Block 3

Basic Concepts

UNIT 7 CULTURE AND SOCIETY*

7.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- The relationship between culture and society;

- The concept of culture as understood in Sociology;

- The unique characteristics of culture, culture as distinct from biology, civilization, elements of culture, culture traits and culture complex;

- Cultural change and the factors responsible to bring in cultural change;

- Cultural diversity, multiculturalism;

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*This unit is contributed by Roma Ranu Dash, Research Scholar, JNU.

- The global flow of culture or how there is a change in culture under globalization; and

- Culture in Indian context, its diversity and the unity in diversity.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture and Society are mutually interdependent. Every society has a culture which guides its members. In order to understand the relationship between culture and society we need to understand what a society is. Ralph Linton defines society as *"an organized group of individuals. A culture is an organized group of learned responses characteristic of a particular society"* (Linton, 1955:29). Society is a much larger concept and culture is an important part of the society that we live in. A society is a group of individuals who interact and share a common culture. Through culture, the members of society experience their lives. In other words, society refers to persons and groups; culture is the behaviour patterns of these groups which emerge from communal living. Culture distinguishes a man from an animal. It is culture that shapes our attitude, beliefs, values and norms. So, culture and society cannot be separated. Giddens and Sutton (2014) say that sociology has always studied culture as bound up with social relations and the structure of society.

Different scholars define culture in different ways. Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn had discovered more than 150 definitions of culture. The first definition of culture was given by E.B Tylor. He says, "*Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capability acquired by man as a member of society*" (Tylor, 1871:1). Malinowski when referring to Arunta society, talks about the behaviour patterns like the customs, language, beliefs and also the ways of thinking feeling and acting which are important aspects of culture and also applies to any society. Abraham (2006) defines culture as "*a total way of life of a social group, meaning everything they are, they do and they have. It is a complex system that consists of beliefs, values, standards, practices, language and technology shared by members of a social group*" (Abraham, 2006:64).

Culture used in Sociological sense would be very different from as it is used in common parlance. Sutherland et al (1961) says that when we study the behavior patterns, the customs, beliefs, language and other shared ways of thinking, feeling and acting to are referring to the culture of the society. The unique aspect of culture is that it is highly variable and is also subject to change. While human heredity is a relatively constant factor, culture is variable. This can be explained when we compare culture with biology.

7.2 CULTURE AND BIOLOGY

Culture is often contrasted with biology. This distinction between culture and biology becomes important when human society is compared to that of animals. Humans and animal share the same biological traits like hunger, thirst, sex etc. It can also be said that animals do have certain behavior patterns like humans, but there are striking differences between the behavior patterns of both animals and humans. For example, hunger and sex urge are biological facts, but it is culture which determines how these urges are channelized. In human society social

behaviour is transmitted from generation to generation by communication in contrast to animals in which it is transmitted by heredity. This distinguishes human society from the complex insect society as the insects are instinctitive and do not learn to behave. Insects can pass on sounds which convey certain meanings but they are unable to produce language, hence culture which makes them different from humans. In other words, animals depend on their instinct but humans use their culture.

Worsley (1970) says that culture can be transmitted through coding, classifying and passing experience through language, a distinctive human trait. It can be said that a major difference between humans and animals is the inability of the animal to use symbols. But humans have a way of manipulating symbols and they even express abstract concepts using symbols. By symbols we mean a value or meaning attached to a particular object. As human we tend to attach value to a particular object. For example, the National flag is not any other piece of cloth but a symbol which has a meaning. Similarly, to a Christian a cross is a symbol of salvation.

7.3   CULTURE TRAIT AND CULTURE COMPLEX

Traits are the smallest elements of a culture. There are many cultural traits in every cultures. Each culture has certain components or traits like a ritual, celebration of different festivals etc which distinguish one culture from the other. Even touching feet, shaking hands, taking a particular diet, wearing a saree are all cultural traits. When cultural traits combine together they produce culture complex. Majumdar and Madan (2008) say that a culture complex is not an institution but is the outcome of interaction between several institutions. They are defined as the pattern of the interrelation of culture traits. Sutherland et al. (1961) says that kawa drinking is observed among the Samoans which is a culture trait of the Samoans. But it is not only about drinking the non alchohalic beverage but there are rituals of preparing and serving the beverage, pouring out the first cup as a libation to the Gods, there is also a ceremonial precedence of serving the kawa and the mythological belief in the background of the ceremony. So the kawa drinking is tied with many other aspects of the Samoan. In this way the kawa drinking is related to many other traits making it the kawa complex.

When similar cultural traits are found in a particular area it is called a **culture area**. For example, the different regions in India like The North-Eastern states, the states like Kashmir, Tamil Nadu constitute culture area.

7.4   CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

Culture is social

Culture is acquired through social life. Human being is a social animal and has a culture of its own. Culture is shaped by our social interaction and is bound up with social relations within the members of a group. Culture regulates the behaviour of the members of a group and fulfills man's needs like hunger, shelter, clothing etc. For Clyde Kluckhohn Culture is a design for living. Culture is defined as a social adjustment or the means by which man adjusts to his environment.

Culture is learned and shared

Culture is a behaviour acquired by man from his birth and as a member of society. When a human baby is born, it is helpless. It does not have the pattern of behaviour that is required for living in society or culture is not innate. The baby learns the behaviour and culture from the elders and is socialized to become a member of society. In course of time, man becomes human by acquiring the culture of a particular society and is thus called 'culture-bearing animal'. The influence of culture on human beings is hence deep rooted. After man learns a culture, culture is internalized and is shared by the members of the group. Culture is shared through communication and cooperation by the members of a society.

Culture is transmitted

Culture is handed down from one generation to the other and also between nations and people within the lifetime. Culture is what we receive from previous generations and subsequently adapt to. Culture is transmitted to humans by parents, teachers, friends through traditions, customs etc. Cultural transmission is different from genetic transmission. One has no control on genetic transmission such as skin color, hair and color of eyes but through culture man acquires the habits, thoughts, attitudes of his or her parents and through this it is transmitted to the group. Ralph Linton (ibid.) appropriately says that the culture is the way of life of the members of a society. It is the collection of ideas and habits which they learn, share and transmit from generation to generation.

Culture is symbolic

A symbol is something on which some value is bestowed by us or it has a meaning. The meaning of symbols is a matter of cultural intervention. For example, the National Flag is not any piece of cloth but has a culture. Similarly to the Christians the cross is a symbol of salvation.

Culture is dynamic

It is no longer seen as static, natural, well bounded and independent of political power. Culture is constantly undergoing change and often adapts to external forces. It also undergoes internal adaptation and change. Various parts of culture are integrated with each other to constitute a whole.

7.5 TYPES OF CULTURE: MATERIAL AND NON-MATERIAL CULTURE

Material and Non material culture

Sociologist William F. Ogburn distinguished between material and non material culture. Material culture refers to the objects which satisfies the material needs of human beings like houses, means of transport, factories, food items etc. They are the tangible aspects of society. Non material culture on the other hand refers to non tangible aspects of culture like customs, ideas, beliefs, patterns of communication etc. There are a lot of debates as to what should be included in the ambit of culture. Some anthropologists believe, only those aspects which can be communicated can be a part of culture. Many others also include objects in the definition of culture. Giddens and Sutton (2014) say that culture has always dealt with the non material aspect, it had not conventionally included the material artifacts like the buildings, furniture but this has changed as gradually sociologists became interested in 'material culture'. So, both material and non

material objects are part of culture. Culture not only includes knowledge, beliefs, and practices but also includes manmade objects like tools, buildings, means of transport and communication or various artifacts. Green (1964) defines culture as "*the socially transmitted system of idealized ways of knowledge, practice and belief, along with the artifacts that knowledge and practice produce and maintain as they change in time*" (Green, 1964:80).

7.6   ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

Language

Language is the most important element of culture. The essence of a culture is reflected in the language which facilitates day to day interaction with other people. The use of language distinguishes human beings from other species. It is instrumental in the transmission of cultural tradition from one generation to another as it is infused with meaning. **Sapir- Whorf Hypothesis** says that language is not 'given' but is culturally determined and through language reality is interpreted in different ways (Schaefer and Lamm 1999). For example, in the Arab world in which people depend on camels, there are 3,000 words for camels. Similarly, when we describe vegetables like Drumstick, bitter gourd etc. in Indian words we don't use any adjective. But the English words reflect the taste or appearance of these vegetables (Abhraham, 2006). Language and culture are intertwined.

Belief

Abraham (2006) says that belief is a statement or idea about reality which people accept as true. For example, many people in India believe in God and many auspicious occasions like marriage are scheduled on the basis of auspicious dates. Even marriages are fixed when the horoscopes of the bride and the groom matches. But beliefs are not static and are subject to change over time. We may be practicing a certain belief but by coming in contact with other cultures we may change our beliefs. People migrating to cities may shed off some of the superstitious beliefs. But in many other occasions the beliefs towards something is so strong that we may not be able to let it go.

Norms

Norms are the prescribed rules of society which guides the behaviour of the members of a society. Sutherland (1961) says that social norms are group developed and group held standards of behaviour of the groups' members. They direct the conduct of the members of the society or it is the guideline for appropriate behaviour. For Haralambos and Heald (2006) a norm is a specific guide to action which defines acceptable and appropriate behavior in particular situations. For example, in every society there are norms governing dressing patterns. In particular occasions we tend to wear a particular kind of dress. We wear different dresses when we go to a party, a funeral, a office or even a hospital. But norms vary from society to society. For example in a tribal society wearing a particular dress is acceptable but in other societies it is not.

Norms can be both formal and informal. *Formal norms* are written down and attract punishment when violated. *Informal norms* are not formally written down but are generally accepted. For Abraham (ibid.), formal norms are explicit norms like the explicit rules imposed by schools about uniforms etc. Implicit norms

can be some restriction on the public display of affection or norms governing dress that we discussed above.

Norms are further classified into *folkways* and *mores* and *laws*. Folkways are the informal rules which guide our actions. For example, do not poke your nose when elders discuss something, cover your nose when you sneeze etc. Mores are those folkways which are important for the welfare of the group. Sumner (1906) says, when the relation of welfare is added to folkways they are converted to mores. Laws grow out of mores and have a rational element in them or they are formally established rules. Mores are more strictly enforced than folkways but less strictly enforced than laws.

Values

Values are the general guidelines regarding the conduct in society unlike norms which provide specific conduct. For Abraham (2006) values are agreements among members of the society as to what is desirable and what is undesirable in society. They are generalized standards that define what is good or bad, ugly or beautiful. Values are the way people conduct themselves in society, it reflects the orientation of individuals, groups towards achieving essential goals of society. For example, paying attention when national anthem is played, respecting elders is a value of the Indian society. Different cultures have different value systems. American value system is different from Indian value system. Certain values are also given importance in a culture over others. Schaefer and Lamm (1999) give the example of Papua culture in which contributing to the public good is much more valuable than making a personal profit. Erasov and Singh (2006) mention families, relatives, older generation as values forming basis of cultural criteria.

Sanctions

Sanctions are penalties and rewards for social conduct of a person. Sanctions can be both positive and negative. Conformity to a norm prescribes positive sanction like rewards, praise etc. On the other hand violation of a norm attracts negative sanctions like fines, imprisonment etc. Schaefer and Lamm (1999) says that the norms and sanctions in a culture reflects that culture's values and priorities The most cherished values will be the most heavily sanctioned, the less critical matters will have light sanctions.

7.7 CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

Culture is often contrasted with civilization. For Ogburn and Nimkoff (1947), civilization is the latter phase of culture. It is a highly developed organization, a complex and more evolved form of culture. When the human society develops certain social and political organization, it is called a civilization. Cultural is internal but civilization is external as it is the external manifestation or the material aspect of culture such as the scientific and technological achievements. Majumdar and Madan (2008) say that culture is the moral, spiritual and the intellectual attainments of man. It stands for symbols and values. But civilization is secondary or it is something outside us. It is the sum total of the instruments of cultural life. Tai (2003) says that whereas civilization is the universal development of human beings and society, culture indicated particularity, each person has their own culture. Civilization is a much broader concept as compared to culture as it is spread beyond boundaries. Although civilization is a broader concept than culture but culture is often seen superior to civilization.

1)   What is the relationship between culture and society? Discuss in four lines.

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2)   Bring out the difference humans and animals with reference to culture in four lines.

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7.8   CULTURAL CHANGE

Culture is dynamic. The elements of culture change from time to time. In todays society, we see a lot of changes in the culture of societies. There is a change in the eating habits, dressing pattern, types of family, education, caste and many changes which are imminent. Cultural changes occur due to innovation, diffusion, acculturation and assimilation.

7.8.1   Cultural Innovation

Innovation is something which is newly created by someone. It may be a physical object or an artifact, or social in terms of rituals, stories, new ideas, new knowledge etc. For example, the carvings on the temples, the delicate artistic works or the carvings of the white marble of the Taj Mahal to the orbiting of satellites are all which are cultural innovations which we cherish. Innovation also happens when there is a modification on something that exists beforehand. Innovation is the most important element of cultural change as, if there is no innovation there cannot be diffusion, acculturation, and assimilation.

7.8.2   Cultural Diffusion

Cultural diffusion is a process by which the elements of culture spread from one society to another or it is the spread of cultural traits from one group to the other. Due to the development in transportation and communication and the movement of people from one place to another without restriction there is spread of culture in the form of food, dress, lifestyle, education etc.

Cultural diffusion happens at two levels – *diffusion of material culture and diffusion of non material culture.* According to William F. Ogburn (1966) the elements of non material culture are more resistant to change than the material culture. He refers to the term '**cultural lag**' to refer to the maladjustment in which non material culture fails to adjust to the rapidly changing material conditions. For example, it is difficult to adapt to a Western culture and accept foreign ideas than to accept foreign technology. We accept technology much faster as it makes our lives much easier but we are unable to change our ways of life accordingly. In a fast changing society, cultural lag is very prominent as a change in one aspect will bring stress and strains in other parts, there is a time lag before the other part of the culture catches up and restores the equilibrium in society. This sometimes disturbs the balance of society and brings '**anomie'.** **Anomie** is a concept coined by Emile Durkheim which refers to a condition in which the normative order of society is broken down. In this situation, there may be slight contradiction and confusion or a serious deterioration and disintegration in society.

7.8.3   Acculturation

Cultural diffusion brings with it the question of cultural contact. When two cultures come into contact, there is some interchange of ideas and culture leading to cultural diffusion. But when the way of life of one culture is in the process of change under the influence of another culture it is called acculturation. It may lead to either a least partial modification of one culture or may result in substantial transformation. In acculturation, the minority culture still retains some of its cultural elements.

7.8.4   Assimilation

It is the way in which one way of life is being displaced by another or it is a process in which a minority group is absorbed into the dominant culture. For example, with the coming up of development projects leading to the clearance of forests there are many tribal cultures which are getting displaced and the tribals are slowly getting assimilated into the society.

7.9   CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A society is made up of diverse cultures. It can be said that the culture of one society is distinct from the other society. The societal culture is a broad culture representing a society. But apart from the societal culture there are different subcultures, countercultures which occasionally lead to a culture shock.

7.9.1   Subcultures

It is a culture within a larger dominant culture. In many complex societies there are many subcultures. Schaefer and Lamm (1999) say that "*a subculture is a segment of society which shares a distinctive pattern of mores, folkways and values which differs from the pattern of the larger society*" (Schaefer and Lamm, 1999:81). Abhraham (2006) says that these subcultures are not partial or miniature cultures but are complete cultures which are unique to a particular social group. He gives the example of the Todas of Nilgiris, Nairs and Ezhavas of Kerala, Rajputs of Rajasthan; Bodos of Assam have cultures of their own. For him, the

distinct subcultures also evolve around occupations, political parties etc. Apart from this, there are deviant subcultures which are associated with the criminals gangs, the mafias, drug addicts. In American Society there may be New Englanders, Southerners, Texans etc. When we talk of subcultures, one issue that has gained prominence is "youth culture" or "youth subculture". Youth subculture implies that young are socialized into a type of values, standards, and a certain type of behavior pattern that distinguishes it from the adult society.

7.9.2 Countercultures

Though there are different subcultures in a society, these subcultures of a particular group are always not compatible with the dominant culture. Some subcultures challenge the prevailing culture and contrast the prevailing culture. For example, a group of dacoits have their own norms and standards which differ from the conventional prevailing patterns. The countercultures are very popular among the youth who generally find it difficult to cope up with the dominant culture which is shared by the older generations. In some countries an exclusive youth culture is being formed consisting of the youth population. This happens due to a lot of factors like the growing importance of technology, emergence of political radicals, hippie culture. Schaefer and Lamm (1999), give the example of a new counterculture that surfaced in Great Britain in 1968 were the skinheads who were young people with shaved heads, often sported tattoos, steel- toed shoes who had very less expectation of being a part of mainstream society. They championed racist ideologies and even engaged in vandalism, violence and even murder. The deviant subcultures can be appropriately called counter cultures.

7.9.3 Culture Shock

When people come across a unfamiliar culture and are unable to cope up with it they suffer maladjustment. In this situation they face a cultural shock. As our society has many subcultures we may not be aware of all of them and when we confront the ways of living of some other cultures we get disoriented. For example, when we go to a foreign country we may come across a particular way of life which is different from ours.

7.10 ETHNOCENTRISM

The term ethnocentrism was coined by William Graham Sumner to refer to a feeling that ones culture is always superior to other cultures. Sumner (1906) says "*ethnocentrism is the technical name of this view of things in which ones own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it*" (Sumner,1906:13). He further says that it leads people to exaggerate everything in their folkways which differentiate them from others. On the basis of this feeling, other cultures are judged in relation to one's own culture. The South Indians feel that their culture is superior to the North Indian culture. Similarly, people still feel that Africa is a country only inhabited by primitive tribals and is a Dark Continent. Ethnocentrism gives rise to a feeling of superiority in the sense that we judge other cultures as "wrong" rather than just the "other" or the other way. Ethnocentrism sometimes may lead to *xenophobia* or the fear of the foreign.

7.11   CULTURAL RELATIVISM

It is a process in which we evaluate a culture by its own standards or in its own context rather than from our own cultural lens. Abraham (2006) says that every element of the culture has a function unique to the group which shares the culture. Many customs and practices in a culture should not be judged as right or wrong, good or bad but are to be understood in terms of their function. Many Americans wonder why the Indian farmers refuse to eat their cows even if they starve. Cultural relativism may lead to *xenocentrism* which is the opposite of ethnocentrism. Xenocentrism is the belief that other cultures is superior to one's own culture.

7.12   MULTICULTURALISM

In order to understand what a multicultural society is we have to understand what an ethnic group is. In todays society there is the existence of multiple ethnic groups. Ethnic group is a community of people who share a common cultural background or they share certain common characteristics such as race, language, religion etc which differentiates them from other groups. Kymlicka (2012) defines multiculturalism as a legal and political accommodation of the ethnic diversity. He says multiculturalism emerged in the West as an attempt at replacing the older forms of ethnic and racial hierarchy with the ideals of democratic citizenship. Abraham (2006) says that "*it is a principle of coexistence of different cultures which fosters understanding and appreciation of different cultures*" (Abraham, 2012:72). A multicultural society is often equated with a 'salad bowl' in which all communities retain their distinct identities as opposed to a 'melting pot' in which the majority culture swallows up a minority culture.   Multiculturalism in recent times has become a highly debated concept with people questioning whether a multicultural society is possible?

7.13   GLOBALISATION AND CULTURE

Sunanda Sen (2007) says that "*globalization is associated with the integration of the world, with the markets breaking open the barriers across nation states in terms of flows of trade, finance, technology, knowledge, culture and even movements of people*"(Sen, 2007:1). An improvement in transportation and communication and a global contact between cultures, led to the transmission of values, ideas, meanings and even movement of people around the world. The phenomenon of globalisation has brought in significant changes in the economy, politics, culture etc of the world. Arjun Appadurai discusses about the global cultural flow. Appadurai (1996) mentions five dimensions of global cultural flow as *Ethnoscapes* – the landscapes of persons such as tourists, immigrants, refugees and the movement of persons who affect the politics of a particular place. *Technoscapes* – The global spread of technology both material and informational across boundaries. *Finanscapes* – The rapid flow of money through currency markets and stock exchange. *Mediascapes* – The distribution of electronic capabilities like television, films to produce and disseminate information. *Ideoscapes* – The exchange of ideologies and counter – ideologies which consists of notions of freedom, justice, rights, democracy, sovereignty.

7.14 CULTURE IN INDIAN CONTEXT

7.14.1 Cultural Diversity in India

The Indian society is very diverse and extremely complex. S.C Dube (1990) says that "*the Indian society had covered a span of five thousand years since the period of its first known civilization. During this long period several waves of immigrant representing different ethnic strains and linguistic families have merged into its population to contribute to its diversity, richness and vitality*" (Dube, 1990:1). The Indian society consists of a large number of languages, dialects, beliefs, rituals, customs, traditions etc. It has 22 national languages and hundred dialects. It is one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse nations of the world. There are even many languages which are till now not even recognized. Dube (1990) says that in the state of Nagaland itself there are nineteen languages. Religious faiths include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and even Baha'i faith which is practiced by a smaller number of communities with the Hindus constituting the majority. It has been the dominant religion and has put considerable influence on the Indian culture and society. People in India belong to different castes, sub-castes or *jati* and social classes. Each caste has their unique rituals, rules customs etc. Indian society is also characterized by sharp contrasts or inequalities. On the one hand there are very rich people the **elites** who are comparatively smaller in number and on the other hand there are vast majority of people who are poor or the **working classes**. In the middle are certain classes called the **middle classes**.

Moreover the Indian society is also a home to a number of tribal communities who have their distinct cultural identity and heritage. These diversities can be attributed to the existence of different cultural traditions like the classical, folk and the tribal. In other words these traditions can be divided into **little tradition** and **great tradition**, the concepts coined by Robert Redfield. The little traditions are unwritten and are transmitted orally. On the other hand great traditions are written traditions and are found in literature and religious texts. Though in the present context there has been much overlap between traditions and there has been an interaction between the two traditions.

Todays society creates division on the basis of division of labour, specialization of knowledge which separates the highly educated from the less educated. One of the most significant divisions among people is found in the field of educational attainment. Education which should be a great leveler instead it reproduces the existing cultural and social divisions. Pierre Bourdieu (1986) calls this **'cultural capital'**. Apart from this religious, spatial segregation also brings in variability of culture in terms of manners, speech, activities, recreation. Cultural diversity can be best understood when we talk about Indian Society.

7.14.2 Cultural Unity and Integration

 Inspite of these diversities in the Indian society discussed above, the Indian society is characterized by unity and this unity in diversity has become a part of India's self identity says S.C Dube. India is a secular state and has a constitution which ensures that the identities of different communities are preserved. Moreover the different facets of culture like religion, music, art and architecture, painting, dance and drama, habits and customs have contributed to the unity and integration

of India. Dube (ibid.) says that problems persists and many also have spawned in recent decades like ethnic movements, religious fundamentalism, linguistic conflicts, regionalism which pose a major challenge to the contemporary Indian society. The Indian society has witnessed a lot of invasions. Moreover libaralisation, privatization and globalization also has ushered in a lot of changes. But these have not led to the disintegration of the Indian society. It can be said that despite a lot of diversity, dissent, protests there is an underlying unity derived from its unique culture which is the cornerstone of Indian society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What are the different ways in which cultural change is brought about? Write in four lines.

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2) What do you understand by cultural diversity? Why is Indian society so diverse?

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7.15 LET US SUM UP

Culture and Society are closely interrelated. Society is a broad aspect and culture is a part of it. Society refers to persons and groups and culture refers to behaviour patterns, the sum total of man's activities, thoughts, beliefs, attitude and all that is characteristics of man as a social being. Culture has been defined by different scholars differently as it is highly variable and differs from society to society. Though animals adapt to their environment, but the adaptation pattern of both humans and animals are very different. As a result of this there is a difference between culture and biology. Culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation through language, an important element of culture. Culture is also conveyed through customs, beliefs, norms, sanctions, values, laws, institutions. Hence, culture is social, symbolic and dynamic. The distinguishing elements of culture are language, customs, belief, norms, sanctions, values and law. All cultures have basic structure like the cultural traits, complexes, culture area. It is through these structures communication is possible in a society. It can also be

contrasted to civilisation which is the later phase of culture. Culture is dynamic and is also subject to change. It is not static. It cannot remain isolated for long periods of time. As cultures come in contact with each other, cultural changes happen due to innovation, diffusion, acculturation, accumulation etc. Culture is also very diverse. The diversity of culture is seen both in primitive as well as modern societies. The diversity of culture is also visible in the Indian context and it can be said that India is a land of diverse cultures. It can be said that there are various subcultures, countercultures to a dominant culture. Failure to adjust to a dominant culture leads to culture shock. Each culture has its own uniqueness. We tend to relate our own culture with others and sometimes treat our culture as superior to others. But inspite of the diversity and uniqueness of cultures, there is coexistence between different cultures which seem to create a multicultural society. There are certain cultural universals which are common to all cultures. This brings about cultural uniformity and integration. In today's world of globalisation, there is a global cultural flow as a result of which there is a transmission of cultural traits in the world.

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UNIT 8   SOCIAL GROUPS AND COMMUNITY*

8.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to understand:

- To give a definition of community;

- To identify the bases and elements of community;

- To explain the relation between community and association;

- To discuss the characteristics of community;

- To describe social groups and their different classifications;

- To explain the major concept of social group;

- To describe the nature and types of social groups; and

- To discuss the different aspects of social groups.

8.1   INTRODUCTION

Wherever the members of any group, small or large, live together in such a way that they share, not this or that interest but the basic conditions of a common life, we call that group a community. A community is essentially an area of social living. It is marked by some degree of social coherence.

Thus, community is a circle of interwoven relationships. Within the ranges of a community the members may carry on their economic, political, religious,

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educational and other activities. Hence community is the total organization of social life within a defined social space; e. g. Village, tribe, city, district.

Group means a collection of human beings who have social relationships with one another. Social relationship involves some degree of reciprocity as well as awareness of mutuality. On the basis, of this criterion, many of those divisions of a population that are sometimes named social groups may not be so. For general understanding we regard any collection of two or more individuals to be a group, whose members identify and interact with each other in a personalized manner. The small size of some groups (often no more than 15-20 People) enables all the members to know and to interact with the help of shared values and norms. As a result the members of a group feel strong inter-personal bonds among themselves and with the group as a whole. There are countless kinds of groups in contemporary societies, including families, friendship cliques, work crews, teenage gangs, sport teams, juries, rap groups and committees of all sorts. All of us are members of numerous social groups that influences or shape many of our daily activities. The family is an extremely important group in most of our lives, since bonds of love and affection, commitments, marriage and kinship link us closely within the family. Even if we do not live with all the members of our family or interact with them on daily basis, we commonly maintain these interpersonal ties through letters, phone calls and visits. Categorizing groups as either primary or secondary is a convenient way of indicating the depth and inclusiveness of their social relationship.

8.2 DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY

1) According to Bogardus, Community is a social group with some degree of 'we feeling' and 'living in a given area.

2) For Kingsley Davis, Community is the smallest territorial group that can embrace all aspects of social life.

3) Ginsberg defines Community as a group of social beings living a common life including all the infinite variety and complexity of relations which result from that common life which constitutes it.

8.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY

All communities need not be self-sufficient. Some communities are all-inclusive and independent of others. Among primitive people, some communities of no more than a hundred persons, (Examples: Yurok tribes of USA) which are almost isolated. But modern communities, especially large ones are much less self-contained. Economic and political interdependence rather than kinship and family relationships, is a major characteristic of our modern communities. Apart from this, a community has the following characteristics:

1) Definite territory

2) Population

3) Close social relationship

4) Cultural similarity

5) We feeling

6) Organized interaction

Great and Little Communities

In spite of the expansion of the community to the dimensions of the nation and the world, the smaller communities still remain as viable units. The nation or the world state does not eliminate the village or neighbourhood, though they may be changed in character. As social beings, we need smaller as well as the larger circles of community. The great community brings us opportunity, stability, economy, the constant stimulus of a richer, more varied culture. But living in the smaller community we find the nearer, more intimate satisfactions. The larger community provides peace and protection, patriotism and sometimes war, automobiles and the radio. The smaller provides friends and friendship, gossip and face to face rivalry, local pride and abode. Both are essential to the full life process.

Bases of Community

The mark of a community is that one's life may be lived wholly within it. One cannot live wholly within a business organization or a church; one can live wholly within a tribe or a city. The basic criterion of community then is that all of one's social relationships may be found within it. A community then is an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence. The bases of community are; 1. Locality and 2.Community Sentiment.

1) **Locality:** A community always occupies a geographical area. Locality is the physical basis of community. Even a nomad community, a band of gypsies, for example, has a local though changing habitation. At every moment, its members occupy together a definite place on the earth's surface. Most communities are settled and derive a strong bond of solidarity from physical proximity. A group of people form a community only when they begin to reside in a definite locality. In contrast with society, a community is, to an extent, locally limited. Living together facilitates people to develop social contacts, gives protection, safety and security. Most communities are settled and derive from the conditions of their locality a strong bond of solidarity. However, to some extent this local bond has been weakened in the modern world by the extending facilities of communication; this is especially apparent in the penetration into rural areas of dominant urban patterns. But the extension of communication is itself the condition of a larger but still territorial community.

2) **Community Sentiment**: People occupying specific local areas which lack the social coherence necessary to give them a community character in today's world. For example, the residents of a ward or district or a large city may lack sufficient contacts or common interests to instill conscious identification with the area. Such a 'neighborhood' is not a community because it does not possess a feeling of belonging together – it lacks community sentiment. Locality though a necessary condition, is not enough to create a community. A community is undoubtedly a common living. Community sentiment means a feeling of belonging together. The members develop a sense of 'we-feeling'. It means a kind of identification with the group. Without a sense of

identification, a sense of awareness, a sense of living and sharing some common interests in life there cannot be any community.

8.4   ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

1) **We-Feeling:** This is the feeling that leads men to identify themselves with others so that when they say "we" there is no thought of distinction and when they say "ours" there is no thought of division. This 'we-sentiment' is found wherever men have common interest, and thus throughout group life, but is revealed nowhere more clearly than where the interest is the territorial community.

2) **Role-Feeling:** This feeling involving subordination to the whole on the part of the individual is fostered by training and habituation in the daily discipline of life, so that each person feels he/she a role to play, his own function to fulfill in the reciprocal exchanges of the social scene.

3) **Dependency Feeling:** This refers to the individual sense of dependence upon the community as a necessary condition of his own life. This involves both a physical dependence, since his/her material wants are satisfied within it and a psychological dependence, since the community is the greater "home" that sustains him/her, embodying all that is at least familiar, if not wholly congenial to his life. The community is a refuge from the solitude and fears that accompany that individual isolation so characteristic of our modern life.

Criterion of Community

We are members, mostly, of a very small community, though we may be living in big cities. This is because our interests are cut down within a narrow area. On the contrary, we may live in a village and yet belong to a community as wide as the whole area of our civilization or even wider. No civilized community, as MacIver points out, has walls around it to cut it off completely from a larger one, whatever 'iron-curtains' may be drawn by the rulers of this nation or that. Communities exist within greater communities: the town within a region, the region within a nation and the nation within the world community which again, is in the process of development.

A community then is an area of social living marked by some degree of social coherence. According to McIver, the mark of a community is that one's life may be live wholly within it. One can't line wholly within a business organization of a Church; one can live wholly only within a tribe or a city.

There may arises some questions such as, in certain condition some people gather for a long period of time, then will this gathering be called community or not? Following three set of questions are given regarding the condition given above. Among these questions first two get affirmative answer while the last one, negative

1) Shall we call monastery or convent or prison a community in our sense? These establishments are territorially based and they are, indeed, areas of social living. Many, however, would deny them a community status because

of the restricted range of functions of the inhabitants. But are human functions always limited by the nature of one's community? We should be inclined to answer this query in the affirmative.

2) Shall we call immigrant groups, which in the midst of large American cities cherish their own customs and speak their own language, communities? According to McIver such groups clearly possess the requirements.

3) Shall we call a social caste, the members of which exclude their fellow citizens from the more intimate social relationships, a community? Here the negative answer is more appropriate because, in order to satisfy our definition, the community group must by itself occupy a particular location. A social caste has social coherence, no doubt, but it lacks the community's territorial basis.

As a conclusion, community has been defined in following ways –

a) A grouping of people

b) Within a geographic area

c) With a division of labour into specialized and interdependent functions

d) With a common culture and a social system which organizes their activities

e) Whose members are conscious of their unity and belonging to the community

f) Whose members can act collectively in an organized manner.

8.5   COMMUNITY AND ASSOCIATION

One of the most important divisions of social groups is an association. An association is a group of people united for a specific purpose or a limited number of purposes. Such is an army or a school, the object of which is to defend the nation or to impart knowledge.

A community on the other hand, is a permanent social group embracing a totality of ends or purpose. In contrast with an association the life of the members of a community is wholly lived init; here they find all their social relations, while outside it there is little but they need.

The task of deciding whether a group is a community or an association is not always easy. The greater the plurality of ends of an association the nearer it approaches the concept of community, though that may never be reached. Thus in India the so-called communities, which gave rise to the problem of communalism, are not communities in the sociological sense. They are rather ethnical groups within which certain social and religious interests are satisfied; but owing to the dependence of these groups on one another and on the larger provincial or national unit, they cannot fulfill the definition of a community. For the samereason a religious community or an *Ashram* cannot be strictly called a community though it is largely self-contained. Yet many of the Utopian communities of the USA in pioneer times and not a few Indian villages may be considered as real communities inasmuch as their inhabitant live a simple self-contained life separated from the rest.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Define the concept of community. Explain various elements of community sentiments.

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2) What are the characteristics of community? Describe its various bases with examples.

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3) Distinguish between community and association in brief.

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4) Explain the basic aspects of great and small communities

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8.6 DEFINITION OF SOCIAL GROUP

Definition of Social Group

1) Albion Small defines a group as 'any number of people, larger or smaller, between whom such relations are discovered that they must be thought of together.'

2) Bogardus defines 'a social group may be thought of as a number of persons, two or more, who have some common objects of attention, who are stimulating to each other, who have common loyalty and participate in similar activities.'

3) Green Arnold defines 'a group is an aggregate of individuals which persists in time which has one or more interests and activities in common and which is organized.'

4) Williams defines 'a social group is a given aggregate of people playing inter-related roles and recognized by themselves or others as a unit of interaction.'

8.7   BASES OF CLASSIFICATION OF GROUPS

Sociology considers human groups its primary unit of analysis. If asked to describe the bases on which social groups exist, different answers may exist for different kinds of groups.There are several criteria by which social groups may be classified. They, for instance, include the nature of their interests, the degree of organization, the extent of their permanence, the kind of contact among the members and the like. Ginsberg also takes the same view and says, 'Groups can be classified in numerous ways, size andspatial distribution. Permanence and inclusiveness of the relationships on which they rest, mode of formation, type of organization and so forth.'

Thus, while some sociologists give a simple basis for classifying groups, others have given an elaborate classificatory scheme.

George Simmel considered size as the criterion for classification of groups. Since the individual with his societal conditioning is the most elementary unit of sociology, Simmel began with the nomad. He took the single person as a focus of group relationships and pursued his analysis through the 'dyad' and the 'triad' and other smaller collectivities on the one hand and the large scale groups on the other.

Dwight Sanderson takes structure as the basis for classifying groups. He classifies them into involuntary, voluntary and delegate groups.

C.H. Cooley divides groups into two types, namely primary group and secondary group on the basis of the kind of contact.

F.H. Giddings classifies groups into genetic or congregate on the basis of the type of relationship.

W.G. Sumner makes a distinction between the in-group and out-group on the basis of consciousness of kind.

Geroge Hasen classifies groups on the basis of their relations to other groups into unsocial, pseudo-social or pro-social.

Miller divides social groups into horizontal and vertical groups.

8.7.1 Primary Groups and Secondary Groups

The term 'Primary Group' was coined by Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929), in 1909 in his book 'Social Organization'. A primary group is relatively small. Members of this group generally have face to face contacts. They have intimate and cooperative relationship as well as strong loyalty. The relationships between the members are ends in themselves because members derive pleasure and enjoyment merely by associating with one another. They have no other end or goals in view. The primary group comes to an end when one or more members leave it they can't be substituted by others. The best example of a primary group is the family or the friendship or peer group.

Secondary Groups: Secondary groups in several respects are the opposite of primary groups. As they are in general large groups, members of the secondary groups maintain relatively limited, formal and impersonal relationships with one another. Secondary groups are specific or specialized Interest groups. It generally has a well-defined division of labor. Secondary groups may continue irrespective of whether its original members continue to be its members or not. A football team, a music club, a factory, an army etc. are examples of secondary groups.

Difference between Primary and Secondary Group

1) The size of the primary group is small; Secondary group is bigger.

2) There exists a personal and intimate relationship among members of a primary group while the relationship among the members of the secondary group is relatively impersonal.

3) There is much face to face communication among members of a primary group while in the secondary group the members have little face to face communication.

4) Members have a strong sense of loyalty of 'we' feeling in a primary group but in case of a secondary group anonymity prevails.

5) Informality is most common in a primary group. The group. The group usually does not have a name, officers or regular meeting place, but in secondary group such formality prevails.

6) Primary group are relationship-oriented but secondary groups are goal oriented.

7) In primary groups, the relations are inclusive and that is why the absence of one person cannot fulfilled by another. Inclusiveness of relations is not found in secondary groups and therefore a person can very easily be substituted for another.

8) Virtues like love, sympathy, mutual help etc. flourish in the primary groups while secondary groups promote self-interest and individuality.

9) Group decisions are mare traditional and non-rational in primary group while in secondary group decisions are more rational and the emphasis is on efficiency.

10) The position of a person is fixed according to his/her birth-order and age in the primary group while it is fixed according to roles in the secondary groups.

11) Primary groups are primary in time and importance. As such, they are the foundation stones of the society while the secondary groups are always secondary in importance.

Primary and Secondary Relations in Modern World

Among primitive people and in villages and small town communities, individuals are linked together for the most part by primary bonds – the other members of the group are known as persons, not merely as representatives of positions in the formal order. Thus, for his apprentices the member of the medieval guild was more than a "boss"; he was a counsellor, disciplinarian, teacher, friend (or enemy) and so on.

Task Group

Some groups are neither clearly primary nor secondary but are intermediate, with some features of each. Task groups (or task oriented groups) are small groups formed to do some task or set of task (Nixon, 1979). They include work teams, committees, and panel of many sorts. Some scholars consider the task group the most common form of group of our society (Fisher, 1980). Task group resemble primary groups in being small, for only small groups are efficient work units. This is why large labour forces are broken down into small teams. Task group also resemble primary groups in that interaction is typically face-to-face and informal. But the task group contacts are impersonal, segmental and utilitarian. Members are not much interested in one another as persons and are not concerned with the entire person but just with work performance in the task group.

8.7.2 Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

Somewhat similar to the concept of primary and secondary groups are the concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, developed by Ferdinand Tonnies (1887). These two terms translate roughly as 'Community' and 'Society'. The Gemeinschaft is a social system in which most relationships are personal or traditional and often both. A good example is the feudal manor, a small community held   together bya combination of personal relationships and status obligation. Although great inequality existed, the lord of the manor was personally known to his subjects, while their duties to him were balanced by his obligation for their welfare.

In the Gesellschaft, the society of tradition is replaced with the society of contract. In this society neither personal attachment nor traditional rights and duties are important. The relationships between people are determined by bargaining and defined in written agreements. Relatives are often separated because people move about and live among strangers. Commonly accepted codes of behavior are largely replaced by rational or 'cold-blooded' calculation of profit and loss. Thus in the Gemeinschaft, primary-group relationships were dominant, while in the Gesellschaaft, secondary-group relationships gained in importance.

Gemeinschaft Relationships Gesellschaft relationships

1) Personal   Impersonal

2) Informal   Formal, Contractual

3) Traditional   Utilitarian

4) Sentimental	Realistic, 'hard-boiled'
5) General	Specialized

8.7.3 In Group and Out Group

These twin terms were introduced by WG Sumner to refer insiders in a 'we' relationship, in contrast with outsiders to the relationship. Sumner used the term 'in-group' in his celebrated book *Folkways (1906).*There are some groups to which I belong, my family, my religion, my university, my clique, my profession, my sex, my nation – any group which precede with the pronoun, "my". These are in-group, because I feel, I belong to them. There are other groups to which I do not belong other families, cliques, occupations, races, nationalities, religions, the other sex – these are out groups, for I am outside them.

The simplest societies live in small, isolated bands which are usually clans of kinsfolk. It was kinship which located one's in-group and out-group and when two strangers met, the first thing they had to do was establish the relationship. If kinship could be established they were friends, both members of the in group. If no relationship could be established, then in many societies they were enemies and acted accordingly. In modern society, people belong to so many groups that their in-group and out-group relationship may overlap. For example, in a hostel there are various in-groups who consider others as members of out-groups. However, in a cricket match against another hostel, all the hostel inmates will behave as in-group and cheer their team on the field.

In-groups and out-groups are important then, because they affect behaviour. From fellow members of an in-group we expect recognition loyalty and helpfulness. From out-group our expectation varies with the kind of out group. From some out-group we expect hostility; from others, a more or less friendly competition; from still others, indifference. From the same out group, we may expect neither hostility nor indifference yet in our behavior a difference undeniably remains. For example, the 12 year boy who shuns girls grows up to become a romantic lover and spends most of his life in matrimony. Yet when men and women meet on social occasions they tend to split into sex groups, perhaps because each sex is bored by many of the conversational interests of the other. The clique is one kind of in-group. Thus, our behavior is affected by the particular kind of in-group or out-group which is involved. However, it should also be obvious that in-group and out-group are not actually groups in-so-far as people create them in their use of the pronouns 'we' and 'they' and develop a kind of attitude towards these groups. Nevertheless, this distinction is an important formal distinction because it enables us to construct two significant sociological principles.

a) The in-group members tend to stereotype those who are in the out-group. Thus the people of Delhi may have stereotypes of those who live in Bihar or UP. The significant thing is that such stereotypes are usually formed by considering what appears to the members of the in-group as the least respectable traits to be found in the members of the out-group. The people of each linguistic state in India have tendency to form a stereotype of the people of other linguistic states. A Punjabi, for instance, has stereotype or a generalized perception of what a Guajarati do not fit into that stereotype. In fact, social distance (a concept developed by Bogardus) encourages such categorization and discourages individual differentiation. Knowledge of this

principle helps to considerably reduce the unfortunate effects of such categorization into stereotypes and to demolish the barriers that obstruct the easy communication between people.

b) Any threat, real or imaginary, from an out-group tends to bind the members of the in-group against the members of the out-group. This may be illustrated with references to our experience in the family situation. Mecinus, the Chinese sage, said many years ago: "Brothers and sisters who may quarrel within the walls of their home, will bind themselves together to drive away any intrude".

8.7.4 Reference Group

Reference group refers to any group accepted as model or guide for our judgments and actions. However, it needs further elaboration for clarity. In some situations, we conform not to the norms to which we belong but rather to those of the groups to which we would like to be identified.

A reference group may not be an actual group. It may even be an imaginary one. Any group is a reference group for someone if his conception of it, which may or may not be realistic, is part of his frame of reference for assessment of himself or of his situation.

1) Thus, an individual who is anxious to move up the social ladder usually, has a tendency to conform to the norms of etiquette and speech of a higher social class than his own because he seeks identification with this class. 'Sanskritization' in the Indian context, is one of the best illustrations of the concept of reference group where people in the upper ladder of the caste hierarchy are taken as a 'model' and imitated by those below them. For members of a particular group, another group is a reference group if any of the following circumstances prevail 1. When members of the first group aspire to membership of the second group, the second group becomes the reference group for the next. For example, IAS trainees serve as the reference group for many of the university students in India.

2) When members of the first group strive to be like the members of the second group in some respect, the second group serves as the Positive reference group of the first. It is to be noted here that the first group wants to be like the second group. For example, the non-Brahmins, in some parts of India have a tendency to emulate the ways of behavior of the Brahmins in order to acquire the prestige of the Brahmins (as noted by Srinivas).

3) When the members of the first group derive some satisfaction from being unlike the members of the second group in some respect, and even strive to maintain the difference between themselves and the members of the second group, the latter group is the Negative reference group of the first. For example, in USA, the whites strive to remain unlike the African Americans and in this case the African Americans become the negative reference group for the whites.

4) When without necessarily striving to be like or unlike or to belong to the second group, the members of the first group appraise their own group or themselves by using the second group or its members as a standard for comparison; the second group becomes the reference group of the first. For

examples, in some situation the non-teaching employees of the colleges are found to assess their own performance or record attendance in reference to those of the teachers.

Vertical and Horizontal Groups

A vertical group (concepts by Miller) consists of members from all walks of life, while a horizontal group consists mainly of members from one social class. Occupational groups of doctors, electricians, engineers etc. are examples of the first, while caste groups are examples of vertical groups.

Institutional and Non-Institutional Groups

Institutional group are those which function through rituals, symbols, officers, codes of conduct, regulatory power including power to punish. The nation is an institutional group. The state as an association of citizens for power is an institutional group in contrast to picnic party which is a non-institutional group.

Contractual and Non-Contractual Groups

The contractual groupsborn with a contract within a definition of power and responsibilities of the members as well as of the group. It is a formal group with definite tendency toward institutionalization. The framers of Indian Constitution, the corporation, a labor union are some examples of contractual group. The non-contractual groups are students, passengers on a train etc.

Voluntary and Involuntary Groups

A voluntary group is one which a person joins his own. It is his option whether he wants to remain a member or not. For example, a club membership is voluntary. An involuntary group is one which is based on kinship or caste group and it is beyond own will an example of involuntary group members.

Informal and Formal Groups

An informal group is one in which a number of persons work together to attain a common goal. There is no set of formal rules and regulations to govern the relationship. It has no definite structure. Crowd is an example of an informal group.

A formal group consists of a number of persons working together toward a given goal according to a set of rules under the direction of a set of officers. It has a definite structure. A bureaucratic group is an example of a formal group.

8.8   SOCIAL GROUP AND COMMUNITY DIFFERENCES

	Social Group		Community
1)	Group is an artificial creation.	1)	Community is a natural growth.
2)	Group is formed to realize some.	2)	Community includes the whole circle of social life.
3)	Membership of group is voluntary.	3)	Membership of community is compulsory.
4)	Group is comparatively temporary.	4)	Community is comparatively permanent.
5)	Group is a part of community.	5)	Community is a whole.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Define social group. What are objectives of social group?

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2) What are the different types of Social groups? Describe with examples.

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3) Explain basic aspects of In-group and Out-group groups.

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4) What are the bases of classification of Social groups? Explain.

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8.9 LET US SUM UP

This unit has explained clearly some important and basic concepts of Community and social group. Community is the most inclusive grouping of humans, marked by the possibility for the individual member to live his life wholly within it. Community need to be self-sufficient and in fact is decreasingly so as civilization becomes more interdependent. This unit briefly examined the two bases of all communities, the occupation of a territorial area and the shared possession of a community sentiment.

Basic concepts of social group, as explained in this unit, by group it means any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationship with one another. Social relationships involve some degree of reciprocity between those related, some measure of mutual awareness as reflected in the attitudes of the members of the group. On the basis of this criterion, many of those divisions of a population named social groups. The basis for the classification of groups, then, size or some quality of group interaction or some quality of group interest or the degree of organization, or some of these combination. The classification of major types of groupings is based primarily upon the range and nature of interests and the degree of group organization, while other criteria enter into the distinctions between the subtypes.

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UNIT 9   ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS*

9.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the meaning of Institutions and Organisations;

- Understand the difference between Institutions and Organisations;

- Identify different kinds of Organisations and Institutions presently structuring society;

- Understand perspectives on Organisations;

- Understand different types of Organisations; and

- Understand Organisational Behaviour.

9.1   INTRODUCTION

This unit looks at institutions and organisations as units of society. It highlights the relationship between society, institutions and organisations. It further examines in details what is meant by institutions, organisations and organisational

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behaviour. It also captures the various sociological perspectives on the idea of institutions and organisations, and their relationship with the society.

Society is made up of individuals and collectives and a sum total of all the relationships that exist between them. Society, however, needs to order itself through organising its various constituents. One of the ways in which society orders itself is through institutions and organisations. Institutions and organisations provide the society a fair amount of consistency and predictability which is essential for the stability of the society.

Institutions are set of rules that structure social interaction (Jack Knight, 1992). Institutions can be understood as code of conduct or a set of rules and guidelines for human activity. Institutions structure human interaction through stated or implied rules that set expectations. Some examples of institutions are law, education, marriage, and family.

Organisations are specific types of institutions with more clearly defined and stated boundary that separate members from non-members. Organisations are singular in that they are characterised by its members being tied in a chain of command. Organisations clearly demarcate the responsibilities, authority and spheres of influence. They also arrange their members in a hierarchy of roles with a sovereign in-charge. Some examples of organisations are trade unions, schools, and courts.

Consider the examples of education as an institution and school as an example of organisation. Every known society formulates some ways in which it trains and cultivates the faculties of its young ones, constructs new knowledge and transmits the existing knowledge. In doing so, it organises human interactions and human activity within the society. Education becomes a way in which the young are made to understand their roles, expectations and duties as members of the society. All societies (clans, tribes, agrarian, industrial) have devised some or the other way of transmission of knowledge, values and skills among their younger members. This objective can be fulfilled through various means such as apprenticeship, *gurukulas* (traditional residential education system in India), mentorship and training.

9.2   INSTITUTION

1) Institutions are components of the society that help to maintain order and stability through structuring human interaction and activity. Institutions manifest themselves in terms of overt or implicit rules that structure human interactions. Institutions function through the members of a society being socialised into them. This makes the study of institutions critical to the field of sociology. Emile Durkheim referred to sociology as the scientific study of principle institutions. Institutions such as religion, family, education et cetera are still critical to the discipline of sociology.

Let us consider a few scholarly definitions of institutions to acquaint with the meaning of institution:

According to Morris Ginsberg (1921), "Institutions are definite and sanctioned forms or modes of relationship between social beings, in respect to one another or to some external object".

Robert Morrison MacIver1 defines Institutions as "established forms or conditions of procedures characteristic of group activity".

William Graham Sumner (1906:53) suggests that "an institution consists of a concept, idea, notion, doctrine or interest and a structure".

Bronislaw Malinowski 2 argues that, "every institution centres around a fundamental need, permanently unites a group of people in a co-operational task and has its particular body of doctrines and its technique or craft. Institutions are not correlated simply and directly to new functions. One need not receive one's satisfaction in one institution."

Jonathan Turner defines institution as "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment" (Turner 1997: 6).

From the above definitions we learn that 1) institutions may not be physical entities but visible in the co-ordinated patterns of behaviour of members of a society. 2) Institutions can help explain the behaviour of individual members. 3) Institutions have both restrictive and enabling potential in that it both constraints the choices available to an individual and defines the ways in which choices are to be exercised. Consider a situation whereby two individuals decide to live together the institution of marriage both defines and constraints the way in which they exercise their desire to live with each other. 4) Institutions function to forge and reiterate solidarity among members of a society. 5) It structures the interaction between members.

Institutions can be identified, in terms of the regular and consistent patterns of behaviours that are structured through norms and sanctions. While manifest behaviours may be read as observable form of institution. Institutions cannot be reduced merely to associated behaviour; for if the associated behaviour were to get disrupted that may not necessarily mean that the institution has ceased to exist. There are no clear boundaries that can be drawn between norms and institutions but institutions are distinct in that they are consistent and have generalised normative expectation. These normative social expectations are seen as obligatory and are supplemented by strong sanctions against aberrations. For example, the biological fact of reproduction has been institutionalised into marriage and family as institutions. Human reproduction outside of the sanctioned institutions of marriage and family would receive general discouragement and in some cases, a strong backlash. Therefore, institutions seek to assign and define the social roles that members of a particular society must fulfil and adhered to. Institutions may therefore be understood as an ensemble of such roles. For instance, the institution of family expects a heterosexual man to adopt certain roles and responsibilities and the heterosexual woman to adopt other roles and responsibilities. The children in a family also have socially defined roles and responsibilities. However, such delineation of roles and responsibilities is not final and absolute. The institution of family has been attacked for its assumptions about the roles of 'man' and 'woman', of sexuality and division of labour.

Institutions function well in so far as they maintain stable patterns of expectation, thought and action. The consistency and synchronisation among these elements

determine the stability of the institution. It is often argued that institutions have equilibrium like qualities, in that, when disturbed, institutions reinstate their stability by reinforcing order as purpose or preference. Repeated and consistent behaviour that has rule-like qualities assumes normative weight and act in ways that stabilise the equilibrium status of the institution.

Sociologists consider institutions not singularly as stable static phenomena but as process. Institutions have been understood in terms of the processes of institutionalisation, de-institutionalisation, and re-institutionalisation. They are generally considered as the "more enduring features of social life" (Giddens, 1984: 24).

Origin of the Term

The term became popular through its usage in economics where it signified constraints on human endeavour of utility maximisation due to parallel efforts towards utility maximisation by other members. The two economists who are associated with its usage are Oliver Williamson and D.C. North(Give the references). As you may notice its usage in economics is quite different from its usage in sociology. While, the usage of the term in economics is of little significance to sociology, the sociological conception of institutions, institutional change and institutionalisation have been significant to the discipline of economics. To economics, institution in the sociological sense can help predict and explain individual behaviours. Unlike its original usage in economics one can start at the understanding of institution and comprehend individual behaviour, which is what the sociological concept of institution suggests.

After its initial usage in economics, the term then spread into sociology. The first sociologist credited with the usage of the term is Herbert Spencer. Spencer suggested that society is an organism and the institutions are all organs of the society.

9.2.1 Purpose of Institutions

German Sociologist Arnold Gehlen (1980) suggested that humans seek to supplement their instinctual world with a cultural world. He suggests that this feeling of incompleteness and the attempt to supplement explains the emergence of institutions. In his book '*The Social Construction of Reality*' (1967) Thomas Luckman elaborates this idea and suggests that human beings compensate for their biological underdevelopment through surrounding themselves with a social canopy or religion. Institutions therefore make human life meaningful through connecting human beings to their natural environment with the help of intermediate social relationships and symbolic constructs.

9.2.2 Types of Institutions

Sociologists generally classify institutions into five clusters of major institutions. They are:

- Economic Institutions: These are the institutions that correspond to production, consumption and distribution of goods and services.
- Institutions of Social Stratification: These are the institutions that regulate and control differential access to social status and prestige.

- Kinship, Marriage and Family: These institutions control and regulate reproduction.

- Political Institutions: They are concerned with regulation and distribution of power.

Cultural Institutions: They regulate religious, symbolic and cultural practices.

9.3 PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Social institutions are systematic beliefs and norms that are centred on fulfilment of basic social needs. These social needs pertain to replacement of members of the society (reproduction and family) and preserving order. Social institutions provide insights into the structure of the society. For instance, the norms and beliefs surrounding kinship and incest help understand the structure of a society. The structure of the society becomes apparent through the constraints that these norms mandate as well as their adaptive feature to serve the interest of the members of the society.

Social institutions have been studied by sociologists in varied ways. While some perceive social institutions to be critical parts that must function well for the overall society to function well, others may look at social institutions as establishing a status quo that under optimum conditions causes friction. Below we look at some of these perspectives. All of these perspectives highlights some aspect of social institutions that may deepen our understanding of social institutions.

9.3.1 Functionalist Perspective

Functionalist perspective highlights the role and service that institutions play with regards to the larger society. The functionalist perspective looks at institution as part of a whole that is society. The value of an institution is understood solely in relation to the service it pays for the overall wellbeing of the society. Functionalist perspective suggests that social institutions fulfil the needs of the society through five ways. The functional needs of a society that institutions fulfil are: 1) replacement of personnel that the society loses as a result of death caused by ageing, disease, war or migration. This is done through adding new members by the means of immigration, annexation or sexual reproduction. 2) Socialization and education of new members. 3) Production, circulation and distribution of goods and services among members of the society. 4) Providing an order to day to day interactions and governance while simultaneously preserving this order through defending against outside attacks threatening the order of the society with disruption. 5) Promoting a sense of belongingness and purpose by allowing people to form and reassert allegiance to associations such as religion, culture, language, et cetera.

9.3.2 Conflict Perspective

The conflict perspective agrees with the functionalist perspective in so far as to admit that institutions fulfil basic needs of a society. However, conflict perspective argues that institutions work to establish hierarchies and perpetuate inequalities. For instance, conflict perspective has stressed how a major institution such as education has worked to privilege the powerful groups within a society. Conflict perspective further stresses that institutions work towards maintenance of

privilege. Relatedly, conflict perspective highlights that institutions are both exclusionary and oppressive to those that the institutions disadvantages. For instance, conflict perspective stresses that women within the institution of family face labour exploitation. It has also shed light on the racist, gendered and overall conservative character of social institutions. Conflict perspective attacks the assumptions inherent to norms and expectations embodied by institutions. It brings forth the unfair power distribution within the seemingly placid norms of institutions.

9.3.3 Interactionist Perspective

Interactionist perspective, unlike the former two (viz., Functionalist Perspective and Conflict Perspective) is interested in the microcosmic view of how institutions play out in actual interactions. It seeks to capture patterns of how institutions frame and feature in interactions and everyday behaviours. Interactionist perspective argues that institutions frame our daily interactions and behaviours. Our day-to-day interactions and behaviours are conditioned by the roles and statuses that we are accorded (and accept), the groups we are assigned (and promise allegiance) to within the institutions that we function in. For instance, the role of a teacher within the institution of education frames the interactions in specific ways. It can only make sense in relation to the roles of students, parents and other stakeholders defined by the institution of education. The institution of education derives its significance from the various roles and statuses that people agree to play and carry out in a consistent manner in their day-to-day interactions.

9.4 ORGANISATION

Institutions are not necessarily stated but they are rather normative expectations that structure interactions between members of a society. Organisations, on the other hand, are formal bodies with concrete structures. It is a physical entity with clearly defined boundaries distinguishing members from non-members. So, while institutions are formally unstated, organisations are formally stated bodies. Institutions are socially embedded consistent and systematic set of rules. Organisations are special case of institutions that has specific features. Institutions are therefore, like the rules of football. They frame the way in which the game has to be played. A good example of organisation in the context of football would be Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) also called International Federation of Association Football.

We can also consider other examples of organisations such as Indian postal services, Indian coffee house, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Delhi Police, Khadi Gram Udyog. What can be identified as some of the common features of all these organisations?

Organisations, despite differences in type, size, spread, efficiency and specificity of goals, all the above mentioned organisations work to facilitate large scale operations. They have clearly stated and defined goals that they pursue an established hierarchy of authority and chain of command. Organisations can also be seen in terms of social action in so far as the organisation has the ability of making decisions and acting upon at least, some of them (Coleman, 1982; Hindess, 1989).

Modern industrial societies are peculiar for their dependence on sophisticated large-scale organisations for ensuring order. The organisations of modern industrial and post-industrial societies are much larger in scale, size and scope. It is argued that with increase in specialised division of labour, organisations also become more sophisticated.

9.5   PERSPECTIVES ON ORGANISATIONS

There are various perspectives on the nature and working of an organisation. These perspectives would help us develop a better understanding of what organisations are and how they work.

9.5.1   Amitai Etzioni

Amitai Etzioni et al (1980) defines organisations as "social units that are predominantly oriented to the attainment of specific goals". Etzioni suggests the following as the characteristics of organisations:

1) Divisions of labour/ power/ responsibilities, such divisions being deliberately planned to achieve certain goals.

2) The presence of power-centres which control the productivity, monitor its efficiency and re-pattern its structure upon review, and

3) Substitution of personnel, maintaining healthy employee/participant pool and others who are transferred and/or promoted (Etzioni, 1964).

Etzioni (1961) divides the organisations on the basis of the power relationship between the people administering the organisation and lower level participants. The relationship may be based on either: 1) compliance, that is the lower level participants agree to meet the demands placed on them by their superior authorities because of fear of sanctions or because they are coerced. 2) Utilitarian consideration, that is, they are getting returns that are of value to them. 3) Shared ideas and values, that is, both the administrative group as well as the lower level participants share similar assumptions, norms, values and ideas.

Etzioni's classification draws upon the element of 'compliance', which Etzioni highlights that this element of compliance is contingent on two elements. The kind of power wielded by those who take the decisions and the kind of involvement of the lower level participants in the organisation. Etzioni suggests that power is of three types coercive (employing fear and force), remunerative (giving returns) and normative(mutual agreement upon norms and values). He further adds that the kind of involvement of lower level participants is also of three kinds: 1) alienative, 2) calculative, and 3) moral. Etzioni views that certain kind of power coincides with certain forms of involvement. Coercive power can only be reciprocated with alienative participation. For instance between prison inmates and prison staff, the relationship can only be expected to be coercion-alienative, that is prison staff is coercive and prison inmates have aleinative participation in the working of prison. Etzioni distinguishes the organisations based on this combination as organisations that have 'order' goals.

There are organisations that have 'economic' goals that have remunerative power and calculative participation. For instance workers at Indian Coffee House are

all tied to the goal of expanding sales to improve income which they see as tied to their individual financial goals.

The third kind of organisation combines the normative power with moral participation. These organisations are ones that have 'culture' goals. For example churches do not remunerate their participants nor are they coerced to attend. The participants attend the church because they believe in the values, norms and ideas that church preaches.

9.5.2   Max Weber

Etzioni's classification and definition of organisation draws upon the works of Max Weber. Weber's model of bureaucracy emerges in the broader context of his elaborate theorisation on the nature of authority in society. He highlighted the organisations in the industrial societies were capable of attaining highest degree of efficiency if they were administered in a 'bureaucratic' manner. Bureaucratic administration, Weber (1964, p. 337) argued, was "superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability. It thus makes possible a particularly high degree of calculability of results ... and is formally capable of application to all kinds of administrative tasks". The way in which Weber sketches his ideas about bureaucratic administration it stretches to cover all major large-scale organisations of modern industrial societies like business, charitable organisations, religious organisations and even political parties.

Weber argues that bureaucratic administration is the most efficient way of organising human resources to attain desired ends. Weber does not understand bureaucracy as carrying inherent risks of too much control or inefficiency. He suggests a number of conditions that bureaucratic administrations espouse that make them most efficient form of administration. These are: 1)a series in which officials are arranged, guided by a written statement of their power and influence. 2) The offices are all arranged in a hierarchy, with each successive step embracing all those under it with the authority based on office. 3) Commands are issued in the capacity of the offices and obeyed because the rules state that they are within the competence of the office issuing them. 4) A clear statement of rules and procedures within which every possible contingency is theoretically provided for. 5) All information is compulsively recorded/written down with a ' bureau' for the safe keeping of all written records and files. 6) A contractual method of appointment in terms of technical qualifications for office. 7) A clear distinction is made between personal and business/official affairs, written down in terms of employment/contract (Pugh et al., 1964).

In Weber's conceptualisation of bureaucratic organisation individuals perform specialised segmental roles over which they have no control. Instead, he suggests that individuals are controlled by the roles they occupy within a bureaucratic administration, which does not allow much scope for rational judgement on the part of the individual. Weber argues that these conditions make bureaucratic organisation most efficient. Weber suggests that within a bureaucracy

9.5.3   Erving Goffman

Goffman highlighted a class of organisations that are different from each other in some respects yet share a common distinct feature. Consider hospitals,

monasteries, prisons and boarding schools, these are different from each other in many respects yet share a common feature that is, the participants all live within the organisation. These institutions may be different in many regards such as schools, where entry is voluntary unlike prisons where entry is forced and involuntary. Similarly, there may be differences between those total institutions that exist to perform a work task such as army camps and those that 'treat' people often without their explicit consent. These institutions were termed as total institutions by Goffman (1961). Goffman (1961) argued that all these institutions have a similar structure despite differences in personal characteristics of its participants, which is strikingly different from the basic arrangement of 'normal society'. He suggests that a 'normal society' is characterised by distinctly defined spheres of work, leisure and home. People organise their lives in these different areas of life and under different control. 'Total Institutions' are organisations whereby all three functions are localised in the contained space and under one control. Inmates, patients, prisoners or monks spend their lives in an enclosed formally structured setup and undergo more or less similar experiences.

In these 'total institutions', inmates have prescribed 'careers' (work) and a setup with privileged position that reinforces their conformity to careers/expected behaviour/work and for causing least inconvenience to those who run these organisations. The interaction between the inmates and the administrative staff is individualistic and yet what brings the inmates together is a similarity of experiences and a collective antagonism for the staff which forms a controlling and powerful group. He argues that the inmates in such institutions are yearning to be released but miss these places upon their release.

Goffman suggests that when people are living in batches the institutional arrangements made to structure their lives and administer them are more or less the same.

9.6   CLASSIFICATION OF ORGANISATIONS

As we have seen above organisations have been divided into work organisations and treatment organisations by Goffman and by Etzioni on the basis of power relationships between participants and administrators. Blau and Scott (1963) suggest yet another way to classify organisations into four categories based on 'prime beneficiary' that they serve. They suggest the four categories to be 1) Mutual Benefit, that is all those who constitute the body of the organisation. 2) Business where prime beneficiary is owners or managers. 3) Service where prime beneficiary are clients or public in contact and 4) Commonweal, that is, where the prime beneficiary are the larger population.

9.7   ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

People often choose the organisation they want to part of based on a perceived 'suitability' of the organisation to the individual. When people get associated with an organisation it is only expected that their affiliation with the organisation (the kind of organisation, the roles they fulfil and the nature of work they do) has an impact on their personalities. Also, it is expected that people who are affiliated to the organisation also impact the organisation's character. It is important, therefore, to look at the interplay between individuals and organisations.

9.7.1 Attitudes of Members Towards the Organisation

Attitudes of participants and administrators towards the organisation are a crucial element of this interplay. For instance, administrators of a sanatorium are obligated by their role to control and restrict participants, often against their will. They have to ensure that the functioning of the sanatorium is not affected by the opposition from the inmates. The administrators are responsible for ensuring that the inmates do not run away from the facility. A monastery, on the other hand, despite a similar setup differs from the sanatorium because of the attitudes of participants and inmates. Sanatoriums have arrangements built in to acknowledge the desire of inmates to escape (high walls, surveillance et cetera), while in monasteries there is no such surveillance. This brings us to another crucial element which is about the roles individuals acquire upon entry into these organisations.

9.7.2 Roles that Members are Assigned

Individuals acquire roles upon their entry into an organisation. These roles come with their own role-expectations and these expectations are synchronised in such a manner that it ensures smooth functioning of the organisation. Each role has specific tasks assigned to them and a set of rules that must be followed. Interpersonal relationship between individuals within the organisation is impacted by the roles that they acquire upon entry. For instance, the possibility of an inmate and guard at prison becoming friends rare and unlikely given the antagonism of their roles they acquire upon entry. These elements impact the working of the organisations.

The social experiences of individuals within the roles they acquire inside an organisation impact their lives outside. Their social behaviour outside gets influenced by their experiences inside the organisations. In his 1936 movie titled 'Modern Times' Charlie Chaplin captures this element of the impact of experiences within the organisation impacting social behaviour. He plays the part of a factory worker who spends his day tightening bolts on screws. The movement of the wrist is repeated so often that he begins to move his wrist in the same motion involuntarily.

9.8 LET US SUM UP

Institutions are expectations of attitude, behaviour and a code of conduct that individuals feel obligated to fulfil. The working of institutions is contingent on people understanding conventions and rules associated with an institution and feeling obligated to live their lives by these. Organisations in contrast have explicitly stated rules that an individual is bound to fulfil owing to his or her affiliation with the organisation. Institutions are embedded in shared habits, values and norms that an individual is socialised into while organisations have explicit affiliations that mark members from non-members. There are different types of institutions that act as social units to promote solidarity and cohesion within the society. Organisations work to facilitate better and more efficient control over resources. They are explicit units of society that function to facilitate social processes.

9.9   CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1)   What are institutions? What are the different types of institutions? Explain giving examples.

2)   What is the difference between the functionalist and conflict perspective on institutions?

3)   Discuss Church as an example of an organisation.

4)   What does Weber mean by bureaucracy? What makes bureaucracy efficient system of administration?

5)   What are the different types of organisations that Etzioni illustrates in his work.

6)   Compare perspectives of Etzioni and Goffman using the example of prison.

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UNIT 10   STATUS AND ROLE*

Structure

10.0   OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you should be able to understand:

- Explain the concept of status and its relation to roles;

- Differentiate between types of status;

- Discuss the concept of role;

- Differentiate between the two approaches in understanding roles;

- Classify roles;

- Distinguish between roles in simple and complex societies; and

- Discuss the different dimensions of roles.

10.1   INTRODUCTION

This unit seeks to introduce you to the concept of status and role which are important aspects of the social structure of any society. It discusses roles in both simple and complex societies and different dimensions of roles such as role set, multiple roles, role-signs and role-conflict. Although status and role has been discussed separately in the unit the relationship between the two will be drawn recurrently.

*This unit is contributed by Sriti Ganguly, JNU, New Delhi.

10.2 THE CONCEPT OF STATUS

In simple terms, status is a position occupied by a person in the society. In a lifetime an individual occupies different statuses on the lines of age, gender, class, occupation, and education. A person can have several statuses at a point of time such as being a daughter, social worker, member of a book-reading club, guitarist, and a manager in a company. A combination of all the statuses that a person holds is called **status set**.

Linton (1936) defines status as "a collection of rights and duties" (p.113). Each status has certain behavioural expectations attached to it which we call social roles (discussed in detail later). Drawing the relationship between status and role, Linton writes: "a role represents the dynamic aspect of status…when he (an individual) puts the rights and duties which constitute a status into effect, he is performing a role…" (Linton 1936: 114). Therefore, statuses are occupied and roles are played. Social status and social roles are important concepts in understanding how social life is organized and activities are distributed.

While ideally the term status refers simply to the positions occupied by an individual in the society, whether of a man or woman, lawyer or shopkeeper, Brahmin or Dalit we often attach a sense of high and low with statuses in our common everyday usage. The status classifications are based upon where we live, what we do, what we eat, who do we mix up with, kind of schools or institutions we attend, which social category we belong to and so on. Therefore, status is also a basis of social stratification and individuals not just occupy a position but these positions are also placed in a hierarchy. Say for example, one occupation is not merely different from another in division of labour but also ranked in terms of prestige and differentially rewarded.

Sociologist, Max Weber defined status as "positive or negative social estimation of honour" (Gerth and Mills 1946: 187) and related it to "style of life". Lifestyles are symbolized by housing, clothing, language spoken, manners of speech and occupation (to name a few). This is why in everyday life having a luxury car or living in an affluent neighbourhood is seen as a symbol of a person's status. While status normally seems to be determined by a person's income or wealth, unlike Marx, Weber, argued that class and status may not always overlap. Status can be an independent basis of social stratification. Thus both the propertied and propertyless can belong to the same status group.

Just as status is hierarchically arranged, positively or negatively valued, each status has privileges/disprivileges attached to it. Having the status of a Dalit or former untouchable in India, for instance, prevented the individuals from having access to public wells, sharing food with other castes, or marrying someone from an upper caste family. Similarly, in United States of America, being a black became a basis for denial of right to employment and segregation in schools, housing and public places.

However, honour or prestige assigned to a status is not unchanging. For example, societies where being a woman, disabled, black or 'untouchable' was considered inferior or stigmatized (a concept of Erving Goffman) these statuses and their roles are now positively seen owing to the struggles for rights and dignity that have been fought for years. Therefore, both statuses and roles are dynamic and keep changing.

Linton (1936) distinguished between two types of statuses:

10.2.1 Ascribed and Achieved Status

Ascribed statuses are "those which are assigned to individuals without reference to their innate differences or abilities" (p.115). The universally used criteria for ascription of status are age, sex, kinship, and race. Birth of an individual in a particular social category such as class and caste also become criteria for ascription of statuses in several but not all societies.

Achieved statuses: Achieved statuses are those that are "left open to be filled through competition and individual effort" (ibid). These are acquired over an individual's lifetime. Occupation and education are thus called **achieved statuses**. Marital statuses of a wife or a husband are also achieved statuses.

However, the line distinguishing between the two are not as clear as they seem. For example, although the ascribed statuses seem fixed at birth they are not immutable. Some people also undergo sex (gender) change later in life. For a long time gender was bifurcated into categories that is male and female however now a third broad category of transgender which includes homosexuals, trans-sexuals (to name a few) is also recognized in many parts of the as an outcome of struggle for recognition. Furthermore, it is difficult to put strictly class or for that matter caste also in either of the two categories of ascribed and achieved. It is also necessary to ask if all achieved statuses are entirely merit based or does ascribed status of being a white or male or upper caste can also influence the acquisition of status.

10.2.2 Master Status

In every society there is always one status that tends to overshadow all other statuses or is given more importance by others. This is called the **master status**. Gender, race and caste for instance often become master statuses in highly stratified societies. Conflict sociologists often engage with ascribed statuses of gender and race as they argue that these often shape the individual's life chances including income, occupation, education, social networks and so on.

Similarly, mental or physical disability can also become a master status and govern the everyday behaviour of the society towards the disabled. Box 1 shows how disability can become a master status.

Box 1: Does the new Act for the disabled represent the needs of differently abled women?

Both Deepa and Sakshi Malik have won medals for India. But the similarities between the two probably end there. Wheelchair bound Deepa, wife of an army officer and mother of two, made India proud with her silver medal in shot-put at the 2016 Paralympics, the first ever Paralympic medal by an Indian woman, while Sakshi, with a bronze win at the Rio Olympics became the first Indian woman wrestler to win a medal at the Olympics. But whereas Sakshi's Olympic feat made her a household name, Deepa says that though the Indian government and their own states feted the para-athletes, the able-bodied athletes got more attention from across the country and corporates looking to sign endorsement deals.

Hindustan Times, January 08, 2017

10.3   THE CONCEPT OF ROLE

Think about how our each day begins with playing different roles attached to our different statuses. Just as there are multiple statuses, there are roles associated with each one of them. A woman, for instance, plays the role of daughter, sister, student, a private tutor, a friend and so on. Giddens and Sutton (2014) define roles as "socially defined expectations that a person in a given status (social position) follows" (p.91). For example, when there is traffic congestion, we expect the traffic police to manage the traffic and ease the flow of vehicles. Similarly, at a restaurant the customers expect the waitress to provide the menu, note down the orders and serve the food.

Roles help in maintaining some kind of social order and predictability in interactions. Turner (2006) defines roles as a "cluster of behaviour and attitudes" and argues that roles help in organizing social behaviour both at individual and collective level. In Banton's (1965) definition, roles are a "cluster of rights and obligations" and what is one individual's obligation is his/her partner's right (p.2). So in a restaurant a waitress is obliged to serve and the customer has the right to be served. This way, "the concept of role", Banton writes, "provides one of the available means for studying elements of cooperation" (ibid).

Newcomb distinguished between **expected behaviour** and **actual behaviour** of individuals. The expected behaviour is one which an individual is expected to perform as per the status and role assigned to him or her. The actual behaviour of the person may be different from the expected behaviour. Banton (1965: 28-29) further refined this distinction and added that actual behaviour can be related to

1)   **Role cognitions**: individual's own ideas of what is appropriate or

2)   **Expectations**: to other people's ideas about what he will do or

3)   **Norms**: to other people's ideas about what he should do.

Take for example, the role of a chef. Neeraj occupies the status of a head chef in a hotel. As a chef, he is expected to play the role of overall supervision and coordination with cooks who have to prepare the meals. Apart from this, some general expectations from him include ensuring discipline and maintenance of hygiene standards in the regular work environment of the kitchen.

Role learning begins at a young age when children start observing how people in their surroundings behave with them and toward each other. In fact children often engage in role playing games where they enact the role of a mother, father, or teacher. Individuals also have role models in their lives whose certain pattern/s of behaviour is incorporated in one's own behaviour. A role model can be a person in the family, neighbourhood, school or even some distant, unrelated person whom we have seen in the social media.

In our daily lives, we smoothly switch from one role to another without much effort and also play distinct roles at the same time. How one behaves as a daughter is different from how one behaves as a friend. Similarly, social situations also define roles we play. How we behave in a formal set up of workspace is different from how we behave at home. Thus we tend to compartmentalize our lives and roles. So a criminal lawyer behaves differently at home from how she behaves in the courtroom.   However, to say that everyone conforms to the socially laid

expectations will be not be true. Individuals in their everyday lives are also constantly negotiating and redefining the roles they play. Roles assigned to a particular status are also challenged. For example, in India historically women were expected to perform domestic chores and confined largely to the private sphere of home. However, women are now taking up roles that were traditionally expected of men, particularly in urban India. It is important to keep in mind that social changes are slow and may take several years and sometimes even concerted struggles.

10.3.1 Role Theory

Role Theory in Sociology: Structural and Interactionist Approach

Understanding of roles has been approached in two different ways or from two schools of thought. The structuralists (Linton, Banton, Parsons and Merton) view roles as norms and expectations associated with statuses in the social structure where individuals are socialized into "role taking". Linton (1936) writes: "…the more perfectly the members of any society are adjusted to their statuses and roles the more smoothly the society will function" (Linton 1936: 115). This way the functionalist also assume consensus on part of the individuals.

The social interactionists (Mead, Turner) on the other hand argue that individuals though bound by the structure and its given expectations interpret and evaluate their roles and engage in negotiation. For interactionists this is a creative process of "role making" rather than just unquestioning internalization of given expectations.

10.4 CLASSIFICATION OF ROLES

We can further classify roles into: 1) **ascribed roles** and **achieved roles,** 2) **relational and non-relational roles,** 3) **basic, general and independent roles.**

10.4.1 Ascribed Roles and Achieved Roles

Like ascribed statuses, the ascribed roles are the ones that are given at birth. From the time an individual is born, role learning begins which is a part of what we know as socialization. These roles pertain to one's sex (gender), age, kinship, caste, class, and so on.

The achieved roles on the other hand are the ones that are largely acquired over a lifetime on the basis of merit such as occupational roles of a farmer, salesperson, banker, shopkeeper, driver, lawyer, professor et cetera.

10.4.2 Relational and Non-relational Roles

There are certain roles which are complementary in nature and are conceived of and defined in relation to another. One good example of relational role is that of a wife which cannot be conceived of without the husband. Similarly, the role of a debtor cannot exist without the role of a creditor.

Non-relational roles on the other hand are not dependent or complementary such as the role of a musician, researcher, and painter. Age and sex roles largely fall in the category of non-relational roles whereas kinship roles can be classified as relational.

10.4.3 Basic, General and Independent Roles

Banton (1965:33) developed a scale giving a comparison of the extent to which particular roles are independent of other roles.

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      s              o              l
  0 ┌───────┬───────┬───────────┬──────────────┐ 100
  Basic roles          general roles          independent
                                                  roles
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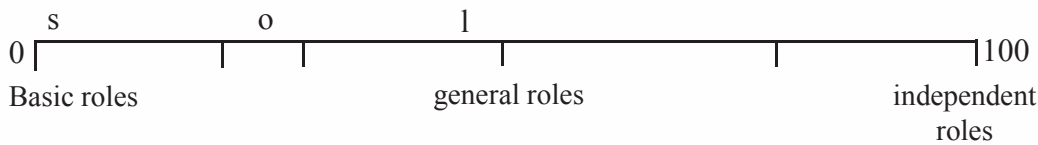
s = sex roles   a = age roles   o = occupational roles l = leisure roles

a) **Basic roles:** Basic roles are mostly determined by sex and age, ascribed to individuals at birth and these roles shape conduct in a large number of social contexts.

b) **General roles:** General roles are mostly assigned on the basis of merit of the individual.

c) **Independent roles:** Independent roles are determined by merit and have very less implications for other roles and on the way people respond to the person who occupies the independent role. Examples of independent roles are leisure roles and many occupational roles.

Usually an individual's sex role shapes the individual's conduct and the response of others towards him or her more than any other role. Occupational roles also shape the way people respond to an individual particularly in work space or social gatherings. The leisure roles are more independent and have limited influence outside of a particular setting for example, golfer in a golf club.

Placement of different roles in this scale will vary from one society to another. In primitive societies, for example, there were small number of highly undifferentiated basic roles linked to sex and age (Banton 1965: 34) but in advanced industrial societies the importance of age and sex roles is limited and less. We see more independent roles in advanced societies. For example, in primitive societies of Bushmen role of a woman was tied to her sex and she was restricted from taking up roles that were defined for men. However, in modern societies women occupy more independent roles like a female manager or doctor where they are judged in the same way as men are.

Box 3: Women to get combat role in Army

The Hindu, New Delhi, June 04, 2017

In a transformational move, the Indian Army is all set to open up combat positions for women, a gender barrier broken by only a few countries... The Army Chief said he was ready to recruit women as jawans and the matter is being taken up with the government.

10.5 ROLE SYSTEMS: SIMPLE AND COMPLEX SOCIETIES

According to Banton (1965) one of the ways to understand variation in social organization is to study the criteria on bases of which roles are given to an individual. Roles allocation in simple societies differ from those in complex industrial societies.

10.5.1 Roles in Simple Societies

In the simplest societies like that of Bushmen in Kalahari Desert in Southern Africa and Eskimo in Arctic Wastes, roles are allocated based upon the natural differences of age, sex and kinship. Let us see how roles were distributed as per these criteria:

1) The division of roles on the basis of sex took place in the following manner. A man is responsible for hunting, preparing skins for clothing, making weapons, building fire and sometimes helping the women in fetching wood and water. The wife on the other hand builds shelter for her family, takes care of the children, gathers and prepares food and keeps the residence clean.

2) The other basis of role allocation is age. A boy's passage into manhood is marked when he kills his first buck and this passage is celebrated with rituals. Thereafter, he is allowed to marry. In case of a girl she can be married when a baby but she takes the role of a wife and a married woman only when she matures physically. Elderly people are treated with respect and as experts on traditions, myths and family lineages.

3) The third basis is of kinship. Mothers and fathers perform the important role of bringing up their children. When the children grow up as adults they have certain mutual obligations with their parents. Marriage between men and women can be dissolved but as they rarely quarrel divorce is rare. Marriages between close relations are avoided to keep kin ties clear.

10.5.2 Roles in Complex Societies

We discussed how roles are allocated on the distinction of age, sex and kinship in simple societies that have to survive in harshest environmental conditions. But as societies become complex new criteria has to be introduced for role division. Social stratum is one such criterion.

1) **Social strata:** Some societies are organized on the basis of ranks such as nobles, commoners, slaves, etc. People belonging to the same strata share a similar existence and have same privileges and duties towards the king. While this kind of social strata is more flexible than rigid role system of simple societies, social strata can become rigid and discriminatory to an extent where birth in a particular category influences the life chances of individuals. In such rigid system of stratification leaving the category in which a person is born becomes difficult.

   Take for example, the caste system in India where a person born in a particular caste is expected to adhere to the caste specific norms, customs, occupation and rules of interaction with other castes. Deviation from roles are often disapproved and also punished particularly when a lower caste individual does so. While these norms are not as rigid as they used to be earlier, due to continuous struggle and legal action, caste based rules of interaction and roles still prevail in the present day.

2) **Diversification and specialization of tasks:** In complex societies tasks are distributed based on specialization and skills. From largest to even smallest of organizations have role divisions.

For example, Meera and her friend open a small bakery. Along with the two bakers they hire two workers to attend to the customers and one person to manage the accounts. When they decide to offer home delivery service they hire another individual to deliver the orders at home or office. Further when they buy a bigger store, they make seating arrangements for customers and hire two more people to serve them. What we see is that every task is divided to avoid chaos and friction so that the bakery runs smoothly.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Discuss the concept of roles.

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2) How does the structural perspective on roles differ from the interactionist perspective?

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3) What are the different ways in which we classify roles?

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10.6 DIMENSIONS OF ROLE

10.6.1 Multiple Roles and Role Set

Sociologist, Robert K. Merton (1957) emphasized on the need to distinguish between the concept of multiple roles and role-set. In contrast to Linton's theory that each status has a single, associated role, Merton argues that "each status has an array of roles" associated with it. This is what Merton calls **role set**. It is a "complement of role relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular status" (p.110). Each status has its own role-set.

Merton offered the example of a medical student whose status as a student is not only related to teachers but to the roles of other status occupants like nurses,

physicians, social workers and so on. Merton added that this kind of complex arrangement can also give rise to contradictory expectations of the role partners in the role set.

Multiple roles, on the other hand,refers to the roles associated with the various social statuses of an individual. The figures given below explain the difference between role set and multiple roles.

Multiple roles
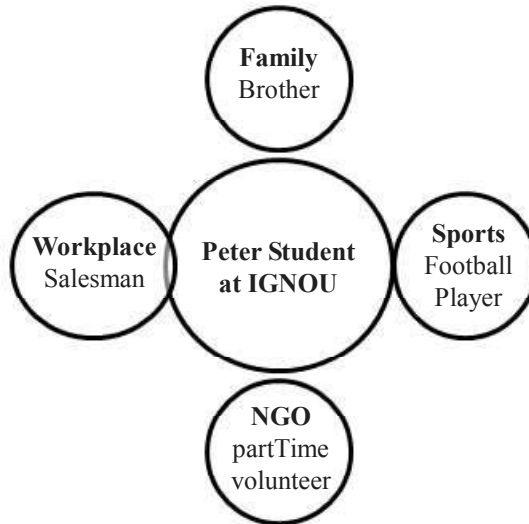
Role Set
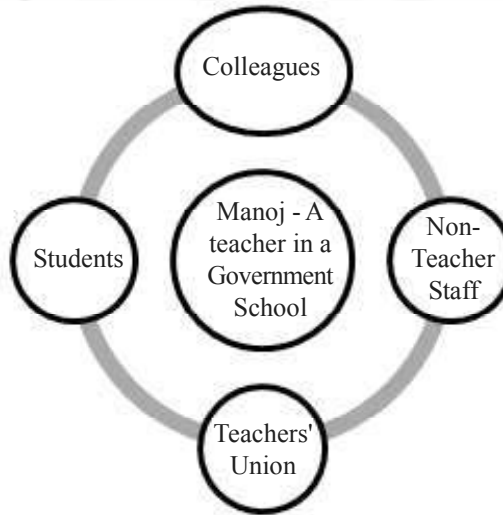
10.6.2   Role Signs

Clothing often serves as one of the most important ways to distinguish between men and women in almost all societies. But it is important to ask why we must make this distinction. It is because it works as a sign to differentiate the male and female roles and helps others to anticipate their roles and shape their response accordingly. According to Banton role signs help in communication and control. Role signs act as ways of communication by shaping our relationship, expectations and interactions. They also help in controlling behaviour and checking deviation from the role both for the individual playing the role and signalling others as well. If such distinguishing signs are totally abandoned, everyday life and activities may become very chaotic.

In our day to day lives costumes help in defining the role of the individuals, whether it is a salesperson at a supermarket, ticket collector in a train or traffic police personnel at a red light. During a traffic jam we often anxiously look for the traffic police identified by a particular uniform and expect him/her to perform the role that is assigned to them. Similarly, in hospitals nurses and doctors each have their unique uniforms that help us in identifying them and setting our expectations.

Banton identified signs of various roles in terms of basic, general and independent roles.

a) **Signs for basic roles:** Signs for basic roles which are largely determined by sex, age and kinship include names, clothes and hairstyles. The first names of two sexes are mostly distinctive. Titles like Miss, Mrs, Mr, Master also help in identification of gender, age and marital status.

b) **Signs for general roles:** Signs for general roles often depend on the extent to which it is necessary to distinguish and communicate the distinctiveness and relevance of the role for a particular situation as well as for other role relationships. The case of a policeman and his uniform discussed above is an example of sign for a general role.

c) **Signs for independent roles:** Since independent roles have less implications for other roles, signs for them are limited. Signs for independent roles have relevance only in particular contexts and may lose relevance in most other social situations. For outsiders such signs often serve as prestige signs.

10.6.3 Role Changing

Roles never remain the same and keep evolving. Individuals move from one role to another and new roles are added to the old set of roles. When a person moves from one role to the other it is important to become familiar with the rights and obligations of this new role. This is important not only for the person who undergoes role change but also for all others who are associated with the person to modify their behaviour and expectations as per the new role.

This is the reason why role changes are often marked by ceremonies. The first important change that individuals in every society experience is from childhood to adulthood. If you remember, in the tribal society of Bushmen a boy becomes a man when he first shoots his buck and this is celebrated with rituals. From this point he is also allowed to marry. Similarly, in many societies maturity of girls is marked by puberty rites.

When an individual is about to acquire the role of a wife or a husband it is followed by a ceremony where family, friends, neighbours and the community takes part. Ceremonies help in making this changeover a critical moment for the individual as well as others. Similarly, when any person acquires an important position like of a chairperson of an organization, or Prime Minister or President of a country it is marked by oath taking ceremony.

The change in roles also occurs during the passage from adulthood to old age. In many societies the elderly are relieved of their labour intensive tasks and they assume new roles such as taking care of grand children. While in some societies

old people are treated with respect for their experience and wisdom, and advice on important matters are sought from them there are some where elderly are treated like invalids.

10.6.4 Role Conflict and Strain

As a person occupies several statuses and there are multiple roles to be played, sometimes two different statuses of an individual may demand conflicting expectations placing the individual in a state of dilemma. A simple example of this can be of a class monitor. As a class monitor Ahmad is given a set of responsibilities by his class teacher. He is expected to maintain discipline in the teacher's absence and is suppose to report any disruption caused by the students. At the same time Ahmad also occupies the status of being a close friend to some of his classmates. Now if one student from his close circle of friends disturbs the class or becomes a bully in the teacher's absence it may give rise to role conflict for Ahmad. As a friend he may be expected to ignore this behaviour while as the responsible class monitor he is expected to bring this unruly behaviour to his teacher's notice.

While this is an example from a classroom, in everyday life individuals are often confronted with similar or much more complex dilemmas pertaining to their roles. We have already discussed that an individual plays multiple roles in his/her lifetime and therefore such incompatibility is bound to arise. A frequently cited example of role conflict is the one experienced by working women who are also married. In traditional societies the culturally accepted role of women were largely related to child rearing and household chores. However, in modern societies these roles are being challenged and women are increasingly entering full time salaried employment and sharing professional workspace with men. When such social changes take place a woman may experience a pull from both sides –her commitment to her work as a professional and her commitment towards the family and children as a wife or mother. Such conflicts arise when and especially because the role partners may not accept and reorient themselves to the fact that women are re-making their roles or adopting new ones.

While role conflict takes place between roles associated with *two different statuses* of an individual, **role strain** is experienced when *different responsibilities associated within a single status* are incompatible. For example, Rohit has to prepare for an exam that is next day but has to also represent his school in an inter-school chess competition on the same day. As a student he might experience stress and anxiety because he has to perform well in both the situations.

People try to manage role conflict by role compartmentalization or separation where they try to keep what they do in one role distinct from what they do in another and giving priority to one role over the other. Concepts of role strain and conflict are important to understand role exit as they can also give rise to doubt about one particular role eventually lead to exit.

Check Your Progress 2

1)   Define social status. Is status simply a position occupied by an individual in society?

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2) Do class distinctions and status distinctions always overlap? Discuss with reference to Max Weber's theory.

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3) Discuss the difference between ascribed and achieved status with the help of examples

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4) What is master status? Discuss with help of an example

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5) What is the difference between role strain and role conflict? What are ways in which they can be handled

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6) How is the concept of role set different from multiple roles

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7) Write short notes on the following:

a) role exit

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b) role-person merger

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c) role signs

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit introduced you to the concept of status and role which form important aspects of the social structure. You read in the discussion that there are different conceptions and ways to understand and classify status and roles, some are ascribed while others are achieved. Both are also dynamic in nature and constantly being defined and redefined by individuals and the society. The dimensions of role such as role conflict, role exit and role change which we experience in our own lives have also been discussed in this unit.

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UNIT 11   SOCIALISATION*

Structure

11.0   OBJECTIVES

After going through this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define socialisation;

- Identify some of the main thinkers contributing to studies on socialisation;

- Distinguish the various types of socialisation; and

- Identify agents of socialisation and how they affect your personality.

11.1   INTRODUCTION

We will begin this unit by focusing on the meaning and definition of socialisation. The discussion will be carried forward by looking at the types and theories of socialisation.Finally we will end the discussion by examining the various agents of socialisation. This unit, thereby, will provide an in-depth understanding of socialisation.

11.2 SOCIALISATION – MEANING AND DEFINITIONS

11.2.1 What is Socialisation?

Socialisation is an important process for the functioning and continuation of society. Different societies have different ways and methods to train their new born members so that they are able to develop their own personalities. This training ofand building the personality of the child is called socialisation. Socialisation is a process of learning rules, habits and values of a group to which a person belongs whether it is family, friends, colleagues or any other group. It is the process by which a child slowly becomes aware of her/himself as a member of a group and gains knowledge about the culture of the family and also the society into which she/he is born.

Socialisation is also considered as the passing of culture from one generation to the next. During the process of socialisation, children learn about their family traditions from their elders and preserve them and pass them on to the next generation as they grow older. Socialisation helps children to learn and perform the different roles and responsibilities which they have learnt from their elders. It therefore, helps to associate one generation with the others (Giddens, 2006; Jonson, 1960).

11.2.2 Some Definitions of Socialisation

i)   **Anthony Giddens:**"Socialisation refers to the process which transforms a quite helpless human infant into a self-aware, knowledgeable person who is skilled in the ways of their society's culture" (2014:263-64).

ii) **Peter Worsley:** "By this is meant, simply, the transmission of culture, the process whereby men learn the rules and practices of social groups. Socialisation is an aspect of all activity within all human societies" (1972:153).

iii) **Tony Bilton:**"The process by which we acquire the culture of the society into which we are born – the process by which we acquire our social characteristics and learn the ways of thought and behaviour considered appropriate in our society- is called socialisation" (1981:10).

11.3 TYPES OF SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is a process that continues throughout life from birth till adulthood. However, there are different phases in which the process takes place. These phases are usually spread across different age groups and have been categorised as the different types of socialisation.

11.3.1 Primary Socialisation

Primary socialisation is the most important feature in the process of socialisation. It happens during infancy and childhood. The primary stage basically takes shape during infancy and childhood where basic knowledge and language or behaviour is taught. This phase of socialisation usually takes place within the family. During

this phase infants learn language and certain basic behaviour forms of the family and the society in which she/he lives. It is through primary socialisation that the foundations for later learning are laid. As Frønesargues, "Primarysocialisation refers to the internalization of the fundamental culture and ideas of a society; it shapes the norms, values and beliefs of the child at a time when it has little understanding of the world and its different phenomena, and the basic socialisation agent moulding the child is the family" (Frønes, 2016: 13).

11.3.2 Secondary Socialisation

Secondary Socialisation occurs once the infant passes into the childhood phase and continues into maturity. During this phase more than the family some other agents of socialisation like the **school** and **friends**' group begin to play a role in socialising the child. Different kinds of social interaction through these different agents of socialisation help the child to learn the moral standards, customs and principles of their society and culture. Whenthe child receives training in institutional or formal settings such as the school, secondary socialisation takes shape. This levelruns parallel to primary socialisation. But, unlike the family settings, children in schools are trained to conform toauthority.

Frønes argues that, secondary socialisation is usually carried out by institutions and people in specific roles and positions. Further, it involves the "acquisition of knowledge and conscious learning, and thus opens for critical reflection, while primary socialisation points to the transmission of naturalised cultural patterns" (Frønes, 2016: 14).

11.3.3 Gender Socialisation

Gender socialisation can be understood as the process by which different agents of socialisation shape the thoughts of children and make them learn different gender roles. According to the World Health Organisation, **Gender** "refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men." **Gender role** refers to "social roles assigned to each sex and labelled as masculine or feminine"(Giddens, 2014: 82).

Much before children begin to know themselves as a male or a female they receive a series of clues from adults in their family and society because male and female adults have different ways of managing infants. Infants learn quite a lot from visual and symbolic indicators. Differences in the manner of dressing, hairstyle, different cosmetic products used by men and women, provide children with indicators of variation between the male and female. Within two years of age children begin to vaguely understand what gender is. Apart from adults around them children receive a lot of clues about gender roles and differences from television programmes, toys they play with as well from their colouring and picture books. **For example**, a baby girl is very commonly seen playing with dolls and/or a kitchen set while a boy would be found playing with toy cars and/or toy guns.

However, today the definition of gender is no longer fixed within the binary of male and female because there is a third category which is often referred to as the **third gender**. The term third gender is assigned to a person by the society or by the person her/himself when one does not want be recognised as a male or a

female. In some societies where three or more genders are recognised, we can find the use of the term third gender. This is usually associated with the gender role that a person performs and in some societies the gender roles are not very strictly defined. The term third gender is often used to describe *hijras*in the context of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. More recently the term third gender is also associated with the term **Queer** wherein any person not willing to be strictly identified as male or female may be categorised as a Queer person (Towle and Morgan, 2002).

11.3.4 Anticipatory Socialisation

The term **anticipatory socialisation** was introduced by the sociologist Robert K. Merton (1957). It is a process by which someone is consciously socialised for future occupations, positions and social relationships. Through anticipatory socialisation people are socialised into groups to which they wish to or have to join so that entry into the group does not seem to be very difficult. Some people suggest that parents are the primary source of anticipatory socialisation when it comes to socialising their children for future careers or social roles. **For example**, a child made to leave home to stay in a boarding school with the anticipation of better socialisation.

11.3.5 Re-socialisation

Re-socialisationrefers to the process of leaving certain behaviour patterns and roles in order to adopt new ones as part of one's evolution in life. Resocialisation occurs when there is a major transformation in the social role of a person. It occurs throughout life where individuals experience radical breakthroughs from their past experiences and learn new manners and values which are starkly different from what they had learnt previously.Sociologist **Erving Goffman**analyzed resocialization in mental asylum. According to him a mental asylum is a total institution in which almost every aspect of the resident's life was controlled by the institution in order to serve the goals of the institution. **For example**, the institution demands that every inmate obeys the rules and regulations even if it is not very useful for the person (Fergusan, 2002; Kennedy et al, 1973). Another common example is that of a girl who is about to get married is often re-socialisedby suggestions and advice from her parents on different matters so that after marriage it is easier for her to adjust in her husband's home with her in-laws.

11.3.6 Adult Socialisation

Adult socialisation takes place in adulthood when individuals adapt to new roles such asthat of a husband, a wife or an employee. This is related to their needs and wants. People continue to learn values and behaviour patterns throughout life. Socialisation does not have any fixed time period. It begins at birth and continues till old age. In traditional societies the older people had a significant influence in important matters related to the family. Both male and female adults had exerted their influence with increase in age (Mortimer and Simmons, 1978).

In modern times we can find this elderly influence decreasing in some families. However, that is not to say that older people have completely lost their authority in the modern day families. Even today their opinions are sought for certain

important matters. Like the younger generation continues to be socialised by their adults similarly the older generation also gets socialised by their younger generation through different experiences. Apart from the family adult – socialisation continues to take place through other agents of socialisation. **For example**, one's workplace, social groups, senior citizens' forums, clubs for recreation and some religious institutions also.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What are some of the important characteristics of Socialisation?

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2) Give one prominent definition of socialisation?

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3) Write a small note on the types of socialisation by explaining how the different types are spread across different age groups throughout life.

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11.4 THEORIES OF SOCIALISATION

Some of the most well-known theories in sociology and psychology agree that the 'self' is the primary concept in the development of the child and it is through the process of socialisation that such a development takes place. Therefore, let us look at some prominent theories of socialisation in order to understand the concept well.

11.4.1 George Herbert Mead and the Development of Self

According to the American sociologist**George Herbert Mead**(1972), young children begin to develop as social beings by imitating the actions of those near

them. By doing so the child is able to develop the ability to understand the action of the person with whom he is interacting. '**Play**' is one of the ways by which children often imitate what adults do. The play stage begins around the third year during which the child begins to adopt different roles of adults in her/his life. Mead refers to these others as "**significant others**". Children's play gradually develops from simple imitation to difficult games where a child of four or five years old will enact the role of an adult. **For example**, children are often found imitating the classroom situation where one becomes the teacher, the others become students and they enact a classroom teaching session. Most children locally refer to this play as 'Teacher-Teacher'. Another similar act of play is that of 'Doctor-Patient' where children imitate the role of a doctor, nurse and patient and try to enact a situation where a patient goes to the doctor for treatment.

Mead refers to this act of imitation as "**taking the role of the other**". This stage being a complex one is known as the **game stage** where children begin to attain maturity and develop a sense of self and others. Children begin to understand themselves as "**me**" by looking at themselves through other people's views and opinions about them. The "me" is the social self while the "**I**" is the response to the "me". In simple words, "I" comprises of the response of the child to the action of others while "me" is the organised set of reactions of others that the child takes on.

Another stage of self-development occurs around the age of eight or nine. At this stage children are able to function as members of a group and also understand their role as a member of that group. Mead introduces the concepts of "**generalised other**" and "**significant other**". "Generalised other" can be understood as those rules and values of the culture of a particular group in which the child is engaged. By understanding the "generalised other" the child is able to understand what kind of manners is expected as well as valued in any social setting. "Significant other" consists of those persons who are of importance in the child's life and affect her/his understanding of self along with the child's emotions and behaviours. Mead was one of the first thinkers to understand the role of "significant other" in the development of self. According to him socialisation depends upon the child's understanding of others' views as important in her/his life.

11.4.2 Charles Horton Cooley and the Looking Glass Self

Charles Horton Cooley(1922a) the American sociologist is best known for his concept of the "**looking glass self**". Children develop a concept of their selves with the help of others around them. She/he forms an idea about oneself based on the opinions of others about her/him. The kind of social self that develops out of an imagination of how one appears to the other person and the kind of feeling about one's self can be referred to as "looking glass self"or "reflected self". The knowledge about ourselves develops in us through the opinions and reactions of others around this. The social "looking glass self" consists of these other people through whom we build an image of ourselves. This knowledge about one's self is first obtained from the parents and later it is reformed by the judgements of others.

The way in which the mirror helps us to form an opinion about ourselves through the clothing we put on, our face and figure/physique, in a similar manner we try

to imagine how in another person's mind we might appear through our behaviours, manners, and so on. As a result, in our imagination we form an opinion about ourselves through the other person's perceptions and may get positively or negatively affected by it. **For example**, a child who is in the mood to create some mischief might want to lie to her/his parents. However, before creating the mischief the child might reflect over and think that if hislie is caught that will have a bad impression on her/his parents about her/him.

According to Cooley, there are three main features that make up the idea of the self. The first consists of our imagination of how we appear to the other person. The second feature consists of our imagination of the judgement that the other person makes by our appearances. The third feature consists of some feeling of self-importance, shame or self-doubt based on the imagination of the other person's judgements about our appearances.

11.4.3   Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalytic Theory

The Austrian neurologist and father of psychoanalysis **Sigmund Freud**(1923a in Strachey, 1961)believes socialisation demands that individuals must do away with their selfish wants for the benefit of the larger society. According to him socialisation is a process that directs one's cravings and instincts in ways that are culturally accepted by the society. He has explained the process of socialisation through three distinguishable parts of the personality: "**id**", "**ego**" and "**superego**".

The "**id**" consists of all kinds of basic impulses. It is the unconscious, selfish, impulsive and illogical part of the personality that always tries to increase the feeling of pleasure by avoiding pain. The "id" tries to make a person work towards achieving the selfish desires by not paying any heed to other individuals or social rules and standards.**For example**, a child craving for a second helping of dessert screamed constantly until she was given another serving.

The "**ego**" is the referee between the "id" and the "superego". It tries to maintain a balance between the "id" (basic impulses) and the "superego" (norms of the society). The "ego" tries to regulate our desires and cravings and helps us to obey the norms of society. As a referee the "ego" tries to control our impulses according to the norms of the society. **For example**, we often get tempted by discount offers in the shopping malls and feel like purchasing as much as we can. However, we restrict ourselves to buying just a few products because we realize that buying everything at once might not be a practical thing to do. This process of adjustment among the "id", "ego" and "superego" continues throughout life. This adjustment is the principle means of socialisation.

The "**superego**" refers to the principles, rules and ethics that one learns through the process of socialisation. The "superego" comprises of the norms of a society which are internalised through socialisation. The "superego" is the inner voice ('conscience') of the individual and inthat inner voice the hopes, beliefs and guidelines of the society are organised. **For example**, Ruchi was eager to steal some grocery from the store without anyone noticing her. But, because she knew that stealing is not the right thing to do so she did not steal even though she would have never got caught.The "id" and the "superego" are always opposed to each other because neither is it always possible to fulfil all our wishes and demands nor is it easy to keep ourselves completely away from our cravings.

Check Your Progress 2

1) According to Mead, how does the social self of a child develop?

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2) According to Cooley what is the meaning of 'looking glass self'?

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3) What are the different parts of the personality and how are they associated with socialisation according to Freud?

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11.5   AGENTS OF SOCIALISATION

The process of socialisation is not just limited to the family. It consists of a range of groups and institutions through which people learn the culture of their society. As already mentioned the family is the primary agent of socialisation while some of the important secondary agents of socialisation include the peer group, school and the mass media.

Frønesargues that, "*Primary socialisation* was implicitly understood as taking place in the family and during the first part of childhood. In this perspective the socialising agents in the primary process are the parents, especially the mother. *Secondary socialisation*came later and was related to agents as significant others, educational institutions and the media" (Frønes, 2016: 4).

11.5.1 Family

Parents along with the family are the most important agents of socialisation. Within the family it is the mother who first begins to socialise the child. Socialisation in basic values such as love and affection, manners and etiquettes

are first taught in the family. In a joint family structure apart from the parents, uncles,aunts,grandparents also play important roles to socialise the children. Children learn their language and develop their speaking abilities in the family. Regional and class differences of the family into which one is born affects the socialisation patterns in different ways as a result of which children from different cultural backgrounds grow up with different values, attitudes and beliefs. The situation within the family whether affectionate or disturbed will affect the growth of a child accordingly.

For example, Patterson et.al (2015) argue that, greater numbers of separations from primary caregivers or greater numbers of residential moves are more likely to have problems in adjustment. These aspects can lead to stress for children and adolescents. Also that, these moves may often be associated with family disruptions – such as separation or divorce of parents, so they may be markers for other stresses. In all, children and adolescents whose families provide stable, supportive environments seem to be at an advantage over those in more chaotic home situations (Patterson et.al. 2015: 205). They further attest that, factors such as 'physical resources', 'high-quality parenting', 'favourable family climate', 'reasonable stability', and 'supportive extra familial social networks' are important resources for socialisation(Patterson et.al. 2015: 206).

11.5.2 Peer Groups

Peer groups usually consist of friends who are of the same age. They share a mutual sense of understanding and cooperation with each other and also consider each of them as equals. Initially peer groups are formed in the neighbourhood or the housing community where the children live. When children are young they usually begin by making friends with children of similar gender. As a result peer groups exert a significant influence on gender socialisation. Once children enter the school their peer groups become diverse. Children who become part of peer groups are usually seen spending more time with their friends than with family members. The influence of peers group continues throughout life from the neighbourhood to education institutions to workplace and so on.

Bukowski et. al. (2015) argue that, "even after face-to-face interactions have come to an end, peers can maintain their contact with each other through 20th- and 21st-century forms of media. Starting during the preschool years, when many children spend their days in day care centers, experiences with peers can make up a large part of a child's daily life. These experiences can be sources of companionship, stimulation, information, help, rewards, security, joy, and, at times, frustration and harm" (Bukowskiet.al., 2015: 228).

For example, one of the many negative forms of peer socialisation can be the aspect of peer pressure: deviant acts such as any kind of addiction (smoking and drinking) can be attributed as elements of peer pressure.

11.5.3 School

The school is known to be the first formal agent of socialisation which shapes the ideas and attitudes of a child. Children learn to maintain certain decorum in the class, they learn to obey rules of discipline in the school and be diligent in learning the lessons that are taught in class. The children are expected to listen to their teachers and accept their authority. At times teachers' reactions also have positive or negative implications on the children. The school is not only

responsible for formally training the child in reading, writing and arithmetic but it also helps to develop critical thinking abilities. Broadly speaking, the school helps in the overall development of the child and in the diffusion of culture of the society. The role of the teacher becomes very important within such a setting.

Frønes argues that, for many children the teacher becomes a secondary socializing agent. However, for many others, the teacher can have primary functions. Hence, the borders between primary and secondary socialisation get blurred in such cases. He further says that, "although schools and the dissemination of their curricula in general is understood as part of secondary socialisation, in the knowledge-based economies the fundamental numerical and alphabetical skills provided by the schools could also be defined as belonging to primary socialisation". In this way, it is suggested that the 'hidden curriculum' of cultural codes suggests that the major educational institutions influence young people through more than just the mediation of the formal curriculum (Frønes, 2016: 4).

Overall, the role of the school can be attributed as equally important with respect to the family when it comes to socialisation of the children. A recently popular film, *Hindi Medium* vividly demonstrates this aspect wherein in contemporary societies; parents tend to over-rely on the school setting for socialisation.

11.5.4 Mass Media

Mass media includes various agents of communication for instance, the radio, television, newspapers, magazines, media portals and websites and the like. Prot et.al. (2015) argue that in this age of electronic media, children are provided with a variety of new learning opportunities which broaden the range of events children experience. As a consequence, it is witnessed that socialisation is no longer primarily or secondarily dependent to the influences of family, peers or other such agencies (Prot et.al, 2015: 276).Frønes further contends that our contemporary social realities and myths are given a visual as well as a narrative form through the media, and in this respect the modern social media illustrate how the medium shapes the message. He gives the example of Facebook's architecture which "encourages various presentations of taste, identity and popularity assessment, structuring both the form and content of the communication" (Frønes, 2016: 21).

Over the years television has become the greatest source of influence especially for children, when compared to the other tools of communication. There are different kinds of programmes that are available on the television ranging from serials, movies, cartoons to news, music, fashion, food, history and geography that cater to people belonging to different age groups. However, Protet. al. (2015: 280) reiterates that, violent media exposure is a causal risk factor for aggression. Television programmes for children especially cartoons, portray high levels of violent acts and episodes of different types. Although children might remain passive to such depiction of violence yet these can affect them in the form of nightmares and/or feelings of uncertainty and fear. Apart from this, certain forms of music, films or even violent video games may have such attributes. For example, Prot et.al attest that, racing video games such as *Need for Speed*, *Burnout*, and *Road Rash*, which can be rewarding for players, can be causes for reckless or violent driving. However, they also suggest that playing prosocial characters in nonviolent video games such as *Super Mario Sunshine* can lead to

significant decrease in hurtful behaviour and increase in helpful behaviours (Prot et.al, 2015: 286). Hence, the media plays a very important role in the process of socialisation by moulding our understanding of the world around us.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Discuss the role of family and the school as agents of primary and secondary socialisation respectively.

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2) Give two examples of peer group socialisation.

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3) Explain how media can have negative impacts on socialisation.

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11.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the various dimensions of socialisation. We began by understanding the meaning and nature of socialisation which included some definitions. We learnt about various types of socialisation and then we moved on to study some of the most important theories of socialisation. In this unit we have also seen that there are many agents of socialisation and how each one of them plays an important role in the process of socialisation.

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UNIT 12   STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION*

Structure

12.0   OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the premises of functionalism;

- Discuss the relevance of the concept of function in understanding society; and

- Compare and contrast the theoretical approach of Radcliffe-brown, Malinowski and parsons.

12.1   INTRODUCTION

Functionalism is the name of an approach in social anthropology and sociology according to which a society is a whole of interconnected parts, where each part contributes to the maintenance of the whole. The task of sociology is to find out the contribution of each part of society and how society works together as an ordered arrangement of parts. At the same time 'function' is a multi-meaning and multi-usage term, Levy, Jr. (1968: 22) writers: 'Perhaps the major difficulty associated with the general concept of function has been the use of a single term to cover several distinctly different referents.'

As a distinct approach, as a way of looking at and analyzing society, functionalism emerged first in social anthropology in early twentieth century, and later in sociology, beginning in the 1930s. However, its roots are as ancient as the concept of organic analogy, used in the philosophy of Antiquity by Plato (B.C. 428/7-345/7) and Aristotle (B.C. 384-322). Some writers regard **Claude Henri de Saint-Simon**, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century scholar, writing after the French Revolution, as the '**father of sociology'**, because in his writings, one finds a coexistence of two ideas- one from which a scientific study of society emerged, and the other which contributed substantially to the growth of Marxian theory (**Giddens** 1973). The first idea is that 'scientific methods' should be used for the study of society, and the second is that each society contains in it the

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* This unit is contributed by Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava, DU. The Unit has been adopted after editing from Unit 6 of MSO-001.

germs of its contradiction, because of which it changes over time. Saint-Simon also recognizes revolution as an important process of change.

It is the first thought of studying a society scientifically that Auguste Comte (1789-1857), the collaborator of Saint-Simon and the person who has coined the term 'sociology', fully develops under the rubric of what the calls 'positivism' or 'positive philosophy'. In this view, the methods for the study of society come from natural and biological sciences. The aim of the study is to discover the 'Laws of evolution' as well as the 'Laws of functioning' of society, i.e., 'how has the society evolved with the passage of time and what are the various stages through which it has passed' and 'how does the society function (or work) at a particular point of time.'

In this unit we expose the concept of function in sociological writings. We begin with the basic premises of functionalism and then look into the theoretical contributions of Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski, and Parsons.

12.2   FROM POSITIVISM TO FUNCTIONALISM

The immediate forerunner of functionalism in sociology is Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who is a sharp critic of Comte as well as influenced by his ideas. Like Comte, Durkheim is keenly interested in defining the subject matter of sociology as distinct from that of philosophy or biology. For him, sociology is a comparative and an objective study of 'social facts', which are the 'ways of thinking, acting and feeling' that have the 'noteworthy property' of existing outside the 'individual consciousness'. Social facts do not originate in the individual but in the collectivity, in the 'collective mind'. Because they exist outside the individual, they can be studied in the same way as one studies the material objects. Social facts are 'things', perceived objectively and outside the individual. This however does not mean that they are as tangible as are the 'material things'. Instead, for their study one uses the same frame of mind which one uses for the study of natural and biological objects that constitute the subject matter of natural and biological sciences. Durkheim's book titled The Rules of the Sociological method (1895) was basically concerned with these issues.

Box 12.1: Sociological Explanations

From the study of social facts, sociologists offer what Durkheim calls 'sociological explanations'. Each sociological explanation is consisted of two parts: to quote Durkheim (1895: 123) here : ' …to explain a social phenomenon the efficient cause which produces it and the function it fulfills must be investigated separately,' the first component of the sociological explanation is the 'causal-historical explanation': to delineate the cause(s) which produce a phenomenon by examining historical sources rather than indulging in what Radcliffe-Brown calls 'conjectural history'. The second component is 'functional', i.e., the contribution that a part makes to society 'in the establishment of ..general harmony' (Durkheim 1895: 125).

Durkheim's definition of function has tremendously influenced the writings of later functionalists, both in social anthropology and sociology. For him, function is the 'contribution' a part makes to the whole for its 'maintenance and well being'. Thus, function is a 'positive contribution': it is inherently good for society (the whole), for it ensures its continuity and healthy maintenance.

For instance, in his doctoral work, which was on the division of labour, Durkheim (1893) rejects Darwin's idea survival. Instead of lending support to the theory of competition, conflict and elimination, Durkheim shows that as human population increases, society becomes more and more differentiated with the division of labour moving towards the specialization of jobs. Rather than competing with others for survival, human beings are able to depend on one another. Specialization makes each one of the beings important for society.

Durkheim is also critical of the utilitarian (i.e., economic) and individualistic (i.e., psychological) explanations, because according to him none of them actually explains the real function of the division of labour. For him, the function of the division of labour is sociological: it contributes to social solidarity. Modern industrial society is integrated because of the interdependence that comes into existence with the specialization of jobs. In his study of Australian Totemism, he shows that the function of religion is to produce solidarity in society, 'to bind people in a moral community called church' (Durkheim 1915).

Durkheim is particularly interested in showing that the function of social facts is moral. Social institutions work to produce the goal of integration.

With this perspective, he is able to account for such phenomena that to many may appear 'unhealthy' for society. For example, he regards crime as a 'normal' and healthy' feature of all societies, because it reinforces collective sentiments and works towards the evolution of morality and law. A normal rate of crime indicates that the society lacks the total authority to 'suppress' all 'divergences' of the individual to express them as 'individuals'. However, if crime exceeds the normal limits, then it becomes unhealthy (or 'pathological'), jeopardizing the normal functioning of society. As is clear, Durkheim distinguishes between the 'normal' and the 'pathological' forms of social facts. What is general in a society is normal and what is not is pathological. The former performs the function of integrating society, whereas the latter, thwarts the process of integration.

12.3   THE PREMISES OF FUNCTIONALISM

Durkheim is not a 'functionalist' in the sense in which this term has come to be used for the approach that the British social anthropologists, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), have espoused. Durkheim does not use the term 'functionalism', although he defines the concept of social function. One comes across in Durkheim's works a fine coexistence of the diachronic (genetic, evolutionary, and historical) and the synchronic (society 'here and now') approaches. For instance, in his celebrated study of religion, he begins with a consideration of Australian Totemism as the most elementary form of religious life, but instead of speculating on origin he is more concerned with the function of totemism and how its study can help us in understanding the place of religion in complex societies. This emphasis on the study of synchronous (or 'present') societies exerted a tremendous impact on later scholars.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of functionalism and disappearance of evolutionary theory. Adam Kuper (1973) thinks that 1922 was the 'year of wonder' (annus mirabilis) of functionalism, for in this year were published two monographs that substantiated the functional approach. One was by Radcliffe-Brown titled The Andaman Islanders, and the other, by Malinowski,

titled Argonauts of the Western Pacific. The impact of anthropological functionalism was felt in other disciplines, particularly sociology. Sociologists such as Talcott Parsons were clearly impressed with the writings of functional anthropologists. As a result functionalism emerged as an extremely important approach, holding its sway till the late 1960s and the early 1970s. In its history of about 150 years, first in the positivism of Comte, then in the 'sociologistic positivism' of Durkheim, and then, in the works of the twentieth-century functionalists, functionalism has come to comprise a number of variants and fact. Pointed differences exist between different functionalists – in fact, some of them happen to be archrivals, like Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski. Notwithstanding their differences, it seems that all functionalists share the following five propositions:

1) Society (or culture) is a system like any other system, such as solar system, or organic system.

2) As a system, society (or culture) consists of parts (like, institutions, groups, role, associations, organisations), which are interconnected, interrelated, and interdependent.

3) Each part performs its own function – it makes its own contribution to the whole society (or culture) – and also, it functions in relationship with other parts.

4) A change in one part brings about a change in other parts, or at least influences the functioning of other parts, because all the parts are closely connected.

5) The entire society or culture – for which we can use the term 'whole' is greater than the mere summation of parts. It cannot be reduced to any part, or no part can explain the whole. A society (or culture) has its own identity, its own 'consciousness', or in Durkheim's words, 'collective consciousness'.

12.4 FUNCTIONALISM IN SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY: RADCLIFFE-BROWN AND MALINOWSKI

Both the founders of the British functional approach (Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski) were vehemently critical of the nineteenth-century evolutionism. Radcliffe-Brown (1952) said that it was based on 'conjectural history', a term we used earlier, and not 'authentic history'. It was 'pseudo-historical', thus devoid of a scientific value. For Malinowski (1944), classical evolutionism was a 'limbo of conjectural reconstructions'. With the works of these scholars came a shift from:

1) Arm-chair anthropology to fieldwork-based studies;

2) The study of the origin and stages of evolution of society and to institutions (diachronic studies) to society 'here and now' (synchronic studies);

3) The study of the entire societies and cultures (macro approach) to the study of particular societies, especially the small-scale societies (micro approach); and

4) An understanding of society confined to a theoretical level to putting the knowledge of society 'here and now' to practical use, to bring about desired changes in society. It was believed that the knowledge acquired should be

used for improving upon the conditions of people in society. Malinowski called this concern of anthropology 'practical anthropology'.

The functionalists did not level their criticism against the processes of diffusion and evolution, for they knew that they were important processes of change. In fact, both Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski thought that eventually they would take up the study of these processes.What they were against was a study of the past through 'imaginative history' rather than empirical studies. If authentic documents were available about societies, theymaybe used for some insights into change. But the functionalists noted that these documents were not available about 'primitive and pre-literate' societies.

Structural-functional Approach of Radcliffe-Brown

Radcliffe-Brown (1952: 180) defines each society as a 'functionally interrelated system' in which 'general laws or functions operate'. He accepts that Durkheim offered the first systematic formulation of the concept of function and that this concept is based on an 'analogy between social life and organic life'. However,Radcliffe-Brown suspected that functionalism as used by Durkheim might become teleological. He thus substitutes for the word 'need' the term 'necessary conditions of existence.' He believes that the question of which conditions are necessary for survival is an empirical one, and the study of a society will tell us about this. Radcliffe-Brown recognizes the 'diversity of conditions necessary for the survival of different systems.' Once we have recognized this, we shall avoid asserting that each item of a culture must have a function and that 'items in different cultures must have the same functions' (Turner 1987: 48)

Radcliffe-Brown dislikes the use of the word 'functionalism', which Malinowski propagated with enthusiasm. His objection is that '-isms' (like functionalism) are ideologies, schools of thought, philosophies, and realms of opinions. Science does not have either of them. What it has are the methods of study, opting for those methods that are regarded as the best for study.

Moreover, Radcliffe-Brown also looks at the distinction between an organism and society. For instance, an organism dies, but a society continues to survive over time, although it may be changed and transformed. An organism can be studied even when its parts have stopped working. In over words, the structure of an organism can be studied separately from its function, which is not the case with society. Social structure is observable only when it functions. Structure and function are inalienable concepts in social-anthropology; that is why Radcliffe-Brown calls his approach 'structural-functional', rather than 'functional', as many have done. He writes (1952: 180):

The concept of function…involves the notion of a structure consisting of a set of relations amongst unit entities, the continuity of the structure being maintained by a life-process make up of the activities of the constituent units.

Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functional approach comprises the following assumptions:

1) A necessary condition for survival of a society is a minimal integration of its parts.

2)   The concept of function refers to those processes that maintain the necessary integration or solidarity.

3)   And, in each society, structural features can be shown to contribute to the maintenance of necessary solidarity.

For Durkheim, the central concept is of solidarity, while for Radcliffe-Brown, it is the 'structural continuity' of society. For example, in an analysis of the lineage system, according to Radcliffe-Brown, one must first assume that some minimal degree of solidarity must exist for it to continue. Then, one must examine the processes associated with the lineage system, assessing their consequences for maintaining social integration. Then, one will move to the other systems of society, analyzing at each level the contribution a part will make to the structural continuity of the whole.

Reflection and Action 12.1

What are the assumptions of Radcliffe-Brown's structural functional approach?

Radcliffe-Brown is far from being dogmatic in his assertions. For him, the functional unity (or integration) of a social system is a hypothesis. That we look for integration and structural continuity of society does not imply that does not imply that it does not change, Radcliffe-Brown believes that the states of 'social health' (eunomia), and 'social illness' (dysnomia) constitute two ends of the continuum, and the actual society seems to lie somewhere in between.

b)   **The Functionalism of Malinowski**

By comparison to Radcliffe-Brown, it is Malinowski who claims the creation of a separate 'school', the 'Functional School'. Malinowski (1926:132-3) assumes that In every civilization every custom, material object, ideas and belief fulfils some vital function, has some task to accomplish and is indispensable within a working whole.

Whereas Radcliffe-Brown begins with society and its necessary conditions of existence (i.e., integration), Malinowski's starting point is the individual, who has a set of 'basic' (or 'biological') needs that must be satisfied for its survival. It is because of the importance that Malinowski gives the individual that the term 'psychological functionalism' is reserved for him, in comparison to Radcliffe-Brown's approach which is called 'sociological functionalism' because in this society is the key concept.

Malinowski's approach distinguishes between three levels: the biological, the social structural, and the symbolic (Turner 1987: 50-1). Each of these levels has a set of needs that must be satisfied for the survival of the individual. It is on his survival that the survival of larger entities (such as groups, communities, societies) is dependent. Malinowski proposes that these three levels constitutes a hierarchy. At the bottom is placed the biological system, followed next by the social-structural, and finally, by the symbolic system. The way in which needs at one level are fulfilled will affect the way in which they will be fulfilled at the subsequent levels.

The most basic needs are the biological, but this does not imply any kind of reductionism, because each level constitutes its distinct properties and needs, and from the interrelationship of different levels that culture emerges as an integrated whole. Culture is the kernel of Malinowski's approach. It is 'uniquely

human', for it is not found to exist among sub-humans. Comprising all those things- material and non-material- that human beings have made right from the time they separated from their simian ancestors, culture has been the instrument that satisfies the biological needs of human beings. It is a need-serving and need-fulfilling systems. Because of this role of culture is satisfying biological needs that Malinowski's functionalism is also known as 'bio-cultural functionalism.'

One more difference between Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski may be noted here. A concept fundamental to Malinowski – the concept of culture – is a mere epiphenomena (secondary and incidental) for Radcliffe-Brown. He believes that the study of social structure (which for him is an observable entity) encompasses the study of culture; therefore, there is no need to have a separate field to study culture. Further, whilst social structure is the individual peoples, culture is in the minds of people, not amenable to observation in the same way as social structure is. Radcliffe-Brown wants to make social anthropology a branch of natural science, which would be possible when there is an empirically investigable subject matter.

Reflection and Action 12.2

What are the major differences between the theoretical approaches of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski?

The basis of Malinowski's approach is a theory of 'vital sequences', which have a biological foundation and are incorporated into all societies. These sequences number eleven, each composed of an 'impulse', an associated physiological 'act', and a satisfaction which results from that act. For instance, the impulse of somnolence accompanies the act of sleep, resulting in satisfaction by 'awakening with restored energy' (Malinowski 1944: 77; Barnard 2000:68). Malinowski follows this eleven-fold paradigm with a set of seven biological needs and their respective cultural responses (see Table 6.2).

Basic Needs	Cultural Responses
1. Metabolism	Commissariat
2. Reproduction	Kinship
3. Bodily comfort	Shelter
4. Safety	Protection
5. Movement	Activities
6. Growth	Training
7. Health	Hygiene

For example, the first need is of food, and the cultural mechanisms are centered on the processes of food getting, for which Malinowski uses the term 'commissariat', which means the convoy that transports food. Similarly, the second need is of reproduction (biological continuity of society) and the cultural response to which is kinship concerned with regulating sex and marriage. From this, Malinowski goes on to four-fold sequences, which he calls the 'instrumental imperatives', and associates each one of them with their respective cultural responses. The four-fold sequence is of economy, social control, education, and political organization. From here, he shifts to the symbolic system – of religion, magic, beliefs and values – examining its role in culture.

12.5 FUNCTIONALISM OF TALCOTT PARSONS (1902-1979) AND ROBERT K. MERTON (1910-2003)

In 1975, in an important article, Parsons labels his student, Robert Merton and himself 'arch-functionalists'. For him, structure refers to 'any set of relations among parts of a living system'. On empirical grounds, he says, it can be assumed or shown that these relations are stable over a time period. By process, which is the correlative concept with structure, one refers to the 'changes' that occur in the state of the system or its relevant parts. With respect to structure, the key concept is of stability, and with respect to process, it is of change. Thus, by structure, we refer to a pattern of relationships in a social system, and process refers to the changes occurring in that system. A significant characteristic of 'structural functionalism' has been that it has stressed 'structure' over 'process'.

Parsons thinks that his original formulation under the rubric of 'structural functionalism' tends to analyze society as if it is static, but the new formulation, where stress is laid on the concept of function than structure, in the name of functionalism, takes much more account of change and evolution. For example, one may examine in the American context, the function of the process of education of women on 'static' structures like family.

Parsons' functionalism is best known in terms of the 'functional imperatives', the essential conditions required for the enduring existence of a system (Parsons 1951). Also known as the 'AGIL model' (based on the first letters of the four functions that Parsons has devised) or the 'four-function paradigm', it evolved from Parsons' collaborative work with Robert F.Bales in experiments on leadership in small groups (Rocher 1974).

All 'action systems' – and society is one of them – face four major 'problems' (or have four major 'needs'), namely Adaptation (A), Goal Attainment (G), integration (1), and Pattern Maintenance, or, as Parsons later renamed it, Latent Pattern Maintenance-Tension Management, or simply, Latency (L). Parsons pictures society (or the social system) as a large square, which he divides into four equal parts. The underlying idea is that all systems need to accomplish these four functions in order to survive. The meaning of these four 'functional imperatives' is as follows:

1) *Adaptation:* By this is meant the problem of securing sufficient resources from the society's external environment and distributing them throughout the system. Each society needs certain institutions that perform the function of adaptation to the environment-which is an external function. Adaptation provides the means – the instrumental aspects – to achieve goals. Biological organism performs the function of adaptation in the general system of action. In the context of society, economic institution performs this function.

2) *Goal Attainment:* this function is concerned with the need of the system to mobilize its resources to attain the goals and to establish priorities among them. It mobilizes motivations of the actors and organizes their efforts. In the general system of action, personality performs this functions, while in case of society this task is given to the political institution, because power

is essential for implementation and decision-making. Goal attainment is concerned with ends – the consummatory aspects. Since goals are delineated in relation with the external environment, it is, like adaptation, an external function.

3) *Integration:* It is regarded as the 'heart' of the four-function paradigm (Wallace and Wof 1980: 36). By integration is meant the need to coordinate, adjust, and regulate relationships among various actors (or, the units of the system, such as the institutions), so that the system is an 'ongoing entity'. According to the general theory of action, the social system performs this function, whereas in society, legal institutions and courts are entrusted with this task. Integration is concerned with ends, and the internal aspects of the system.

4) *Latency (Pattern Maintenance and Tension Management):* This function pertains to the issues of providing knowledge and information to the system. In the general theory of action, culture – the repository of knowledge and information – accomplishes this function. Culture does not act because it does not have energy. It lays hidden, supplying actors (who are high in energy) with knowledge and information they require for carrying out action. Because culture exists 'behind' the actions of people, it is called 'latent'. Integration takes care of two things: first, it motivates actors to play their roles in the system and maintain the value patterns; and second, to provide mechanisms for managing internal tensions between different parts and actors. The problem that every society faces is of keeping its value system intact and ensuring that theare property transmitted and imbibed. The institutions that carry out this function are family, religion, and education, and education. Latency gives means to achieve ends; it is internal to the system.

AGIL Model

Means (Instrumental)	Ends (Consummatory)
External A Adaptation	Goal attainment G
Internal L Latency (Pattern maintenance and tension-relieving mechanisms)	 Integration I

General Level of Action Theory

Organism	Personality
Culture	Social System

AGIL Functions in the Social System	
Economy	Polity
Fiduciary System	Societal Community

For the purpose of analysis, Parsons identifies sub-systems corresponding to the AGIL model in all systems and their sub-systems (see Diagram 1). As we have seen, at the general level of action theory, the biological organism performs the function of adaptation, the personality system, the function of goal attainment, the social system integrates different units, and the cultural system is concerned with pattern maintenance. Then, the social system is broken down into the four AGIL functions. We noted earlier that economy performs the function of adaptation, whereas, polity (or political institution), the function of goal attainment. For the sub-system that carries out the function of integration, Parsons uses the term 'societal community', which reminds one of Ferdinand Tonnies's ideas of gemeinschaft ('community'). 'Societal community' produces solidarity, unity, cohesiveness, and loyalty to norms, values, and institutions. The function of pattern maintenance, Parsons says, is the task of what he calls the 'fiduciary system', which pertains to the nature of a trust or a trusteeship. This system produces and legitimizes moral values, beliefs, and expressive symbols.

Each of the sub-systems of the system can be taken up for analysis by treating it as a 'system', and then, breaking it down into four parts looking for its components that respectively perform the functions of adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. This way of analyzing society is known as the systemic approach.

12.6   LET US SUM UP

Parsons's AGIL model is an ideal type, applicable to differentiated societies than simple societies. It is popularly known as a 'grand theory' – an all-encompassing, unified theory – which is believed to have a large explanatory power. Parsons' student, Robert Merton, is skeptical of such a theory, for it is too general to be of much use (Merton 1957). Instead, he expresses his preference for mid-level (middle-range) theories, which cover certain delimited aspects of social phenomena (such as groups, social mobility, or role conflict). Partially because of this middle-range strategy, Merton's functionalism is quite different from that of Parsons. For instance, Merton abandons the search for any functional prerequisites that will be valid in all social systems. He also rejects the idea of the earlier functionalists that recurrent social phenomena should be explained in terms of their benefits to society as a whole. For criticism, Merton identifies the three postulates of earlier functionalists given below:

1)   Postulate of the functional unity of society. It is an assumption that there is unity in society, which comes about because of the contributions that parts make to the whole.

2)   Postulate of the universal functionalism. It is an assumption that all social or cultural forms have positive functions, which are for the maintenance and well being of society.

3)   Postulate of indispensability. It is an assumption that the function that a social or cultural from performs is an indispensable precondition for the survival of society.

Merton notes that none of these postulates are empirically justifiable. For instance, there is no reason to suppose that particular institutions are the only ones to fulfill the functions. Empirical research shows that there may be a wide range of

what Merton has termed 'functional alternatives' that may be able to perform the same function.

With a critical look, Merton tries to attempt what he calls a 'codification of functional analysis in sociology', a functional paradigm (for perspective) (which is not a grand theory) that takes into consideration the actual dimensions of social reality, of conformity and deviance, understanding and explaining them. Like other functionalists, he views society as a system of interconnected parts, where the functioning of a part has implications for the functioning of other parts and the entire system. Like his predecessors, he is interested in the concepts of equilibrium and integration, and the contribution of customs and institutions to the persistence of societies. His definition of function is also in terms of the 'positive contribution' of a part to the whole: functions are those contributions or consequences that 'make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system.'

While agreeing with other functionalists on certain points stated above, Merton has made a distinct contribution to a set of two typologies, namely, the distinction between 'function' and 'dysfunction', and between 'manifest' and 'latent' functions. Most functionalists think that all contributions are inherently good or 'functional' for society, a proposition Merton finds difficult to accept. He thinks there are acts that have 'consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system'. Such acts have harmful consequences, the technical term for which is 'dysfunction'. It is, therefore, expected that the sociologist will always ask the following question: 'For whom are the consequences functional or dysfunctional?' The same institution can be functional in one context and dysfunctional in another. All social institutions are expected to have some mix of functions and dysfunctions. Whether the institution tilts to the pole of function or dysfunction in a continuum will depend upon the net balance between the functional and dysfunctional consequences.

Box 12.2: Manifest and Latent Function

The distinction between manifest and Latent functions has its roots in the writings of the funders in sociology. In his study of religion, for example, Durkheim (1915) makes a distinction between 'what people do of which they are aware' and 'what emerges from their collective acts which they had not intended and anticipated.' When people assemble for collective totemic rituals, their explicit aim is to honour their totem, but what these rituals produce is a sense of we-ness, which is an unintended, unrecognized, and unanticipated consequence. Following this, one can say that manifest functions are those consequences people observe or expect, while latent functions are those consequences that are neither recognized nor intended.

Merton was able to advance four types of explanations in terms of the two dichotomies (function and dysfunction; manifest and latent functions). The earlier functionalists put forth only one explanation and that too with respect to latent functions. Merton's conceptual scheme guided empirical research, rather than remaining a theory with several explanatory claims, like the 'grand theory' of Parsons.

12.7   CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1)   What are the assumptions of Radcliffe-Brown's structural functional approach?

2)   What are the major differences between the theoretical approaches of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski?

3)   Examine Parsons' model of AGIL.

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UNIT 13   SOCIAL CONTROL AND CHANGE*

Structure

13.0   OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- Social control as a concept;

- Relationship between social control and social order;

- Agencies which function as social control;

- Concept of social change and social transformation;

- Various approaches to the understanding of social change;

- Causal factors of social change; and

- Rate of social change.

13.1   INTRODUCTION

Social control is a central concept in sociology. All of us are expected to behave in a certain way. It ranges from how to eat to giving respect to our elders to driving to the left side of the road and to obey the laws of the land. The very basic idea behind following certain desired rules is to make collective social life possible. Community life is possible only in the context of social constraints as social living demands sacrifice of individual interests. For example one is always

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* This unit is contributed by R. Vashum, IGNOU and Shushwi Ke, Consultant, NUEPA, Delhi.

tempted to jump a traffic signal but does not do so for fear of being fined. Thus, in order to function smoothly and efficiently society makes certain rules and regulations and expects that its members will follow them. Social institutions such as family, school, religious institutions and media are some of the agents that reinforce and maintain these rules. Many sanctions are not applied directly but only by embedding certain values in the socialized person. Thus most people conform not because of fear but because they are internally conditioned to do so. In the most fundamental sense 'social control' refers to the capacity of a society to regulate itself according to desired principles and values.

13.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL CONTROL

The purpose of social control is as the term indicates is to exercise control over people in an effective manner. Confirming or behaving in accordance with the norms of society is referred to as conformity. In fact in a modern complex society social order can be achieved by making the people to accept and follow certain specified group norms. By maintaining solidarity and stability among its members society ensures its continuity. As a result the means of social control does not remain external to individual but are followed unconsciously too and becomes the larger part of culture and gets transmitted from one generation to another. And this is how a social order is maintained. It delimits the chances of chaos and confusion in the functioning of society. Therefore, social control is a necessary component of social order.

It was E.A. Ross, an American Sociologist who introduced the concept Social Control in his famous book "Social Control" published in 1901. He has defined social control as "system of devices whereby society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour". Others like Ogburn and Nimkoff have said that social control refers to "the patterns of pressure which society exerts to maintain order and established rules".

From the above definitions it is clear that society exercises some kind of influence on the behaviour of the individual. The influence may be exercised by means of public opinion, religion, morality, ideology or by coercion. Such influence is exerted at various levels. It may be the influence over all members of society or influence of a dominant group over smaller groups or individuals. Some members exercises and influence the behaviour of others by having moral authority on them. The influence of society over individual or group may also result in benevolence and care giving approach. Thus socialization into the moral code of society results in some members taking care of others. Thus social control underlies all forms of social behaviour and has been an essential aspect of all societies from ancient to recent times.

13.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Society exercises its control on the behaviour of individual or group in many ways. The nature of social control is also dependent on the social situation and the nature of social goals. In some simpler societies some form of beliefs and customs exercise enough control to act as a social pressure on individuals or groups. In rural society long established traditions and beliefs have significant

influence on the behaviour of the individual or group. However, it does differ in modern industrial urban society. Here, modern means like radio, television, school, and law etc. work more effectively for the purpose of controlling behaviour of members of society. In a way, formal and informal represents two types of means to have influence on the members of society.

Thus, social control can be classified into two major types on the basis of the means of social control that are exercised.

They are: formal control and informal control.

Formal Control: Formal control is exercised by some institutionalised organisations or associations characterised by formal authority like government which makes law and legislation to control. Formal control is a feature of modern urban complex society in which the interaction is mostly impersonal in nature and social life is anonymous. A complex society requires the necessity of formal control or rules and regulation to make its members conform. The legal institution and judiciary are a well recognised and well accepted means of social control. The various laws are exercised by specific body in which officials are vested with power to enforce control. The state is often the highest agent of social control and subsumes within itself subsidiary institutions like that of the police and the military for the enforcement of control.

Informal Control: Informal control is mainly exercised by unwritten rules and regulations characterised by informal agents like folkways, traditional beliefs and customs, rituals, gossip, public opinion etc. Informal means of social control evolve on their own and are an integral and accepted part of life over a period of time. They become more established with practice. Though no specific punishment is given to persons in case of violation yet, informal controls are more effective in their influence than even formal control. They are more effective in simple or rural society where members of society are more tradition oriented and the community is more tightly knit. They are also more effective in primary groups like family where interaction takes place more at personal ground. In informal control, the control is either through internalized values or through feelings of shame, honor and ridicule.

In complex societies and in urban city life, both formal as well as informal mechanism of control work simultaneously to maintain social order.

13.4 AGENCIES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

A society maintains social control through agencies that have evolved over time to be effective. Society uses law, education, physical coercion and codes besides folkways, religion, traditional customs, mores etc. to exercise control over its members of society. The types of social control mechanisms used by society depend upon nature of society in terms of its organisational complexity.

Control by Law: Law is the most powerful instrument of social control in the modern urban industrial society. Law appears in a society with a political organization of the state. The term 'Law' has been defined in various ways. J. S. Roucek says that "*Laws are a form of social rule emanating from political agencies*". The sources of law are many. Laws are made and legislations are

enacted on the basis of social doctrines, ideals and mores. Laws are made formal when they are enacted by a proper law making authority. Formal laws are deliberately made with proper planning. In the western system laws are supposed to be definite, clear and precise and everybody is treated equally before law in identical circumstances. Such may not however be true for non-western laws emanating from cultures other than European. Law is enforced by agencies; therefore, formal bodies are created. With colonization and the spread of western civilization, the nature of formal law has become similar in most societies.

Control by Education: Education is very significant tool and a mechanism of social control in all forms of society. Education can be just simply viewed as imbibing of social values and norms by the younger generations. Informal education is imparted by all socializing agents especially the family. Education has been visualised by Emile Durkheim as '*the socialisation of the younger generation*' because it is through education by which society passes its heritage to from one generation to another. Formal education, that is the education that is imparted by an institution that is dedicated primarily to it and which has its own tools and techniques, books, and teachers, been playing central role in controlling the behaviour of members of society. Formal education is designed to impart the right kind of ideology to the young members of society so that they contribute to its reproduction. Formal education often includes religious and patriotic values that are deemed necessary for the formation of the responsible citizen.

Control by Public Opinion: Public opinion is an important agency of social control. Public opinion simply refers to mass of ideas which people expresses on any given issue. In fact it works as a collective opinion of majority of members of society. Moreover it is more valued in democratic societies. Public opinion is gathered through various modern means like Press, Radio, and Television etc.

Control by Propaganda: Propaganda does affect people's attitude, behaviour, faith and ideology. At times it is also used to replace an older belief system with the new one. However, it may have both positive and negative impact. Most governments and power regimes use propaganda to bring changes in the behaviour of people. Thus people are urged to conform to the goals of the state willingly through propaganda that makes them believe that what the society wants is actually also good for them.

Control by Coercion: Coercion refers to physical force to stop or control the behaviour of an individual or group. When people are forced to follow certain rules under threat or under some imposed controls, it is said that coercion is used to regulate the behaviour of an individual or members of society. State is the only agency which uses it legitimately although every one may not agree with every situation of use of force, like when police uses force on peacefully demonstrating people or when the state uses repressive measures to suppress any protest.

Control by Customs: Custom is basically an informal means of social control. It is exercised mostly unconsciously. We learn them from childhood in our families or what we say in primary groups in a very informal manner. It ensures collective life. They are more influential in traditional or rural society.

Control by Religion: Religion refers to faith in some supernatural forces. MacIver and Page has defined religion as religion "*implies a relationship not merely*

between man and man but also between man and some higher power". It is a strong instrument of social control. Therefore, it is based on the belief that it confirms the man's relationship with God and therefore, constitutes a religious code. And it is this religious code which becomes significant to control the conduct of human behaviour. The power of religion is very deep rooted as it conflates the social requirements with the wishes of the higher power. For example in many religions women are made to believe that it is their religious duty to serve men and is very effective in maintaining and continuing a patriarchal society. Similarly many religions supported the rule of kings saying that the king or ruler was divine.

Control by Morality: There is a close relation between morality and religion. Morality is "*that body of rules and principles concerned with good and evil as manifested to us by conscience*". Morality is what makes a person distinguish right conduct from wrong. But the moral order is not universal and varies from society to society, and each society imbibes its own norms and values in its children. In the context of a Western society one may identify honesty, faithfulness, trust, fairness, conscientiousness, kindness and sacrifice to represent some of the moral concepts. The moral order of Indian society is more towards family and respect for elders and following rules. The moral order is internalized by the people and therefore, plays very crucial role in influencing people's behaviour or maintain control on members of society.

Besides the above mentioned mechanism of formal as well as informal means of social control different social ceremonies in terms of rituals, fashions are also used to regulate the behaviour of an individual or members of society.

Thus, society in order to function smoothly and effectively uses some form of inbuilt mechanism. Individuals have the tendency to deviate from the desired behaviour because of their desires for their self, like pleasure and individualistic goal fulfillments. For example people wish for the good things of life that they may not be able to get by fair means but by anti-social means such as theft or breaking of rules. Social control refers to all the mechanism which are used to regulate the behaviour of individuals and makes them conform to its norms and values. It is the way through which society ensures its collective life and maintains normative social order. The effectiveness of mechanisms varies from simple to complex society. Means like customs, folkways and mores are more effective in rural traditional simple society. But law, education, public opinion plays more significant role in urban complex society.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Explain the meaning and definition of social control.

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2) Discuss various types of social control.

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3) Discuss the agencies of social control.

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13.5 CONCEPT AND MEANING OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Social change has been defined in various ways. Scholars and authors have defined them in many different ways so that there is no one agreed definition of social change. Nevertheless, for our purpose we shall attempt a working definition of social change. Social change can broadly be defined as the *significant alteration or modification of any social organization and/or social structure and functions of a society and its various manifestations*. The definition incorporates the aspects of significant changes in the various patterns of social relationships – social processes, social patterns, action and interaction – the rules of relationships and conduct (norms), values, symbols and cultural products. The concept of social change also refers to variations over time in both the material and non-material aspects of culture. These changes take place both from within the societies (*endogenous forces*) and from without (*exogenous forces*) that is brought about by external forces.

13.6 APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CHANGE

There are a few main approaches to the understanding of social change and/or social transformation. They are:

i) Evolutionary theories;

ii) Cyclical theories; and

iii) Structural-functional and conflict theories.

13.6.1 Evolutionary Theories of Change

Evolutionary theories of social change are conglomeration of many but interrelated theories of change. The main notion of the evolutionary theory of change is that

there is a consistent direction of social change of all societies in a similar sequence of stages from the original to the final stage of development, or from a simple and 'primitive' to the more complex and advanced state. Evolutionary theory also implies that evolutionary change will culminate at reaching the final stage of development. Evolutionary theorists consider change as progress and growth. The theory can be classified into two main categories- Classical evolutionary theories and Neo-evolutionary theories.

The classical evolutionary theories have been developed by the 19th century anthropologists and sociologists. Although, approaches differ among them, there is an underlying principle of convergence of ideas that evolutionary change takes place in a *unilinear* and similar direction. They largely draw an analogy of the progress of animal life from the simple uni-celled organisms to the most complex animal- the human being. They believe that as societies evolve and grow, the functions of its members would also become more specialized just as the development of millions of body cells to perform specific functions within an interrelated system. The main proponents of the classical theories of evolutionary change were August Comte (from French Evolutionary and Positivist School), Herbert Spencer, E.B.Tylor, H.J.S.Maine, J.F. McLennan and S.J.G.Frazer (from British Evolutionary School); Lewis Henry Morgan (from American Evolutionary School); and J.J.Bachofen, Adolf Bastian and Ferdinand Toennies [Ferdinand Tönnies] (from German Evolutionary School).

The Neo-Evolutionary theories were introduced in the 20th century by V.Gordon Childe, Julian Steward and Leslie White. Their formulations of evolutionary theories are characterized by careful scrutiny of evidence, systematic analysis, and rigorous reasoning. To distinguish them from the classical evolutionary theorists, they have also been labeled as neo-evolutionists. Later, Marshall D. Sahlins and Elman Service attempted a synthesis of the theories of evolution (particularly the theories of Julian Steward and Leslie White's) by developing the concept of '*specific*' and '*general*' evolution. The main claim of these theories was that evolution moved simultaneously in two directions in both the biological and cultural aspects. This evolutionary process then led to progress and made new ones emerge out of the old ones. They considered these two processes as interconnected in its totality.

13.6.2 Cyclical Theories

Cyclical theories have been concerned with the repetitious change of conditions, events, forms and/or fashions over a long period of time, although the period of recurrent phases (cycles) of change would vary. The cyclical theorists believe that societies pass through a series of stages. However, they do not consider the notion of ending in a stage of perfection but see them as a return to the stage where it began for further round in a cyclical manner. Some of the eminent contributors include A.L.Kroeber, Oswald Spengler, Pitirim Sorokin, Arnold Toynbee, and Vilfredo Pareto.

13.6.3 Structural-functional and Conflict Theories

The structural-functional and conflict theories are generally concerned with micro and middle range theories of social change. The structural-functionalists assume that society, like the human body, is a balanced system of institutions, each of

which performs a function in maintaining society. They consider 'change' as a constant that requires no explanation. They hold that changes disrupt the equilibrium of a society, until the change has been integrated into the culture. Societies accept and adopt those changes that are found useful (functional), while they reject changes that are useless (dysfunctional).

Conflict theories are closely related to structural-functional theories of change. They have no specific theory per se of change. The conflict theorists believe that societies progress to a higher order when the oppressed groups improve their conditions of life. They do not however assume that societies smoothly evolve from lower to higher levels. They consider conflict as a constant and necessary factor to bring about social change. They view social change as the result of social conflict, but not as constant. As conflict continuous, so is also change.

13.7   SYNTHESIS OF SOCIAL CHANGE THEORIES

Most theorists today integrate the various ideas and theories of social change that have been discussed above. There is a general agreement, however, that societies change because of various factors conditioned on the society. These factors could be both within and without the society and/or planned and unplanned. Many theorists do believe that changes in societies are not necessarily good or bad. They opine that although a stable society is usually better than a chaotic and conflict-ridden society, stability would sometimes imply exploitation, oppression, and injustice. In such situation of injustice and oppression, conflict is bound to take place and the society will be forced to change.

13.8   FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Social change is brought about by various factors. These factors are mainly responsible for the differences in the rate and nature of change in different societies and at different times. They may be broadly classified into the following categories —

i)   Biological factors

ii) Geographic factors

iii) Technological factors

iv) Socio-cultural factors

13.8.1 Biological Factors

Biological factors may be further classified into two types – *Non-human biological* factors, and *Human biological* factors. The *non-human biological* factors include plants and animals. They affect the lives of the people in varied ways. Human beings need plants and animals for survival, be it for food, cloth, medicine and other purposes in many different ways as defined by one's culture. Man also needs plants and animals indirectly for availing oxygen and other utilities through many processes. Transformations of the environment may bring about changes in livelihood, food habits and related social aspects. *Human biological* factors affect social change in two main ways – the genetic character of a given population, and the quantity, density and composition of population. *Population* change, unlike genetic factor, is considered to be one of the most important factors of

social change. Growth in population and also it s composition have been affecting various aspects of socio-cultural lives. Migration brings about further change by creating a new environment setting after the contact of two or more alien peoples and cultures with that brings about numerous new problems. Migration could also affect the processes of acculturation, cultural diffusion and/or social conflict.

13.8.2 Geographic Factors

Geographic changes have been significant factors of social change. There are several instances where social changes have been brought about by geographic factors. Natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods can cause both environmental and social changes. Often when land and resources are lost in such mishaps there is deepening of social inequalities as most of the burden falls on the marginal people. Ecological change is also a major source of social change in the modern times. Many ecological changes have been induced by human beings. Over population of a region, overexploitation of a region/border area due to social and political conflict, deforestation, construction of large dams, among others, for one reason or another have caused enormous social and ecological problems in the contemporary world which are found to be even greater factors of social change than migrations and disasters.

13.8.3 Technological Factors

Technology has been considered as one of the important factors of social change. This is quite true particularly in the context of the contemporary World. This is for the fact that variation in technology affects social organization and/or structure of a society in a significant way. The use of mass media and rapid transfer of information through the internet and the revolution in communication technology has changed the face of the world. However this has often resulted in the dominant cultures such as American culture making its impact worldwide. People have began to wear western clothes and eat popular junk food all over the world. At the same time, the magnitude and the rate of change could differ from one period and situation to another depending on the availability and use of technology. While modern technology has been a great boon to man, there are also the other dark side of it. This is mainly due to change of the old ways of life and systems, destructive nature of the technologies being designed or misuse of technologies for destructive ends.

13.8.4 Socio-cultural Factors

Socio-cultural factors have been the most important causal factors of social change. Humans are the most important player of social change. As society is a human creation so also humans are primarily responsible fo rchanging their own creation. Social change has been caused by various human activities in the form of *discovery*, *invention*, *diffusion*, *social movements*, and so on. Change is also caused by the attitudes and values of the people toward innovation in a society. Some people are more conservative and resistant to change while others are more open to transformation. Change is however viewed as inevitable and natural by most people.

Societies located at world crossroads areas of greatest intercultural contact have always been centres of change. On the other hand, isolated areas are generally centres of stability, conservatism, and resistance of change. Ethnographic

evidences show that the most primitive tribes have been found among the most isolated communities. Discoveries and inventions have contributed much to the process of social change. This truth is increasingly realised in modern times after the introduction of modern technological know-how.

Diffusion, the process of the spread of culture from group to group, has been considered as one of the main causes of social change. Diffusion takes place within societies and between societies through contact. This is why the process of diffusion becomes difficult to penetrate in a situation of isolation. Jazz, which was originated among black musicians of New Orleans diffused to other groups within the society, and then later spread to other societies as well and to different parts of the world.

Social movement is certainly one of the most important factors of social change. We can understand social movement into two different forms- one, those movements organised to create some new social forms that are usually radical and liberal in nature; and two, those movements concerned with maintaining or recreating older social forms that are generally conservative or reactionary. However, in both these cases, social change will depend much on the success of the movements and the impact it could cause to the society.

Again, the amount of success of a social movement aimed at creating new social forms will depend on several inter-related factors, such as, the bearing and relevance of the goals and objectives of the movement to the people concerned, quality of leadership it provides, the art of strategy, the ability to incorporate influential persons and sections of the society, and the extent to which vested interests, counter forces and hurdles are successfully tackled.

Revolutionary movement may be considered as a kind of social movement. Revolutionary movements also cause social change. The French Revolution of 1789 witnessed the rise of French democracy, rise of modern civilian army, and was a great eye-opener and model for many peoples in different parts of the world who are struggling for liberation and justice. The Russian Revolution is also another example of revolutionary change that brought an end to monarchical government and class stratification in Russia.

13.9 IMPACT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The impact of social change on human society has been a major concern for social scientists, particularly, sociologists. Sociologists are concerned with the impacton the group more than on the individual. The opinion of sociologist about social change differs according to the schooltowhich they belong.

There are many sociologists who believe that industrial society alienates individuals from one another because of the nature of the work. Karl Marx was one of the thinkers which believed that the move from agrarian to industrial societies would alienate people from their labour and therefore from their real selves. This, he felt, was inevitable because the goods produced would be owned by the factory owner, and not the worker. There are also other sociologists who think that industrial society would affect human society. Ferdinand Tonnies and Max Weber, among others, may be cited as those sociologists who subscribed to the idea that industrial society would affect human relationships, albeit in different

ways. While the former believed that industrialization and urbanization isolated people and had negative impact on social relationships the latter believed that people will become more rational and practical.

There are few sociologists, such as Emile Durkheim who felt that complex industrial societies have positive effect on human relationships by virtue of the division of labour after specializations among other attributes that promote interdependence and integration of society. But he had also talked about anomie and break down of social relationships.

Sociologists today realise that industrial society has disintegrated traditional family and community systems and has led to increasing cases of broken families and divorce. The rise of individualism and more liberal views have also been viewed as ushering in a more liberal and humane society. Sociologists are also aware that modern socialisations and life styles encourage individuals to behave in a way that would be compatible with industrial life and specialised professions. The media also plays immense role in influencing the individuals to emulate and adapt to the lifestyles of the middle class.

The introduction of modern know-how and technology has also caused great problems and anxiety to human life and the environment. The heavy use of automobiles and fuels causes massive pollution and hazardous emissions. It also pollutes and damages the physical environment that man depends for survival. The acute demand for fuel and the means to meet the demand have often led to conflicts between communities and states even to the extent of war. The invention and use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction have caused great concern to humanity. At the same time humans are forming bonds across the world and we have now the concept of the Global Village. Thus change works both ways and the future is always unpredictable.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Discuss various approaches to understand social change.

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2) Explain the factors for social change.

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3) Discuss the impact of social change on human society.

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13.10 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have explained the meaning and concept of social control and social change. We have discussed how social control is a necessary component of social order to maintain the relationship among individuals in the society through various mechanisms. We have also explained the various aspects and approaches to understand social change through evolutionary theories, cyclical theories, structural-functional and conflict theories. Various factors for social change and their impact on society and individual have also been discussed.

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GLOSSARY

Achieved status: Ascribed statuses are those which are assigned to individuals irrespective of their innate differences or abilities. The universally used criteria for ascription of status are age, sex, kinship, and race.

Anomie: Refers to a condition in which the normative order of society is broken down.

Artifacts: It is a manmade object that has a kind of cultural significance. It is the thing that id made.

Ascribed status: Achieved statuses are those that are acquired through competition and individual effort.

Association: A group of people united for a specific purpose or a limited number of purposes; army, school.

Association: An organised group of people pursuing some common interest.

Capitalist: In an industrial system of production, the class of owners of the means of production (such as, the capital i.e. the money, the property, the tools, etc.) is called the capitalists.

Classification: A way of putting social data into different categories and groups.

Community: A permanent social group embracing a totality of ends or purpose.

Cultural lag: A situation in which some parts of culture changes at a faster rate that the other.

Cultural Relativism: Culture being specific to a group, each group should be studied according to its own culture.

Culture: The system of behavior, customs, regulations etc. which is learnt by and socially acquired.

Democracy: A form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively. It is a state of society characterised by recognition of equality of rights and privileges, social and legal equally.

Diffusion: The spread of culture traits from group to group.

Discovery: A shared human perception of an aspect of reality which already exists.

Dominant Ideology: It denotes the attitude and belief, value shared by the majority of people in a given society as a mechanism of social control.

Enlightenment: It refers to that period in European history, which embodies the spirit of the French philosophers of the eighteenth century. During this period a belief developed that both nature and society can be studied scientifically. Human reason and the ideas of progress developed.

Estate: The system of stratification followed in medieval European society of around 17th-18th century, in which society was divided into different social groups having a different set of laws and social status for each.

Feudal: A system of tenure in agricultural areas whereby a vassal or serf served the landlord to whom the land belonged. In return the landlord allowed the serf to till his land and live on his land.

Gemeinschaft: Strong reciprocal bonds of sentiment and kinship within a common tradition.

Gesellschaft: Impersonally contacted association between persons.

Group Process: A perspective within the sociological psychology that examines how basic social process operates in the group context.

Group: Any number of persons sharing a consciousness of membership and of interaction.

Group: Comprises two or more people who have a meaningful interaction and common goals.

Historical sociology: It is a sub-field emerged as an outcome of intersection between sociology and history. It is interested in studying about how people, communities and societies have been changing over period of time, how they have transformed themselves to the contemporary modern societies. It depends on historical data for such studies.

History: Generally, history is defined as study of past. It studies people and events of the past. It presents a chronological account of past events, development and growth of the human society.

Industrial society: A society in which goods are produced primarily through machine-factory methods of production.

Institution: An organised system of social relationships which embodies certain common values and procedures and meets certain basic needs of society.

Invention: A new combination or a new use of existing knowledge.

Locality: The physical basis of a community.

Master Status: There is always one status that tends to overshadow all other statuses or is given more importance by others. This is called the master status.

Mentifacts: It is used to describe how beliefs, ideas take on a life of their own spanning over generations.

Migration: Movement of people into or out of an area.

Multiculturalism: It is a principle of coexistence of different cultures and this also results in appreciation and understanding between different cultures.

Political capital: Political capital, in the form of goodwill, trust and prestige, is a symbolic capital which is primarily related to decision making, value and prestige within political field. Political capital acts as a device helping people to gain expected result in the political arena. In other words, the better the political capital one, the better the influential or prestige one may have in the political field.

Political culture: The term refers to a set of norms, traditions, belief systems, and values which are essentially oriented towards the political system. Each nation has its own distinct political culture. The modern origin of the term goes back to 1950s when it was popularly used and became part of the discipline. The term is used in the work of Herder, Tocqueville, and Montesquieu.

Political role: Sociologically, role is a socially expected behaviour. The term political role refers to a process when an individual is attached with the set of status and responsibilities to perform within the political field. The society expects him or her perform the same within the given set of political boundaries.

Political science: It is generally defined as scientific study of politics. The discipline covers study of government, state and political behaviours related to politics and its various institutions.

Political socialisation: The terms refer to a social process whereby people or groups learn politics or political behaviour. This socialisation may or may not be ideologically guided. For instance, certain political parties do train their cadres or target population on their ideological lines. However, on the other hand civil/human rights groups just attempt to make people aware of their rights.

Political sociology: It is a sub-field of sociology which has primarily emerged as an outcome of positive relationships between sociology and political science. In other words, this is sort of intersection between sociology and political science.

Population change: A change in the number of people in a society, or the characteristics of the population such as age or sex.

Primary and Secondary group: A small group with close ties and dealings is primary group; e.g. Family. A large group with looser ties but common goals is secondary group; e.g. Office Employees.

Progress: Social or cultural change that are considered desirable according to some set of values.

Psychology: The study of human behvaiour.

Reference group: Any group accepted as model or guide for our judgements and actions.

Role Conflict: The stress and dilemma caused roles associated with two different statuses of an individual are incompatible.

Role Set: It is a complement of role relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular status.

Role Signs: Signs act as means of communication about the roles, distinguishing one role from another and also help in controlling any deviation from the role.

Role Strain: The anxiety and frustration experienced when different responsibilities associated within a single status are incompatible is called role strain.

Role: In social life human undertakes various responsibilities, e.g. husband, wife, mother, son etc. They are various roles.

Salad Bowl: It suggests the integration of cultures that combine like a salad as opposed to the traditional concept of melting pot. In a salad bowl, cultures are brought together but each one maintains its distinct identity and do not form a single homogenous culture.

Social Facts: The laws, moral, values, religious beliefs, customs, rituals, and all the cultural rules that govern the social life.

Social history: Social history is a sub-field bringing sociology and history closer. It predominantly includes socio-cultural aspects as defining features. The term, social history, is often used interchangeably with the term historical sociology.

Social interactionism: A theoretical perspective through which scholars examine the relationship of individuals within their society by the means of communication (symbols and language).

Social movement: A collective act to promote or resist change.

Social Psychology: The systematic study of people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour in the social context.

Social Role: Roles as socially defined expectations that a person in a given status (social position) follows.

Social Status: Status isoccupied by a person in the society. Statuses are also ranked and have differential prestige, privileges and rewards attached to them.

Sociological imagination: The ability to understand how your own past relates to that of other people, as well as to history in general and societal structures in particular.

Sociology: Systematic study of the society.

Verstehen: A German word that means to understand in an in-depth manner.

Voluntary associations: Formal organisations directed toward some definite functions which one enters voluntarily rather than by ascription.

NOTES