



**Centre for Distance and Online Education  
Punjabi University, Patiala**

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**Class : B.A. I**

**Semester : 1**

**Paper : Fundamentals of Sociology**

**Unit : I**

**Medium : English**

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***Lesson No.***

- 1.1 : SOCIOLOGY: NATURE AND SCOPE
- 1.2 : SOCIOLOGY: RELATION WITH OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES
- 1.3 : SOCIAL STRUCTURE
- 1.4 : SOCIETY
- 1.5 : SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS
- 1.6 : COMMUNITY AND ASSOCIATION
- 1.7 : VALUES AND NORMS
- 1.8 : STATUS AND ROLE

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***Department website : [www.pbidde.org](http://www.pbidde.org)***

## SYLLABUS

**Sociology B.A. Part I (FIRST SEMESTER)**  
**SESSION 2023-2024**  
**FOR REGULAR/ DISTANCE EDUCATION /PRIVATE STUDENT**

**For Regular Students: Each paper will carry 70 marks and 30 marks of Internal Assessment.**

The Break-up of 30 Marks for Internal Assessment (Theory Papers) is as below:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Test   | 12 Marks |
| 2. Class Attendance   | 06 Marks |
| 3. Field Work / Project Work/Assignment/<br>Response Sheet/Seminar etc. | 12 Marks |

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TOTAL MARKS	30 Marks
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Paper-I FUNDAMENTALS OF SOCIOLOGY

FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION AND PRIVATE STUDENT EACH PAPER WILL CARRY 100 MARKS AND THERE WILL BE NO INTERNAL ASSESSMENT.

FOR REGULAR STUDENTS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 100

TIME ALLOWED: 3HRS

INTERNAL ASSESSMENT: 30

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT: 70

FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION AND PRIVATE STUDENTS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 100

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER-SETTER

For **Regular Students**, the question paper will consist of three sections A, B and C. Sections A and B will have four questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 10½ marks each. Section C will consist of 14 short-answer type questions, which will cover the entire

syllabus uniformly and will carry 28 marks in all. Each short-answer type question will carry two marks each. Thirty (30) marks will comprise of internal assessment.

For Distance Education and **Private Students**: The question paper will consist of three sections: A, B and C. Sections A and B will have four questions from the respective sections of the syllabus and will carry 14½ marks each. Section C will consist of 14 short-answer type questions, which will cover the entire syllabus uniformly and will carry 42 marks in all. Each short-answer type question will carry 3 marks each.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES

Candidates are required to attempt two questions each from sections A and B. Section C is compulsory.

### SECTION A

- i) **Sociology**: Definition, nature and scope; relationship with other social sciences: Psychology, Anthropology, History, Economics, Political Science.
- ii) **Basic concepts**: Social structure, society, social organization, Community, Association, Norms, Values, Status and Role.

### SECTION B

- i) Socialization: Meaning, processes and agencies. Theories of self (Frued, Cooley and Mead)
- ii) **Culture**: Meaning, characteristics; material and non-material culture; cultural lag; culture and civilization.

### BOOKS RECOMMENDED

1. Bottomore, T.B. 1972. *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature*, Bombay: George Allen and Unwin.
2. Giddens, A. 2006. *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
3. Gisbert, PSJ, 1993. *Fundamentals of Sociology*, Bombay: Orient Longman.
4. Haralambos, M. 1998. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

## Sociology : Nature and scope

### Structure

- 1.0 Introduction of the unit
- 1.1. Objective
- 1.2. Introduction of lesson
- 1.3 Emergence in India
- 1.4. Meaning
- 1.5. Definitions
- 1.6. Views of various thinkers
  - 1.6.1 August Comte
  - 1.6.2 Herbert Spencer
  - 1.6.3 Karl Marx
  - 1.6.4 Max Weber
  - 1.6.5 Emile Durkheim
- 1.7. Nature
  - 1.7.1 Formulation of Hypothesis
  - 1.7.2 Observation
  - 1.7.3 Classification
  - 1.7.4 Verification
  - 1.7.5 Prediction
- 1.8. Scope
  - 1.8.1 Specialist or Formalistic School of Thought
  - 1.8.2 Generalistic or Synthetic School of Thought
- 1.9. Key words
- 1.10. Conclusion
- 1.11. Questions
- 1.12 Model Answers
- 1.13. Further Readings
- 1.0 Course Introduction-

This is the first unit of sociology of Paper A. This is very important unit for understanding various basic aspects of sociology. Meaning of sociology and

outline of the theories of the 'founding fathers' of sociology is given. The scope of sociology is discussed with reference to two school of thought i.e. synthetic school of thought and formalistic school of thought. It also tells you about the nature of sociology whether sociology is an art or science? Finally in lesson 2 the relationship of sociology with other social sciences like History, Anthropology, Psychology, Political Science and Economics is also discussed. Since sociology has emerged as a very significant discipline among the social science thus it is important to know how it is different from other social sciences and how it is related to them?

### 1.1. Objectives :-

After going through this lesson you will be able to :

- be acquainted with the discipline i.e. Sociology.
- know the emergence of sociology in India.
- be able to define sociology.
- gain the knowledge regarding nature and scope of sociology.
- discuss sociology at various levels.

### 1.2 Introduction of Sociology

Sociology is the youngest of all social sciences. It was only in the latter half of the 19th century that Sociology was recognized as an independent discipline. Since then, Sociology has emerged as one of the major disciplines amongst other social sciences.

Philosophizing about humans and society had long been a preoccupation of lay men and scholars alike, but it was Auguste Comte who advocated a 'Science of society' and coined the term 'Sociology' in his book 'Positive Philosophy' in 1839 A.D. Hence, the founder of Sociology like most French thinkers of his time. Comte was trying to restore or reinstate the order and harmony out of the chaos created by the French Revolution (1789). He believed that it was possible only through a theoretical science of society. Comte sought to formulate a system of laws based on scientific method governing society so that he could postulate a cure for society on their basis. Thus giving birth to a new science of Sociology.

Sociology essentially deals with that network of social relationships we call society. No other science takes this subject (i.e. social relationships) as its central concern. Aristotle, remarked 'Man is a social animal'. This means that all human beings have to interact with other in order to survive. Both nature and necessity compels humans to live in society. Sociology is thus primarily interested in the study of man's behaviour in relation to other men i.e. social relations.

### 1.3 Emergence of Sociology In India

The teaching of Sociology as a separate discipline started in 1876 in the United States, in 1889 in France, in 1907 in Great Britain, after World war –

I (1914-1918) in India and Poland, in 1925 in Egypt and Mexico and in 1947 in Sweden.

In India, sociology as an independent discipline was first introduced in Bombay University in 1921.

After Independence, the popularity of this subject increased rapidly and Universities of Pune, Delhi, Mysore, Baroda, Patna, Madras, Nagpur, Haryana and Punjab included it in their academic courses. It was introduced at the Post- graduation level in Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1960 and in Punjabi University, Patiala in 1969.

#### 1.4 Meaning of Sociology

The word 'Sociology' is derived from the Latin word 'socius' means 'society' and the Greek word 'logos' means 'study' or 'science'. Thus, literal meaning of Sociology is the 'science of society'. Sociology is a 'systematic and scientific study of society'.

The term society, here refers only to the human society. Where there is life, there is society and in future you will come across or study about the societies or colonies of insects (ants) and animals etc. But Sociology Studies human society only and this study is a systematic and scientific one.

A social relationship, involves reciprocal awareness between two or more people. Thus, the smallest unit of Sociology is a 'dyad' i.e. two individuals involved in meaningful interaction; as the smallest unit in physics is an 'Atom' and in Biology a cell.

#### 1.5 Definitions of Sociology

In order to understand Sociology it shall be appropriate to study some of the definitions given by important Sociologists.

Some of the definitions of Sociology are as follows :-

"The subject- matter of Sociology is the inter-action of human minds."

-L.T. Hobhouse

"Sociology is the study of society, that is, of the web or tissue of human inter- actions and inter- relations, their conditions and consequences."

- M.Ginsberg

"Sociology in the broadest sense may be said to be the study of interactions arising from the association of living beings."

- Gillin & Gillin

"Sociology is a science which attempts interpretative understanding of social action in order there by to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects."

- Max Weber

"Sociology is the science that deals with social groups, their internal forms or modes of organization, the processes that tend to maintain or

change these forms of organization and relations between groups.”

- Harry M. Johnson

“Sociology is a generalizing science of socio- cultural phenomena viewed in their generic form. types and manifold interconnections.”

- Pitirim A. Sorokin

“Sociology is the study of the relationships between man and his human environment.”

- Fair child

“Sociology seeks to discover the principles of cohesion and of order within the social structure, the ways in which it roots and grows within an environment , the moving equilibrium of changing structure and changing environment , the main trends of the incessant change, the forces which determine its direction at any time, the harmonies and conflicts, the adjustments and maladjustments within the structure as they are revealed in the light of human desires, and thus the practical application of means to ends in the creative activities of social man.”

- MacIver

“Sociology may be defined as the study of the ways in which social experiences function in developing, maturing and repressing human beings through inter- personal stimulation.”

- E.S. Bogardus

“Sociology is an attempt to account for the origin, growth, structure and activities of society by the operation of physical causes working together in the process of evolution.”

- Giddings

After scanning all these definitions we find that no definition is entirely satisfactory because of the diversity of perspective which is characteristic of this discipline. But following conclusions can be made :

- (i) Sociology is a scientific study of society.
- (ii) Sociology is a science of social relationship.
- (iii) Sociology is the study of social life.
- (iv) Sociology is the study of human behaviour in groups.
- (v) Sociology is the study of social action.
- (vi) Sociology is the study of social groups.

However, the common underlying idea in all these definitions is that Sociology is concerned with human relationships. It emphasizes on the ‘Social’ aspect of these relationships. MacIver has clarified that whatever topic may be included in the subject matter of sociology, its real subject- matter is social relationships. It is on account of such relationships that there is human

inter- action. Therefore, if we include social processes or any other matter within the subject – matter of Sociology, their study can be carried only in the context relationships. The different aspects of life, viz. political or economic are but the expressions of social relationships.

In studying social relationships, the sociologist attempt to discover the evolution of society, its systems and structures, the development of social institutions and their functions, the customs and the rules regulating social relationships, the groups and communities by man throughout history, the nature and interdependence of these groups like family, caste, government, economic groups, religions groups etc, and the phenomenon of social change.

### 1.6 Views of various thinkers

Sociology as a science and particularly as a separate field of study is of recent origin. According to Maclver “Sociology as a more or less definite body of knowledge with a distinct place and name among the family of sciences must be dated by decades rather than by centuries.” Let us now see the views of modern pioneers in this discipline who made notable contribution towards establishing sociology as an independent discipline :

August Comte	(1798-1857)
Herbert Spencer	(1820-1903)
Karl Marx	(1818-1883)
Max Weber	(1864-1920)
Emile Durkheim	(1858-1917)

#### 1.6.1 August Comte

He was born on 1st Jan, 1798 in Montpelliar of South France. He coined the term ‘Sociology’ and defined the scope of this modern science and the methods which it should employ. It is for this reason, that he is called the ‘Father of Sociology’. He used the word Sociology in his book Positive Philosophy which was published in 1839. He defined Sociology as “The science of social phenomena subject to natural invariable laws, the discovery of which is the object of investigation.”

According to him Sociology is the “Queen of all Sciences” that should always follow the method of natural sciences and the social sciences are subjected to general and universal laws. He sought to establish a science which would embrace the totality of human life and activities. He was the first thinker of the modern world to set the fact that all the aspects of social life are bound in a unity and to show that this unity has an evolutionary character following the ‘Law of the three stages’ which according to him were:-

- (i) Theological stage,
- (ii) Metaphysical stage
- (iii) Scientific or positive stage, which was the most advanced one.



Comte's one of the most important contributions to Sociology is in the form of 'Positivism' or 'Positive Philosophy'. 'Positivism' is a scientific method used by Comte to study the social phenomena. This doctrine formulated by Comte asserts that only positive knowledge is scientific knowledge. Positive knowledge is based on facts gathered by observation, experimentation and comparison.

Comte further divided sociology into two parts :-

(a) Social Statics            (b) Social dynamics

(a) Social Statics : is the study of that order or part of society which is a static. The conditions of existence of society in harmony and which cannot be challenged all times. It studies current laws, rules and present condition of the society. In his book "Positive Philosophy-II" Comte says that- "The statistical study of Sociology consists in the investigation of the laws of action and reaction of the different parts of the social system- apart , for the occasion from the fundamental movement which is always gradually modifying them."

(b) Social Dynamics : Comte considers this part as more important than the other because social progress (dynamics) is more important than social stability. Comte considers progress an essential element of the society. The social dynamics tries to discover the laws and principles underlying social change and progress. It also tries to find out the conditions necessary to maintain the continuity of social progress.

### 1.6.2 Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

He is considered as the second founding father of sociology. He was born in a middle-class English family. If Charles Darwin is said to have propagated the concept of Biological evolution, Herbert Spencer has propagated the concept of social evolution.

Spencer attempted to integrate all the sciences into one system and to find one fundamental law that would explain all phenomena, natural and social. One of his noteworthy theories was that the social phenomena like the organic matter, undergo an evolutionary process of growth from the simple and homogeneous to the complex and heterogeneous. Spencer points out following characteristics of social evolution:

- (i) Society always evolves from a simple state to complex one.
- (ii) As social evolution advances, the homogenous form of society changes into a heterogeneous one.
- (iii) Society moves from less differentiated state to a more differentiated state.
- (iv) The process of social evolution moves from lower to higher stages.

Spencer's concept of evolution also includes the concept of development and progress but fails to draw distinction between development and progress.

Another significant contribution of Spencer is called organic analogy. In this Spencer compares society with an organism. He asserts that as an organism is organized in a proper structure with specific functions assigned to each part similarly society is organized. As an organism moves from birth to maturity and then to death a society too follows similar course.

### 1.6.3 KARL MARX (1818-1883)

A political revolutionary and social theorist, Marx was born in Germany. He is the propounder of the greatest materialistic and dialectic interpretation of society. He has been a major influence in the development of sociology because he analyzed various aspects of social life very minutely. His main thought is found in the 'Communist Manifesto' and 'Das Capital'. His major sociological contributions are :

- (i) Historical Materialism.
- (ii) Theory of Private property
- (iii) Class struggle.
- (iv) Stateless society

#### (i) Historical Materialism :

According to Marx "All the social, political and intellectual relations, and religious and legal system all the theoretical outlooks which emerge in course of history are derived from material conditions of life." In other words matter is primary for Marx, and it is from the matter that each and everything is born. According to this theory "the ultimate cause of all social change and political revolutions are to be sought not in the minds of men, but in changes in the mode of production and exchange, they are to be sought not in the philosophy but in the economics of the period concerned." Thus Marx has given the economic factor a pivotal role in the causation of social change.

#### (ii) Theory of Private Property :

Private property is the basis of capitalism which makes it exploitative. In the capitalist dominated society the worker gets alienated from his job and he is only an appendage to the machine the worker becomes alienated from himself, from each other and from nature. According to Marx "Private property is derived from alienated man, alienated labour, alienated life and estranged man". In order to remove alienation, the system of private property is to be abolished.

#### (iii) Class Struggle :

According to Marx, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle". He asserts that in every age, society becomes divide into two major classes- the oppressor and the oppressed, who are always in conflict because their interests collide. Marx says that the class struggle between the workers (proletariat) and capitalists (Bourgeoisie) will ultimately lead to

the victory of the proletariat. As a result of this victory, class distinctions will disappear from society and with that disappearance class struggle too would come to an end and a classless society would be born.

(iv) **Stateless society**

According to Karl Marx , “ the state will ultimately wither away”. Before the state withers away, it will be preceded by a transitional phase of dictatorship of the proletariat. The proletarian state will only prepare the way for the ushering in of a stateless society in place of the bourgeois society, state as an agency of force will no longer be required because people in the communist society will gradually become accustomed to the observer of the elementary rules of social life without compulsion and without subordination. Mankind will make an ascent from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.

#### 1.6.4 Max Weber (1864-1920)

Of all the great teachers of sociology, Max Weber was most concerned with the methodological and theoretical problems of the discipline. Weber was born in Germany. He is often regarded as the father of Modern Sociology. It is because of the following reasons:

- (a) He provided a systematic statement of the conceptual framework of the sociological perspective.
- (b) He developed a coherent philosophy of social science, which recognized the essential problems of explanation of social action.
- (c) In a variety of substantive fields, he grasped the basic characteristics of modern industrial civilization.
- (d) Through the empirical studies of modern society, he identified a number of key issues which have become the focus of principal debates within the discipline.
- (e) His own life in many respects provides a forceful example of sociology as a vocation.

Another major contribution of Weber is the concept of social action. From the outset , Weber was obsessed with the possibility, even the necessity of analyzing human actions and relationships scientifically, his logical starting point in the concept of action. He says that “we shall call action any human attitude or activity (no matter whether including external or internal acts) if and in so far as the actor or actors associate a subjective meaning with it”. In other words we can say that part of behaviour to which an actor attaches a meaning is action. And social action is “Such action which according to its subjective meaning to the actor , involves the attitudes and actions of others and is oriented to them in its course.”

In simple words we can say social action is that action in which an actor attaches meaning to his behaviour and orients his actions according to the action of other actors i.e. action of the individuals which are somehow

influenced, guided or determined by the action of other individuals.

Thus for Weber sociology is "A science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order thereby to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects." This concept of social action is the centre of all social ideas for Max Weber.

### 1.6.5 Emile Durkhiem (1858-1917)

This French sociologist attempted to establish the status of sociology as an independent and distinct science . He was a follower of Comte's tradition. He did his best to give sociology a scientific form by liberating it from the mysterious methods and terminology of theology and philosophy. He also advocates the objective , factual and empirical method of study.

In Durkhiem's theory the ultimate social reality is the group, not the individual. Social life, he thinks, has to be analyzed in terms of SOCIAL FACTS which are the most basic concepts of his thought. According to him social facts are "collective ways of thinking, acting and feeling which, though coming from the individual, are external to him and exert constraint or pressure on him; for instance the feeling of patriotism, which spreads over the country, impels us to make some sacrifice for it. The social facts, he insists, are the proper study of sociology and to them (social facts) all social phenomena must be ultimately reduced.

As pointed out earlier social facts have four main characteristics:-

- (i) Exteriority
- (ii) Constraint or Coercion
- (iii) Generality
- (iv) Sui-generous

Social facts exist outside the individuals mind and consciousness. The individual is forced to obey the directives of social facts. When he tries to resist them or break the laws, society shows a hostile reaction. Social facts are everywhere in all societies.

Durkheim studied Division of Labour as a social institution a collectivity wherein the multiplicity of individuals secure social coherence. On the basis of social solidarity Durkhiem divide society into two parts.

- (i) Society based on mechanical solidarity.
- (ii) Society based on Organic solidarity.

In mechanical solidarity man is directly related to other men. Considering the relations of mechanical solidarity and division of labour, Durkhiem emphasizes the following points.

- (i) Differentiation in the society based on mechanical solidarity is at an elementary stage. It is mainly based on sex and age.
- (ii) It has a simple division of functions.

- (iii) The members have a very keen sense of collective consciousness and obedience.
- (iv) All members are alike.
- (v) It has repressive laws.

The society of organic solidarity on the other hand has the following characteristics.

- (i) Complex process of differentiation.
- (ii) Increase in the interdependence among individuals and the various parts of society.
- (iii) Increase in divisions of labour and development of various trades and professions.
- (iv) In spite of the increase in subjective feeling, the feeling of mutuality and interdependence grows.
- (v) Civil and restitutive laws.

According to Durkheim there are two main causes of the Division of Labour:-

- (i) Increase in the density of population.
- (ii) Increase in the moral density of population.

He introduced the concept of 'anomie' i.e. normlessness which is the product of (i) separation of management from industrial labour ii) disregard to individual natural talent iii) improper co-ordination of functional activities.

Durkheim also propounded the theory of 'Suicide' on the basis of the comparative data obtained from various European countries. He holds that suicide is a social fact. It is not the individual act of self-destruction but a social act of self-destruction. He rejected all extra social factors of suicide such as psychological, pathological, climatic and geographical etc. He maintains that suicide which appears to be a phenomenon relating to individual is actually explicable (that can be explained) with reference to social structure and its various functions. According to Durkheim there are three types of suicide.

- (i) Egoistic Suicide : It is a product of weak group integration and is prevalent in those groups where lack of social cohesion is marked. Eg. Protestants and unmarried individuals.
- (ii) Altruistic Suicide : When an individual sacrifices his life for the welfare of others e.g. dying in a battle field defending mother land etc.
- (iii) Anomic Suicide : Its induced by a break down of social norms and is encouraged by sudden changes characteristic of modern times. For eg. sudden progress. In an anomic situation individuals find themselves unable to adjust or cope with change and commit suicide.

**1.7. Nature of sociology :** There is great controversy about the nature of sociology as a science. There are some who deny sociology the claim to be regarded as a science. But there are others who assert that sociology is as much a science as other social sciences like Political science, History, Economics etc.

Before we form any opinion on the subject, we must see what constitutes a 'science'

This term is taken from Latin word 'Scientia' means 'knowing'. Science is a systematic understanding of a phenomena. It is a branch of knowledge or study dealing with body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws." It gathers facts and links them together in their causal sequence to draw valid conclusions. Goode and Hatt say that "Science is a method of approach to the entire empirical world. It is merely a mode of analysis that permits the scientist to state propositions in the form of if..... , then .....".

Poincare rightly remarks that, "Science is made up of facts as a house is made of bricks or stones. But mere collection of facts can't be called science as a heap of bricks or stones can not be called a house or building. A house is build up by a particular type of methodology though the bricks may be of any form."

Thus a branch of knowledge can be called science only on condition that it can be studied through scientific method. Karl Pearson asserts that- There is no short cut to truth, no way to gain knowledge of the universe except through the gateway of scientific method."

According to Encyclopeadia Britannica, "Scientific method is a collective term denoting the various processes by the aid of which the sciences are built up. In a wider sense, any method of investigation by which scientific or other impartial and systematic knowledge is acquired is called a scientific method".

**Scientific method consists of the following steps:-**

**1.7.1 Formulation of Hypothesis :** A hypothesis is a proposition (i.e. a statement that expresses a judgement or an opinion) condition or principle which is assumed in order to draw its logical consequences. In other words we can say that hypotheses is a sort of probably / possible answers to the questions which one has taken up for investigation .

According to Goode and Hatt : "A hypothesis is a proposition which can be put to a test to determine its validity. It may seem contrary to or in accord with common sense. It may prove to be correct or incorrect. In any event, however it leads to an empirical test."

Thus the formulation of hypothesis is a central step in a good research.

**1.7.2 Observation :**

It is the most important, oldest and general technique of data collection

while conducting research. Goode and Hatt say that "Science begins with observation and must ultimately return to observation for its final validation".

But each and every observation does not become a part of the scientific method. For the observation to be scientific following things must be kept in mind : -

- a. Accuracy : It means that the observation should be to the point.
- b. Systematic : We have to plan what, how, where and when to observe.
- c. Recorded : We've to record the observations immediately after the event or phenomenon.
- d. Objectivity : What ever observation one makes should be impartial and free from any bias.

### 1.7.3 Classification :

It is the arrangement of the raw or ungrouped data into groups or categories. The data is grouped because it is very difficult to draw any conclusions from the ungrouped data. Thus different categories and of facts with similar characteristics are put together so that some meaningful inferences may be drawn.

### 1.7.4 Verification :

After the useful observation and classification of facts the hypothesis we have constructed is assumed to be valid for all cases where similar conditions prevail. It is this universality based on observation which gives to a proposition the quality of law and to a branch of study the character of science. Thus, if by studying cases only in India we find that the proposition - ' Broken homes are the main cause of juvenile delinquency'. is true but we cannot accept this hypothesis as general or universal unless we have conducted investigations among other nations where different conditions prevail such as in Brazil, France, U.S.A. etc. Once this has been conveniently carried out and the hypothesis has been tested, it may be accepted as a law or principle.

### 1.7.5 Prediction : -

It means that the laws are formulated on the basis of observation etc. must enable us to predict accurately i.e. to say that these laws must be able to establish a cause and effect relationship. For instance following laws of gravitation if a ball is thrown up it will come down at the speed of 9.8 m/s.

Major objections leveled against sociology to be called a science :

Those who deny the claim of sociology to be designated as a science the following objections are advanced :

- i) Lack of experimentation : Sociology in this sense is not a science since its subject matter is human relationships and we can neither catch nor see, neither weigh nor analyze them in the test tube of the laboratory.

- ii) Lack of Objectivity : The second objection is that sociologist cannot maintain objectivity while collecting data. It is not possible for an individual to observe his subjects with complete detachment due to prejudices and bias.
- iii) Lack of prediction : Unlike natural science the conclusions drawn in sociology cannot be expressed in precise terms and its prediction may not come true. Its findings are often limited in time and space.
- iv) Lack of generalizations or no universal laws: Owing to the complex nature of social phenomenon it is very difficult to make any generalizations about human behavior.

### SOCIOLOGY IS A SCIENCE

There is an element of truth in what the critics say. Indeed a scientific study of social phenomena is not free from difficulties. Social studies, by their very nature, cannot be as exact as physical sciences. But sociologists believe that universal validity of conclusions and a complete accuracy of prediction are not the criteria of science. What determines the scientific character of discipline is its methodology. If the methods of study are scientific, the subject deserves the rank of science. Sociology does make use of scientific methods in its studies and is therefore entitled to be called a science. Now let us see how sociologists refute the charges of their critics:-

- (i) Firstly, though sociology cannot experiment with men directly in a laboratory its social behaviour is amenable (can be subjected) to scientific investigation as any other natural phenomenon. Moreover, Sociology does employ scientific methods as scales of sociometry, schedule, questionnaire, interview, which help obtain quantitative measurements of social phenomenon and hence comparable to experimentation.
- (ii) Secondly, Sociology describes - What it is? It studies social phenomena and social interaction and brings into lime light the various facts relating to them. It collects and analyses these facts objectively. Moreover two basic methods of scientific investigation; observation and comparison, are readily available to the sociologist.
- (iii) Thirdly, Sociology does frame laws and attempts to predict. It endeavours to discover laws that are generally applicable, regardless of various cultures. Moreover, no science can boast of making infallible predictions. There is a good deal of information on family relationships and the personality of children. As sociology matures and comes to understand more fully the principles underlying human behaviour it will be in a better position to make accurate prediction.
- (iv) Fourthly, Sociology delineates cause – effect relationships. It not



only tells about the social phenomenon but also tells us the cause of their occurrence. For instance in its study of family it has traced the relationship between urbanization and family disorganization as one of the causes of divorce.

If we accept "science" in the sense in which it has been defined by philosophers like Cuvier, Pearsons etc. then it will invalidate objections levelled against sociology . According to Cuvier "the science is the method of discovery of the uniformities in the universe through the process of observation and re-observation, the result of which eventually comes to be stated in principle and arranged and organized into fields of knowledge. According to Pearsons - "The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance is the function of science."

Sociology, then is a scientific discipline which obeys the demands of validity implied by the word science. It studies its subject- matter scientifically. It tries to classify types and forms of social relationships, especially of institutions and associations. It tries to determine relations between different parts or factors of social life. It tries to deduce general laws from systematic study of its matter and the conclusions thus drawn are applied to the solution of social problems.

Robert Bierstedt in his book "The social Order" has mentioned the following characteristics of the nature of sociology:

1. Sociology is a social science and not a natural science.
2. Sociology is a categorical or positive and not a normative science.
3. Sociology is a pure or theoretical science and not an applied science.
4. Sociology is an abstract science and not a concrete science.
5. Sociology is a generalizing and not particularizing science.
6. Sociology is both a rational and an empirical science.

Check your knowledge

a) What do you study in sociology?

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.....

.....

b) Who is the father of the sociology? List some of his contributions.

.....

.....

.....

c) Is sociology a science? Give reasons.

.....

.....

.....

d) Who is Karl Marx? List some of his contributions.

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.....  
.....

## 1.8 SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

There is no one opinion about the scope of sociology. U.F. Calberton writes :  
“Since sociology is so elastic a science, it is difficult to determine first where its boundaries begin and end where sociology becomes social psychology and where social psychology becomes sociology, or where economic theory becomes sociological doctrine or biological theory becomes sociological doctrine, something, which is impossible to decide.” It is maintained by some that – “Sociology studies everything and anything under the sun.” This is rather too vague about the scope of sociology. As a matter of fact, sociology has a limited field of enquiry and deals with those problems which are not dealt with by other social sciences.

In the broadest sense, sociology is the study of human interactions and interrelations their conditions and consequences. Thus ideally sociology studies all types of social relationships. But this is a too wide a scope for any science, therefore an attempt has been made to limit and demarcate the field of sociology. There are two main schools of thought among sociologists on this issue.

- A) SPECIALISTIC OR FORMALISTIC SCHOOL
- B) GENERALISTIC OR SYNTHETIC SCHOOL

**1.8.1 Specialistic Or Formalistic School Of Thought :** The main exponents of this school of thought are German Sociologists like : Simmel, Small, Vierkandt , Von wise, Max Weber. These authors assert that sociology confines its inquiry to certain defined aspects of human relationship. They regard sociology as pure and independent science. Now let us see the views of these German Sociologists:

(i) **Simmel’s Views :** He makes a distinction between forms of social relationships and their content or matter. He says that sociology aims at description, classification, analysis and explanation of the forms of social relationships. It should not study their contents because they are studied by other social sciences. He compares sociology with geometry , he says that just as geometry studies the special forms of the natural objects and their contents is studied by other natural science. Similarly, sociology studies the form of social relationships and the contents is studied by other social sciences such as economics, political science, history etc. Simmel calls sociology as social- geometry.

(ii) **Small’s View :** According to him, sociology does not undertake study

all of activities of society. Every science has a delimited scope. The scope of sociology is the study of the generic forms of social relationships, behaviours and activities etc.

(iii) Vierkandt's view :- He also declares that sociology is a special science and is concerned with ultimate forms of social relationships, such as love and hate, attitudes of respects, shame, submission i.e. the bond that ties individuals in a groups . It should not make any detailed historic or inductive study of concrete society. It should confine it self to the study of those social forces which tend to sustain order and bring about a change.

(iv) Max Weber's View : - Weber also makes out a definite field for sociology. According to him, the aim of sociology is to interpret or understand social action. But social action does not cover the whole field of human relations. Indeed not all human inter-actions are social. For instance, a collision between two cyclists is in itself merely a natural phenomenon, but their efforts to avoid each other or the language they use after the event constitute a true social behaviour. Sociology according to him is concerned with the analysis and classifications of types of social action.

To conclude according to formalistic school sociology studies only one specific aspect of social relationships i.e. their forms in their abstract nature, and not in any concrete situation.

Criticism of formalistic school :- This school of thought can be criticized on the following grounds :

(i) It has narrowed the scope of sociology : -

This school has limited the field of sociology to merely abstract forms, sociology besides studying the general forms of social relationships should also study the concrete contents of social life.

(ii) The conception of pure sociology is impractical : -

Though this school of thought has conceived of pure sociology but now of the sociologists has so far been able to construct a pure sociology. As a matter of fact, no social science can be studied in isolation from other social sciences.

(iii) The notion that sociology is a special science, in the sense that it is the only science that studies forms of social relationships. Many other social sciences also study forms of relationships for e.g. economics, political science.

(iv) Study of Abstract forms separated from concrete relations is not possible : -

Ginsberg is of the view that Simmel's thesis that function of sociology is to study the social relation ships in abstraction is not correct. He maintains that a study of social relationships would remain barren if it is conducted in abstract without full knowledge of the terms to which they relate in real life. In the words of Sorokin - " We may fill a glass with wine, water or sugar without changing its form, but I cannot conceive of a social institution whose form would not change when its members change."

Likewise its comparison with geometry is misconceived because whereas in geometry the forms of physical things are definite, in sociology the forms of social relationships are not definite.

Thus the formalistic school has extremely narrowed and confined the fields of sociology.

### 1.8.2 GENERALISTIC SYNTHETIC SCHOOL OF THOUGHT : -

This school wants to make sociology a synthesis of the social sciences or a general science. Durkheim, Hobhouse, Sorokin etc subscribe to this view. They all assert that sociology is a general science that synthesizes the findings of other sciences and give a new shape to them.

(a) Durkheim : According to Durkheim sociology has three principal divisions

- i. Social Morphology
- ii. Social Physiology
- iii. General Sociology
  - i. Social Morphology: Social Morphology is concerned with geographical or territorial basis of the life of the people and its relations to the types of social organizations and the problems of populations such as its volume and density, local distribution etc.
  - ii. Social Physiology : Social physiology is divided into a number of branches such as sociology-of religion of morals, of laws, of economic life, of languages etc. Every one of these branches of sociology deals with a set of social facts, that is, activities related to the various social groups.
  - iii. General Sociology : The function of general sociology is to discover the general characters of these social facts and to determine whether there are any general social laws of which the different laws established by the special social sciences are particular expressions.

(b) Hobhouse's view : For him sociology is a synthesis of numerous social studies but the immediate task for the sociologist is threefold. Firstly, as a sociologist he must pursue his studies in his particular part of the social field but secondly, bearing in mind the interconnections of social relations he should try to interconnect the results arrived at by the different social sciences and, thirdly, he should interpret social life as a whole.

Hobhouse, therefore outlines a special role for sociology i.e. to inter-relate the results arrived at by other social sciences, however it does not mean that sociology should only try to co-ordinate the social sciences but rather try to absorb their findings for the formulations of general sociological principles.

(c) Sorokin : According to him, the subject matter of sociology includes :

- i. The study of relationships between different aspects of social phenomena.
- ii. The study of relationships between social and non-social phenomena.
- iii. The study of general features of social phenomena.

Thus, the scope of sociology is very wide. It is general as well as a special science. As a matter of fact, the subject matter of all social sciences is society. Sociology differs from them because it has its own point of view or perspective to look at society. Green remarks : - "The focus of attention upon relationships makes sociology a distinctive field, however closely allied to others it may be."

Actually it is neither possible nor essential to delimit the scope of sociology because this would be as Spratt put it, "A brave attempt to confine an enormous mass of slippery material into a relatively simple system of pigeon holes."

### 1.9 Conclusion

From the above discussion we conclude that sociology is the scientific and systematic study of society. It is the youngest of all social sciences. Its subject matter is social relationships. It focuses its attention on these relationships that are the outcome of human interaction. Since it is recent in origin so there is no single view regarding the scope of this subject as it matures a more comprehensive perspective may be formed regarding this discipline. At the end we can say that its subject matter is society rather than an individual hence, its study society from a social point of view.

### 1.10. KEY WORDS

Positivism or Positive philosophy : It is a scientific method used by Auguste comte to study social phenomena.

Bourgeoisie : - Originally a 16th century French term referring to the body of urban freemen, which gradually became interchangeable with the term 'Capitalist Class' especially among Marxists.

Proletariat - Working class, who according to Marx are the prime vehicle to bring about revolutionary change in society.

### 1.11 Questions :

- Q.1. Define sociology. Give its etymological meaning.
- Q.2. Sociology is a scientific study of society. Comment
- Q.3. Who is the father of sociology? Discuss his contributions towards this discipline.
- Q.4. Discuss the scope of sociology.
- Q.5. Is sociology a science! Give reasons in supports of your answer.

**Short Questions :**

- (a) Hypothesis
- (b) Experimentation
- (c) Objectivity
- (d) Generalisation
- (e) Classification

**1.12 Model Answers:**

August Comte is the “Founting Father of sociology”. He coined the word sociology in 1839 in his book “Positive Philosophy”.

(a) **Sociology:** The word is derived from the latin word ‘Socius’ means ‘Study’, ‘Science’ or ‘Knowledge’. Thus literal meaning of sociology is the ‘science of society’. So we can say sociology is a systematic and scientific study of society. It is concerned with human relationships. It is study of group not of an individual. Thus the smallest unit of sociology is a ‘dyad’ i.e. two individuals involved in a meaningful interaction. As Ginsberg has said, “Sociology is the study of society, that is of the web or tissue of human inter-actions and inter-relations, their conditions and consequences”.

(b) **Science :** This term is taken from Latin word ‘Scientia’ means ‘Knowing’. Science is a systematic understanding of a phenomenon. It is a branch of knowledge which deals with body of facts or thruths systematically anaged and showing the operation of general laws. It gathers facts and links them together in their causal sequence to draws valid conclusions. According to Goode and Hatt “Science is a method of approach to the entire empirical world. It is merely a mode of analysis that permits the scientist to state propositions in the form of if -----then -----.” Thus we can say science has following characterstics:

- (i) Experimentation
- (ii) Objectivity
- (iii) Perdiction
- (iv) Generatizations or Universal Laws

(c) **Society :** In common parlance the word ‘society’ is usually used to designate the members of specific group of persons rather than the social relationship of those persons for e.g. Hindu society, Harijan Society etc.

In sociology the term ‘society’ refers not to a group of people but to the complex pattern of norms (rules & regulations) of interaction that arise among them. According to MacIver and Page : – “Society is a system of usages and procedures, authority and mutual aid of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and of liberties.”

(d) **Group :** In our own society we often use the word ‘group’ to refer to such diverse collectivities as the family or the crowd or the social class, to informal

cliques (collection of people) or vast communities or to the members of a race, religion etc.

In sociology it is defined as : - “Any number of individuals among and between whom there is consciousness of the membership together with interaction and influencing one another directly or indirectly.”

### 1.13 Further Readings : -

1. Gisbert – Fundamentals of sociology
2. Ogburn and Nimkoff – A Hand Book of sociology.
3. Oxford Dictionary of sociology – Indian Edition.
4. Sorokin – Contemporary sociological theories.
5. Ginsberg – Sociology.
6. Wikipedia, The free encyclopedia ([http : //en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org).)
7. C.N. Shankar Rao - Sociology.

Note : - This lesson is written with the financial aid of D.E.C.

## Relation of sociology with other social sciences

### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Relationship between Sociology and history
- 2.3 relationship between Sociology and Psychology
- 2.4 Relationship between Sociology and Anthropology
- 2.5 Relationship between Sociology and Economics
- 2.6 Relationship between Sociology and Political Science
- 2.7 Conclusion
- 2.8 key Words
- 2.9 Questions
- 2.10 Model Answers
- 2.11 Books

### 2.0 Introduction

Sociology is defined as a systematic and scientific study of society and society is the web of social relationships which are ultimately based on mutual awareness of two or more individuals. Sociology attempts to study these relationships in their entirety. The relationships are multi-dimensional/sided. These can have political aspect, religious aspect, economic aspect, ethical aspects etc. Sociology studies the combination of all these aspects i.e. the social aspect.

This does not mean that sociology is the combination of different disciplines. These social sciences exclusively deal with just one aspect or the other of the social life of an individual. The distinction between sociality and other sciences not only resides in the diversity of the subject but more specifically in the particular way in which a situation/problem is approached.

The various sciences dealing with human beings as social entities (units) are called social sciences and most fundamental of them all is sociology. Sociology and other social sciences have much in common. Recently there has been gradual increase in mutual reciprocity (give & take) between different disciplines.



The traditional barriers of a subject being an independent discipline is crumbling. There is a rapid increase in the inter-disciplinary approach whereby the findings of two or more disciplines are synthesised giving birth to inter-disciplinary subject which further helps to provide solution & explanation of problems of modern complex society. For eg. Social Anthropology an inter-disciplinary approach of Sociology and Anthropology, Econometrics – An inter-disciplinary approach of Economics & Mathematics. From the examinations point of view while analyzing the relation between sociology and other sciences the students are expected to provide the definition of the two disciplines, the similarities between them, the differences between them and at the end make a concluding statement.

Now let us understand the relation of Sociology with other social sciences:

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES :

After going through this lesson you will be able to :

- define relationship of sociology with other social sciences.
- explain the relationship of History and Sociology.
- acquainted with the relationship of Psychology and Sociology.
- gain the knowledge regarding the commonalities and differences between sociology and Anthropology.
- discuss the relationship of Sociology with Economics and Political Science.

### 2.2 Relationship between Sociology and history:

History is a record of events; it tells us how they've happened. It is concerned with past & historical occurrences. Man is a History making creature who can neither repeat his past nor leave it behind. Thus history studies the record of man following the time order of significant events.

Historically sociology has had its origin in history. On the other hand History also greatly benefits from sociology. Many of the concepts, general ideas and methods used in present day history are drawn from sociology. Hence developed a branch of history called social history. Sociology & History are inter-dependent as History supplies facts which are interpreted and co-ordinated by the sociologists and sociology gives a social background to the study of History.

The subject matter of both these disciplines are human beings. An inter disciplinary approach called Historical Sociology further brings these two disciplines closer in which sociological analysis is made which is based on historical data. Social history deals not with kings and wars but with less glamorous events that interest sociologists, such as changes in land owning pattern or in the relation between men and women in the family.

On the other hand there are a number of difference between these two

disciplines:

- (a) Troeltsch remarks that History deals with historical occurrences whereas sociology deals with general laws.
- (b) Sociology is an abstract science whereas history is concrete, presenting the description of events in a chronological order.
- (c) Sociology studies the incidents which are reported frequently and thus to generalize them and make universal laws whereas History studies those incidents which are unique/peculiar or universal and it considers a definite time and place to describe an event.
- (d) Sociology considers the past events and utilizes this knowledge for understanding the present whereas History studies the events which happened in the past.
- (e) A Historian may deal with the development of the family in different civilizations whereas the sociologist's task is to investigate into the various forms of institution.

To conclude we can say that both these disciplines are inter-related & inter-dependent but their scope & subject matter is different. G.E. Howard remarks that "History is past sociology and sociology is present history".

### 2.3 Relationship Between Sociology and psychology:

Sociology is the systematic & scientific study of society & society is fundamentally a mental phenomenon.

Psychology deals with the mental processes of human beings. The term 'Psychology' is derived from two Greek words-'Psyche' which means soul and logos which means 'study' or 'science'. Psychology can be defined as the scientific study of behaviour. Being a science of behaviour it focuses its attention primarily on the individual. Sociology also deals with human groups but from a different perspective. It is more concerned with the pattern of relationship within groups. Sociology is the study of men's behaviour in groups or of interaction among human beings. The Psychological and Social aspects are so closely inter-related with one another that one can't be studied without some knowledge of the other.

Both these sciences are interdependent and inter-related. The branch of Psychology which is called Social Psychology further bridges the gap between the two disciplines. According to R.W. Rickard- "Social Psychology analyses the framework of social relationships in such a way as to show that interaction of individuals and groups now and in the past".

A Psychologist must understand the social processes if he is to fully grasp the mental processes of man. Similarly for a sociologist to have an insight into social behaviour and social interactions, the understanding of Psychological aspects is absolutely necessary. MacIver writes, "Sociology in special gives aid to Psychology and Psychology gives special aid to sociology."

### Difference between sociology & psychology.

Through the relation between sociology and psychology are intimate yet there are lot of differences between the two.

- (a) Sociology studies the behaviour of a group whereas psychology studies the behaviour of an individual in society.
- (b) The smallest unit of sociology is dyad i.e. two individuals but psychology deals with the mind processes of a single individual.
- (c) Sociology studies different factors such as economic, political, mental etc and their role on human behaviour whereas psychology studies only the mental processes.
- (d) Sociology studies the social laws & values and their impact on social life of individuals where as psychology is the study of individual attitudes towards cultural and social values.
- (e) Sociology is a study of the society as a whole while social psychology is merely the study of individuals in interaction as members of groups.

To conclude we can say that both disciplines are concerned with human beings. Psychology analyses mental process and Sociology analyses social processes.

### 2.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology is the study of man. This term is derived from two Greek words 'anthropos'- means man and 'logos' meaning study. Thus, Anthropology is 'Science or study of man'.

Anthropology can be broadly divided into five sections:-

- i. Physical Anthropology- It deals with bodily characteristics of early man.
- ii. Cultural Anthropology- It investigates the cultural remains of early man.
- iii. Social Anthropology- It deals with the institution and human relations of primitive of the past and present.
- iv. Linguistic Anthropology- It studies the characteristics of various cultural groups and their changes through the study of languages of preliterate and historical periods.
- v. Applied Anthropology- this implies the use of Anthropological concepts, methods, theories and findings for a specific purpose for solving the problems which often disturb the society.

While dealing with man and society, sociology accepts from Anthropology the history of man which was not unilinear in its evolution. sociology depends upon Anthropology to understand the present day social phenomena from our knowledge of the past. Researches done by various eminent Anthropologists have proved to be of immense help to the sociologist.

Similarly some of the conclusions drawn by sociologists have also helped the Anthropologists. For instance Anthropologists like Morgan and his followers have come to the conclusion regarding the existence of primitive communism from the conception of private property in our modern society.

Social Anthropology a branch of Anthropology further bridges the gap between the two disciplines. According to Hobel- "Sociology and social Anthropology are in their broadest sense, one and the same." A.L. Kroeber has called 'Sociology and Anthropology twin sisters'.

In spite of their interdependence the field of study of each discipline is quite distinct.

- (a) Sociology mainly studies modern communities whereas Anthropology studies ancient communities.
- (b) Sociology makes use of documents and the statistical methods whereas Anthropology makes use of functional method.
- (c) Sociology studies social problems and aims at finding out solutions whereas Anthropology studies social problems, finds out the causes but does not offer any solutions.
- (d) Sociology studies influence of anatomical features and racial relationships upon society whereas Anthropology is not concerned with the effects of anatomical or with the human features on society.
- (e) Sociology studies civilizations that are vast and dynamic whereas Anthropology studies cultures that are small and static.
- (f) Sociology is concerned with both social philosophy and social planning whereas Anthropology is not concerned with social planning, it does not make any suggestions for future.

"The sociological attitude has tended towards the practical and present; the Anthropological towards pure understanding and the past".

## 2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

Economics is the study of human activity devoted to obtain the material means for the satisfactions of his wants. It is thus concerned with that part of human life which is most closely connected with the attainment & the use of materialistic things. As the economic process develops in society, it influences and is influenced by the social life of man, hence the relation between these two sciences is very intimate.

Economics is dependent on sociology and other social sciences in order to solve various problems like unemployment, inflation, poverty etc. Similarly, sociology is also influenced by Economics. Economic forces play a very important role in every aspect of our social life. Many of the problems of sociology and Economics are common. For instance problems of population growth, environmental pollution, slums, urbanization etc are socio-economic problems

and which cannot be solved unless the social attitudes of the people are given consideration. According to Mariner- 'The economic phenomena is constantly determined by all kinds of social needs and activities and in turn they are constantly predetermining, creating shaping and transforming social need and activity of every kind. Economic forces play a very important role in every aspect of our social life. It is for this reason that sociologists have been concerned with economic institutions.

Karl Marx and Fredrick Engles had gone to the extent of asserting that economic factor was the sole motive force of the society. Since their times, economic determination has found a significant place in the theories of many social scientists seeking to explain this vital phenomenon.

The difference between the two disciplines is as follows:-

- (a) Economics studies economic relationships i.e. economic activity of human beings where as sociology studies social relationships. The scope of sociology is thus wider than that of economics.
- (b) Economics as a social science is much older than sociology, Sociology as a social science has emerged in the first half of the 19th century.
- (c) Economics is primarily concerned directly or indirectly to increase the material happiness of human beings, with the methods, and techniques of production, distribution and consumption whereas sociology primarily deals with social aspects of economic activities rather than mechanism of production and distribution.
- (d) For an economist the negative effect of the utility of particular commodity does not matter but it matters deeply to a sociologist. For eg. a cigarette has a utility as it satisfies human wants but to an economist its negative effects does not matter but for a sociologist the effect of smoking is of utmost importance.

Check your knowledge

- a) Society is a web of social relationships. How?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
- b) How sociology is dependent on other social sciences?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
- c) State any two differences between Sociology and Anthropology?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

## 2.6 Relationship between Sociology and Political Science

Political science is a branch of social science dealing with the principles of organization and government of human society. It mainly deals with state. Though recently the scope of political science has been extended to a great extent to cover many aspects of society.

The forms of government, nature of government organs, the laws and sphere of the state activity are determined by the social processes, it shall be apt to say that the study of political science will be incomplete without the study of Sociology. In the words of Giddings, "To teach the theory of the state to men who have not learnt the first principles of sociology is like teaching astronomy or thermodynamics to men who have not learnt Newton's laws of motion". This shows that political science is greatly dependent on sociology.

Similarly sociology is also dependent on political science for its conclusions. One has to gain the understating of the political life of the society for the complete study of society as a whole. Catlin remarks that political science and sociology are two facts or aspects of the same figure.

Political sociology is an inter-disciplinary approach which further bridges the gap between the two disciplines. The major focus of political sociology is the description, analysis and the explanation of the state; the institution which claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory and constitutes possibly the largest single concentration of power and authority in any society.

The difference between the two is as follows :-

- (i) Sociology being the scientific study of society deals with social man in all his associated processes whereas political science is concerned only with one form of association i.e. state.
- (ii) The scope of sociology is much wider than that of political science. Sociology deals with the society as a whole and it includes all the aspects of human life whereas political science deals with the political aspect.
- (iii) Political science is a special science as it deals with political organization which is a special kind of social organization whereas sociology is a general science and deals with all forms of human organization.
- (iv) Sociology studies all types of human communities i.e. organized as well as unorganized whereas political science is concerned only with organized communities.
- (v) Political science deals with only overt or conscious activities of humans whereas sociology deals with both overt or conscious as well as covert or unconscious activities.
- (vi) In political science the basic premise is that man is a political being whereas sociology assures and tries to explain how and why man became a political being.

## 2.7 CONCLUSION :

From the above discussion we conclude that all social sciences are dependent on each other. Therefore, Sociology can not have an existence independent of other social sciences. Because, it studies man's social life as a whole which is many sided having different aspects like, economic, political, social, cultural, religious etc. Thus to understand society Sociology takes help of other social sciences like History, Psychology, Political Science etc. It does not mean that sociology only borrows from other sciences rather as a matter of fact various social sciences are very much dependent on Sociology for the simple reason that no aspect of human life can be detached from its social aspect.

## 2.8 Key Words

Society:- Society is a web of social relationships' — MacIver.

Social Sciences:- A general label applied to the study of society and human relations.

Primitive Society:-A term used to refer to earliest societies.

State :- It is one of the most important political organization which regulates the social relationships of human beings and is the overall controlling institution of society.

Government:- It is the machinery through which the state functions. It is the political organization of the state.

Urbanisation:- It is the movement of people from rural areas to urban areas and from agriculture based occupation to non-agriculture based occupation.

## 2.9 Questions:-

1. Define Sociology and discuss its scope.
2. Describe Anthropology & its various branches. How do they differ from Sociology?
3. Make a comparative analysis of Economics, Political Science and Sociology.

## 2.10 Model Answers:-

(a) Anthropology: The term is derived from two Greek words that is 'Anthropos' and 'Logus'. 'Anthropos' means primitive man and 'logus' means knowledge, science or study. Thus Anthropology is science of Primitive man. Basically it studies ancient communities. Broadly we can divide it into five sections;

- (i) Physical Anthropology
- (ii) Cultural Anthropology
- (iii) Social Anthropology

(iv) Linguistic Anthropology

(v) Applied Anthropology

(b) Psychology: The term Psychology is derived from two Greek words i.e. 'Psyche' which means soul and 'Logus' which means Study. Thus Psychology is a study of Psyche or we can say it is a scientific study of behaviour. Being a science of behaviour it focuses its attention on individual i.e. it deals with the mind process of a single individual. Social Psychology is the study of individuals in interaction as members of groups and the affect of that interaction on them.

(c) Economics: Adam Smith, regarded as the father of economics defined it as the science of wealth or the science relating to the laws of production, distribution and consumption. The ultimate aim of economics is to make the people and the state prosperous. In other words we can say economics is the study of man's efforts to satisfy his unlimited wants by utilizing his limited resources.

(d) Political Science: It is a branch of social science dealing with the principles of organization and government human society. It mainly deals with state. Though recently the study of political science has been extended to a great extent to cover many aspects of society.

The forms of government, nature of government organs, the laws and sphere of the state activity are determined by the social processes. It is a special science kind of social organisation which treats only conscious activities of man. It starts with the assumption that man is a political being.

#### 2.11 Further Readings :-

1. Oxford Dictionary of Sociology.
2. Ginsberg . M — 'Sociology'.
3. Majumdar , D.N, and T. N. Madan,— 'An Introduction to Social Anthropology'.
4. Giddings, — 'Principles of Sociology'.
5. P . Gisbert,— ' Fundamentals of Sociology'.

Note : This lesson is written with the financial aid of D.E.C.



## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

### Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Meaning
- 3.2 Definitions
- 3.3 Views of different scholars
  - 3.3.1 Emile Durkheim
  - 3.3.2 Redcliff Brown
  - 3.3.3 Talcott Parsons
  - 3.3.4 S.F. Nadel
  - 3.3.5 Levi-Strauss
- 3.4 Characteristics of social structure
- 3.5 Elements of social structure
  - 3.5.1 Sub groups
  - 3.5.2 Roles
  - 3.5.3 Social Norms
  - 3.5.4 Cultural Values
- 3.6 Social structure, social system and social organization
- 3.7 Summery
- 3.8 Keywords
- 3.9 Exercise Questions
- 3.10 Further Readings
- 3.0 Objectives**

A study of this lesson would enable you to:

- understand the meaning of the term social structure.
- become aware about various definitions of social structure.
- explain the views of various scholars regarding social structure.
- describe the characteristics of social structure.
- discuss the elements of social structure.

- throw light on the relationship between social structure, social system and social organization.

### 3.1 Meaning

The term structure refers to a systematic arrangement of the part of any whole. For example, the human body as a whole is a systematic arrangement of different parts like hands, legs, mouth, ears, nose etc., so they constitute a particular shape (human body). The body functions as a result of the interrelationship and inter-dependence between shape or pattern, which is called the social structure of that society. This structure differs from one society to another, because the parts of every society are arranged in a specific pattern, which is not the same in all the societies. However, the systematic arrangement of various parts of any society is not due to any conscious planning or deliberate efforts; rather it arises out of the process of social interaction among the constituent individuals of any society.

### 3.2 Definitions

Some of the more often quoted definitions of the term 'Social structure' are given below:

According to *S.F. Nadel*, "We arrive at the structure of a society through abstracting from the concrete population and its behaviour, the pattern or network (or system) or relationship obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another.

According to *Talcott Parsons*, "Social structure is the term applied to the particular arrangement of the inter-related institutions, agencies and social patterns, as well as the statuses and roles which each person assumes in the groups".

In the words of *Karl Mannheim*, "Social structure is the web of interacting social forces from which have arisen the various modes of observing the thinking".

In the opinion of *Ginsberg*, "Social structure is concerned with the principal forms of social organisation, that is, types of groups, associations, institutions and the complex of these which constitute societies".

According to *Radcliffe Brown*, "The components of social structure are human beings, the structure itself being an arrangement of persons in relationships institutionally defined and regulated".

In the words of *Maclver and Page*, "The various modes of grouping together comprise the complex pattern of social structure. In the analysis of the social structure the role of diverse attitudes and interests of social beings is revealed".

According to *Harry. M. Johnson*, "The structure of anything consists of the relatively stable inter-relationships among its parts; moreover, the part itself implies a certain degree of stability since a social system is composed of the inter-related acts of people;

its structure must be sought in some degree of regularity of recurrence in these acts”.

### 3.3 Views of different scholars

Herbert Spencer was the first sociologist to have used the term social structure in his famous book ‘Principles of Sociology’. He attempted to describe the concept of social structure with the help of an organic analogy. In his opinion, there is a striking resemblance between society and organism. In the words of Spencer, “So complete is society organised on the same system as an individual that we may perceive something more than an analogy between them, the same definition of life applies to both.” The various parts of any organic structure are mutually related and constitute its body. In the same manner various parts of society build its social structure. Although the organic analogy of Spencer is no longer accepted in modern day Sociology, still it had a significant impact on the Sociological writings after Spencer.

*3.3.1 Emile Durkheim* also referred to the concept of social structure but did not elaborate its definition or its constituents. He emphasized to a greater extent the functions performed by various parts of the social structure in preserving as well as changing it. He analysed the functional aspect of factors like religion, division of labour, crime and punishment within the social structure. He maintained that with the help of these functions the social structure functions in a smooth fashion.

*3.3.2 Radcliffe Brown* has used the term social structure differently in his two major works, ‘African System of Kinship and Marriage (1950) and ‘Structure and Function in Primitive Society (1952). In his first work, he considered of social structure are human beings. In order to explain his viewpoint he cited examples from the Australian and African tribal societies. According to him, the kinship system among such societies refers to the institutionalized relationship between the tribals. These relationships bind the individuals in a specific manner and ascribe to them certain positions. The kin who occupy these positions constitute a pattern which he calls the kinship structure. He refers to kinship structure as the sub-structure within the broader social structure. Later, in his second work, “Human beings are connected by a complex network of social relations. I use the term “Social structure” to denote this network of actually existing relations.” He maintained that the organism is not itself the structure; it is the collection of units (cells or molecules) arranged in a structure, that is, a set of relationships. Brown used two terms, ‘General Structure’ and ‘Actual Structure’ The general structure is abstract, but its expression is possible with reference to the roles which individuals play within it. The roles or functions refers to the ‘actual structure’ which is concrete in nature.

*3.3.3 Talcott Parsons* has explained the concept of social structure in an abstract form. According to him, institutions, agencies, social patterns, statuses and roles are the units of social structure. The statuses and roles of individuals are based on

the customs, traditions, and conventions of society. The various statuses lead to the formation of different institutions, agencies and social patterns. When all these units are inter-related and organised in a specific manner they constitute the social structure of society. The units by themselves do not constitute the social structure; rather the ordered arrangement of these units in a pattern constitutes the social structure.

3.3.4 *S.F. Nadel* has maintained that social structure refers to a definable articulation or an ordered arrangement of parts. As the structure is an arrangement or articulation, it is not related to function, content, material or qualitative character. While describing structure, all those aspects are excluded which do not refer to the ordered arrangement of parts into the whole. According to Nadel, "Structure indicates an ordered arrangement of parts, which can be treated transposable, being relatively invariant, while the parts themselves are variable." Nadel was of the opinion that for 'structure'. It is not only essential for individuals to be organised; rather it is essential that the roles played by the individuals must be organised and regulated by society. According to them, there are three important elements of social structure : (i) a group of people (ii) institutionalized roles according to which members of the group interact and (iii) an institutionalized pattern or expression of these interactions.

3.3.5 *Levi Strauss* views social structure as a reality based upon logic. He maintained that social structure is not related to empirical reality, rather its relation is with the models developed on the basis of this concept. He criticized Radcliffe Brown for not differentiating between social structure and social relationships. According to Strauss, social relations are the raw materials from which the models are built and these models constitute the social structure. The structure exhibits the characteristics of the social order which consists of a number of elements. The various elements are inter related in such a manner that the change in one element bring about change in all the elements.

According to *Harry M. Johnson*, the term structure denotes stability which is created by the interrelation of parts. These parts are the groups and sub groups of society. However, he clarifies that stability does not mean that there is no change in the structure and roles leads to greater stability and lesser changes. Among the constituent parts of social structure, Johnson includes groups, subgroups, roles, norms and cultural values.

#### 3.4 Characteristics of social structure

Based on the definitions and the views of the various scholars about the concept of social structure, its following characteristics can be described.

- (i) Social structure depicts the pattern of a society. When the various units of a society are interrelated in a specific manner, then the society gets a distinctive

- shape or pattern, which is called its social structure.
- (ii) The concept of social structure is abstract in nature. The social pattern which constitutes its structure does not have a concrete shape; it can only be comprehended by mind. The term structure expresses a societal condition or a situation which can only be conceptualized.
  - (iii) Every society has its own distinctive social structure, because the interrelationship of units or more importance given to a particular element over another differs from society to society. For example, in Indian society a greater emphasis is given to religious institution as compared to other institutions, which gives Indian social structure a distinctive character.
  - (iv) Social structure is relatively stable and organised. The various parts of structure are interrelated in a specific manner which makes the structure organised. The interrelations between the parts are not temporary or unstable rather they persist over time. For example, men may die but the role system persists. This does not mean that social structure is completely static; as the parts undergo a change, this change is reflected in the whole.
  - (v) Social structure is basically the result of interactions among individuals. The interrelation of various parts like institutions, groups, statuses and roles etc. is not the result of any deliberate or conscious effort. This interrelation of parts comes into existence spontaneously as a result of social interaction.
  - (vi) It is not essential that all parts of the structure may be useful or functional for it. Every social structure consists of certain sub-groups within it which do not function in accordance with the social norms. According to Parsons, one can find both functional and dysfunctional elements in the social structure. For example, the criminal gangs are the dysfunctional elements of the social structure.
  - (vii) Social structure is not just the sum of its parts, rather the various parts are systematically arranged to form the whole. As a result of this systematic arrangement of parts, the various social structure acquire a distinctive form.

### 3.5 Elements of Structure

The elements refer to the constituents units of the social structure. The systematic interrelationship between these elements constitutes the social structure. According to Harry M. Johnson, there are four main elements of social structure which have been described as under:

**3.5.1 Sub group:** There are larger groups like society or community which are further sub-divided into sub-groups. The family, a factory or a political party are the examples of sub-groups. As community is a relatively stable group, similarly the sub-groups are also relatively stable. The individual members of the sub-groups may come and

go, but the sub-groups tend to persist over a period of time. The roles played by individuals do not come to an end even after their death, which enables the sub-groups to become relatively stable. For example, family is a relatively stable sub-group although some of its members die from time to time. Similar is the case with other sub-groups in society.

3.5.2 Roles: The roles of individuals in the groups or sub-groups are determined according to social needs. The roles facilitate the participation of individuals in the groups. One individual performs several roles at the same time. For example, in a family, the same individual plays the role of son, husband, father and brother. The roles played by the individuals determine their status. The statuses and roles within the sub-groups lead to the development of their structure.

3.5.3 Social Norms: These are the socially principles of behaviour. The individual's perform their roles in groups with reference to these norms. According to Johnson, "roles and sub-groups of various types of the parts of social structure to the extent that stability, regularity and recurrence in social interaction are due to the social norms that define roles and obligation of the sub-groups." Thus, social norms determine the duties and responsibilities of the role-incumbents and lead to the relative stability of the sub-groups. Johnson had classified norms into two types- relational and regulative. The relational norms determine the relationship between the individual and his group. The regulative norms regulate and control the behaviour of the individuals. Both types of norms are the important bases of social structure.

3.5.4 Cultural Values: The term value refers to the preferences of the group. According to Johnson, "value may be defined as a conception or standard, cultural or merely another". The group guides the individual by its cultural values. These values guide the individual as to what is good or bad, desirable or undersirable. Johnson refers to values as higher standard norms as they involve moral considerations and are indispensable for the welfare of the group. Cultural values have three main aspects- emotional, cognitive and valuational. Firstly, human beings are linked with values at the emotional level. Secondly, values are based on ideas and wisdom. Thirdly, values provide the standards for classifying human actions or behaviour as good or bad; right or wrong desirable or undersirable.

Check your knowledge:

(a) Meaning of social structure

Ans:

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(b) Views of Talcott Parson's about social structure.

Ans: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(c) Name elements of social system.

Ans: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(d) What is Role?

Ans: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 3.6 Social Structure, Social system and Social organisation

The term system refers to an orderly arrangement of parts. Thus a social system is an orderly and systematic arrangement of social interactions. According to Parsons, social system has the following elements.

- (i) Plurality of individual actors.
- (ii) Interaction among the actors.
- (iii) The condition of interaction.
- (iv) Incentive to get maximum satisfaction.
- (v) Relationships defined on the basis of culture and common symbols.

Thus, according to Parsons, the social system is essentially a network of interactive relationships. The term social system refers to the functional relationships between the constituents parts of a society, which determine and regulate the social interactions of individuals and groups. According to Marshall Jones, social system is that arrangement under which the various functional units of society are related to each other and society as a whole, in a meaningful manner. Parsons is of the opinion that social system is a broader concept which includes both structure and function.

#### 3.6.2 Social Structure :

Social structure has various constituents like groups, institutions and organizations. When they are interrelated in such a manner that they acquire a pattern, it is called social structure. As various parts of the body perform various functions, similarly the various parts of the social structure also fulfil various social needs. The functional study of society deals with various aspect like- how the various parts of society are interrelated; are they influence each other and what functions they perform for each other and for society as a whole. This structural functional

approach advocated by parsons is used for the study of social system.

### 3.6.3 Social Organisation :

Social organization is one of the parts of social structure. The two terms cannot be used as synonyms. Social organisation refers to planned activities. Various social structures have their own distinctive organisation, that is, the mode of planning various social aspects of the structure. For example, in the tribal panchayats or kinship groups. In the tribal societies all activities are undertaken at an informal level and accordingly their social organization is simple and informal. On the other hand, the social organisation of modern industrial societies is formal and complex. Formal organisations are related to definite and planned activities which are carried out by formal structure like bureaucracy, corporations, trade unions etc. Thus, social organisation includes various activities, systematic planning goals, definite means to achieve these goals and the resources.

### 3.7 Summary

From the above discussion we come to the conclusion that every society has various parts like groups, associations, institutions, classes etc. When all these parts are arranged systematically in a definite shape or pattern, it is called social structure of that society. It has following characteristic:

- (a) depicts the pattern of a society;
- (b) is an abstract concept;
- (c) differs from society to society;
- (d) is relatively stable;
- (e) is the result of interrelation of various parts of society.

Each social structure has some constituents units to which we call elements of social structure namely:

- (a) Groups and sub-groups
- (b) Roles
- (c) Social Norms
- (d) Cultural values

When we say that society has different parts which are systematically arranged thus that orderly arrangement is called system. A social system is essentially a network of interactive relationships. Which has following elements:

- (a) Plurality of actors
- (b) Interaction among actors
- (c) The condition of interaction



- (d) Incentive to get maximum satisfaction
- (e) Relationships defined on the basis of culture and common symbols.

Social organisation is a part of social structure which refers to planned activities.

The elements of social organisation are:

- (a) various activities
- (b) systematic planning
- (c) goals
- (d) definite means to achieve these goals
- (e) desources

### 3.8 Key Words

**Social structure:** The pattern arrived at by the systematic interrelationship of various parts of society.

**Organic Analogy:** Conception of society as an organic structure.

**Roles:** The actual performance of an individuals in a given position is called his role.

**Norms:** The socially approved principles of behaviour.

**Values:** A social conception or standard used for evaluation of behaviour.

**Social System:** Orderly and systematic arrangement of social interactions.

**Social Organisation :** Modes of planning various social activities.

### 3.9 Exercise Questions

- (i) What is social structure? Give views of various thinkers.
- (ii) Define social structure and discuss its elements.
- (iii) What do you mean by social strucutre? Give characteristics.

#### Short Questions:

- (i) Social Structure
- (ii) System
- (iii) Norms
- (iv) Social organisation
- (v) Values

**3.10 Further Readings:**

1. Bottomore, T.B. 1972, *Sociology- A Guide to Problems and Literature*, George Allen and Unwin, Bombay.
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## SOCIETY

### Structure :

- 4.0 Objective
- 4.1 Everyday usage of the word 'society'
- 4.2 Sociological definitions of 'society'
- 4.3 Society as a web of social relationship
- 4.4 Elements of society
  - 4.4.1 Definite Territory
  - 4.4.2 Progeny
  - 4.4.3 Culture
  - 4.4.4 Independence
- 4.5 Forms of society
- 4.6 Comparison between animal society and human society
- 4.7 Summary
- 4.8 Keywords
- 4.9 Questions
- 4.10 Further Readings
- 4.0 Objectives

After studying this lesson you should be able to :

- differentiate between everyday usage and the sociological connotation of the term 'society'.
- explain society as a web of social relationship.
- describe the elements of society.
- throw light on forms of society.
- differentiate between animal & human society.

### 4.1 Everyday Usage of the word 'Society'

Sometimes the word 'society' is taken to mean the company of an individual; for example, it is mentioned that person 'X' does not have good society meaning thereby that the friends of 'X' are not good. At other times, the word society is used to designate an organization or associations; for example, co-operative house building society, or a charitable society or a religious society etc.

## 4.2 Sociological Definitions of 'society'

In sociological terms the term 'society' is not used in the everyday sense, rather than it is given a specific meaning and connotation. The sociological meaning of the term society will be clear examining some important definitions given by eminent sociologists. These definitions are as follows:

According to Maclver and Page, "Society is a system of usage and pocedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and the liberties. This ever changing complex system we call society. It is the web of social relationships, and it is always changing".

According to Lapiere, "The term society refers not to group of people, but to the complex pattern of the normal of interaction that arise among and between them".

According to Parsons, "Society may be defined as the total complex of human relationship in so far as they grow out of action in terms of mean end relationship, intrinstic or symbolic".

According to Cooley, "Society is a complex form of processes each of which is living and growing by interaction with others, the whole being so unified that what takes place in one part affects all the rest."

Giddings defines society as a "group of individuals co-operating for the achievements of any obejct of common interest or utility".

## 4.3 Society as a web of social relationship

The definitions of society given by eminent sociologists make it abundantly clear that the term society refers to a web of social relationship. Therefore, we must learn about social relationships which constitute the society. Maclver and Page approach the answer by differentiating between physical and social relationships. For example, there is relationship between a typewriter and a desk; between the earth and the sun; between fire and smoke and so on. Each of these is affectd by the exercise of the other, but the relationship cannot be called social. The basic reason is that the physical condition or mental awareness is lacking in all these relationships which can, therefore, only be called physical relationships. Thus awareness among people who enter into and type of relationship is the pre-condition for labeling relationship as social. According to Maclver and Page, "Society exists only where social beings "behave" towards, one another in ways determined by their recognition of one another. "Similarly, F.H Giddings has expressed the opinion that society is based on 'concioussness of kind', that is a conscioussness that we as men belong to the same species.

The social relationships have a very wide range. For example, we refer to various types of relationships by terms like 'economic', 'political', 'personal', 'impersonal', 'friendly', 'antagonistic' and so on. They are all social relationships because they are based on mutual recongition among people who are engaged in such relationships. Maclver and Page give the example of relationships

between two armies in time of war. Such relationships express conflict, but they are social as the armies on the opposite side are abundantly aware of the presence of one another. However, a majority of social relationships are not based on conflict but on a sense of belonging together. Sociology is more prominently concerned with the relationships which involve both mutual recognition and the sense of something held or shared in common.

Another eminent sociologist, Max Weber, had defined the term social relationships. According to him, "The term social relationship will be used to designate the situation where two or more persons are engaged in conduct wherein each takes account of the behaviour of the other in a meaningful way". This definition emphasizes two aspects of social relationships - mutual recognition and meaningful behaviour. Thus, the persons entering into any type of relationship must be conscious or aware about each other's existence. However, mere awareness does not lead to social relationships. Unless there is interaction among two or more persons, the social relationships do not exist. Yet it is essential that this interaction must be meaningful. For example, if two persons do not know each other's language or cannot comprehend each other's gestures or facial expressions, they cannot enter into any meaningful interaction. In this situation, the mere presence or mutual awareness among these two persons does not lead to social relationships among them because their actions or behaviour are not meaningfully oriented to each other.

#### 4.4 Elements of society

Long ago Aristotle mentioned a fundamental trait of man on which society depends. He remarked that man is a social animal and a person who is incapable of sharing a common life is 'either a beast or a god'. Man is social by nature and necessity. He is gregarious by nature, that is, always desires to live in the company of other men. That is why solitary confinement is considered as one of the most fearful of all punishments. Moreover, man needs society for protection, comfort, nurture, education, and a large number of other services which society provides. Man has to depend on other men for the satisfaction of his myriad needs.

According to Maclver and Page, society involves both likeness and difference. In the absence of likeness there could be no sentiment of 'belonging together' and therefore no society. Social relationships can exist only among those who resemble one another in some degree, in body and in mind. In the primitive societies the sense of likeness is focussed on kin groups. This sense has been greatly extended in the modern societies. This is exhibited in the principles of 'one world' or 'globalization'.

However, if all people were exactly alike, their social relationships would be as limited as those of ants or bees. In case of human social relationships there are differences in men which lead to a wide range of such relationships. In society each member seeks something and gives something. There are various types of differences. The family depends upon the biological differences

between the sexes.

There are a host of other natural differences like those of aptitude, intelligence, capacity and so on. The various differences among men are reflected in the social division of labour.

However, the division of labour in society is based on co-operation before it is division. The people have similar needs and for their satisfaction they engage in dissimilar functions. Thus, the likeness of men's needs is necessarily prior to the differentiation of social organisation. That is why Maclver and Page have expressed the opinion that differences are subordinate to likeness in society.

The society can be conceptualized with reference to some essential elements or traits which are necessary for the comprehension of this basic concept of sociology. Harry M. Johnson has referred to the following four characteristics of society: (i) definite territory, (ii) progeny, (iii) culture and (iv) independence. A brief explanation of these elements of society is given below:

**4.4.1 Definite Territory:** A society is basically confined to a specific territory. There are some nomadic groups who move from one place to another, but this movement is also within a particular territory. Such groups consider the entire territory within which they move, as their country or society. Within a larger society one can find smaller territorial groups like clans, cities, regions, etc.

**4.4.2 Progeny:** The members of a society are recruited mainly through reproduction within the group. Some societies may also get their members through conquest, enslavement or immigration, but reproduction within the group remains the most important and fundamental source of getting new members of the society. Kingsley Davis has considered the maintenance of population as the most significant elements of society. A set of three factors are essential for the maintenance of population : (a) availability of sufficient food resources, (b) protection of population from various types of disasters and (c) reproduction within the society.

**4.4.3 Culture:** The members of every society have a distinctive way of life. Culture is the basic element that binds men together in a society. Culture is acquired by man as a member of society and is transmitted from one generation to the next. Culture can be viewed as a system of learned behaviour shared by and transmitted among the members of a group. Thus, there is a very close relationship between society and culture. A large culture may have sub-culture as well. For example, India has a comprehensive culture which gives Indian people a specific identity. However, this vast culture is further sub-divided in sub-cultures like Assami, Punjabi, Rajasthani cultures etc. Each sub-culture is also characterised by certain distinctive characteristics.

**4.4.4 Independence:** A society is an independent entity in the sense that it is a permanent, self-contained and an integrated group. In other words, every

society has an independent identity of its own and a society cannot be considered as a sub-group of any other. Society is a comprehensive concept which includes various groups and sub-groups within itself.

#### 4.5 Forms of society

A distinction is made between 'general form' of society and 'particular form' of society. For the 'general form' the word 'society' is used while for the 'particular form', the word 'A society' is used. Human society is further sub-divided into a number of particular societies like Indian society, Japanese society, Chinese society and so on. When we are referring to a particular society we refer to distinctive social relationships which are found among people living in 'A Society'. Thus the term 'society' is more abstract in nature while the term 'A society' is more concrete.

- According to Ginsberg, "A society is a collection of individuals united by certain relationships or modes of behaviour which mark them all off from others who do not enter into those relations or who differ from them in behaviour".
- According to Hankins, "We may for our purpose here define a society as any permanent or continuing grouping of men, women and children able, to carry on independently the process of social and maintenance on their own cultural level".

Emile Durkheim has contrasted between segmental and organic societies. The major characteristics of a segmental society is that it is predominantly homogenous in nature, that is, individual members of such a society differ from one another as little as possible. The individual in this type of society have similar emotions, values and beliefs. According to Durkheim, the segmental societies are marked by mechanical solidarity among its members. Mechanical solidarity is a collective feeling of unity that people experience as a result of performing same or similar tasks. On the other hand, an organic society has remarkable social differentiation. Even in organic societies in spite of the differentiation, there is a coherent unity of the collectivity which is based on consensus. The primitive societies may be called segmental, while the modern societies are organic in character, which are characterized by organic solidarity. Organic solidarity is a collective feeling based on interdependence brought about by division of labour.

Ferdinand Tonnies differentiated between 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft'. The Gemeinschaft is a rural or localistic society constituted of a homogeneous population with a common value system. The social relationships in such a society are intimate and personal. The social life is characterized by understanding and co-operation among individuals and families. On the other hand, 'Gesellschaft' is an urban, cosmopolitan society. It is composed of heterogeneous population which is bound through an elaborate division of labour. The social relationships in this type of society are impersonal and contractual. The thoughts and actions of individual members are governed by selfish

interests and personal gain.

Check your knowledge

(a) What do you mean by Human Society?

Ans:

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(b) Any four characteristics of society.

Ans:

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(c) Name the societies given by Ferdinand Tonnies.

Ans:

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#### 4.6 Comparison between Animal society and Human society

Society, that is a network of social relationships, is not confined only to man. There are animal societies of varying kind and degrees. For example, it is a common knowledge that insects like the ant or the bee have a remarkable social organisation. Among all higher animals there is a definite system of social relationships which arise due to their various needs. The insects and animals also possess mutual awareness just like humans. One can find division of labour, interdependence and co-operation among many species of animals.

In spite of all above mentioned similarities between animal and human societies, there are some basic differences between them. The major difference is that the animal society is based only on heredity or biological factors. Whereas human society is predominantly based on culture. Kingsley Davis has referred to animal societies as bio-social and the human society as socio-cultural. In the non-human world every social system meets its basic needs primarily through mechanisms determined by heredity. The animal society is therefore, a function of organic evolution. As such, society is, fundamentally biological



in character and that is why, it is termed as bio-social. Although biological factors are also important in human societies but they are regulated by culture, which is the distinguishing factor between animal and human societies. As Kingsley Davis has remarked, "If there is any single factor explaining man's uniqueness, it is this: he, and he alone, has culture. From this all other differences flow".

According to Tylor, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society." Culture embraces all modes of thought and behaviour that are handed down by communicative interaction i.e. by symbolic transmission rather than by genetic inheritance. For example, the pattern of nest building among birds is determined by heredity whereas the pattern of house building among men is culturally determined.

The most important cultural aspect by human society has been the development of language. This has enabled men to evolve a system of symbolic communication. With the help of the medium of language man has become capable of transmitting various aspects of culture from one generation to the next. In the words of Ralph Linton, "Men, thanks to the possession of language, can convey to one another a clear idea of situations which are not present and of the behaviour appropriate to such situations." Thus, language is not only a medium of communication between individuals it is also a way for the expression of their personality. The processes of socialization and cultural transmission could not have been possible without language.

As mentioned earlier, man is an animal and always desires to live in the company of other men. This fact of living together, makes it necessary that the relationships between people should be regulated through certain rules or principles of behaviour. Moreover, man has accumulated knowledge, technology, beliefs, customs, morals and so on. This vast man-made social environment is termed as culture; one cannot exist without the other. Culture has been created by man as a member of society and society cannot function without culture. Therefore, whenever we talk of human society we cannot conceive it without culture. Accordingly, Kingsley Davis has used the term socio-cultural to describe the unique nature of human society.

#### 4.7 Summary

From the above discussion we can make following conclusions:

- (i) Society is a web or network of social relationships. The social relationships are based on mutual awareness and meaningful orientation of action of two or more persons.
- (ii) Society involves both likeness and differences, but difference is subordinate to likeness.
- (iii) The major characteristics of society are definite territory, progeny,

- culture and independence.
- (iv) The term 'society' is used for its general form whereas the term 'A society' is used for its particular form.
  - (v) Segmental society is homogenous whereas organic society is heterogenous in nature.
  - (vi) Gemeinschaft is a rural or localistic society whereas Gesellschaft is an urban cosmopolitan society.
  - (vii) Bio-social refers to society which is mainly based on biological factors (animal societies) whereas socio-cultural refers to society predominantly based on cultural factors (human society)
  - (viii) Culture is that complex whole which includes, knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society.

#### 4.8 Keywords

**Society** : Society is a web of social relationships. It is a grouping of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area and consider themselves as unified and distinct.

**Social Relationships** : They are based on mutual awareness between people and meaningful behaviour between them.

**Progeny** : Members of a society are recruited mostly by means of reproduction within the group.

**Segmental society** : A society which is homogenous, that is, whose members are similar in various aspects.

**Organic Society** : A society that has remarkable social differentiation or division of labour.

**Mechanical Solidarity** : A collective feeling of unity that people experience as a result of performing same or similar tasks.

**Organic Solidarity** : A collective feeling based on the interdependence brought about by division of labour.

**Gemeinschaft** : It is rural or localist society constituted or homogenous population.

**Gesellschaft** : It is urban, cosmopolitan society composed of heterogenous population.

**Bio-Social** : A society which is predominantly based on biological factors, e.g., animal societies.

**Socio-Cultural** : A society which is based on culture i.e. human society.

**Culture** : It is the man made part of the environment which includes knowledge, language, arts, morals etc. and all other

capabilities acquired by man as a member of society.

#### 4.9 Questions

1. Define society and discuss its elements.
2. What do you mean by the term society? Explain its types.
3. What is society? What is the difference between animal society and human society?

#### Short Questions

- (a) Society
- (b) Society as a web of social relationships
- (c) Culture
- (d) Organic solidarity
- (e) Mechanical solidarity

#### 4.10 Further Readings

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## SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

### Structure

- 5.0 Objective
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Definitions
- 5.3 Meaning of social organization
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- 5.0 Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to :

- explain the concept social organization
- describe the various elements of social organization
- discuss various types of social organization

### 5.1 Introduction

Social organization is one of the important concepts with which the students of sociology must be acquainted. Society is composed of many organisations. Like political organisations, religious organisation, economic organisations etc. An organisation is an orderly also organisational arrangement help in

fulfilling human needs and other social objectives. According to encyclopedia of social sciences, "social organisation is non-random patterns within human populations that comprise society by sharing the main aspects of a common existence over time as well as non-random patterning, the human and inter-human activities through which patterns are formed, retained, altered or replaced. These twin aspects of social organization had been considered structure, relatively stable patterns of interrelations among persons or other social units, and process, the manner in which the patterns are produced reproduced or transformed."

The term social organization means the independence of parts, which is an essential characteristics of all enduring collective entities: group, communities and societies. Social organization indicates that state in which there is a peaceful interaction between the different parts, elements of the society. They work according to pre fixed and recognized aims.

## 5.2 Definitions

Various scholars have tried to define social organization in their own way. We shall discuss some of the important definitions on the subject.

According to Duncan Mitchell, social organisation mean "the interdependence of parts, which is an essential characteristics of all enduring collective entities: groups, communities and societies.

Ogburn and Nimkoff write that "an organization is an articulation of different part which perform various functions. It is an active group devised for getting something done."

According to Elliot and Merrill "social organization is a state of being, a condition in which the various institutions in a society are functioning in accordance with their recognized or implied purposes.

As per Broom and Selznick definition, "Social organization is the patterned relations of individuals and groups and identify it is one of the two basic sources of order in social life, the other being norms and values.

Auguste Comte says that social organization is a general social agreement.

## 5.3 Meaning of social organization

The meaning of social organization may be more clear while comparing it with the terms social disorganization. An organization is an orderly and coordinated relations of different parts. For example, a factory is an organization for the purpose of production. A factory is composed of internal sub-organizations such as is sale department, accounting department, supply department etc. The factory as a social system performs yet another function. It serve to maintain a balance among its sub-organizations or parts. This equilibrium of parts means a synchronization or integration of functions. Hence the functions of selling department, production department, etc. must be properly articulated and coordinated. Disorganization is a disturbance of the balance existing in the functioning of parts. The criterion of disorganization

is function, what is done or not done. A typewriter may write or badly or not at all, because of an imbalance in the functioning of its parts as, for instance, in the ribbon or keys - Ogburn and Nimkoff.

#### 5.4 Elements of social organization

Following are the essential elements of social organization:

5.4.1 Aims and objectives: Every organization is goal-oriented and its members are inter-related to each other by the sense of common purpose, to pursue the goals through appropriate interaction. Had there been no human needs, goals or ends, there would have been no social organization. The bank as an organization has a definite purpose or facilitating the financial transactions. A college or a university has the aim of promoting education.

5.4.2 Power centre: Power refers to the capacity to control others. In absence of proper power centre dispute or conflict may occur in different parts of the organization. So for smooth functioning of any social organization power centre is must.

5.4.3 Norms: Norms determine the standard of behaviour of human beings. Norms set by the consensus tell about the wrong and right things in the behaviour. Violations of norms may hamper the smooth functioning of social organization while following of norms help in its proper functioning.

5.4.4 Status and Role: All the members in the organization have an assigned role and status because an organization brings different people together into a network of interaction of perform different functions.

#### 5.5 Types of social organization

Human needs have given birth to many organizations. These organizations fulfil the needs, satisfy the multi-faceted desires and promote the diverse interests of men. There are two major types of organizations (i) Formal organization (ii) Informal organization

##### 5.5.1 Formal social organization

While spending life, a human being may create one or more organizations by certain rules and regulations to fulfil specific needs. When a new organization is created under these circumstances it is called a formal type of organization. In other words formal organizations represents those arrangement which are characterized by a specific action, division of labour, a hierarchy of authority, rationality and a proper arrangement of status and role. They are carefully planned and systematically worked out. Examples : banks, college, universities, factories, political parties etc. are formal types of social organization.

Formal organization bears the following characteristics:

- (i) Defined purposes
- (ii) Own Norms
- (iii) Division of labour/bureaucracy

- (iv) Authority
- (v) Rationality
- (vi) Substitution of personnel.

### 5.5.2 Informal social organization

Human behaviour is not confined just in the formal bureaucratic manner. In fact it is not thinkable that a society can work just on the basis of formal organizations. There are lot of social organizations which have informal basis where the formal laws hardly matters. Informal organizations refers to a small group of members which are tied to one another as persons. The group is characterized by informal and face-to-face relations, mutual aid, cooperation and companionship. The members of informal organization work together not in their official capacities but as person. They have their hopes and fears, their joys and sorrows. Family friendship groups, Bands, Cliques etc. are informal types of organization. Informal organizations resemble cooley's "Primary Groups" and Summer's " In groups"

Informal organization bears the following characteristics

- (i) Predominance of plrimary group
- (ii) System of anticipated responses
- (iii) Informal authority position
- (iv) Permanent nature
- (v) Smaller in size
- (vi) Flexible

### Check your knowledge

1. What is social oranzization?

Ans:

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2. Name the elements of social organization.

Ans:

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3. What is formal organization?

Ans:

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4. What are the characteristics of informal organization?

Ans:

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## 5.6 Social organization in India

Society in India is composed of numerous tribes, rural settings and urban centres in which lot of formal and informal organizations exist. Here we shall confine our discussion on three major social settings i.e. tribal, agrarian (rural) and urban.

### 5.6.1 Tribal social organization

#### Social Organization of Tribes

A sizeable number of Indian population constituted of various tribes scattered across the nation particularly in hilly areas and central and southern states. In India there are about 250 main tribes which are declared as scheduled tribes. The important tribes of India are Gond, Santhal, Munda, Bhuiya, Ho, Bhil, Garo, Khasi, Jaintia, Raba, Tharu, Gaddi, Gond, Barli, Konka, Dhanka etc.

**Definition of Tribe:** According to Imperial Gazetteer of India "A tribe is a collection of families bearing a common name, speaking a common dialect, occupying or professing to occupy a common territory and is not usually endogamous, though originally it might have been so. Majumdar writes that "A tribe is a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, members of which occupy the same territory, speak the same language and observe certain taboos regarding marriage, profession or occupation and have developed a well assessed system of reciprocity and mutuality of obligations.

Generally a tribe is a little community having lot of commonness among its members. This commonness includes, territory, language and norms and values. There was great importance of these little communities in traditional societies. Robert Redfield, who have done lot of work on little communities, gives the four major characteristics of it. These are:



(a) **Distinctiveness:** Means little communities or tribes are settled on a isolated and specific area. They are physically immobile.

(b) **Small in size:** Little communities and tribe are usually of small size. Members have direct contact with each other, but its numerical strength can not be fixed.

(c) **Homogeneous:** All the tribe members bear similarities with regard to dress, custom, culture, way of life etc.

(d) **Self-dependent:** All the tribes meet all there needs at their level hence complete dependent. In other words in relationship with production and consumption, they produce for the subsistence and they are independent in that.

On the basis of above discussion some of the common characteristics which emerge are as under:

(e) **Specific Territory:** The tribe inhabits and remain within a definite and common topography. In the absence of a common topography the tribe would also lose its other characteristics features as community sentiments, common language etc.

(f) **Sense of Unit:** A tribe can not be called a tribe until and unless its members do not possess a sense of consciousness of mutual unity. So, it is essential to have psychological common feelings towards the unity of tribe.

(g) **Common language and name:** All the members of a tribe speak a common language and bear common name. This also help to generate and evolve a sense of communal unity among them.

(h) **Endogamous:** Marriages of the tribal people usually are done within their own group.

(i) **Blood relations:** A major cause of the sense of communal unit in the tribe is the ties of blood relationship among its members.

Beside the main tribe there are references in the books about some other related terms. Which are as under:

(j) **Sub- tribe:** sometime the big tribes are divided into two sub tribes keeping in view the ecology and topographical factors but these sub tribes bear the similarities in social and cultural life. Hence while living on separate places these groups lead the identical life.

(k) **Clan or sib:** Clan or sib is a patrilineal or matrilineal kin group whose members have assumed to have a common ancestor but who do not know their exact genealogical relationship to one another. It is as if all persons named Smith at birth considered themselves bound by ties of kinship. The gotra of the Hindus is an example of clan. The term clan or sib described larger, more geographically dispersed. Clan usually practice exogamy.

(l) **Phratry:** Any grouping of clans is phratry. It is an exogamous group of two or more clans which have a special bond between them and which

associates with various activities. The various phratries within a tribe or society sometimes may be the result of the splitting of a large clan into several units or sometimes of the uniting of two distinct clans into a phratry.

#### Internal Form of Tribal Society:

The cultural values, beliefs, and norms of tribal or folk society are traditional and sacred. They are derived from ancient customs, myths and traditions.

The key features of this society is a minimal amount of internal organization, with most social life centering in the extended family. A tribal society survives on a subsistence economic level, and it has no surplus resources for further organizational development beyond "multi-purpose" kinship units. From an ecological viewpoint, the natural and social environments, the level of technology, and population size of a tribal society are non-conducive to large and complex social organization. Social order in a tribal society centre almost exclusively in the extended family, clan or tribe. It is the only significant type of organization within the society, and it performs almost all major social function: economic governmental, educational, religious, recreational, welfare and socialization.

Most social interaction is in fact guided by the participants 'kinship relationship to each other. Education, religion and other such specialized activities take place almost entirely with the family, and hence have no separate organization.

Overall, tribal society is strongly integrated, but almost entirely on a normative basis, since there is little division of labour and hence no ground for extensive functional interdependence. The few organizational sub -units that do exist are highly institutionalized. Because of its social isolation simple organizational structure, and strict social control, the society experiences relatively few conflicts other than those arising from the natural environment, changes in population size or sporadic clashes with other societies.

#### 5.6.2 Social organization of An Agrarian Society:

The domestication of animals and discovery of agriculture brought about a revolutionary change in the patterns of living in man's distant past. His food supply became more abundant, more predictable. Men no longer had to live in small and wandering groups, hunting, fishing, and gathering wild fruit in order to survive. Agriculture enabled them to settle in larger and more stable communities. There emerged, as a result, what is called village community. The social life of an agrarian society is, therefore, village oriented. The dictionary meaning of 'agrarian' means anything related to land management or distribution. Related to land distribution is also the aspect of 'equitable division of land'. It refers to the political movement in favour of change in conditions of property in land.

Andre Beteille has defined agrarian social structure. He observes: The meaning of the phrase (agrarian system) may not be immediately clear but what is implied is something more specific than the study of peasant societies and

cultures, as this is generally understood by anthropologists. The term 'peasantry' has variety of referents. But is most meaningfully used to describe a more or less homogeneous and undifferentiated community of families characterized by small holdings operated mainly by family labour.

Most population of the world in general and of India in particular lives in agrarian social set up. The striking feature of this type of organization has been the agriculture base. The whole life revolves around agriculture. In the primitive type of rural or agrarian set up there was mostly common property. As the time passed agrarian societies across the world changed and entered into new phases of civilization with concomitant changes in all aspects of life viz economic, social, religious, cultural etc. Broadly the agrarian organization bears the following characteristics:

(a) Occupation: The main occupation in the agrarian set up is agriculture. Naturally, the domestication of plants and animals constitute an important economic activity. Hoeing, ploughing and simple technology were the part of traditional agrarian life. There also exists, alongside agriculture, varied economic occupations, such as those of artisans, weavers, potters, blacksmiths, etc. A simple division of labour characterizes such a society. There is practically no scope for complex division of labour which we find in an industrial society. There are varying patterns of land ownership. There are, in the first place, absentee landowners. There are secondly, supervisory farmers who own land but get their land cultivated by hired labourers who do not own any land themselves. Thirdly, there are small cultivator owners who own and cultivate their small holdings.

(b) Closeness to nature: By virtue of the occupation people in the agrarian set up are very close to nature.

(c) Immense role of caste: The most important social factor in agrarian set up (in India) has been the immense role of caste. Caste restrictions in relations to eating, wearing, interacting, marrying and occupations, are quite prevalent. Under the overall caste models various castes follow their occupations. Most narrowly under Jajmani system various castes render services to each other. However, the farmer, in a typical caste ridden village, is central force around whose the whole village economy revolves. In most cases services are rendered and in lieu food grains are taken. An other feature of traditional agrarian life has been the barter system in which goods used to be exchanged.

(d) Homogeneity: In an agrarian set up most of residents bears lot of similarities in different aspects of life.

(e) Joint family system: In most of the agrarian set ups joint family system prevails and it plays an important role catering to the myriad needs of its members. As agriculture has been the main occupation, almost all the family members do not work either on fields or at home. Women folk play an important role in rearing the animal and supplying the foods to the males in

the field. In fact, family serves practically a miniature community.

(f) **Religiosity:** Religion play a great role in agrarian economy. A.R. Desai concludes that hardly any aspect of rural life is there which is not colored with religion. Almost all the people start their daily life after pray to natural forces. Sowing harvesting are usually done after paying obseience to temple or Gurudwara.

(g) **Immense role of moneylenders:** An other important featuer in agrarian life has been the important role of moneylenders. Moneylenders are known as, shahukaar, Bania, etc. which lend the money to farmers and get the returns of interest and principle amount Historical and literary writings pertaining to rural life portrayed the exploitive role of shahukar in agrarian life.

(h) **Social mobility:** In rural or agrarian oranization people are strongly attached to their social status which is ascribed. There is hardly any scope for occupational or social mobillity. The patters of living being, more or less, unchanging and the production relations also being virtually stablized, the social division into classes in such a society exhibit the features of a closed social structure.

(i) **Strong role of traditions:** In agrarian organization traditions, folkways, norms play strong role in moulding the behaviour of the people. In most cases the social control in agrarian in exercised by these informal means.

(j) **Prevalence of superstition:** Agriculture is to a large extent, affected by elements of nature flood and drought for instance- which are beyond the control of farmers. The people therefore, become fatalistic and superstitious and observe rituals and practices designed to influence the elements of nature.

**Changing agrarian society:** Although agrarian society is still found all over the world there started changes in it and in future more profound changes are expected. The people living in the villages are now coming more in contact with the cities. Under their influence they have started giving up simplicity. New technology has changed the whole face of village life. The villages have been electrified and village folks challengeing some of the old well established customs and traditions. In addition, agrarian society is now gradually trying to give up its dependence on agriculture. Industries of the various levels are coming up in the rural areas. Plough cultue is being replaced by tractor culture. Ownership patterns of landholdings are being changed. Old feudal system has become defaunct and most farmers are now self owners. Division of landholdings and over population pressure in agriculture village people are forced to shift their occupation. With the spread of education and other factors village people are becoming more rational from religion and other sides. Old system of joint family is now being replaced by single family system.

### 5.6.3 Industrial social organization

Industrial revolution came in western countries in 19th century, which

yielded far reaching consequence for the whole world nations. India has also experienced its effect and resultingly agrarian and rural character of the country has been coming close to the industrial character. Though in pre 19th century there were industrial units in villages but they were of small nature based on family labour. The arrival of new big industrial units have vanished the old cottage and small industrial units.

The industrial society, which emerged in the wake of industrial revolution, is distinguished by a new economic order. The entire production is shifted away from the family and the household to the factory. Family is no longer a production unit, as in an agrarian setting. Moreover, technology, which is the basis of new economic order, is the cause as well as the effect of a complex division of labour.

As the industrial units need lot of labour and other infrastructural needs, most concentration of the units is in the urban areas or near the urban area. Hence, the industrial society bears the characteristics of urban society, some of which are as under:

- (a) Heterogeneous groups: Unlike the agrarian set up in industrial society includes various groups, professing different occupations, having different types skills. In the same family members may profess different occupations. Which does not exist industrial and agrarian setting. Life in industrial set up becomes highly complex. Occupation in industrial society are highly diverse and bear varied levels of skills.
- (b) Preponderance of formal relations: An industrial society is marked by disappearance of the neighbourhood and kin relations which are largely based on informal relations. In the industrial society most relations are formal. Achieved status is more important than ascribed status in city.
- (c) More social mobility: Unlike the rural societies in industrial and urban societies chances are quite high for occupational and social mobility. People lead more open, secular life.
- (d) Rationally: People in urban centres are more rational than tribal and agrarian societies. Superstitions are crude form of religion is hardly found. City people are more materialistic.
- (e) Less role of family: In the cities hold of family is not strong and many functions which the family perform in the villages are taken away by other institutions and associations in the city.
- (f) Anonymity: Since in the cities there are different communities and the people do not know each other, therefore no attempt is made to adhere to established codes of conduct.
- (g) Mixture of culture: In the cities it is difficult to find pure culture. There is novelty, sophistication and excitement in culture.

### 5.7 Let us sum up

In this lesson we have studied the concept of social organization. We began with introducing and defining the concept and also discussed its elements. Then we have studied the different types of social organization. Then our discussion focused on the informal type of social organization. After that main discussion held on various types of social organization viz. Tribal, Agrarian and Industrial. In these types we have discussed the main characteristics of them and aspects their internal functioning.

### 5.8 Key words

Social organization	:	An orderly arrangement interdependence of various part, which is essential characteristics of all enduring collective entities: group, communities and societies.
Formal relation	:	When behaviour is governed largely by prescribed rules and laws.
Tribe	:	A group of families bearing a common name, having same occupation and living on a specific territory.
Agrarian society	:	When social organization has main base on agriculture and allied activities and relationships among the members are more formal. It is called a agrarian society.
Industrial society	:	A complex society having diverse occupational structure and having preponderance of formal relationships.

### 5.9 Exercise Questions:

#### Long Questions

1. What is social organization? Discuss its elements.
2. Define organization and explain various characteristics of Rural organization.
3. What do you mean by social organization? Discuss briefly its various types.

#### Short Question (Define)

- (i) Organization
- (ii) Norms
- (iii) Status and role
- (iv) Phratry

(v) Clan

(vi) Homogeneity

(vii) Hetrogeneity

(viii) Tribe

### 5.10 Further readings

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## COMMUNITY AND ASSOCIATIONS

### Structure

- 6.0 Objective
- 6.1 Meaning and definitions
- 6.2 Bases of community
  - 6.2.1 Locality
  - 6.2.2 Community Sentiment
- 6.3 Development of communities
- 6.4 Types of communities
- 6.5 Ecological approach to the study of community
- 6.6 Meaning and definitions of associations
- 6.7 Characteristics of Associations
- 6.8 Community and Associations
- 6.9 Summery
- 6.10 Key words
- 6.11 Questions
- 6.12 Further readings
- 6.0 Objectives :

After studying this lesson you will be able to :

- comprehend the sociological connotation of the terms community and associations.
- describe the development of communities
- differentiate between various types of communities.
- explain the ecological approach to the study of community
- differentiate between community and associations.

### 6.1 Meaning, Definitions :

The word community is used in everyday language and in such usage its meaning and connotation is not uniform. Sometimes people use the term community in the sense of a group, for example, we refer to a caste or a religious group as a community. However, in sociology a specific connotation is given to the term 'community'. The definitions of community by some eminent sociologists have been reproduced below:



- Kingsley Davis has defined community as follows, “The community is the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life. Although the household is a smaller contiguous group, it is also more limited in scope. The community, on the other hand, is a local group broad enough to include all the major institutions, all the statuses and interests, that make a society. It is the smallest local group that can be, and often is, a complete society”.
- According to Maclver and Page, “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 basis conditions of a common life, we call that group a community. The mark of a community is that one’s life may be lived wholly within it. The basic criterion of a community, then, is that all of our social relationship may be found within it”.
- Lundberg defines community as, “a human population living within a limited geographic area and carrying on a common interdependent life”.
- According to Bogardus, “Community is a social group with some degree of ‘we feeling and ‘living in a given area’.
- In the words of Ginsber, “Community is a group of social beings living a common life including all the infinite variety and complexity of relations which results from that common life or constitute it”.
- Ogburn and Nimkoff define community as ‘the total organization of social life within a limited area”.
- According to Duncan Mitchell, “Community denotes a collectivity of people who occupy a geographical area, people who are together engaged in economic and political activities and who essentially constitute a self governing social unit with some common values and experience feelings of belonging to one another”.

## 6.2 Bases of Community :

Maclver and Page have mentioned two main bases of community, that is, locality and community sentiment.

**6.2.1 Locality:** A community always occupies a territorial area. Even a nomad community, a band of gypsies has a local, though changing habitation. However, most communities are now well settled and derive a strong bond of solidarity as a result of residing in a particular area. To some extent this local bond has been weakened in the modern world by the expanding facilities of communication. According to Goldenweiser, although modifications in the relation of social bonds and territorial abode have been introduced by civilization, yet the basic character of locality as a social classifier has never been transcended.

**6.2.2 Community sentiment:** Locality, though a necessary condition, is not enough to create a community. A community is an area of common living.

There must be a feeling of belonging together among the members of a community. As mentioned by Bogardus, some degree of 'we feeling' is essential for a community. In the modern world, there is a lack of such sentiment among people occupying a specific local area. For example, in big cities, many a times people do not know even their next door neighbour. However, such a neighbourhood cannot be called a community because it lacks the community sentiment or the feeling of belonging together.

In addition to the above mentioned basic elements of community a few more can be mentioned. They are (i) permanent nature of community (ii) communities are not created by deliberate action or planning, rather they are natural. Every individual is born in a particular community, (iii) the member of a community share a common way of life, (iv) every community has a particular name. In the words of Lumley, "It points to identity; it indicates reality; it points out individuality; it often describes personality and each community is something of a personality". (v) a community has no legal status. In the eyes of law, it has no rights and obligations.

### 6.3 Development of communities :

N.S.B. Gras propounded the theory that the first to appear was collectional economy, which was found in the primitive tribes who collected fruits, vegetables, fish or killed animals for their sustenance. This was followed by nomadic economy when people were not settled in a particular territory. The advent of agricultural economy led to the formation of village communities. Villages developed into towns when a class of traders came into existence. Finally, when conditions were favourable, the towns developed, into large cities or metropolises which appeared with the rise of market economy, empires and national states.

C.H. Cooley maintained that the development of large cities is the result of a 'break' in transportation, that is, an interruption in the movement of goods for the purpose of transferring them from one type of conveyance to another. He distinguished two types of breaks- the physical and the commercial. By the first, he meant mere physical or storage of goods and by the second, a change in ownership. Transfer of goods involves a number of activities like unloading and storage of goods, financial transportation etc. The more extensive the activities connected with the break in transportation, the greater is the number of people involved. The involvement of large number of people encourages economic activities like production, manufacturing, commercial and industrial activity. Thus the modern metropolis comes into existence.

R.D. McKenzie in his book "The Metropolitan Community" describes how the development of three major types of transportation- water, rail and road had a profound impact upon the development of cities in the United States. Thus, the growth of large cities can be attributed to a large extent to an improvement in the means of transport and communications, which are the result of the wider process of industrial revolution. Metropolitanism leads to the

development of subordinate communities around a central city so as to make all such communities a part of an integrated unity. The rise and development of the 'metropolitan region' has been largely the result of improved rail and road transport and other means of communication like telephones, mobile phones, newspapers, television etc.

#### 6.4 Types of communities :

Communities are generally divided into two main types- rural and urban. There is no unanimity among the scholars regarding the criteria to be used for distinguishing these two types of communities. An arbitrary criterion of the size and density of population of a place is commonly used for this differentiation. Although this criterion is convenient but it has been regarded arbitrary and without any sociological relevance. From a sociological view point, the more significant criteria are -occupational structure and some other features of social organisation like nature of social relationships, norms, values and ways of life of the people. Based on data from many parts of the world, Pitrim A. Sorokin and Carle C. Zimmerman concluded that the factors distinguishing rural from urban communities include occupational, size and density of population, mobility, differentiation and stratification.

Besides, the differences in population size, occupations and differentiation, rural and urban communities have a more or less distinct pattern of life. Louis Wirth has described urbanism as a way of life. According to him, there are three main characteristics of urbanism which are briefly described below:

- (i) Transiency: The social relationships between individual are for a very short duration and are not stable in nature. Due to the busy routine and severe competition of the urban dwellers, they do not have the time and will be build durable social relations.
- (ii) Superficiality: Urban life is quite unnatural and artificial. The social relations of urban people are mostly formal and contractual.
- (iii) Anonymity: Due to the busy nature of urban life, people do not have time to know each other personally. Sometimes, even the next door neighbours do not know each other.

Nels Anderson and K. Ishwaran have also described the following characteristics of urbanism:

- (i) Monetary economic system: All the economic activities in urban areas are based on money. The urban dweller fulfils all his needs through money.
- (ii) Written documents: The various activities in the city are contractual in nature and most of them are based on written documents. Most of the contracts are legal in nature. Similarly, exchange of money is through banks or financial institutions, which involves the use of written records.

- (iii) Diversity of techniques and innovation: In the cities there is continuous research and development in various fields, which enhance the material comfort of city dwellers. However, they also lead to complex social relationships and a variety of social problems.
- (iv) Organizations and rigid administration: The vastness and complexity of urban life necessitates elaborate and efficient administration. Housing, water and electricity supply, roads and other means of transport are some of the many essential services which require an effective administrative machinery.
- (v) Cultural innovations: In the urban areas, there is rapid change in the material aspect of culture and the non-material aspect lags behind. This cultural lag leads to a number of urban problems.

Some sociologists have distinguished between rural and urban communities on the basis of various criteria. However, there is agreement among them that these differences are not of kind but of degree. According to A.R. Desai, the differences between these two types of communities can be described with reference to the following factors:

- (i) Differences with reference to occupation
- (ii) Differences with reference to environment
- (iii) The size of communities
- (iv) Density of population
- (v) The homogeneity and heterogeneity of population
- (vi) Social mobility
- (vii) The direction of migration
- (viii) Social differentiation and stratification
- (ix) Differences in patterns of social interaction

Rural urban differences have been summarized by Sorokin and Zimmerman in following table:

	Rural World	Urban World
Occupation	Totality of cultivators and their families. In the rural community these are usually a few representatives of several non-agricultural pursuits	Totality of people engaged principally in manufactur, -ing mechanical pursuits, trade, commerce, profes sion, governing and other non-agricultural occupa tions.
Environment	Predominance of nature over anthro-social environment.	Greater isolation from nature predominance of

	Direct relationship to nature. over natural.	human made environment
Size of community	Open farms of small communities agriculturalism" and size of community are negatively correlated. than the rural community. and size of community are	As a rule in the same country and at the same period, the size of urban community is much larger. In other words, urbanity positively correlated.
Density of population	In the same country and at the same period the density is lower than in urban community- Generally density and rurality are negatively correlated.	Greater than in rural communities. Urbanity and density are positively correlated.
Heterogeneity and homogeneity of the population	Compared with urban populations, rural communities are more homogeneous in racial and psychological traits (Negative correlation with heterogeneity)	More heterogeneous than rural communities (in the same country and at the same time) Urbanity and heterogeneity are positively correlated.
Social differentiation and stratification Mobility	Rural differentiation and stratification less than urban. Territorial, occupational and other forms of social mobility of the population are comparatively less intensive. Normally the migration current carries more individuals from the country to the city. the city.	Differentiation and stratification show positive correlation with urbanity. More intensive, urbanity and mobility are positively correlated. Only in the periods of social catastrophe is the migration from the city to the country greater than from the country to
System of interaction	Less numerous contacts per person. Narrows areas of the interaction system of its members and the whole	More numerous contacts. Wider areas of interaction system per individual and per aggregate. Predominance

	aggregate. More prominent part is occupied by primary contacts. Predominance of personal and relatively durable relations. Comparative simplicity and sincerity of relations. "Individual is interacted as a person."	of secondary contacts. Predominance of impersonal casual and short lived relations. Greater complexity, manifoldedness, superficially and standardized formality of relations. Persons is interacted as a "number" and "address".
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### 6.5 Ecological approach to the study of community :

The nineteenth century German biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term 'ecology' to refer to the study of the influence of environment among animals. Later the Botanists also started using this approach for the study of plants. The sociologists who adopted this mode of study termed it as 'human ecology'. The ecological approach to the study of communities was employed initially by American sociologists. Park and Burgess were the pioneers in this field of study. They and their disciple McKenzie formulated its basic principles.

According to Park, human ecology should be distinguished from human geography. The latter deals with man's relations to his environment, whereas the former is concerned with the influences of environment upon man's relations to his fellow men. The unit of study of human ecology is the community. From this view point community is not a mere population aggregate but a populational structure, composed of interdependent individual units which are distributed spatially and stand in certain relationship to one another. These relationships are of symbiotic nature, that is, they involve people living together and benefiting one another without intending to do so. The human ecologist is mainly concerned with the factors involved in the structural pattern of the community and the pressure of change within it.

A community, from the ecological point of view, includes a focal area plus the surrounding territory. Its size is determined by the extent of its economic and social influence. Thus, in case of metropolises, the surrounding area is quite vast and includes smaller cities, towns and villages which cluster around the central city like planets around the sun. McKenzie termed it as 'ecological constellation'.

### 6.6 Meaning and definitions of associations :

As association is a group of people organised for a particular purpose or a limited number of purposes. According to Maclver and Page, there are three ways in which men seek the fulfillment of their ends".

- (i) they may act independently, each following his own way without thought of his fellows or their actions.
- (ii) they may seek them through conflict with one another. But if this

method is not properly regulated it is precarious, wasteful and opposed to the very existence of society.

- (iii) men may purpose their ends in company, on some cooperative basis, so that each is in some degree and manner contributing to the ends of his fellows. A group which organizes itself expressly for the purpose of pursuing certain of its interests together is called association.
- Maclver and Page have defined association as a group organized for the pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common.
  - According to Ginsberg, “an association is a group of social beings related to one another by the fact that they possess or have instituted in common an organisation with a view to securing a specific end or specific ends”.
  - G.D.H. Cole states, “by an association I mean any group of persons pursuing a common purpose by a course of co-operative 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 or common action.”
  - According to Bogardus, “association is usually a working together of people to achieve some purposes”.
  - According to Gillin and Gillin, “an association is a group of individuals united to specific purposes and held together by recognized or sanctioned modes of procedure and behaviour.”

The perusal of the above mentioned definitions lead us to three main element of associations which are:

- (a) A group of people
- (b) These people work together for some common purpose or purposes.
- (c) They are organized on the basis of co-operation.

Maclver and Page have underlined the specific nature of ‘association’ as a form of group. According to them, “By a group we mean any collection of social beings who enter into distinctive social relationships with one another..... we have defined associations as a group expressly organized around a particular interest. The qualification, expressly organized enables us to distinguish between association and other social groups”.

### 6.7 Characteristics of Associations :

Based on the precedings description of ‘association’ we can describe its following characteristics:

- (i) Association is a group of people, that is, it is formed by some individuals. In this sense association is not abstract but concrete in nature.
- (ii) Association is deliberately formed. It is not a natural group; rather it is formed consciously by some people.
- (iii) Associations have definite goals or objectives. Thus, associations cannot fulfill all the needs of man but only some specific ones.

- (iv) Association are temporary in the sense that the association cease to exist after the achievement of their objectives.
- (v) The membership of associations is voluntary. Any person can become a member of any association according to his choice and needs. He can cease to be a member of any association whenever he so desires.
- (vi) Every association functions according to specific rules and procedures for the fulfilment of its objective. These rules can be either written or unwritten.
- (vii) Associations are formed on the basis of a feeling of co-operation. Whenever individuals organize themselves in associations, they co-operative with one another for the achievement of its goals.

### 6.8 Community and Associations :

Community and associations are two distinct social entities. The main difference between the two are as follows:

- (i) Community develops in a natural way by the mere fact of some people living together in a specific territory. An association is deliberately created by some individuals for some specific purpose or purposes. Thus, association is an artificial creation.
- (ii) Community is all pervasive while association is partial. A community is the whole circle of common life and is related to all the aspects of a collective living. Association is concerned only with some specific aspect according to the needs of its members.
- (iii) Associations exist within the community. There are a number of associations within a community. Thus, associations are organizations within the larger community.
- (iv) The membership of community is compulsory, while the membership of association depends on individuals choice. Men are born in communities but they choose their associations.
- (v) Community sentiment or we feeling is an essential feature of community, but it may not be present in all associations.
- (vi) An individual is a member of only one community but he may be a member of a number of associations.
- (vii) A specific territory is the basic characteristics of a community but associations do not exist in any definite area or locality. Some associations may be formed even at the international level.
- (viii) A community functions in accordance with some folkways, customs or traditions, while most of the associations have written rules and procedures to guide thier functioning.

Maclver and Page have cited examples of some important associations. Family is the foremost among them. In primitive and extremely rural societies, the family had many attributes of a community. However, in modern society, the



family becomes definitely an association. Family is specifically established with certain ends in view. Although these interests are very significant, yet they are limited.

The State is generally confused with the community. As a matter of fact, state is only one form of social organization and not the whole community in all its aspects. For the understanding of social structure, one must comprehend the associational character of the state. The state is an agency of wide range of functions but nevertheless it is an agency. Some of the 'totalitarian' states might claim to control every aspect of human life. Even if this claim were fully realized- which never could be the case- the state would not become a community but an association controlling the community. However state as an association is different in important respects from all other associations.

### 6.9 Summary :

From the above discussion we can draw following conclusions:

- Community is a social grouping of people, all of whom share a territory, the basic conditions of common life and possess 'we-feeling' or a sense of belonging together.
- In the process of development of communities, the first were based on collectional economy, second on nomadic economy and lastly on market economy.
- Communities are mainly divided into two types- rural and urban. There are differences in the two types of communities which are not differences of kind but of degree.
- The term 'ecology' refers to the study of the influence of environment on plants, animals or human beings.
- A community, from the ecological point of view, includes a focal area plus the surrounding territory. Its size is determined by the extent of its economic and social influence.
- An association is a group of people organized for a particular purpose or a limited number of purposes.
- Community is all pervasive while associations are partial. There might be a number of associations within the community.

### 6.10 Key words :

- We feeling : A feeling of unity or a sense of belonging together.
- Collectional economy : Economy of primitive communities based on collecting fruits, vegetables, fish and other eating material just for sustenance.
- Nomadic economy : Economy of people who are not permanently settled in one locality or territory and move from one place to

another for their livelihood.

- Metropolis : The term refers to large urban centres and surroundings suburbs.
- Urbanism : It refers to ways of living typical of urban population. These include superficiality, short duration of social relationships and anonymity.
- Human Ecology : The field of study concerned with the influences of environment upon man's relations with his fellow men.
- Symbiotic relations : People living together and benefitting one another without intending to do so.
- Ecological Constellation : When a large metropolis is surrounded by smaller cities, towns and villages which cluster around the central city.

### 6.11 Questions

1. What is community? What are the bases of community?
2. Define community and discuss its various types?
3. What do you mean by community? Make a difference between rural and urban community?
4. What is Association? Explain its characteristics.
5. Explain Association and make difference between community and association.

### Short Questions (Define)

- (i) Community
- (ii) Association
- (iii) Any four characteristics of Urbanism
- (iv) Any four characteristics of Association

### 6.12 Further readings

1. Davis, Kingsley, 1948, Human Society, The Macmillan Company, New York.
2. Desai, A.R. (ed. ) 1978, Rural Sociology in India, Popular Prakashan, Mumabi.
3. Koenig, Samuel, 1957, Sociology- An Introduction of the Science of Society. Barnes & Noble, Inc. New York.
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5. Marshall, Gordon (ed.) 2000. Dictionary of Sociology, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

## VALUES AND NORMS

### Structure

- 7.0 Objective
- 7.1 Meaning of values
- 7.2 Meaning of Norms
- 7.3 Definitions
- 7.4 Types of Norms
  - 7.4.1 Ideal and Practice Norms
  - 7.4.2 Personal and Social Norms
  - 7.4.3 Statistical and Cultural Norms
  - 7.4.4 Folkways and Mores
- 7.5 Characteristics
  - 7.5.1 Social Norms are universal
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  - 7.5.4 Social Norms are unwritten
  - 7.5.5 Social Norms provide guidelines to behaviour
  - 7.5.6 Social Norms are enforced by sanctions
  - 7.5.7 Social Norms vary from culture to culture
  - 7.5.8 Norms are means of social control
  - 7.5.9 Norms change with time
- 7.6 Summary
- 7.7 Key words
- 7.8 Exercise Questions
- 7.11 Further Readings
- 7.0 Objectives

The study of this lesson will enable you to:

- know the meaning of values
- explain the concept of norms
- define the types of Norms
- discuss various characteristics of Norms

- differentiate between community and associations

### 7.1 Meaning of Values

A value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important, worthwhile and worth striving for. It defines appropriate and acceptable behaviour in particular situations. Values are usually as higher order norms. Social values are cultural standards that indicate the general goods deemed desirable for organised social life. They provide the ultimate meaning and legitimacy for social arrangements and social behaviour. Value is a belief that something is good and desirable. Values deal less with what "is" and more with what "Ought" to be; in other words, they express moral imperatives." Values vary from society to society. Many norms can be seen as reflection of values. A variety of norms can be seen as expressions of a single value e.g. value of human life is expressed in terms of (a) safety regulations in factories, (b) Norms for settling disputes or argument, (c) Norms associated with hygiene in the home and public. It has often been suggested that individual achievement and materialism are major values in Western industrial society. Thus the individual believes it is important and desirable to come top of the class, to win a race or reach the top of his chosen profession. Individual achievement is often symbolized and measured by the quality and quantity of material possessions that a person can accumulate. In the West, the value of materialism motivates individuals to invest time and energy producing and acquiring material possessions.

### 7.2 Meaning of Norms

Norms are simply social rules, which people follow, in their day-to-day interaction with the members of society. In sociology, a norm, or social norm, refers to a pattern of behaviour expected within a particular society in a given situation. Every culture contains a large number of guidelines which direct conduct in particular situations. Such guidelines are known as norms. A norm is a specific guide to action that defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in particular situations. For example, in all societies, norms of dress provide guidelines for what to wear on particular occasions. Similarly norms concerning food guide us what to prepare on a particular occasion. Each society has quite a large number of norms which people follow from morning to evening in various situations. Human behaviour is largely governed by these social norms.

### 7.3 Definitions

The different sociologists have defined the concept of norms differently, some of the important definitions are as follows:

According to H.M. Johnson, "A norm is an abstract pattern held in the mind, that sets certain limits for behaviour".

According to Young and Mack, "Norms refer to "group shared

expectations”.

According to Donald Light, Norms refer to, “The rules that guide behaviour in everyday situations and are derived from the values”.

According to Broom and Selznick “The norms are blueprint for behaviour, setting limits within which individuals may seek alternate ways to achieve their goals”.

According to Robert Bierstedt, “A norm is a rule or standard that governs our conduct in the social situations in which we participate”.

It is clear from the above definitions that norms are general rules and regulations that an individual or a group follows in its everyday interaction with the fellow members of society. Norms are the means through which values are expressed in behaviour.

## 7.4 Types of Norms

### 7.4.1 Ideal and Practice Norms

Norms are categorized differently by the different sociologists. Some sociologists termed it as the ideal norms and the practical norms. Ideal norms are those, which each society sets forth for its members and expects that these should be accepted and obeyed. On the other hand there are practical norms. It is expected that the members of the society can follow and practice them and as such the society expects that these norms should be strictly followed.

### 7.4.2 Personal and Social Norms

While some other categories, norms and personal norms and social norms. Personal norms are purely individual in character and they belong to the individual only. The sociologists are least interested in these personal norms. They are mainly interested in social norms which are always backed by sanctions. Because of sanctions, the violators of norms suffer some penalties in the group. While those who conform are rewarded. Sociology studies in detail the types of social norms, the manner in which they are implemented, the way in which they differ from society to society, the functions they perform for the maintenance of social structure.

### 7.4.3 Statistical and Cultural Norms

Norms are also defined in the sense of statistical norms and cultural norms. The statistical norms refer to behaviour that is found to be “average”, “typical” or “usual”. Sociologists call such norms statistical norms because they represent what people, actually do. Thus, in calculating a statistical norm one would observe the actual behaviour of people in a given situation and report the findings in some form of numerical average. On the other hand cultural norms are rules or standards of expected behaviour or given situations. Thus a cultural norm in the true sociological sense is an idea in the minds of the members of a group, an idea that can be put in the form of a statement

specifying what the members or other men should do, ought to do, are expected to do under given circumstances.

#### 7.4.4 Folkways and Mores

William Graham Sumner, an important nineteenth century sociologist has classified norms as either folkways or mores.

For him folkways are customary rules of conduct that are seen as appropriate for given situations but are not strongly insisted upon and not seen as vital to the welfare or survival of the group. Gillin and Gillin have defined Folkways by saying the "Folkways are behaviour patterns of every day life which generally arise unconsciously in a group." Reuter and Hart have said that the "Folkways are simple habits of action common to the members of group. They are the ways of folk that are somewhat standardized and have some degree of traditional sanctions for their persistence." In the words of Ogburn "Folkways has become a common expression to designate customs." Maclver has stated that "The folkways, then the recognized or accepted ways of behaving in society. They include conventions, forms of etiquette and the myriad modes of behaviour men have evolved' and continue to evolve with which go about the business of social living."

Folkways apply to acts such as how one arranges a place setting at a dinner table, or the placing of a postage stamp on the upper right hand corner of an envelope. Standards of polite behaviour, or etiquette such as making brief conversation. when meeting acquaintances or neighbours would also be categorized as folkways.

Green defined mores as "Common ways of acting which are more definitely recorded as right and proper than the folkways and which bring greater certainty and severity of punishment if violated are the Mores." According to Gillin and Gillin, " Mores are those customs and group routines which are thought by the members of society to be necessary to the groups continued existence." In the words Maclver and Page, "When folkways have added to them conception of group welfare standards of right or wrong, they are converted into Mores.

Examples of mores would be rules prohibiting murder, rape, and cannibalism. Mores, therefore, represent a special type or variety of folkways. They are those folkways that represent obligatory behaviour, thus mores go beyond custom or etiquette as prescribed by most other folkways, because they are viewed as highly important and necessary standards for group welfare and because their intransigence results in far more severe punishment to the violator.

**Check your knowledge:**

(a) What do you mean by values?

Ans:

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(b) Define Norms

Ans:

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(c) Explain Folkways and More

Ans:

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## 7.5 Characteristics of Social Norms.

Social norms bear the following characteristics:-

### 7.5.1 Social Norms are universal:

Social norms are the very important for every society. No society can function smoothly in the absence of norms. Either the society is uncivilized or civilized, rural or urban it has to follow the number of norms for its normal functioning. Man is social animal and in order to survive he is physically and socially dependent upon other, and thus, he come in contact with other people by following certain social norms of behaviour. Norms grow slowly and gradually as a result of social interaction each person in the universe follows certain rules or norms during process of social interaction. Thus norms are universal.

### 7.5.2 Social Norms are learned:

Norms are always learned, man learn these norms during the process of socialization. In fact, socialization is often described as the process whereby an individual internalizes the norms of the group. The socially acceptable rules and behaviour or norms are internalized by the new born baby through the process socialization. People in most of the instances accept norms and follow them or obey them implicitly. It is because norms become the part and parcel of personality of the individual through the process of socialization.

### 7.5.3 Social Norms are based on values and customs:

Norms are normally based on values. Norms do not refer to an average tendency of man. But they denote expected behaviour or even ideal behaviour. A norm is a standard or behavioural expectation shared by group members. It is in terms of norms that we judge whether some action is right or wrong, good or bad, wanted or unwanted, expected and unexpected. Traditional norms such as the customs have been followed by many people over a long period of time. Therefore, norms are closely related to customs. On the other hand, a norm may arise as a formal description of an implicitly followed custom.

### 7.5.4 Social norms are unwritten:

Social norms are generally unwritten and are passed from one generation to

another by the various agencies of socialization like family, peer group, school etc. The elders tell us about the socially approved or acceptable behaviour of the society orally during the process of socialization.

#### 7.5.5 Social norms provide guidelines to behaviour:

Social norms are based on those social behaviour that govern or form the foundation of the society. It is the norms that individual members of the society are able to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. Norms have deep relation with sense of duty. It is the relationship of the norms with the sense of duty that compels an individual to observe those norms. Norms guide behaviour in all aspects of social life. There are norms of dress, which define the type of clothing appropriate for members of each age, sex, and social situation. There are norms governing behaviour with family, friends, neighbours and strangers. There are norms which define acceptable behaviour in the home, in the classroom, working place, worshipping place, at a party, wedding and funeral and so on.

#### 7.5.6 Social norms are enforced by sanctions:

Norms also vary in the types of sanctions that are attached to the violation of norms. Norms and sanctions go hand in hand. Norms are the groups rules of proper behaviour; whereas sanctions are the group's punishments for violation of the norms. We may say that sanctions are the rewards or punishment used to enforce the norms in a society.

Norms are enforced by positive and negative sanctions that the rewards and punishments. Sanctions can be informal, such as an approving or a disapproving glance, or formal, such as a fine or a reward given by an official body. An admiring glance, a word of praise or an encouraging smile provide rewards for conformity to social norms. Certain norms are formalized by translation into laws which are enforced by official sanctions. According to H.M. Johnson, a social norms would state the following. Who is expected, by whom, to do what, or refrain from, doing what, and in what circumstances. Further, it would specify what penalties will be imposed if the norm is violated, or what rewards will be conferred if it is conformed to.

#### 7.5.7 Social norms vary from culture to culture:

Norms generally vary from culture to culture and society to society, even within the same, culture different groups, communities and social categories have normative variations. Social norms operative in one system may not be operative in another system e.g. social norms of Hindu society cannot be made operative to either Muslim or Christian society. Social norms have relevance to sex. Occupation and status e.g. same social norms cannot be applied to people occupying high or low positions. Some norms do not govern the behaviour of all the people always. Norms of behaviour meant for old people are not applicable to the children. What is 'alright' for a man is not 'alright' for a woman. Norms meant for soldiers and policemen are different



from those of teachers and advocates. Each group in a society, to a certain extent at least, has its own norms. There is no social group without norms. Within the same society they differ with age, sex, occupation and social status of the individuals.

#### 7.5.8 Norms are means of social control

Norms are good source of social control and help the maintenance of social order. The social order is developed and maintained through social norms. From morning till we go to sleep, throughout our life, we follow norms every moment. Human culture can be understood as vast integrated normative system, which serves for man the functions of controlling human behaviour. Norms not only lessen the problems of social control but also help individuals to have self-control. In fact, social control is achieved when self control is mastered. Because of the pressure of norms the individual is able to exercise discipline by himself over his own actions and behaviour.

#### 7.5.9 Norms change with time:

It is found that over the period of time certain norms get changed, the people now no longer follow so many indigenous social norms, which were being observed in the old days. With the influence of western culture, so many Indian norms concerning food habits, dress and general behaviour have undergone change. Education, technology, law, Rationalization and scientific developments play important role to bring change in the social norms. It is observed that norms lose their original context as society changes: an action that was once performed because it was necessary for society may over the years no longer remains important.

#### Check your knowledge

(a) What is the difference between Norms and Values?

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(b) How norms are means of social control?

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(c) Do Norms vary from culture to culture?

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## 7.6 Summary

A norms is specific guide to action that defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in particular situations. Norms are the means through which values are expressed in behaviour whereas values are usually defined as higher order norms. Social values are cultural standards that indicate the general goods deemed desirable for organized social life. Norms are categorized differently by the different sociologists. Some sociologists termed it as the ideal norms and the practical norms. While some other categorized norms as personal norms and social norms. William Graham Sumner, an important nineteenth century sociologist has classified norms as either folkways or mores. Norms are generally unwritten, dynamic and are found in every society but they vary from culture to culture and group to group. They maintain solidarity and social control in the society.

## 7.7 Key words

- Values : These are cultural standards that indicate the general goods deemed desirable for social life. These refer to individual preferences.
- Norms : A rule or standard of behaviour which is considered socially acceptable. These are structural.
- Folkways : Folkways are the typical or habitual belief attitude and styles of conduct observed within a group of community.
- Mores : Common ways of acting. Which are more definitely regarded as right and proper than the folkways and which bring greater certainty and severity of punishment if isolated.
- Customs : Those practices that have been after repeated by a multitude of generalise, practices that tend to be followed simply because they have been followed in the past.
- Morality : It is concernd with good and evil. There are found certain rules of social behaviour in every group which should and ought to be observed by it members.
- Sanctions : These are the means of controlling human behaviour in the form of both rewards and punishments. They are used to persuade or force an individual or group to conform to social expectations.

Religion : It is an attitude towards supernatural powers. A system of beliefs, attitudes and practices of a people with regard to super natural power.

### 7.8 Exercise Questions

1. What do you understand by the concept norms, discuss its various features?
2. What do you mean by Norms? Discuss its types?
3. What do you understand by the term value? How it is different from norms?

### Short Questions (Define)

Values

Norms

Folkways

Mores

Morality

Religion

Customs

### 7.11 Further Readings

1. Sumner, W.G. (1940), Folkways: Boston, Ginn and Co.
2. Harry M. Johnson, Sociology: A Systematic Introduction.

## STATUS AND ROLE

### Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Meaning of Status
- 8.3 Types of Status
  - 8.3.1 Ascribed
    - 8.3.1.1 Race
    - 8.3.1.2 Caste
    - 8.3.1.3 Gender
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  - 8.3.2 Achieved
    - 8.3.2.1 Education
    - 8.3.2.2 Occupation
- 8.4 Features of Status
- 8.5 Role
- 8.6 Related concepts
  - 8.6.1 Role Conflict
  - 8.6.2 Role Taking
  - 8.6.3 Role Making
  - 8.6.4 Role Sector
  - 8.6.5 Role Set
  - 8.6.6 Role Distance
- 8.7 Features of Role
- 8.8 Summary
- 8.9 Key Words/Concepts
- 8.10 Exercise Questions
- 8.11 Further Readings
- 8.0 Objectives

The objective of this chapter is to familiarize students thoroughly with the concepts of status and role. By the end of the chapter students shall be able

to :

- define status and role
- understand various types of statuses
- identify how concept of role is closely associated with that of status.
- highlight the differences and similarities between the two
- discuss the dynamics and interrelation between these concepts
- explain the utility of these concepts in analyzing social structures and systems

### 8.1 Introduction

All societies have a definitive structure which is maintained through a stable network of relationships among its members. Such stability is achieved only if there is smooth and uninterrupted communication among its members along with minimum degree of confusion regarding their role in society. It is for this purpose that all societies have a system of allocating positions and roles to all its members. The positions held by members of a society are referred to as statuses and that what is expected of them by virtue of being in a particular position is referred to as their role. The current chapter discusses the concepts of status and role while describing them in detail wherever required. Beginning with the concept of status it describes its major types before proceeding with the concept of role. After discussing both status and role, it tries to give an overview of these concepts by understanding their dynamic character as societies undergo social changes. Some of the related concepts have also been discussed to help the student gain insight into the utility and versatility of the basic concepts of status and role.

### 8.2 Meaning of Status

Status is used in sociology to describe a position within the hierarchy and structure of a society. Every member of a society has some status or the other. This status is nothing but a position that an individual holds in society.

Society is a group of individuals who are associated with each other through common cultural concerns, tied with the same set of norms and values. Society therefore ensures that not only its values and norms are successfully conveyed to its members but are also conformed to by them through their own volition. It is for this reason that society, besides what it does through socialization, prefers to give clear instructions to its members, wherever possible, regarding their behaviour and actions in any social situation. As a result, there is little confusion regarding what is expected of one and what one should expect of others in any social situation. Hence, all societies try to assign positions to all their members.

Through the mechanism of assigning positions, society identifies all its members and entrusts them with various responsibilities. Fulfilling these responsibilities one confirms one's participation in and allegiance to one's

society. The position an individual occupies in society is that individual's status and the obligations attached to that position or status is called role. For example, doctor, engineer, nurse, teacher, president, etc, are all positions or statuses in society whereas the obligations attached to these statuses are the roles defined for those who occupy these positions. Hence, the two concepts are closely linked. For analytical purposes, however, we must understand the differences between the two.

Had all people been considered the same and equal in society it would not have been much of a problem assigning positions to its members. However, no society is completely equal. It differentiates between its various members on the basis of different criteria before assigning any position or responsibility to them. Generally, all the positions in society are not only different but also hierarchically arranged. It is because of them being hierarchically arranged that some statuses in society are considered better than others even though all the statuses have more or less the same function, to strengthen society. For example both doctor and nurse work together towards helping the patient but doctor's position is given more social respect than that of nurse. Thus the status of a doctor is considered higher than that of a nurse. Though the purpose of having statuses in societies across the world is not very different, the way all societies establish such a network differs drastically from place to place and from time to time.

Another thing important to remember is that one's status is the position that one holds in relation to other members of society. It is not in isolation that an individual holds a particular status. Therefore, it is not surprising to find status networks correspond to social relationships as they exist in society.

We may also draw from this observation that status is a socially determined position that one holds in society because not only is it defined in relation to other members of society but also because its relative significance is implied on the basis of social and cultural values of society. Hence, in societies where white colour is valued more than black colour, social position of people with white skin will be considered better than people with black skin and therefore will be esteemed higher. It must be noted that there is nothing intrinsically better about white or wrong about black that makes white more valuable. It is only when it is culturally and socially valued over black that it becomes better for a particular society.

### 8.3 Types of Status

Statuses are social positions determined on the basis of some social criterion. Depending on the criteria adopted by a society statuses differ across time and space. This variation occurs because society keeps changing, it is never stagnant. With its changing structure and character, its values and norms also keep undergoing some change. As society adapts itself to such changes, not only do the expectations related to any status change but also the status itself undergoes change. For example, in earlier times in India, status of

king was supreme in society but nowadays, with Indian political system adopting a democratic model of governance the status of king has become redundant. Hence, with time, some statuses may even become irrelevant or non-existent. On the other hand, the prestige attached to a particular status also might alter with changing time. For example, Brahmins in ancient Hindu society enjoyed extreme respect but nowadays status of Brahmin is not so important from society's perspective. Statuses therefore keep changing with the passage of time. Not only that, it changes across space too. The status of caste itself varies from place to place. Some castes are considered higher in one state but have a lower rank in caste hierarchy in another state. For example, a Brahmin may find his caste status very helpful in Rajasthan but may not find it of any significance in Punjab. There is no dearth of statuses in any society. However, all the statuses may be classified under two broad types, ascribed and achieved.

### 8.3.1 Ascribed status

Ascribed status is that position in society which is determined on the basis of one's birth. It is a status that one inherits from society one does not have to work towards achieving it. Such a status does not come to a person as a matter of choice but is imposed on an individual even if he doesn't like it. Ascribed status cannot be altered by will or efforts of a person. For example, in caste system one becomes a Brahmin or a Sudra depending merely on the family one is born in. No matter what he does all his life, he cannot alter the fact of being born in a particular family. Another example could be of one's race. The fact of being born in a particular race is non alterable and is imposed on an individual from birth itself. There are various kinds of statuses that are of ascribed type. Some of these have been discussed below.

#### 8.3.1.1 Race

Another important basis for ascribed status is one's race. It is something that we genetically inherit from our parents. As in caste, in race also it is one's parentage only that determines one's status, something that one cannot choose or change. One's genetic makeup, therefore, has got nothing to do with that individual. It is a mere accident of birth that makes someone Mongoloid, Caucasian, or Negroid. It is only when these racial differences are used to explain social differences and inequalities in society that it becomes a basis for determining one's social status in society. That is why in European societies people born with white skin are considered socially superior to those born with brown or dark skin. Such social differences explained and sustained on the basis of some criterion that is beyond one's control is considered highly unscientific, unethical and prejudiced. In the past, blacks were treated as slaves deeming it to be the only status fit for them.

Till recently, South Africa witnessed such racial beliefs at the base of its social system and had evoked strong reactions from across the world for continuing with a social set up that distinguished people on the basis of their

race rather than their achievement or hard work.

### 8.3.1.2 Caste

Social status accrued to someone based on one's caste is one of the best examples of ascribed status. In case of caste, as mentioned above, one's birth in a particular family determines one's social position in society. Moreover, this position is assigned to an individual from his birth itself and stays with him all his life. For example, once a Sudra, a person remains a Sudra throughout his life. No amount of effort on the part of individual can help him alter his social status that has been accrued to him by being born into a particular family or community.

In traditional Hindu society, one's caste status determined to a great extent the life chances of an individual. It was on the basis of caste only that one's occupation was determined. One's caste used to provide a guideline for conducting one's daily activities. One's social obligations and responsibilities were also tied with one's caste only. Still at some places in India one's caste plays a significant role in determining one's opportunities and options. For example in case of marriage, most of the Indians still prefer to stick to caste rules and give prime importance to one's caste status over one's occupational or educational status.

However, with changing times, caste has lost its strength. Not that one can change one's caste now but importance to caste as a basis for determining one's social position has weakened since independence. Growth of scientific temper and belief in equality, freedom and fraternity has further eroded the strength of caste as a basis of determining one's social position in society.

### 8.3.1.3 Gender

One's gender also is something that is determined from the very beginning and one cannot alter it. Most of the societies in world currently are patriarchal in nature. It means that these societies are governed and managed by the male members of society. All these societies consider man's social position higher to woman's believing men to be more intelligent, rational, decisive, courageous and stronger. Merely being from a particular gender often privileges a few over others in social terms. There are many societies, like Indian society, where birth of a boy is celebrated and that of a girl is not. Female infanticide and foeticide are common problems facing Punjabi society where a girl child is perceived as a burden. Women are considered to be helpless and weak and hence someone who needs to be protected by men against other strong men.

### 8.3.1.4 Age

One's age differential is another constant that does not change. Most of the societies give more significance to people who are older to others. Though a person who is older to others is assumed to be more mature and experienced it is not necessarily the case. However, it is one of the oldest methods of



determining one's social position in society. An elder brother in a family will always remain elder because of the simple fact of being born earlier than the younger brother. A fact that cannot be altered by anyone at any stage in life. Traditional societies were generally ruled by the older people. Still in many Indian families the final authority remains with the oldest member of the family. Children in almost all societies have to submit before the authority of the elders. Authority and social position of elder generally become more visible when there is some function or occasion taking place in a family.

Ascribed statuses are generally more rigid. Once a person is allotted such a status, it remains with him through out his life. Society based heavily on ascribed statuses is less prone to change and gives less space to an individual. It views individuals as moral, passive beings who have to simply follow and obey instructions of society to maintain its existing values and norms. Traditional and rural societies are more often found to depend on ascriptive statuses.

Most of these statuses have their roots in inequality based on biological differences which militates against the basic belief and faith that all men are born equal and free. Social perception flowing from such biological facts has been prevalent for centuries and it will take time for societies to evolve more on rational bases of status disbursement.

Ascribed statuses these days are not as popular as they used to be earlier. There is a growing opposition to them as the societies across the world are trying to adjust to changing times by opting for more flexible systems of status allocation. The trend is increasingly towards a shift from ascribed to achieved basis of status allocation. With advent of science and growth of individualism, faith in one's abilities to change one's social position for better has become stronger. In such circumstances, determining one's social status on ascriptive bases becomes more and more out of place. It was more in traditional societies that ascriptive status were popular. However, to say that such statuses do not exist anymore would be incorrect as some ascriptive bases of status are still very common and prevalent, like one's gender or age are still widely used along with achieved statuses.

### 8.3.2 Achieved Status

Achieved status is that which a person acquires through of his own accomplishments. It is a status that can be achieved by anyone in society through one's efforts and actions. Such a status is bestowed on an individual when he does something to qualify for it. It is a result of his accomplishments rather than an accident of birth. For example, status of doctor in our society is an achieved one because one is not born a doctor but has to work towards becoming one. One has to clear some exams and then diligently develops those skills that are required to become a doctor.

### 8.3.2.1 Education

One's educational qualification is something that one has to achieve by one's hard work and efforts. We are not born educated but we become one. It is through constant and consistent hard work that we develop our educational skills. To achieve a degree of masters in any discipline, one has to keep studying for many years before reaching that level. One's birth, race, caste, gender, or family does not form the basis of determining whether a person would be able to pass only class 10th or would be a graduate.

### 8.3.2.2 Occupation

Status attached to an occupation is also achieved through one's efforts. We are not born doctors, nurses, teachers or engineers but we learn to become one. It is an accomplishment of an individual that makes him achieve any of the statuses mentioned above. With the help of educational qualifications, or with the help of his other skills that he learns and acquires in society, he is able to choose his vocation.

Though in many cases one's ability to achieve statuses in society often appears to be determined in turn by their caste, family, and other ascriptive statuses that we discussed above, nevertheless for achieved status, one has to do something more than just being born into a particular social group. In more unequal societies, ascriptive statuses will appear to dominate achieved statuses.

A person occupies different statuses in life as he grows. Initially he is a child, then he becomes a brother, a son, a father etc. He simultaneously holds different statuses. Being a father he does not stop being a son, at the same time he is a teacher and a husband too. All these statuses ensure he is knit tightly into the social structure. Moreover, in all societies both types of statuses are present, ascribed type and achieved type. One occupies both types of statuses simultaneously, for example one may be both a doctor as well as a Brahmin. What matters though is the significance attached to various types of statuses. While in traditional societies ascribed statuses are more significant, in modern societies it is achieved statuses that gain primacy. Simple biological facts accounting for assigning different social positions to different people was more popular an idea as long as we were not much aware of scientific facts. Once scientific discoveries and inventions revealed the fallacy of linking biological facts with social worth of individuals, emphasis shifted to move towards societies having more and more achieved statuses. This shift was also supported by the growing belief in rationality, equality and freedom of man.

## 8.4 Features of Status

Status determines the role of an individual in society

It is the static aspect of role.

It is in relation to other statuses.

Individual simultaneously holds more than one status in society.

Statuses are hierarchically arranged in society.

Status determines the social position of an individual in society

Gives an individual a sense of identity.

Status could be both achieved and ascribed.

Status determines one's life chances in society.

### Check Your knowledge

Que. Define status.

Ans:

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Que. What is achieved status?

Ans:

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Que. Which type of status is more commonly found in Indian society?

Ans:

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## 8.5 Role

Every status in society has some corresponding duties and obligations that are to be fulfilled. These obligations are called its role. To each status there is a corresponding role associated with it, hence role is but the dynamic aspect of status. While status describes where a person is located in social hierarchy and social structure, role describes the behaviour and attitudes expected of that person by virtue of having a particular status. For example, while a doctor is a status, what is socially expected of that doctor forms his role. Similarly, teacher is a status but what is expected of a teacher is his role. For example, role of a teacher would be to guide and instruct students, to develop the interest of students in their subject, etc. However, like status, role too is relational. It is always performed in relation to some other role.

Hence the role of teacher makes sense only as long as we can assume the role of students whose role would be to listen to their teacher, seek his guidance, etc.

Role is a set of ideas associated with a social status. It is different from what people actually do as occupants of a particular status. It concerns with what is expected of them as occupants of a particular status. It is a behaviour expected of an incumbent of a social position. We may visualize social structure or social system as full of slots vacant to be filled by people. In these vacant slots or positions whoever comes will be expected to do or not to do a few things. These slots would be called statuses and the set of expectations attached to these slots would be referred to as their corresponding roles. Once these slots are filled by individuals, they will try to stick to the expected role behaviour corresponding to those positions. Whether they are able to successfully perform what is expected of them would be a different thing but that what is expected of them by virtue of being in a particular social position is what role is all about. Role is the normative expectation attached to positions in a social structure or social system. It is a set of guidelines as to what is to be done and what is not to be done in a particular social status.

The concept of role is important because it is through roles that individuals are connected to society. Role is considered the point of interface between the individual person and the larger social structure. Social structure is a set of status networks to be filled in by individuals. Individuals by filling up these statuses animate social structure and make it work. It is through roles that a status gets manifested. At times one's status is not very obvious to others. In such cases it is through the kind of role performed by someone that helps others to guess what one's status would be.

The concepts of role and status are thus mutually complementary. Both are said to be two different sides of the same coin. It is only for analytical purposes that we treat the two separately. While status is said to be the static aspect of role, role is considered the dynamic aspect of status. Status is what one is and role is what one must do to be someone. It is with the help of both status and role that the concept of social system can be explained. Social system is defined as a network of statuses and their associated roles.

Like statuses, roles also keep changing with time and space. However, in case of statuses change is more gradual and rare. Roles are more amenable to change because they are to be carried out by individuals who are dynamic and unpredictable. Despite all socialization and clearly laid out rules individuals may still fail in carrying out their roles effectively. In the process they may also alter other's perceptions about one's role as well as expectations from it. Initially the actions that do not conform to the status of individual are looked down upon with suspicions and treated as a threat to social system. However, some degree of deviance can never be ruled out since no one is ever perfectly socialized. But the degree to which it may happen depends on

the rigidity and flexibility of the social structure. In rigid societies are clearly roles laid down and any deviance is dealt very the strictly. Elements of individuality are curbed strongly in such a society.

In modern societies which are much more flexible than traditional societies, roles are changing faster than ever before. Society that provide enough space for roles to change and alter as per emerging social conditions are more open to social change and experience it less abruptly. On the other hand, societies which strongly resist any change and strictly adhere to their norms and values find it much more difficult to accept changes developing from strains in society. The fascination of society for well prescribed status and clearly defined roles is that it leaves little confusion with regards to one's social obligations and behaviour in society. However, this comfort may also limit that society's capacity to adjust to new situations that keep emerging with the passage of time.

## 8.6 Related concepts

### 8.6.1 Role Conflict

It is a term used to describe a conflict that arises between various roles as perceived or experienced by an individual. There are three main causes of role conflict. First and the most commonly talked about role conflict arises when an individual perceives incompatibility between performing certain prescriptions of one of his roles and carrying out those of another of his roles. For example, a person as a police officer may be required to shoot at the thief who is trying to run away but in case that thief also happens to be his son, it could pose him a problem of deciding what to do, to shoot or not to shoot. To act like a father or like a police officer. The two roles appear to him to be in direct conflict with each other.

Second type of role conflict arises when an individual's perception of his role and actual role his actual role behaviour are at variance. For example, a student may feel that as a student he has to study five hours daily, that is his own perception of what his role is but may find himself devoting not more than two hours.

The third type is the one which arises out of lack of consensus between perception of an individual about his role and perception of other regarding his role.

For example, a teacher may perceive it to be part of his duty to attend to personal problems of his students. On the other hand, others may perceive it to be totally unnecessary and even unprofessional. There is no consensus regarding what exactly is the role of teacher in such a case.

### 8.6.2 Role Taking

Role taking is the imaginative thinking on the part of an individual where one imagines one self in the position of others. Role taking teaches individual to assume the perspective of others. By able to read each other's gestures and

perspectives, people are better prepared to predict each other's actions. With one's ability of role taking, it becomes easier for an individual to imaginatively rehearse and consider alternative lines of action before actuating any action. The concept was used by George Herbert Mead.

### 8.6.3 Role Making

According to Ralph H. Turner it is only role taking that individuals do but also role making. By role making he implies that individuals coordinate their gestures in order to assert a role in a situation that meets their needs and affirms their self conception. The process occurs even in highly structured situation where individuals in different statuses would try to make for themselves a particular kind of role. For example, a student would try to be a good student, a worker would try to be a hard worker, etc.

### 8.6.4 Role Sector

It is the set of expectations between the individual and another person with whom he is interacting.

### 8.6.5 Role Set

It is the set of expectation between the individual and number of other persons with whom he is interacting. The term was first used by R.K. Merton.

### 8.6.6 Role distance

It is a term given by Erving Goffman to describe a method used by individuals to minimize role strain associated with it. It is people's ability to free themselves from the standard demands of roles by playing them tongue in cheek. The intention, according to Goffman, in such cases is to show that they are much more than the simple role that they play.

## 8.7 Features of Role

It is socially determined.

It is in relation to other roles.

It is the dynamic aspect of status.

Individual may simultaneously be expected to perform more than one role in society. In case these roles are incompatible it may lead to role conflict as well.

Role of an individual is determined by his status.

Role helps integrate an individual with larger society.

## REVISION TEST - II

i. What is role?

Ans:

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ii. How is it related with the concept of status?

Ans:

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## 8.8 Summary

Status and role are two complimentary concepts that together help in understanding social system better. It is only for analytical purposes that we deal with them separately otherwise both the concepts are too closely associated with other to be perceived as different from each other. While status is the social position that one holds in society, role is set of expectations that society has from the person holding that position. Statuses are generally of two types, ascribed and achieved. Both status and role are relational terms. One holds status and performs role with reference to some other status or role. As one may simultaneously be holding more than one positions in society one may simultaneously be expected to perform different roles. Different role expectations may also lead to a situation of role conflict, something that is not very rare to be found in societies. Though status and role highlight, the fact that we as individuals simply play our respective roles when in society, it does not ignore the ability of individuals to alter their social situations. The concepts are extremely useful in analyzing social structures and social system.

## 8.9 Key Words/Concepts

**Achieved status:** Achieved status is that which a person acquires through his own accomplishments. It is status that can be achieved by anyone in society through his own efforts and actions. Such a status is bestowed on an individual when he does something to qualify for it, it is a result of his accomplishments rather than an accident of fate.

**Ascribed status:** Ascribed status is that position in society which is determined on the basis of one's birth. It is a status that one inherits from society and does not have to work towards achieving it. Such a status does not come to a person as a matter of choice but is imposed on an individual even if he doesn't like it. Ascribed status cannot be altered by will or efforts of a person.

**Role conflict:** It is a term used to describe a conflict that arises various roles as perceived or experienced by an individual.

**Role distance:** It is a term given by Erving Goffman to describe a method used by individuals to minimize role strain associated with it. It is people's ability to free themselves from the standard demands of roles by playing them tongue-in-cheek. The intention, according to Goffman, in such cases is to show that they are much more than the simple role that they play.

**Role sector:** It is the set of expectations between the individual and another

person with whom he is interacting.

**Role set:** It is the set of expectations between the individual and number of other persons with whom he is interacting. The term was first used by R.K. Merton.

**Role Taking:** Role taking is the imaginative thinking on behalf of others by imagining oneself in the position of others. Role taking teaches individual to assume the perspective of others. With one's ability of role taking, it becomes easier for an individual to imaginatively rehearse and consider alternative lines of action before actuating any action. The concept was used by Mead.

**Role making:** According to Ralph H. Turner it is not only role taking that individuals do but also role making. By role making he implies that individuals coordinate their gestures in order to assert a role in a situation that meets their needs and affirms their self conception.

**Role:** Every status in society has some corresponding duties and obligations that are to be fulfilled. These obligations are called its role to each status there is a corresponding role associated with it. Hence role is but the dynamic aspect of status.

**Status:** Status is used in sociology to describe a position within the hierarchy and structure of a society. Every member of a society has some status or the other. This status is nothing but a position that an individual holds in society.

### 8.10 Exercise Questions

- Q.1 What do you mean by the term status? Discuss its types.  
Q.2 What is Ascribed Status. Explain various bases of it.  
Q.3 Define Role and elaborate how status and role go hand in hand.

#### Short Questions :

- (a) Define role conflict.  
(b) Define role distance.  
(c) Define role set.  
(d) What is the difference between status and role?  
(e) What are the similarities between status and role?  
(f) Give five features of status.  
(g) Who gave the concept of role distance?  
(h) Give one example each of change occurring in any status and change occurring in any role.

### 8.11 Further Readings

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