefer to talk to their parents about things like their school, friends and career choices, while they enjoy talking and discussing about things such as sex and other interpersonal relationships with their friends or their peer group. Children seek acceptance in the peer groups that they join or aspire to join, even if such groups may be involved in undesirable activities. It is less likely for a child to get accepted in a peer group if his temperament does not match with that of the group.

Some common examples of peer groups may include: Sports teams, school organizations and clubs, classmates, neighbours who are close in age. At any given time, an individual may belong to several peer groups at the same time.

Peer groups provide several things for a teen, including:

- Opportunities to develop friendships
- Support for figuring out abilities and interests
- A way to learn how to deal with problems
- The chance to learn how to interact with others
- Independence from adults
- Emotional support

The adolescent peer groups may be divided into:

- Cliques
- Crowds

(i) **Clique:** It may be defined as a small group of two-twelve individuals formed by friendship or by common interest, among people of the same sex, age, race and class. These groups often serve the purpose of social control and agents of socialization for its members who are often quite similar in terms of their risk behaviour and academic backgrounds. For these individuals, being members of the clique can be advantageous as members feel a sense of security, belongingness along with a sense of well-being and also some levels of autonomy to function and behave.

Generally, a young adolescent would go to a clique to seek support or answers to his/her questions. For example, they may want answers to such simple questions as what should he/she say or do during particular situations, who should he/she be friends with and/or hang out with, or even what should he/she wear... latest fashion tips.

A clique may also comprise peers whom other members choose or may include individuals who have come together due to circumstances. For example, an afterschool club whose members come together because the circumstances are such. Cliques can have both positive and negative influences on adolescents.

(ii) **Crowd:** It may be defined as a large but ambiguous gathering of unrelated people. For adolescents, such gatherings may also be said to serve as peer groups. Quite importantly, these are prevalent during early adolescence and their importance decreases as individuals advance towards the latter phase of adolescence.

One of the crowds usually identified in most schools is the 'popular' crowd. Concern over being popular can take up a lot of energy for some teens. There are different ways to look at or define popularity. One perspective that comes to mind immediately is the view of popularity often portrayed in the media. The 'popular' crowd usually consists of the pretty or most handsome people with the best clothing and cars. The media also usually depicts 'popular' teens as unkind or cruel people who frequently make life miserable for peers. Some of the 'popular' teens also form cliques that wield a lot of power in the school social scene. The power exists in part because other teens do not challenge that power; they may be envious of the clique members' status and/or intimidated. Another view of 'popular' crowds comes from parenting expert Dr. Laurence Steinberg. He says truly popular teens are friendly, helpful, enthusiastic, good-natured, humorous and intelligent.

Popular teens also:

- Perceive and respond to others' needs
- Are confident and assertive without being cocky
- Like to have fun in positive ways
- Behave in ways peers consider appropriate for their age

NOTES

Table 2.1 Distinction between Cliques and Crowds

NOTES

| Cliques | Crowds |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Small group (2-12 members) | Much larger (may include several cliques) |
| Members are good friends | Members may or may not be friends. |
| Identified by interest, social status (popular or unpopular) | Often membership is based on reputation and or stereotypes |

Belonging to a clique or a crowd can actually modify adolescents' beliefs and behaviour but family experiences affect the extent to which adolescents become like peers. In one study comprising 8000 students from class IX to class XII gave the following results:

- Adolescents who described their parents as authoritative were members of 'Brain', 'Jack' and 'Popular' groups that accepted both adult and peer reward systems.
- Adolescent boys, with permissive parents aligned themselves with the 'Parties' and 'Burnouts', suggesting a lack of identification with adult reward system.

Effects of Peer Groups

Peer groups affect both positively and negatively. These are discussed as follows:

I. Positive effects of Peer Groups

- Peer groups serve as a source of information:** Peer groups are instrumental in an individual's life to provide a perspective outside one's own viewpoint. Being a member of peer groups, one learns the art of developing and nurturing the relationships with others in the social structure. Peers, predominantly group members, become vital social referents to teach other members customs, prevalent societal norms, and different ideologies.
- Teach gender roles:** Peer groups can also function as a setting where one learns gender roles. Group members learn about cultural and social expectations, and sex differences through gender role socialization. However, girls and boys vary greatly; there is no one-to-one connection between sex and gender roles with females always exhibiting feminine characteristics and males always exhibiting masculine characteristics. In fact, both the gender types can have different intensities of femininity and masculinity. Peer groups can comprise of either all males or all females or mix of males and females. It has been shown in the different studies that majority of peer groups are unisex. Peer groups can have great impact or pressure of peers on each other's gender role behaviour depends on the intensity of peer pressure.
- Serve as a practicing venue to adulthood:** As adolescents' progress towards adulthood with a feeling self-sufficiency and their dependence on parents begins decreasing as they start connecting with a much larger social network. It is now that they find support and help in peer groups. To them, their peers become a sort of social referents as they emulate and learn the

art of negotiating relationships beyond those of their families. Often peer groups influence and shape an individual's attitude and behaviour on various social and cultural issues such as violence, drugs, achievements, academics and so on.

- (d) **Teach unity and collective behaviour in life:** Peer groups have a number of positive influences on adolescents and one of them is the fact that they inculcate a sense of unity and collective behaviour in life. They are quite influential in the socialization process promoting in-group similarity. Factors like group will and consensus and conformity with certain attitudes and behaviours all foster a group's cohesion. Group members decide amongst themselves as to what is 'normal' for them. For example, the group may together decide what kind of clothes they must all wear. That is normal for them. Such normative codes can often be very rigid in nature.
- (e) **Identity formation:** Peer groups help individuals find out as to who they are. Obviously, then, if it is the peer group who helps a person to identify his/her identity. This identification helps a person acquire a sense of self. Studies have shown that peer groups provide individuals with a platform to experiment with roles and discover themselves, as they are guided by the normative regulations of the group.

NOTES

II. Negative effects of peer groups

Besides having positive effects on individuals, peer groups also affect them adversely. These are discussed as follows:

- (a) **Peer pressure:** The term peer pressure may be defined as the unwanted indirect pressure that one feels to change his/her behaviour so as to conform to their peers' behaviour. For example, a teetotaler may feel pressured to drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes so that he/she does not stand the odd one out at a party. However, in the spirit of the negative meaning of the term, peer pressure can also be used positively. For example, when a weak student is introduced into a group of studious kids, he feels pressured to perform better to be able to conform to the group's norms.

Peer pressure is not restricted to adolescents only. Even grown-ups are often faced with peer pressure though it is most commonly seen in adolescents, especially boys. Studies suggest that girls are less likely to experience peer pressure compared to boys. Boys especially tend to spend more time with their peers in social contexts. Teens often force one another to conform to certain beliefs and behaviours. Thus, a lot of research has been done to understand how peer pressure affects teenagers negatively, and it is really helpful for parents to study and learn how peer groups can affect teens negatively; and how they can at best try to negate the ill effects.

- (b) **Future problems:** An individual's psychological developments and academic achievements often are affected by the peer relationships one has had while growing up. Being in bad company earlier on in age can lead an individual to turn out unsuccessful with a poor academic track record. Such people may even have marital and employment related issues in the future.

NOTES

- (c) **Risk behaviours:** Many studies have been carried out till date which suggest that peer groups often adversely affect teenagers which leads to them displaying risk behaviours. In 2012, a study done on teenagers' involvement in risk behaviours occurring in the context of peer groups conclude that both peer pressure and control were responsible for risky behaviour. It was further established that adolescents more dedicated to having their own personal identity within the group, were less prone to displaying risk behaviour. The conclusion was that those individuals who had developed their own identities were less affected adversely by peer pressure.
- (d) **Aggression and prosocial behaviour:** Adolescent behaviour is largely affected by the type of peer group they are part of. There was a study conducted in 2011 which focused on aggression and pro-sociality which suggested that teenagers who joined an aggressive group tended to show an increase in aggression in their own behaviour over a period of time. Furthermore, they also displayed prosocial behaviour that was akin to the standard behaviour of the group they were in. Thus, we see how peer groups affect the behaviour of adolescents.
- (e) **Sexual promiscuity:** Teen sexual activity leading to teenage pregnancy and transmission of sexual diseases and sexual violence, are major issues that adolescents grapple with in today's times. Adolescence is a time when a teen's body and mind goes through a lot of changes. Their emotions and hormone levels are surging and their desire to experiment and delve into previously uncharted territories is high and, thus, they indulge in sexual activity. A longitudinal study spanning over a period of thirteen years was carried out in 2012 which presented that there was a strong relationship between deviant peer groups and teen sexual promiscuity. Individuals who were part of the study stated that they indulged in having sex early in life due to pressure from peers or even partners.

Adolescents and their peer groups

The behaviour of boys and girls changes with growing age. They behave quite differently in pre-adolescence, adolescence, mid-adolescent and late adolescence years. In a cross-sectional, correlational study conducted by Gavin, it was found that mid-adolescents gave more importance to being in a popular group and felt more group conformity and leadership within the group than in pre or late adolescence. Furthermore, it was found that early and middle adolescents reported few positive interactions with group members and more negative interactions with those who were not their group members. Girls were more bothered by negativity and, hence, reported having more positive group interactions, opposed to boys. Gavin further concluded that the decreased importance of leadership in late adolescence resulted in lesser conformity with a peer group. Also, being in a popular group and conforming to group norms became less important in late adolescence.

Further studies conducted by Tarrant on the effects on in-groups and out-groups is also noteworthy for the findings that in-group was always associated with a higher number of positive characteristics compared to the out-group, and

the more an individual identified with the in-group, the higher their evaluations were for it.

Adolescents living in multi-cultural countries often form peer groups based on racial preferences. For example, Caucasians would be more comfortable being with Caucasians, Blacks with Blacks and Latinos with Latinos. This often leads to race related prejudices. Preference of being with one's own racial group can lead to the rejection of the racial out-group. It has been observed that females are most prone to such discrimination. Cross Race Peer Groups in this case are beneficial in fostering racial harmony within groups as they lower racial prejudices and increase prosocial behaviour. Having cross-racial friends is often shown to give youngsters a sense of higher social satisfaction. A racially diverse peer group often helps in decreasing the feeling of victimization by members of a racial minority.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

3. Name the two aspects of social interaction.
4. Mention one of the key characteristics of a social group.
5. When is a potential group termed as a social group?
6. Name the different types of social groups.
7. What does the term 'in-groups' mean?
8. Name the sociologist who introduced the idea of primary groups.
9. Why has Kimball Young termed secondary groups as special interest groups?
10. Define the term peer group.
11. Mention the types of adolescent peer groups.

2.4 COMMUNITY

Human society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals sharing a distinctive culture and institutions.

Community is also an important concept in social and political life. The social life led by people is affected and influenced by the kind of community in which they live. The word 'community' is derived from Latin, where the prefix 'com' signifies 'together' and the noun *munia, munium* means 'duty'. Thus, community refers to fulfilling duties together. It implies that the 'community' is an organization of human beings framed for the purpose of serving together. According to a widely quoted definition, 'a community is a local grouping within which people carry out a full round of life activities.'

Other definitions of community

Community is 'any circle of people who live together and belong together in such a way that they do not share this or that particular interest only, but a whole set of interests'.

–Karl Mannheim

NOTES

Community is 'a group of social beings living a common life including all the infinite variety and complexity of relations which result from that common life which constitutes it'.

–**Morris Ginsberg**

Community is 'the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life'.

–**Kingsley Davis**

MacIver's conception of community

R. M. MacIver has given one of the most salient definitions and analyses of community. According to him, 'Wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community.'

A village, a city, a tribe and a nation are examples of community. The mark of a community, according to MacIver, is that one's life may be lived wholly within it. One cannot live wholly within a business organization or a church; but one can live wholly within a tribe or a city. The basic criterion of community is that all of one's social relationship may be found within it. However, all communities need not be self-sufficient.

While some communities, especially among primitive people, are all-inclusive and independent of others, modern communities, even very large ones, are much less self-contained. Economic and political interdependence is a major characteristic of modern communities. As MacIver has stated, 'Communities exist within greater communities: the town within a region, the region within a nation, and the nation within the world community, which, perhaps, is in the process of development.'

According to MacIver, the basis of community is locality and community sentiment. A community always occupies a territory. The members of a community derive from the conditions of their locality a strong bond of solidarity. Locality, however, is not enough to create a community. A community is an area of common living. There must be common living along with its awareness of sharing a way of life as well as the common earth which is known as community sentiment.

Integral elements of community sentiments

- **We-feeling:** This is the feeling that leads men to identify themselves with others so that when they say 'we', there is no thought of distinction and when they say 'ours', there is no thought of division.
- **Role-feeling:** This involves the subordination to the whole on the part of the individual.
- **Dependence-feeling:** This refers to the individual's sense of dependence upon the community as a necessary condition of his own life.

Characteristics of Community

Like most things in sociology, the term 'community' is difficult to define with any degree of accuracy or certainty. The term is a construct, a model. We cannot touch, see or experience a community. It may come in varying shapes, sizes, colours, and so on with no two communities being alike.

Also, a community is much more than the people who already exist in it. That community, more likely than not, was already in existence much before the current residents were born, and will continue to flourish long after they are all gone. A community will have members who go to other places and who may eventually return.

A 'community' sometimes may not be any tangible location but a group of people with similar interests. Let us now look at some characteristics of a community.

Sociological construct: A community is a 'sociological construct'. In other words, it is a set of human interactions and behaviours that have meaning between the members. They have actions that are based on shared expectations, values, beliefs, and so on between individuals.

Blurred boundaries: When a community is a tiny village, separated by a few kilometres from other villages, in a rural region, its boundaries appear simple. That pattern of human interaction may seem to consist only of relations between community members inside that village. The residents, however, may interact with people outside the village. They may marry and move out or bring a partner with them to the community. At any one time, the village may have residents living elsewhere.

Communities within communities: There may be communities within bigger communities, such as districts, regions, nations, and so on. There may be interaction that connects villages on different countries.

Movement of communities: Community residents may be nomadic herders walking with their cattle. They may be mobile fishing groups and may also be hunters.

Urban communities: A community may be a small group in urban areas, consisting of a few people of a common origin. That community may be a subpart of a neighbourhood community or a local urban division and so on. As the boundaries become bigger, one will find differences in origin, language, religion, and so on. In general, urban communities are more difficult to demarcate, are varied, and more difficult to organize, than rural communities.

A human community is more than a collection of houses. It is a social and cultural organization. Also, it is not merely a collection of human beings but a socio-cultural system.

A key characteristic of a community is its social cohesion and its willingness to set and strive for common goals. This depends on various factors, such as historical, social, economic and cultural factors.

These characteristics provide the necessary incentives to cooperate and obey community rules, and consider the needs of future generations of the community.

Historical factors: All activities in a community take place in a historical backdrop. How well a community functions and how its members strive towards a common goal depends on factors such as population history and the history of conflict, or the lack thereof, in the community.

NOTES

NOTES

Social factors: These may include ethnicity and language, caste, class and other social divisions, family structure and gender relations.

Economic factors: These include differences or similarities in livelihood strategies, and the degree of economic stratification in the community.

Cultural factors: Cultural factors such as religion, tradition and custom can determine the extent to which members of a community share common goals and cooperate with each other.

Traditional, socialist and liberal conceptions of community

Traditional or conservative thought emphasizes the idea that community is based upon commonality of origin—the blood, kinship and historic ties—of people living in a particular location. Village localities as much as national groups are considered to exist on such basis. This commonality of origin may also be derived in another locality or by reference to a homeland as is the case in the ‘Jewish community’.

Socialist thought identifies conservative versions of community as hegemonic devices to bind members of different classes together in capitalist society, preventing them from seeing their real clash of economic interests, and, thus, averting social conflict. Conservatives and socialists may stress different basis for the existence of community, but both identify the social relations inherent in community as something greater than the concerns and interests of each individual living in it added together, and as providing the basis for the longevity of a community.

Liberals are reluctant to conceptualize community on the same elevated basis because of their commitment to individual freedom. Instead, they see community as based on the freely chosen associations of individuals with common interests and needs.

Institutions

An institution is a structure of social order and cooperation, governing the behaviour of a set of individuals within a human community. Institutions are generally identified with a social purpose and permanence.

Social Interaction

Social interaction refers to a relationship between two, three or more individuals.

2.5 INSTITUTIONS

Socially established ways of doing things called institutions. Generally, the term ‘institution’ refers to a group of people who have some specific purpose. However, the sociological understanding is quite different from common usage. Every society is characterized by certain social norms. These norms are very important in interactive social systems. In fact, they are institutionalized, i.e., they are widely accepted among members of the society. In this context, it can be said that an institution is neither a building, nor a people, nor an organization. An institution is a system of norms aimed at achieving some goal or activity that people feel is

important. It focuses on major human activities. Institutions are structured processes through which people carry on their activities.

Institutions have been defined by MacIver as 'established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity'. So, it can be said that social institutions are the social structures and machinery, through which the society organizes, directs and executes multiple activities that are required to fulfil human needs. An institution is an organized system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures and meets certain basic needs of the society (Horton and Hunt, 1984).

Every organization is dependent on certain established norms that are accepted and recognized by the society. These norms govern socio-cultural and interpersonal relationships. They are institutions in different forms such as marriage, family, economy, polity, religion, and so on. These institutions govern social life.

Features of Social Institutions

A social norm is said to be institutionalized in a particular social system when three conditions are fulfilled:

- (i) Many members of the social system accept the norm.
- (ii) Many of those who accept the norm take it seriously. In psychological terms, they internalize it.
- (iii) The norm is sanctioned. This means that certain members of the system are expected to be guided by the norm in appropriate circumstances.

However, the process of institutionalization involves the following characteristics:

- Institutions emerge as largely unplanned products of social living. People struggle to search for practical ways of meeting their needs; they find some patterns that work and become regular by repeated practice. These patterns are converted into standardized customs. As time passes, these patterns become part of customs and rituals which justify and sanction them. For example, the system of lending has paved the way for banks to emerge as institutions for borrowing, lending and transferring money in a standardized manner.
- Institutions are means of controlling individuals.
- Institutionalized role behaviour is guided by expectations of the role and not by personal preferences. For example, all judges act in a similar manner when they are practising, but it is not necessary for them to behave in the same manner in every situation as well.
- Institutions have some proceedings, which are formed on the basis of certain customs.
- Institutions have certain cultural symbols. People adhere to certain symbols which serve as convenient reminders of the institution. For example, the citizen is reminded of loyalty to the government by the sign of the flag. Similarly, national anthems, national songs, national flags, and so on, strengthen institutional ties.
- Institutions have certain codes of behaviour. The people involved in certain institutions are expected to carry out some roles which are often

NOTES

NOTES

expressed in formal codes, such as the oath of loyalty to one's country, marriage vows, and so on.

- Every institution is based on certain ideological principles. An ideology may be defined as any set of ideas that explains or justifies social arrangements, structures of power or ways of life. These are explained in terms of goals, interests or social position of the groups, or activities in which they collectively appear. The ideology of an institution includes both the central beliefs of the institution and a rational justification for the application of institutional norms to the problems of life.
- Institutions are formed to satisfy the primary needs of the members of the society and they have social recognition.

Functions of Social Institutions

A society is so complex and interrelated that it is impossible to foresee all consequences of any action pertaining to it. Institutions have a list of functions, which are the professed objectives of the institution. They also have latent functions, which are unintended and may not be recognized. If they are recognized, then they may be regarded as by-products.

Manifest functions of social institutions

These are functions which people assume and expect the institution to fulfil, for instance, families should care for their children, economic institutions should produce and distribute goods, and direct the flow of capital where it is needed, schools should educate the young, and so on. Manifest functions are obvious, admitted and generally applauded.

Latent functions of social institutions

These are unintended and unforeseen consequences of institutions. Economic institutions not only produce and distribute goods but sometimes also promote technological change and philanthropy. Sometimes they promote unemployment and inequality. Latent functions of an institution may support manifest functions.

Apart from these functions, social institutions have some other common functions like provision of food, power, maintenance of law and order, shaping of personalities of individuals, manufacture and supply of commodities and services, regulation of morals, provision of recreation, and so on.

Polish anthropologist Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski has remarked, 'Every institution centres around a fundamental need, permanently unites a group of people in a cooperative task, and has its particular set of doctrines and techniques or craft. Institutions are not correlated simply and directly to new functions; one need not receive satisfaction in one institution.'

2.6 ASSOCIATION

An association is an assembly of people planned for a particular purpose or a limited number of purposes. To constitute an association, there must be, firstly, a group of people; secondly, these people must be organized, i.e., there must be certain rules for their conduct in the groups, and thirdly, they must have a common

purpose of a specific nature to pursue. Thus, family, church, trade union and music club are the instances of association.

Associations may be formed on several bases, for example, on the basis of duration, i.e., temporary or permanent, such as Flood Relief Association which is temporary and State which is permanent; or on the basis of power, i.e., sovereign like state, semi-sovereign like university and non-sovereign like club, or on the basis of function, i.e., biological like family, vocational like Trade Union or Teachers' Association, recreational like Tennis Club or Music Club, Philanthropic like charitable societies, and so on.

Some of the definitions of association by eminent sociologists are mentioned below:

According to Maclver, 'An organization deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interest, which the members of it share, is termed as association.'

Ginsberg writes, 'An association is a group of social beings related to one another by the fact that they possess or have instituted in common an organization with a view to securing specific end or specific ends.'

G. D. H. Cole says, 'By an association, I mean any group of persons pursuing a common purpose by a course of corporative action extending beyond a single act, and for this purpose, agreeing together upon certain methods of procedure, and laying down, in however, rudimentary a form, rule for common action.'

Characteristics of Association

The various characteristics of association are as follows:

(i) Concrete Structure

Since in an association people come together for a common purpose, it keeps them united to accomplish the tasks at hand.

(ii) Established

An association is not spontaneous, rather, every member of the association is specified, all of whom work in a structured manner.

(iii) Pre-determined Aim

In order to maintain their identity, all associations are formed with a pre-determined aim.

(iv) Associations are voluntary

Associations are mostly voluntary in nature. No one can be forced to participate in the working of the association. Due to its voluntary nature, every member of the association is answerable for his or her own deeds and results. However, involuntary associations also exist.

(v) Rules and Regulations

All associations have rules and regulations that members are expected to follow. Only those individuals who follow the rules and regulations provided for and

NOTES

participate in the pursuit of the aim of the association are only called as the members of it.

Types of Association

NOTES

Associations can be classified on the basis of its formation. A **voluntary association** is one where individuals join on their own, for example, as association formed for cricket lovers. On the other hand, **involuntary associations** as the name suggest are involuntary in nature. For example, an involuntary association is formed between people breathing harmful polluted air and the company causing it. In addition, the relationship that we have with the government is also an involuntary association. Trade associations are formed by individuals working in one specific industry. They can also be called business associations.

Difference between Association and Institution

The differences between an association and an institution are as follows:

- An association is a group of people organised for the pursuit of a specific aim. Institutions, on the other hand, are the rules of procedure. For example, a family is an association while marriage is an institution.
- Institutions grow, while associations are formed deliberately.
- An association indicates membership, while institutions indicate rules of procedure.
- All associations have a specific name while institutions are based on cultural symbols.
- Institutions fulfil all the primary and basic need of people. But association is a group of people organised for the pursuit of some specific purposes.
- The rules of an institution are informal means of social control such as customs, traditions etc., while the laws of association are formed on the basis of formal means of social control.

Check Your Progress

12. State a key characteristic of community.
13. Define institution.
14. What do you mean by ideology?

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. A society, or a human society, is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.

2. Another elements of society is likeness. According to Maclver, society means likeness. It is this likeness or similarity which creates understanding between individuals. This understanding lies at the root of all social relationships.
3. Social interaction has two essential aspects which are: social contact and communication.
4. Being organized is one of the key characteristics of a social group.
5. A potential group becomes a social group when it becomes organized.
6. There are two main types of social groups, namely primary groups and secondary groups.
7. An in-group is that type of group to which members have a feeling of belongingness and loyalty for the group.
8. Charles Cooley was the first sociologist who introduced the idea of primary groups.
9. Kimball Young termed secondary groups as special interests group as they are formed to fulfil certain specific end or ends.
10. Peer group is a type of social group constituted by people who are equal in such aspects as age, education or social class.
11. Cliques and crowds are the two type of adolescent peer groups.
12. A key characteristic of a community is its social cohesion and its willingness to set and strive for common goals. This depends on various factors, such as historical, social, economic and cultural factors.
13. An institution is a system of norms aimed at achieving some goal or activity that people feel is important. It focuses on major human activities. Institutions are structured processes through which people carry on their activities.
14. An ideology may be defined as any set of ideas that explains or justifies social arrangements, structures of power, or ways of life.

NOTES

2.8 SUMMARY

- Like an organism, a society is a system of relations between organisms themselves rather than between cells. Like the organism, a society has a determined structure and the parts of this structure, when in operation, contribute to the existence of the whole.
- A society, or a human society, is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations, or a large social group sharing the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.
- The noted sociologists Maclver and Page, (1950) defined ‘society as a web of relations, a complex system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties’.

NOTES

- According to Maclver, a society is ‘a web of social relationships’. These social relationships could be within the family and outside the family. For example, the relationship between a mother and her child, or between a teacher and her student.
- Human society is a group of people related to each other through persistent relations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships between individuals sharing a distinctive culture and institutions.
- Traditional or conservative thought emphasizes the idea that community is based upon commonality of origin—the blood, kinship, and historic ties—of a people living in a particular location.
- Social interaction is the most important aspect of social life. When people live in a community they interact with each other, they communicate with each other.
- According to Park and Burgess, social interaction has two essential aspects: (i) Social contact (ii) Communication.
- A potential or quasi group involves a group of individuals who have some common characteristics, but do not possess any recognizable structure.
- The important characteristics of a social group are that social groups have a certain given number of individuals, reciprocal relations within social groups, social groups have common goals, social groups provide sense of solidarity and unit, and social groups have a strong sense of ‘we-feeling’.
- Social groups may broadly be classified into two, namely, primary groups and secondary groups.
- Feelings of intimacy, co-operation and close relationships are the main characteristics of a primary group. These are found aplenty in some concrete groups than many others.
- Secondary groups are quite contrary to primary groups. The functions and activities of a secondary group are rather utilitarian and time and task oriented as it is structured around secondary relationships only.
- Both primary and secondary groups can be distinguished from each other by the following points: Difference in Meaning, Difference in Structure, Difference in Size, Difference in Co-operation, and Difference in Stability.
- A reference group is a group through which individuals compare themselves. They serve as a standard to which we measure our behaviours and attitudes.
- Individuals use reference groups in order to guide their behaviour and attitudes and help us to identify social norms.
- A peer group is a type of social group constituted by people who are equal in such aspects as age, education or social class.
- Peer groups affect both positively and negatively.
- R. M. MacIver has given one of the most salient definitions and analyses of community. According to him, ‘Wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular

interest, but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community.’

- Socially established ways of doing things are called institutions. Generally, the term ‘institution’ refers to a group of people who have some specific purpose.
- An association is an assembly of people planned for a particular purpose or a limited number of purposes. To constitute an association, there must be, firstly, a group of people; secondly, these people must be organized, i.e., there must be certain rules for their conduct in the groups, and thirdly, they must have a common purpose of a specific nature to pursue.
- According to Maclver, ‘An organization deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interest, which the members of it share, is termed as association.’

NOTES

2.9 KEY TERMS

- **Cultural anthropology:** It is a branch of anthropology focused on the study of cultural variation among humans and is in contrast to social anthropology which perceives cultural variation as a subset of the anthropological constant.
- **Community:** It is a local grouping within which people carry out a full round of life activities.
- **Communitarianism:** It refers to the advocacy of a social order in which human beings are bound together by common values that foster close communal bonds.
- **Social group:** It has been defined as two or more people who interact with one another, share similar characteristics, and collectively have a sense of unity.

2.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the various definitions of society.
2. List the important characteristics of a social group.
3. Distinguish between primary and secondary groups.
4. List the various elements of a society.
5. What are the effects of peer groups?
6. What are the integral elements of community sentiments?
7. What factors should be considered for constituting an association?
8. Differentiate between social groups and quasi- groups.

NOTES

9. What does a primary group mean?
10. Write a short-note on reference groups.
11. Outline the major differences between communitarianism and liberalism.
12. What are the characteristics of associations?

Long-Answer Questions

1. Define institutions. Explain its important features.
2. 'When two or more people having common outlooks and identities, interest, they tend to form what is called a social group.' Elucidate.
3. Discuss the peer groups existing in modern society.
4. Describe the types of social groups.
5. Differentiate between primary group and secondary group.
6. Explain the characteristics and different types of associations. Differentiate between associations and institutions.

2.11 FURTHER READING

Ryan, Michael. 2018. *Core Concepts in Sociology*. London: John Wiley and Sons.

Giddens Anthony, and Phillip Sutton. 2017. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (2nd Edition). London: John Wiley and Sons.

Braham, Peter. 2013. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Stolley Kathy. 2005. *The Basics of Sociology*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.

Abel, Theodore. 1980. *The Foundations of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.

Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. I and II. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Boguardus, Emory S. 1969. *The Development of Social Theory*. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffa and Simons.

Ritzer, George. 1988. *Sociological Theory*, Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

UNIT 3 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

NOTES

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Social Structure
- 3.3 Status and Role
 - 3.3.1 Relation between Individual and Society
- 3.4 Culture
 - 3.4.1 Culture and Civilization
 - 3.4.2 Social Origins of Culture
- 3.5 Socialization
- 3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 3.7 Summary
- 3.8 Key Terms
- 3.9 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 3.10 Further Reading

3.0 INTRODUCTION

Social structures are the modelled social arrangements in society that are both developing from and determinant of the actions of the individuals. The process that teaches an individual his culture is termed as socialization. In this unit, you will learn about the process and importance of socialization. The process goes on throughout one's life, and it develops a sense of self and converts the individual into a member of the society. For the success of this process, the individual needs consistent and organized interaction with his culture and social surroundings. The growth of the self is shaped and highly influenced by contact with family, peers and the media. Socialization also contributes to the formation of one's personality. Although personality type may depend on one's genes, it is the process of socialization that can shape it into particular directions.

The unit will also discuss the relationship between an individual and society. Culture includes the shared belief systems, rituals, and conversational styles of small groups, as well as societally pervasive ways of seeing that are passed from generation to generation. On the other hand, a society describes a group of people who share a community and a culture. In this unit, you will study about the meaning and role of culture in society, relation between culture and civilization, the social origins of culture, and the components of culture.

3.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Describe the social structure
- Assess the relationship between individual and society

NOTES

- Analyse the meaning and role of culture in society
- Examine the relationship between culture and civilization
- Recognize the social origins of culture
- Describe the components of culture

3.2 SOCIAL STRUCTURE

India is a vast country with a geographical area of 3,287,263 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 about 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 people contributed to India's culture. Some came into contact temporarily while, others settled permanently within its borders. Hence, India has a long history and its cultural tradition is very rich.

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 twenty-nine different states each with their own distinct traditions and character, and a population rich with diverse religions, costumes and accents. Such a level of diversity could perhaps be found elsewhere in an entire continent 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. The composition of Indian society reflects the various diversities existing in India. 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.

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 per cent). The Muslims are the second largest religious group (13.4 per cent). The Christians (2.3 per cent), Sikhs (1.9 per cent), Buddhists (0.8 per cent), Jains (0.4 per cent), and other religions like Jews, Zoroastrians and Parsis comprise 6 per cent. 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.

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 Zoroastrians 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 the 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 and Parvati) 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 and others.

Some sects like Satnami, Kabirpanthi, Radhaswami and Swaminarayan are also prevalent in Hinduism. Brahmo 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.

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

NOTES

NOTES

now Sikhs are found almost everywhere in India and even in other countries like UK and US. Their unique tradition of Langar (free food for all) 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, for example, 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 the 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. 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.

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 and Qutub Minar 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) there are 179 languages and as many as 544 dialects in the country. The Constitution of India, in its Eighth Schedule recognizes ‘twenty-two’ 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 fourteen languages were included in the Eighth 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 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 'twenty-four' literary languages in India by the Sahitya Academy, and newspapers and periodicals are published in thirty five 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'.

Originally among the scheduled languages, the speakers of Hindi had the highest percentage (41.03 per cent). 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.

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 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 and Mayurbhanj.

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 twenty-nine states has adopted one or two of the 'twenty-two' 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.

NOTES

NOTES

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.

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. 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 in it. There are many cultures which coexist simultaneously in India. Communities in India demonstrate commonalities in cultural traits irrespective of which religious background they belong to, even though these religious groups are further subdivided.

Many studies on cultural diversity and syncreticism have been conducted by sociologists and anthropologists like Y. Singh, N.K. Das, Madan and Majumdar, 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.

NOTES

What is the Social Structure of India?

India's culture is diverse. Different regions have different cultures and traditions. At the same time, you can find a lot common in them. Let us try and look at the various social formations which offer different characteristics to the Indian society.

Social Structure of India

The Indian social structure comprises the following:

- **Caste system:** India's social structure is founded on its caste system. The caste system is divided into four major castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. Brahmins are the priests and the uppermost caste. Kshatriyas are the warriors, Vaisyas the business class, and Sudras are the working class. Inter-caste marriages, once forbidden, are commonplace in the urban areas today. Untouchability still persists, with the Dalits treated as untouchables and reduced to menial jobs like cleaning the streets and so forth. Today, with burgeoning urbanization, the caste system does not have an influence it once did on society.
- **Family:** The family unit is given great significance. Divorces are not appreciated. Couples try their best to adjust than break up and cause children (also given high importance) distress. Nowadays, due to modernization, divorces do take place with greater regularity; still, on the whole, couples look at retaining the family unit first.
- **Women:** In the past, women have played an important role in the India's political and social structure. This has improved with the passage of time. For example, after independence, Indira Gandhi, was the first women Prime Minister of India. In the 21st century, with access to better education, women have come to occupy esteemed positions in the management of various organisations.
- **Men:** Man's authority in the Indian social system is still unchallenged. He is very dominating by nature, due to his position as the head of the family.
- **Patriarchal setup:** The Indian family is patriarchal, with the father as the head of the family unit. The eldest male member is respected and has much influence over matters of the family.
- **Matriarchal setup:** In Kerala and Meghalaya, however, the woman is the dominant force, and the powerful authority on family matters.

NOTES

- **Marriage:** The Indian society gives the institution of marriage a lot of importance. Marriages are usually arranged, but people in urban areas have started choosing their own partners. Marriages are conducted with intricate rituals and celebrated with much pomp.
- **Birth:** This is viewed as an auspicious occasion warranting much celebration. The birth of a male child is much sought after. In some regions, the birth of a girl child is considered unfavourable.
- **Death:** Elaborate ceremonies are held when people die, and rituals are held every year in their remembrance.

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.

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 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, gurdwaras attract lot of tourists and reinforce the bond of unity.

In situations of war and natural disasters, this unity in diversity can easily be seen, when the entire nation comes together in support of one another. Even during sporting events, the entire nation supports the national team, which itself may comprise members from various regional and religious backgrounds.

In spite of the many differences that the potpourri of cultures inevitably entails, India's people are united with a common cultural heritage. There is no doubt that India is a vast land of myriad physical features. The country is blessed with mountains, hilly terrains, plains, and coastal areas, among other geographical features. There are seemingly countless religions, languages and castes. The type of food varies in different regions. Still, people are united and share basic human values.

India's culture is vibrant and tolerant. Even with the advent of foreigners over the last four or so centuries, little has changed. In fact, one can say that the foreign cultures have blended with the Indian culture and the country is better for

it. However, narrow-mindedness can weaken national unity. Thus, it is up to people to feel proud of being 'Indian' while retaining their unique features. As for now, India remains one of the best examples of the term 'Unity in Diversity'.

Modernization and Globalization

Indian sociologist, M. N. Srinivas used the term 'Westernization' to indicate the changes which took place in India during the British Rule in the 19th and early 20th century. Srinivas defined the term Westernization to characterize the changes brought about in the Indian society and culture as a result of 150 years of British rule, and the term includes changes occurring at different levels, including technology, institutions, ideology, and values. He considers such changes as important in the context of changes that a non-Western country undergoes as a result of its contact with a Western country. Westernization is, therefore, a process of cultural change.

The term 'globalization' is commonly used in the media these days. The term is used to denote most things—good or bad. For some people, globalization means free market capitalism. For others, it is the picture of domination of poor nations by rich ones. Both sides, for and against, however, share a focus on economic aspects.

A process is series of changes. In that context, globalization is the process of turning global, but that process is not yet complete. There is no one global society, even though processes seemingly point in that direction. These processes are many and over vast areas of social life and human relations, including culture, ideology, economy, polity and religion.

Globalization in India began in 1991. Globalization at the economic level involves a worldwide movement of money, capital, goods, services and technology. The export and import regulations for the production and distribution of commodities are being liberalized. Today, McDonald's burgers are available in India, as well as in Russia and China.

At the political level, globalization is a process initiated by the dominant powers that control organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or International Monetary Fund (IMF). There is competition among developing countries for sharing power in the United Nations Organization (UNO). Now, every country, barring a few exceptions, is opening its frontiers for foreign investment. Every country is competing with others in marketing their products. Globalization has given rise to industrialization, consumerism and multi-national companies. This process has increased migration of people from India to other countries.

There is, however, much difference between Westernization and similar processes like industrialization. There is evidence of the existence of cities in the pre-industrial world. Though Westernization is more prevalent in large cities, keeping in view the complex nature of Indian society some people in rural areas are also Westernized. Westernization leads to the induction of new institutions (such as newspapers, elections and Christian missions) and also brings about necessary changes in older institutions. There are certain value preferences like humanitarianism and rationalism implicit in Westernization. Such values became instrumental in

NOTES

NOTES

bringing about many changes and reforms in the Indian society. According to Srinivas, the increase in Westernization does not retard the process of Sanskritization. In fact, both go on simultaneously and, to some extent, an increase in Westernization accelerates the process of Sanskritization.

Sanskritization refers to the process by which castes that used to be lower in the hierarchy seek upward mobility by emulating customs and rituals of the upper castes. This is a common process in India and was observed by M.N. Srinivas in 1952 in his book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*.

Westernization and Modernization

There has been lot of debate regarding application of the term 'modernization' to 'Westernization'. American scholar and writer Daniel Lerner used the term 'modernization' in his book *The Passing of Traditional Society, Modernising the Middle-East* (1958), to the changes brought about in non-Western countries by contact, direct or indirect, with a Western country. The term 'Westernization', unlike 'modernization', is ethically neutral, i.e., it does not carry an implication of good or bad. Westernization, however, is an inclusive and many-layered concept. According to Srinivas, it covers a wide range, from Western technology at one end, to the experimental method of modern science and modern historiography at the other. Its incredible complexity is seen in the fact that different aspects of Westernization sometimes combine to strengthen a particular process, sometimes work at cross-purposes, and are occasionally mutually discrete. For instance, Indians used to eat their meals sitting on the floor and observed a number of restrictions right from cooking the food to serving it. However, in the present times, educated and Westernized people prefer to eat at tables.

The concept of modernization is plagued with a number of difficulties. Modernization is a comprehensive process of transformation of the traditional society, involving far reaching changes in all aspects of individual life. It symbolizes rational attitudes towards issues and their evolution from a universalistic (and not particularistic) viewpoint. In contemporary India, both modernization and Westernization exist and are easily observed. While modernization refers to a complete transformation in attitudes, including value patterns, Westernization on the other hand, may not lead to transformation. For example, Westernization in behaviour patterns does not mean Westernization of value preferences and a scientific outlook.

In this regard, Srinivas has given an appropriate example of a government bulldozer driver in Rampura village in Mysore. While on one hand, he drove the bulldozer, on the other hand, he also practiced black magic. In fact, there was no inconsistency between driving a bulldozer for his livelihood and indulging in black magic for pleasure. Thus, the utilization of Western technology does not mean that people have become more rational and scientific.

Hence, Srinivas prefers to use the term Westernization to modernization, whereas other scholars like Lerner and others prefer modernization. Srinivas believes that modernization presupposes rationality of goals which in the ultimate

analysis cannot be taken for granted, since human ends are based on value preferences and rationality could only be expected of the means, and not the ends, of social action.

Westernization and Socio-Cultural Changes

Westernization in India took place in different forms, and with sub-regional variations. The various changes due to Westernization are as follows:

Educational field

With Westernization, English education became popular. The Brahmins, and other castes with traditional education methods, shifted to secular education with English as a medium of instruction. School education was open to everyone, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. English education motivated the youth to take up occupations in the government sector and other commercial concerns. Moreover, Western education brought about a change in the outlook and perception of people. Values like equality and humanitarianism were internalized, and this promoted a secular outlook. While traditional education promoted uncritical acceptance of ancient works, Western education promoted rationalism and a critical outlook towards events and problems.

Lifestyle

Westernization implied and led to changes in the style of life, dress habits and food manners. The Westernized groups adopted a Western style of living and gave up their inhibitions for various types of food. For instance, Brahmins were forbidden from eating meat but such inhibitions were given up later. Western music, dance and dress were adopted by Indians who were Westernized.

Political and cultural field

Westernization resulted not only in nationalism but also led to other thoughts and behaviours such as revivalism, communalism, casteism, heightened awareness of linguistics, and regionalism. Even revivalist movements used Western-type schools and colleges, as well as books, pamphlets and journals to propagate their ideas.

The process of Westernization intensified when India became independent. The extension of agriculture and trading frontiers broke the centuries old isolation of groups that inhabited the forested mountains, and provided them with new contacts and opportunities. The development of communication and the removal of internal customs barriers, integrated the economy of the various regions in the country into a single one. The political and administrative integration of India, along with development of transport and communication, increased social and spatial mobility for the elite as well as the masses. This created the grounds for nationwide Westernization.

Relation between Sanskritization and Westernization

Thus, it becomes evident that Sanskritization and Westernization are both processes of cultural change. Even Srinivas reiterated the fact that social changes occurring in modern India in terms of Sanskritization and Westernization, are primarily changes

NOTES

NOTES

in cultural terms and not in structural terms. We will now analyse the relationship between the two terms.

According to sociologist Zetterberg, Sanskritization and Westernization, in the logical sense, are truth-asserting concepts, which oscillate between the logics of ideal-typical and nominal definitions of phenomena. Hence, their connotation is often vague, especially as one moves from one level of cultural reality to another. While Sanskritization or Brahminization puts a taboo on meat-eating and alcohol consumption, Westernization is supportive of meat-eating and consumption of alcohol. The highly Westernized Brahmins shed their inhibitions about these two issues.

The Sanskritization process promotes the sacred outlook, while Westernization promotes the secular outlook. The conflict, however, is removed by the Constitution which is secular in outlook and emphasis, though the sacred outlook continues to be dominant among the elite as well as the masses. Sanskritization and Westernization are founded upon empirical observations and offer objective insight into various aspects of cultural change. Difficulties arise from the complexity of the contextual frame.

Sociologist, Yogendra Singh maintains that there are theoretical loopholes in these concepts. He makes a reference to E.B. Harper who treats Sanskritization as a functional concept, which is distinct from the historical concept of change.

Tradition and Modernity

The concept of tradition has always occupied an important place in Indian sociological thought. Indian sociologists, have often ventured to acquire deeper knowledge of social phenomena prevailing in the country. According to sociologist, D.P. Mukherji, there is no getting away from tradition for Indian sociologists. This is so, especially because their role is to study the principles that govern social life in India, common living, common sharing of social heritage and the continuity of social structure, in order to guide the future course of the country whose culture is 'eternal'.

The concept of tradition has been defined by many sociologists, social anthropologists and Indologists; however, none have defined it clearly. D.P. Mukherji pleads for a philosophical approach in order to improve the understanding of society. Yogendra Singh contends that tradition means value, i.e., themes encompassing the entire social system of Indian society, prior to the beginning of modernization, were organized on the principles of hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence. These four value-themes were deeply interlocked with other elements of the Indian social structure. Hierarchy was evident in the caste system with caste and sub-caste stratifications and also in Hindu concepts of human nature, occupational life cycles (ashramas) and moral duties (*Dharma*).

Holism meant a relationship between individuals and groups in which the former was encompassed by the latter in respect of duties and rights. The collective aspect always occupied an important place in the life of the individual. The collective life was reinforced in the traditional social structure of India in terms of family, caste and village community. The traditional values were never challenged at the

cost of rationality derived from non-sacred principles of evaluation. D.P. Mukherji's concept of the Indian society is a derivative of what he calls 'the philosophy of Indian history' which remained unrecorded. But it has a history of ideas exemplified in the daily conduct of its people. Indian culture, essentially being social, has a history expressed in Indian society. The history, economics and philosophy of India have always centred on social groups according to D.P. Mukherji.

The concept of tradition has different connotations for Indian sociologists. Ram Krishna Mukherji regards tradition as 'the schematic point in organism' (in the context of Indian society) which can be used as a comparative frame of reference for measuring social change in India. He further stated that Indian traditions provide four dimensions of integration in our people. Social change is almost a variation on this intra-India static four dimensional model: the place where an Indian is born, where he is brought up and dies, the kin group to which a person belongs, the caste to which he is affiliated, and finally the linguistic region with which he is integrated.

Moreover, R.K. Mukherji quoted D.P. Mukherji to emphasize the economic aspect of structural change which can have a significant impact and bring about an alteration, 'Traditions have great power of resistance and absorption.' Unless the influence is very powerful (which is possible only when modes of production are changed), traditions survive through adjustments. The capacity to adjust is a measure of the vitality of tradition. According to R.K. Mukherji, Indian sociologists should precede the socialist interpretations of changes in the Indian tradition in terms of economic forces.

Yogendra Singh, has however, come out with a paradigmatic concept of tradition in his book, *Modernization of Indian Tradition*. He refers to traditions as evolving from primordial tradition to modernization with a pattern of change in quality. His concept of Indian tradition, contrary to the meta-social views, is analytical as indicated in a unified worldview, ritual styles and belief systems. He does not delineate tradition as entity or substance, but as a variable identified under the components of little and great traditions, contributing extensively to the process of transformation and synthesis. Great tradition refers to a broader civilization while little traditions imply the folkways found in villages and smaller communities that are none the less part of the great tradition. In other words, great traditions refer to traditions that have their roots in the ancient culture of the Aryans and the Vedas. They also comprise of customs and traditions that are found in the epics, Puranas and Brahmanas. Little traditions are symbolized by cultural processes operating among the folks or peasants in rural India. These develop when there is internal growth of a village. Sometimes, the little tradition undergoes change when it comes in contact with the great tradition. These traditions are sensitive to the requirements of the local village, area or community where they operate. Folk artists, medicine men, bards, proverbs and poets, can be found in little traditions. Y. Singh refers to two kinds of changes—'orthogenetic changes' (primary) and 'heterogenetic changes' (secondary). While orthogenetic changes refer to those changes within the cultural tradition of India itself, heterogenetic changes refer to changes brought about due to contact with other traditions.

NOTES

NOTES

The evolutionary process of modernization is a smooth one, and there is no serious breakdown in the system caused by institutionalization of modernizing changes. Caste, as an institution, however, has the potential for negotiating with modernizing trends and adapting to modern institutions. Yogendra Singh is concerned about the constant coordination of modernization with conciliation as an assumed pre-requisite for democratic modernization in India. Modernization, in its initial stages in India, according to Israeli sociologist Eisenstadt did not lead to any serious system breakdown because of the peculiar structural characteristics of the Indian society. Here, the cultural system was fairly independent of the political system. Modernity in India developed as a sub-structure and subculture without subsequent expansion in all sectors of life. However, Y. Singh's main concern was with structural changes which would take place due to modernization. Inconsistencies have arisen due to structural changes that India has undergone during the post-colonial phase of modernization. Micro-structures like caste, family and village community have retained their traditional character. Caste system has shown unexpected elasticity and latent potential for adaptation with modern institutions, such as democratic participation, political party organization and trade unionism. These contradictions are magnified at the level of macrostructures such as the political system, bureaucracy, elite structure, industry and economy.

In fact, the major potential sources of breakdown in the process of modernization in India can be attributed to structural inconsistencies such as democratization without spread of civic culture (education), bureaucratization without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation and aspiration without proportionate increase in resources and distributive justice, verbalization of a welfare ideology without diffusion into the social structure.

At the outset, it must be said that there has been considerable modernization of Indian traditions and constant adaptation with the process of modernization.

There has been no breakdown in the traditional value systems, rather it can be said that there has been a discontinuity between expectation and performance. Y. Singh would deny a policy of controlled suppression in favour of a 'series of conciliatory steps through a forceful strategy of mobilization'. This would lead him to accept that the chances of institutional breakdown are minimal on the Indian scene. There is, in fact, a rational coordination instead of complete reliance on modernization.

Check Your Progress

1. Name the second largest religious group in India.
2. What do you understand by the term 'unity in diversity'?
3. What are the main reasons of diversity in India?
4. What is Sanskritization and Westernization?
5. What is the linguistic diversity of India?
6. How is the caste system in India divided?
7. How did Yogendra Singh define tradition?
8. When did globalization in India began?

3.3 STATUS AND ROLE

Let us begin by looking at the meaning and definition of status and role.

Meaning and Definition

The position or the situation that an individual occupies in society is called status. As a result of that status and position, the individual is expected to discharge certain functions. These functions are known as roles. An individual has a variety of roles in society, he or she is a father, mother, brother, engineer, doctor, etc. These roles are an integral part of group behaviour.

According to the American sociologist Ralph Linton, 'The term role is used to designate the sum total of the cultural pattern associated with a particular status. It thus includes attitude, values and behaviour ascribed by the society to any and all person occupying this status. ... In so far as it represents overt behaviour and a role has the dynamic aspect of the status: what is the individual has to do in order to validate the occupation of the status.' Ogburn and Nimkoff state that, 'a role is a set of socially expected and approved behaviour patterns, consisting of both duties and privileges associated with a particular position in a group.' It is 'the behavioural enacting of the patterned expectations attributed to that position.' In role performance, the emphasis is on quality. One's role as a father implies a more specific and particular manner of performance.

Types of Roles

Roles are allocated according to the status they occupy in the social system. Each status has its own set of role requirements. Social groups operates harmoniously and effectively to the extent that performance conform to the role requirements. In a society, a social role is critical since it demonstrates how individual activity is socially determined and thus follows a regular patterns. It is important to recognize that a social role only exists in relation to other social roles in society. For example, the role of a mother implies the role of a child, the role of the employee implies the role of the employer, and so on. Moreover, within the institution of family one may hold the status of brother or sister, son or daughter, father or mother. However, at work he/she could be a bank manager, janitor or president of the country.

Nature and Determinants of Role

The different dimensions of the role system in society is as follows:

1. Action Aspect of Status

The role is in fact the action aspect of status. It entails different types of actions that an individual has to perform in accordance with the expectations of the society. These actions are reliant on sanction of society and not on a person's will. It is for this reason every social role has a cultural basis.

2. Changing Concept of Role

Roles in a society are in accordance with the social values, ideals, patterns, and so on. These ideals, values and objects in a society changes and thus the social role

NOTES

NOTES

also changes. Thus, it is possible that a social role that was justified in the past may not be justified in the present.

3. Limited Field of Operation

Every role has a limited sphere within which it is confined. For example, an employee has a social role in office, however, this role ceases the moment the individual reaches his or her family.

4. Impossible for Social Roles to be Performed Fully to the Expectations of Society

It is impossible for any individual to perform his social role to expectations of society. There will always be deviations. For example, an employee may not be able to perform his role to the expectation of the employer.

5. Difference in the Importance of Role

From a socio-cultural perspective, all social roles do not have the same level of importance. Some may be more important than others. The roles that are the most important are known as key roles, while the less important ones are known as general role.

Role Conflict

Conflict over social roles or role conflict refers to the psychological stress that is created when individuals do not fulfil roles (personal role-conflict), or when other appropriate individuals are in disagreement about his or her role (intro role-conflict) or when the various social roles an individual performs make contradictory demands of him or her.

A social group carries on its life smoothly and harmoniously to the extent that roles are clearly allocated and each individual accepts and fulfils the assigned role according to the extent possible. In reality however, one finds that there is doubt or disagreement as to what behaviour is expected in a given role and sometimes a person grudges the role that is allocated to him or her and fails to live up-to the expectations. As a result, there is much of group tension and conflict.

Types of Social Status

As you learnt, status refers to the position or the rank an individual holds in a society, while a role means the particular functions that an individual is expected to perform in that society. Thus, every status holder is a role performer. Therefore, status and role, is inter-connected. In a social group, every member has a status role position. There are two types of status in a society. These are ascribed status and achieved or earned status.

- i. **Ascribed status:** Ascribed status is given to people on the basis of the situation in the society or by other members of the society. Such a status may be given by birth or by placement in a social group. For example, a person born in a rich or aristocratic family immediately gains prestige and recognition as a member of the family.

- ii. **Achieved status:** An individual who achieves prestige or recognition in society on the basis on his or her personal hard work is known as achieved status.

Difference between Status and Role

Some of the differences between a role and status are as follows:

- As discussed, a role is the function of a status. In a social set-up, an individual plays a role. Based on his or her role, status is ascribed.
- A status is simply a position in society or in a group. A role is the behavioural aspect of status.
- Status is a sociological concept and sociological phenomena while role is a concept and a phenomenon of social psychology.
- Though status and role are related, it is possible to have one without the other. A status without a role may simply denote an unfulfilled position in an association. Similarly, roles are often played without occupying a status.

3.3.1 Relation between Individual and Society

As we have seen, a society, especially human society, comprises a group of people who are related to each other through persistent relations and share the same geographical or virtual territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations.

Society has the capacity to encourage personal growth and development of individuals through the process of socialization. It provides an opportunity to individuals to develop their potential to the fullest extent. It is society that orients the individuals towards conformity to institutionalized norms and keeps them in limits. It makes a person worth calling a human being. Society is external to individuals and exerts a pressure on them to act according to norms also counteracts deviant behaviour in individuals. The honour killings by Khap panchayats is a case in point. Individuals gain immensely from being a part of the society. Man becomes man by being in company with other men. A child picks up everything from its surroundings and from things he is taught by the family he is born in. As every family is part of some society, it has to adhere to certain acceptable social norms. The family, consciously or otherwise, passes these norms to the child in his impressionable years, gradually moulding him to become suitable for living in the society. An individual gains fulfilment and empowerment only by being a part of the society that recognizes his abilities and respects his individualism.

The following cases have been discussed here to highlight the importance of society for individuals.

Case I

The famous case of the German youth Kaspar Hauser is peculiarly significant because this ill-starred youth was in all probability bereft of human contacts through political machinations. Therefore, his condition could not be attributed to a defect of innate mentality. When Hauser, at the age of seventeen, wandered into the city of Nuremberg in 1828, he could hardly walk, had the mind of an infant and could

NOTES

NOTES

mutter only a meaningless phrase or two. Sociologically, it is noteworthy that Kaspar mistook inanimate objects for living beings. And when he was killed five years later, his post-mortem revealed that the development of his brain was subnormal. The denial of society to Kaspar Hauser was the denial of human nature itself.

Case II

One of the most interesting of the feral cases involved two Indian children in 1920. These children, who were eight and two years old respectively, were discovered in a wolf's den. The younger child died within few months of the discovery but the elder, Kamala, as she became named, survived until 1929. Her history has been carefully recorded in human society. Kamala brought with her almost none of the traits that we associate with human behaviour. She would walk on all four of her limbs and could not speak any language other than wolf-like growls. Like any other undomesticated animal, she too was shy of humans. However, as a result of the most careful and apparently sympathetic training, she was taught rudimentary social habits. Before her death, she had slowly learned some amount of simple speech, human eating and dressing habits, and so on. This wolf child utterly lacked human habits when she was first found, but her individuality emerged when she interacted with the human society.

Case III

Recently, sociologists and psychologists have studied the case of Anna and her illegitimate American child, who were isolated since the child was six months old, until her discovery five years later, in 1938. During her confinement, Anna was fed little else than milk, was not given any general training and had no contact with other human beings. This extreme and cruel social isolation provided scientists with a laboratory case and left the child with few attributes of a normal, five-year-old child. When Anna was discovered, she could not walk or speak, she was completely apathetic and indifferent to people around her. As in the case of Kamala, Anna responded to the careful treatment provided to her after she was released. However, because of her young age and limited contacts while she was a prisoner, she interacted with humans much more rapidly before she died in 1942. Anna's case illustrates once again that human nature develops in man only when he is a social being, only when he is a part of the society and shares a common life.

Dependence on Social Heritage

Each individual is the offspring of social relationships, itself determined by pre-established mores. Further, man or woman are essential terms in relationships. The individual is neither a beginning nor an end, but a link in the succession of life. This is a sociological as well as a biological truth. But yet, it does not express the depth of our dependence as individuals on society, for society is more than a necessary environment and more than just the soil in which we are nurtured. Our relation to social heritage is more intimate than that of a seed to the earth in which it grows. We are born in a society, the processes of which determine our heredity and part of which becomes our internal mental equipment in time and not merely an external possession. Social heritage continuously changes because of our social experiences. It evokes and directs our personality. Society both liberates and

limits our potentialities as individuals, not only by affording definite opportunities and stimulations or by placing definite and interferences restraints on us, but also subtly and imperceptibly, by molding our attitudes, beliefs, morals and ideals.

Comprehension of this fundamental and dynamic interdependence of individual and social heritage permits us to appreciate the truth of Greek philosopher Aristotle's famous phrase that man is a social animal. However, this does not mean that man is a sociable animal. Man is greater than that, in this respect. This also does not mean that man is altruistic in his impulse toward society, nor does it mean that he is social by virtue of some original constitution of human nature. This means that without society, without the support of social heritage, the individual personality does not and cannot come into existence.

Individual and Society

The Systems Approach of Talcott Parsons claims that the governance of individual relationships at the micro level is taken care of by the macro level. Moreover, the functional contribution of an individual to the society is so indispensable that the society cannot live without the individual and vice versa. The entire interactive approach in sociology and even social psychology revolves around this concept of relationships between individuals and society. This relationship paves the way for framing the most acceptable definition of society which is given by sociologist R. M. MacIver and Charles Page: 'Society is a system of usages and procedures of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions of controls of human behaviour and of liberties.'

We will discuss the relationship of individual and society through the following points:

- (i) **The nature of social unity:** The unique quality of social unity is revealed when it is contrasted with other types of unities. Various forms of unities may be distinguished by viewing the nature of the functional relations of the units or parts of the whole. A type of unity is the organism, to which the society itself is assigned, mistakenly. In this type, one can interpret the cells, organs and various systems that these compose, for instance, circulatory, glandular, nervous, and so on. These derive their significance solely from their utility to the life of the organism, as a whole. Mechanism is another type of unity, the specific form of which is a man-made machine. The machine is not autonomous or self sustaining or self reproducing, like the organism. However, its various parts like wheels, gears, transmission belts, and so on, can be understood in terms of their contribution to the functioning of the whole machine. Like organic unity, mechanical unity has been attributed to the society or parts of it. However, the social system must be distinguished from these types. For a social system, social relationships grow and change in accordance with the changing attitudes and interests of its members of some or all of the units or individuals who compose it. Here, the system derives its significance from its support of and contribution to the final purpose of individuals themselves. Without this purpose, social unity cannot be envisaged. This principle makes the harmonization of society and individuality possible.

NOTES

NOTES

(ii) **Understanding individuality:** When we extend the meaning of individuality to man, we find it essential to use the term in its sociological reference. Here, one can argue that a social being has more individuality in the following circumstances:

- (a) His conduct is not imitative nor is it the result of suggestion.
- (b) He is not entirely the slave of custom or even of habit.
- (c) His responses to the social environment are not altogether automatic and subservient.
- (d) His personal purpose are factors in his real-life activities.
- (e) Individuality in sociological sense is that attribute which reveals the member of a group as more than merely a member.
- (f) He is a self, a centre of activity and response, expressive of a nature that is his own. This concept supports the admonition that we often give to others or to ourselves.
- (g) The factor of 'being yourself'. Being oneself need not mean just originality; it certainly does not mean eccentricity. A strong individuality may, in fact, express more fully the spirit or quality of his country or his time, but he does so, not because he is quickly imitative or easily suggestible, but because of his sensitivity to the age itself.

It is true that when members of a group are more individualized, they will exhibit greater differences and will express themselves in a greater variety of ways. However, the criterion of individuality is not the extent to which each individual differs from the rest. It is rather, how far each acts autonomously in his own consciousness and with his own interpretation of the claims of others. When the possessor of individuality does as others do, at least in those matters which he deems important, he does it simply. This is not because others do it, but because he himself approves that particular behaviour. When he follows authority, except as far as he is compelled to, he follows it partly because of conviction and not because of authority. He does not specifically accept or reflect the opinions of others. He has certain independence of judgment, initiative, discrimination, strength of character, and so on. The extent to which he exhibits these qualities is directly proportional to his individuality.

3.4 CULTURE

Culture is a very broad term, which encompasses the following:

- All our walks of life
- Our modes of behaviour
- Our philosophies and ethics
- Our morals and manners
- Our customs and traditions
- Our religious, economic, political and other types of activities

In short, it includes all that man has acquired as a member of the society, or through his social life.

Edward B. Tylor, a famous English anthropologist, has given a widely used definition of culture. He defines culture as, 'that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man, as a member of society.'

NOTES

Characteristics of Culture

The characteristics of culture are as follows:

- *It is learned:* Culture is not something that one is born with. But, it is learnt as a member of society.
- *It is social:* Culture cannot exist in isolation. It is a product of society, and originates and develops through social interactions.
- *It is shared:* Culture cannot be possessed by an individual. An American sociologist, Robert Bierstedt says, 'culture is something adopted, used, believed, practiced, or possessed by more than one person. It depends upon group life for its existence.'
- *It is transmissive:* Culture is capable of being transmitted from one generation to the next. Parents pass on their culture to their children and they in turn to their children, and so on. Culture's vehicle for transmission is language, which itself is a part of culture. Through instructions and imitations, culture is passed on to the next generation.
- *It is continuous and cumulative:* As culture is a continuous process, in its historical growth it tends to be cumulative. It includes all past memories, achievements, issues of present, and also makes space for future endeavours. Rolph Linton, an American anthropologist terms culture as 'the social heritage of man'.
- *It is consistent and integrated:* Culture has a tendency to be consistent over a period of time. It integrates various aspects of society, like values, mores, beliefs, religion, customs, traditions, and so on.
- *It is dynamic and adaptive:* Culture includes both growth and change; it is thus, dynamic and not static. It adapts itself to the changing world.
- *It is satisfying:* Culture satisfies our needs for accomplishments, acknowledgement of our talents, it provides the environment for us to fulfill our different wishes and desires.
- *It varies from society to society:* Culture differs in every society. Each society has a culture unique to itself.
- *It is represented through symbols:* Each culture is composed of ideals which can be represented through various symbols, like saree, bindi, sindoor, skull cap in various cultures, and so on.

As we know, development refers to the 'change in human society due to economic process'. This economic process mainly refers to industrialization, which

NOTES

originated in Europe. Since culture is unique to every society, different societies with different cultures have reacted differently to this process of development.

According to the economist Amartya Sen, development is mainly progress, be it economic, social or cultural that serves the basic needs of both today and tomorrow. These needs include five interconnected freedoms namely, economic opportunities, political freedom, social freedom, transparency and protective security. Underdevelopment occurs when these basic needs and freedoms are denied or not equally accessible to all members of the populace. Underdevelopment is not the absence of development. It results from the uneven nature of human social, political and economic development. In the past and even now, theorists such as Amin (1972), Peter Bauer and Andre Gunder Frank (1966) have blamed the global economic structure for the underdevelopment of the Third World.'

Since culture is intangible and includes both material and non-material culture, its impact on the well-being of the people and on their development, is a complicated and complex issue. Diverse factors and events in history have affected development and culture in various ways. These are as follows:

- **Colonialism:** Colonialism transported European values and people around the world. It introduced industrial production and machine based technology replacing human labour and agriculture as primary sources of income. The exploitation of colonies by Imperialist European powers, in terms of resources and raw materials, left these colonies backward and extremely poor.
- **Slavery:** Slavery meant that people were bought and sold as commodities, especially in the African continent. Although, it has been outlawed in all societies, it left a trail of exploitation of human labour, from which Africa is yet to emerge.
- **Globalization, debt and unequal international trade relations in the present system:** Globalization refers to the process which has united and interconnected the world, and has social, political, economic and cultural implications. In 2000, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) identified four basic aspects of globalization: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge. Globalization has also led to monopolization by multinational companies (MNCs) in various economic arenas, so much so that some refer to the domination by MNCs as 'new age colonialism'.

In order to catch up with the developed world, developing and underdeveloped countries get into a cycle of debt. Unequal international trade is a part of the global economic transaction, which has led to a growing gap between the developed and developing countries, and has dominated international relations and diplomacy for a long time.

Types of Culture

In sociological studies, culture can be classified into two types: material and non-material culture. By **material culture**, we mean the physical objects, resources, and spaces that individuals use to define their culture. These encompass homes, neighbourhoods, cities, schools, temples, gurudwaras, mosques, offices, factories

and plants, tools, goods and products, and so on. These physical aspects of culture help define people's behaviour and perceptions. On the other hand, by **non-material culture** we mean the nonphysical ideas that individuals have about their culture, including beliefs, values, rules, norms, morals, language, organizations, and institutions. These encompass the values, symbols, beliefs, norms that people have. A prominent example of non-material culture would be religion, which comprises a set of ideas about God.

NOTES

Culture as an Aid to Development

Culture aids development in the following ways:

- It endows people of a society with ethics and morals, which helps in establishing a conducive environment for conducting business in an honest manner.
- It provides alternate indigenous development models to use resources in an environment-friendly way.
- Cultural tourism provides income and employment to a lot of people when it is marketed effectively.
- It provides people with spiritual satisfaction in a largely materialistic world.

Culture as an Impediment to Development

Culture acts as an impediment to development in the following ways:

- There are many disputes that have taken place or are taking place because of cultural reasons, i.e., ethnic or religious conflicts between different nations as well as within nations.
- There are problems when indigenous cultures try to adapt to new ways of life.
- Traditional systems of knowledge in some societies still promote superstitions, anti-scientific and backward beliefs.
- Women in many traditional societies are still treated as unequal and are made to perform domestic duties only.
- Many prejudices and inequalities like the caste system are obstacles in providing equal opportunities for all in society.

Issues Related to Development

- An underdeveloped country has to adapt itself to take on the challenge of civilization while preserving and developing its own culture.
- Technology in underdeveloped countries sometimes degrades the environment, eliminates jobs without compensation, forces rural-urban migration that leads to overcrowding and marginality, facilitates irresponsible genetic manipulation, and so on.
- The relationship between culture and development limits the role of explicitly cultural sectors (artisanry, fine arts, community culture, artistic training, cultural heritage) in the Indian economy. There are certain cultural and educational activities that do not generate enough income for their continued functioning.

NOTES

In such cases, the budgetary policies of the government and the capacity of other social agents, whether national and international, to mobilize resources to maintain and develop them are fundamental.

- The tendency towards indiscriminate privatization of public sector companies and utilities and the decrease in social, cultural and health budgets is one of the most serious problems for the future of the underdeveloped world.

The United Nations declared ten years from 1988 to 1997 as the ‘World Decade of Cultural Development’ UNESCO came up with a *Culture for Development Indicator Suite* to provide development actors with a tool that demonstrates how culture impacts development, as it looks at seven policy areas, called ‘dimensions’. These dimensions are illustrated by one to four sub-dimensions, which focus on a particular angle of the dimension in order to help elucidate its role in development processes. Each sub-dimension is in turn represented by at least one indicator. There has been testing of this indicator suite in fifteen countries, covering regions, like Ghana and Burkina Faso. The dimensions of the indicator suite are given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Dimensions of Culture for Development Indicator Suite

| Dimensions | Sub-dimensions |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Economy | 1. Added value of cultural activities to GDP 2. Employment in culture 3. Household expenditures on culture |
| Education | 1. Complete, fair and inclusive education for all 2. Valorization of interculturality, cultural diversity and creativity in the first two years of secondary school 3. Training of professionals in the cultural sector |
| Heritage | 1. Promotion and valorization of heritage |
| Communication | 1. Freedom of Expression 2. Access and Internet use 3. Diversity of media content |
| Governance and Institutionalility | 1. Standard-setting framework for culture 2. Policy and institutional framework for culture 3. Distribution of cultural infrastructure 4. Civil society participation in cultural governance |
| Social Participation | 1. Participation in cultural activities 2. Trust 3. Freedom of self-determination |
| Gender Equality | 1. Levels of gender equality 2. Perception of gender equality |

Valdes’ and Stoller in their paper entitled ‘Culture ad Development: Some Considerations for Debate’ give the following recommendations which would help in giving cultural policy the place, it deserves within a strategy for development:

- (i) Establish the greatest possible articulation between the institutions that represent the various dimensions of government policy: for example, culture-sciences, culture-environment, culture-economic planning, culture tourism,

culture-education, culture-public health, culture-sports, and culture-foreign relations.

- (ii) Work towards understanding and political endorsement of the concept that culture, in its broadest sense, is the essence of development so that government policies in various fields can be pursued within this conception.
- (iii) Identify specific forms of financing for the activities of the cultural sectors that require it by distributing part of the income generated elsewhere and by soliciting from governments the necessary budget allocations.
- (iv) Ensure that the economic, political, and social conditions exist for the most diverse, wide-ranging, and authentic cultural creativity.
- (v) Develop the cultural industries, emphasizing their contributions in terms of income and employment but guiding them with eminently cultural objectives and principles.
- (vi) Prioritize the conservation of tangible and intangible heritage, both natural and historical, as the principal cultural reference point of people, avoiding any action or investment whose narrowly economic or commercial orientation might impoverish that heritage.
- (vii) Incorporate into cultural policy the dimensions of gender and age, i.e., consciously stimulate the increased participation of women, children, and youth in cultural development, arresting the historical tendency, reinforced by globalization, to exclude or undervalue these social sectors.
- (viii) Emphasize the development and maintenance of a system of education, health, and social security for all citizens as a fundamental principle directly linked to the full realization of human beings.
- (ix) Stimulate increased academic research, multidisciplinary in nature, on the theme of culture and development at both the theoretical and the case study level, creating analytical instruments that allow us to measure the cultural development of society at each stage and the evolution of its aspirations.
- (x) Encourage an environment of interchange and debate within the scientific and intellectual communities and within government and political circles and between both communities and the rest of society.
- (xi) Guarantee the greatest possible opportunity for discussion of culture and development in the mass media to contribute to a greater consciousness among the people about the development, execution, and control of the policies whose goal is their material and spiritual well-being.

NOTES

3.4.1 Culture and Civilization

When the concept of culture first came into the picture in 18th and 19th century Europe, it referred to a process of cultivation or, rather, improvement, regarding horticulture or agriculture. In the 19th century, it connoted refinement of the individual, particularly through education, and also the fulfilment of national ideals. In the mid-19th century, scientists used the term in reference to a universal human capacity. For Georg Simmel, a German non-positivist sociologist, culture was

NOTES

‘the cultivation of individuals through the agency of external forms which have been objectified in the course of history.’ In the 20th century, ‘culture’ became vital to the study of anthropology. Today, its definitions, though far from concrete are more comprehensive than before. Culture may refer to the totality of socially transmitted behaviour patterns, beliefs and institutions arts, as well as all other products of human thought and work. Culture can also be defined as the predominating attitudes and behaviour that characterize a group or an organization’s functioning.

According to sociologists MacIver and Page, two great areas of human experience and of human activity are ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’. All that man does, all that he creates and all his artifacts fall permanently into one order or the other. It would include not only our systems of social organization but also our techniques and our material instruments. It would include the ballot box and the telephone alike; our laws, schools and banking systems as well as our banks. They argued that technology is a part of civilization. Within the order of civilization, they distinguished between basic technology and social technology.

Basic technology is directed towards man’s control over the natural phenomena. It is the area of the engineer and the mechanic. It applies the laws of physics, chemistry and biology to the service of human objectives. It rules the process of production in industry, agriculture and extractive industries. It constructs ships, planes, armaments, tractors and elevators and an endless variety of artifacts. It shapes and assembles the objects of every scale. It plans the modernized city and its parkways and also the newest design of women’s hats. Social technology, on the other hand, is a collection of techniques that are directed towards the regulation of the behaviour of human beings. It has two essential divisions, economic technology and political technology. Economic technology is concerned with economic processes and the immediate relationships between men, for the pursuit of economic means. Political technology regulates a wide range of human relationships. While MacIver and Page describe culture, they believe that, just as the typewriter belongs to one great order, similarly, the book that has been typed on it belongs to another great order. All material things that we bring into existence, give us something that we crave for or we need. All of them are expressions of us. They have been created to satisfy the need within us. This need is not an outer necessity. They belong to the realm of culture. This is the kingdom of principles, styles, emotional strings and intellectual ventures. They argue that culture is then the antithesis of civilization. It is the expression of our nature in our modes of living and thinking, in our everyday intercourse, in art, in literature, in religion, in recreation and in enjoyment.

MacIver and Page pointed the difference between culture and civilization in the following ways:

- **Civilization has a precise standard of measurement, but not culture:** When we compare the products of civilization, we can prove

which is superior and which is inferior. Since they are means to ends, their degree of efficiency can be readily estimated. This efficiency can be measured only if the end is clearly postulated. For instance, a lorry runs faster than a bullock cart, an airplane runs faster than a lorry and a power loom produces more than a handloom. On the other hand, cultural aspects that raise the ultimate problem of value cannot measure the culture.

NOTES

- **Civilization is always advancing, but not culture:** Civilization not only marches, it marches continuously, provided there is no catastrophic break of social continuity in the same direction. An achievement of civilization is generally exploited and improved, until it is superseded or rendered obsolete by some new invention. It is true that in the past, some achievements of civilization have again been lost. Men forgot the art which raised the pyramids of Egypt and constructed the roads and aqueducts of Rome. The reason for this was that these losses were a result of catastrophic changes which blotted out the records of civilization.

With a wide area of civilization and superior methods of recording discoveries, any utilitarian or technical gain becomes a permanent possession within the social heritage. It then conditions further gains. It is otherwise a cultural achievement. Since man first invented the automobile, it has continuously improved. Our means of transportation develop constantly. They are much superior to those which the ancient Greeks employed. But the same cannot be opined about our dramas and sculptures, our conversation and our recreation. Here certitude fails us. There are no automobiles which are today comparatively inefficient as the first vehicle of Henry Ford. His work and that of other inventors inevitably prepared the way for better cars. But our plays are not necessarily better today because of the achievements of Shakespeare. Culture is subject to retrogression as well as advancement. Its past does not assure its future.

- **Civilization is passed on without effort, but not culture:** Culture can only be assimilated by the like-minded. It can be had only by those who are worthy of it. No one can appreciate art without the quality of an artist. Civilization, in general, makes no such demand. We can enjoy its products without sharing the capacity which creates them. Civilization is the vehicle of culture; its improvement is no guarantee of finer quality in that which it conveys. Television can show movies, but there is no guarantee of their quality.
- **Civilization is external and mechanical, while culture is internal and organic:** Civilization is inclusive of external things. Culture is related to internal thoughts, feelings, ideals and values. According to MacIver, 'Civilization is what we have, culture is what we are'.

NOTES

Though culture and civilization have certain demarcation lines, they are interdependent. One can believe that they hardly exist apart from each other. Both are not only interdependent but also interactive. The articles of civilization called 'artifacts' are influenced by articles of culture known as 'mentifacts'. Similarly, culture is influenced by articles of civilization. The objects of civilization gradually acquire cultural aspects. The tools and artifacts of primitive communities are not tools, but actually symbols of culture.

Culture and Subcultures

A subculture is a group of people with a culture that differentiates them from the mainstream culture to which they belong. The subculture could be prominent and visible, such as contemporary urban youth subcultures, or hidden, such as gay or lesbian sub-cultures in conservative societies.

According to American sociologist Ken Gelder, there are six key methods by which subcultures can be identified. They are as follows:

1. Often negative relations to work (as 'idle', 'parasitic', at play or at leisure)
2. Negative or ambivalent relation to class (since subcultures are not 'class-conscious' and do not conform to traditional class definitions)
3. Association with territory (the 'street', the 'hood' and the club), rather than property
4. Movement out of the home and into non-domestic forms of belonging (i.e., social groups other than the family)
5. Stylistic ties to excess and exaggeration (with some exceptions)
6. Refusal of the banalities of ordinary life and massification

Subcultures strongly value the symbolism attached to the clothing, music and other visible manifestations by members, and also the ways in which these symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture.

3.4.2 Social Origins of Culture

Culture is not a simple accumulation of folkways and mores; it is an organized system of behaviour. Culture is always organized with cultural traits and complexes. Cultural traits are basically the smallest units of culture, for instance, shaking hands, offering prayer and saluting a flag. Every culture includes thousands of traits. Culture complex is a combination of different elements like religious ceremonies, magical rites, a courtship activity and a festivity. The culture complex is intermediate between the trait and the institution.

Culture can be characterized in the following ways:

- Culture is man-made
- Culture is learned
- Culture is transmitted

- Culture is specific to each society
- Culture is social, not individualistic
- Culture is an ideal for a group
- Culture satisfies human need
- Culture has adaptability
- Culture has integrative quality
- Culture shapes human personality
- Culture is both super-individual and super-organic

NOTES

Folkway

Folkways can be defined as practices, customs, or beliefs shared by the members of a group (specifically rural groups) as part of their common culture.

Willam Graham Sumner, in his book, *Folkways (1906)*, defined folkways as the usual, established, routine and regular way in which a group performs its activities. These activities can range from shaking hands, eating with knives and forks and driving on the left side of streets.

Folkways are established ways in which a social group behaves. This pattern of behaviour is exhibited to counter the problems faced by a group which lives in a society. Life in society has many problems and different problems give rise to different efforts to tackle them. Various societies come up with a variety of operational models for resolving their problems. Social groups may achieve a probable set of solutions through an experimental approach or some strange observation. Irrespective of the means by which they come upon a solution, its success establishes its acceptance as a normal way of behaviour. It is inherited by successive generations and surfaces as a behavioural tendency of the group of the folk, thus, it is known as a folkway. As stated by Sumner, psycho-physical traits have been transmitted genetically to men from their brutish ancestors. These traits include skills, nature of character and temperament that provide a solution to the problem of food supply, sex, business and self-importance. The outcome of this is a collection of occurrences like, flows of likelihood, harmony and collective inputs, which result in folkways. Folkways are, thus, outcomes of continuous recurrences that are seemingly insignificant activities, generally in large numbers. These activities arise when similar needs are experienced by a group.

American sociologist Lundberg agrees that folkways assign similarities in group behaviour to the way of life of individuals in that group. These are born out of recurring or occasional needs or happenings. In this manner, it is believed that the collection of instinctive behavioural patterns governs and protects the existence and development of a social group. This collection includes rituals and practices that have been transmitted from one generation to the other, along with alteration and addition of new features, corresponding to the fluctuating needs of time. These symbolize man's exclusive trait of changing himself to become accustomed to the environment. None of the individuals within the group is ever sceptical about a folkway.

NOTES

The concept of culture can be visualized as an ongoing repository, which keeps on adding material and non-material elements that have been socially inherited by future generations, from past generations. Culture is incessant because its patterns have surpassed the boundaries of time to recur in succeeding generations. Culture keeps on getting updated since every generation adds a new feature or quality to it.

Diffusion

Though invention contributed largely to cultural development, over a period of time, diffusion benefited it more. Diffusion means adopting the characteristics of culture from other societies, irrespective of their means of emergence in the source society.

For diffusion to prevail on a large scale, the societies should be segregated and their origin should be old enough so as to support the development of unique cultures. In addition to this, it is important for these societies to be mutually in touch with each other. This would provide options for substantial borrowing. Such scenarios have gained momentum only in the later stages of evolution. Once the process of cultural borrowing began, it turned so persistent that a large number of elements of modern cultures were borrowed.

Both invention and diffusion have contributed to the development of culture. The initial start was slow because it was mostly caused by invention. However, with the growth of the culture base, societies were further set apart. This caused an expanded increase in the diffusion of traits and a simultaneous increase in the growth factor. At present, the growth factor of culture has scaled spectacular heights, especially in the Western countries.

Custom

A habit, once formed, becomes a normal way of life. Customs usually comprise mutual give and take, accompanied by compulsive responsibilities. Additionally, customs also abide by the law, in the absence of which they would be worthless. According to Maclver and Page, custom sets up its own kind of social order which curbs the disagreements that rise between custom and law. Thus, customs streamline the entire social life of an individual. Law is not equipped enough to cover all activities of social behaviour. Practices of rituals and customs add to the harmony within a social group. Often, the effect of customs crosses the boundaries of one's own community. In certain cases, custom is the measure of the relations between two enemy communities, for instance, it is the custom of the Bedouins of the Arabian desert not to damage any water-well, even if it belongs to the enemy.

However, a few of the customs have no impact on social control. These customs exist simply because they have been there since ancient times and people of all generations have been practising them. A perfect example of this is the custom of people bathing in an unclean pond or lagoon simply because it has been an age-old religious practice. Although, in many traditional societies, religious rituals and customs are losing their significance. In other words, custom is viewed just like public opinion. It has a strong impact on life in social groups simply because it is the only factor which textually influences social behaviour.

Cultural Institutions and Media

Cultural institutions are an ideal support centre for a community to sustain its culture. A healthy culture has the ability to cope with changes to remain relevant. Today, in the age of the Internet and new media, cultural institutions have ample opportunities to connect with the wider world. They include the following:

- An attractive website that is regularly updated with the latest events
- Promotional pages on Facebook, Twitter and other social media
- Uploading videos of events on You Tube
- Maintaining a blog and discussion forum on the website
- Inviting local bloggers to write about cultural events
- Connecting to other organizations through LinkedIn

Components of Culture

The major components of culture fall under four heads. They are as follows:

- Communication components
- Cognitive components
- Behavioural components
- Material components

Communication components include language and symbols that enable members of a group to communicate with one another and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Cognitive components include ideas, knowledge, belief and values. Ideas can be used to create larger systems of information, that can become knowledge, which can be passed down from one generation to another. A belief assumes the truth of a proposition or statement, while values serve as guidelines for social living.

Behavioural components are concerned about the way—individuals who are members of a culture act and can further be categorized into mores, laws, folkway and rituals.

Material components include objects created by humans for practical use or for artistic reasons, such as art and architecture.

These components vary across cultures, and certain concepts need to be kept in mind while analysing those differences. These are discussed as follows:

1. Cultural relativism

This is a concept of analysing various societies or cultures in an objective way without comparing them with each other. It is not possible to study the activities of another group if they are analysed on the basis of our motives and values. Their activities must be analysed on the basis of their motives and values, for an unbiased understanding. Cultural relativism can be defined as the function that measures

NOTES

NOTES

trait on the basis of its cultural environment. In an isolated form, a trait is neither positive, nor negative. It can be regarded as positive or negative only on the basis of the culture in which it exists and thrives, for instance, fur clothes are important in the Polar region, but serve no purpose in deserts. In some societies, being fat is considered to be a sign of health and prosperity. However, in other societies, being fat is not only a waste but it also signifies bad health and ugliness. Thus, the idea of cultural relativism does not make all customs equally important or harmful. It believes that some customs may be extremely beneficial in some places, and may be very harmful elsewhere. It is a phenomenon that is related to the environment. The most prominent feature of cultural relativism is that in a certain type of environment, specific traits are just right because they are beneficial to that environment. However, if the same traits are shifted to an entirely different setting, they may result in a disaster by colliding with other traits of that culture.

2. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is interrelated with cultural relativity. Ethno is derived from a Greek term which means, people, country, and cultural bonding. Centric is derived from a Latin word, which means centre. Thus, ethnocentrism means the inclination of every society to place its own culture patterns at the centre of things. Ethnocentrism is the act of evaluating other cultural practices, in terms of one's own and obviously rating them as inferior. It is the tendency of considering one's own culture superior. This converts one's own culture into a yardstick which can be used to gauge all other cultures and rate them as right or wrong.

Ethnocentrism is the way humans respond in every society, group and walk of life. It is a part of the growth of every individual. It is reflected in the possessive nature of a child, who learns the difference between the toys which belong to him and which do not belong to him. He exhibits a superiority complex when he feels that his toys are better than those of other children, unless corrected by his parents or elders. Though parents may not encourage such ideas in their children in public, in the privacy of their homes, they may give him the feeling that his possessions are genuinely nice. The teaching of ethnocentrism may either be direct and intentional or indirect and unintentional. But at least a small part of it is purposeful. History has several evidences where it often teaches to place the accomplishments of one's own country higher than those of other countries. Religious, civic and other groups belittle their rivals in the most explicit ways. In the case of fully developed individuals, ethnocentrism simply translates as a reality of life.

As the awareness of ethnocentrism spreads, the urge to validate it in moral terms rises. However, it is to be noted that ethnocentrism is one of the characteristics of culture. Thus, similar to the remaining part of culture, it can be appraised only on the basis of its involvement in the maintenance of social order and in the promotion of social change.

Ethnocentrism has largely contributed to the maintaining of social order than for promoting social changes. Similarly, the efforts of ethnocentrism for maintaining

social order too are obvious. It begins by consolidating the unity of the group. This is based on the level of faith between companions. Ethnocentrism has both positive and negative influences. On the positive side, it brings about a steady status quo and on the negative side, it puts off change.

Ethnocentrism also obstructs the importance of collaboration between different groups. It believes that if one group functions in the best way, it does not need to interact with other groups which have lower standards of functioning. In reality, this stimulates the mental outlook of scepticism, disregard and animosity. Generally, disputes and clashes are caused by severe levels of ethnocentrism. This is evident by the historical details pertaining to wars and religious and racial conflicts.

Conflict brings about social changes through ethnocentrism, which in turn, promotes this change. There are cases when these changes are encouraged through peaceful evolution. In general, scientists advocate a peaceful evolution of social changes. They are against conflicts. As a result, they use diplomatic means to disregard ethnocentrism. They discourage their students to support and adopt ethnocentrism by defining it as a hindrance to the learning process. For this purpose, sociologists use a blend of the concepts of evolution and functionalism. On the other hand, ethnocentrism is used by radical groups (belonging to the downtrodden blacks, the poor, women and young people) to intensify their power and functioning. This is clearly visible in the form of slogans like 'black power'.

3. Acculturation

This is an expression that explains the manner in which different cultures interact with each other. It also defines the customs of such interactions. These interactive processes between cultures may either be socially interactive in a direct way or through media, or other forms of communication. As a result of these interactions, the identity and culture of the interacting groups change. In some cases, hostility between both the cultures may result in the emergence of a new form of culture. This new culture may adopt the characteristics of both the cultures.

4. Cultural lag

According to American sociologist, William F. Ogburn, objective inventions (technology) have greatly influenced social changes. Ogburn played a key role in promoting the theory that the number of inventions within a society is directly proportional to the magnitude of the existent culture. He also observed that the number of material inventions was growing with the passage of time. Ogburn held that both material and non-material cultures experience different changes. Changes that are affected in material culture have a particular direction and are dynamic in nature. This is because they have specific values of effectiveness, which are used as a base for estimating them. An instance of this can be seen in the use of airplanes. The development of airplanes involves continuous efforts to produce planes that can fly, higher and faster and can carry heavier cargo at minimum cost. Since these standards can be applied to the development of airplanes, all related inventions are directed to achieve these goals. On the contrary, in the case of non-material culture, such accepted standards are not a general occurrence. For instance, a person interested in paintings may prefer the work of either M.F. Hussain, or

NOTES

NOTES

Picasso, or Gainsborough. This choice is a result of his preference. Additionally, it is not necessary for these choices to remain constant. Likewise, government or economic organizations comprise contending forms of styles. These styles may be dictatorships, oligarchies, republics or democracies.

The economic system may have communist, socialist, feudal or capitalist style of functioning. Target-oriented changes, which are a feature of material culture, do not exist in most of the areas of non-material culture. Thus, Ogburn and other sociologists were of the opinion that changes in material culture are more dynamic than those in non-material culture. Surely, one of the most obvious highlights of modern life is the continuous growth of technology. Man's life has undergone tremendous changes with inventions like radio, TV, automobiles, airplanes, rockets, transistors and computers. These changes are within material culture. On the other hand, transformations in governments, economic systems, family lives, education and religion have been very gradual. These changes are non-material in nature. Ogburn introduced the concept of cultural lag after observing this disparity in the rates of cultural changes. According to him, material inventions promoted changes that required amendments to different domains of non-material culture. An invention like the automobile led to two different types of changes. On the one hand, it made traveling easier and on the other, it provided an easy escape for criminals.

Culture lag is the duration or gap of time that exists between the emergence of a new material invention and the process of adapting it to the corresponding non-material culture. This duration is usually long, for instance, the period between the invention of the typewriter and its practical use in offices was fifty years. Even today, most of the family systems are more suited to an agricultural economy rather than an industrial one. Thus, the theory of cultural lag is related to the type of social problems that are associated with it. Academics have visualized an equilibrium and tuning between material and non-material cultures. This tuning is disturbed when raw material objects appear. This disturbance results in a disproportion which is known as a social problem. This social problem continues till the non-material culture adapts itself to the new technology.

Culture and Personality

Culture is the hallmark of every society. It is the distinguishing mark of human society. The term personality has been used in contexts, both popularly and psychologically. However, its comprehensive and satisfactory use is integrated. The dynamic organization of physical, mental and social qualities of an individual is apparent to others, in the exchange of social life.

One can define personality as the collection of habits, mind-sets, behaviour and qualities of a person. These focus externally on specific and general roles and statuses. Internally, they are focused on self-consciousness and the concepts of self, ideas, values and purpose.

The characteristics of personality are the following:

- It is influenced by social interaction
- It is acquired
- It refers to persistent qualities of an individual

- It is an individual unit
- It is not related to bodily structure alone

The type of personality is generally defined by the culture which prevails in a specific social group. Culture plays a vital role in influencing the personality of a group. This has attracted the attention of the scholars of culture and various schools of thought that are concerned with personality.

The relationship between culture and personality involves on one side, the total social heritage available to the individual and to which he consciously and unconsciously responds and on the other, the integral character of the individual being. It can be argued that personality is everything that makes an individual. Personality comprises the total 'organized aggregate of psychological processes and states pertaining to the individual'. The culture personality focus is one that reminds us that the pattern of any culture basically determines the broad contours of individual personalities. These individual personalities, in turn, provide evidence of the culture pattern and tend to strive for its perpetuation.

Studies in culture and personalities

American anthropologist and folklorist Ruth Fulton Benedict, in her famous book, *Patterns of Culture*, developed the concept of culture pattern. She also focused on the significance of culture. The culture which is described in her book illustrates Benedict's idea that culture can be viewed as consisting of cultural configurations. These configurations are integrated under the domination of one general pattern. Therefore, a culture is analogous to individual beings, such that it is more or less a consistent pattern of thought and action. According to Benedict, integration of any culture is due to the arrangement of its content in a contemporary or permanent style, or design. This arrangement is defined as pattern, by Benedict. There is a particular style or design in every part of a culture. These separate designs, together present a grand design of culture as a whole. This is the configuration of culture. The emergence of this reunion in culture is due to a common tendency to see all aspects of culture. Benedict termed this main tendency a 'special genius' of culture. It is this 'genius of culture', that brings about its integration. This alone, is the basis of integration of form. Benedict proposed that two kinds of 'geniuses' are found in human society. One is 'Appollonian' and the other is 'Dionysian'. The word 'Appollonian' has been derived from Apollo, the Greek sun god. Greek people regarded the Sun as the God of peace, discipline, kindness and humanity. Therefore, in the Appollonian pattern of culture, one finds the existence of peace, discipline and kindness. Benedict has cited the example of Pueblo (a term used to describe modern and ancient communities of Native Americans). They are peace loving and disciplined. They extend help and cooperation to each other. Not only in Pueblo, but the Appollonian genius is found in all societies, which have peace and tranquility as their main qualities. These are the causes of their integration. The term 'Dionysian' has been derived from the Greek God Dionysius, who appeared to be connected to drinking and a luxurious way of life. In his way, the Dionysian genius is found in a culture, which experiences many storms and changes. Benedict cited the example of the Dobu and the Kwakwaka'wakw cultures of the north-west coast of America as representatives of the Dionysian genius. Thus, Benedict has accepted

NOTES

NOTES

patterns or geniuses as an ideal or an induced theory, which determines the behaviour of human beings.

Benedict was also concerned with showing the influence of personality on culture. She argued that Appollonian and Dionysian geniuses are integrated personalities of two cultural groups. These groups are quite opposite in their behaviour pattern. She also held how these two geniuses molded the personality of members of their cultural groups. The Appollonian personality compels the members of the group to behave peacefully and in a disciplined way. This ultimately forms special cultural characteristics of the concerned group. In the same way, the Dionysian personality shows its influence on the characteristics of the culture of a particular group. In this way, personality influences culture.

American cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, through her studies, has attempted to show the impact of culture on the formation of personalities. An individual is born in a particular culture and enters into a preformed cultural environment, which plays a significant role in the formation of his personality. An individual adopts not only the material aspects of a culture, i.e., house, tool, furniture and art, but also its non-material aspects. The non-material aspects may include parts of culture, such as religion, tradition, custom, rituals, beliefs, norms, values and ideals. It is culture which teaches an individual to behave in society, in a systematic way. An individual adopts culture through the processes of enculturation and assimilation. Mead studied the impact of culture on the personality formation of three primitive groups of New Guinea. These groups were Mundugumor, Arapesh and Tschambuli. Though these tribes lived in the same geographical region, they had different character and personalities. This was due to differences in their culture.

American anthropologist Ralph Linton, in his book, *Cultural Background of Personality* (1945), attempted to define and classify culture on the basis of behaviour. He has also defined personality and attempted to show how it was formed in a given cultural situation. He emphasized how personality influenced culture. According to Linton, 'culture may be defined as the sum total of knowledge, attitudes and natural behavior pattern, shared and transmitted by the members of a particular society.' He divided culture into three groups, based on the behaviour of their members. These groups are as follows:

- (i) Real culture (actual behaviour)
- (ii) Ideal culture (philosophical and traditional culture)
- (iii) Culture construct (what is written about culture)

Real culture is the aggregate of the behaviour of the members of a society, which are learned and shared in particular situations. It is the way of life of a community member. The ways of life differ from culture to culture. Ideal culture pattern is formed by philosophical traditions. In this, some traits of culture are regarded as ideals. When a culture is studied, it also reflects our understanding of that culture, which is to be written. This is known as culture-construct. Linton has also differentiated among cultural universals, cultural alternatives and cultural specialties. He argued that some cultural traits are necessary for all members of the society, while the other traits are shared

only by some members. The traits, which are followed by all members, are called universals of culture. For instance, man must clothe certain parts of body. This is a universal of culture. On the other hand, a person may choose among a number of religious beliefs, or even adopt none. Specialists are the elements of culture, which are shared by some, but not all groups, within a society. Linton used the term 'contra-culture pattern' to designate those groups, which not only differ from the prevailing pattern, but sharply challenge them. For instance, a group of thieves has its own norms and standards, which are compelling for all members of the group. However, these norms and standards sharply differ from the conventional prevailing patterns.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

9. What does the Systems Approach of Talcott Parsons state?
10. What is the criteria of individuality?
11. List the four basic aspects of globalization.
12. Define the term subculture.
13. Name the two great areas of human experience and activity.
14. List the main characteristic of culture.
14. Name the major components of culture.
16. State the book which has significantly contributed towards the development of culture pattern.

3.5 SOCIALIZATION

Socialization involves the processes by which an individual is taught the skills, behaviour patterns, values and motivations needed to competently function in a culture one is part of. According to sociologist, Robert MacIver, 'Socialization is the process by which social beings establish wider and profounder relationships with one another, in which they come closer to each other and build a complex structure of association.'

According to Kimball Young, President of the American Sociologist Association in 1945: 'Socialization means the process of inducting the individual into the social and cultural world of making him a particular member of a society and its various groups and inducing him to accept the norms and values of that society. Socialization is definitely a matter of learning and not of biological inheritance.'

Socialization can lead to uniformity in a society. As children grow up, the nature of socialization they receive is important in shaping not only their own personalities, but also the nature of the society they live in. If all children receive the same nature of socialization, then they may share the same beliefs and expectations. This is one of the reasons why many governments want a standardized educational curriculum in schools. In large, multi-cultural societies, however, such

uniformity is difficult to achieve as children belonging to different cultures receive different kinds of socialization.

Process of Socialization

NOTES

Socialization begins right after birth. Early childhood is a crucial period in the socialization of an individual as this is when the learning of language takes place and the child becomes aware of the culture that surrounds him and how it shapes his personality. Of course, socialization continues throughout life, and as children get older, they become aware of the roles they are expected to fulfil and their personalities are also shaped by the various experiences that they face.

Theories of Socialization

Some important theories of socialization were developed by Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Sigmund Freud.

Charles Horton Cooley

Cooley, in his book *Social Organization*, writes that the construction of self and society are twin-born and that we know one as immediately as we know the other. He further says that 'The notion of a separate and independent ego is an illusion'. He reiterates that self-consciousness can arise only in a society and it is inseparable from social consciousness. According to him, the self is social. The basic idea of the conception is, 'the way we imagine ourselves to appear to another person is an essential element in our conception of ourselves. He believes that there are three steps in the process of building 'looking-glass self'.

- (i) Our perception of how we look to others
- (ii) Our perception of their judgement of how we look
- (iii) Our feeling about these judgements

Thus, we are constantly revising our perception of how we look. Just like a mirror that gives an image of physical self, so the perception of the reaction of others gives an image of the social self. Another important point is that the perception of the judgement of others, is the active factor in the self-image forming process.

G.H. Mead, basically a psychologist, agreed completely with Cooley that it is absurd to look at the self or the mind from the viewpoint of an individual organism. Although it may have its focus on the organism, it is undoubtedly a social product and a social phenomenon. He believes that the self arises in interaction with the social and nonsocial environment. The social environment is particularly important.

The basic argument which Mead developed was in support of this conclusion and also in support of his theory of 'Me' and 'I'. For Mead, 'Me' is that group of organized attitude to which the individual responds. He called the acting self 'I'. 'Me' on the other hand, is part of the self which consists of the internal attitudes of others.

The process of personalizing the attitudes of others has been aptly described by Mead, who developed the concept of 'generalized other'. This generalized other is composite of the expectations that one believes, others hold towards one. Awareness of the generalized other is developed through the process of taking

and playing roles. Playing a role is acting out the behaviour of a role that one actually holds, whereas in taking a role, one only pretends to hold the role.

Mead argues that a three-stage process is through which one learns to play adult roles. These three stages are as follows:

- (i) **Preparatory stage (1–3 years):** It is the stage in which a child imitates adult behaviour without any real understanding.
- (ii) **Play stage (3–4 years):** It is the stage when children have some understanding of the behaviour but switch roles erratically. At one moment, the boy is a builder who is piling blocks and a moment later, he knocks them apart. Similarly, at one moment, he is a policeman and a moment later he becomes an astronaut.
- (iii) **Game stage (4–5 years):** It is the stage where the role behaviour becomes consistent and purposeful and the child has the ability to sense the role of the other players. To play baseball, each player must understand his own role, as well as the role of other players. Thus, one develops an ability to see one's own behaviour in relation to others and sense the reaction of the people involved.

Mead's theory of role taking is an essential learning process in socialization. Both Cooley and Mead explain the process of interaction. They saw personality as shaped through our social interaction with others. Both assumed a basic harmony between self and society. To Cooley, the separate individual was an abstract idea that had no existence apart from society, just as society has no meaning apart from individuals. The socialized self is shaped by the society and the society is an organization of the persons it socializes. Thus, self and society were two aspects of the same thing.

Sigmund Freud saw self and society in basic conflict, not harmony. He believed that self is the product of the ways in which basic human motives and impulses are denied and repressed by the society. Freud believed that the rational portion of human motivation was like the visible part of an iceberg. The larger part of human motivation that rests within the unseen forces has a powerful effect on human conduct. He divided the self into three parts:

- (i) The Id
- (ii) The ego
- (iii) The super ego

The Id is the pool of instinctive and unsocial desires and impulses, which are selfish and antisocial.

Ego is the conscious and rational part of the self, which oversees the super ego's restraint of the Id.

Super ego is the complex of social ideals and values which one has internalized and which form part of consciousness.

Ego is the control centre, whereas super ego is the police officer and Id is a combination of selfish and destructive desire. Since society restricts the expression of aggression, sexuality and other impulses, the Id is continually at war with the super ego. The Id is usually repressed, but at times it breaks through in open

NOTES

NOTES

defiance of the super ego, creating a burden of guilt that is difficult for the self to carry. At other times, the forces of the Id find expression in misguided forms which enable the ego to be unaware of the real and underlying reasons for its actions. For example, a parent relieves hostility by beating the child, believing that this is for its own good. Thus, Freud finds that self and society are often opponents and not merely different aspects of the same thing. Freud sees self and society in eternal conflict.

Types of Socialization

According to clinical psychologist Ian Robertson, the socialization that a person undergoes in the course of his lifetime may be divided into the following four types:

- (i) Primary socialization is the most fundamental and essential type of socialization. It takes place in early childhood. In this stage, a child internalizes norms and learns language and cognitive skills.
- (ii) Anticipatory socialization is where human beings learn the culture of a group of which they are immediate members. They also learn the culture of a group with the anticipation of joining that group. This is referred to by American sociologist R.K. Merton as 'anticipatory socialization'.
- (iii) Developmental socialization is the kind of socialization that is based on the achievement of primary socialization. It is based on already acquired skills and knowledge as the adult progresses through new situations, such as marriage or new jobs. These require new expectations, obligations and roles. New learning is added to and blended with the old in a relatively smooth and continuous process of development.
- (iv) Re-socialization takes place mostly when a social role radically changes. An individual not only changes roles within a group, but also changes groups.

Agencies of Socialization

One can conceive of socialization, then, as a succession of processes occurring at various stages of development, with the child's family of origin being the first.

Let us now discuss the various agencies of the socialization process.

The Family

The family gets the baby first. Therefore, the process of socialization begins in the family. The child is born with some basic abilities that are genetically transmitted from his parents. These abilities and capacities are shaped in a way that is determined by culture. The mother, with whom the relation of child is most intimate, plays a significant role in the process of moulding the child in the initial stages. Subsequently, the father and older siblings transmit other values to the child. Values like knowledge and skill are transmitted, that children are expected to acquire in a particular society.

The Peer Group

As the child grows older, his contemporaries begin to influence him. He spends most of his spare hours outside his work and study schedule, with his peers in the

playground and places outside his home. The attraction of peers is virtually irresistible to him. He learns from them and they also learn from him. As time passes, the peer group influence surpasses that of his parents, significantly. Teenage is the stage when misunderstanding occurs between parents and children. In socialization of the child, the members of the family, particularly those who exercise authority over him and members of his peer group exercise two different types of influences on him. Both, authoritarian and equalitarian relationships are equally significant to him. He acquires the virtues of respect, constraint and obedience from the first type of relationships and the virtues of cooperation that is based on trust and mutual understanding, from the second.

The importance of equalitarian element in the socialization process rests on altogether different grounds. There is free and spontaneous interaction instead of coercion among those who have equalitarian relationships. They view the world in the same way, share the same subjective attitude and consequently, have perfect understanding of one another. This applies to age mates, sex mates and classmates. They learn shades of meaning, fads and crazes, secret modes of gratification and forbidden knowledge from one another. Part of this knowledge is often socially useful and yet socially tabooed. Renowned American sociologist and demographer Kingsley Davis has given the instance of knowledge of sex which is supposed to remain undisclosed until marriage. If this were followed, the problems of maladjustment and aberration of many kinds would not have been infrequent. Fortunately, such knowledge is transmitted as a part of the lore that passes from child to child.

The School

The school is the second agency of socialization. When a child comes to school, his formal indoctrination into the culture of the society begins. In school, the child gets his education, which moulds his ideas and attitudes. He is formally introduced to the lore and the learning, the arts and the science, the values and beliefs, the customs and taboos of the society, from a wider circle. His teacher plays a very significant role. Education is of great importance in socialization. A well-planned system of education can produce a socialized person.

The Books

In literate societies, another important agency of socialization is the printed word in books and magazines. Experiences and knowledge of the cultural world, values and beliefs, superstitions and prejudices are expressed in words. According to American sociologist Robert Bierstedt, 'Words rush at us in torrent and cascade; they leap into our vision as in newspaper, magazine and text book'. Textbooks are written by authors. They join the teachers, the peers and the parents in the socialization process.

The Mass Media

Apart from newspapers which carry printed words, the two other mass media, viz., radio and television, exercise tremendous influence on the socialization process.

NOTES

NOTES

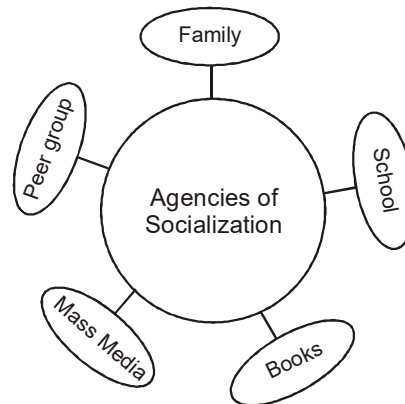


Fig. 3.1 Agencies of Socialization

Changing Patterns of Socialization, Culture and Social Structure

Social interactions are actions or practices of two or more mutually oriented people towards each other's selves. In other words, it is any behaviour that tries to influence or take account of one another's subjective experiences. Thus, parties involved in social interaction must have each other's self in mind. This does not mean that two people have to be tangible to each other to socially interact. A letter, for instance, can be used for social interaction.

Social interaction necessitates a mutual orientation. For instance, spying on a person is not social interaction as that person is unaware of what is going on. Criminal behaviour of individuals who treat people as objects is also not considered as social interaction. As a matter of fact, wherever people treat each other as objects, there is no social interaction.

These days, with the advent of social media, the patterns of social interaction have changed and this has influenced social culture and social structure to a great extent. There are so many different social media these days, which includes the Internet forums, social blogs, weblogs, podcasts, photographs or pictures, that the world is 'smaller' and better connected than ever before. Nothing is quite a 'secret' anymore.

Social interaction is the most important aspect of social life. When people live in a community they interact with each other, they communicate with each other. Such interaction is a continuous process. Social interaction is also essential for the survival of any community and culture.

One can study social interaction at two levels, micro and macro. Micro means limited to an individual level. Micro interaction at a larger scale is within a community, state, nation and international level.

One can also argue that social interaction is the basic ingredient of social relationships. Social interaction refers to the entire range of social relationships, wherein there is reciprocal stimulation and response among individuals. An aggregate of individuals becomes a community and communities form a society. Social interaction is the base of social relations. It also establishes cultural and physical relations.

According to Park and Burgess, social interaction has two essential aspects:

- Social contact
- Communication

Social contact can be established through a medium of conversation, letters, messages, mobile phone/telephone and other modes of communication, even between people who are separated by thousands of miles. Social contact is also strengthened by physical contact.

Forms of Social Interaction

Social interaction essentially takes place in associative and dissociative forms. These forms of social interaction are also designated as social processes.

Associative Social Processes

Associative forms of social interaction can be divided into three categories:

- Cooperation
- Accommodation
- Assimilation

(i) Cooperation

Cooperation is the most pervasive and continuous form of social processes. It integrates one individual with the other, it also integrates one community with the other. The word 'cooperation' has been derived from two Latin words, *co* means together and *operari* means work. Cooperation generally means working together in pursuit of continuous and common endeavour of two or more persons to perform a task or to reach a goal that is commonly cherished. According to Merrill and Eldredge, 'Cooperation is a form of social interaction wherein two or more persons work together to gain a common end'. Cooperation always requires joint or organized efforts and a common end.

According to Cooley, 'Cooperation arises when men see that they have a common interest and have at the same time, sufficient intelligence and self-control to seek this interest through united action. Perceived unity of interest and faculty of organization are the essential facts in intelligent combination'. Cooperation also requires mutual aid. Cooperation is possible when there is similarity of purpose, mutual awareness, mutual understanding and mutual helpfulness. Cooperation is brought about by several circumstances like desire to achieve a common goal, situational necessity and desire to achieve larger objective.

The modes of cooperation in social life may be divided into two principal types:

- (a) Direct cooperation
- (b) Indirect cooperation

NOTES

NOTES

Direct cooperation may include all activities that people perform together. The essential character of these activities is that people perform them in company, which they cannot do separately or in isolation. When two or three companies carry a load together which would be very annoying for one of them to carry alone, such a cooperation may be characterized as direct cooperation.

Indirect cooperation may include those activities which people perform, unlike tasks towards a common goal. The principle of division of labour, that is embedded in the nature of social life, exemplifies indirect cooperation. This mode of cooperation is revealed wherever people combine their differences for mutual satisfaction or for a common goal.

Cooperation is a universal phenomenon. Without cooperation, neither an individual nor a community will survive. Mutual aid starts with cooperation in rearing of progeny and in the provision of protection and food. Even among the lowest group of animals such as ants and termites, cooperation is evident for survival.

(ii) Accommodation

Accommodation is essentially a process of adjustment, a sort of working arrangement among persons or groups who are not favourably disposed towards each other. Just as adaptation is a biological process, similarly, accommodation is a social process. The question of accommodation arises only in situations of conflict. Had there been no conflict, there would have been no necessity for adjustment and, hence, no need for accommodation. A compromise that is reached by conflicting parties is termed as accommodation.

Accommodation is the resolution of conflicts which generally means adjusting oneself to the new environment. Adjustment may be to the physical or social environment. Adjustment to physical environment takes place through organic or structural modification that is transmitted by heredity and is termed as adaptation, while adjustment to social environment is achieved by an individual through the acquisition of behaviour patterns. These behavioural patterns are transmitted socially and through adoption of new ways of behaving and are called accommodation. Therefore, animals that are lower than man adjust themselves most frequently through adaptation; man does this primarily through accommodation as he lives in a truly social environment. Accommodation is a social process, whereas adaptation is a biological process.

Modes of Accommodation

Accommodation is social adaptation that involves the invention or borrowing of devices whereby one ethnic group develops modes of life, economic and otherwise. These modes complement or supplement those of others groups. It is primarily concerned with the adjustment issuing from the conflict between individuals and groups. In a society, individuals have to resolve their conflicts sooner or later. This compromise that is reached by conflicting parties is accommodation. According to authors Park and Burgess, in accommodation, the antagonism between conflicting elements is temporarily regulated. This is why Summer referred to accommodation

as antagonistic cooperation. Accommodation or resolution of conflicts may be brought about in many different ways and accordingly, may assume various forms. The most important of these forms are as follows:

Compromise: When the combatants are equal in strength and neither may be able to prevail over the other, they attain accommodation by agreeing to a compromise. In compromise, each party to the dispute makes some concessions, yields to some concessions and yields to some demand of the other. The 'all or nothing' attitude gives way to a willingness to yield up to a certain point in order to gain another. A compromise is a state in which everyone can find consolation for his disappointment by reflecting that every one else is disappointed too. The settlement of disputes in the parliament involves accommodation of this kind.

Arbitration and conciliation: Accommodation is also achieved by means of arbitration and conciliation which involves attempts on the part of the third party to bring an end to the conflict between contending parties. The labour management conflict may be between a husband and a wife, or sometimes, it may be a political conflict. These are resolved through the intervention of an arbitrator or a mediator in whom both the parties have complete confidence. In the international law, mediation or arbitration is a recognized mode of settling international disputes.

Toleration: Toleration is the form of accommodation in which there is no settlement of difference but there is only the avoidance of overt conflict. In toleration, no concession is made by any of the groups and there is no change in the basic policy. It involves accepting a group despite some state of affairs that are definitely objectionable to the other group. However, each group must bear with the other. Toleration is best exemplified, particularly in the field of religion where the different religious groups exist side by side. Each has some rights over others which it can also claim for itself. The coexistence of states with radically different economic and social systems such as communist and capitalist systems is an example of toleration. The difference in such cases cannot be resolved as they involve irreconcilable ideologies.

Superordination and subordination: The most common accommodation is the establishment and recognition of the order of superordination and subordination. The organization of any society is essentially a result of this type of accommodation. In a family, relationships among parents and children are based in terms of superordination and subordination. In larger groups, whether social or economic, relationships are fixed on the same basis. Even under a democratic order, there are leaders and followers who give orders and others who follow them. When individuals ordinarily accept their relative positions as a matter-of-fact, accommodation is said to have reached a state of perfection.

- Accommodation also checks conflicts and enables persons and groups to maintain cooperation, which is an essential condition of social life.
- It also enables individuals to adjust themselves to changed conditions. Therefore, it not only controls but also maintains the necessary security of a social order, without which it may be difficult for the individuals to carry on their activities together.
- Society is the result of accommodation.

NOTES

NOTES

Conversion: The process of conversion occurs when one of the contending parties tries to convert the other party/parties to his point of view by proving that his views are right and the other party/parties viewpoints are wrong. Though widely used in the religious context, conversion takes place in the political, economic and other fields as well.

Sublimation: In this method, non-aggressive attitudes and activities substitute aggressive ones. For instance, conquering hatred through love and compassion is an act of sublimation. In psychology, it is referred to as a mature type of defence mechanism in which unacceptable impulses are transformed into socially acceptable behaviour.

Rationalization: Rationalization is an imaginary premise that justifies action or conduct. In this method of accommodation, contending parties attempt to justify their actions based on imaginary grounds. Thus, rationalization involves reasonable excuses or explanations for an individual's behaviour. For instance, an athlete who does not win a race due his negligence and lack of training, blames his school's coaching system for his failure.

(iii) Assimilation

Assimilation refers to a process whereby a group of people that has lived among another group of people for a considerable period of time adopts the way of life of the latter. This way both groups are completely indistinguishable from each other. Assimilation is both psychological and social. According to sociologist Nimkoff, 'Assimilation is the process whereby individuals or groups, once dissimilar, become similar and identified in their interests and outlook'. According to American sociologist Lundberg: 'Assimilation is a word used to designate a process of mutual adjustment through which culturally different groups gradually obliterate their differences to the point where they are no longer regarded as socially significant or observable'.

According to sociologists Horton and Hunt, 'The process of mutual cultural diffusion through which persons and groups come to share a common culture is called assimilation.'

According to sociologist Park and Burgess, 'Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, attitudes of other persons or groups and by sharing their experiences and history are incorporated with them in a cultural life.'

When different cultures come into contact, originally, it is the sentiment of mutual conflict that is most prominent, but they gradually assimilate elements from each other. In the process of assimilation, the two distinct groups do not just compromise to get along with each other, they also become much like each other, such that they are no longer distinguishable as separate groups. Assimilation is a social and a psychological process.

Assimilation also takes place with foreigners or migrants, who are being assimilated in the host culture. Assimilation also takes place the other way round. It is a very slow and gradual process, it takes quite some time for individuals or groups who were once dissimilar to become similar, that is become identified by

their interests and outlook. Acculturation takes place before assimilation, when one cultural group which is in contact with another appropriates or borrows certain cultural elements from it and incorporates them into its own culture. Social contact and acquisition of new values and norm are also part of assimilation.

Assimilation is not a simple but an essentially complex process. There are certain factors which facilitate assimilation and others, which create hurdles in the process of assimilation.

According to John Lewis Gillin and John Phillip Gillin, factors that favour assimilation are as follows:

- Tolerance
- Equal economic opportunity
- Sympathetic attitude on part of the dominant group, towards the minority group
- Exposure to dominant culture
- Similarity between cultures of the minority and dominant groups

Factors that go against assimilation are as follows:

- Isolated condition of life
- Attitude of superiority on part of the dominant group
- Excessive psychological pressure
- Cultural and social difference between the groups
- Persecution of the minority group by the majority group

According to Maclver, cultural differences, particularly those of language and religion are usually considered to be the main constitutions of culture. Immigrants having the same religion and language as the people of the country of their adoption can easily adjust themselves there. For example, in the US English speaking people are assimilated quickly and easily, whereas those who do not speak English face difficulty in being assimilated there. Customs and beliefs are other cultural characteristics which can aid or hinder assimilation.

Prejudice may also impede assimilation. Prejudice also impedes assimilation between constituent elements within a given society. Religious groups often allow the social distance that is created by prejudice to maintain there separateness. Prejudice may be the outcome of some unpleasant experiences such as, fear of losing superior status, dread of economic competition or some form of collective phobia.

The differences between assimilation and accommodation are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Differences between Assimilation and Accommodation

| Assimilation | Accommodation |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Assimilation is permanent. | Accommodation is non-permanent. |
| Assimilation is a slow process. | Accommodation may be a sudden process. |
| Assimilation is unconscious. | Accommodation is deliberate. |

NOTES

NOTES

Dissociative Social Processes

Dissociative forms of social processes can be divided into two categories:

- Competition
- Conflict

1. Competition

According to sociologist Kingsley Davis, 'Competition simply aims to outdo the competitor in achieving a mutually desired goal.' The urge to outdo arises only when the desired goal is in scarce supply. Competition is actually the most fundamental form of social struggle. It is also considered to be very healthy and a necessary social process. Competitive spirit is deliberately inculcated in order to produce a result which is considered to be socially desirable.

According to American sociologists Anderson and Parker, 'Competition is that form of social action in which we strive against each other for the possession of or use of limited material or non-material good'. According to Bogardus 'Competition is a contest to obtain something which does not exist in a quantity that is sufficient to meet the demand.'

Authors Sutherland, Woodward and Maxwell defined competition as, '... an impersonal, unconscious, continuous struggle between individuals or groups for satisfaction which, because of their limited supply, all may not have.'

- **Competition is an impersonal struggle:** According to Park and Burgess, 'Competition is an "interaction without social contact." It means that it is an inter-individual struggle that is impersonal. It is usually not directed against any individual or group in particular. The competitors are not in contact and do not know each other.
- **Competition is an unconscious activity:** It takes place on an unconscious level.
- **Competition is universal:** It is found in every society and in every age group.
- **Competition is not an inborn tendency:** It is a social phenomenon. It takes place only when the desired thing is in short supply.
- Competition can be seen at different levels. Like social, cultural, political and economic levels.

2. Conflict

According to Gillin and Gillin, 'Conflict is the process in which individuals or groups seek their ends by directly challenging the antagonist either by violence or by threat of violence. As a social process, it is the antithesis of cooperation. Conflict is conscious action. It is a deliberate intent to oppose. Conflict is also universal. Conflict expresses itself in numerous ways and in various degrees and over every range of human conduct. Its modes are always changing with changes in social and cultural conditions. Some types disappear and new types emerge.'

According to Maclver, conflict can be divided into two types:

- **Direct conflict:** When individual or groups thwart, impede, restrain, injure or destroy one another in an effort to attain a common goal, direct conflict occurs.
- **Indirect conflict:** When individuals or groups do not actually impede the efforts of one another but nevertheless, seek to attain their ends in ways that obstruct the attainment of the same ends by the other, indirect conflict occurs.

Kingsley Davis has argued, 'Conflict is a part of human society because of the kind of society.' He further observed, 'As a matter of fact, society itself engenders conflict situations and cannot avoid doing so. By allotting different statuses to different people, it lays the base for envy and resentment. By giving authority to one person over another, it sets the stage for the abuse of authority and for retaliation by force. By instilling ends that are competitive, it makes it possible for competition to convert into violence.'

As we have discussed, conflict is universal. It occurs at all times and in every place. There has never been a time or a society in which some individuals or groups did not come into conflict. According to English scholar Malthus, scarce means of subsistence is the cause of conflict. According to Darwin, the principle of struggle for existence and survival of the fittest are the main causes of conflict. According to Freud, 'The innate instinct for aggression in man is the main cause of conflict.' It arises primarily due to a clash of interests within groups and societies and between groups and societies. Conflict also arises as a result of the difference between the rate of change in moral norms of a society and men's desire, hopes, dissatisfaction and demands.

Cultural differences among groups sometimes cause tension and lead to conflict. Religious differences have occasionally led to wars and persecution in history. Clash of interests also cause conflict. The interest of workers, clash with those of employers which leads to conflict among them. When a part of society does not change along with changes in other parts, then conflict occurs. Social change causes a cultural lag which leads to a conflict.

Changing Patterns of Culture

Culture constantly changes and goes through innovation. Presently, one can say that humanity is in a global accelerating cultural change period, driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, and the population explosion.

It is not only change that affects or shapes cultures. It is also the resistance to change that shapes a particular culture. Social conflict and the development of technologies can produce numerous changes within a society by altering social dynamics and promoting new cultural models. Along with these changes may come ideological and cultural changes. For instance, the late 20th century change in the role of women led to long-lasting changes in gender relations. War can also make a great impact on culture and social dynamics.

NOTES

NOTES

One culture may also be affected by another, which may produce great social changes through acculturation and diffusion. In diffusion, a component of one culture is transferred to another in form, if not in meaning. For instance, hamburgers, which are mundane in USA first seemed exotic when introduced in India. In acculturation, the traits of one culture are replaced with those of another, as has been seen in colonial experiences.

Changing Patterns of Social Structure

Changing patterns in culture often go hand in hand with changing patterns of social structure. Social structure is subject to change, as has been seen in the last 100 years in particular, as old orders of caste, class and race have collapsed. In India, for instance, formerly deprived communities today have political power, and along with that social prestige. In China, in the aftermath of the cultural revolution, there was a great upheaval in social structure as the former elite found themselves victims. In South Africa under Apartheid, Blacks had no power whatsoever. In Post-Apartheid South Africa, however, Blacks rule the country and many former oppressed are now better off than their former oppressors.

Check Your Progress

17. What are the three parts of the self as put forward by Sigmund Freud?
18. List the three steps involved in the process of building 'looking-glass self'.
19. How can one gain the awareness of generalized other?
20. What do you understand by the term social interaction?
21. List any three factors that favour assimilation.

3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The Muslims constitute the second largest religious group in India.
2. 'Unity in Diversity' expresses the opinion that India is a unified country while retaining its cultural diversity as well.
3. The 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.
4. Sanskritization process promotes the sacred outlook, while Westernization promotes the secular outlook. Sanskritization and Westernization are founded upon empirical observations and offer objective insight into various aspects of cultural change.

5. According to the Grierson (Linguistic Survey of India, 1903–28) there are 179 languages and as many as 544 dialects in the country. The Constitution of India, in its Eighth Schedule recognizes ‘twenty-two’ official languages with English as an important associate language.
6. The caste system is divided into four major castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. Brahmins are the priests and the uppermost caste. Kshatriyas are the warriors, Vaisyas the business class, and Sudras are the working class. Inter-caste marriages, once forbidden, are commonplace in the urban areas today. Untouchability still persists, with the Dalits treated as untouchables and reduced to menial jobs like cleaning the streets and so forth. Today, with burgeoning urbanization, the caste system does not have an influence it once did on society.
7. Yogendra Singh contends that tradition means value, i.e., themes encompassing the entire social system of Indian society, prior to the beginning of modernization, were organized on the principles of hierarchy, holism, continuity and transcendence. These four value-themes were deeply interlocked with other elements of the Indian social structure.
8. Globalization in India began in 1991.
9. The Systems Approach of Talcott Parsons claims that the governance of individual relationships at the micro level is taken care of by the macro level. Moreover, the functional contribution of an individual to the society is so indispensable that the society cannot live without the individual and vice versa.
10. The criterion of individuality is not the extent to which each individual differs from the rest. It is rather, how far each acts autonomously in his own consciousness and with his own interpretation of the claims of others.
11. The four basic aspects of globalization are: trade and transactions, capital and investment movements, migration and movement of people and the dissemination of knowledge.
12. A subculture is a group of people with a culture that differentiates them from the mainstream culture to which they belong.
13. The two great areas of human experience and human activity are culture and civilization.
14. The main characteristics of culture are as follows:
 - It is man-made
 - It is learned
 - It is specific to each society
 - It is social and not individualistic
15. The major components of culture are of four types namely:
 - (a) Communication components
 - (b) Cognitive components

NOTES

NOTES

(c) Behavioural components

(d) Material components

16. Ruth Fulton Benedict's famous book *Patterns of Culture* has significantly contributed towards the development of culture pattern.
17. The three parts of the self as put forward by Sigmund Freud are: preparatory stage, play stage, and game stage.
18. The three steps involved in the process of looking-glass self are as follows:
 - Our perception of how we look to others
 - Our perception of their judgement of how we look
 - Our feeling about these judgements
19. The awareness of generalized other is developed through the process of taking and playing roles.
20. Social interaction refers to the entire range of social relationships, wherein there is reciprocal stimulation and response between individuals.
21. The three factors which favour assimilation are: tolerance, equal economic opportunity and exposure to dominant culture.

3.7 SUMMARY

- The Systems Approach of Talcott Parsons claims that the governance of individual relationships at the micro level is taken care of by the macro level.
- Edward B. Tylor, a famous English anthropologist, has given a widely used definition of culture. He defines culture as, 'that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man, as a member of society.'
- The characteristics of culture are as follows:
 - o It is learned
 - o It is social
 - o It is shared
- When the concept of culture first came into the picture in 18th and 19th century Europe, it referred to a process of cultivation or, rather, improvement, regarding horticulture or agriculture.
- According to McIver and Page, two great areas of human experience and of human activity are 'culture' and 'civilization'.
- A subculture is a group of people with a culture that differentiates them from the mainstream culture to which they belong.
- Culture can be characterized in the following ways:
 - o Culture is man-made
 - o Culture is learned

- o Culture is transmitted
- o Culture is not specific to each society
- o Culture is social, not individualistic
- The major components of culture fall under four heads. They are:
- Communication components
 - o Cognitive components
 - o Behavioural components
 - o Material components
- Ethnocentrism is interrelated with cultural relativity. Thus, ethnocentrism means the inclination of every society to place its own culture patterns at the centre of things. Ethnocentrism is the act of evaluating other cultural practices, in terms of one's own and obviously rating them as inferior.
- The type of personality is generally defined by the culture which prevails in a specific social group. Culture plays a vital role in influencing the personality of a group.
- Acculturation is an expression that explains the manner in which different cultures interact with each other. It also defines the customs of such interactions. These interactive processes between cultures may either be socially interactive in a direct way or through media, or other forms of communication.
- Culture lag is the duration or gap of time that exists between the emergence of a new material invention and the process of adapting it to the corresponding nonmaterial culture. This duration is usually long, for instance, the period between the invention of the typewriter and its practical use in offices was fifty years.
- Real culture is the aggregate of the behaviour of the members of a society, which are learned and shared in particular situations. It is the way of life of a community member.
- Socialization involves the processes by which an individual is taught the skills, behaviour patterns, values and motivations needed to competently function in a culture one is part of.
- Socialization can lead to uniformity in a society. As children grow up, the nature of socialization they receive is important in shaping not only their own personalities, but also the nature of the society they live in.
- Socialization begins right after birth. Early childhood is a crucial period in the socialization of an individual as this is when the learning of language takes place and the child becomes aware of the culture that surrounds him and how it shapes his personality.
- Some important theories of socialization were developed by Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead and Sigmund Freud.

NOTES

NOTES

- According to Ian Robertson, the socialization that a person undergoes in the course of his lifetime may be divided into the following four types: primary socialization, anticipatory socialization, developmental socialization, re-socialization.
- One can conceive of socialization, then, as a succession of processes occurring at various stages of development, with the child's family of origin being the first. There are various agencies of the socialization process: the family, the peer group, the school, the books, the mass media.
- Social interactions are actions or practices of two or more mutually oriented people towards each other's selves.
- Social interaction necessitates a mutual orientation. For instance, spying on a person is not social interaction as that person is unaware of what is going on. Criminal behaviour of individuals who treat people as objects is also not considered as social interaction.
- Social interaction essentially takes place in associative and dissociative forms. These forms of social interaction are also designated as social processes.
- Culture constantly changes and goes through innovation. Presently, one can say that humanity is in a global accelerating culture change period, driven by the expansion of international commerce, the mass media, and the population explosion.

3.8 KEY TERMS

- **Culture:** It can be defined as the predominating attitudes and behaviour that characterize a group or an organization's functioning.
- **Subculture:** It is a group of people with a culture that differentiates them from the mainstream culture to which they belong.
- **Folkways:** These can be defined as practices, customs, or beliefs shared by the members of a group (specifically rural groups) as part of their common culture.
- **Diffusion:** It means adopting the characteristics of culture from other societies, irrespective of their means of emergence in the source society.
- **Ethnocentrism:** It is the act of evaluating other cultural practices, in terms of one's own and obviously rating them as inferior.
- **Cultural lag:** It is the duration or gap of time that exists between the emergence of a new material invention and the process of adapting it to the corresponding non-material culture.
- **Socialization:** It involves the processes by which an individual is taught the skills, behaviour patterns, values and motivations needed to competently function in a culture one is part of.
- **Peer group:** It refers to a group of people of approximately the same age, status, and interests.

3.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Name the two methods which contribute to the development of culture.
2. Write a short note on the concept of socialization.
3. Mention the characteristics of culture.
4. How does culture help development?
5. Differentiate between culture and civilization.
6. Write short notes on the following:
 - (a) Folkways
 - (b) Culture
7. Write a short note on the process of socialization.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the theories of socialization.
2. Describe the agencies of socialization.
3. 'Social interaction necessitates a mutual orientation.' Elucidate.
4. Distinguish between assimilation and accommodation.
5. Describe the various components of culture.
6. Examine the relationship between culture and personality.
7. 'Cultural institutions are an ideal support centre for a community to sustain its culture.' Elucidate.
8. Discuss the theories and types of socialization.
9. Examine the four stages of socialization.
10. Critically analyse the agencies of socialization.

3.10 FURTHER READING

- Ryan, Michael. 2018. *Core Concepts in Sociology*. London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Giddens Anthony, and Phillip Sutton. 2017. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (2nd Edition). London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Braham, Peter. 2013. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Stolley Kathy. 2005. *The Basics of Sociology*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Abel, Theodore. 1980. *The Foundations of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

NOTES

NOTES

Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.

Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. I and II. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Bogardus, Emory S. 1969. *The Development of Social Theory*. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffa and Simons.

Ritzer, George. 1988. *Sociological Theory*, Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

UNIT 4 SOCIAL CONTROL AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

NOTES

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Social Control
 - 4.2.1 Values and Norms of Society
- 4.3 Social Stratification
 - 4.3.1 Theories: Functional, Marxism and Weberian
 - 4.3.2 Marxian Theory of Social Stratification
 - 4.3.3 Weberian Theory of Social Stratification
 - 4.3.4 Functions of Social Stratification
- 4.4 Social Mobility
- 4.5 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 4.6 Summary
- 4.7 Key Terms
- 4.8 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Society is defined as a group of people sharing common values and traditions living together in organized communities for common benefits. However, there are groups or individuals in a society who at times move away from the mainstream society so as to maintain and satisfy their personal interest. How should the society react when an individual breaks a rule or social norm? All societies devise means and ways to guide and control individual members so that they abide by the prescribed standards and customs. These means form part of social control. Social control can be defined broadly as ‘an organized action intended to change people’s behaviour’. The primary aim of social control is to maintain and enforce social order, a compilation of rules, norms and laws on which members of the group base their day-to-day lives. In this unit, you will study about the methods, means and the need for social control.

Also, the unit explains social stratification which is a concept of class, involving the ‘classification of persons into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions’. In Western societies, stratification is generally categorized into upper class, middle class, and lower class. Stratification can also be defined by kinship ties as well as castes. In addition to this, the unit also discusses about social mobility which implies a set of changes in opportunities, incomes, lifestyles, personal relationships, social status, and ultimately in class membership. The main idea of social mobility is concerned with the movement of individuals or groups within the stratification system, which is usually measured by changes in occupational status.

NOTES

4.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the significance of social control and its growing need in society
- Recognize the methods and nature of social control
- Examine the need for social control in a society and understand how it helps in curbing deviance
- Understand the meaning, nature, principles and bases of social stratification
- Discuss the various forms of social stratification
- Explain practical applications of theories of stratification
- Analyse the meaning and types of social mobility
- Describe the relationship between social mobility and nature of society

4.2 SOCIAL CONTROL

The power to influence is ‘control’. In a society control is exercised by policemen, law courts, prisons, and so forth. The term social control has been described by sociologists in various ways. Sociologist, MacIver, defines social control as: ‘The way in which entire social order coheres and maintains itself, how it operates as a whole, as a changing equilibrium.’ Sociologist, Karl Mannheim defines social control as: ‘The sum of those methods by which a society tries to influence human behaviour to maintain a given order.’ These definitions imply that social control is a set of procedures by which a society enforces the accepted norms on its members. Hence, social control denotes effective enforcement of the prescribed rules on the members. The control can happen, by use of coercion, restraint, force, persuasion or suggestion.

These regulations may be set down by the members themselves or they may be imposed by a bigger, all encompassing group or society for the guidance of its members. Social control may be defined as any power which the society exerts upon its members with the objective of serving the interests of the group as a whole. It operates on three different layers: social group over another social group, society over its constituent members and individual members over their peers.

The characteristics of social control are as follows:

- (i) **Social control is an authority:** The authority may be imposed and expressed through public opinion, appeal to reason, coercion, religion, or other such methods.
- (ii) **This authority is exercised by society:** An individual may not readily obey or follow what is being enforced by another individual. However, if a norm is enforced by the group or the society as a whole the individual is more likely to abide by it. These groups could be the family, social circle, educational institutions, religious preachers, the state or any other association of our life. The effectiveness of authority depends upon various factors. Sometimes, the control exercised by

social or friends circle may be more effective than that of the family and vice versa. Similarly, the authority of the school may be more effective than that of religious preachers. There are innumerable agencies of social control. The success of each agency depends largely upon the circumstances.

- (iii) **The authority is exercised to promote the interests of the society as a whole:** An individual is urged to behave and act in a manner that would be in the interests of the society rather than in his/her selfish interests. Social control has a definite aim. The intent of social control is always in the interests of the entire community. The individual is made conscious of others' interests. The individual is forced to abide by the accepted norms and social behaviour. Thus, he becomes a social being by abiding by the parameters of social control.

Methods and Means of Social Control

The ways and means by which the society ensures that its members abide by the accepted norms of behaviour can be numerous and varied. An attempt has been made by sociologists to classify them. One way of enforcing rules is through sanctions. According to E. C. Hayes, an American sociologist, control by 'sanctions is a system of rewards and punishments'. Sanctions can be positive or negative. Positive sanctions are those motivating factors which encourage people to conform to accepted norms. Rewards and prizes given for good behaviour are positive sanctions. A scholarship at school or college is a reward for studying hard and it can be termed as positive sanction. On the other hand, punishments and fines for bad behaviour or acts of deviance are negative sanctions. Being fined for violating traffic rules is a negative sanction. According to Hayes, family is the most important agency of social control and education is the best means of enforcing social control. Direct method of social control and indirect method of social control was another classification, given by Karl Mannheim. For Kimball Young, the method of social control could be classified as positive and negative. According to him, punishing people for deviance acts as a deterrent and is a negative type of control. Whereas, rewarding an individual for conforming to societal norms is positive type of social control.

F.E. Lumley, former Professor of Sociology at the Ohio State University, felt physical force was a crucial factor in social control, but not the only factor. He strongly believed that in social control symbolic acts are more effective as compared to force. These symbolic acts can be divided into two categories; one is of positive gestures like appreciation, praise, persuasion and rewards; the second is that of negative gestures like criticism, threats, reprimand, punishment, public ridicule, and so forth. Lumley felt gestures would prevent deviance. Sociologist, Luther L. Bernard has classified social control into unconscious and conscious types. Conscious control is developed by the society in the form of laws, while unconscious control takes place in the form of traditions, customs and rituals. Social control has also been explained in terms of exploitative and constructive type. Control through constructive means includes education and through exploitative means refers to threats or fear. Even though various sociologists have categorized social

NOTES

control under numerous methods, but if we analyse closely these methods are quite similar in nature.

Means of Social Control

NOTES

Different means are used by a group to make sure that all its members adhere to the set norms. Most important means are discussed as follows:

1. Informal means of Social Control

The informal means of control are practiced without the help of a constituted authority. Social control is exercised through inherent beliefs, ethos and values of the society. Informal means of social control are considered to be an effective way of managing order in most groups of the society. They form a part of the daily routine of these individuals; though in modern societies, the effect of this control is less because of lack of proximity among its members. The Hindus during 'navrataras' do not consume non-vegetarian food or alcohol. The Jains do not eat food after sunset. In the Sikh community wearing turban has a religious significance. The respect of the elderly is an established norm. These norms and beliefs are enforced by the informal means of social control. This type of control is prevalent in all spheres of an individual's life. Informal means of social control are most significant and effective among families, communities and small groups. If an individual of a group does not follow these informal means of social control then he stands the chance of being ridiculed by the society. People are scared of public condemnation. A person desires to be appreciated, praised, honoured and respected in the society. It is an established fact that man is a social animal, who can survive only in a society. Hence, he would not do anything to harm his standing in the social group. The process of getting integrated with the society also influences the individual. The informal means of social control are exercised in the following aspects of a person's life.

- (i) **Set beliefs in one's life:** The individual's actions are influenced and governed by his or her beliefs. These beliefs are necessary for relationships in a person's life. The beliefs influence the choices a person makes in her or his life. The beliefs encourage individuals to work towards the betterment of society at large. Beliefs may not have any scientific reasoning. They may not be based on facts. Religious beliefs, most often than not, are not based on facts. However, that does not diminish their usefulness in social control. Actions of an individual are as much governed by beliefs based on scientific reasons as by those that are not based on verified facts.
- (ii) **Role models:** Mother Teresa and Dr B.R. Ambedkar, for example, are some of the great personalities whose achievements have inspired several generations. The accomplishments of such personalities inspire people to work towards common goals that aim for the well-being of all in the society. This is a powerful means of social control. The beliefs and teachings of the role models urge individuals to follow the acceptable social norms.
- (iii) **Ideologies:** Social norms and rules are inspired by ideologies. Ideology is a group of ideas and ideals that govern the formulation of

societal beliefs and laws. Ideologies form the basis of social, political, and economic policies. For instance, the ideals of Lenin and Gandhi have influenced the social life of the Russian and Indian societies respectively. Ideologies are a group of ideas which influence a person's beliefs, choices and motivations. They communicate the essential and important aspects of a particular society and the necessity to follow them so as to improve as a group. These not only act as stimulants but also propagate a set of norms and a new way of life. Ideologies drive and motivate social change and evolution. To be successful as a means of social control, an ideology has to be comprehensive and has to connect with people. It has to be able to imagine a better future for the society and be consistent with the shared morals and ethics of that group.

NOTES

- (iv) **Folkways:** Folkways are the accepted way of behaving in a social situation. They are norms of behaviour related to day-to-day life like manners, behaving with elders, and so forth. They are considered as the everyday manners of social life, which are natural and take place instinctly in a group. They are generally a set of practices that are shared in a society and have some degree of conventional approval. Members of society generally abide by and follow folkways. They are the foundations of customs in a society. A person who does not follow the folkways can be boycotted by the members of the society. The way of dressing, food habits and other social conducts must be according to the norms of the particular group. Since habits are formed based on folkways, they are followed automatically and, therefore, they are said to have effective control over the individual's social behaviour.
- (v) **Mores:** Mores are norms based on the morals of the group or society. They act as restrains for the individual. They prevent the individual from doing acts which are not acceptable to the society. Mores influence behaviour of individuals and thereby act as a social control mechanism. Every society, culture and group has several norms like speaking the truth, monogamy, working hard, and so forth. Conformity to mores is regarded necessary. They compel the individual to act in the welfare of the society. Divergent behaviour against the mores is not allowed by the society. For this reason, existence of mores is considered an important method of social control.
- (vi) **Customs:** Custom is defined as a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society. They constitute the collection of folkways and mores which have been followed for a prolonged duration over time and have been passed down from one generation to another. They are a set of values which are formed gradually with the passage of time. Customs are not listed by an authority still they are accepted and followed by all the members of the group. Customs can control social life to a great extent due to which their significance as a means of social control cannot be

NOTES

undermined. Individuals are compelled to follow them as they outline the accepted standards. Sometimes, violation of customs is considered as a minor infringement and disrespect, while on other occasions, it could be a crime. In the past, customs were considered an effective method for social control; however, in modern society their significance has diminished to some extent, as they are not followed as rigidly as before.

- (vii) **Religion:** Religion is a set of beliefs and values based on the teachings of a spiritual leader. It is a set of beliefs which motivates society to follow the set norms. Religion also helps in exercising effective control upon a person's behaviour in society. Religion occupies an indispensable position in society. Religion exerts tremendous influence on the individual's actions in the society. All human beings are equal; good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are looked down upon; are beliefs common to all religions which compel individuals to conform to good behaviour. All religions teach compassion, generosity, mercy and truth to the individuals of society.
- (viii) **Public opinion:** Public opinion to a great extent controls deeds of individuals. Most people want to be appreciated by all. They fear criticism by the society and public because of which they are dissuaded from indulging in deviant acts and behaviour. Every person likes to be applauded and avoid public humiliation or scorn. The desire for recognition is natural for all individuals. Public opinion is one of the strongest forces influencing the behaviour of people, hence, acts as a natural source of social control. Most individuals in the group follow what the majority is following as they feel they would be acting against the public opinion. The media acts in a significant way in forming public opinion.

2. Formal Means of Social Control

Formal means of social control are the ways to officially recognize and enforce violation of norms and rules. Regulations enforced by an appointed institution can be termed as formal social control. It is important to prevent a student from cheating in an exam. This is essential to ensure the discipline of the school. For instance, a person who robs a bank needs to be arrested and punished. Formal methods need to be enforced in modern societies because of their increasing size and complexities. The following formal means of social control exist in most societies:

- (i) **Law:** Law is one of the key methods of social control. In the earlier times, societies were small and individuals were closely associated with each other. In these societies, religion, customs, mores and other informal means of social control were very effective. However, in modern times, the societies are large and diverse. Informal means are not effective in bigger societies which need to lay down rules and regulations for guidance. These rules and regulations specify acceptable

and unacceptable behaviour. The punishment and penalties that would be imposed on a person who does not abide by these is clearly articulated by these rules. Law is defined as a set of rules formulated by groups officially empowered for the same. There are governing bodies empowered for the implementation of law in society.

Informal means of social control are not adequate to enforce social behaviour in the modern society due to their size and complex nature. In modern society, personal relationships do not hold much significance. Security of one's own life and property is more important to some than welfare of the society on the whole. In this scenario, formalization of laws is essential. The ideas and concepts that were enforced by mores and customs in earlier times have now become a part of the formal set of laws. For instance, increase in corruption in all spheres of society has led to the enactment of several laws in the society. Laws have been enacted governing behaviour at workplace, parents' interaction with children, behaviour of teachers in schools, norms of building houses and industries, traffic regulations, and so forth. Law prohibits certain actions, for example, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 prohibits employing any child below 14 years of age and a person doing so, is liable for punishment. Prohibition Acts have been enacted which forbid drinking and smoking in public places. In accordance with a law enacted on 2 October 2008 smoking is prohibited in public places. In this manner, laws have become an important means of controlling behaviour of individuals in modern societies.

- (ii) **Education:** Education is a formal process of teaching the individual—the acceptable and unacceptable norms of a society. It is a process of socialization through which a child or a person easily becomes a responsible member of the society. It helps in forming his personality in a positive way. Certain beliefs or customs of a family may give rise to religious and social biases in a person's mind. By formal system of education society endeavours to rectify these beliefs. Relevance of formal system of education in addition to law as a means of social control has increased in modern society. Education helps in inculcating values such as discipline, social cooperation, tolerance, humility and sense of justice.
- (iii) **Coercion:** Coercion may be defined as the use of force or threat to persuade someone towards an aim of compliance. It may include methods that cause physical pain or it could be through non-violent methods. Coercion is exercised by societies when all other means of social control become ineffective. Physical form of coercion could include imprisonment, lynching, and death penalty. Physical coercion is the least desirable form of social control but sometimes the most effective. Societies like to utilize coercion as a means of social control only as a last resort. It has an instant effect upon the deviant but is not able to correct the deviant permanently. Non-violent means of coercion

NOTES

NOTES

comprise strike, boycott and non-cooperation. These were practiced during the fight for independence from the British rule or during the Chipko movement of 1973 to stop deforestation. Another example, a person, who threatens to withdraw his support from a friend, if he does not give up smoking, implies the use of non-violent coercion to change his action. Social control is exercised by the government in the form of criminal sanctions such as capital punishment, monetary fines or imprisonment. These sanctions apply equally to all sections of the society. Formal coercion exists to tell everyone within the society, what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The quick judgment to punish the perpetrators of Nirbhaya case of 2012 is an example of formal coercion practiced by the Indian government against the wrong doers of the society.

Need for Social Control

‘The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prison.’

Fyodor Dostoyevsky

A socially controlled society will have conformity, solidarity and continuity within its structure. We need a uniform system to achieve this, as every individual in a group has a distinct character. Modern societies are complex and formed of individuals belonging to diverse cultures, religious beliefs and practices, lifestyles, habits and tastes. Members look different, belong to different races, and follow varied social practices. Social harmony is essential for any society. It becomes increasingly important because no two individuals are alike. They differ in their interests, beliefs, values and ideas. In such a diverse, complex and heterogeneous society, if each person is allowed to behave and act as he or she desires, it will lead to social chaos. Social control is vital to ensure order in a society.

‘Nipping deviant tendencies in the bud’ is the persistent need of every society. Social control is necessary for an orderly life. Without it the systems of a society will get disturbed. Individuals conform to accepted ways of society only if there is a force pushing him to do so. Hence, we need social control to act like that force in the individual’s life to achieve the following:

- (i) **To re-establish connection with tradition:** In today’s fast paced modern life, people are forgetting their traditional values. There is a strong need for a system to be in place, to keep these traditions alive. A strong family bonding and close relationships play a vital role in keeping these traditions alive. The older generation in a family impresses its ideas and values over the next generation. Most of the important decisions concerning education, jobs or marriage are settled in agreement with the members of the older generation in the family.
- (ii) **Harmony in society:** Social control ensures that the focus of the group remains focussed on achieving similar objectives. It standardizes the acceptable behaviour and norms which lead to uniformity in the conduct of individuals. Social conduct that is adhered to by all, gives rise to social bonding and harmony among all individuals of the society.

A family in which all members behave in accordance with the family norms remains united and closely knit.

- (iii) **Uniformity in behaviour of the individuals:** It is a known fact that even siblings of a family do not have similar attitudes, habits and interests. They may like to dress differently, eat different food and sometimes, even have different ideologies. So, it becomes an obvious fact that people in a society are bound to think and behave differently. In modern times, with the fast pace and busy schedule of life, people have become self-centred and selfish. Social control is essential to ensure that interests of the society are not compromised and general welfare is achieved. If the society does not put in place the mechanism of social control, every individual would start behaving in accordance to his or her whims and fancies and social order would be destroyed.
- (iv) **To abide by the norms:** For the welfare of the group, the individual has to follow numerous folkways, mores and customs prevailing in the society. Social control prevents an individual from violating these norms.
- (v) **To be able to adjust to the changing system:** Social control is essential to ensure that all individuals are able to adjust to the ever changing complexities of modern life. Every person has to change in order to be able to conform to the changing societal norms. Every person is not capable of adjusting to the changes on their own. Some individuals and families remain conservative in spite of living in a cosmopolitan society. When an individual moves from a small city to a metropolitan city, the individual comes across an absolutely different and new way of life governed by different set of values. It is possible that the individual may get dazzled by the fast life and may not adjust to this new environment. Social control plays an important role in helping the individual adjust and conform to the accepted norms. In the modern Indian society this scenario is very common. Therefore, it is necessary that our society puts in place a powerful mechanism of social control.

The above reasons clearly elucidate the need for social control. The need is accentuated in modern society because of its diverse and heterogeneous character and due to the presence of disintegrating forces. Social control works persistently in a society, but due to external impact and internal revulsions, the continuity of this control gets threatened. Hence, the system has to constantly change and evolve according to the needs of the society. Social control is not a simple process. Some individuals get dissatisfied with it and they find satisfaction in deviance. This risk is real and cannot be overlooked. The effectiveness of social control would, therefore, depend on the appropriate coordination of the accepted methods of social control.

4.2.1 Values and Norms of Society

Usually, both terms – norms and values- are used interchangeably in our daily discourse. But social scientists have described both terms in a specific sense. According to them, social norms are standards, behaviour and attitudes which are considered normal, while values are conceptions that people consider important and

NOTES

NOTES

worthwhile to them. For example, honesty is a general value, while a belief that students will not cheat or use such material prohibited by the codes in the examinations is a norm. To be more precise, values are general guidelines, whereas norms are specific guidelines. General standards which decide what is good and what is bad are termed as values. However, norms are rules and expectations that state the ways of how people should and should not behave in different social situations.

Check Your Progress

1. List the characteristics of social control.
2. What are positive sanctions?
3. How are informal means of social control practiced?
4. How does education act as a formal means of social control?
5. Why is social harmony considered essential for society?
6. How does social control assist in adjusting to the changing system?

4.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Differentiation is the law of nature. This is true in the case of human society. Human society is not homogeneous but heterogeneous. Human beings differ from one another in many aspects. Human beings are equal so far as their bodily structure is concerned. But the physical appearance of individuals, their intellectual, moral, philosophical, mental, economic, religious, political and other aspects are different. No two individuals are exactly alike. Diversity and inequality are inherent in society. Hence, human society is everywhere stratified.

All societies assign their members to roles in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. This vertical scale of evaluation and placement of people in strata, or levels, is called stratification. Those in the top stratum have more power, privilege and prestige than those below.

Society compares and ranks individuals and groups

Members of a group compare different individuals, as when selecting a mate, or employing a worker, or dealing with a neighbour, or developing friendship with an individual. They also compare groups such as castes, races, colleges, cities and athletic teams. These comparisons are valuations, and when members of a group agree, these judgments are social evaluations.

All societies differentiate members in terms of roles and all societies evaluate roles differently. Some roles are regarded as more important or socially more valuable than others. The persons who perform the more highly esteemed roles are rewarded more highly. Thus, stratification is simply a process of interaction of differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others.

The concept of social stratification came into existence in the 1940s. The term 'stratification' was borrowed from geology. Geologists viewed the earth as

the layering of rocks, wherein each layer had its own composition and was distinct from other layers. Similarly, sociologists opine that society consists of different strata in a hierarchy where the most privileged are at the top and the least privileged are at the bottom.

Sociologists believe that the rich have better 'life chances' than the poor because of their accessibility to quality education, safe neighbourhood, nutritional diet, health care facilities, police protection, and a wide range of goods and services. German sociologist Max Weber's term 'life chances' refers to the extent to which individuals have access to important societal resources, such as food, clothing, shelter, education and health care. There is scarcity of resources in the society due to their unequal distribution among different social groups.

Societies distinguish people by their race, caste, age and gender as well. This kind of stratification results in inequality. A nation's position in the system of global stratification also affects the system of stratification in a society. Thus, we can say that the division of society into strata results in social stratification. Now, let us see how different sociologists and critics define stratification.

Definitions of Stratification

Eminent sociologist Frank P. Gisbert says, 'Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups of categories linked to each other by the relationship of superiority and subordination.'

According to American sociologist William J. Goode, 'Stratification is the system through which resources and rewards are distributed and handed down from generation to generation.'

Sociologist and author Chris Barker opines that social stratification involves 'classification of persons into groups based on shared socio-economic conditions... a relational set of inequalities with economic, social, political and ideological dimensions'.

Based on these definitions of social stratification, we can list out the attributes of social stratification as follows:

- Unequal distribution of power, privileges, prestige, resources and rewards
- Rank-status groups based on the criteria by which power, privileges and prestige are distributed
- The notion of high and low positions in the interaction and relations between these groups
- Prevalence of step-wise social inequality among different social groups in a given society

Some other important definitions of stratification by well-known sociologists and philosophers are as follows:

- 1. Ogburn and Nimkoff:** The process by which individuals and groups are ranked in a more or less enduring hierarchy of status is known as stratification.

NOTES

NOTES

2. **Gisbert:** Social stratification is the division of society into permanent groups of categories linked with each other by the relationship of superiority and subordination.
3. **Melvin M. Tumin:** Social stratification refers to arrangement of any social group or society into a hierarchy of positions that are unequal with regard to power, property, social evaluation and/or psychic gratification.
4. **Lundberg:** A stratified society is one marked by inequality, by differences among people that are evaluated by them as being lower and higher.
5. **Raymond W. Murry:** Social stratification is a horizontal division of society into high and lower social units.

The universality of social stratification

Social stratification is ubiquitous. In all societies, population is socially differentiated on the basis of age, sex and personal characteristics. The roles and privileges of children differ from those of adults; and those of good hunters or warriors differ from those of the rank and file. It is not customary to speak of a society as stratified if every individual in it has an equal chance to succeed to whatever statuses are open. Strictly speaking, there are no purely equalitarian societies, but only societies differing in degree of stratification. Even Russia which dreamt of a 'classless society' could not, any more than any other society, escape the necessity of ranking people according to their functions. The criterion of rank has changed along with values of society. P. A. Sorokin wrote in his *Social Mobility* that an 'uncertified society with real equality of its members is a myth which has never been realized in the history of mankind'.

Social differentiation and stratification

As it is clear from the above, all societies exhibit some system of hierarchy whereby its members are placed in positions that are higher or lower, superior or inferior, in relation to each other. The two concepts — 'social differentiation' and 'social stratification' — are made use of to refer to such classification or gradation and placement of people in society. In differentiation, society bases status on a certain kind of trait which may be (i) physical or biological, such as skin colour, physical appearance or sex (ii) social and cultural, such as differences in etiquette, manners, values, ideals, ideologies, and so on. Thus, differentiation serves as a sorting process according to which the people are graded on the basis of roles and status.

Stratification tends to perpetuate these differences in status. Hence, through this process, people are fixed in the structure of the society. In some cases (as it is in the case of caste), status may become hereditary. Differentiation may be considered the first stage preceding stratification in society, sorted and classified into groups. It does not, however, mean that all differentiation leads to stratification in society.

Characteristics of Social Stratification

According to American sociologist M. M. Tumin, the main attributes of stratification are as follows:

Social

Stratification is social in the sense that it does not represent biologically caused inequalities. It is true that strength, intelligence, age and sex are also factors that serve as distinguishing features, but this still do not explain why some strata of society receive more power, property and prestige than others. Biological characteristics also do not determine social superiority and inferiority until they are socially recognized and given importance. For example, the manager of an industry attains a dominant position not by his physical strength, nor by his age, but by having socially defined traits. His education, training skills, experience, personality, character, and so on, are found to be more important than his biological equalities.

Further, as Tumin has pointed out, the stratification system is: (i) governed by social norms and sanctions, (ii) is likely to be unstable because it may be disturbed by different factors, and (iii) is intimately connected with the other systems of society such as the political, family, religious, economic, educational and other institutions.

Ancient

The stratification system is quite old. According to historical and archaeological records, stratification was present even in the small wandering bands. Age and sex were the main criterion of stratification then. 'Women and children last' was probably the dominant rule of order. The difference between the rich and poor, powerful and humble, freemen and slaves existed in almost all the ancient civilizations. Ever since the time of Plato and Kautilya, social philosophers have been deeply concerned with economic, social and political inequalities.

Universal

The stratification system is a worldwide phenomenon. The difference between the rich and the poor or the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is evident everywhere. Even in the 'not literate' societies, stratification is very much present. As Russian American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin has said, all permanently organized groups are stratified.

Diverse forms

The stratification system has never been uniform in all the societies. The ancient Roman society was stratified into two sections: the patricians and the plebeians, the ancient Aryan society into four Varnas: the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras; the ancient Greek Society into freemen and slaves; the ancient Chinese society into the mandarins, merchants, farmers, soldiers, and so on. Class, caste and estate seem to be the general forms of stratification to be found in the modern world. However, the stratification system seems to be much more complex in the civilized societies.

Consequential

The stratification system has its own consequences. The most important, most desired, and often the scarcest things in human life are distributed unequally because of stratification. The system leads to two main kinds of consequences: (i) 'life chances' and (ii) 'lifestyles'. 'Life chances' refer to such things as infant mortality,

NOTES

NOTES

longevity, physical and mental illness, childlessness, marital conflict, separation and divorce. 'Lifestyles' include such matters as the mode of housing, residential area, one's education, means of recreation, relationships between the parents and children, the kind of books, magazines and TV shows to which one is exposed, one's mode of conveyance, and so on. Life chances are more involuntary, while lifestyles reflect differences in preferences, tastes and values.

Principles of Social Stratification

Some of the principles of social stratification are as follows:

- **Social stratification is a trait of society, not of an individual:** Social stratification reflects social traits and not individual traits. For example, irrespective of individual traits, children born into wealthy families enjoy better health, better schooling, better career opportunities and improved life chances vis-à-vis those children who are born in poor families.
- **Social stratification continues from generation to generation:** The division of society into a hierarchy is not a one-generation affair; it continues from generation to generation. People who are in higher strata of society pass on their land, properties and titles to their inheritors. There could be upward and downward mobility in their status, but they are viewed with respect in the society. In contrast, neo-rich families are not given the same respect.
- **Social stratification is universal but varies from society to society:** Social stratification is found in all societies but the basis of stratification may vary. In primitive society, social stratification was carried out on the basis of physical strength. However, in industrial society and socialist society, the basis of stratification are wealth and power, respectively.
- **Social stratification includes not just inequality but beliefs:** Social stratification not only stratifies society on the basis of inequality but also establishes beliefs and norms among the people. People who are in the lower strata of the society believe that they are in the lower position and behave according to their class position.

Social Stratification: Social Difference and Social Inequality

The existence of certain dissimilarities between the two units, things, individuals or groups causes difference. It does not mean that one group or individual is superior to the other, that is, it does not imply ranking or inequality. For instance, potters are different from carpenters, but they depend on one another for their needs of the respective products.

Social difference

The differences among individuals on the basis of social characteristics and qualities are known as 'social differences'. The concept of 'social stratification' is very broad, and it is possible to include under its ambit all types of 'differences' such as age, health and religion. However, social stratification based on gender or race is substantially different from social stratification based on age as the latter

encompasses all people and creates spaces for everyone who occupy them at different stages of their lives. Social difference also involves assigning of tasks and responsibilities after taking into account the existence of differences.

Social inequality

The term ‘social inequality’ means unequal distribution of privileges and resources in the society, whereby some people possess more wealth, power and privileges than the rest of the people in the society. In most of these societies, people live with pre-existing notions of unequal power, status and economic resources. Those who are privileged with more money, power and superior social status continue to have greater accessibility to resources, for example, going to school, getting a university degree, and receiving technical and professional education that leads to better-paid jobs. Therefore, anyone who cannot afford this kind of education will be in a disadvantageous situation.

Social stratification is a particular form of inequality that refers to hierarchy. It means that the members of a society are assigned high and low ranks in various social groups, where weightage is given on the magnitude of power, prestige and wealth. The social inequality comprises both the vertical and horizontal division of a society, but social stratification only signifies the vertical division of a society. The people belonging to a ‘strata’ form a group, and they have common interest and a common identity. The people of a strata have some awareness of ‘consciousness of kind’ and share a similar way of life which distinguishes them from the people of other strata.

The form and the intensity may differ, but the perennial issue of ‘social inequality’ is a common feature of all world communities. We can say that the prevalence of ‘inequality’ is a part of human existence.

German-British sociologist and philosopher Ralf Dahrendorf distinguishes between inequalities of natural capabilities and those of social positions, and between inequalities that do not involve evaluative rank-order and those that do. Of these two pairs of distinctions, Dahrendorf works out four types of inequalities:

- Natural differences of kind
- Natural differences of rank
- Social differentiation of positions
- Social stratification based on reputation and wealth

In all the four types, ‘individual’ is evidently the focal point of status evaluation. Such a conception of social inequality, built on distribution of property, wealth, honour and power among individual members, would imply a certain ideological basis and a structural arrangement of people based upon those non-egalitarian and institutionalized norms. Social inequality is found in the division of labour, differentiation of roles, and even differential evaluation of different tasks and roles assigned to be taken up by the members of a society.

It is to be remembered that social inequality is not monolithic, especially in the context of caste. Also, a continuous structuring and restructuring takes place in social inequality.

NOTES

NOTES

It is also to be noted that inequality is a relational phenomenon, that is, it is not to be seen in an absolute sense. For instance, in a family, its members may be unequal on the basis of kinship-based statuses, but they are equal as members of an intimate primary primordial unit. Also, a family structure differs from that of a formal organization. Even when there is unequal distribution of work, or assignment of duties and responsibilities, members in a family are treated as equal. Thus, to evaluate social inequality in India on the basis of Western industrial society would be inappropriate, since this would undermine the role of social structure, culture, history and dialectics in India.

Major Dimensions of Social Stratification

In any society, individuals or groups are ranked along several dimensions of social stratification. It is obvious that rankings along many dimensions of social stratification may all be highly correlated with one another (i.e., 'all high', 'all medium' or 'all low' in rank) or much less highly correlated ('some high', 'some medium' and 'some low' in rank). The former is an example of status consistency. The latter is an example of status inconsistency, because according to some people, one may have a high status; according to some, a medium status; and according to some others, a low status.

Status consistency is the degree of uniformity in a man's/woman's social standing across the various dimensions of social inequality. A caste system has limited social mobility and high status consistency; so the typical person has the same relative ranking with regard to wealth, power and prestige.

The greater mobility of class systems produces less status consistency; so people are ranked higher on some dimensions of social standing and lower on others. For instance, in India, the academicians enjoy high social prestige even though they may be drawing modest salaries.

Low status consistency means that it is difficult to define people's social position. Therefore, classes are much harder to define than castes. Some examples can throw some light on this phenomenon. If, for example, a high caste Brahmin marries a girl belonging to a comparatively lower caste, a status inconsistency is the likely outcome. Similarly, the marriage of the daughter of the nouveaux riche to man of distinguished lineage may give rise to the problem of status inconsistency. The position of the many high caste Brahmin priests with low occupational prestige is another phenomenon of this nature.

Several research studies and analyses have been conducted to investigate social stratification in these terms. It has been found that status inconsistency results in types of behaviour different from those caused by status consistency. It has also been found that each specific pattern of inconsistency has its own particular consequences. It has also been found that various types of status inconsistency may last long enough; and that there is no universal tendency toward status consistency, that is, toward highly positive correlation among the individual's several rankings.

Race/ethnicity and gender are the key dimensions of social stratification. As such, racial/ethnic and gender stratified opportunity structures result in the accumulation of disadvantages for women and racial/ethnic minorities, and consequently disparate aging experiences.

In all societies, there are differences between people in terms of the amount of power and wealth which they command. The basis of stratification—the division of people according to a hierarchical system—varies from society to society. In very simple societies, the divisions may be based on age and gender, older people having more power and prestige than younger ones, and men more than women.

In contemporary industrial societies, like Britain, sociologists argue that primary stratification is based on social class. Capitalist industrial societies are still stratified, and theories of social class still provide us with essential insights into the manner in which established inequalities in wealth and power associated with production and markets, access to educational and organizational resources, and so on, have systematically served to perpetuate these inequalities over time (Crompton, 1993).

Nevertheless, class processes are not the only factors contributing to the reproduction and maintenance of social inequalities. In a family, the numbering of birth of a child has got much important place. In some of the societies, if a child is born as the first child of a family, he/she gets special respect and privileges in the family.

In some other societies, the youngest child of the family enjoys some special privileges, rights and authorities. This is why the primogenitor and the ultimo genitor systems are widely prevalent in the society. The sex–gender system also provides a primary form of stratification, with men having more power and prestige than women.

A person’s actual or perceived age has real consequences on how people perceive him and what opportunities he may or may not be given in society. The role of age in social stratification can be difficult to sort out because unlike race or caste, age does correspond to real differences in a person’s experience and abilities.

For instance, a man is obviously too immature to do well in paying jobs until he grows out of childhood; and as he progresses through adulthood and into old age, he gains skills and experience, though in due course, he loses physical and even mental endurance and agility. Age can also be the basis for unfair discrimination—people may be ill-treated as they are seen as being ‘too young’ or ‘too old,’ or may be esteemed just for being a certain age.

This has become a popular issue in contemporary society as people’s work lives have become longer and jobs have become less stable. A person who is middle-aged or older may find himself losing a job to a younger person who is no better qualified.

Further, this treatment may vary with other ascribed characteristics—women may face harsher age discrimination than men for some jobs, and vice-versa for others.

NOTES

NOTES

Bases of Social Stratification

The anthropologist Ralph Linton first coined the terms ‘ascribed status’ and ‘achieved status’ in his book *The Study of Man*. Ascribed status is the social status which is assigned to a person on his birth and remains fixed throughout his life. Thus, in societies which are based on ascription groups, people have little freedom to move to another group or status, whereas, in a society based on achievement, an individual can work his way up the social ladder through his talents, abilities and skills.

(i) Ascribed or biological bases of stratification

These are the attributes that a person is born with. The position of a person in the society is decided by these attributes. Some of these attributes are sex, race and caste. Now, let us study these bases of ascribed stratification:

- **Race/Caste stratification:** Discrimination on the basis of race or caste is the prime example of ascribed stratification. Here, race refers to the aspects of your physical appearance that make you a part of a particular group which is recognized by the society. Throughout history, people’s caste and the colour of their skin have determined their social status. Today, racism and casteism are considered extreme forms of discrimination.
- **Gender stratification:** Gender is also an important basis of social stratification. In many societies, men are considered more powerful and authoritative than women. Women are considered victims of social inequality. Some feminists point out that women do not form a homogenous group as their social status is also determined by their race, age, sexual preference and class. However, there are other feminists who believe that irrespective of these differences, there are some common characteristics among women across the world.
- Professor Lesley Doyal (University of Bristol, the UK) states that the women’s physique is the real constraint in their lives; and she explains this statement by saying, ‘this is evidenced by the fact that the fight for bodily self-determination has been a central feature of feminist politics across very different cultures.’

(ii) Achieved or socio-cultural bases of stratification

Social stratification is not only based on biological bases but on socio-cultural bases as well. A person can control some of the attributes like power, prestige, wealth and education. According to Max Weber, three Ps form the base of social stratification. These are Property (wealth), Power (influence) and Prestige (status). Generally, these three Ps occur together, that is, people who are wealthy tend to be powerful and have a prestigious status in the society. Yet, this is not always true. For example, a petty contractor may make more money than a school teacher but cannot have a prestigious status like him. Now, let us study the three Ps in detail.

- (a) **Power:** Weber sees power as the capacity of an individual to influence others. Favouring Weber, the American sociologist Talcott Parsons believes

that power is the universalized capacity of social system and is exercised to achieve collective goals. Power is classified into two categories:

1. Individualistic power situations
2. Organizational power situations

Individualistic power relationships are exercised by individuals, and they become organizational when these are exercised by social organizations. Generally, all power relations have individualistic as well as organizational elements. If the head of the family decides where to marry off his daughter, it is an individualistic power; but as a social unit, family exercises organizational power. Power is also classified as purposive and purposeless, and direct and indirect.

Activities which are intended to affect social order or cultural system come under purposive power. If an activity is not deliberately done to influence the society; but it still influences the society, it would be purposeless power. In case of direct use of power, power flows directly from bearer to the affected individual or group. In case of indirect use of power, other people exist between the bearer of power and the affected individuals or group.

- (b) **Property or wealth:** It refers to material possessions and other things owned by people which help in producing income. Some of the examples of material possessions are money, land, building, jewellery and livestock. Income refers to money that people receive over a certain period of time, including salaries, rent, interest and wages. In advanced capitalist societies, money plays an important role in people's lives.
- (c) **Prestige:** It is also an important basis of social stratification. However, it is subjective in nature unlike property and power. It is because prestige is intangible and depends on other people's perceptions and attitudes. It refers to social honour and respect. Prestige has several aspects. It may result from a person's social roles, socio-political activities, leadership qualities, physical attributes or a property. Social prestige is also related to authority, respect and influence.

Occupation is also an important means of social prestige. For example, doctors and managers enjoy better social prestige than peons or sweepers.

Weber believed that one of the most important factors in the rise of capitalism was the religious belief that wealthy people were smiled upon by God. In the modern capitalist societies, most people believe that people with more wealth have worked harder and are more deserving than people with less wealth.

Besides the three Ps, there are some other bases of social stratification as well. These are as follows:

- **Social network:** Social networks help a person in many social situations. Thus, a person with a good and large social network is considered more powerful than others. People make social network through their classmates, colleagues, acquaintances and neighbours.

NOTES

NOTES

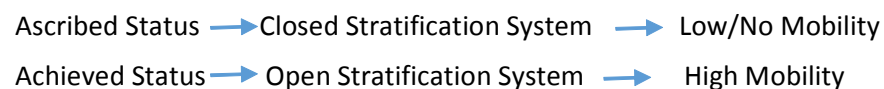
- **Education:** Education helps a person in moving up the social ladder. When people attend school or college, they not only earn degrees but also make social network and learn a number of off-course things. All these things help people later in their lives. This is one of the reasons why most countries force children to attend school and strongly encourage adults to attend college.
- **Human capital:** Human capital refers to useful skills that a person has learned. Some of the examples of human capital are knowledge about how to use a computer programme, ability to fix a car, knowledge of medical treatments, understanding of a country, state, or city's legal system and knowledge of sociology. Specialized skills are valuable in the job market.
- **Cultural capital:** The term 'cultural capital' was coined by a sociologist named Pierre Bourdieu. It refers to the knowledge of and a liking for high-status culture. According to Bourdieu, some of the examples of cultural capital are knowledge of classical music, ability to identify compositions with their composers, interest in art, and knowledge of fine wine and gourmet food.

He states that none of this knowledge has much practical usage, but it shows that the person was raised by relatively wealthy and well-educated parents.

(iii) Closed and open stratification systems

Corresponding to the ascribed and achieved social stratification, there are two types of stratification systems, namely closed and open systems. Most sociologists agree that there is no stratification system which can be considered perfectly open. This implies that there is no system which is totally based on achieved statuses and where ascribed statuses do not help or hurt people in the long run.

When sociologists look at societies which have open stratification systems, they want to determine the extent to which the society is more open than closed. Sociologists determine the openness of a society's stratification system by finding out its permissible social mobility. These ideas can be understood with the help of following flow charts:



Many sociologists believe that inequality exists in all societies, but the degree of inequality varies from society to society. It implies that inequality is more severe in some societies than in others. David B. Grusky, a leading expert in inequality, notes that social stratification systems vary along a number of dimensions. These dimensions are as follows:

- **Type of assets:** Using this dimension, sociologists look at the main attribute that people high in the stratification order have more than others. In some societies, this attribute is money, and in others, it is human capital. Some societies respect people with political power, while others respect people with cultural prestige.

- **Classes:** Under this dimension, major classes in the society are observed. In a capitalist society, as German philosopher and economist Karl Marx said, there exist two classes namely bourgeoisie and proletariat. Other societies may have class classification such as slaves and slave-owners, or nobles and commoners.
- **Degree of inequality:** While studying this dimension, sociologists observe the extent of inequality between the people in the highest classes and those in the lowest classes. In medieval feudal society, inequality was very high, and in prehistoric tribal society, inequality was relatively low. According to David B. Grusky, Professor of Sociology at Stanford University, in our advanced industrial society, the degree of inequality is in between those two extremes.
- **Rigidity:** In this case, rigidity refers to the permissible social mobility. Traditional caste society allows virtually no mobility unlike modern societies.

NOTES

Importance of studying social stratification

The study of social stratification is extremely important for sociologists. The importance of studying social stratification can be summed up as follows:

- It helps in understanding the type of life people live. Knowing what type of life individuals in a given social group or stratum live is very important for sociological analysis.
- It helps in understanding the bases on which a society is stratified.
- It helps in understanding the kind of interaction and relationship that exist between individuals of different strata.
- It assists in investigating the relationship between individuals or groups belonging to the same hierarchy.
- It helps in understanding which type of social system gives rise to a particular type of hierarchy. It implies that the type of social stratification varies across cultures, times and types of social systems.

Forms of social stratification

This section will examine four major systems of social stratification — slavery, social castes, social classes and estate. These systems can be seen as ideal types for analytical purposes. It may be pointed out that any social stratification system may include elements of more than one type.

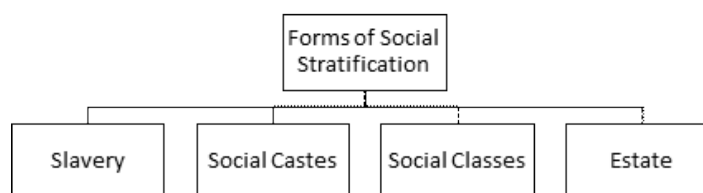


Fig. 4.1 Forms of Social Stratification

NOTES

Slavery

The most radical, legalized, social inequality for individuals or groups is slavery. The most unique feature of this crushing system of stratification is that one human being owns another. These individuals are treated as possessions, just like household pets or appliances. Slavery has been practised in different forms. In ancient Greece, the main source of slaves consisted of captives of war and piracy. Though the slave status could be inherited, it was not permanent. A person's status might be changed depending on the outcome of the military conflict between kingdoms. On the other hand, in the United States and Latin America, racial and legal barriers were established to prevent the freeing of slaves. In other words, in whatever form it existed, it had required extensive use of coercion in order to maintain the privileges of slave owners.

Some social analysts believe that there have been five slave societies in history. Here, slave societies mean those places where slavery affected the social and economic conditions to a great extent. These societies were ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, the United States, the Caribbean and Brazil.

British liberal political theorist and sociologist L. T. Hobhouse is of the view that a slave is a man whom law and custom regard as property of some other person. He further states that in some cases, slaves do not have any rights, and in other cases, they may be victims of cruelty. According to British Marxist sociologist Thomas Burton Bottomore, the basis of slavery is always economic. In the 1600s, the United States imported slaves, which was a legal practice in the United States in those days. This is evident from the fact that the early US presidents such as George Washington, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson owned slaves.

Some of the characteristics of slavery, as practised in the United States, are as follows:

- Slavery was hereditary in nature, that is, children of slaves were also considered slaves.
- Slaves were not treated like human beings as they were considered the owners' property.
- They did not have any rights.
- They were treated in a cruel manner.

Most of the slaves considered themselves powerless; thus, they did not attempt to bring a change in the system. However, some tried to challenge the system and their position by being careless in their work, working at a slow speed, not working at all, and running away from their master's house. This practice has officially ended many years ago. Many sociologists opine that the ideologies of equality and justice have led to the abolition of slavery from the world. Other reasons behind the abolition of this practice include denunciation of slavery as a barbaric institution and the inefficiency of slave labour.

However, Patricia Hill Collins (Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park) opined that the legacy of slavery is deeply embedded in the United States even in the present scenario, which can be seen in the current patterns of prejudice and discrimination against African Americans.

Stanley L. Engerman, an economist, also believes that the world is not completely free from slavery. In this context, he says that slavery cannot end from the world as long as there are ‘debt bondage, child labour, contract labour and other varieties of coerced work for limited periods of time, with limited opportunities for mobility, and with limited political and economic power’.

Social Class

A **social class** is a group of individuals who have more or less similar wealth. The possession of wealth enables the individual to obtain those goods and services that are scarce and are valued by others. These goods and services differ from society to society. In traditional society, the wealthy person may buy land and gold, while in modern society, he may invest in the stock market or buy luxurious cars or go aboard for vacations. Wealth allows the person to create more wealth if he invests it prudently. Most modern societies have class based stratification. However, many features of traditional stratification may be observed in modern societies, such as elements of caste system and feudalism found in India. However, with economic development, class based stratification is becoming increasingly important.

Class is a relatively open stratification system

Any society is said to be relatively open or closed depending on the number of opportunities available to its members for upward social mobility. Equally important is the attitude of the society towards the mobility of its members. If the society offers a large number of opportunities and encourages members to achieve higher positions, then the society can be called an open stratification society. On the other hand, if the society has a limited number of opportunities for upward mobility and its normative values prohibit its members from achieving higher positions, that society is called a closed stratification society. Along with development, the system of stratification becomes open and achievement oriented.

The class system is a form of open stratification system. An individual with his achievements can gain entry to a higher class and acquire prestige. There are examples of individuals who by their hard work and achievements rose from poverty and became millionaires. Modern society appreciates such individuals as they are seen as models for others.

Social mobility in modern societies is based on intelligence, merit, competence and achievement of individuals. However, in every society, inspite of the openness, factors like socio-economic background, parental status and resources, social networks and various ascribed factors play an important role in determining individual motivation, achievement and the availability of opportunities. Since these factors are not in control of the individual and cannot be easily modified to his advantage, it cannot be said that modern societies are fully achievement oriented and open.

That is why we have said class based societies are relatively open, that is, in relation to other societies. We will shortly study the caste system, which is a relatively closed stratification system.

NOTES

NOTES

Social hierarchy in traditional societies is formed by ascription, while in class based societies, achievement plays an important role. In other words, the difference between traditional and modern social hierarchies lies in the difference between (status ascribed and status achieved being) the bases of social stratification. Traditional social hierarchies are based on ascribed states, while modern social hierarchies are based on achieved status.

The level of competition in modern society is high and only the fittest can survive.

Social workers have to remember two consequences of an achievement based society. Since achievement is stressed, failures of an individual are looked down upon by others and they lose their self-esteem. You may have read in newspapers about school children committing suicide after failing in school exams. It is the desire for high achievement and fulfilling the high expectations of others that pressurize vulnerable students to take this extreme step. Secondly, an achievement based society should provide the minimum facilities of health, education and housing to individuals to make them fit for competition. In countries like India, we find that these essential facilities are not provided to all and many people are unable to compete with others on an equal basis. This makes the social situation unfair to these people. The government and voluntary organizations implement welfare and development programmes to enable disadvantaged people to enter the mainstream of society.

Impact of class system in India

Membership of particular class groups influences the behaviour of its members. It makes them conscious about their position in society. However, in the Indian context, more importance is given to caste and related issues rather than class factors. The class character in India is quite different from western societies. Here class and caste categories co-exist in India and class categories like upper, middle and lower are parallel to caste categories. They jointly determine the class status, power and prestige of the individual in the society. Studies have shown that the upper classes, predominantly belong to the upper castes, which are an ascribed status. There have been significant changes in the last decades but the pattern still continues. The accumulation and distribution of resources including education is determined by the social position of the individual. Those who are higher in terms of the class and caste terms control available resources to a great extent, leaving behind a section of the Indian population below and around the poverty line. The forces of globalization and liberalization seem to have widened the gap between the haves and have-nots, between the rich and the poor, between urban people, and rural people and the upper caste and the lower class and lower caste.

There are three methods which are used for the determination of social class. These are as follows:

- **Objective method:** Under this method, sociologists use 'hard facts' for the determination of social class.
- **Subjective method:** Under this method, sociologists ask various questions from people to know their perception about their own class.

- **Reputational method:** In this method, various questions are asked from people of different social classes to know their perception about other classes.

According to Barbara Katz Rothman (Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York), 'Class system is a type of stratification based on the ownership and control of resources and on the type of work people do.' This form of social stratification is not fixed as it is achieved by people on the basis of their property, profession and achievements. Thus, it is flexible and changeable. Change of class can take place with the help of social mobility, be it upward mobility or downward mobility.

Members of a class have common economic interest and class consciousness. There is no concrete, objective or scientific criterion of class structure. Sociologists have considered family, property, lifestyle, prestige, residential place, type of house, children's school, membership of associations and clubs for determining class status. Karl Marx analysed two types of class:

- (i) Bourgeoisie
- (ii) Proletariat

According to Marxist theory, bourgeoisie is the ruling class which consists of capitalists, manufacturers, bankers and other employers; and proletariat is the working class. The former class owns the means of production, whereas the latter sells their labour in order to survive.

According to Bottomore, there are four types of classes. These are as follows:

- (i) Upper class
- (ii) Middle class
- (iii) Working class
- (iv) Peasantry

People who belong to the upper class are exceptionally rich. They live in exclusive regions and send their children to the best schools. They are influential and powerful people. The middle class consists of white-collar workers and professional groups. The working class includes industrial skilled and semi-skilled workers who are minimally educated and engage in manual labour. People who belong to the peasantry class earn their livelihood by cultivation and allied occupations.

Caste

Caste is a much debated topic in India. The word 'caste' refers to the Spanish word 'Casta' which means 'breed' in Spanish. In the Indian context, it represents caste and its related social practice. The caste system influences the social life of the Indian in a number of ways, as it assigns ascribed status to its members. According to the *Rig Veda* the oldest and most important of all the four Vedas, there are four Varnas which are placed in a hierarchical order — the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The profession of Brahmins is that of priests and teachers. The Kshatriyas are warriors and rulers. The Vaishyas are traders and other common people. The Shudras occupy the lowest position in the

NOTES

NOTES

hierarchy and perform the menial tasks. According to some historians, there is a fifth Varna, the untouchables, and they are not considered as a part of society. The tribes and people of other religions are also considered outside the Varna system. Individuals are born into a caste and membership of a caste is determined by birth. An individual cannot change his or her caste. However, there are instances where castes as a whole, after an improvement in economic status and changes in lifestyles, have claimed a higher status in society. Such claims may or may not be accepted. The dominant castes might react adversely to the claim. But even if the claim is accepted the caste system remains intact. However, the process of Sanskritization, inter-caste marriage and advancement of education has changed the degree of the rigidity of the caste system in India.

According to Indian Professor of sociology G. S. Ghurye, caste has six characteristics:

1. Hierarchy: Hierarchy is superior-subordinate relationship between various individuals and groups. Hierarchy in one form or another exists in every society but the principle of determining the hierarchy differs from society to society. In India, caste is the main basis of social hierarchy. The degree of ritual purity and impurity associated with a particular caste determines its position in the hierarchy. Wealth and power are not the determining factors. For example, a Brahmin whose economic status is lower than a Rajput is accorded a superior position because of his higher ritual status.

In reality, however, political and economic factors do play a significant role in determining the position of the caste. Sociologists have pointed out that high ritual status does not actually translate into a higher social status. For example, while a Rajput may not have as important a role in ritual matters as the Brahmins, it is unlikely that he will give a higher status to the Brahmin in other matters. According to sociologist, M. N. Srinivasan, a dominant caste is that caste in the community that has a sufficiently high ritual status, numerical strength and material resources like land, wealth and access to power. It is the combination of these factors which keeps a caste high in the hierarchy. The dominant caste often has a major role to play in the village politics and its social life.

2. Segmented division of society: Castes are well-developed groups with membership based on birth and not by selection. The rights and duties of the individuals are controlled by caste councils, which exist in every caste. These councils have large powers to regulate the social life of its members. They can enforce order by punishing offenders for a variety of offences. Offences include adultery, causing injury to others; killing and punishments can include the imposition of fines, ordering corporal punishment and even the death sentence. Many castes have their own gods and goddesses that are not a part of the larger religious tradition. Thus, caste has a sufficient degree of autonomy in dealing with the issues related to its members, and is independent of the controls by the government.

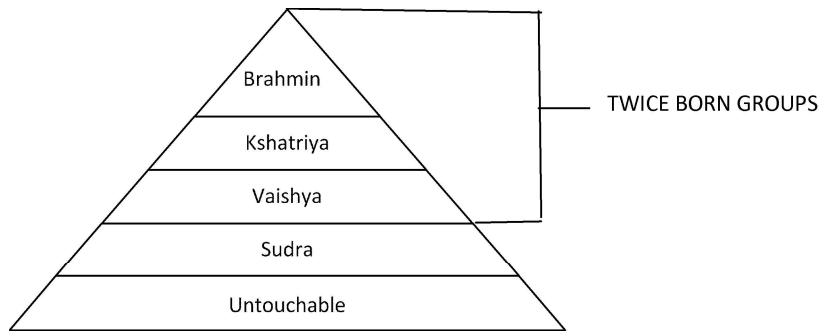


Fig. 4.2 Hierarchy of Indian Caste System

NOTES

3. Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse: The exchange of cooked food between various castes is based on specific rules and conditions. Certain castes accept only certain kind of foods from members of other castes. Food items are divided into pakka and kucha food. Pakka is cooked in ghee and are considered superior to kucha food which is cooked in water. A Brahmin can take only pakka food from Kshatriyas and Vaishyas but not from Shudras and untouchables. On the other hand, Kshatriyas will take kucha food from a Brahmin but only accept pakka food from the Vaishyas who are lower than them. The distinctions in the offering and taking of food are based on the positions of the caste involved.

Such kinds of differences are seen in the maintenance of social distance between different castes. The physical distance between castes reflects the caste positions.

For example, in traditional Kerala society, a *Nayyar* may approach a *Nambudri* but cannot touch him, whereas a member of the *Tiya* caste (lower than the *Nayyar* caste) has to maintain a distance of 36 steps from the *Nambudri*.

4. Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of different castes: Different castes in the hierarchy have different rights and privileges. The result is that social life is segregated on the basis of caste. In north Indian villages, impure castes are segregated, while pure castes live together. In South India, all castes tend to be segregated. In Tamil Nadu, for example, we find that the place where Hindus live are called *Ur* and where dalits live are called *Cheri*. The *Cheri* is situated at a distance from the village.

Ghurye gives a number of instances from the late 19th century and early 20th century to show how these disabilities were enforced. For instance, in Viakomom, a town in the princely state of Travancore, Shudras were not allowed to walk on the temple streets. A nationwide agitation by prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Periyar against these discriminatory practices changed the situation.

Similarly in Pune, a Shudra could not enter the city in the morning and evening as their long shadows would pollute the high caste members. We also find differential treatment in the punishments for committing

NOTES

similar crimes. For example, if caught stealing, a Brahmin had to pay only a fine but for the same crime, a Shudra had to undergo corporal punishment. There are a number of places even today in India where Shudras are not allowed to offer prayers in the temples.

The religious practices reinforced this hierarchy and Shudras had liabilities that were attached to their caste status. They could not enter the most inner part of the temple, the sanctum sanctorum. Only Brahmins were allowed this privilege. In rural areas, even now, there is discrimination against lower caste members. We often hear of caste violence after lower caste members were disallowed by higher caste members to take out a marriage procession or funeral procession on the main street.

5. Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation: Membership of the caste is hereditary and each caste had a traditionally assigned occupation. Regardless of the individual's aptitudes and skills, he had to adopt the occupation of his caste. In the same way, every occupation was linked to a specific caste. So each caste has one occupation and that occupation was the presence of that caste only. For example, only a Brahmin could become a priest because of his birth in a Brahmin family. Education was imparted on the basis of caste. Young members would be attached to older members to train them in the occupational skills of the caste. There was no universal and common education. However, sociologists have pointed out that in spite of such restrictions on occupations, there were certain occupations like weaving, agriculture and military that were open to all castes.

In pre-modern times, the economic relations between the various castes was in the form of the *jajmani* system. Each service caste performed a particular function for the landlords. They used to receive payment in kind and commonly on an annual basis. The service castes and the higher castes had a client-patron relationship. In modern times, their relation has undergone a change.

6. Endogamy: Endogamy refers to the marriage practice in which the members of a group marry from within the group members. Endogamy is an important characteristic of the caste system. In many castes, there is endogamy at the sub-caste level. For example, Iyers and Iyengars may not marry between each other even though both are Tamil Brahmins.

There are, however, exceptions to the rule. These exceptions pertain to hypergamy and hypogamy. When a higher caste man marries a low caste woman, it is called hypergamy and when a lower caste man marries a higher caste woman, it is called hypogamy. Hypergamy is allowed, whereas hypogamy is strictly forbidden. It is a matter of prestige for the lower caste family if their daughter had been accepted by a higher caste's man and family. An example of this practice is marriage between a male *Nambudri* and a *Nayyar* woman.

Caste in other religions

Among the major religions of the world, caste exists only in Hinduism. However, in India, adherents of virtually all religions seem to have caste-like divisions. The Muslims, the Christians, the Buddhists and Sikhs, all seem to follow the principle of inclusion and hierarchy in different ways. Islam and Christianity believe in radical equality between its members. However, the existence of caste-like practices shows that in some aspects the social milieu in which a religion is practiced, influences it more than its theology. This is the case of Sikhism and Buddhism also.

Caste-like differences may be observed in religions other than Hinduism. In Sikhism, there are groups like Jat Sikhs and Mazhabi Sikhs. They do not intermarry. In Islam, four groups were identified that can be compared to castes: Syeds, Sheikhs, Pathans and Mughals. Syeds claim that they are the direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad, while Sheikhs claim that they are descendants of the tribe of Prophet Muhammad. Pathans and Mughals are considered to be the warrior class comparable to Kshatriyas in Hinduism. Other groups in Islam are based on professions they pursue like weavers butchers, water carriers, and so on. These groups are considered lower in status than Syeds, Sheikhs, Pathans and Mughals. Most of these groups are endogamous. There is limited social intercourse between these members. However, anyone from any social group, if competent in religious knowledge, can become a priest or moulvi.

Christianity is also an egalitarian religion and has encouraged conversions of people from all castes during different periods of history. Many of these castes have retained their caste identities even after their conversion to Christianity, and this has influenced their social behaviour. However, Islam and Christianity have no concept of pollution and purity, which is central to Hinduism. Hence, these religions were less influenced by caste than Hinduism.

Mythological background of Indian caste system

According to *Rig Veda*, a sacred text which is approximately 3,000 years old, Brahma created a primordial man out of clay. The ancestors of the four caste groups sprang from various parts of his body. Brahmins sprang from his mouth and were given the task of fulfilling spiritual needs of the community. Kshatriyas sprang from his arms and they were entrusted with the task of protecting people of other castes. Vaishyas sprang from thighs and were asked to take care of commerce and agriculture. Shudras sprang from feet and they were to perform manual labour. Thus, each group had an important role in the functioning of the society. A fifth category named 'Untouchables' was conceptualized later. The untouchables were supposed to carry out menial work related to decay and dirt.

Historical background of Indian caste system and Varna

The Sanskrit word 'varna' means 'colour'. The early Aryans used the colour of the skin to differentiate themselves from the dark-skinned non-Aryans. This was the first division in the Indian society. The Aryans brought numerous slaves from the conquered non-Aryan population and named them *dasas*. The institution of slavery in Aryan society had a profound influence on the development of caste

NOTES

NOTES

system on one hand, and the status of women on the other. The slaves were given menial tasks which involved strenuous physical labour. The large number of female slaves in these societies lowered the status of women in general.

Gradually, with the growth of a composite 'Indian race', Aryans lost their distinct social identity. *Dasas* now became accepted as members of this composite community and were called Shudras. The composite society then got divided into four groups, namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. In the course of time, numerous racial and tribal groups came together and each of these became a separate caste. It is possible that with the assimilation of such groups, the institution of untouchability came into being.

In the early religious texts, there are references that Brahmins avoided the sight or presence of Shudra at the time of recitation of sacred texts or performance of rituals. For instance, it is written in a religious text that a Brahmin must interrupt his study of sacred texts if he discovers that there is a Shudra present. Such references clearly show that the custom of considering Shudra as unclean and his presence as polluting had made its appearance as early as the 2nd century BC. This ritualistic 'untouchability' soon developed into lifelong 'untouchability' for Shudras.

Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who came to India in the early part of the 7th century AD, mentioned that groups like the 'Chandalas' were required to warn the passer-by of their coming or their presence on the road by striking two blocks of wood against each other. This shows that the institution of untouchability had been firmly established in the society by then.

The caste system is still prevalent in India. However, it is undergoing a lot of changes due to industrialization, urbanization, modern education, means of communication and transportation.

Theories of caste system

There are a number of theories on the origin of caste system. It is because the caste system is a complex phenomenon. There is no unanimity among scholars about its origin. Let us study some of the theories of caste system.

- (i) **Traditional theory:** The sources of the emergence of this theory are Vedas, Shastras, Upanishads and *Dharmshastras*. This theory, as discussed above, states that Lord Brahma created a primordial man out of clay. The ancestors of the four varna groups sprang from various parts of his body. Further, the theory states that other castes emerged through the process hypergamy and miscegenation of the varnas.

Critics opine that this theory explains the emergence of varnas but fails to explain the creation of various castes among the varnas. On these grounds, they find this theory irrational and inaccurate. Many critics feel that caste does not emerge merely through the process of hypergamy and intermarriages, and that several other factors are responsible for this phenomenon.

- (ii) **Racial theory:** Some sociologists like G. S. Ghurye, Herbert Risley and N. K. Dutta believe that caste emerged due to racial mixture and

miscegenation. Risley adds that castes came into existence with the advent of Aryans to India during 1,500 BC. When Aryans invaded India and won battles from non-Aryans, they believed that they were physically, culturally or racially superior to the defeated races of India.

After sometime, Aryans began to marry non-Aryan women. In this way, hypergamy began to be practised but hypogamy was prohibited, that is, they used to marry women of higher castes but marrying women of lower castes was prohibited. Whenever the rules of hypergamy and hypogamy were disobeyed, the child of that union was called *varna-shankara*. Further, this group developed into a distinct caste. In this process, several other castes emerged.

Ghurye too agreed with Risley's theory of caste. He believed that the racial and cultural contact between Aryans and non-Aryans are the determining factors of the origin of the caste system. He held the view that to maintain the purity of blood, Aryans prohibited hypogamy.

This theory has been criticized on various grounds. Critics believe that racial mixture is a significant factor of the origin of caste, but it is not the sole factor. Thus, they criticize this theory because it does not mention other significant factors. Some of them question that if racial contact is a dominant factor of emergence of caste, then why this system could emerge only in India.

- (iii) **Religious theory:** A. M. Hocart and Emile Senart are the proponents of this theory. According to Hocart, caste system came into existence due to religious practices and rituals. Religion held an important place in ancient India. The king, who was considered the representative of God, was the chief of religious as well as administrative works. Religious works were performed in the form of *yagya*, *havans* and *bali* (offerings to God). These rituals were performed after the contributions made by several groups like Brahmins recited hymns for *havans*, potters used to make utensils for religious practices and gardeners used to bring flowers for worship. These groups were divided into different social strata according to the 'purity' of their respective works.

This theory is criticized because it considers religion as the only determining factor of caste. Thus, it is a unilateral theory that ignores other factors.

- (iv) **Occupational theory:** Well-known sociologist J. C. Nesfield propounded this theory. He said that 'function and function alone is responsible for the origin of caste system'. He criticized racial and religious theories of caste and claimed that occupation is the only determining factor of caste. Nesfield states that occupation of most of the castes is fixed to a large extent. It is because caste is determined by the occupation which a man's forefathers were in. The high and low rank of caste depends on 'pollution and purity' of their jobs. The people who were in the occupations which were considered to be 'pure' in that society were ranked higher in the hierarchy of the caste system than the people who performed 'impure' jobs.

NOTES

NOTES

Sir Denzil Ibbetson, an administrator in British India, states that the process of formation of caste has three stages. The first stage was tribal stage when people had some knowledge of all the current works. The second stage was of professional association in which every occupation had its own association. In the third stage, these occupational groups developed into hereditary groups and took the form of caste.

Famous anthropologist John Henry Hutton criticized this theory on the ground that these types of 'professional groups' developed in other parts of the world as well, but there was no development of caste in those parts.

4.3.1 Theories: Functional, Marxism and Weberian

Since the second half of the 19th century, four broad sociological theories have been used to explain and interpret the phenomenon of social stratification. They are discussed in the following sections.

Natural Superiority Theory

Natural superiority theory, also referred to as social Darwinism, was a popular and widely accepted theory of social stratification in the late 19th and early 20th century. The main advocate of social Darwinism was Herbert Spencer, an English sociologist, who saw social organization as an environment. It is believed that certain individuals and groups had the requisite skills or attributes to compete and to rise in that environment. Others, not so skilled or less competitive, would fail. The social Darwinists believed that their theory was part of the law of nature. Some other sociologists believed that the social inequality arising out of stratification is biologically based. Such beliefs are often heard in the case of racial stratification where, for example, whites claim biological superiority over the blacks. Even in terms of gender stratification, the underlying principle is that the men are biologically superior to women. However, the question of a relationship between the biologically based inequality and socially created inequality is difficult to answer.

Rousseau refers to biologically based inequality as natural or physical, because it is established by the nature, particularly with respect to the age, health, bodily strength and the qualities of the mind. In comparison, socially created inequality consists of different privileges, which some men enjoy to the prejudice of others, such as that of being richer, more honoured, or more powerful. However, biologically based inequalities between men are treated as small and relatively unimportant, whereas socially created inequalities provide the major basis for systems of social stratification.

Functionalist Theory of Social Stratification

The functionalist theory is a theory that is most concerned with how societies maintain order. Generally, the functionalist theorists have tended to stress stability, consensus and integration in society. Functionalists assume that the society is similar to that of a human body, comprising several parts which form an integrated whole. Like the human body, the society's institutions must function properly to maintain the stability of the entire social system. Further, certain functional prerequisites

must be met if the society is to function effectively and in order. Social stratification, therefore, becomes a tool to see how far it meets these functional prerequisites.

Talcott Parsons' approach

Talcott Parsons, the leading proponent of functionalist model, differentiated societies as falling on a continuum between ascribed-status-based societies and achievement based societies. Societies in which individuals were value based on their family position, sex, race or other traits of birth are viewed as the traditional end of the continuum. On the other end is the modern society, in which a system of rewards is used to aid in fulfilling a complex division of labour. According to Parsons, more difficult positions that demanded considerable responsibility required a system of rewards to motivate individuals to take them. In his view, stratification — which is, by definition, social inequality — was both necessary and agreeable. Parsons believed that stratification was necessary to provide rewards for people who would take on the additional responsibility tied to difficult positions, and in his view, stratification was desirable because it allowed the social system to function smoothly. Parsons's ideas on social stratification were further developed by two American sociologists Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore in their essay 'Some Principles of Stratification', published in *American Sociological Review* in 1945. They shared the common notions with Parsons in so far as stating that the social stratification is universal, functional and integral to fulfilling the division of labour in society. Let us look at their theory in detail.

NOTES

David and Moore's Structural-Functional Theory of Stratification

Structural-functional theory of stratification as articulated by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore (1945) is perhaps the best known single piece of work in the structural functional theory. Davis and Moore made it clear that they regarded social stratification as both universal and necessary. They argued that no society is ever unstratified or totally classless. Stratification is, in their view, a functional necessity. All societies need such a system and this need brings into existence a system of stratification. They also viewed a stratification system as a structure pointing out that stratification refers not to the individuals in the stratification system but also to a system of positions. They focused on how certain positions come to carry with them different degrees of prestige and not on how individuals came to occupy certain positions.

Given this focus, the major functional issue is how a society motivates and places people in their 'proper' positions in the stratification system. This is reducible to two problems. First, how does a society instil in the 'proper' individuals the desire to fill certain positions? Second, once people are in the right positions, how does society instil in them the desire to fulfil the requirements of those positions? The problem of proper social placement in society arises due to three basic reasons. First, some positions are more pleasant to occupy than others. Second, some positions are more important to the survival of society than others. Third, social positions require different abilities and talents.

Although these issues apply to all social positions, Davis and Moore were concerned with the functions of more important positions in society. The positions

NOTES

that rank high within the stratification system are presumed to be less in number but more important to the survival of society and those which require the greatest ability and talent. In addition, society must attach sufficient rewards to these positions so that many people will seek to occupy them and the individuals who do occupy them will work diligently. The converse was implied by Davis and Moore, but not discussed. That is, low ranking positions in the stratification system are presumed to be more pleasant and less important and require less ability and talent. Also, society has to be less vigilant about individuals that occupy these positions and perform their duties with diligence.

Davis and Moore did not argue that a society consciously develops a stratification system in order to be sure that the high-level positions are filled, and filled adequately. Rather they made it clear that stratification is an 'unconsciously evolved device'. However, it is a device that every society does, and must develop if it is to survive. According to Davis and Moore, in order to be sure that people occupy the higher-ranking positions, society must provide these individuals with various rewards, including great prestige, high salaries and sufficient leisure. For example, to ensure there are enough doctors in society, we need to offer them rewards. Davis and Moore implied that we could not expect people to undertake the 'burdensome' and 'expensive' process of medical education if we did not offer such rewards (high prestige and pay scale plus sufficient leisure). The implication seems to be that people at the top must receive the rewards that they deserve. If they do not, those positions would remain understaffed or unfilled, and the society would crumble.

Criticisms of Structural-Functional Theory of Stratification

Structural-functional theory of stratification has been subject to much criticism since its publication in 1945. One basic criticism is that this theory of stratification simply perpetuates the privileged position of those people who already have power, prestige and money. It does this by arguing that such people deserve their rewards, and indeed they need to be offered such rewards for the good of the society. The functional theory can also be criticized for assuming that simply because a stratified social structure has existed in the past it must continue to exist in the future as well. It is possible that future societies can be organized in any other non-stratified way. In addition, it has been argued that the idea of functional positions varying in their importance to society is difficult to support. For example, are garbage collectors really any less important to the survival of society than advertising executives? Despite the lower pay and prestige of the garbage collectors, they actually may be more important to the survival of the society. Nurses may be much more important to society than movie stars, but nurses have far less power, prestige and income than movie stars. The theory provides no explanation to such a situation.

Is there really a scarcity of people capable of filling high level positions? In fact, many people are prevented from the training they need to achieve prestigious positions, even though they have the ability. In the medical profession, for example, there is a persistent effort to limit the number of practicing doctors. In general, many able people never get a chance to show that they can handle high-ranking positions even though there is a clear need for them and their contributions. The

fact is that those in high-ranking positions have a vested interest in keeping their numbers small and their power and income high. Finally, it can be argued that we do not have to offer people power, prestige and income to get them to want to occupy high level positions. People can be equally motivated by the satisfaction of doing a job well or by the opportunity to be of service to others.

In sum, Parsons, Davis and Moore present a view of structured inequality as being necessary to maintain social order and, therefore, society's survival, and as being based on a general agreement among the members of the society.

4.3.2 Marxian Theory of Social Stratification

Karl Marx analysed social stratification through conflict perspective. Marx closely observed European society, impact of the industrial revolution on Europe and the division of society into rich people and poor people. Rich people are fewer in number, whereas most of the people are poor.

Marx found that all societies are composed of social institutions. Social institutions include economy, political system, family, religion and education. In his analysis of society, Marx states that economy is the dominant factor in the society and influences other institutions. He identified economy as the 'real foundation' of society. So, Marx analysed 'economic factor' as the **base or infrastructure** and rest of the institutions such as religion, family, custom, education, polity as superstructure which support the economy.

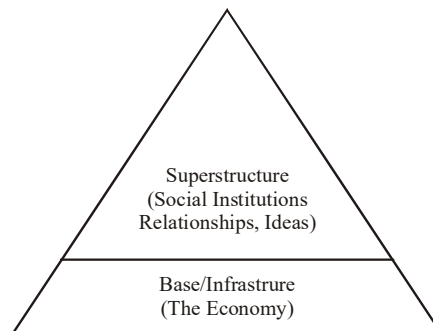


Fig. 4.3 Marx's Conception of Society

Marx also insisted that it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being but it is their social being which determines their consciousness. In the capitalist economy, the legal system helps capitalists to protect their wealth, and the family allows capitalists to pass their property from one generation to the other.

Change in economic system leads to change in other parts of the society as well. Marx also analysed that economy is based upon 'mode of production'. Mode of production consists of two things: (i) forces of production and (ii) relations of production. Forces of production include machines, tools and technology. Relation of production means relationship between people of different classes. It also means the relation between the ruler and the ruled.

Marx defined **class** as the group of people who share the same relationship to the forces of production. The proletariat sell their labour for wages and the

NOTES

NOTES

capitalists own the force of production. These two classes are found in all the periods. Let us study these periods:

- **Primitive communism:** Primitive communism was based on hunting and gathering system. In this system, people shared food and other things equally. The society was homogeneous, and there was absence of accumulation of private property. Tendency of accumulation of wealth started in the last stage of primitive communism.
- **Slavery:** In this stage, the society was divided into two classes: master and slave. Masters used to exploit, sell, and sometimes kill their slaves.
- **Feudalism:** In the feudal stage, the society was divided into two classes: feudal lords and serfs. Feudal lords were the owner of lands, whereas serfs were poor and totally dependent on their feudal lords.
- **Capitalism:** In the capitalistic stage, the society was divided into two classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat. Bourgeoisie class are the owners of capital (factories, properties and capital), whereas the proletariat work for capitalists and earn their livelihood. Both the classes are dependent on each other. One for the execution of their work and the other for their livelihood. The relationship of these two mutually dependent classes is like the relationship between the exploiters and the exploited. This is shown in Figure 4.4.

The capitalist class invests money in the production of goods. The source of profit for them rests in extracting surplus value. They ensure that the value they pay for the labour is less than the value of goods produced. For Marx, this is exploitative and results in 'conflict of interest' between these two classes.

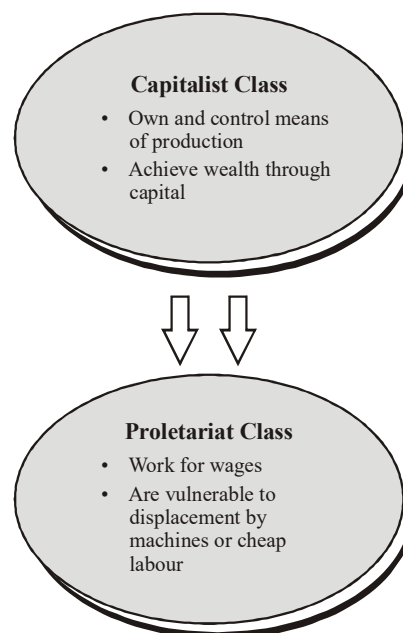


Fig. 4.4 Division of Class in the Capitalist Society

He explains exploitation as a situation that satisfies the following three criteria:

- (i) **Inverse interdependent welfare principle:** This principle states that the exploiters' material welfare largely depends on the material deprivations of the exploited.
- (ii) **Exclusion principle:** According to this principle, the welfare of the exploiter depends upon the exclusion of the exploited from access to certain productive resources.
- (iii) **Appropriation principle:** Exclusion generates material advantage to exploiters because it enables them to appropriate the labour effort of the exploited.

During this analysis, Marx also distinguished between two concepts: 'class in itself' and 'class for itself'. The former refers to a situation in which the members of a class are aware of their class positions. In this situation, workers fight for higher wages, that is, for their trade union consciousness and not for their class consciousness. According to Marx, '**class consciousness** is the awareness of a common identity based on position in the means of production'. The consciousness is the shared awareness that members of a social class have about their common situations and interests. It is the essential basis of the unity of workers. These workers also engage in intra-class rivalry. This is the situation of 'class in itself'. On the other hand, the 'class for itself' is a self-conscious class. In this situation, a large portion of the members identify with the class and develop an attitude for class struggle.

Here, Marx identified class on two criteria: objectively and subjectively. Objectively, the classes are divided on the basis of economic factors, that is, 'haves' and 'have-nots'. Subjectively, the members of classes have consciousness of their class. In the latter case, the working class can come together and overthrow capitalism and bring socialist system as a solution to end the conflict.

Marx believed it was possible to transform a capitalist system into a system of socialism. After the transformation 'from within' the system based on private property will be replaced with the system that advocates common ownership. Here, it is important to understand the system of socialism. It is a system in which the means of production are owned and controlled communally and cooperatively. It is characterized by equal power-relations and the elimination of hierarchy which used to manage economic and political affairs.

Criticism

Conflict theory has been criticized on various grounds:

- It does not consider different types of differentiations that exist in the present-day society.
- It fails to recognize that a system of unequal rewards is necessary to motivate people to perform their roles effectively.
- It ignores other factors of social stratifications like power, prestige and lineage.
- It is a one-dimensional theory, that is, it is based on single factor.

NOTES

NOTES

4.3.3 Weberian Theory of Social Stratification

Max Weber, a German sociologist, represented one of the most important developments in stratification theory. Weber emphasized a multidimensional approach to understand social structures. He attempted to integrate structure and agency with material and normative dimensions. Weber argued that human actors interpret and construct the meaning of social world around them. Different viewpoints embody different values and interests. Therefore, different people understand social structures differently. Weber argued that ‘unintended consequences of action’ produce social structures.

Weber further elaborated the Marxian perspective of social stratification. Marx viewed polarized class structure and economic factors as the reasons of social conflict. But, Weber developed a more complex and multidimensional perspective of social stratification. According to him, social stratification is not simply a matter of class but is shaped by two more aspects — the status and the party. To understand social stratification, it is necessary to understand the relationship among class, status and party. All these aspects are interrelated and overlapping. Weber interpreted social stratification through multidimensional perspectives (Figure 4.5).

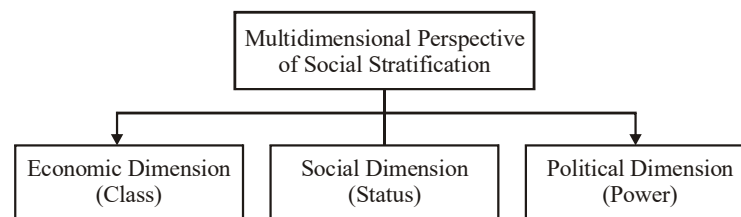


Fig. 4.5 Multidimensional Perspective of Social Stratification

Economic Dimension Class

Weber identified economic inequality as the first dimension of social stratification. He argues that classes develop in market economies when individuals compete for economic gains. Weber defines ‘class’ as a group of individuals who share a similar position in a market economy and receive similar economic rewards consequently.

According to Weber, a person’s class situation is basically a market situation. He states that those who share similar class situation also share similar life chances. Their economic position directly assists them in fulfilling their desires such as access to higher education and expensive comfort commodities. Now, let us discuss Weber’s class stratification. Weber divided class into four categories. These are as follows:

- (i) **Propertied upper class:** The propertied upper class is the class of people who are owners of properties such as land and factories.
- (ii) **Property-less white collar workers:** This is the class of people who are not owners of any property but are educated. They work as white-collar workers like engineers, judicial magistrates, doctors and accountants.

- (iii) **Petty bourgeoisie:** People who belong to petty bourgeoisie class do not work in any firm. They are the owners of land, property or enterprises on a small scale. For example, farmers who own their land, and goldsmiths or ironsmiths who own their enterprises.
- (iv) **Manual working class:** It is defined by the kind of services workers provide in the labour market. Workers are classified as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. These distinctions are based on the value of different kinds of labour.

In addition to the categorization of classes, Weber studied the relationship between class and life chances. Now, let us study this relation in detail.

- **Political, economic and social behaviour:** The higher a person's class, the more likely that he takes interest in politics. On economic issues, high income people are generally more conservative than lower income people. On social issues, the higher the social class, the more tolerant people tend to be in their attitudes.
- **Marital stability:** Divorce is relatively more common in upper and lower classes than in middle classes. Gender roles for both men and women tend to be more rigid and traditional at lower socio-economic levels.
- **Educational achievement:** Social class has a strong influence on educational achievement. The higher the social class of the parents, the better opportunities children are likely to get in school. Therefore, the offspring of upper and upper-middle families are disproportionately represented in college and high-level jobs.
- **Health:** The higher one's socio-economic status, the better one's health is likely to be. Mental disorder is more common in lower class than in other classes. The incidence of diseases is significantly higher in lower classes due to the lack of safe work conditions and nutritional diet.
- **Values and attitudes:** People of middle and upper class feel a strong sense of control over their lives. They are generally prepared to put off their present enjoyment in the hope of greater future rewards. Members of working and lower classes are more likely to believe that their lives are shaped by luck and other forces which are beyond their control. They are more likely to focus on present needs and wants than on future possibilities.
- **Child-rearing practices:** Parents of each class tend to teach the norms of their own work to their children unconsciously. Jobs at the upper levels of hierarchy usually offer autonomy, while those at the lower levels involve close supervision. Accordingly, the child-rearing practices of the middle and upper classes focus on teaching principles of behaviour that encourage children to shape their own conduct. On the other hand, parents of working and lower classes tend to focus on teaching children to obey the rules and stay out of trouble.

NOTES

NOTES

- **Criminal behaviour:** People of all classes commit crimes, however, people of lower classes are more likely to be arrested, denied bail, found guilty, and imprisoned. They do not necessarily commit more crimes, but they are most likely to commit street crimes that are of concern to the society. Typical lower class crimes include robbery and auto theft; whereas, upper and middle class crimes include corruption, tax evasion and fraud.

Social Dimension Status

The social dimension refers to the unequal distribution of social status or social honour. Class is the part of a broader multidimensional schema of stratification for Weber, in which the most central contrast is between class and status. Status groups are defined within the sphere of communal interaction. They always imply some level of identity in the sense of some recognized 'positive or negative social estimation of honour'. A status group cannot exist without its members being in some way conscious of being members of the group. In this regard, Weber says, 'in contrast to classes, for status groups are normally groups'.

For Weber, this conceptual contrast between class and status is not primarily a question of the motives of actors. It rather implies that status groups are derived from purely symbolic motives and class categories are derived from material interests. Although people care about status categories in part because of their importance for symbolic ideal interests, class positions also entail such symbolic interests. Thus, both status and class are implicated in the pursuit of material interests. As Weber said, 'material monopolies provide the most effective motives for the exclusiveness of a status group'.

Rather than motives, the central contrast between class and status is the nature of the mechanisms through which class and status shape inequalities of material and symbolic conditions in people's lives. Class affects material well-being directly through the kinds of economic assets brought to market exchanges.

Social status is related to effective claims concerning social prestige. Social prestige is based on the mode of livelihood, birth, education, and occupation. In terms of stratification, social status is also expressed at the time of marriage, feast and other such activities involving economic status. Conventions and traditions are also associated with social status. It considers the following aspects:

- **Status Group:** It is a group of people who are given equal amount of social honour and enjoy the same status. For example, the status of engineers, doctors, professors and lawyers. The high status groups have a distinctive lifestyle as demonstrated in their patterns of association and consumption. Low status groups project their sense of worth on the hopes of salvation.
- **Shared Identity:** Members of a status group share common status situations and similar lifestyles.
- **Restriction on social intercourse:** Status groups restrict relations within the groups and avoid outsiders to interact. For example, members of

upper class restrict themselves and avoid social intercourse like talking, give and take, and enjoying feasts with lower class people.

Political Dimension Power

Weber holds that the third dimension of social stratification refers to the unequal distribution of power. Power means the capacity to influence others. Gaetano Mosca argued that every society can be stratified by power. Weber further pointed out the party formation is a significant part of power.

Weber defined **parties** as groups specifically concerned with policy formation and decision-making. Class and status interests are usually the base of political power. The organizations of power are known as 'parties'. The major objective of a party is to struggle for domination. Basically, the parties operate in the political and/or legal domain. Although parties are formed on the basis on class and status, they are not just organized across such distinctions. As the economic power binds class and status together, in some way, it is very common for parties to even reflect such complex interest patterns. Parties need to symbolize a high degree of rationality in their social action; and hence they require planning. The party motives are suppose to be strategic in nature for seeking power.

Weber distinguished between power and authority. According to him, 'a authority' is legitimate power, and legitimate authority involves an element of voluntary compliance. He identified three sources of authority: (i) traditional, (ii) legal-rational and (iii) charismatic. *Traditional authority* is inherited. *Legal-rational authority* is based on calculability, intellect and impersonal logic of goal-directed action. *Charismatic authority* is extraordinary personal power identified with a particular individual.

Weber preferred the State, particularly the bureaucracy, as the foundation of power. Power represents actions which are likely to succeed even against opposition and resistance of those on whom power is applied. Bureaucracy embodies legal-rational authority which he saw as undermining other forms of authority such as traditional and charismatic. Weber considered that the process of rationalization, understood as calculability, intellect and impersonal goal-directed action, increasingly overtake human activity; affecting all institutions.

Although Weber's conception of structure attempts to relate agency and subjectivity with external reality, it suggests little inter-subjective bond between social actors. In its absence, rational-legal domain of the state alone becomes the normal social bond. Weber accords little consideration for democracy and active citizenship to sustain social relations. His understanding of the social structure in the modern scenario calls for charismatic spells of one kind or another to sustain people's engagement with the social order. However, charisma cannot be anticipated, calculated and predicted. It is a double-edged sword. Therefore, rational-legal authority will always attempt to keep it at bay.

Weber does not adequately engage with the inequality of wealth, power and status. There is little to suggest that he thought that it was the responsibility of the state to promote an equalitarian order. A shared moral domain cannot arise in a Weberian framework. The exercise of power is also related to authority. In

NOTES

NOTES

Weber's analysis, class is associated with the economic aspect, status with community and caste system, and power with politics.

Weber noted that each of his three dimensions of social inequality were present in the evolution of human society. In agrarian society, there was prevalence of status difference. In industrial society, social stratification was based on class which means economic dimension. In socialist society, social stratification was based on the basis of power.

Difference from Marxian View

Max Weber disagrees with Marxian interpretation of social stratification on the following issues:

- Factors other than ownership or non-ownership on the means of production are significant in the class formation. Especially, the market value of the skills of the property less varies from place to place. It brings variations in their social class. For example, a plumber is paid higher in the US than in India.
- Weber disagrees with Marxian view of polarization of classes. He distributed class in four categories. Weber argued that bourgeoisie class declined in number and many of them became petty bourgeoisie due to competition from large companies.
- Weber rejects the Marxian view of proletarian revolution. He believes that instead of revolution the proletariats may adopt other ways like strikes and grumble their grievances, etc.

Criticism

Max Weber's multidimensional view of social stratification has influenced sociological theory greatly. However, critics (especially those who favour Marx's idea), argue that although social class boundaries may have blurred, industrial and post-industrial societies still show striking patterns of social inequalities.

4.3.4 Functions of Social Stratification

The glimpse of the cultures of the world reveals that no society is 'classless', that is, uncategorized. All the known established societies of the world are stratified in one way or the other. According to Wilbert Moore and Kingsley Davis, the stratification system evolved in all the societies due to the functional necessity. As they have pointed out, the main functional necessity of the system is: '... the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure... Social inequality is, thus, an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons.' As analysed by eminent sociologist H. M. Johnson, certain things here can be noted about the 'functional necessity' of the class stratification system.

Encourages hard work

One of the main functions of class stratification is to induce people to work hard to live up to the values. Those who best fulfil the values of a particular society are normally rewarded with greater prestige and social acceptance by others. It is

known that occupations are ranked high if their functions are highly important and the required personnel is very scarce. Hard work, prolonged training and heavy burden of responsibility are associated with such occupational positions. People undertaking such works are rewarded with money, prestige, comforts, and so on. Still we cannot say that all those positions which are regarded as important are adequately compensated for.

Ensures circulation of elites

To some extent, class stratification helps to ensure what is often called ‘the circulation of the elite’. When a high degree of prestige comforts and other rewards are offered for certain positions, there will be some competition for them. This process of competition helps to ensure that the more efficient people are able to rise to the top, where their ability can best be used.

Serves an economic function

The competitive aspect has a kind of economic function in that it helps to ensure the rational use of available talent. It is also functionally necessary to offer differential rewards if the positions at the top are largely ascribed as it is in the case of the caste system. Even in the caste system, the people at the top can lose their prestige if they fail to maintain certain standards. Hence, differential rewards provide the incentives for the upper classes to work at maintaining their positions.

Prevents wastage of resources

The stratification system prevents the wastage of scarce resources. The men in the elite class actually possess scarce and socially valued abilities and qualities, whether these are inherited or acquired. Because of their possession of these qualities, their enjoyment of some privileges, such as extra comfort and immunity from doing menial work, are functionally justified. It becomes functionally beneficial for the society to make use of their talents without being wasted. For example, it would be a waste to pour the resources of society into the training of doctors and engineers, and then make them work as peons and attendants. When once certain individuals are chosen and are trained for certain difficult positions, it would be dysfunctional to waste their time and energy on tasks for which there is enough manpower.

Stabilizes and reinforces the attitudes and skills

Members of a class normally try to limit their relations to their own class. More intimate relationships are mostly found between fellow class-members. Even this tendency has its own function. It tends to stabilize and reinforce the attitudes and skills that may be the basis of upper-class position. Those who have similar values and interests tend to associate comfortably with one another. Their frequent association itself confirms their common values and interests.

Helps to pursue different professions or jobs

The values, attitudes and qualities of different classes do differ. This difference is also functional for society to some extent because society needs manual as well as non-manual workers. Many jobs are not attractive to highly trained or ‘refined’ people for they are socialized to aspire for certain other jobs. Because of the early influence

NOTES

NOTES

of family and socialization, the individuals imbibe in them certain values, attitudes and qualities relevant to the social class to which they belong. This will influence their selection of jobs.

Social control

Further to the extent that 'lower class' cultural characteristics are essential to society, the classes are, of course, functional. In fact, certain amount of mutual antagonism between social classes is also functional. To some extent, upper-class and lower-class groups can act as negative reference groups for each other. Thus, they act as a means of social control also.

Controlling effect on the 'shady' world

Class stratification has another social control function. Even in the 'shady' world of gamblers and in the underworld of lower criminals, black-marketers, racketeers, smugglers, and so on, the legitimate class structure has got respectability. They know that money is not substitute for prestige but only a compensation for renouncing it. Hence, instead of continuing in a profitable shady career, such people want to gain respectability for their money and for their children, and they try to enter legitimate fields and become philanthropists and patrons of the arts. Thus, the legitimate class structure continues to attract the shady classes and the underworld. This attraction exerts a social control function.

Check Your Progress

7. Define stratification.
8. What do you mean by 'social inequality'?
9. State the categories of power.
10. Define social class.
11. Differentiate between hypergamy and hypogamy.
12. Who was the main advocate of social Darwinism?
13. List the three criteria given by Marx that satisfy 'exploitation as a situation'.
14. What are the three sources of authority according to Weber?

4.4 SOCIAL MOBILITY

Classes and individuals are rated high or low on the basis of characteristics possessed by them according to the social value scale. Change in the value scale or any change in the characteristics may change the status of classes. For instance, members of the priestly class were at one time rated higher than the members of the other classes in India, however, today it is not so. A doctor or engineer enjoys greater prestige than a priest does.

Occupation also plays an important role in the change of status. It is because different occupations are held in different degrees of esteem in different societies or within the society at different times. Thus, occupation of a person can change his social status. For example, if a person becomes a minister from an ordinary shopkeeper, his status is enhanced. On the other hand, if a minister loses his job, the status enjoyed by him as a minister is lost.

Thus, it is seen that people in society continue to move up and down the status scale. This movement is called 'social mobility'. Now, let us see how different sociologists define social mobility.

Social mobility refers to 'movements by specific entities between periods in socio-economic status indicators' (Behrman, 2000) and it aims to quantify 'the movement of given (entities) through the distribution of economic well-being over time, establishing how dependent one's current economic position is on one's past position, and relating people's mobility experiences' to the overall conditions of the economy in which they operate (Fields, 2000).

Differences arise, however, when an attempt is made to endow these definitions with empirical content (i.e., when an effort is made to determine what variable should be used to measure mobility, what exactly should be considered "movement" in a distribution, or what time spans should be used to evaluate mobility).

According to Anthony Giddens, social mobility is the 'movement of individuals and groups between socio-economic positions'.

Stephen Aldridge defines social mobility as 'the movement or opportunities for movement between different social classes or occupational groups'.

David Popnoe said, 'social mobility is a change of position and status of any person or transformation from one level to another'.

According to Henry Pratt Fairchild, 'social mobility is a transformation from one state to another state'.

Pitirim A. Sorokin who was the founder of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University and one of the greatest contributors to the study of social mobility. He define social mobility as 'any transition of an individual or social object or value — anything that has been created or modified by human activity — from one social position to another'. According to him, the study of social mobility should be primarily concerned with the courses and consequences of demographic exchanges between groups, as distinct from the study of individuals who may move up or down the social hierarchy. Even the term 'social mobility' was propounded by P.A. Sorokin in 1927.

In the present scenario, social mobility refers to the movement of individuals and groups between one stratum to another. It brings changes in the position of an individual or a group in the social ladder. It could be upwardly or downwardly directed. It provides opportunities to a person to change his strata (socio-economic position). For example, a son of a sweeper may become an officer. Here, he

NOTES

NOTES

achieved higher strata on the basis of his abilities and talents. It is an example of social mobility, as he moves his socio-economic position from lower to higher position.

Social mobility is measured on socio-economic scale. The degree of vertical mobility is the index of openness of a society.

In open or liberal society, the rate of social mobility is higher when compared to the closed society. It is a natural desire for all to lead a comfortable and easy life. Everyone wishes for a higher status and income. The process whereby people achieve the goal or fail to achieve such wishes leads to social mobility, where one may change his place of living or job. i.e., the person moves from one socio-economic class to another.

An 'open' or 'fluid' society is one where individuals are able to move freely, as a result of factors such as aptitude, intelligence, ability and effort, up the social scale, regardless of their social position in childhood (Heath and Payne, 1999). In open society, the rate of social mobility is higher when compared to the closed societies. For example, caste system in India has lower mobility.

Nature of social mobility

Social mobility has been defined as 'the process of moving from one social class to another'. The concept of social mobility is being increasingly associated with the idea of social fairness and equality of opportunity in a society at any given time.

In an open society, it is easier to move from one class to another, i.e., class mobility is high; and in a closed class there is little mobility. The caste system in which people are confined to the occupations and statuses of their ancestors is the most extreme example of a closed class society (Berreman, 1981). India is often cited the world's most caste-ridden country. Its government now is opening higher status occupations to low-caste groups which, for centuries, have been limited to low- status work. It is trying to move India toward an open class society (Gandhi, 1980).

In today's world, all countries are looking for an increase in social mobility, which is believed to make people happier and more satisfied in terms of the most suitable work for them. Although individuals have unequal social origins in case of high social mobility, all may consider that they are equal in position. In case the social mobility is low, it is clear that most people are frozen into the status of their ancestors.

Types of Social Mobility

Sociologists have identified different types of social mobility. The two main types of social mobility are: (i) vertical social mobility, and (ii) horizontal social mobility (Figure 4.6).

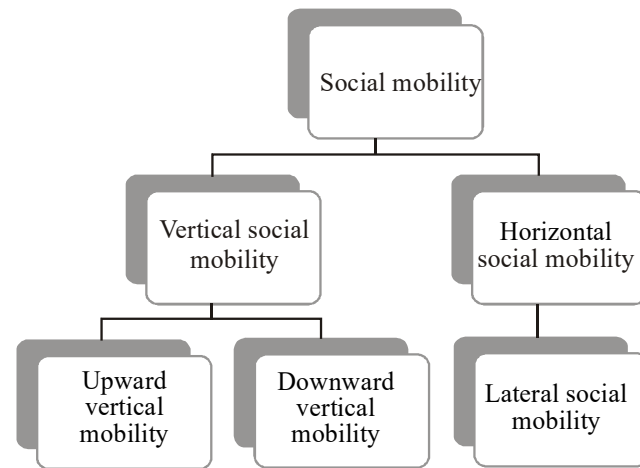


Fig. 4.6 Main Types of Social Mobility

NOTES

Now, let us discuss these two types of social mobility in detail:

- (i) Horizontal mobility:** Horizontal mobility is a type of social mobility that involves a change in social position with no corresponding change in social class. In this, there is a slight change in an individual's social position within his own social class. It implies that in horizontal mobility; individuals do not improve their living conditions, nor do they necessarily improve their social, occupational or political status. For instance, when a rural labourer shifts to a city and becomes an industrial worker, there is no significant change in his position in the social hierarchy.

So basically, horizontal mobility signifies a change in the position without a change in the status i.e., it indicates a variation in position within the range of the same status. It is a movement from one status to its equivalent status. The vertical social mobility involves drastic changes, but this is not the case with horizontal mobility. It refers to geographical movement between neighbourhood, towns or regions. For example, a bank manager is transferred to Mumbai from Delhi. Examples of horizontal social mobility at times can even include a change in religion or in country of citizenship (Habil et al.).

In modern days, lateral mobility (a kind of horizontal mobility) is also prevalent. It refers to a geographical movement of a person; wherein there is no change in status, but there is slight improvement in the prestige of a person. For example, when a professor of Gorakhpur University becomes a professor of Delhi University (central university), there is no change in status; but in the central university he enjoys more privileges and social prestige.

- (ii) Vertical mobility:** Vertical mobility is present in every society in some form or the other. This means that it is an intrinsic feature of all stratified societies. Vertical mobility means a radical change in the socio-economic position of an individual, a family or a group.

NOTES

It is to be noted that vertical mobility can take place in two ways—(a) individuals and groups may improve their position in the hierarchy by moving upwards, or (b) they may worsen their position and fall down in the hierarchy. When an individual gets into a seat of political position; where he can gain money and exert influence over others because of his new status, he is said to have achieved ‘individual mobility’. Just like individuals, even groups can attain high social mobility. According to the direction of the transition, there are two kinds of vertical social mobility: (a) ascending and (b) descending (i.e., social climbing and social sinking). When a Dalit from a village becomes an important official, it is a case of upward mobility.

According to some sociologists, there are two types of societies: (a) open societies and (b) closed societies. In open societies, every person has a chance to achieve any status or position of his choice and preference on the basis of his talents and abilities. His achievements are not restricted on the grounds of his ascribed status such as caste, race and lineage. Thus, vertical mobility is usually found in open societies.

Vertical mobility is completely absent in closed societies. It is because in closed societies, an individual’s position is determined at birth on the basis of his caste, class, race and gender. One cannot modify or change his status. These two types of societies are the two extremes. In the modern scenario, most of the societies lie between these two extremes. Thus today, many individuals rise up the social ladder and join the higher stratum or group through their talent, hard work and courage.

Vertical mobility may be upward or downward. Upward and downward types of vertical mobility are discussed below:

- (a) Upward vertical mobility:** When an individual gets property, income or status that enhances his status, it is called ‘upward vertical mobility’. For example, when a person of lower class becomes an IAS officer, there will be an improvement in his financial condition and status. Upward vertical mobility is also known as ‘occupational mobility’.

Prior to World War II, studies of social mobility was limited to investigations of different occupational groups, employees of single factories or inhabitants of single communities. In the post-World War II, there have been a number of studies conducted in different cities of various countries. These investigations facilitate the comparison of current variations in occupational mobility and also make assumptions of differences during the past half centuries. To make such comparisons and assumptions is difficult.

In order to study social mobility, occupations have been categorized into three levels: manual, non-manual and farm occupations. It has been assumed that a move from manual to non-manual employment constitutes upward mobility. This assumption is based on the following grounds:

- o Non-manual occupation carries more prestige than manual occupations.
- o White-collared positions generally lead to higher incomes than manual employment.

- o Non-manual positions generally require more education than manual positions.
- o Holders of non-manual positions, even those who are paid less, consider themselves superior to manual workers.
- o Non-manual workers, as compared to manual workers, are more likely to have attitudes which resemble those of upper middle class.

(b) Downward vertical mobility: Downward movement of a position is called downward vertical mobility. For example, if an industrialist loses everything in a project and becomes financially bankrupt, it is an instance of downward vertical mobility.

Generally, industrialized societies have more social mobility than peasant society as Lipset and Bendix proved in their book *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*. That is why industrial society is called an open society and peasant society is called a closed society.

Vertical mobility is quite prevalent in open society, where every person has a chance to achieve any status or position of his choice and preference on the basis of his talents and abilities. His achievements are not restricted on the grounds of his ascribed status, such as caste, race or lineage. On the other hand, in a totally closed society, upward vertical mobility is completely absent. An individual's positions are determined at birth like his caste, family membership, race, sex, etc. One cannot modify or change the individual's status. These two types of society are the two extremes. All societies lie between these two ideal types of societies. Today vertical mobility is significant in our life, especially in industrialized or open society where an individual gets the chance to improve and change his socio-economic status.

In this respect, social mobility is an important political issue as it consists of the democratic values of 'equal opportunity for all'. This liberal view has diminished the obstacles in the free flow of talents. Otherwise, talents would have been crushed. The phenomenon of an individual riding up the social ladder and joining the higher stratum or group through dint of his talent, hard work and courage is relatively common. For example, a sweeper's son becomes an IAS officer or doctor through his talents and hard work. Similarly, there are several rags to riches stories in the glamour, business and political spheres of society.

There are numerous examples of an individual's loss of fortunes and his subsequent slide in social status. However, the social ascendance and descendance of groups within a given period require careful attention. For example, the Brahmins did not have an unquestionable superiority compared to the Kshatriyas in the remote past. However, according to the historian of India's caste society, only after a sustained struggle did the Kshatriyas yield the supreme social position to the Brahmins. If this theory is accepted to be true, this is an example of the second type of social ascent where one group as whole, supersedes the rank of another group.

Similarly, the Green Revolution in India led to the socio-economic consolidation of the status of the middle caste peasantry as a dominant caste. With

NOTES

NOTES

increase in their economic power, they were able to realize their political ambitions and participated in development administration. This led to social mobility of these intermediary castes. As a consequence, the Yadavas, the Kurmis, the Koeris in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh; Jats in Haryana, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh; Reddis in Andhra Pradesh have successfully climbed the socio-economic and political ladders. They wield considerable influence in politics and administration.

Reasons of Vertical Mobility

Now, let us discuss some of the reasons behind vertical mobility:

- In every society, there are high social, political or administrative positions with fixed tenures. On the expiry of the terms or tenures, such positions have to be filled with new people. This creates opportunities for new persons to occupy those positions. If the positions are open to all strata of the society, there is a possibility that people from lower strata also occupy such positions. This in turn leads to vertical social mobility.
- Another reason of vertical mobility is the inability of many individuals to efficiently perform the desired functions of their social stratum. This may lead to opportunities for more dynamic, intelligent and courageous people to fill these positions.
- When people of lower strata try to emulate the ways and manners of those belonging to upper strata, sooner or later, they are accepted as members of upper strata. For example, through the process of sanskritization, several lower caste members adopted the lifestyle of upper caste people.
- Geographical adaptations also require social adaptation. As population grows, forests are depleted and fields eroded to provide more housing accommodation. New calamities and diseases appear. The social system has to adjust itself to the changing physical conditions, and such adjustment result in a certain amount of social mobility as well.
- In the past, various political, economic, religious or other revolutions have resulted in rapid social mobility for some particular group or class. For instance, industrial revolution resulted in the rise of middle class.

Apart from these reasons, Henry M. Johnson also lists some factors that lead to vertical social mobility which are as follows:

- Social prestige ultimately depends upon the accepted value system. If certain qualities of achievements are socially valued, some people will strive for them.
- There is no constant tendency for intelligence and other kinds of native capacity to be confined to upper classes. It has not been uncommon for the sons of farmers and labourers to rise to highest position in the society.
- At varying rates of speed, changes always occur in the demand for different kinds of skill.

- The birth rate of each class never exactly fills all the positions in the class.
- Birth in upper classes sometimes fosters complacency in many people.

All these factors lead to vertical social mobility in the society.

Amount of mobility

It may be noted that mobility may be downward or upward. Downward mobility is permitted in every society. In India, if a member of an upper class fails to live up to the class, he will fall below the class status by marrying someone of another caste, especially a lower one. As regards upward mobility, no society absolutely forbids it; but the amount and case of upward mobility will depend upon certain factors.

Among these factors, the following ones may be noted:

- (i) Social change:** In general, the principal condition that favours or prevents mobility is the rate of social change conditions of rapid social change such as the Industrial Revolution or territorial expansion make for social mobility, while a period is very little for the individual to rise out of the status which is ascribed to him. It may be noted that political, economic, religious or other revolutions may produce rapid social mobility so as to reduce the upper class to the bottom of social scale and to elevate to the top classes formerly at the bottom.
- (ii) Communication:** The system that limits communication between classes and restricts knowledge of the conditions of life to one's own class will also tend to discourage social mobility. Conversely, a system through which members of all classes become familiar with the conditions of life in other classes, facilitates mobility; of course, the extent of mobility will be determined by the opportunities and needs that exist.
- (iii) Division of labour:** Finally, the amount of social mobility is influenced by the degree of division of labour that exists in a society. If the division of labour is very highly developed, and if the degree of specialization and skilled training is very high, it is correspondingly difficult for a person from one class to pass readily into other classes. Similarly, the sharply defined castes that have been assigned certain traditional functions may be related to social mobility despite the fact that other conditions are favourable for social movement. Here, it may be emphasized that the economic progress is the most important factor in determining the rate of mobility in any country. Economic progress is associated with industrialization, which on turn is associated with a higher rate of mobility.

Upward Social Mobility Occurs more Frequently than Downward Social Mobility

In the earlier sections, we studied that vertical social mobility is of two types: (i) upward social mobility and (ii) downward social mobility. Most of the scholars opine that vertical social mobility occurs mostly in a down-up manner, that is,

NOTES

NOTES

groups and individuals frequently go up the socio-economic ladder than going down.

Upward vertical social mobility took place in Britain, some European countries and in the United States after World War II due to economic development and structural changes occurring in these economies. A sociologist notes that democratic governments endeavour to induce upward social mobility, while 'the barriers to downward social mobility grow all the time'. This means that during the period of growing economies, governments try to raise the living standards of the people leading to better access to health care, education and greater life chances.

In the last two decades, there has been an expansion in middle-level jobs and decline in the number of manual jobs in all industrial societies including India. This is due to the shift from agricultural to industrial economies. As a result of these changes, the proportion of population employed in manual labour has come down, and there has been a significant rise in professional and managerial jobs. These structural changes have resulted in increased rates of upward social mobility because people have better job opportunities than their parents had.

Various class analysts acknowledge that the increase in overall mobility has improved most people's chances in life. However, they insist that the key issue is the distribution of opportunities rather than the fact that people have got more opportunities now than in the past. The concept of equality is inherently comparative. Thus, we need to examine the advantages of different groups or different individuals and assess these advantages in relation to one another.

General Principles of Vertical Mobility

Pitirim Sorokin has a prominent place in the study of social stratification and mobility. He has developed new methods of studying social phenomena. Sorokin called the dynamics of social stratification by vertical social mobility. He discovered the following propositions about social stratification:

- (i) **The First Proposition:** There has been hardly any society whose stratification system is totally rigid. At least all the societies are stratified on the basis of economic, political and occupational levels. Even in the primitive tribal societies, the leaders used to be elected on the basis of their personal qualities. Even in the past, high positions were not hereditary.

It is the caste system of India which was considered to be the most rigid society with little scope for vertical mobility. Though the vertical social mobility was quite feeble, it was not completely absent. Historical evidences point to the fact that even the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, who were at the top of the social hierarchy had to face social sanction or boycott and used to be punished for acts of crime.

In *Manusmriti*, the most important and earliest metrical work of the *Dharmashastra*, it is mentioned 'through a want of modesty many kings have perished, together with their belongings; through modesty even hermits in the forest have gained kingdoms; through a want of humility Vena perished, likewise king Nahusha, Sudas, Sumukha and Nimi'.

In the same work, it is mentioned that the outcasts could regain their social position through suitable repentance. It is also said that people born in lower social stratum could aspire to succeed in entering the highly esteemed Brahmin caste through asceticism.

In addition to this, people achieved vertical mobility through change of occupation, migration, creation of new castes, education and inter-caste marriages. Thus, even in the so-called rigid caste system in India, there were chances of vertical social mobility. If this was the case in rigid societies, we can say that vertical mobility was present in the past in almost all societies across the world. For instance, if we study the history of Greece, Egypt, Rome, Medieval Europe and China, we will find traces of intensive vertical mobility.

- (ii) **The Second Proposition:** Vertical mobility was never easy in any society. There were systems and people who resisted vertical mobility at all times in the past. It is because if there was no resistance to vertical mobility, society would not have been stratified. This implies that in all societies, there was a 'sieve' which allowed some people to move up the social ladder and stopped others from doing so. During those times in the history when there was utter chaos in the society due to anarchy or some other reasons, there was upheaval in the social structures and social strata. Even during these periods, there were hardly any account of unlimited vertical social mobility. This was due to the presence of old 'sieve', new 'sieve' or modified 'sieve' in the society at all times.
- (iii) **The Third Proposition:** The intensiveness and commonness of vertical social mobility in a society varies from society to society. Table 3.1 shows what percentage among the monarchs and executives of the different countries were 'newcomers'. Here, the word 'newcomer' means people who climbed to the highest position from the lower social strata.

Table 4.1 Percentage of 'Newcomers' Among the Monarchs and Presidents in Different Countries

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Percentage of 'Newcomers'</i> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Western Roman Empire | 45.6 |
| Eastern Roman Empire | 27.7 |
| Russia | 5.5 |
| France | 3.9 |
| England | 5.0 |
| United States of America | 48.3 |
| Presidents of France and Germany | 23.1 |

From Table 4.1, we can infer that while occurrence of political mobility is quite higher in the US and Western Roman Empire, it is very low in England, France and Russia. Thus, intensiveness and commonness of vertical social mobility varies from country to country.

- (iv) **The Fourth Proposition:** The intensiveness and generality of vertical social mobility do not remain constant in a given society. It varies from one time

NOTES

NOTES

period to another. There are periods when a country as well as its social groups experience quantitative and qualitative growth. That is, there are times when vertical mobility increases quantitatively as well as qualitatively, while at other times it decreases.

- (v) **The Fifth Proposition:** There are three fundamental forms in the field of vertical mobility. These are: (a) economic, (b) political and (c) occupational. There seems to be no definite and perpetual trend towards either an increase or decrease of the intensiveness and generality of mobility. This assumption is valid for countries as well as large social groups. In general, it is valid for the entire mankind.

Various Forms of Social Mobility

After studying the concept of social mobility and its types, let us study various forms of social mobility:

- (i) **Inter-generational and Intra-generational mobility:** This categorization is done on the basis of generation:

(a) **Inter-generational social mobility:** When an individual's status changes between generations, it is called inter-generational mobility. In this mobility, our focus of attention is a social group like family. It is usually measured by comparing the positions of parents and children. We also look at the change in the status position of the family over two or more generations, i.e., the social position of the grandfather, the father and the son.

In this condition, the son may go up or down the social status by taking up a job which ranks higher or lower in comparison to his father. For example, a son of a sweeper becoming an engineer or a scientist is an instance of **upward inter-generational mobility**. On the other hand, a son of an aristocrat becoming a labourer is an instance of **downward inter-generational mobility**.

Nowadays, inter-generational mobility is increasing across the world. In India, reservation policies and open system of education are playing vital roles in bringing about inter-generational upward vertical mobility.

(b) **Intra-generational social mobility:** When the individual's status changes within the same generation, it is called intra-generational mobility. It examines the career of an individual and looks at how socially dynamic an individual has been through the course of his working life. It can also be called 'career mobility'.

For example, an individual starting his career as an executive and finishing his career as the vice-president of that organization, is an instance of intra-generational social mobility. Here, his career enhanced his social class. Intra-generational social mobility is also of two types: (i) upward intra-generational mobility, and (ii) downward intra-generational mobility.

When an individual's status is enhanced within his life period, it is called **upward intra-generational social mobility**. For instance,

when an individual of lower caste becomes a member of Parliament or Legislative Assembly, he achieves higher position in the society.

When an individual's status goes down within his life period, it is known as **downward intra-generational mobility**. This type of mobility is common particularly in the US, among divorced or separated women with children. Women who enjoyed a moderately middle class way of life when they were married, often find themselves living hand to mouth after getting divorced. In many cases, alimony payments are meagre or non-existent.

Studies of intra-generational mobility have been made in the Netherlands and Sweden. In the Netherlands, the rate of intra-generational mobility has increased in the past few decades, whereas, in Sweden, this rate was slower in the depression years (1930–1935), then in the war years (1940–1945). Both the studies reveal that intra-generational mobility increases in the industrial society.

NOTES

(ii) Absolute and relative mobility: This categorization is done on the basis of social mobility of social groups.

(a) Absolute mobility: It usually refers to the proportions of individuals who are moving from one social group to another. This form of mobility is studied by sociologists in order to understand large-scale social changes such as shifts in industrial and occupational structure. When social mobility occurs in an absolute manner, a given society at large is presented with greater opportunities for socio-economic advancement. This kind of mobility is made possible through advancements within the economic structure of a society.

(b) Relative mobility: It refers to the change in the class position or income of individuals in relation to others in their society. It is the mobility of one social group compared either to some predefined norm or to the mobility of another group. Relative mobility may be present with or without absolute mobility.

(iii) Structural and individual mobility: This categorization is done on the basis of changes in social stratification hierarchy.

(a) Structural mobility: It is a forced vertical mobility that results from changes in stratification hierarchy itself. This kind of mobility takes place when some change in society provides opportunities to a large number of people to move up the social ladder. For instance, computerization has given opportunities to a large number of people to improve their social status. Some of the factors that led to structural mobility in the US are:

- o Growth of urban areas
- o Growth of big corporations
- o Increased standard of living of people
- o Advanced technology

NOTES

(b) Individual mobility: A number of factors such as race, caste, gender, educational qualification and place of residence determine chances of individual mobility. For instance, in some societies, women and disabled people have limited opportunities to move up the social ladder.

Process of Social Mobility

The process of social mobility can be explained in various ways. The stages of social mobility are as follows:

Stage I: Educational attainment: According to social norms, a child at this stage achieves social mobility by scoring good marks, and by excelling various co-curricular activities and competition.

Stage II: Transition from school to work: When a child completes his education, he starts working. This transition is another form of social mobility. It is because when a child starts earning, he ceases to be financially dependent on his parents.

Stage III: Growth of a person during his career: The most important form of social mobility occurs at this stage. A person gets a number of opportunities to rise up the social ladder and change his social class.

The process of social mobility indicates the open and closed nature of society. In open society, the amount of mobility is higher than the closed society. The process of social mobility depends on the factors that are considered valuable in the community. Therefore, the ownership of these things makes a person occupy higher or lower position. These vary from society to society. Some of these things are: wealth, power and honour.

- (i) Wealth:** The wealthiest person occupies the top position in the class hierarchy. For example, Mukesh Ambani and Laxmi Mittal command huge respect from people. Wealth reflects itself in the patterns of people's dresses, food habits, type and place of house and vehicles.
- (ii) Honour:** Unlike the amount of wealth and power, amount of honour is immeasurable. The person who is highly respected in the community attains the highest position in the society. For example, people like Anna Hazare, Sri Sri Ravishankar and Mother Teresa are held in the highest esteem in Indian society.
- (iii) Power:** Whoever has the greatest power in the community are at the top position. Power may be traditional, rational-legal or charismatic. The power enjoyed by caste headmen is an example of traditional power. The power enjoyed by top government executives comes under the category of rational legal power. Popular film personalities and sportsmen, like Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan, Sachin Tendulkar and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, generally enjoy charismatic power.

Every society places its members to a certain place and assigns them certain rights and obligations. It means that all members have some status in the society and they perform their roles accordingly. With performance and hard work, one may change or improve one's status. It is often seen that the owner of any one of the three things — wealth, honour or power — gets rest of the two things easily.

The process of social mobility is driven by social situations and environmental conditions. Some factors obstruct social mobility, whereas others are conducive to social mobility. Some of these factors are as follows:

- **Industrialization and urbanization:** These factors increase occupational mobility in a society. Urbanization, in the last two decades, has changed the pattern of mobility. These factors had positive as well as negative effects. On one hand, these have accelerated the rate of social mobility; on the other, they have negatively affected the cohesiveness of family in terms of kinship relationships and social ties.
- **Economic liberalization:** Economic liberalization modernizes economy and brings about changes in job patterns by opening new avenues for people. More job opportunities ultimately lead to social mobility for all strata of the society. In fact, economic liberalization results in tough competition, thus, more emphasis is given to talents, skills and aptitude than caste, class and gender.
- **Modern education:** Educational opportunities and life chances are directly linked. Some functionalist theorists view education as an 'elevator' to social mobility. Improvements in the educational achievement levels of the poor, people of socially depressed castes, and women have been cited as evidence that students' abilities are now more important than their class, caste, or gender.

Before Independence, the educational system in India was closed in nature, that is, education was available only to the upper castes. Indian policymakers believed that education was the heart of development. Thus, they focused on education as the main avenue by which they planned to integrate lower classes into 'mainstream' society.

- **Legislative actions:** Indian Constitution is based on the principles of socialism, equality, and social justice. To achieve these goals, several legislations were constituted. Article 46 of the Constitution of India states, 'the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation'. In view of this clause, several provisions have been made for the reservation of seats for scheduled castes in the states of Union and in Parliament and reservation for jobs and services at various levels.

Article 17 declares that: 'Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.' In pursuance of these constitutional provisions, several programmes have been undertaken for the upliftment of the scheduled castes and tribes.

Due to these actions, people from lower strata of society get opportunities to occupy different and probably better socio-economic positions. At workplaces, they are likely to make new social relations irrespective of

NOTES

caste consideration. In the language of mobility, these persons are socially mobile in comparison to the generation of their fathers.

Evaluation of Social Mobility

NOTES

Social mobility is widely prevalent and desirable. Some have argued that social mobility produces a sense of disequilibrium and isolation while others have taken a more optimistic view suggesting that a gradual process of adaptation to a new class is inevitable.

Optimistic views

Some of the optimistic views related to social mobility are as follows:

- (i) **Enhancement of living standard:** Sociologists believe that social mobility enhances people's living standard. When people of lower strata achieve high status, it brings changes in their lifestyles and food habits. They can avail good houses, healthy diets and goods of comforts. They can also invest money in their education.
- (ii) **Bridging the gap between upper and lower classes:** This is another merit of social mobility. It helps in bridging the gap between two extreme classes. In India, in the last two decades, more than 200 million poor people moved from poverty to middle class. In China, 800 million people moved from absolute poverty to middle class. The rise of middle class helps in solving the problem of polarization.
- (iii) **Emergence of middle class:** Social mobility, in the last two decades, has resulted in the emergence of middle class. People of middle class can be seen in all kinds of professional and managerial position. This has resulted in the growth of economy as well.
- (iv) **Increase in national unity:** Social mobility lessens people's grievance from the government. This also reduces crime from the society. All these factors increase national unity.
- (v) **End of obsolete customs:** Social mobility helps in ending obsolete customs due to exchange of ideas among people. When people move up the ladder, they start understanding the customs that are no longer beneficial for the society. Gradually, these obsolete customs become non-existent in the society.

Pessimistic Views

Sociologists who have pessimistic views about social mobility believe that it results in a number of problems. A few of them have been discussed below.

- (i) Social mobility creates discrepancies in the overall status profile of a person. When a person moves up the social ladder, he may not be able to adopt the ways and means of new class. It is because he cannot disassociate himself completely from the status of his origin. This might result in stress, anxiety, psychological problems and identity crisis.

- (ii) Upward mobility is accepted by people gladly whereas it is not easy for people to accept downward mobility. For example, when a millionaire loses his property due to recession or fall in the share market, he might suffer from social, economical, psychological, and health problems.
- (iii) New members of middle class are not completely accepted by old members of the class. Thus, they suffer from status-anxiety.
- (iv) When people see other people living in a comfortable life after social mobility, some of them turn towards crime as a short-cut to live a lavish life. This increases crime in the society.

NOTES

Check Your Progress

15. Name the two broad types of social mobility.
16. What is the fifth proposition given by Pitirim Sorokin in relation to social stratification?
17. What is 'inter-generational social mobility'?
18. List any two impacts of social mobility.

4.5 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. The characteristics of social control are as follows:
 - Social control is an authority
 - This authority is exercised by society
 - The authority is exercised to promote the interests of the society as a whole.
2. Positive sanctions are those motivating factors which encourage people to conform to accepted norms. Rewards and prizes given for good behaviour are positive sanctions.
3. Informal means of social control include inherent beliefs, ethos and values of the society. Informal means of social control are considered to be an effective way of managing order in most groups of the society.
4. Education is a formal means of social control as it teaches an individual the acceptable and unacceptable norms of a society. It is a process of socialization through which a child or a person easily becomes a responsible member of the society. It helps in forming his personality in a positive way.
5. Social harmony is essential for any society. It becomes increasingly important because no two individuals are alike. They differ in their interests, beliefs, values and ideas.

NOTES

6. Social control is essential to ensure that all individuals are able to adjust to the ever changing complexities of modern life. Every person has to change in order to be able to conform to the changing societal norms.
7. All societies assign their members to roles in terms of superiority, inferiority and equality. This vertical scale of evaluation and placement of people in strata, or levels, is called stratification. Thus, stratification is simply a process of interaction of differentiation whereby some people come to rank higher than others.
8. The term 'social inequality' means unequal distribution of privileges and resources in the society, whereby some people possess more wealth, power and privileges than the rest of the people in the society.
9. Power is classified into two categories:
 - (a) Individualistic power situations
 - (b) Organizational power situations
10. A social class is a group of individuals who have more or less a similar wealth. The possession of wealth enables the individual to obtain those goods and services that are scarce and are valued by others.
11. When a higher caste man marries a low caste women it is called hypergamy and when a lower caste man marries a higher caste woman it is call hypogamy. Hypergamy is allowed whereas hypogamy is strictly forbidden.
12. The main advocate of social Darwinism was Herbert Spencer, an English sociologist, who saw social organization as an environment.
13. The three criteria that satisfy exploitation as a situation are inverse interdependent welfare principle, exclusion principle and appropriation principle.
14. Weber identified three sources of authority: (i) traditional, (ii) legal-rational and (iii) charismatic.
15. The two broad types of social mobility are:
 - (i) horizontal social mobility, and
 - (ii) vertical social mobility.
16. The fifth proposition states that there seems to be no definite and perpetual trend towards either an increase or decrease of the intensiveness and generality of mobility. This assumption in general, is valid for the entire mankind.
17. When an individual's status changes between generations, it is called 'inter-generational mobility'.
18. Social mobility enhances living standard of people and bridges the gap between upper and lower classes.

4.6 SUMMARY

- Society is defined as a group of people sharing common values and traditions living together in organized communities for common benefits.
- All societies devise means and ways to guide and control individual members so that they abide by the prescribed standards and customs. These means form part of social control.
- The power to influence is 'control'. In a society control is exercised by policemen, law courts, prisons, and so forth.
- The characteristics of social control are as follows:
 - o Social control is an authority
 - o This authority is exercised by society
 - o The authority is exercised to promote the interests of the society as a whole
- The ways and means by which the society ensures that its members abide by the accepted norms of behaviour can be numerous and varied.
- Positive sanctions are those motivating factors which encourage people to conform to accepted norms. Rewards and prizes given for good behaviour are positive sanctions.
- Different means are used by a group to make sure that all its members adhere to the set norms.
- The informal means of control is practiced without the help of a constituted authority. Social control is exercised through inherent beliefs, ethos and values of the society.
- The informal means of social control is exercised in the following aspects of a person's life.
 - o Set beliefs in one's life
 - o Role models
 - o Ideologies
 - o Folkways
 - o Mores
 - o Customs
 - o Religion
 - o Public opinion
- Formal means of social control are the ways to officially recognize and enforce violation of norms and rules. Regulations enforced by an appointed institution can be termed as formal social control.
- The formal means of social control exist in most societies are law, education and coercion.

NOTES

NOTES

- A socially controlled society will have conformity, solidarity and continuity within its structure. We need a uniform system to achieve this, as every individual in a group has a distinct character.
- Social control is necessary for an orderly life. Without it the systems of a society will get disturbed. Individuals conform to accepted ways of society only if there is a force pushing him to do so.
- The need is accentuated in modern society because of its diverse and heterogeneous character and due to the presence of disintegrating forces.
- Social mobility is the movement of individuals and groups between socio-economic positions.
- The two broad types of social mobility are: vertical mobility and horizontal social mobility
- Vertical social mobility can be further divided into two types: upward vertical mobility and downward vertical mobility.
- Upward social mobility occurs more frequently than downward social mobility.
- There are three stages in the process of social mobility, namely Educational attainment, Transition from school to work, and Growth of a person during his career.

4.7 KEY TERMS

- **Social control:** It refers to the control of a person or group by wider society in order to enforce social norms, through socialization, policing, laws, or similar measures.
- **Coercion:** It is the action or practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.
- **Ideology:** It is a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy.
- **Sanction:** It is a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule.

4.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the different methods of social control?
2. List out the attributes of social stratification.
3. List some characteristics of slavery.
4. What type of methods are used for the determination of social class?

5. State one of the main functions of class stratification.
6. What is the economic function of social stratification?
7. How does social stratification act as a means of social control?
8. Distinguish between social differentiation and social stratification.
9. State the importance of studying social stratification.
10. Compare the Marxian theory of social stratification and the Weberian theory of social stratification.
11. Name the three stages of social mobility.
12. List various forms of social mobility.
13. Explain in brief the three stages in the process in social mobility.

NOTES

Long-Answer Questions

1. Examine the relevance of social control theory in controlling deviance.
2. Explain the means of social control.
3. 'The informal means of control is practiced without help of constituted authority.' Elucidate this statement.
4. How has the need for control changed in modern society? Explain.
5. Critically evaluate the bases of social stratification.
6. Discuss the various forms of social stratification.
7. Describe the characteristics of caste system in India. Also, give a detailed account on the theories of the origin of caste system in India.
8. Examine the importance of the functionalist theory of social stratification.
9. Explain the types of social mobility.
10. Discuss the general principles of social mobility.
11. Explain the factors that affect the process of social mobility.

4.9 FURTHER READING

- Ryan, Michael. 2018. *Core Concepts in Sociology*. London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Giddens Anthony, and Phillip Sutton. 2017. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (2nd Edition). London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Braham, Peter. 2013. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Stolley Kathy. 2005. *The Basics of Sociology*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Abel, Theodore. 1980. *The Foundations of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

NOTES

Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.

Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. I and II. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Bogardus, Emory S. 1969. *The Development of Social Theory*. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffa and Simons.

Ritzer, George. 1988. *Sociological Theory*, Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

UNIT 5 SOCIAL CHANGE

Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Meaning of Social Change
 - 5.2.1 Types of Social Change
 - 5.2.2 Evolution of Social Change
 - 5.2.3 Development and Progress
 - 5.2.4 Revolution
- 5.3 Answers to Check Your Progress Questions
- 5.4 Summary
- 5.5 Key Terms
- 5.6 Self-Assessment Questions and Exercises
- 5.7 Further Reading

NOTES

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Change has been a topic of discussion since the inception of sociology as a field of study. Sociologists like Max Weber, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx and Auguste Comte—all have discussed the idea of change in their writings. To state briefly, social change refers to a modification in the social order of a culture. It may comprise transformation in nature, social institutions, social behaviours or social relations. Social change has been the most stable factor in the history of human civilization. Social change is a process; it is a universal law of nature that is present in every society. Our society has seen the most changes in the least amount of time; it is still changing every single day. These changes have occurred in every aspect of society, every institution and structure, and have affected every individual in some degree or the other. ‘Development’, ‘change’ and ‘progress’ are the different types of change and whenever we speak of social change the significance of each of these types has to be assessed. In this unit, you will study about the concept of development, social progress, difference between social change and social progress, linear or evolutionary theories of social change.

5.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss the meaning and characteristics of social change
- Describe the types of social change
- Analyse the evolution of social change
- Discuss the development and progress of social change
- Understand the interrelationship between change and development
- Describe the indicators of development
- Analyse different factors of social change

5.2 MEANING OF SOCIAL CHANGE

NOTES

Change and continuity are the inevitable facts of life. Not only people themselves undergo the process of change but also the habitat they live in. That is why ‘change’ is often called the unchangeable or inescapable law of nature. Change is the only reality. Looking at the inevitability of change, Greek Philosopher Heraclitus pointed out that a person cannot step into the same river twice since in between the first and the second occasion, both the water in the river and the person concerned get changed (Giddens 2001, 42). History reveals that man’s life has been transformed from the caves and jungles to the palatial buildings. People, family, religion, value and system will not remain same forever. Societies grow, decay and modify to the changing conditions. Every society, from primitive to industrial and post-industrial, has witnessed continuous state of transformation. Change is permanent, although the intensity or degree of change is different in different societies. According to British sociologist Anthony Giddens (2001), in human societies, to decide how far and in what ways a particular system is in a process of change or transformation, we have to show to what degree there is any modification of basic institutions during a specific time period. There are social systems which change very fast, whereas there are others which have ties with the remote past. World religions like Christianity and Islam maintain their ties with ideas and value systems pioneered thousands of years ago. Primitive societies considered change as an external and problematic phenomena. However, in modern times, change is seen as natural and necessary. Every new generation faces different and new socio-economic challenges and yet they forge ahead with new possibilities of life keeping continuity with the past.

Like natural scientists study different aspects of change in the nature, social scientists study change in the social life of man. Change and continuity have long been the subjects of research and study for social scientists and philosophers. Scholars like Aristotle, Plato, Hegel and others have written at length on the various aspects of change during their times. In fact, sociology as a separate discipline emerged in the middle of the 19th century as an effort to explain the socio-cultural and economic changes that erupted in Europe, following the industrialization and democratization processes. It will not be wrong to state that major classical sociologists were preoccupied with explaining change, more precisely articulating on the change that followed the rise of capitalism in the West.

Considering change as an important aspect of study, the father of sociology, August Comte, even remarked that the role of this discipline is to analyse both the ‘Social Statics’ (the laws governing social order) and ‘Social Dynamics’ (laws governing social change) (Slattery 2003, 57). Similarly, English philosopher Herbert Spencer also talked about change in his analysis of ‘Structure’ and ‘Function’. ‘Structure’ indicated the internal build-up, shape or form of societal wholes, whereas ‘function’ signifies their operation or transformation (Sztompka 1993, 3). Spencer measured change or progress taking into consideration the degree of complexity in society. According to Spencer, society passes from simple, undifferentiated, homogeneity to complex, differentiated, heterogeneity. Another classical sociological

thinker, and one of the founders of the discipline, Emile Durkheim talks about evolutionary change in his famous work *The Division of Labour* and observes that society passes from ‘mechanical solidarity’ to ‘organic solidarity’. Eminent philosopher Karl Marx explains societal change with his economic deterministic model and describes change of society from primitive communism to socialism. German sociologist Max Weber’s analysis of religious codes and its impact on economic development in his *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* examines the major aspects of change.

Meaning and Definitional Analysis of Change

Before going into details about social change, it is pertinent to discuss the meaning of the term ‘change’. ‘Change’ refers to any alteration or transformation in any object, situation or phenomena over a certain period of time. As eminent sociologists Strasser, Hermann and Susan C. Randall (1981, 16) have said, ‘If we speak of change, we have in mind something that comes into being after some time; that is to say, we are dealing with a difference between what can be observed before and after that point in time.’ Similarly, the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology* defines change as a ‘succession of events which produce over time a modification or replacement of particular patterns or units by other novel ones’ (Sekulic 2007, 4368). Time is an important factor in the context of change.

‘Social change’ on the other hand indicates the changes that take place in human interactions or interrelationships. Society is regarded as a ‘web of social relationships’, and in that sense, social change refers to the change in the system of social relationships (Shankar Rao 2000, 484). It is the alteration or modification of the structure and function of any system. For example, change in interpersonal relationships, inter-caste and inter-community marriage, change in family type from joint-living to nuclear households, and so on. can be called as social change.

Different scholars have defined social change in different ways. A glance at some of them can make our understanding clear. According to British sociologist Morris Ginsberg (1986, 129), ‘Social change is the change in social structure, i.e., the size of a society, the composition or balance of its parts or the type of its organization. The term ‘social change’ must also include changes in attitudes or beliefs, in so far as they sustain institutions and change with them.’ Here, he talks about two types of changes: changes in the structure of society and changes in the value system of society. However, these two types of changes should not be treated separately because a change in one brings on changes in the other, as a change in the attitude of people may bring about changes in the social structure and vice versa (Kar 1994, 500). Describing it as a part of ‘cultural change’, American sociologist Kingsley Davis says, ‘Social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organizations, i.e., the structure and function of society’ (Kar 1994, 501). Professor of sociology (Kenyon College, Ohio) John J. Macionis (1987, 638) defines social change as the ‘transformation in the organization of society and in patterns of thought and behaviour over time’. Again, according to Ritzer, *et al.* (1987, 560), ‘Social change refers to variations over time in the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, cultures and societies.’ So, it can be summarized from the above definitions that almost all the authors while defining

NOTES

social change, give emphasis on social relationships, social organizations, social patterns and values. Social change, therefore, is change in the societal system as a whole.

NOTES

Different scholars debate over if 'change' is a revolutionary process or it happens gradually. However, they settle with the fact that it is both an evolutionary and a revolutionary process. Every change has an effect over different aspects of life and different components of the societal system. The development of the Internet, for example, in contemporary society has enormous implications for other institutions and ideas—it affects psychology, ideology, the political system, industry, education and the media. It is a revolutionary force but it builds upon previous developments so that it is both gradual and insurrectionary (Hoffman 2006, 561).

Characteristics of Social Change

Following the meaning and definitional analysis of the concept, the characteristics of social change can be discussed as given below:

- 1. Social change is universal:** As discussed in the above section, social change is inevitable. It is not only inevitable but also universal. It is found in every society. From primitive society to the post-industrial one, change is found everywhere. No society or culture remains static forever. Human beings changed themselves from nomads, food gatherers to agriculturists and later modern, industrial beings.
- 2. Social change is continuous:** Right from the time mother earth came into being to the present times, society/life has been in a continuously changing mode. No society or people can be stopped from the influences of change. It is a never-ending process.
- 3. Social change may produce chain reactions:** Change in one aspect of a system may lead to changes of varying degrees in other aspects of that system. As to Biesanz and Biesanz (1964, 63), the change from hunting and food gathering to agriculture was a revolution in technology that led eventually to the development of civilization by making large and diversified societies possible. Similarly, the Protestant emphasis on Bible reading as a road to salvation led to a great rise in literacy. Further, the introduction of the system of reservation for backward communities in government institutions and offices in India has brought changes in their socio-economic status, interpersonal relationships, and also in the social and economic structure of the country. Similarly, improvement in literacy in the country leads to economic independence of women which in turn brings changes in the whole notion of family, marriage and husband-wife ties.
- 4. Social change may be planned or unplanned:** Change may occur with or without proper planning. People, government or any other agent may initiate change through plans or programmes and may determine the degree and direction of change. The Government of India after Independence devised several socio-economic developmental programmes to bring the country out of poverty and unemployment through the broader provision of Five Year Plans. In the 68 years of Independence, the country has seen

phenomenal improvement in literacy, health, infrastructure and industry, and considerably managed to overcome poverty, hunger and unemployment problems. Apart from the planned social change, there can be changes which are unplanned and happen accidentally. Changes due to natural calamities like earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and so on, belong to this category.

5. **Social change is temporal and directional:** Change can be directional. It happens in a particular direction. In several instances, such direction is planned, predetermined and is fixed ideally. Such changes are called as progress. However, change in general may happen in any direction. Similarly, the rate or tempo of change varies from time to time and place to place. Some changes may take months and years, while some may occur rapidly. Social change is temporal in the sense that it involves the factor of time. It denotes time sequence. It can be temporary or permanent. Time is an important component in the process of change.
6. **Social change is value-neutral:** The concept of social change is not value-laden or judgemental. It does not advocate any good or desirable and bad or undesirable turn of events. It is an objective term which is neither moral nor immoral. It is ethically neutral.

5.2.1 Types of Social Change

There are different types of social change. The term 'social' is so vast in scope that different forms of change which carry several names of their own can actually be brought under the broader concept of social change. However, different types of change are discussed below for better understanding of the concept.

1. **Social change and cultural change:** Social and cultural changes are often regarded as the same and denote similar kind of change. However, there are differences between the two. 'Social' refers to interactions and interrelationship between people. 'Culture', on the other hand, refers to the customs, beliefs, symbols, value systems and, in general, the set of rules that are created by people in society. It can be both material and non-material. Material culture consists of manufacturing objects and tools like automobiles, furniture, buildings, roads, bridges, books, mobiles, TV sets and anything of that sort which is tangible and is used by the people. Non-material culture includes belief systems, values, mores, norms, habits, language, and so on. The concept of culture relates to the body of knowledge, techniques and values through which a society directs and expresses its life as an interacting entity (Mohanty 1997, 13). So, the change in social relationships, human interactions, modifications in role expectations and role performance, and so on, are regarded as social change, whereas changes in human artifacts, beliefs, values, body of knowledge, and so on, are called as cultural change. Culture changes through time and it spreads from place to place and group to group. As Biesanz and Biesanz (1964, 61–62) put it, in the span of time since the Second world War began, immense changes

NOTES

NOTES

have taken place. Television, since the experimental stage before the war, has entered almost every living room in the world. From the first atomic reaction in the early decades of 20th century, we have progressed to space capsules and satellites, and in a few short post-War years, plastics and synthetic fabrics, wash-and-wear clothes, stretch socks, automatic washers, dishwashers, clothes driers, food freezers and packaged mixes have changed the housewife's fate.

It is important to mention here that sometimes changes that occur in a cultural system do not go smooth and face maladjustment with other parts of the system. Such a situation is termed as 'cultural lag'. Defining the concept, American sociologist William Fielding Ogburn (1957) wrote, 'A cultural lag occurs when one of the two parts of culture which are correlated changes before or in greater degree than the other parts does, thereby causing less adjustment between the two parts than existed previously.'

However, any cultural change has its impact on human relationships and, therefore, influences social changes too. The advent of mobile telephony and Internet has far-reaching consequences on interpersonal relationships. Thus, cultural change positively affects social change and change in a society comes through both social and cultural changes. As Kingsley Davis stated, cultural change is broader than social change and social change is only a part of it (Shankar Rao 2000, 485). All social changes are cultural changes, but not vice-versa. Those cultural changes that affect social organizations and human interpersonal relations can be called as social changes.

- 2. Social change and social progress:** Progress is a change in a desirable direction. It can also refer to change for the better. It involves value-judgement because it implies betterment or improvement. Progress involves change that leads to certain well-defined goals. It is also a type of social change. However, there are differences between the two. Every change is not progress, but every progress can be called as a change. Moreover, change is a value-free concept, while progress always denotes change for the better. In that sense, progress is a value-laden concept. It has been discussed before that change can be planned and unplanned. Nonetheless, progress is always planned and ideally fixed. Besides, change is obvious and certain. Small or big, slow or fast, change takes place in every society, but progress is uncertain (Mohanty 1997, 21).
- 3. Social change and social evolution:** The use of the word 'evolution' or 'social evolution' in sociology is borrowed from biology. Biology studies 'organic evolution', which denotes the evolution of all kinds of organisms. Social evolution, on the other hand, refers to the process of evolution of human society, human social relationships, societal values, norms and the way of life. It involves the idea that every society passes through different phases, from simple to complex. Sociologists and social anthropologists were impressed by the idea of organic evolution which could convincingly explain how one species evolves into another, and wanted to apply the

same to the social world (Shankar Rao 2000, 491). As put forward by eminent sociologists MacIver and Page (2005, 522), evolution means more than growth. Growth does connote a direction of change, but it is quantitative in character. Evolution involves something more intrinsic, a change not merely in size, but at least in structure also. Social evolution is also a type of social change. Both of them are natural and are inevitable facts of life. However, there are differences between the two. First, every change is not evolutionary in nature, whereas evolution always implies change. Second, evolution, unlike change, is a continuous process. Third, the cause of social change may be both internal and external, whereas evolution is mostly affected through the operation of internal factors. Fourth, social change can be planned or unplanned but evolution is an automatic process. Fifth, social change is a value-neutral concept, whereas evolution is value-loaded. Sixth, there can be slow or fast social change, but evolution is always a slow process (Mohanty, 1997, 27).

As discussed in the beginning of this sub-section, any kind of change that we witness in the society can come under the broader definition of either social or cultural change. However, some specific variety of change can also be discussed here, although they come under the umbrella term of social or cultural change.

4. **Demographic change:** Demography deals with the size, distribution, growth, and so on, of population over a period of time. Demographic change is change in the patterns of fertility, mortality, age structure, migration, and so on. High fertility or high mortality can have important implications in any society. The same can happen if the rate of such indicators are too slow. High fertility might lead to large-scale instances of poverty and unemployment, and might affect the developmental efforts of a state. Over-population also leads to greater use of natural resources and affects environmental sustainability. High birth and death rates bring about change in the attitude of people towards family and marriage. In India, demographic change in the form of high fertility led to the adoption of family planning programmes and following which there was a decrease in the population growth rate. The small family norm has introduced change in social relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, the status of women, and so on.
5. **Technological change:** Human civilization is moving from the most rudimentary technology of bow and arrow to the modern and highly sophisticated instruments of the present day. The invention of computers, Internet, mobile phones, jet planes, atomic bomb and discoveries of men like Vasco da Gama and Columbus have changed the socio-cultural space of the modern man dramatically. Ancient man walked on bare feet. Then came the bullock cart which made movement comparatively faster. Subsequent technological innovations brought about bicycles, automobiles, jet planes, and so on. These have helped the movement of people faster than ever before. These technological changes have enormous societal implications. The introduction of high-yield seeds in the form of Green

NOTES

NOTES

Revolution in India that ensured massive increase in foodgrains like rice and wheat managed the hunger situation in the country quite well. Dramatizing the fact that technological change may lead to social change, sociologist William F. Ogburn once attributed the emancipation of women to the invention of the automobile self-starter, which enabled women to drive cars, freed them from their homes and permitted them to invade the world of business (Biesanz and Biesanz 1964, 64). The modern means of entertainment and communication like TV, Radio, Internet, cell phones, and so on, have drastically changed the family life in India and substantially affected the role of women in society. Not only they are empowered and emancipated but also the husband-wife ties are now being seen as that of co-partners rather than that of superiors and inferiors. Although technological changes have not spread equally everywhere in the country, still phenomenal improvement in this respect cannot be ignored.

6. Economic change: Economy plays a crucial role in man's daily life. Noted sociologist and philosopher Karl Marx pointed out the significance of economy as a factor in social change. He propounded that economy which constitutes the means of production like labour, instruments, and so on, and the relations of production is the infrastructure and all others like family, legal system, education, religion, polity, and so on are the superstructure. As he says, a conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed, haves and the have-nots brings change in the society and the society transforms to a new mode of production. In this manner, Marx says, society gets transformed from primitive communism to slavery, slavery to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism, Marx predicted, socialism, a classless society, will emerge (Morrison, 2006). In Indian society, industrial economy brought enormous change in the lives of people. Not only did it change the occupation structure in the society but also it affected interpersonal relationships. People from rural areas migrated to cities to work in factories. This drastically reduced the effect of caste/untouchability and also transformed joint families to nuclear households. India, once an agricultural economy, is now manufacturing industrial products to emerge a world leader in producing software, making it a service economy. The software giants like Infosys, Wipro, TCS, and so on are renowned the world over. Thus, economic change is one of the important forms of social change.

5.2.2 Evolution of Social Change

There have been various theories and studies conducted to understand the phenomenon of social change in various eras by different thinkers. This section looks at one of the earliest theories of social change collectively known as linear theories of social change.

Linear theory refers to the theories of social change which discuss a society's progress or evolution in a linear direction. Earlier sociological thinkers believed that human societies were meant for development, that change was always progressive and led to further civilization and ethical enhancement of society. This theory is influenced by Darwin's general theory of evolution which states that

natural species evolve through variation and natural selection, a process which is not essentially progressive.

The conception of evolution involves three essential characteristics:

- (i) Evolution is viewed as an irreversible process of unidirectional growth and development.
- (ii) Every society will go through a limited number of fixed stages of development.
- (iii) Evolution necessarily involves progress and every succeeding stage is considered to be better and higher than the preceding one.

Auguste Comte, considered by many to be one of the pioneers of sociology, through his theory on the 'laws of three stages' talked about social change in terms of evolution of the society (also referred to as the theory of socio-cultural evolution). According to Comte, societies can be seen developing through three different stages of evolution/development. They are:

- (i) The theological stage
- (ii) The metaphysical stage
- (iii) The positive stage

The **theological stage** refers to the belief in embodied deities. This stage was sub-divided into three sub-stages:

- *Fetishism* is a major stage of the theological stage. Also known as animism, in this stage, people believe that inanimate objects have living spirits in them. For example, people worshipping non-living objects like trees, stones, water, volcanic eruptions.
- *Polytheism* is the belief in many gods. In this stage, people believe that different gods control all natural forces; for example the god of rain, god of fire, god of air, god of water, god of earth.
- *Monotheism* refers to the belief in one supreme God; everything is attributed to a single entity.

The **metaphysical stage** can be seen as an extension of the theological stage. In this stage, people believe that God is an abstract entity/ being. The basic belief is that an unseen force or abstract power guides and determines events in the world. Faith in a concrete God is rejected. For example, metaphysical notions can be seen at work in Hindu mythology's conception of the soul, of rebirth. The **positive stage**, or the scientific stage, refers to the rational scientific belief which is based on the methods of observation, experiment, and comparison. This belief by establishing cause and effect relationships relies upon the scientific method. It indicates an intellectual way of understanding the world as it stresses objectivity through classification of data and facts.

Comte was followed by Herbert Spencer, another major thinker of sociology in the 19th century. Spencer defined sociology as the study of the evolution of society and held that the final goal of societal evolution is complete harmony and happiness, as homogeneous systems or societies would grow to become heterogeneous.

NOTES

NOTES

Spencer's theories may be summarized as follows:

- Spencer applied the theory of biological evolution to sociology.
- According to Spencer, evolution had a direction and a goal or an end-point, which was the attainment of a final state of equilibrium.
- He stated that the human mind had evolved in a similar manner; according to him, the human mind evolved from formulating animal like animated responses to the process of reasoning and logic symptomatic of the thinking man.
- He believed that just as in the theory of biological evolution, society was the product of change from lower to higher forms; the lowest forms of life always evolved into higher forms.
- In the development of society, Spencer argued that evolutionary progression from simple, undifferentiated homogeneity to complex, differentiated heterogeneity was exemplified.
- He developed a theory of two types of society, which corresponded to this evolutionary progression:
 - (i) The militant
 - (ii) The industrial

For Spencer, militant society is structured around the relationships of hierarchy and obedience, mostly simple and undifferentiated. On the other hand, **Industrial society** is complex and differentiated, as it is based on voluntary, contractually assumed social obligations. Spencer conceptualized society as a social organism. This society, according to the universal law of evolution, evolved from a simpler state to the more complex state.

Lewis H. Morgan in *Ancient Societies*, published in 1877, differentiated between three eras based on the relationship between technological and social progress:

- (a) *Savage era*- characterized by fire, bow and pottery
- (b) *Barbaric era* - characterized by agriculture, metalworking and the domestication of animals
- (c) *Civilisation era* - exemplified the alphabet and writing.

Morgan rejected the Three-Age system of pre-history, namely, the Ages of Stone, of Bronze, of Iron, as being an insufficient characterization of progress. He further sub-divided the savage, barbaric and civilisation era into sub stages. This subdivision is seen in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Savagery: Natural Subsistence, at least 60,000 years. | Lower | First distinction of man from the other animals. <i>Fruits and Roots</i> , tropical or subtropical habitats, at least partial <i>tree-dwelling</i> , <i>gesture language</i> , <i>intelligence</i> , <i>Consanguine Family</i> . |
| | Middle | <i>Fish Subsistence</i> , <i>Use of Fire</i> , spread of man worldwide along shorelines, <i>monosyllabic language</i> , <i>Punaluan Family</i> . |
| | Upper | Weapons: bow and arrow, club, spear; addition of game to diet, cannibalism, <i>syllabic language</i> , <i>Syndyasmian Family</i> , <i>organization into gentes</i> , <i>phratries and tribes</i> , <i>worship of the elements</i> . |
| Barbarism: Cultivation, Domestication, 35,000 years. | Lower | <i>Horticulture</i> : maize, bean, squash, tobacco; <i>art of pottery</i> , tribal confederacy, <i>finger weaving</i> , <i>blow-gun</i> , <i>village stockade</i> , <i>tribal games</i> , <i>element worship</i> , <i>Great Spirit</i> , formation of <i>Aryan and Semitic families</i> . |
| | Middle | <i>Domestication of animals</i> among the <i>Semitic and Aryan families</i> : goat, sheep, pig, horse, ass, cow, dog; milk, <i>making bronze</i> , irrigation, <i>great joint tenement houses in the nature of fortresses</i> . |
| | Upper | <i>Cultivation of cereals and plants</i> by the Aryans, <i>smelting iron ore</i> , poetry, mythology, walled cities, wheeled vehicles, metallic armor and weapons (bronze and iron), the forge, potter's wheel, grain mill, loom weaving, forging, <i>monogamian family</i> , <i>individual property</i> , <i>municipal life</i> , <i>popular assembly</i> . |
| Civilization: Field Agriculture, 5000 years. | Ancient | <i>Plow with an iron point</i> , iron implements, animal power, <i>unlimited subsistence</i> , <i>phonetic alphabet</i> , <i>writing</i> , <i>Arabic numerals</i> , the military art, the city, commerce, coinage, <i>the state</i> , <i>founded upon territory and upon property</i> , the bridge, arch, crane, water-wheel, sewer. |
| | Mediaeval | <i>Gothic architecture</i> , <i>feudal aristocracy with hereditary titles of rank</i> , <i>hierarchy under the headship of a pope</i> |
| | Modern | Telegraph, coal gas, spinning-jenny, power loom, steam engine, telescope, printing, canal lock, compass, gunpowder, photography, modern science, religious freedom, public schools, representative democracy, classes, different types of law. |

NOTES

Morgan's theory influenced Marxist theorists like Engels, as he believed that any change in the form of technology can lead to social change -in social institutions, organisations or even in ideologies.

Emile Durkheim, in his book *Division of Labour in Society* (1893) talked about the concept of social solidarity. Here, he discussed evolution in terms of society progressing from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity. The most important factor in this social growth was the division of labour. Mechanical solidarity can be seen in a society where division of labour is simple, people are self-sufficient, there is little integration, and to keep the society together force sometimes can be used. Organic solidarity refers to a society where there is more integration and interdependence due to a complex division of labour, and specialisation and cooperation is extensive.

NOTES

Progress from mechanical to organic solidarity is based on the following aspects:

- (a) The division of labour (from simple to complex)
- (b) Population growth and increase in population density
- (c) On the development of more complex social interactions
- (d) On the increase in specialization in the workplace.

These theorists saw society moving in only one direction, i.e., towards progress and development in a manner of unilineal evolution, i.e., evolution in one direction.

The German sociologist and philosopher Ferdinand Tönnies discussed social evolution theory in terms of development. According to him, society moved from an informal society, where there are few laws and obligations, and people have many liberties to a formal rational, modern, society, dominated by traditions and laws which restrict people from acting as they wish.

Tönnies also pointed at the tendency of modern society to absorb all smaller societies into a single, large unit through standardization and unification (presently referred to as the process of globalization). Tönnies' work became an inspiration for the rise of theories on neo-evolutionism.

The following are the characteristics of Tönnies's theory:

- Rejected the linear ideas of evolution;
- Claimed that the social development or progress is not perfect;
- Asserted that the right direction for the evolution of society cannot be pointed out and that societies' do not necessarily follow the same paths; and
- Believed that instead of social progress, the evolution of society could even be called a regress as newer, more evolved societies develop only after paying high costs, resulting in decreasing satisfaction of individuals making up that society.

The theories of Tönnies are also seen as the foundation of the social theory of neo-evolutionism. Briefly, New-evolutionism tries to explain the evolution of societies by drawing on Darwin's theory of evolution and discarding some dogmas of the previous social evolutionism. Neo-evolutionism is concerned with long-term, directional, evolutionary social change and with the regular patterns of development that may be seen in unrelated, widely separated cultures. Tönnies was one of the first sociologists to assert that the evolution of society was not necessarily going in the right direction, that social progress is not perfect, it can even be regressive since newer, more evolved societies are established only after paying a high costs, resulting in decreasing satisfaction of individuals making up that society.

5.2.3 Development and Progress

Development refers to improvement in the quality of life and advancement in one's state of condition. It may refer to the improvements in one's well-being, living standards and socio-economic opportunities. However, the term 'development' is multifaceted due to which lots of confusions and disagreements have taken place with regard to its meaning and definition. Nevertheless, influenced by the

scholars like Amartya Sen, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created a Human Development Index (HDI) that combines indicators like health, life expectancy, literacy, political participation and access to resources (UNDP 2001, 14). Noted economist Amartya Sen argues that development can be seen as a process of expanding real freedoms that people enjoy. This contrasts with the narrow view of development that identifies it with growth or Gross National Product (GNP) or personal income or industrialization or technological advancement or social modernization (Sen 2000, 3). Sen argues that growth of GNP and personal income can be important means that can expand individual freedom. However, freedom depends also on other determinants like proper arrangements for schooling or education, proper healthcare system, civil and political rights, and so on. Sen Says, 'Development requires the removal of major sources of un-freedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity or repressive state' (Sen 2000, 3).

Further, well-known economist and sociologist Gunnar Myrdal (2003, 248) defines development as the upward movement of the entire social system, and this social system encloses, besides the so-called economic factors, all non-economic factors, including all sorts of consumption by various groups of people; consumption provided collectively; educational and health facilities and levels; the distribution of power in society; and more generally, economic, social and political stratification; broadly speaking, institutions and attitudes to which we must add, as an exogenous set of factors, induced policy measures applied in order to change one or several of these endogenous factors'.

Nature of Development

Development is a process that makes the human society a better place to live in. It brings social well-being. The nature of development is analysed below (Jena and Mohapatra 2001; Mohanty 1997).

- (i) Development is a revolutionary process. In many cases, it involves sudden and rapid change of the social structure. In its technological and cultural dimensions, it is comparable to Neolithic revolutions which had turned food-gatherers and nomads into settled agriculturists. Now, during the development revolution, society is getting transformed from rural agricultural one to urban and industrial.
- (ii) Development is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves a lot of economic, behavioural and institutional rearrangements. It involves equity, socio-economic and political participation, and so on.
- (iii) Development is a systematic process. Change in one aspect brings chain reaction and corresponding changes in other aspects also.
- (iv) Development is a lengthy process. The process of development needs substantial level of efforts over a long period of time.
- (v) Development is an irreversible process. It always moves forward. Although some aspects of the process might have some occasional downfalls, the whole process of development is irreversible.

NOTES

NOTES

- (vi) Development is a universal process. Developmental ideas and know-how are diffused from centre of origin to other parts of the world. There are transformations of ideas and techniques between nations world over.
- (vii) Development is directional. It is a process that moves in a direction. In that sense, development is also called an evolutionary process. As stated by Spencer, it can be from simple to complex. As stated by Marx, it can be from class-less primitive communism to capitalistic mode of production and finally to socialism. As discussed by Durkheim, it can be from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, and so on.
- (viii) Development is a value-loaded concept. Qualitatively, it talks about improvement of something over some other. It talks about improvement in lifestyle, infrastructure, education, health system, and so on. Quantitatively, it always advocates for more (of anything) in number. So it is a process that involves value judgement.

Interrelationship between Change and Development

Development is a form of change. However, there are differences between the two. Change is a value-neutral concept, while development is value-loaded one. Change is ethically neutral and suggests alterations or modifications in the structure and functioning of the society over a period of time. Development, on the other hand, advocates change for good. It is a process of desired change. Although development leads to change, all forms of change do not indicate development. Those changes which are planned are termed as development. A change to be defined as development must occur continuously in a desired direction. These desired goals are set looking at the values, norms and needs of any society.

Any change in society must get absorbed in the system and must be felt by the people to make it more effective. Such change can then be regarded as development. Advancement in education and modern means of transport and communication has resulted in high female literacy in the modern societies. This has led to women joining in various jobs in both government and non-government establishments, changing the family relationship as a whole. Such a move leads to a situation like role conflict where the modern women are confused whether to perform the role of a traditional family woman, a mother, a daughter, a wife or to play the role of a teacher, an administrator or an engineer. Such a phenomenon is an example of social change. However, such change can be regarded as development only when proper institutional arrangements and social adjustments are made so that a working woman does not face the situation like role-conflict and manages both her roles well. Such institutional arrangements and social adjustments will then be called as development (Jena and Mohapatra 2001; Mohanty 1997).

Indicators of Development

As discussed in previous sections, development is a multi-faceted term and there are lots of confusions over its meaning and definition. Questions are often raised on how should one count the development parameters. How can a society be

called developed and underdeveloped? What should be the basis? To understand the concept clearly, the indicators of development are discussed as follows:

- (i) **Literacy or education:** Education is the medium through which the members of society are socialized and the modern means of knowledge, skill and technique are imparted to them. Formal education and training expands opportunities for people and increase their capacities. Availability of educated labour force in a country is a prerequisite for development, better governance system and healthy functioning of democracy. In India, to eradicate illiteracy, the successive governments have come out with policies like ‘Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan’ (SSA), ‘Mid-day Meal Scheme’, ‘Mahila Samakhya Scheme’, ‘Teacher Education Scheme’, and so on. Following the National Literacy Mission (NLM), set up in 1988, the ‘Total Literacy Campaign’ was initiated to eliminate illiteracy. India’s soaring literacy helped the country to become a knowledge economy. From a mere 12 per cent during independence, India’s literacy has reached at 65 per cent (2001 census). This is a strong indicator of development.
- (ii) **Health:** Health is, as the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines it, ‘a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.’ Good physical health is the basic requirement for a stable society. Low maternal and infant mortality, good quality of life, and availability of proper health facilities to all sections of a society are necessary conditions for a healthy and developed society. In India, although phenomenal improvements in various health indicators have been witnessed in post-independence period, still several facts need wide attention. Year 2007 data show, in India, the infant mortality rate (IMR)—the probability of a child dying before the first birthday—is still high, i.e., 55 per one thousand live births, although it has shown continuous decline over the years. Again, 43 per cent of children in India under age five are underweight (India 2010, 519–522). According to UN World Food Programme report released in 2009, more than 27 per cent of the world’s under-nourished population lives in India. Besides, 40 per cent of women are found with chronic energy deficiency and around 30 per cent of babies in India are born underweight (Bhattacharya 2010). Development of any country with such bad health indicators will be difficult.
- (iii) **Income:** Adequate level of employment generation is essential for a country to raise income level of its populace. High incomes per capita and increased GNP makes a country economically healthy. When a country has enough economic resources and its per capita income is high, it can invest in social sectors like health and education. Therefore, income and economic welfare are most important indicators of the development process.
- (iv) **Democratic participation:** Participation in the political process of a state is a rational thing every citizen would want to carry out. The political process can enable or hamper developmental process. The participation of people in every developmental activity makes it more effective and serves the developmental goals. Right to choose one’s representative and the right to

NOTES

NOTES

choose one's government are important for the people in polity. The introduction of adult franchise in India soon after independence is a significant step in this context. However, only right to vote is not enough for a country to be called as developed. People must also have the right to choose the development that is meant for them. This makes a state democratic and people friendly. It is an important indication for development when people enjoy such freedom.

(v) **Scientific and technological advancement:** Technological prowess makes a country advanced and that enables for creating better facilities for its citizens. When a country is technologically advanced, its people have larger choices for scientific and technological knowhow. There are very few countries who can afford substantial amount of resources devoted for Research and Development (R&D) since it is very expensive and involves complicated processes. However, a country with adequate and latest technology can manage its various needs well and make facilities available for its masses.

(vi) **Strong and sustained cultural civilization:** A country for its true development needs not only scientific tools and economic growth but also a strong urge to sustain its traditional heritage and cultural civilization. The very notion of HDI devised by UNDP is that progress and development is no longer to be measured just in terms of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or per capita income but also in terms of human well-being, which includes a number of factors like cultural identity, a sense of security of both one's personal safety as well as safety of one's culture and one's place in this world. In that sense, Bhutan has very high indicators of human happiness. This is due to Bhutan's flourishing craft activities, linking craft to Bhutan's sense of identity (Chatterjee and Ashoke 2005). So traditional cultural ethos and values are major parts of a country's development. In India, it is the traditional skill (local knowledge) of the handicraft artisans that is a major basis of their identity. However, in post-liberalization India, this identity is either getting vanished or getting diluted and the skill/local knowledge is very much influenced by the market forces (Jena 2008, 22). Sustaining one's own cultural heritage of any form in modern globalized times is one of the greatest challenges for any country. Without this, true development of nation and humanity is impossible.

5.2.4 Revolution

The process of social change is a very difficult and a many-sided phenomenon. There can be many causes for the process of social change. According to notable sociologist Harry M. Johnson, the causes of social change can be of three types, which can combine in various ways to result in social changes:

- (i) First, the causes of social change are inherent either in social system in general or in particular kinds of social system.
 - **Conflicts:** No society is free from conflict. Any attempt to resolve the conflict would lead to some kind of change in the society. Some

undercurrents of conflict always exist between different groups in the society on the issue of who gets more benefits in the existing system.

- **Social problems:** For example, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, poverty and overpopulation lead to a lot of conflict in the society, which may lead to social change in the present apparatus. The measures to solve or tackle social problems may also lead to changes in society. To deal with overpopulation, government may ask people to follow family control method, which may lead to changes in value systems, institution of marriage and family.
 - **Revolutions and disturbances:** The most intense conflict may result in a revolution in the society like the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution and the American Revolution, and bring about wide ranging changes. These revolutions were the result of exploitation of a large majority by a small minority, the suppression of freedoms, tyranny, corruption and bad policies of the state.
 - **Cultural change:** Cultural innovations (innovation is a new combination of old elements), which may come from innovator's own society or from the other, can cause changes. The diffusion of culture from one society to another has been a great source of social and cultural change in every society, like colonialism. Cultural change can also occur if a new religion or sect comes into being. The origin of a new religion or sect affects the social system and leads to the spread of a new cult/ religion vis-à-vis modifications in the existing social order by the cleansing of old, outdated social mores and traditions. To give an example, in India, the rise of Buddhism and Jainism modified Hindu conservatism of that time.
- (ii) Second, the change may be due to some impact from the social environment of the social system of reference. The influence of the social environment is more significant in bringing about social changes. Shifts of political alliance, military invasions, origin of a new religion or sect, and peaceful immigration and trade shifts can present problems of adjustment to the social system. Any of these changes will have an effect on parts of social structure and then on the society as a whole as well.
- (iii) Finally, the change may also be due to some impact from the non-social environment. Changes in the non-social environment, which may be due to human engineering, such as soil erosion, deforestation and exhaustion of natural mineral resources, can also cause some social changes. Changes in the non-social environment due to nature, for example floods, cyclones and volcanic eruptions, may also cause adoptive social changes. Longevity or average life span also affects composition of population and the social system. When due to natural disasters, wars and diseases, people die at an early age, there are always a majority of youngsters, and/or those who are alive, who are open to new innovations and new ideas for their survival/ better living. On the other hand, when due to medical facilities and peaceful life people live long, they do not welcome change or new ideas and

NOTES

innovations and prefer status quo. This affects speed of social change adversely.

The causes of social change can also be classified into:

- Internal/endogenous (internal phenomenon of the society concerned)
- External/exogenous (external phenomenon of the society concerned)

NOTES

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors affect social change in process and in character. Any change in the population—an increase or decrease—always leads to complex outcomes. Changes in population growth led to the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, and population explosion in post-independence India has led to an increase in poverty, malnutrition and other problems.

Some important factors that determine the rise/fall/density of population are as follows:

- Birth rate
- Death rate
- Immigration and emigration
 - (i) Rise in the birth rate in a society (when it exceeds death-rate) leads to a rise in the population. A rapid rise in population can lead to problems like poverty and unemployment. Birth rates can rise because of illiteracy, early marriage, poverty, lack of family planning programmes or fall in death rate.
 - (ii) A low birth rate leads to decrease in the size of the society's population. Low population can mean fewer trained personnel available and non-utilization of available natural resources, which can also affect social relations due to the small size of the family. Low birth rates may arise as a result of scientific advancements, modern education, better healthcare and preventive medicines, increase in agricultural productivity leading availability of food which raises the standard of living, control over nature to avoid tragedies, and so on.

A change in the sex ratio also leads to changes in the structure and social relations in the society. An almost equal proportion of men and women leads to monogamy in society. Polygamy sets in the society if the number of males and females is disproportionate. If the number of women goes up (more than men), polygyny develops, but if the opposite happens, i.e., there are more men than women, the result often is polyandry. Polygamy sets in the society if the number of women goes up (more than men). Polyandry is often the result, if there are more men than women.
 - (iii) Migration has played a significant role in population growth in the history of mankind. Increase in the growth of population

hastens the process of migration. Migration refers to the process of movement of population from one place to another. There are primarily two forms of migration:

- o Immigration is migration into a country/state/area
- o Emigration is migration out of a country/state/area

To illustrate with the help of an example, a labourer coming from Bihar to Punjab is an immigrant to Punjab and emigrant from Bihar.

The factors contributing to the process of migration are as follows:

- o Better transport facilities
- o Disasters of nature calamities like earthquake, flood, famine, and so on
- o Better job opportunities in the area of migration

The positive and negative effects of demographic factors or population growth are as follows:

Positive effects

- Utilization of natural resources
- Leads to industrialization and urbanization
- Leads to scientific innovations and discoveries

Negative effects

- Decrease in the standard of living of the people
- Leads to problems like poverty, unemployment, child labour and crime
- Leads to disorder and social conflict, and affects migrants too

Economic Factors

Economic factors can act as the drivers for social change. As Karl Marx stated, any change in the means of production (or the material productive forces of society) can lead to changes in the social structure of the society. Some of the ways in which economic factors have acted as drivers of social change include:

- The rise in material means of livelihood led to the birth of the institutions of marriage and family, which led to the idea of possessions/wealth for the family.
- In the agricultural stage, the social organization grew more complex, as people settled down at a particular place for raising crops. It led to the stability and rise of villages. The division of labour led to stratification or division in society based on economic factors, i.e., classes. Institutions like kingship and feudalism also came up during this period.
- Agricultural surplus in Western nations led to the industrial stage, and with scientific advancements, the machine system of production came into

NOTES

NOTES

existence. Industrial revolution led to changes in every structure of the society. These changes were as follows:

- o Migration to cities led to urbanization.
- o The extended family system was replaced by the nuclear family.
- o Women joined the labour force, and led to changes in gender roles and relations.
- o Industrial revolution led to a change in society as lords and serfs were replaced by industrialist and workers.
- o The rise of nation states as kingship declined in this era.
- o It led to many movements around the world like the Russian Revolution.
- o New ideologies like socialism/capitalism came up.
- o More and more ways of entertainment came to be developed.

Economic factors have been and continue to be very important factors of social change but they are not the only determinants of social change (as Marx said), as these changes were in conjunction with the technological and other changes in the society.

Religious Factors

Religion may not be seen as a sole factor for social change, but in combination with other factors, religion becomes a significant factor of social change.

German sociologist Max Weber regarded religion as an important contributor to economic development or stagnation. He tried to explain this theory in his book *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), in which he explains the rise of the capitalist spirit, which led to economic dynamism in the West, especially through the rise of Calvinism—an individualistic ethic of Christianity. Religions of the East, Weber argues, are usually accompanied by a rejection of worldly affairs, including the pursuit of wealth and possessions. He defines the spirit of capitalism as the ideas that favour the rational pursuit of economic gain. Weber shows that certain branches of Protestantism had supported worldly activities dedicated to economic gain, seeing them as endowed with moral and spiritual significance. This recognition was not a goal in itself; rather they were a by-product of other doctrines of faith that encouraged planning, hard work and self-denial in the pursuit of worldly riches.

Weber's theory in simple terms means:

- The protestant religion supported individuals to follow a secular vocation with as much zeal as possible. A person living according to this world view was more likely to accumulate money.
- The new religions (in particular, Calvinism and other more austere Protestant sects) effectively forbade wastefully using hard earned money and identified the purchase of luxuries as a sin. Donations to an individual's church or congregation were limited due to the rejection by certain Protestant sects of icons. Finally, donation of money to the poor or to

charity was generally frowned on as it was seen as furthering beggary. This social condition was perceived as laziness, burdening their fellow man and an affront to God; by not working, one failed to glorify God. The investment of this money gave an extreme boost to nascent capitalism, according to Weber.

- Reformation reforms in the 16th century Europe, to rid Christianity of its superstitions, and corruption that had plagued the church and its officials led to the rise of scientific temperament and rationality. It finally led to Industrial Revolution in the later era.
- Most of the churches of southern US supported the civil rights movement for African-Americans and helped in abolishing racism in the US.
- In medieval India, socio-religious movements like the Bhakti and Sufi movements helped in spreading tolerance among both Hindus and Muslims as their leaders came from all castes and classes, and preached an ideology of tolerance.
- In India, social movements for change have always had a religious colour to them. Mahatma Gandhi during the Freedom struggle used religious symbols to make it popular with the masses.

NOTES

Bio-Technology Factors

Human beings have used biotechnology in agriculture, food production and medicine. Biotechnology is the use of living systems and organisms to develop or make useful products.

- Changes in the natural environment may be either independent of human social activities or caused by them. Deforestation, erosion and air pollution belong to the latter category, and they, in turn, may have far-reaching social consequences. Environmental disasters may lead to migration by the resident population.
- Agricultural advancements, for example, in India, due to the introduction of high-yielding variety led to the Green Revolution. It made India self-sufficient in food and led to the development of the states like Punjab and Haryana, which also gained a higher per capita income.
- Biological pesticides are injected into various crops so that they grow pesticide-free. These have led to the increase in production.
- Scientific advancements in medicine have led to the cure of various serious diseases and have led to a rise in population worldwide. Health care facilities have led to increase in population as well.
- Cloning in biotechnology refers to processes used to create copies of DNA fragments (molecular cloning), cells (cell cloning) or organisms. Cloning organs in human-beings has led to people suffering from ailments to not wait for a donor to get the diseased organ replaced. However, at present, the technology of cloning is at initial/experimental stage and is not available for the masses.

- Cloning of animals is now being tried on extinct species or on endangered species. Scientists have successfully cloned species like the sheep, cattle, cat and rabbit. This will lead to a rise in livestock for domestication and for nutritional purposes in the future.

NOTES

Medical facilities not only increase the life span but consequently the role-relationship within the family, presence and dominance of adults, their opposition for the new, demand of younger generation for more social space, role strains and generation gap, problems of elderly irrespective of social class are some of the associated issues. This also includes new roles of elders in family, changing composition of joint family, changes in the institution of marriage and its effects on the status of women, which are some manifest aspects, and students should be able to understand the underlying social effects of apparent technological and scientific development.

Info-Technology Factors

Information technology (IT) is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data. The term is commonly used as a synonym for computers and computer networks, but it also encompasses other information distribution technologies such as television and telephones. Several industries are associated with information technology, such as computer hardware, software, electronics, semi-conductors, the Internet, telecom equipment, e-commerce and computer services.

- Cases of natural calamities like floods, cyclones, earthquakes and droughts are no more viewed as God's punishments against man's sins. Modern technology based on computers can predict natural disasters, as a result of which the degree of gaining control over them has increased. Modern technology using computers can warn people and save their lives by migrating to other safe areas.
- Communication has reduced distances as people can talk and can even video-chat over long distances. As a result, the world has become closer.
- Social inequalities have gone down as technology cannot be prejudiced/biased against a race, caste or religion.
- Social evils like corruption have gone down as a result of technology, especially in India, as everything is computerized and the number of people involved in the implementation of schemes has lessened. For example, the Indian government is planning to deposit money directly into the accounts of backward people, widows and pensioners.
- Technology has also helped in the spread of democracy by making people more conscious of their rights.
- Law and order has improved, for example, with the use of close circuit television cameras (CCTV) for traffic for keeping a watch, and this has led to the reduction in crime and accidents.
- Technology has helped in the spread of knowledge and literacy in far flung areas.

- Technology has also helped in empowering women, and has also given power and voice to the weak and backwards, as anybody can use technology to show if he/she faced any exploitation and can give his/her side of the story.
- Technology has helped in changing political systems by overthrowing autocratic regimes.
- It has provided more employment opportunities based on skill and expertise.
- Technology has made globalization possible. The world is now a more integrated place now, thanks to communication satellites and the Internet, and events in one place can have an effect on the entire world.

NOTES

Media Factors

Mass media can be said to be diversified media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication. The technology through which this communication takes place varies. Broadcast media, such as radio, recorded music, films and television, transmit their information electronically. Print media uses a physical object, such as a newspaper, book, pamphlet or comic, to distribute their information. Outdoor media is a form of mass media that comprises billboards, signs or placards placed inside and outside of commercial buildings, sports stadiums, shops and buses. The digital media comprises both the Internet and mobile mass communication. Internet media provides many mass media services, such as email, websites, blogs and Internet based radio and television.

- The media shapes and influences public opinion on any matter or issue.
- The media can attract attention to problems and can offer informed solutions as well.
- The media can entertain people and can spread useful information.
- The media can create conditions for mobilization of the public. For example, the anti-corruption agitation by Indian social activist Anna Hazare in 2012 or the anti-rape marches.
- The media has empowered citizens by giving a voice to the poor and the backward by showing their side of the story.
- The media helps in increasing public knowledge by informing and educating them about issues.
- The media can help bring smooth transition in the society from traditional to modern through its programming content.
- Through its various programmes, the media's influence has led to consumerism and changes in lifestyles.
- The media's watch on the state and its institutions have helped in keeping the government and its apparatus efficient.
- The media has helped in the reduction of various myths and superstitions by educating people about various topics.
- The media has helped in spreading the process of democracy around the world.

- The media can also be seen as a reflector of and a reinforcer of dominant values.

NOTES

Each of the factors discussed above may contribute to others; none of the factors can be the sole determinant of social change. One reason why deterministic or reductionist theories are often disproved is that the method for explaining processes is not autonomous but must itself be explained. Moreover, social factors are often so intertwined that it would be misleading to consider them separately. For example, there are no fixed borders between economic and political factors, nor are there fixed boundaries between economic and technological factors. Technological change may in itself be regarded as a specific type of organizational or conceptual change. The causal connections between distinguishable social processes are a matter of degree and vary over time.

Check Your Progress

1. When did sociology as a separate discipline emerge and why?
2. What are the two types of changes according to Morris Ginsberg?
3. Differentiate between progress and change.
4. Why is social change considered to be temporal?
5. What is the main principle of Darwin's general theory?
6. Mention the two types of societies founded by Spencer.
7. What do you understand by the term organic solidarity?
8. What are the three causes of social change as given by Harry Johnson?
9. List the negative effects of demographic factors or population growth.
10. How is media useful in bringing social change?

5.3 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS QUESTIONS

1. Sociology as a separate discipline emerged in the middle of the 19th century as an effort to explain the socio-cultural and economic changes that erupted in Europe following the industrialization and democratization.
2. According to Morris Ginsberg, there are two types of changes:
 - (a) Changes in the structure of society
 - (b) Changes in the value system of society
3. Progress involves change that leads to certain well-defined goals. It is also a type of social change. However, there are differences between the two. Every change is not progress, but every progress can be called as a change. Moreover, change is a value-free concept, while progress always denotes change for the better.

4. Social change is temporal in the sense that it involves the factor of time. It denotes time sequence. It can be temporary or permanent. Time is an important component in the process of change.
5. Darwin's general theory states that natural species evolve through variation and natural selection, a process which is not essentially progressive.
6. Spencer founded two types of societies, namely militant and industrial.
7. Organic solidarity refers to a society where there is no more integration and interdependence due to a complex division of labour, and specialization and cooperation is extensive.
8. The three causes of social change as given by Harry Johnson are as follows:
 - (a) The causes of social change are inherent either in social system in general or in particular kinds of social system.
 - (b) The change may be due to some impact from the social environment of the social system of reference.
 - (c) The change may also be due to some impact from the non-social environment.
9. The negative effects of demographic factors or population growth are as follows:
 - (a) Decrease in the standard of living of the people
 - (b) Leads to problems like poverty, unemployment, child labour, crime, and so on
 - (c) Leads to disorder and social conflict, and affects migrants too
10. The media is useful in bringing social change in the following ways:
 - (a) The media shapes and influences public opinion for any matter or issue.
 - (b) The media can attract attention to problems and can offer informed solutions as well.
 - (c) The media can entertain people and can spread useful information.

NOTES

5.4 SUMMARY

- Change and continuity are the inevitable facts of life. Not only do people undergo the process of change but so does the habitat they live in.
- Sociology as a separate discipline emerged in the middle of the 19th century as an effort to explain the socio-cultural and economic changes that erupted in Europe, following the industrialization and democratization processes.
- 'Change' refers to any alteration or transformation in any object, situation or phenomena over a certain period of time.
- 'Social change' on the other hand, indicates the changes that take place in human interactions or interrelationships. Society is regarded as a 'web of social relationships', and in that sense, social change refers to change in the system of social relationships.

NOTES

- The concept of social change is not value-laden or judgemental. It does not advocate any good or desirable and bad or undesirable turn of events.
- There are different types of social change. The term ‘social’ is so vast in scope that different forms of change which carry several names of their own can actually be brought under the broader concept of social change. However, different types of change are as follows:
 - o Social change and cultural change
 - o Social change and social progress
 - o Social change and social evolution
 - o Demographic change
 - o Technological change
 - o Economic change
- There have been various theories and studies conducted to understand the phenomenon of social change in various eras by different thinkers.
- Linear theory refers to the theories of social change which discuss a society’s progress or evolution in a linear direction. Earlier sociological thinkers believed that human societies were meant for development, that change was always progressive and led to further civilization and ethical enhancement of society.
- Auguste Comte, considered by many to be one of the pioneers of sociology, through his theory on the ‘laws of three stages’ talked about social change in terms of evolution of the society.
- Comte was followed by Herbert Spencer, another major thinker of sociology in the 19th century. Spencer defined sociology as the study of the evolution of society and held that the final goal of societal evolution is complete harmony and happiness, as homogeneous systems or societies would grow to become heterogeneous.
- There can be many causes for the process of social change. According to notable sociologist Harry M. Johnson, the causes of social change can be of three types:
 - First, the causes of social change are inherent either in social system in general or in particular kinds of social system.
 - Second, the change may be due to some impact from the social environment of the social system of reference.
 - Finally, the change may also be due to some impact from the non-social environment.
- Demographic factors affect social change in process and in character. Any change in the population—an increase or decrease—always leads to complex outcomes.
- Economic factors can act as the drivers for social change. As Karl Marx stated, any change in the means of production (or the material productive forces of society) can lead to changes in the social structure of the society.

- Religion may not be seen as a sole factor for social change, but in combination with other factors, religion becomes a significant factor of social change.

5.5 KEY TERMS

- **Cultural lag:** A cultural lag occurs when one of the two parts of culture which are correlated changes before or in greater degree than the other parts does, thereby, causing less adjustment between the two parts than existed previously.
- **Demographic change:** Demographic change is change in the patterns of fertility, mortality, age structure, migration, and so on.
- **Organic solidarity:** Organic solidarity refers to a society where there is more integration and interdependence due to a complex division of labour, and specialization and cooperation is extensive.
- **Development:** Development refers to improvement in the quality of life and advancement in one's state of condition.
- **Linear Theory:** Linear theory refers to the theories of social change which discuss a society's progress or evolution in a linear direction.
- **Fetishism:** Fetishism is a major stage of the theological stage. Also known as animism, in this stage, people believe that inanimate objects have living spirits in them.
- **Polytheism:** Polytheism is the belief in many gods. In this stage, people believe that different gods control all natural forces.
- **Monotheism:** Monotheism refers to the belief in one supreme God; everything is attributed to a single deity.
- **Information technology:** Information technology (IT) is the application of computers and telecommunications equipment to store, retrieve, transmit and manipulate data.

NOTES

5.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Define change and social change.
2. Differentiate between social change and cultural changes.
3. What role do technological changes play in social change?
4. 'Social change may be planned or unplanned.' Discuss.
5. State the significance of economy as a factor in social change as propounded by Marx.
6. What are the ways in which economic factors have acted as drivers of social change?

NOTES

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the meaning and the characteristics of social change. Describe using examples of the different forms of social change.
2. Examine the various factors of social change.
3. Discuss the linear or evolutionary theories of social change.
4. Explain the process of development.
5. Describe the various forms of social change.

5.7 FURTHER READING

- Ryan, Michael. 2018. *Core Concepts in Sociology*. London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Giddens Anthony, and Phillip Sutton. 2017. *Essential Concepts in Sociology* (2nd Edition). London: John Wiley and Sons.
- Braham, Peter. 2013. *Key Concepts in Sociology*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Stolley Kathy. 2005. *The Basics of Sociology*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Abel, Theodore. 1980. *The Foundations of Sociological Theory*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Abraham, Francis M. and John Henry Morgan. 1985. *Sociological Thought*. Chennai: Macmillan India.
- Aron, Raymond. 1965. *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, Vol. I and II. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Boguardus, Emory S. 1969. *The Development of Social Theory*. Mumbai: Vakils, Feffa and Simons.
- Ritzer, George. 1988. *Sociological Theory*, Second edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.