UNIT 1 NATURE AND SCOPE OF SOCIOLOGY

Structure

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have studied this unit, you should be able to:

- give a definition of sociology;
- describe social groups and their different classifications;
- explain the major concerns of sociology;
- describe the relation between sociology and science;
- explain the relation between sociology and other social sciences; and
- give in brief the ideas about the founding fathers of sociology such as, Comte, Durkheim, Weber, Marx, and Spencer

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Sociology, as compared to other social sciences, like economics and political science, is a young discipline. One could say, it is about a hundred-and-fifty years old but there

has been a more rapid development of the subject in the last fifty to sixty years. This is partly due to desire, particularly, after the Second World War, to understand more about the behaviour of people in social situations. All social science subjects are concerned with the behaviour of people but each of them studies defferent aspects. Sociology, however, is concerned with social relations in general, and with social groups and institutions in particular.

1.2 WHAT IS SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology can be defined as a study of society or social life, of group interaction and of social behaviour.

1.2.1 Concept of Society and Culture

Society has been defined as a relatively self sufficient, usually large group of people who maintain direct or indirect contact with each other through a culture. Culture is generally understood as the shared language, beliefs, goals, artefacts and experiences that combine together to form a unique pattern. In other words, culture is a society's way of life (Stebbins, Robert A. 1987; p- 172)

1.2.2 Emergence of Sociology

During the 19th century sociology emerged as separate social science in Europe and its objective was the study of society. Auguste Comte, Spencer and Emile Durkheim besides several other social thinkers sought to establish the idea of society as a matter of study, unique in itself. They examined society as a whole - which is more than the sum of its parts. Society is more than the actions, thoughts, values, belief and wishes of its individual members. It is a complex and abstract reality; yet all human beings live in a society.

A sociologist is interested in the general study of social behaviour as it occurs in groups, large or small, and lays special stress on understanding social life in the contemporary world. The word 'general' has been used as other social science disciplines deal with more specific areas. For example, a political scientist studies governmental functions and activities and an economist studies production and distribution of goods. It is, however, difficult to draw an exact line of difference. Social psychology, social anthropology, political science and economics, all in a sense, have human social life as their general subject.

As sociology is a relatively young discipline compared with the discipline of philosophy, economics and political science, sometimes, people confuse it with social work. Sociology is used in the discipline of social work to analyse and understand social problems. Social work is concerned with the uplift of those socially deprived, physically handicapped, etc. Sociology is not concerned with the reformation of society as such nor is it directly involved in social planning or directed change. The sociological understanding and research can help in better planning and in finding ways and means of acceptance of improved practices, in the formulation of development policies and programmes. It is generally accepted that sociologists do not interfere with social process. They are supposed to be value-neutral, i.e., they are not supposed to have any bias or prejudice in the analysis of the social behaviour. There are, however, at present, some, who question this and feel that sociologists must take an active role in the development process.

We have defined sociology as the study of social life and group interaction and social behaviour. In order to understand social life, sociology is interested in the study of the organisation and the functioning of societies or social groups.

1.2.3 Social Groups

Just as every human being is born in a society, everywhere, social life is lived in groups, whether large or small. The term 'group' is used in different ways. There might be a group, which is watching a game in progress, there might be a group of people crossing a street. In sociology, the group is viewed in a different way. It has already been mentioned that the basic interest of sociology is human social behaviour. This leads to a study of how people relate to each other or interact with each other. The social group, therefore, would have to have the following:

i) a group of persons (two or more);

ii) a patterned interaction (i.e., there is a regularity in the social relations, based on shared beliefs, values and norms); and

iii) the interaction is sustained over a period of time.

The groups are formed in order to satisfy some human needs. A basic need is survival and a family, which is an example of a group, enables us to meet this need. As individuals, it is not possible to fulfil all the needs. It is through the groups that the needs are met. We derive many satisfactions from living in groups and therefore, being a part of the group becomes important. The solidarity of a group is dependent upon the frequency of interaction and the emotional attachment.

Box 1.1: Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft

Ferdinand Tonnies (1855-1936), a noted German sociologist, while examining different kinds of societies found that there were two kinds of social groups, similar to the concepts of primary and secondary groups found in all societies. He found that in small homogeneous societies members interacted with one another on face to face, informal basis. In these groups tradition dictated social behaviour. Tonnies called this kind of society a Gemeinschaft, which when translated means broadly "a communal, or traditional society".

In comparison, societies that are large and heterogeneous, such as the modern industrial societies, relationships among members are impersonal, formal, functional and specialised. According to Tonnies these societies have often contractual relationships which are on the basis of clear cut, legal contracts rather than being governed by traditions. Tonnies calls these societies Gesellschaft, or "associational societies".

1.2.4 Kinds of Social Groups

The classification of social groups in two major types is based on the extent of attachment the individual would have to a group. The major classifications are (i) primary and (ii) secondary groups.

i) A primary group has been defined as one in which the members have very close or intimate relations and there is an emotional involvement. It has also been defined as primary because it is this group, which is chiefly responsible for nurture of social ideas of the individual. From the description above, we can go on to a more precise definition.

Personality of an individual is involved in a primary group. The best example of the primary group is the family. As one tries to analyse one's behaviour within the family and the functions, the family performs for each individual member, one can understand the importance of a primary group in shaping the ideas, beliefs and norms of the members.

The primary groups (family, play groups, a community, etc.) also acts as a link between the individual and the larger society.

ii) In contrast to the primary group, there are secondary groups. In the secondary group, members interact with one another in a very specific range of activities. The relationships in the secondary group are more casual, impersonal and for specific purposes. A student body of a large college is a secondary group as they interact as students. People working in a factory are also an example of a secondary group as they relate to each other as workers. You can see yourself how the relationships between the family and in a work place differ. From that, you will be able to understand the difference between primary and the secondary groups. The understanding of the nature of the groups and their functions is very important for understanding social behaviour.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Give a definition of sociology. Write about five lines.

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2) What is social group? Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) Given below are some social situations, which amongst them can be called primary group. Tick the correct answer:

a) Meeting of political leaders during a summit.

b) Children playing "Kho Kho" in a field.

c) A feminist leader addressing women labourers.

d) School Principal addressing students in an assembly.

1.3 MAJOR CONCERNS OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology seeks to study the society and to analyse it in terms of the social relations that have a pattern. Sociology addresses itself to three basic questions:

i) how and why societies emerge?

ii) how and why societies persist? and

iii) how and why societies change?

Sociology has been concerned with the evolution of society. It has tried to analyse the factors and forces underlying the historical transformations of society. For example, societies have evolved from primitive tribal state to rural communities. How villages have become important centres of commercial activity or of art and culture and grown into towns and cities.

Sociology has also been concerned with the units of social life. The attempt has been to look at various types of groups, communities, associations and society. The effort has been to study the pattern of social relationships in these units. An important area which sociology deals with is social institutions. The institutions provide a structure for the society and perform functions, which enable the society to meet its needs. In any society, there are five basic social institutions; family, political institutions, economic institutions, religious institutions and educational institutions. However, in more complex

societies, there may be many other institutions such as bureaucracy, military organisations, welfare and recreational organisations, etc. Caste is also an institution, which is more or less peculiar to India.

Another area of study and analysis by sociologists is social processes. In one sense, the social institutions provide the stability and order whereas social processes are the dynamic aspects of social relations. Among the various processes that will be dealt with in the latter units are socialisation, social control, co-operation, conflict, social deviation and social change.

1.3.1 Concept of Culture

'Culture' is another very important concept. As mentioned earlier, we are immersed in culture from birth onwards, we take culture for granted. It is difficult to imagine what life would be like without culture. Culture provides summing up of the past experiences, which are the necessary foundation for living in the present. Culture is learned and shared among members of the group. Culture in a sense, can seem to be the chief means of survival and adaptation.

On each of the topics mentioned, which are concerns of sociology, there will be units which will deal in much greater detail. The society is dynamic and is changing, consequently, the areas of interest of sociologists are increasing. Today, there is sociology of knowledge, sociology of science and art, sociology of health, sociology of development, etc. This indicates the expanding nature of sociology.

1.3.2 Sociology and Science

At times, sociology has been defined as the science of society. This raises the question as to what science is. Some have thought of science as an approach whereas others have thought about it in terms of the subject matter. Simply stated, we might say that the scientific approach consists of certain assumption that the phenomena studied have a regularity and hence, a pattern. The method emphasises observation and verification of social phenomena. This involves a systematic approach to the study of phenomena.

The systematic approach consists of:

i) defining a problem for study;

ii) collecting data on the problem defined;

iii) analysing and organising the data; which would help in formulation of hypothesis; and

iv) further testing of the hypothesis and on the basis of this, develop new concepts and theories.

Sociology has been using a systematic approach in the study of social life. On the basis of the knowledge gathered through the systematic approach, it has tried to build a body of reliable knowledge. From this knowledge, it has tried to establish the patterns of relationships from which effort can be made at understanding social behaviour.

If we look at sociology from the point of view of its approach to the study of society, then sociology can be considered to be a science.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note, in eight lines, on the basic concerns of sociology.

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2) Explain the relationship between sociology and science. Write about five lines.

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Auguste Comte
(1798 – 1857)

1.4 SOME FOUNDING FATHERS

Later on, in various units of this course you will come across the names of many early sociologists. A brief introduction is given of early sociologists, whose contribution to sociology is lasting. All of them wrote on the nature of human behaviour. In a way, they tried to understand profound changes taking place in society.

1.4.1 Auguste Comte (1798-1857)

Comte is regarded as the founder of modern sociology. He is the first one to have used the word 'Sociology'. He tried to create a new science of society, which could not only explain the past of mankind but also, predict its future course. He felt that society moves through definite and fixed stages and that, it progresses towards ever-increasing perfection. The three stages, according to him, in which the society moves, were:

i) the theological or the religious

to

ii) the metaphysical or the philosophical

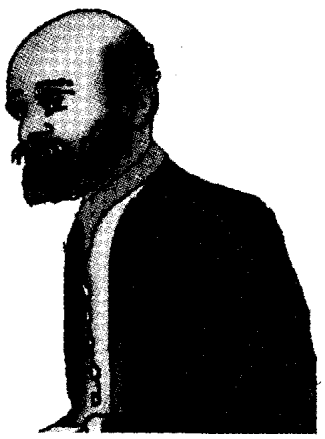
to

iii) the positive or the scientific stage.

In the first stage, people thought, all phenomena were caused by supernatural forces. Abstract forces of either a religious or secular type were considered to be the source of knowledge in the second stage. In the last stage, scientific laws were supposed to determine both the natural and the social worlds.

He also talked about two broad areas —'social statistics', which deals with the orderly and stable aspects of social life and patterns of behaviour (family, occupational, polity, etc.). The second area called 'social dynamics' emphasises the study of changes in a social system. According to him, sociology was to be the queen of all sciences.

Illustration



Emile Durkheim
(1858 – 1917)

1.4.2 Emile Durkheim (1858-1917)

Durkheim was also interested in sociology being a scientific discipline. He wrote a book in 1895 entitled: **Rules of Sociological Method**. To him, social solidarity was one of the main principles of human life. He distinguished between two kinds of solidarity: **'mechanical solidarity'** based on common assumptions, beliefs, sentiments like those found in traditional societies and **'organic solidarity'** based on the division of labour and inter-related interests as found in industrial societies. When solidarity is broken, there would be social disorganisation and confusion in society.

He considered sociology as having wide interests, which includes sociology of religion, sociology of knowledge, sociology of law, sociology of crime, economic sociology, and sociology of education, art and aesthetics.

An important concept given by Durkheim was social facts, which, according to him, are external to the individual but they exert pressure on the individual in the behaviour pattern. Customs, traditions, folkways and mores are social facts. He felt that sociology should be involved in the reformation of society. For him society was a reality in itself, that is, it is more than its parts.

1.4.3 Max Weber (1864-1920)

Weber used the concept of social action rather than social relations. A comprehensive study of social action, to him, meant understanding the meanings human beings give to their behavioural pattern. The social behaviour was not merely a mechanical learning of norms but how people interpreted the social values. Sociology studies all kinds of social action without making any value judgements.

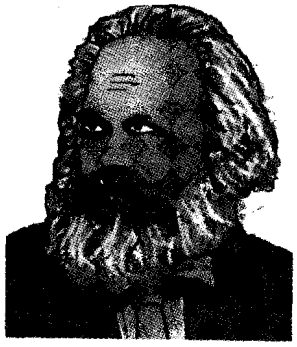
Max Weber
(1864 – 1920)

Weber was concerned with understanding of inter-relations between parts of society and also, with comparative studies of different societies. He studied religion in different societies. His work on **Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism** is one of the well known works in sociology. Through both these approaches, he tried to develop propositions having general validity. For example, he classified authority into three types — charismatic, traditional and rational. These concepts are still used in the study of leadership authority and power.

1.4.4 Karl Marx (1818-1883)

Marx has helped through his ideas in understanding the nature of society, particularly, how conflicts occur. Marx writes in 1848 that all history is a history of classes and class struggles. The society gets divided between the oppressors and the oppressed-masters and slaves, lords and serfs and in the modern times, capitalists and workers. To analyse the structure of society, it was necessary to understand the forces of production and relations of production. The contradiction between the forces and the relations of production leads to class struggle. According to him, each society dies in time because of internal conflicts and contradictions and is replaced by a higher one. In time, capitalism would be destroyed and there would emerge a classless society characterised by absence of conflict, exploitation and alienation from this world.

Karl Marx
(1818 – 1883)



1.4.5 Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

Spencer also emphasised a total view of society. According to him, the study of sociology covers the fields of family, politics, religion and social control, division of labour and social stratification. He emphasised the study of whole more than the study of parts. The individual institutions have significant relations. It is through a study of these inter-relations that one can hope to understand society. He indicated that the inter dependence of the various parts was functional, i.e., each of the part performs different functions, which is necessary for the total well being of society. A large number of sociologists, who are "functionalists", use Spencer's idea of the functional inter dependence as a basis for their approach to the study of society.

Herbert Spencer
(1820 – 1903)

Above descriptions of the contributions of founding fathers of sociology are sketchy. The main purpose is to introduce their names and to give you some idea of their concerns in sociology. In the later units of Elective course 13 on Sociological Thought we will be studying their approaches, theories and contributions in greater details.

1.5 SOCIOLOGY AND OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

As mentioned earlier, sociology has a broad perspective. It is concerned with those aspects of social life, which are present in all forms. It embraces every social setting. Most related social sciences have restricted range of specialisations. It must be pointed

out that human behaviour cannot be divided neatly into different compartments and each assigned to a specific social science. Hence, the boundaries between the disciplines are often overlapping. Almost all the social sciences get outside their 'own' and into 'somebody else's' domain with great frequency.

1.5.1 Social Psychology and Sociology

Social psychology is the study of social and cultural influences on the individual. It focuses on the behaviour of a single person and hence, differs from sociology, which is more concerned with relations among groups.

However, there are areas of common interest such as socialisation, norms and values. Moreover, the influences of the group on the individual and of the individual on the group are also of interest to both social psychology and sociology.

1.5.2 Sociology and Anthropology

There are many fields in anthropology, namely; archaeology, linguistics, physical anthropology and social anthropology. Although, anthropology has been regarded as the study of early (primitive) cultures, and sociology of the more contemporary society. This distinction is no longer valid. Many of the early village studies in India have been done by social anthropologists. The tribal communities in India have, by and large, been studied by anthropologists, in both their physical and social aspects. There is, hence, some overlap between the areas of study of sociology and anthropology, particularly, social anthropology. Culture and social organisations are concepts studied in both these disciplines.

1.5.3 Sociology and Economics

Sociology and economics both study industry but do so differently. Economics would study economic factors of industry, productivity, labour, industrial policy, marketing, etc., whereas a sociologist would study the impact of industrialisation on society. Economists study economic institutions such as factories, banks, trade and transportation but are not concerned with religion, family or politics. Sociology is interested in interaction between the economic institutions and other institutions in society, namely, political and religious.

Social life, in modern times, is very complex and no discipline by itself can study all of it in depth. While each social discipline focuses on a particular aspect of the society, there is need to keep in mind the inter-relations of institutions of society. Only some social sciences have been discussed so as to give a feel of relationships among social sciences. Similar analysis of the relation of sociology can be made to philosophy, history, public administration, etc.

1.5.4 Basic and Applied Sociology

Sociologists are interested in conducting research studies in the area of social life and developing theories with regard to human social behaviour. The purpose is to build a body of reliable knowledge through which various aspects of social life can be understood and explained. While this is important, it is necessary to make use of this knowledge in various aspects of human affairs. There are many factors, which have an impact on social relations. Increased use of technology is one such area. Sociologists could anticipate as to how people will receive and react to new technology and changes it might bring about in social relations. There are many programmes of development that are launched. Sociologist can indicate what care needs to be taken in introducing changes without affecting their way of life so that suggested programmes can be accepted. The reactions towards the innovations — acceptance, resistance or non-

acceptance should be noted, when studies could also provide further insight into social values and social behaviour.

Sociology thus provides an understanding about the social order in which we live and about the forces that shape and mould it. It also suggests paths of action to ensure the emergence of new social patterns. Imaginatively pursued the study of sociology enables us to understand the condition and the predicament of human beings. It can, also help in finding solutions for the present problems and dilemmas of society.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the difference between basic and applied sociology?

Write about ten lines for your answer.

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have given you a definition of sociology. We also explained the idea of social groups. We have explained basic areas of concern for sociology. These include the mention of the concept of culture. It also includes the relationship of sociology with science as whole.

This unit also provides thumbnail sketches of five founding fathers of sociology. The theories of these thinkers continue to influence present day sociology and other social sciences as well. Finally we looked at sociology in its relation to psychology, economics, and so on. We have therefore provided a good idea about the nature and scope of sociology.

1.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Mc. Kee, James B., 1981. *Sociology : The Study of Society.* Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York.

2) Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1972. *A Handbook of Sociology.* Eurasian Publishing House: New Delhi

1.8 KEY WORDS

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

Culture : This embodies the customs, rites and beliefs of a group of people. It includes both material culture, such as, houses, pots, coins etc. as well as non-material culture, such as, values, beliefs, norms etc.

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

Primary group : A social group with close ties and shared interests, e.g. the family.

Secondary group : A large group with looser ties but common well defined goals, e.g. office employees, or members of a club or associations.

1.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) In broad terms, sociology can be defined as the study of social life, group interaction and social behaviour, while other social sciences study specialised areas of social behaviour, Sociology is interested in taking an overall view of social life.

2) A social group refers to a group of persons (two or more), who have a regular social interaction, based on shared beliefs, values and norms. The interaction takes place on a basis over a period of time. The interacting persons view themselves as members of the group. Examples of a group are the nuclear family, a football team, etc.

3) b)

Check Your Progress 2

1) Sociology is basically concerned with the study of patterns in social relations. Once relations between people are familiar and well-established, they become institutionalised ways of social behaviour, then, it is sociology's concern to make comparative studies of social institutions, such as, the family, economy and polity. Sociology is also concerned with the study of social processes, which reflect the dynamic aspects of social relations.

2) Being the scientific study of society, sociology views science as an approach to study social phenomena. In science, patterns in natural phenomena are discovered by observation and verification; in sociology, social phenomena are observed to formulate and test hypotheses.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Sociology is engaged in giving explanations of human social behaviour. For making use of this knowledge of human affairs, sociological findings can be and are used in planning development programmes. This kind of use of sociology is given the name of applied sociology. It is obvious that basic sociology is confined to researches into human social behaviour. Applied sociology differs from basic sociology in the sense that it only makes use of sociological findings in planning and implementing action-oriented programmes for development.

UNIT 2 BASIC CONCEPTS IN SOCIOLOGY

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Key Sociological Concepts
- 2.2.1 The Concept of Society
- 2.2.2 Types of Society

2.3 Social Groups
- 2.3.1 Primary Groups
- 2.3.2 Secondary Groups

2.4 Status and Role
- 2.4.1 Types of Status
- 2.4.2 Multiple Statuses
- 2.4.3 The Concept of Role

2.5 Social Institution

2.6 Culture
- 2.6.1 Culture and Human Behaviour
- 2.6.2 Folkways
- 2.6.3 Mores
- 2.6.4 Values
- 2.6.5 Sub-Cultures

2.7 Social Change
- 2.7.1 Agents of Change
- 2.7.2 Rate of Change

2.8 Social Control

2.9 Sociological Methods

2.10 Let Us Sum Up

2.11 Further Readings

2.12 Key Words

2.13 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this unit we expect that you will be able to:

- explain the concept of society;
- describe the nature of social groups;
- discuss the concepts of status and role;
- explain the relation between culture and human behaviour;
- describe social change and social control; and
- discuss sociological methods.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we introduce you to basic concepts in sociology. These concepts include that of society itself. The social group is discussed, as it is basic to society. We then discuss status and role, which are crucial concepts. This unit also introduces the concepts of social institution and sociological method. Further, we explain various aspects of culture including folkways and norms. The unit rounds off with explanations of social change and social control. This is an important unit for grasping some of the basic concepts of sociology.

2.2 KEY SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

Let us first see what is meant by concepts. A concept is a word or phrase, which is abstract from actual experience and which, more or less, means the same thing to all those familiar with it. A concept represents a class of phenomena. Thus, car is a concept, which signifies a vehicle of a particular kind. Once we are familiar with the concept of car, we do not always have to see it physically in order to know, what someone means by it. Similarly, a house or a table lamp are also concepts.

Concepts are necessary in every science since accuracy is achieved through them. Every scientific discipline is continuously developing a refined set of concepts, which, to those familiar with that discipline, will mean the same thing at all times. Sociology, too, has a large number of concepts, which are similarly understood by all sociologists. Here, we shall introduce you to some important sociological concepts. Many of these concepts, it will be noticed, are expressed in words or terms, which are of daily use. It is necessary to be careful with their sociological usage, because in sociology, these very terms are used in some special sense.

2.2.1 The Concept of Society

Society is viewed by sociologists as s chain of social relationships. A relationship is social, when it is determined by mutual awareness, that is, the behaviour of one individual influences the behaviour of another. For example, when a teacher enters the classroom, students stop making noise and stand up as a mark of respect for their teacher. This behaviour signifies the social relationship between the teacher and the taught. Thus, social relationships exist only when individuals behave towards one another in ways determined by their recognition of each other. This is why society is called a relational concept.

In other words, society is not a substantial concept. It does not denote a concrete reality, rather it refers to social relationships, which become institutionalised, when people relate to each other in well-established and familiar ways.

2.2.2 Types of Society

The predominant types of social relationships form the basis of classifying human society in various types. Most sociologists contrast the industrial society in which they live with all other types. Some sociologists, like Spencer and Durkheim, classified societies on the basis of their size or scale and other features, such as, the extent and degree of the division of labour, political organisation and social stratification, etc. Some scholars, like Karl Marx, distinguish them on the basis of their economic institutions. Thus, there are clearly many ways of classifying societies. Without going into complicated arguments at this stage of your introduction to sociology, it is necessary to realise that there is no ideal classification and no 'pure' example of various types of society.

In broad terms, taking the wider interests of sociology into consideration, we can divide societies into two types, namely; simple and complex. All primitive or tribal social

organisations are included among simple societies. The industrial societies with overlapping sets of social relationships are called complex societies.

Activity 1

Reflect about the type of society you live in and write a short note of one page about your understanding of your society.

Compare your answer with those of other students at your study centre and discuss with your Academic Counsellor.

2.3 SOCIAL GROUPS

The concept of group is central to sociology. While in normal discourse, we regard any collection of two or more individuals to be a group, sociologically, individuals constituting a group must be conscious of a common belongingness, of sharing some common understanding, common interests and goals as well as accepting certain rights and obligations. In this sense, a family or a class can be called a group. A society or community can also be called a group.

2.3.1 Primary Groups

First coined by the sociologist, Charles Horton Cooley (1864-1929), a primary group is relatively small (though not all small groups are primary). Its members generally have face-to-face contact, and thus, have intimate and co-operative relationships, as well as strong loyalty. The relationships between the members are ends in themselves. There is a basic human need for face to face, intimate co-operative interaction with others. That is, members derive pleasure and enjoyment merely by associating with one another. They have no other particular ends or goals in view. The primary group comes to an end, when one or more members leave it; they cannot be substituted by others. The best example of a primary group is the family or the friendship, or 'peer' group, as sociologists call it.

2.3.2 Secondary Groups

Secondary groups, in several respects, are the opposite of primary groups. These are generally large size groups, though not always so. Members of the secondary group maintain relatively limited, formal and impersonal relationship with one another.

Unlike primary groups, secondary groups are specific or specialised interest groups. Generally, a well defined, division of labour characterises these groups. Member can be substituted and replaced, hence, a secondary group may continue irrespective of whether its original members continue to be its members or not. A cricket team, a music club, an army or a factory, and so on, are examples of secondary groups.

It is possible that within secondary groups, some members may come close to one another and develop primary relations and form a group of peers. Several sociological studies have shown that the presence of primary groups in armies, factories, and other secondary groups, have contributed to high level of morale, and more effective functioning.

2.4 STATUS AND ROLE

The variety of social relations in any society is obviously countless. Parenthood, marriage, friendships, neighbourliness, and similar examples, illustrate the enormous range of social relations, which sociologists examine and on the basis of which they try to understand society. Each social relation is conceived, for purposes of analysis and understanding, in terms of two components, namely, status and role.

Status, also referred to as social position by some writers, is the 'socially defined location or place', which an individual occupies in a system of interaction or society. Thus, in any interaction, none of the participants is without status. Indeed, no individual can interact with another, if his/her status, as well as that of the person or persons, is not clear in a given situation.

Thus, interaction in the family poses no problems because each member knows well the status he/she and others are occupying. This knowledge allows for a smooth flow and predictable interaction. But, when we encounter a stranger, we first of all want to know his or her status. Until this is known, we are not clear, how we should behave towards him or her. Thus, it is status and knowledge of status that facilitates patterned interaction.

2.4.1 Types of Status

Sociologists make a distinction between 'ascribed' and 'achieved' statuses. Positions, which one is born into or one acquires without one's own effort, are known as ascribed status. Mostly, kinship statuses come in this category. Achieved statuses are, in contrast, based on and defined by what people do or acquire through their own effort. Usually, people's occupational positions come in this category. Only in some cases, it is possible to have both ascribed and achieved aspects in the same status, a hereditary priest in an Indian village, for example, may be rejected if he fails to learn the required scriptures.

2.4.2 Multiple Statuses

It should also be clear that every individual occupies multiple statuses. Even a young infant is a son, a grandson, a brother, a nephew, and so on. As we grow up, we may get into even more status positions. Public figures and other important men, women simultaneously occupy several statuses. There is, however, one key status in terms of which the individual is ultimately identified and evaluated. In modern societies, one's occupation indicates one's key status.

2.4.3 The Concept of Role

We turn now to the concept of role. Role is the behavioural aspect of status; there can be no statuses without a corresponding role attached to it Role is, thus, the dynamic aspect of status and consists of rights and duties attached to it. Thus, an individual occupying the status of a father, simultaneously, has some rights over his children, as well as, some responsibilities towards them. Statuses and roles are, thus, two sides of the same coin.

Role refers both to the actual behaviour of an individual occupying a particular status, as well as to a set of **expectations** regarding behaviour, shared by those involved in particular social relations. Thus, in the teacher-student relations, the teacher has an expectation as to how the student interacting with him will or should behave. The students, too, in turn, have their own set of expectations. Should either of them fail to act according to other's expectations, their relations are adversely affected. Since individuals, by and large, fulfil role expectation, society gains uniformity of behaviour.

This discussion indicates the significance of the concept of role. Indeed, it is one of the basic units of analysis of social order in human societies and later, in Block 7, more will be discussed about this concept.

2.5 SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Social institution can be defined as a 'broad goal-oriented behaviour, which is firmly established'. It becomes possible to understand and predict the behaviour of people

because of this established pattern of behaviour found in a society. The study of social institutions, therefore, includes groups, roles, norms, beliefs and practices in a particular area of social life.

Social institution provides the framework within which people in different societies and cultures live. It provides the very structure of society. People are born in a family, which is an institution. They are nurtured and socialised in this institution, which is governed by the values, norms and mores of that society. How the family and its members earn their living depends upon the economic institutions of their society. How they maintain order and administration depends on the political institutions of that society. How information and skills are passed from one generation to another, depends upon the educational institution of that society. Finally, how people explain their existence in society, from where they have come before birth and where they will go after death, i.e. the 'religious experience' is established by the religious institutions. Thus, all social institutions in a given society are inter-related. Family as an institution forms the pivot around which all other social institutions move as it provides the individual members to the society. Therefore, as Perry and Perry (1973 : pp. 300) mention, "its important to remember that institutions are simply abstract concepts of organised habits and standardised ways of doing things. We cannot see institutions, what we can see are families, schools, banks and so on." Culture is an essential aspect of all societies. You will learn more about it in the next section.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define the concept of society, in eight lines.

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2) Show the difference between primary and secondary groups. Use about six lines.

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3) Distinguish between status and role. Write about five lines for your answer.

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2.6 CULTURE

Besides society, role, status and institution, culture is another important theme that engages the attention of sociologists. Ordinarily, even those, who are not at all familiar with sociology, are familiar with the word 'culture'. In our daily life, we may describe some people as very 'cultured'. We give such a label if persons concerned are refined and polished in their behaviour and manner. But sociologists do not use the term 'culture' in this sense. They have their own, special understanding of it.

In sociological terms, culture can be defined as the total sum of human activities, which are learnt. It is passed on from generation to generation through membership of a particular society. As various learning processes in human societies involve systems of tools, communications and symbols, we can also say that the concept of culture refers to a system of tools, communications and symbols. People in order to learn new activities require tools, language and symbols.

Cultures in human societies differ from one another and also, change over time. One of the gains of studying sociology is that besides giving an idea of various cultures, it also helps to develop an understanding of other cultures than one's own.

2.6.1 Culture and Human Behaviour

A little reflection will show that in similar situations, people of different cultures reveal differences in the way they meet these situations. For example, while greeting friends and relatives, at home or on the street, men in our society may shake hands with other men but as a rule, not with women. Similarly, notwithstanding great hunger, a vegetarian refuses non-vegetarian food. This is because culture influences our behaviour in given situations. Stated in sociological terms, culture is **normative,** that is, it provides standards of proper conduct, and also therefore, tells us, what is right or wrong. Concretely, these standards are provided to us by what are called **cultural norms**. Thus, while many college students smoke these days, they do not normally do so in the presence of their elders or teachers. In our culture, such an act is considered to be wrong, that is, contrary to our cultural norms. The content of the non-material culture of every society consists of a large number of norms. These norms are learnt and enforced by folkways and mores.

2.6.2 Folkways

There are behaviour patterns that govern most of our daily life and contacts with other people. Thus, rising up from seats, when teachers enter into classrooms, allowing women to purchase tickets without queuing, distribution of sweets after getting a job or a promotion, and so on, are examples of folkways. A number of folkways are simply acts of politeness.

In order that folkways may not be taken lightly, mechanisms such as praise, approval and acceptance exist to make individuals conform to them. Conversely, a word of criticism, frown, or sarcastic remark or laughter are modes of expressing disapproval of incorrect behaviour. Since most people desire that they should not look funny or be considered rude and uncouth by their group, they fall in line with what the group expects and desires. Therefore, most people conform to the folkways without even being aware that they are conforming, or that there are alternative ways of behaving.

2.6.3 Mores

These are norms that are considered to be more important by group, and even vital for its welfare. Violation of the mores evokes an emotional response and instead of the mere raising of eyebrow or ridicule, a strong group action follows. Thus, prohibition of the consumption of beef and alcoholic drinks are part of the mores of Hindu and Muslim societies, respectively. Any violation of these will not be tolerated. Mores are linked to cultural values.

It should now be clear that mores are norms of a higher order than folkways. There is an element of compulsion in them and they are linked to the dominant values of the culture. Mores clearly and definitely reflect the concepts of what is moral and immoral. This is seen from the fact that mores are generally expressed in terms of 'must behaviour' (for example, all married men and women must remain faithful to their spouses and must observe sexual fidelity) or, negatively, in terms of 'must-not' behaviour, for example, women should not expose their bodies.

2.6.4 Values

Values, the ultimate essence and spirit of cultures, are the underlying principles and ideas on the basis of which societies and individuals choose their goals. Values are also the criteria on which social and individual ends and means are judged and evaluated. Apart from goals, all conduct and behaviour whether for achieving these goals, or otherwise, are judged and evaluated in the framework of accepted values. Any action that is contrary to the cherished values of the group or society is condemned and punished. For example, in Indian society there is a value regarding junior persons' behaviour towards senior persons. Any deviance from accepted behaviour is always a subject of criticism.

Unlike norms, which are quite specific, values tend to be generalised ideals and somewhat abstract; nevertheless, they attract the total commitment of the society.

2.6.5 Sub-cultures

Another important point to bear in mind is, that in the case of complex and heterogeneous societies, like India, which are characterised by many religious, linguistic and other diversities, it is usual to have a number of sub-cultures within the framework of the larger overall cultures. Thus, in India, religious communities like Muslims, Christians or Sikhs or linguistic groups like Tamilians, Maharashtrians or Punjabis and so on, have their own sub-cultural characteristics that distinguish them from other communities or groups. But simultaneously, we also share certain core values like secularism, democracy and equality of all citizens, irrespective of our diversities, and these integrate us. But heterogeneous societies have constantly to keep emphasising and nurturing their more universal and cultural values so that they are not forsaken in favour of the sub-cultural values.

2.7 SOCIAL CHANGE

In tracing the origins of sociology, as well as in pointing out the concerns of early Sociologists, it had been indicated that the changes brought by the industrial revolution had a major role to play in the birth of modern sociology. Due to this, sociology and sociologists have never lost sight of the study of social change, and this interest has been major concern of the discipline throughout its entire history of about two hundred years.

Although, sociologists have been studying the process of social change for a long time, it is difficult to give a brief and precise definition. Social change refers to the process

by which alterations occur in society or social relations. Social change is a continuous process.

Social change can be caused by many factors. Increased population can bring about changes. Innovations—i.e., new ideas or an object can bring about new relationships. It is also possible that one society can borrow ideas or objects from other societies, which may cause variation in social relations.

Later on, you would be studying various theories of social change (evolution, cyclical, conflict, modernisation and development). The leading sociologists, who have been referred to in Unit 1, have their own ideas about how change occurs, which will be discussed later.

2.7.1 Agents of Change

An important question is the identity of agents of change. As mentioned earlier, any sub-units or institutions are instruments through which social change can be effected. Some of the institutions are more important than others—the economic, political and educational institutions are more central in effecting change. Religion can act as an agent of change as well as resistance to change.

Although, the society continuously undergoes change, it must be pointed out that there is usually resistance to change. New ideas and new behaviour patterns are not easily accepted. Even material innovations also take time to be accepted and diffused in any society (trains were considered in England as the work of the devil). Resistance is greater, when traditional values and beliefs are involved.

2.7.2 Rate of Change

Another question is with regard to the rate of change. In societies, which are industrialised and use sophisticated technology (which itself has brought about changes), the rate of change is more rapid than in pre-industrial societies. Another important fact to be kept in mind is that a great deal of change today is caused by planning. This is referred to as guided change, which is being undertaken in many developing countries. This would be discussed further in the unit on social development.

Activity 2

Within your family, ask your grand parents or their cousins about the kind of changes that they observe today in our society which were not present when they were children. Make a note of one page and discuss it with other students at your study centre.

2.8 SOCIAL CONTROL

Social control is a process to regulate behaviour within society. In a sense, social control is to discourage people from deviating from the established values and norms. Because of social control, people live up to what is expected of them. Social control is an aspect of all social institutions and thus, it is pervasive to social life on the whole.

Behaviour of people is controlled both by positive and negative sanctions. The aim of both these types of sanction is to encourage people to conform to the norms. Positive sanction can include praise, gifts and promotion whereas negative sanction can be punishment, demotion ridicule or boycott. Social control is not necessarily always successful. There are different approaches to the study of social control, these will be discussed in later units.

2.9 SOCIOLOGICAL METHODS

Sociologists have used many methods in studying society. In Unit 1, we have already discussed the scientific method and its characteristics. Although, sociologists may use different methods, the scientific approach is basic to all of them. The historical method involves the study of origins, development and transformation of social institutions. In this method, a sociologist uses information pertaining to one or more societies over a long period of time. The main approach is to try to get some insights from the past experiences with regard to social behaviour

In comparative method, data from different countries, different regions or different religions are gathered. An effort is made to see whether there are any common factors, which can explain patterns of behaviour.

The empirical method refers to collection of data from the field. The facts of social life are studied and described as they exist. The techniques used in this method are observation, survey, experimental, case studies.

These methods are not necessarily exclusive. There can be a combination of them. The purpose of all these methods, in a way, is to try to answer the questions: 'Why do people behave the way they do?' The sociological theories and concepts have emerged as a result of these studies.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note in ten lines on social division in tribal societies.

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2) What is social control? Explain in about five lines.

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2.10 LET US SUM UP

This unit has explained clearly some important concepts in sociology. They are in fact concepts which keep appearing in the following units. We hope you have grasped these concepts, such as, those of society, social group, status and role, social institutions, culture, and so on. These concepts are basic to a sociological study. Finally, we

explained the concepts of social change and social control. It would be advisable that this unit is understood well by the student for then it would help them better to understand the following units.

2.11 FURTHER READINGS

1) Ritzer, G. Kammeyer, K.C.W. and Yetman, N.R., 1979, *Sociology: Experiencing a Changing Society.* Allan and Bacon Ind.: Boston

2) Perry, J. & Perry E., 1973, The Social Web An Introduction to Sociology, Canfield Press, San Francisco.

2.12 KEY WORDS

Culture : The system of behaviour, customs, regulations that are learnt and socially acquired.

Folkways : Behaviour patterns that govern daily life and interactions, e.g. ways of addressing one another.

Mores : Ways of behaviour that are crucial for the welfare of a society, e.g. non-violence, fidelity, non-thieving and so on.

Role : In social life man and woman undertakes many responsibilities, e.g. husband, mother, son, etc. They are various roles.

Status : Consists of rights and duties of a person in any position. Each status has a role or set of actions attached to it, e.g. the teacher must teach.

2.13 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Society is a relational concept. It does not refer to a concrete reality. It is viewed as a chain or a network of social relationships. A relationship becomes social only when individuals interact in ways determined by well-established and familiar recognition of each other. So, we can say that the concept of society refers to social relationships, which become institutionalised.

2) Primary groups are characterised by personalised relationships among their members. They are typically small and profoundly influence the members' behaviour. Secondary groups, on the other hand, are relatively larger and more impersonal. These groups are, generally, formed with a specific goal.

3) Within a set of social relationships among people, a place or a position is referred to by the term 'status'. Each status carries with it a generally expected behaviour. This behaviour is termed as 'role'. Role is, thus, the dynamic aspect of status.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Social change is a continuous process, which refers to changes occurring in society or social relations. Multiple factors, such as, increased population, innovations, natural disasters, political conflicts, etc., cause changes in society. Subunits or institutions in society are instruments through which social change is effected. In pre-industrial societies, the rate of change is slower as compared to fast speed of change in industrial societies.

2) Social control refers to a regulatory process, which encourages people to conforming to established values and norms. Non-conformity is considered to be a deviant behaviour. Social control is exercised through the mechanism of positive and negative sanctions.

UNIT 3 SIMPLE SOCIETIES

Structure

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Economies in Simple Societies

- 3.2.1 Hunting and Gathering
- 3.2.2 Pastoral
- 3.2.3 Shifting Cultivation
- 3.2.4 Settled Cultivation

3.3 Systems of Exchange in Simple Societies

- 3.3.1 Two Examples
- 3.3.2 Markets

3.4 Social Organisation in Simple Societies

- 3.4.1 Kinship
  - 3.4.1.1 Descent
- 3.4.2 Marriage
- 3.4.3 Religion
  - 3.4.3.1 Religion and Magic
- 3.4.4 Polity
  - 3.4.4.1 Types of Political System—Cephalous
  - 3.4.4.2 Acephalous

3.5 Colonial Impact on Simple Societies

- 3.5.1 Supply of Traditional Products
- 3.5.2 Introduction of New Crops
- 3.5.3 The Industrial Wage Labour
- 3.5.4 Problems of Colonialism

3.6 Let Us Sum Up

3.7 Further Readings

3.8 Key Words

3.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After having read this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the main features of economy and social organisation in simple societies;
- explain the type of religion and political systems which exist in simple societies; and
- discuss the impact of colonialism on simple societies.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The term 'simple societies' refers to small-scale societies with a relatively simple technology. Such societies are not only small-in size but also their control over the environment is quite limited. With small-scale markets, their scope for specialisation in the division of labour is restricted.

All tribal societies can be called simple in terms of their limited technological control over the environment. Their economies are, generally, based on the mode of production of material goods for subsistence. Most such societies around the world have interesting systems of exchange, which intervene between production and consumption of material goods.

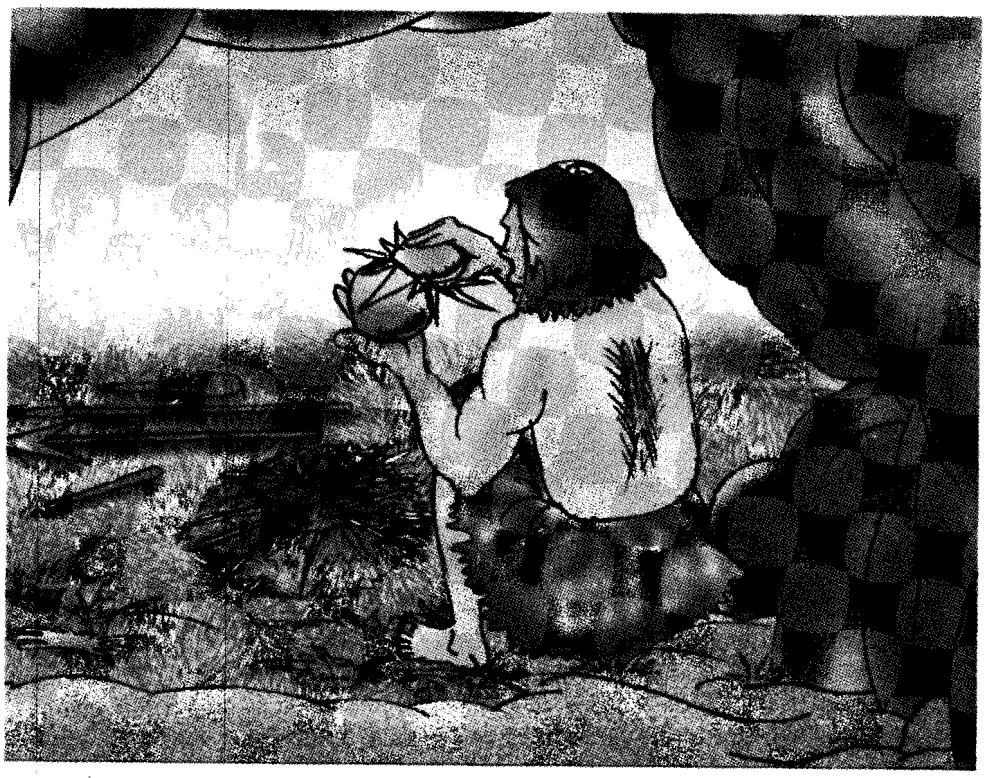
With their distinct types of socio-political organisations, tribal societies all over the world present a striking contrast to the societies in which we live. Many tribal groups are, now, caught in the process of acquiring advance technologies. They can be called 'transitional'. Most transitional societies have experienced colonial rule by Europeans.

In this unit, you will, first, read about the main features of economies and systems of exchange in simple societies. Then, you will look at how these societies are socially and politically organised and how natural phenomena predominate in their religious belief-systems. Finally, you will learn about the impact of colonial rule on simple societies.

3.2 ECONOMIES IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

Simple societies are spread over nearly the entire range of natural environments and are not confined only to one or two regions. They are found in the dense equatorial and tropical forests, in the hot and cold deserts and in the rich alluvial plains. They are found also in the foothills and high ranges of mountains, in the savannas, sea coasts and in the islands jutting out of the open seas. The diversity of natural environment has resulted in the diversity of economies practised by such societies. Given the simple technology, the impact of the natural environment is considerable. But the simple societies, even with their simple technology, have everywhere shown an indomitable spirit to face the harsh nature.

Based on the mode of production of material goods for subsistence, economies in simple societies can be grouped into the following types: a) Hunting and gathering; b) Pastoral; c) Shifting cultivation; and d) Settled cultivation.



Simple Society : Making a Fire

3.2.1 Hunting and Gathering

Hunting and gathering societies live by hunting large and small game and by collecting a wide variety of roots, fruits, and tubers. Despite the similarity in the relationship with nature, the hunting and gathering societies differ a great deal among themselves, depending upon the habitat and the animals they hunt.

All these hunting and gathering societies live close to nature and (rather than adapting nature to themselves) they adapt themselves to nature. Following this principle, they keep on moving from place to place in search of animals, fruits, roots and tubers.

It was generally believed by early anthropologists that the hunting and gathering communities live on the edge of scarcity but recent researches have shown that this is not so and that they enjoy a measure of affluence/abundance.

3.2.2 Pastoral

The domestication of animals forms the main feature of the pastoral stage. Some of the pastoral communities mix pastoral economy with agriculture. For acquiring sufficient water and pasture ground for their animals, the pastoral communities have to move from place-to-place. Some pastoralists make only seasonal movements, while others remain constantly on the move. Because of the importance of movement among these people, the size of their population is always relatively small. Raiding of livestock is quite common among pastoralists. They are known to have little regard for authority and centralised administration. In India, the important pastoral communities include the Toda (The buffalo herders of Nilgiri Hills, Tamil Nadu), the Gujar (cattle and buffalo herders) and the Bakerwal (sheep and goat herders) of Jammu and Kashmir.

The pastoral communities have as their staple diet the animal products of meat, milk and blood. The Toda do not mix the blood of the animal with milk as some African pastoralists do.

The livestock reared among pastoralists have deep impact on their religious and other behaviour. Rearing the buffalo, for example, is a sacred activity for the Toda.

3.2.3 Shifting Cultivation

In shifting cultivation, after every few years, new ground is cleared by the farmer for planting crops and the old plot is left to its natural growth. Compared to the pastoralists' way of life, practitioners of shifting cultivation have relatively long residence in one area. In such societies, land is often owned by the community.

A number of tribes practise shifting cultivation such as the Bantu of equatorial Africa, Garo of Meghalaya, Baiga and Abujhmar Maria of Madhya Pradesh and Saora of Orissa. A number of tribes in Arunachal Pradesh also practise shifting cultivation.

3.2.4 Settled Cultivation

Relatively larger number of simple societies practise settled cultivation, where the same fields are cultivated year after year. Settled cultivation makes it necessary for the villages to become permanent settlements. A number of gods and deities rise up all around the villages, investing religious significance to the villages. The institution of private property also gets more crystallised.

Depending upon the technology, the settled cultivation admits of a two-fold division: hoe cultivation and plough cultivation. Many island communities, like the Trobriand Islanders in the Pacific, are hoe cultivators. The Munda, Santhal and Gond in India are plough cultivators. The hill slopes give rise to yet another type of settled cultivation, because to cultivate the hill slopes are cut up into terraces. The Nagas in India are good examples of terrace cultivators.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe the main features of hunting and gathering societies in five lines.

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3.3 SYSTEMS OF EXCHANGE IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

To give and take things from each other is a necessary part of our daily behaviour and therefore, forms an important aspect of interpersonal relations. In this sense, exchange is not simply a theme in economics. Undoubtedly, many exchanges of goods are of economic nature. In some other cases, occasions of gift-giving, being also ceremonial in nature, express well established and thus, institutionalised relationships among the people. Often, the purpose of exchanging goods is to maintain amicable relations between groups to minimise the possibilities of conflict. For instance, during wedding ceremonies in India, gifts are given and taken by both the sides of the bride and bridegroom. In terms of their use-value, such gifts have certain economic value but they also serve as a mark of status and put a kind of seal or stamp on the new relationship. Secondly, such exchanges are not transacted only once. They usually form a series of gift-giving, which builds mutual feelings of goodwill and express happy relations between the two sides. One of the purposes of exchanging goods is to maintain a state of mutual indebtedness.

Face-to-face relationships of mutual help in simple societies are continually reinforced by exchange of gifts. Many scholars, especially social anthropologists, have studied simple societies. They have highlighted some forms of exchanges, which are peculiar to some cases, with no parallels in Indian society. We bring you two classic examples of the other than economic importance of gift-exchanges in simple societies.

3.3.1 Two Examples

i) The Kula Exchange

Malinowski, in his study of economic activities known as the Kula ring of the Western Pacific region, showed that among the Trobriand Islanders, the members of the Kula ring exchange among themselves ritually and socially valued objects. The system of exchange is regulated in a kind of ring with two directional movements. In clockwise direction, the red shell necklaces circulate and in anti-clockwise circulation, the white arm-shells' circulate among the members of the Kula ring. These objects have no commercial value but carry differing prestige value for donors and receipients. The tribals undertake long dangerous sea voyages in search of these objects, which are economically useless. While the Islanders normally haggle and bargain in their day-to-day buying and selling of other goods, the objects given and taken in the Kula are never subjected to any bargaining.

ii) The Potlatch Ceremony

Our second example is from the American North-West where, the Kwakiutl (and also, some other tribes of the region) organised large-scale feasts. At such occasions, not only enormous quantities of food were consumed and gifts given to guests, but also many articles (considered valuable by them) were destroyed. The practice of feasts

(known as the institution of potlatch) among these people shows how giving away of goods to the extent of physically destroying them was linked with their claims to a higher social status. The more feasts one group organised, the more prestige it received. Further, the more a group was invited to such potlatches and the more gifts it received, the more prestige the group gained in the eyes of other groups. These feasts were always organised by agnatic groups, i.e., by those standing in the relationship of brothers to each other. One such group invited other such groups and vied with each other in giving more and more food to eat and more and more gifts to take home and more and more valuables to destroy.

Activity 1

Do you also have examples of gift exchange which are ritualised? Write an essay of one page on a ritual exchange of gifts in your community. You may discuss your essay with other students at your study centre, as well as, your Academic Counsellor.

3.3.2 Markets

Although, most economic exchange of goods in simple societies take place in markets, there are some societies in which multiple transactions in different items take place without a market. The Trobriand Islanders are a good example of this type.

In some simple societies, for instance in West Africa, markets are well-recognised places for exchanges of goods. They are essential to the functioning of the society's economic system. But besides their economic importance, markets also assume social meaning as a meeting-place. The tribes of Yoruba of Nigeria and Arusha of Tanzania are famous for their markets. Often, Market-places are also used as centres of administration and for dissemination of information. In this respect, traditional centres for development of folk forms of performing arts.

3.4 SOCIAL ORGANISATION IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

In order to present an overview of simple societies, their social organisation can be briefly studied in four parts, namely, kinship, marriage, religion and polity. Kinship roles in these societies subsume religious and political activities and it is, therefore, reasonable to discuss them in one section.

Social anthropological studies have shown that simple societies have extremely elaborate systems of kinship, religion, economy and polity. But in contrast to modern complex societies, simple societies present relatively simpler ways of organising social life.

3.4.1 Kinship

Since most simple societies have been studied in relation to tribal social systems, we discuss the four aspects of social life in simple societies in similar terms. A tribal group is generally considered to be a good example of a simple society. A tribe is, often, spread over a small territory with its language, political and religious organisation. It is usually divided into two or more sections. When divided into only two sections, each section is called a moiety. But if a tribe is divided into more than two sections, each section is called a phratry. Moieties and phratries are, generally, exogamous groups, that is, members of these groups must find their spouses outside these groups; they cannot marry within. Only in some societies, the moieties are endogamous, that is members of such moieties must marry within the moiety. The Toda are an example of such a group.

The members of a moiety or phratry, clan and lineage are under social obligation to help each other. They generally act as corporate groups in performing a number of

social, economic, political and religious activities. But the wide dispersal of a number of tribal groups today in many parts of the world has weakened the corporate character of these groups.

3.4.1.1 Descent

Common descent or origin in simple societies is generally traced through lineages and clans. Lineages are those groups, which reckon common descent from a known ancestor. Clans are the groups of those people, who treat each other as related through common ancestry, even though, it may not be traceable with certainty. In other words, clans have mythical ancestors. Lineages are relatively smaller groups with known ancestors within clans, which are wider groups with presumed common ancestry.

Descent is usually traced through either mother or father. Descent through the mother is called matrilineal or uterine descent. In a matrilineal system of descent, a man does not belong to his father's lineage and clan. He belongs to the same clan and lineage as his mother and his mother's brother. The Nayars of South India are an example.

In patrilineal descent, relationship with males and females of one's group is traced only through males. Most of the students of the course are likely to belong to this form of descent system.

Some people, however, have systems of double descent, that is, both matrilineal and patrilineal groups are recognised, but for different purposes. For example, among the Yako (Forde, 1950), the inheritance of immovable property is regulated through patrilineal descent and that of movable property through matrilineal descent.

3.4.2 Marriage

In all societies, so also in simple societies, social recognition of mating among their members is arranged through the institution of marriage. Monogamy is the most popular type of marriage found in simple societies. Few tribal groups also practice polygyny where a man has more than one wife at a given point of time. More rare is the polyandry type of marriage, in which a woman is simultaneously the wife of more than one man. The Khasa in Uttar Pradesh and the Toda in Tamil Nadu practise polyandry. But there is a difference between the two. Among the Khasa, the eldest brother marries and all other brothers simultaneously become the husbands of their elder brother's wife. This type of polyandry is called adelphic or fraternal polyandry.

Among the Toda, the husbands of the woman need not be brothers. Multiplicity of husbands raises the problem of the paternity of the child. The Toda solve this problem by the performance of the 'bow and arrow' ceremony. When a woman becomes pregnant, the husband who performs the 'bow and arrow' ceremony becomes the father of the child to be born. He becomes the father of all the children born to her after the ceremony. He is regarded as the father of the children born even after his death if no other husband has performed, in the meantime the 'bow and arrow' ceremony. This institution is indicative of the fact that the Toda give emphasis to social rather than biological paternity.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note in ten lines on social division in tribal societies.

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3.4.3 Religion

With their simple technology, the people in simple societies have very little control over the natural environment. They are always overawed by the ferocities of nature. Forest fires, floods thunder, cloud-bursts, earthquakes and wild animals, all affects them severely and therefore they get frightened by the natural calamities far more than in more complex societies.

The belief in impersonal supernatural force finds expression in the wide spread belief in 'mana', a supernatural power generally associated with kings or successful men. Many Indian tribes, such as the Munda and the Ho of Singhbhum, Bihar also believe in this force, which they call 'bonga'. Yet another expression of impersonal supernatural force is 'taboo'. Taboo is a negative force and anyone who does not observe it exposes himself to the danger of supernatural punishment. Taboo is used to regulate social activities. Many tribal communities put a taboo mark on their property in the field and the forest to ensure against theft. 'Mana' and 'taboo' are polynesian terms, which have been incorporated into anthropological/sociological vocabulary.

Lack of understanding of the environment causes in them great anxiety. So it is no wonder that the simple societies develop their own theories regarding the nature and functioning of their environment. They have developed a theory of causation, which tells them that natural events are caused by supernatural forces. The supernatural forces have been visualised as belonging to two categories: personal forces and impersonal forces. Religion addresses itself to the personal forces and magic relates to the impersonal forces. Religion and magic, for the tribal, are thus not contradictory but complementary to each other.

3.4.3.1 Religion and Magic

Religion assumes that certain spirits and deities preside over nature. They have to be propitiated, placated and worshipped in order to get their blessings. These spirits may send both blessings and curses. So an element of freedom and an exercise of will are attributed to the spirits and deities. Magic on the other hand, is an impersonal force which can be made to operate provided the magic is performed properly. There is no exercise of will with regard to the impersonal force. Magic must succeed. It can fail only by an improper performance of magic or by the performance of more powerful counter-magic.

Frazer (1920) believed all magic to be sympathetic, based on the principle of sympathy between cause and effect. He identified two laws governing the operation of magic, the law of similarity and the law of contact. The magic based on the first law he called homoeopathic or imitative magic and the magic based on the second law he called contagious magic. In homoeopathic magic an image of the enemy is destroyed in order to destroy the enemy. In contagious magic, magic is played on the separated part of the body of the enemy, such as paired nails and hair.

But magic is not always destructive. It is in fact only a symbolic act. Magic is the playing out of an event. It expresses desires in symbolic ways.

In brief, religion provides the simple societies with a theory of causation. It builds confidence of nature. The fertility of fields, herds, women, of land and water are believed to be ensured by religion. Religion also has certain political aspects, which we shall examine, in the following section. You have already noticed the role of taboo in the maintenance of order in certain spheres of tribal life.

Activity 2

Do you think your religion and religious rituals have some elements of magic in it? If yes, write a note of about one page on the topic of "Role of Magic in My Religion" and compare it with those of other students at your study centre.

3.4.4 Polity

Maintenance of order over time is the central concern of political organisation in all societies. But different societies solve this problem of order in different ways. Modern state societies, characterised by structural differentiation, use the differentiated state apparatus for the maintenance of order.

The simple societies are characterised by undifferentiated ways of keeping law and order. The responsibility of maintenance of order is distributed among a number of institutions and structures. Manifestly non-political institutions like kinship and religion also perform political functions.

3.4.4.1 Types of Political System—Cephalous

Political systems among the simple societies are divided into two groups: (i) cephalous and (ii) acephalous. Cephalous political system is one in which there is a recognised head, a chief or a king. Acephalous political system is one in which no single head is recognised and order is maintained by means other than state apparatus. Both cephalous and acephalous political systems admit of a number of subtypes within them.

Among the cephalous political systems at least four subtypes can be recognised. Shilluk, Swazi, Ethiopean Kingdom and Muslim Emirates of northern Nigeria may be taken to represent these four types. Among the Shilluk, the headship is more ritual and symbolic than substantial. The order is maintained by the principle of lineage rather than by state apparatus. Swazi and Ethiopean Kingdoms represent two variants of a common system. In both systems, kingship is a powerful institution. Kingship enjoys divine sanction in both these systems. To disobey the king is not only a breach of political obligation, it is also at the same time a breach of the religious obligation. In both, authority is devoluted from the king to his subordinates from the king to his subordinates. Among the Swazi, the devolution of authority is made from the king to his close kinsmen. Thus in this type, the king and his close kinsmen rule.

In the Ethiopean Kingdom also there is devolution of authority from the King to his subordinates. But the subordinates are not his kinsmen, they are his loyal non-kin dependants. In fact in this system the kinsmen are avoided and very often intense rivalry exists between the king and his kinsmen. Close kinsmen are often imprisoned so that they do not create any trouble for the ruling chief. Thus, kinship is not without significance even in this third type of cephalous political system. Though it must be noted that in this type the significance is negative and instead of basking in the sunshine of their kin, they are consigned to the darkness of the prisons.

The fourth subtype within the cephalous is qualitatively different from the above three subtypes. In all the three, the ruler and the ruled are tribals of one ethnic group or another. They share a number of social and political attitudes despite differentiation on class and power hierarchy. In this fourth subtype the ruler comes from a different culture and dominates over the tribal culture. It is clearly a case of political conquest. Our example representing this type is the Muslim Emirate of northern Nigeria.

3.4.4.2 Acephalous

Among the acephalous political systems, once again, four subtypes can be identified. The (i) Central African Bushmen, (ii) Yako of Nigeria, (iii) Masai of east Africa, and (iv) Nuer of Sudan may be taken to represent these four subtypes. Bushmen are

hunting and gathering people, constantly moving from one place to another in search of roots, fruits and tubers or in search of game animal. They are fragmented into small bands. Whatever disputes that arise within and between families are resolved by the elders of the band.

The second subtype consists of autonomous villages with their councils. Among the Yako the village councils contribute to the maintenance of order. Membership of the village council is based on a number of criteria such as genealogical position, economic success and qualities of leadership.

The third subtype of which Masai herders are an example is quite widespread in east Africa. The transition from childhood to manhood is not an unnoticed and uneventful phenomenon among the simple societies. Most of them give ritual recognition to this phenomenon. Among the Masai, the children undergoing this transition are initiated into the youngest age-set. In course of time the youngest age-set becomes the eldest age-set and then it has to take on the responsibility of maintaining law and order. So in this third subtype the maintenance of order is the responsibility of the age-sets.

The fourth subtype is also quite widespread and Nuer tribe of Sudan is an example of this subtype. Order is maintained in such societies by balanced opposition. The Nuer are divided into agnatic descent groups, the lineages. Members of a lineage are obliged to help other on occasions of dispute. Hence a dispute between two individuals belonging to two different lineages soon becomes a dispute between two lineages. Each lineage organises itself into a fighting group to support its member. But when the two persons in dispute belong to the same lineage, then the conflict is confined to this particular lineage and nobody outside this group is involved in this dispute

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.
ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is an acephalous political system? Write in about twelve lines.

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3.5 COLONIAL IMPACT ON SIMPLE SOCIETES

European colonialism came to be imposed on many simple societies from the 18th century. Nineteenth century and the following decades represent the worst period of

colonial exploitation. Though a large number of simple societies in Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania have been able to cast off colonial rule, there are quite a few still struggling to throw off the yoke. Even in those societies which have become politically independent, a number of structures and networks of exploitation established during colonial rule continue to sap, manifestly or latently, the economic, political and psychological vitality of these ex-colonial communities.

Colonialism imposed its imprint on all aspects of tribal life since the 18th century. Economic, political, social and cultural aspects of the simple societies came to be directly and indirectly, influenced by colonial rule. It has however to be noted that all tribal societies under colonial rule did not experience the same level of disorganisation in their social systems. In some the disrupting influence was much more severe than in others. We shall now examine the impact of colonialism in the economic, political, social and cultural aspects of simple societies

With the establishment of colonial rule the economics of the simple societies came to be integrated with the international capitalist economic system. Some got intimately integrated while others were only remotely integrated. In other words, some societies adapted themselves much faster to new ideas practices and technological changes then others. Economic integration with the capitalist system took three main forms: one, by supplying the traditional products to the international commercial network through a series of local and provincial agencies; two, through the introduction of new crops at the inducement and coercion of the colonial capitalists; and three, by joining willingly or under pressure, the industrial wage labour. The impact of economic integration was most in the third and least in the first.

3.5.1 Supply of Traditional Products

In the first category come the hunting and gathering, pastoral and agricultural communities that sold their traditional products to the agents of the capitalist market. This initiated anew system of exchange and influenced to a certain extent, their traditional systems of exchange and exchange obligations. But the impact was limited to only certain areas of their social life. Cash got introduced to their system and they could purchase with it certain new items of consumption but this did not bring about a restructuring of economic relations in these simple societies.

3.5.2 Introduction of New Crops

The changes introduced by the second type of integration were more far reaching than those associated with the first. In this a new agricultural cycle had to be followed bringing about considerable change in the domestic organisation of production. Most important consequence was the impact of fluctuations of the international price with regard to the cash crops grown by these communities. Tobacco and sugarcane, were some of the crops grown by the tribal communities specially for the world market. In many cases they had to replace food crops by cash crops and hence were forced to buy food from the market. Tribes in West Africa, for instance the Yorubas, were drawn into the international capitalist market through this second type of integration. But this type of integration did not result in geographical dislocation.

3.5.3 The Industrial Wage Labour

The most disastrous consequences followed from the third type of integration, by entering the industrial labour market. The colonialists developed industries for which they needed cheap labour. A number of inducements were first tried in Africa to lure people into industrial employment. But when they failed, a lot of repressive measures were taken to force the tribal people to work in the mines in the copper belt and in other factories started all over urban Africa. People were forced to pay taxes in cash which was available only in urban-industrial labour and when even these measures failed, physical capture of tribals was resorted to man the mines and the factories.

These repressive measures did not stop at the factory gates but the entire industrial discipline and the conditions of work were very repressive. Plantations in India, Africa and Latin America, employed tribal and non-tribal labour also called indentured labour and subjected them to dehumanising industrial discipline. This kind of integration involved geographical migration, very often leaving the wife, children and old-parents at home in the village. The worker faced problems at both ends of migration, at the village end as well as at the factory.

Imposition of colonial rule disrupted the political order of the tribal communities. The traditional political systems lost their sovereignty and legitimacy. The traditional political chiefs suddenly found that their rights, authority and power had vanished. They acted now as the representatives of the colonial power and had to behave with their own tribesmen in ways they would not have ever thought of doing in the past. Traditional jurisprudence, traditional measures of the resolution of conflict, all became irrelevant in the new colonial situation.

New political institutions, like police, magistrates and jails, came up all over the tribal world. New jurisprudence was imposed on them whose logic they failed to appreciate. New men came to occupy many of these new positions. Though following the principle of indirect rule, the British in 'Africa tried to retain old chiefs in many areas but this could not be done everywhere. Hence new chiefs were appointed in many communities.

3.5.4 Problems of Colonialism

The new political system had many problems. It was divorced from its relationship with kinship and religion. In the traditional political order as we have examined in an earlier section, kinship and religion played an important part. The chief was assumed to possess supernatural power because it was retained within one family. With chiefs coming from other families, the religious character of kingship got considerably eroded. Irrelevance of kinship support disintegrated not only the political system, but also, to a great extent, even the kinship system. This is because of the fact that this political role of the kinship system went a long way in giving a sense of unity and solidarity.

Economic and political changes had serious implications for the institutions and processes of social solidarity. In fact the tribals found it hard to accept the cognitive and affective elements of the new industrial culture. They got industrialised but could not internalise the values of industrialism. The lack of industrialism resulted in the high rate of absenteeism and low rate of turn over. The tribals became migrants not only from the village to the urban-industrial complex but also from factory to factory, from industry to industry. Thus an element of uncertainty and insecurity developed.

Colonial imposition resulted also in the disintegration of tribal cultures. Introduction of new market rationality and cash economy moved them over from generalised reciprocity to balanced reciprocity and in many cases to even negative reciprocity.

In the new urban-industrial environment they were not in a position to perform their multiple rites and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death. This created psychological deprivation and psychological strains within them. Living in an urban-industrial environment kept them away from the annual ritual cycle, from the festivals and also from a host of ritual obligations they were supposed to meet at their village home. They suffered from a cultural vacuum at the urban industrial centre. They could not practise their own culture and they could not participate in the cultural activities of the urban-industrial centres. They became alienated not only from their village but also from the industrial culture. In fact they got alienated from themselves.

The triblas did not meekly accept the imposition of colonial rule. Researches and studies bear testimony to the fighting spirit of the tribals. In Kenya the Giriamas rose against colonialism in 1913-14. The cult of Mumbo gripped the Gusii and the Luo in Kenya. The Mau Mau rebellion, again in Kenya, speaks of the tribals' determination to throw away the colonial masters. The cargo cults in Oceania are another expression

of the tribal antagonism to colonialism. In India too the tribals rose in violent uprisings against the British and their supporters throughout the nineteenth century. The tribes of Chotanagpur, the Munda, Ho and the Santhal, all rose against the British and the Zamindars in the nineteenth century. In fact the uprisings were so many in the nineteenth century Chotanagpur, that it may easily be called the century of tribal rebellions.

Two features stand out very clearly with regard to these tribal uprisings. One, most of them were violent, to the extent permitted by their primitive tools. Two, they looked for religious support for their success., They were all movements of hope of one kind or another and were all too sure about their success. Needless to say most of them were brutally crushed by the mighty colonial powers.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) **Write** a note in about fifteen lines on exploitation of labour under colonialism.

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3.6 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit that simple societies have many different aspects to them. There are tribal economies, which have special features including hunting, gathering and agriculture.

This unit covered the factor of exchange in simple societies and their social organisation. Marriage religion and political organisation were also discussed. Types of political system in simple societies were examined. We have also pointed out how simple societies suffered under colonialism, including exploitation of labour. We have thus given a well-rounded overview of simple societies. A video programme, sent to your study centre and dealing with an example of a simple society, gives you a visual understanding of simple societies.

3.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Bose, N.K., 1971. *Tribal Life in India.* National Book Trust: Delhi.

2) Radcliffe Brown, A.R., 1964. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society.* Cohen and West: London.

3) Walker, A.R., 1986. *The Toda of South India: A New Look.* Hindustan Publishing Corporation: Delhi.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Acephalous : Society with no recognised head, or single political authority.

Cephalous : Society with a single political head, e.g. a king.

Exogamous : Where marriage must be outside a given group.

Matrilineal : Where descent is traced through female ancestors.

Moiety : When a tribe is divided into two sections.

Patrilineal : When descent is traced from male ancestors.

Phratry : When a tribe is divided into many sections, each section is called a phratry.

Poligyny : When a man has more than one wife.

3.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) In hunting and gathering societies, people live by hunting large and small animals. They supplement this source of food by collecting a wide range of roots, fruits, and tubers. Living close to nature, the people adapt themselves to nature and move from place-to-place in search of food. In some cases, the hunters and gatherers managed to enjoy a measure of affluence by securing surplus food.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Generally, a tribe is divided into two or more sections. In a tribe with two sections, each section is called a moiety. Tribes with more than two sections refer each of these divisions by the term 'phratry'. Moieties and phratries are, generally, exogamous, that is, spouses are found from outside the social divisions. In some societies, e.g., the Toda, moieties are endogamous, that is, members of the moieties must marry within the division.

Check Your Progress 3

1) In acephalous political systems, no single head is recognised and order is maintained by means other than the state apparatus. This system has four sub-types, exemplified by four groups—the Central African Bushmen, the Yako of Nigeria, the Masai of East Africa and the Nuer of Sudan. In the first sub-type, order is maintained by the eldest of each band of Bushmen, hunters and gatherers. In the second sub-type, the village councils and in the third sub-type, age-sets take the responsibility of keeping order in society. In the fourth sub-type, order is kept on the basis of relations among lineages.

Check Your Progress 4

1) Labour was required for industries, developed by colonial powers in various parts of the world. The colonialists, being a part of the capitalist economic system, wanted to acquire labour at minimum cost. As they held also political power over the colonies, they were able to coerce the colonised people in providing cheap labour to their industries. People from simple societies were lured into factories on false promises. When these protests lost their efficacy, even repressive measures were employed for keeping the tribals in labour force. Plantations in Asia, Africa and the Americas subjected their labourers to dehumanising conditions of work

UNIT 4 COMPLEX SOCIETIES

Structure

4.0 Objectives

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Defining a Complex Society

- 4.2.1 Rural-Urban Dichotomy
- 4.2.2 Aspects of Community Life
- 4.2.3 Types of Urbanisation

4.3 Modern Society

- 4.3.1 Work in Complex Societies
- 4.3.2 Work Structures
- 4.3.3 Conflict in Industry
- 4.3.4 Employment and Women

4.4 Post-Industrial Society

- 4.4.1 Further Features
- 4.4.2 Some Trends

4.5 Let us Sum Up

4.6 Further Readings

4.7 Key Words

4.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have gone through this unit carefully, you should be able to:

- define a complex society;
- discuss the rural-urban dichotomy;
- describe modern employment organisation;
- explain what generates conflict in industry;
- identify the characteristics of the employment of women in complex society; and
- describe the main features of post-industrial society.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 3 we have indicated various aspects of simple societies. We find that complex societies are not tribal or simple in their organisation. In part, we find, technological advancement is what defines the complexity of modern society. There is however a rural-urban dichotomy, and community life too is not completely removed from that in simple societies. We examine industrial conflict in complex societies and also aspects of employment of women. Finally we turn our attention to post-industrial society, its main features, and some trends.

4.2 DEFINING A COMPLEX SOCIETY

Technological advances from the stage of hunting and gathering to landing on the moon have given birth to a technologically advanced complex society in modern times. Described as 'complex societies', modern industrial nation-states are contrasted with the simple societies in various important ways:

i) larger territory and population membership;

ii) greater occupational differentiation, and specialisation of work and social groups;

iii) advanced technology for production of consumer items, building of houses, work places, etc;

iv) greater co-ordination in the management of the complex society;

v) quick rate of change in terms of consumer goods, forms of education, and so on;

vi) faster modes of mass communication, such as, radio, TV, computers internet etc.

Initially it was technological advances that ushered in change. Huge markets sprang up, occupational opportunities and population increase created the nation-state. This is far more inclusive in organisation than anything in simple societies.

Advanced Technology in Complex Society

4.2.1 Rural-Urban Dichotomy

Sociologists had earlier thought that there is a clear difference between the urban and the rural community. However gradually this concept of rural-urban dichotomy underwent change. Some sociologists found that there was as much individualism, lack of understanding, fear and suspicion of strangers even among the villagers as it existed in the urban life. The 'peaceful village' image of rural life took a severe blow.

These studies indicated that the happy community-type of existence in villages was not a fact. Remarkably the concept of the urban community also underwent change in the 1950's. It was found that family and friends made life close, informal, and secure. That is to say there does exist 'urban villages' in city life as well.

This aspect of complex societies is very puzzling. Moreover there exist people who live in villages and work in towns. Neither the village nor the town can thus be thought of as a stereotype. Close associations or lack of them did not depend on the environment. They were independent.

Activity 1

Closely examine the community in which you live and write a report of about one page on the nature of your community in terms of its level of urbanisation; whether you will call it rural, urban or semi-urban and why?

Discuss your report with those of other students at your study centre.

4.2.2 Aspects of Community Life

One thing is clear from the above is that the rural and urban life in complex society is not the opposite of one another. In fact it could no longer be assumed that environment determined any one type of association. However this is not to say that rural and urban populations do not have any differences.

Later studies stressed that:

i) social class and

ii) stage in family cycle were very important factors in the complex societies.

According to the studies, social class influences choice over where a person can stay (live). Stage in family cycle determines choice of area within a social class. Thus young parents in a social class do not have as much to invest as those who are older. There are thus several constraints on where a person can live. The housing market makes a cluster of similar social class and stage in family cycle.

Some sociologists point out that it is the group that is influenced-not the community as such. They argue in favour of studying local social systems. They feel these should be studied with reference to:

i) maintenance and establishment;

ii) modifying circumstances; and

iii) inter-relationships with national systems.

It was suggested that community ties and behaviours are very much linked to national behaviour. Personal ties were believed to be decreasing to a very large extent. Thus vertical links to the central decision makers are replacing the 'horizontal' local ties. Thus the two are deeply inter linked, although community reflects the nation. Again the analysis of economic factors has become very important in urban studies. Further, it was felt that urban problems are not exclusively urban, e.g. slums and poverty. Thus, it may be pointed out that community studies do help in studying social change. However locality study gives more precise data for the same.

4.2.3 Types of Urbanisation

There are three types of urbanisation concept:

i) Over-urbanisation.

ii) Under-urbanisation.

iii) De-urbanisation.

The developing world is experiencing over-urbanisation. Cities are enclaves which are surrounded by villages. They are also considered to be 'beach-heads' from which economic growth and its benefits go out towards rural areas. Our view on over-urbanisation is that metropolitan development is due to foreign capital. Thus, cities are being exploited by the main powers of the developed world.

Such urban centres become exploiters of the rural areas near them. They are, however, themselves dependent on industrial nations—both for economic and political dominance. In this situation, manufacturing industry does not grow strong. The service sector is over-emphasised. What results therefore is urbanisation without proper industrialisation. Thus over-urbanisation implies that cities in the developing world are not industrialised enough relative to population ratios. The picture indicates that the service sector has a deep agrarian root.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is a complex society? Describe in about five lines.

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2) List the three types of urbanisation. Use about five lines.

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4.3 MODERN SOCIETY

Modern society is basically industrial. In such societies we find that technical skills are valued very much. Unskilled labour is valued but much less so. All this is reflected in the wage structure. Administration and management services are very prestigious. Modern society has several features. These include:

i) profit-motive production by big capitalists;

ii) technological advances;

iii) high rate of urban populations;

iv) bureaucratic organisation; and

v) spread of education.

Thus modern societies, large organisations are very important, but they make interaction impersonal. In contrast to **over-urbanisation** in the developing world, there is **under-urbanisation** in Eastern Europe. This is in a sense the opposite case relative to over-urbanisation. While the former is produced by industrialisation and low rural employment opportunities, under-urbanisation is the result of extra or over industrialisation, accompanied by a lack of support systems like housing. Thus, those employed in urban areas could not be given housing by the state. Further, the free market rate was too steep for the average person's budget. Workers thus have to travel a long way up and down to work. Only the higher strata people have chances of possessing a house. The process of under-urbanisation puts the burden of industrialisation on the less well-off sections of society.

The next aspect that we examine is that of **de-urbanisation**. In Britain since the late seventies there has been a movement away from large urban towns to small towns and

villages. There has thus been a ruralisation of urban/industrial relations. This is seen as a result of the economic and industrial policies, which encourage such a process. Such ruralisation is especially evident in advanced technology sectors.

In general therefore community remains an important factor. It helps to study change. Even today the idea of a good community is very strongly present. However, the connection between community and wider society must be kept in mind always.

Again in modern society kinship significance goes down in terms of expectations and obligations. However, there develops a complex division of labour. There is a great deal of specialisation inside a large organisation.

In modern society also there are many varieties of subcultures and counter-cultures, each representing a section of people. These form around music, philosophy, or political beliefs. Further we find that the arena of the sacred is relatively small in modern society. On the other hand folk societies are much smaller and closely knit together. There is little use of technology and the religious ethos is very strong. It presents to an extent a picture opposite to that of modern society.

There are some other aspects to modern society. There is the view that what is emerging is a mass society. That is a society in which small groups have no chance. Psychologically people become superficial, and without any deep commitment. Relationships are insecure and competitive.

In terms of politics that local groups are cut off from the mainstream. Job satisfaction is rare and people do not feel a sense of belonging to the work place. Thus this discontent is manipulated by politicians. Some sociologists however see only pluralism in these situations. They feel that modern society offers unlimited choices to the individual.

Activity 2

Prepare a map of the city/town/village where you live. Identify residential colonies and find out who are the people living in this colony, what is their social background in terms of religion, language, class and caste. Write a report of one page and discuss it with the other students at your Study Centre and also Your Academic Counsellor.

4.3.1 Work in Complex Societies

Work in complex organisations means work that is paid. However work may not earn monetary wage. It may be time consuming and call for skill without being wage productive, e.g. house repairs. In simple societies, the tendency is often to be partial towards leisure. Work is thus mental or physical action that has some end result. Thus work has a wide range of being. In fact, among the complex societies leisure activities have to some extent become a means of work and wage earning, e;g; cricket, football, wrestling and tennis. The players earn their living providing a spectacle to the crowd. Others are willing to pay for their playing. Thus employment or self-employment is the main arena of work. People's leisure activities are also related to it.

4.3.2 Work Structures

Very often in simple societies work is deeply linked with family and religion. Bronislaw Malinowski indicates that in the Trobriand Islands many day to day tasks were overseen by a magician. Again what was produced agriculturally was distributed keeping kinship obligations in mind. In such societies work is not separated from domestic activities. This is true also of pre-industrial France. Here household members helped in every way with the work on the farm. In contrast, complex societies have specific workers or employees. These people have a common work place away from home. Their work uses power and machinery and is supervised. Thus there is little job-freedom. Fixed hours have to be worked without a let-up in effort.

The main attraction for the employees, in a complex society, is the wages they are paid. They have to submit themselves to higher authorities (manager, supervisor, etc.) while at work. All this is quite different from simple societies. Work rhythms that take account of the worker's pace and stamina are almost non-existent. The question of not following the routine doesn't arise. A few provisions are made for emergencies (casual leave, medical leave, etc.) in government organisations. Lax rhythms or personally oriented rhythms are obsolete now. In complex societies commercial offices stress time keeping and ceaseless labour. Time keeping is part and parcel of capitalist and modern work modes.

Gradually, these factors were no longer considered to be imposed upon the workers; they themselves found it convenient. They were willing to work hard and to follow all the rules. This attempt to make workers time conscious and hard working continues till the present day. All these changes have met with some opposition. However, the complex societies do realise that the standard of living has risen greatly. However, some of the work has been both mentally and physically exhausting. Alienation is a modern day fact in social life of the complex societies. This is quite opposite of the tribal situation, e.g. Kalahari Bushmen. Here the material wants were few and easily met with. There was no tendency or opportunity to aggravate wants.

Thus some sociologists have pointed out that simple societies have had a better life. It is not so mechanical and relentlessly time oriented. There is time enough for leisure. However, in complex societies, the concept of 'leisure' time has taken another meaning. Some institutions; eg. Companies, offices etc. give paid vacations to their employees, special leave is given so that the productivity and capacity of the workers may improve.

Work has become a most vital aspect of life in complex societies and wage labour is an important factor in the area of work. To get the work done is also considered a kind of work. Some sociologists think that when work, as an employment-earning wages, a social status and standard of living pervades all areas of life, as it does in a complex society, people's attitudes become exceedingly commercialised. Some sociologists even believe that in contemporary societies class can be understood in terms of consumption. Thus, a person who consumes more or expensive items may be placed in a higher class. The tendency of commercialisation can lead to conflicts among the factors of economy. To illustrate this point we take the issue of conflict in industry.

4.3.3 Conflict in Industry

In industry, the employer has control over the employees' labour over a particular time. The employer would like to use his employee in different capacity. Therefore, he leaves the contract sufficiently vague. Nevertheless, (i) work conditions and effort; (ii) technical qualifications; and (iii) responsibility are areas of management worker discussions, and often disputes. Thus, work effort is always being discussed relative to pay. The worker wants higher pay and facilities. The management however, wants to maximise profits, and this includes keeping low wages and long hours of work for the workers. The same problem exists with technical skill and pay. Again responsible behaviour is sought after by management. The level of responsibility varies with the level in an organisation. Higher positions carry higher responsibility—and higher pay. This too afterwards becomes a bone of contention.

Further conflict areas exist when attempts are made to put machines to work and remove workers. This is also called retrenchment of labour. It also exists when attempts are made to control them very closely. Jobs can often be dehumanising and alienating.

The most visible form of industrial conflict are legal or illegal strikes. However, other methods require co-operation among workers to:

i) go slow;

ii) absenteeism; and

iii) sabotage.

These methods may not show much on surface but cause great damage to management.

Industrial conflict has most meaning when it is recognised by management as a just step. This is rarely the case. Very often trade unions are not recognised by management. The pluralist view of industrial conflict is that various groups may have many complaints. Later, when changes are to be made, they have to participate in decision making. Control over workers is a controversial issue as well. Further this control is established through bureaucratic rules and regulations. Thus choices are extremely limited and the feelings of being hemmed in are very strong. Industrial conflict is a worldwide fact and injustices are in it. However, it is important to provide solution to this area.

4.3.4 Employment and Women

In complex societies appreciable headway has been made on employment of women. Women however remain separated from men in the work spheres. There is "horizontal" segregation in that women are mostly in clerical jobs, catering, receptionists, nursing, school teaching and so on. There is 'vertical' segregation also—for example relatively few women reach top managerial positions, or skilled manual jobs. As such their wages too are lower than those of men. As matters stand today anti-women job discrimination is on the way out. It is no longer felt that a woman must stay at home and only do domestic work.

Further the concept of two incomes has gained popularity, since it raises the standard of living. The responsibility of raising the young however remains vested with women. This is also true of domestic work. However; in most nuclear families in urban areas, men do contribute to the domestic work in one way or the other out of choice or out of compulsion. As such maternity leave is provided for in most jobs. Women also often spend time with their young. Even there is a provision for paternity leave which can be availed by the would be father. But still, women as workers are taken less seriously than men by employers. They are not often delegated to workshops, which increase their skill. It is often felt that they have domestic interests which reduce work—seriousness. This need not be true, however, that union meetings etc. are not conducive to women's participation although communication and technology advancement is bringing more and more women into the work force. In general work is still more male oriented.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.
ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief note in five lines on conflict in industry in modern societies.

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2) Provide a picture of women and employment in complex society, in about three lines.

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4.4 POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Post-industrial society is a combination of various dimensions or features. These features separate it from the modern society. We will examine three of them here and two more in the next section. The first important feature is:

i) **Service Economy:** In post-industrial society, agriculture and manufacturing do not absorb a majority of the work force. Services and trade are the major avenues of employment and the governments are major employers. Today only the U.S.A. shows indications of this stage. There are over 60 per cent work force engaged in services. This is expected to go even higher.

ii) **Professional and Technicians:** In industrial societies blue collar and semi skilled labour predominate. However in post-industrial societies professional and technical operators grow to dominate. A new class structure begins to form the basis of post-industrial society.

iii) **Theoretical Knowledge:** In post-industrial society, theoretical knowledge has a crucial value. Scientific knowledge along with mathematics based social science become very significant. In fact a shortage of scientifically trained professionals is felt. In providing this need universities gain a great deal of importance.

4.4.1 Further Features

Post industrial societies manifest two more features:

i) **Technology Planning**

In modern society, use of some technologies has proved to be harmful e.g. DDT is affecting crops, birds, wild life. Nuclear energy generating plants are creating nuclear wastes and accidents risks as in Chernobyl. USSR. Post-industrial societies have technology assessment to prevent any harmful effects of the technology. Thus, the government and people are much more aware of the possibility that the advance of technology can often lead to harmful side consequences.

ii) **Intellectual Technology**

A new intellectual technology will be crucial to post-industrial society. It is not the machine technology of the modern age. Intellectual technology comprises management and other techniques needed to organise. Vast use of computers and super computers and new mathematics is crucial. Decisions regarding the actual use of advanced technology rest with the politicians and not with the technicians. In this situation, the economy may feature an all-out exploitation of the less-developed population. This may lead to a revolution on the part of those exploited. Thus, the post-industrial society may not last long or else societies, both the developed as well as the developing, may take conscious steps to protect themselves from over exploitation of natural environment and pollution.

4.4.2 Some Trends

Post-industrial society depends for its emergence on the persistence of the present trends. What happens if this does not happen? Let us consider some of these aspects below:

i) **State Tasks:** These include saving and distribution of wealth equitably. Both these are contradictory - for the latter means expenditure not saving of capital. Higher taxes do not solve the problem. Education, medicine, insurance, all needs great expenditure. Saving is not enough to meet them and a fiscal crisis arises.

ii) **Cultural Change:** Change may come culturally - not only in the economy but all aspects of social life. The new young may find fulfilment outside their careers as well as inside them.

iii) **Ideologies:** Post-industrialism regulates the big corporations strictly. It is a type of 'state capitalism'. In other countries state socialism exists. Socialism should lead to communal society, which eventually makes the state obsolete. However this is not borne out by trends in modern communism. It is also felt by some sociologists that bureaucracy needs to be replaced by communal structures.

Thus there is much speculation about future trends. Recently, however it is being questioned whether progress alone is the future. Cannot there be devastation in a global sense or regional nuclear holocaust? This factor has come in to create much sobriety and stops utopic visions of the future from being readily accepted.

In the 21st century, we have entered yet another era of social existence. This era is referred to as the **"information age"** where global communication through radio, T.V., Computer networks, satellites has changed the very notion of social group or community. People from different regions, societies, languages etc. can be part of an Internet group, constantly in touch with each other and so on. Sources of knowledge and its accessibility through improved communication technologies has taken such a significant shape that we can talk about a 'global' world today where development of any kind, be it social cultural, political or economic; it affects all societies throughout the world in different ways and different proportions. One example is the post September or 9/11 event in America when in 2002 the World Trade Center (WTC) building was destroyed by two aeroplanes carrying passengers. Thousands of people were killed. The tragedy was immense but its socio-political implications are still being felt everywhere in the world.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use the space provided below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) List three features of post-industrial society. Use about four lines.

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have examined the notion of complex societies. We began with a discussion on the features of complex societies. This involved taking into consideration rural and urban aspects of community life. It also included a look at various forms that urbanisation takes.

We studied modern society as a major form of complex society. We examined work and its aspects within such societies. Industrial conflict and women's employment were two important issues that we explained. Finally, we studied post-industrial societies and what they are comprised of. This included studying the features and various possible trends that complex societies might take in the future such as, the media revolutions which has really made the world a global world. We have thus provided a rounded view of complex societies.

4.6 FURTHER READINGS

1) Bell, Daniel, 1973. *The Coming of post-industrial Society.* Basic Books: New York.

2) Worsely, Peter (ed.), 1987. *The New Introducing Sociology.* Penguin Books Limited: Middlesex.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Absenteeism : When workers are not in the work place without being on any leave.

Alienation : A feeling of dissatisfaction and dislike for the job that the worker is doing.

Contention : A dispute over something, e.g. wages for work, with the management.

Horizontal Segregation : Keeping one particular group apart within the similar wage and status level.

Medicare : Medical treatment available to workers and others.

Obsolete : No longer in use; out moded.

Stereotype : A generally held idea about something e.g. villages are beautiful and peaceful places.

Vertical Segregation : Separating people at the top (or bottom) level from others, e.g. owners, managers, and supervisors.

4.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) A complex society is one, which has high technological developments. Its organisations are formal and its' complicated bureaucratic set-up is an important feature of a complex society.

2) The three types of urbanisation are:
   i) over-urbanisation;
   ii) under-urbanisation; and
   iii) de-urbanisation.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Conflict and disputes arise in industry in modern societies over
   i) working conditions;
   ii) required technical qualifications; and
   iii) responsibility relative to pay.

2) A large number of women are employed in complex society. However, most of them are in low-level jobs—clerical, receptionists, etc. Very few reach high positions.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Three features of an industrial society are:
   i) basically, a service economy, e.g. trade;
   ii) dominance of professionals and technicians; and
   iii) vast scientific knowledge.

REFERENCES

References cited in Block 1 (These are given here for those students who wish to follow up certain points in detail.)

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UNIT 5 FAMILY

Structure

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Definition of Family

- 5.2.1 Family as an Institution
- 5.2.2 Variations in Family Forms
- 5.2.3 Universal Nature of Family
- 5.2.4 Biological Basis of the Family
- 5.2.5 Common Residence and Nomenclature

5.3 Social Functions of the Family

5.4 Role of Family in Industrial Society

- 5.4.1 Importance of Family

5.5 Let Us Sum Up

5.6 Key words

5.7 Further Readings

5.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

A study of this unit would enable you to:

- define the term family;
- explain the concept of family as one of the social institutions of society;
- describe the various forms of family;
- explain the nature and characteristics of family;
- distinguish the social functions of family; and
- describe the role of family in contemporary modern society.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units, in Block 1, we have taught you some basic concepts. We also gave a good idea about simple and complex societies. In this unit we introduce you to the definition of the family, family as a social institution and variations in the family form. We also explain the biological basis of the family. Important features such as social functions of the family, roles and the importance of the family in industrial society are also brought out in this unit.

The basic unit of the social structure in every society is the family. This is as true among simple societies as within the complex, modern societies. However, it varies in internal organisation, in its degree of autonomy and in the sanctions and taboos by which it is protected and perpetuated. Its universality, its persistence through time and under widely variant cultures, and its necessity for biological and social reasons should be an effective reply to the 'prophets of doom' who fear that the family is of less significance today than in earlier times. The specific pattern of family life in any given social structure is the product of the mores and varies with time and place and peoples. Therefore, the family has been seen as a universal social institution, as an inevitable part of human society. It is built around the needs of human beings to regularise sexual behaviour and protect and nurture the young ones.

It is the unit in which resources are pooled and distributed for consumption, around which residence is organised and domestic tasks are performed. The social organisation is associated with such emotive issues as love, marriage, home and child bearing. It is the family that gives us our principal identity our social status and even our very name, which is the lable of this identity in the larger society of which we are a part. This unit will give you an idea about the family as a social institution, the discussion will be kept at a sociological level.

5.2 DEFINITION OF FAMILY

The early and classical definitions emphasised that the family was a group based on marriage, common residence, emotional bonds, and stipulation of domestic services. The family has also been defined as group based on marital relations, rights and duties of parenthood, common habitation and reciprocal relations between parents and children. Some sociologists feel that the family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction.

In recent times the concept of family is viewed in terms of certain criteria applicable to all societies. For instance, it is felt that the family is a primary kinship unit, which carries out aspects of the sexual, reproductive, economic and educational functions. Keeping in view these definitions, we generally picture a family as a durable association of husband and wife with or without children, or a durable association of a man or woman along with children. Thus, members in the family live together, pool their resources and work together and produce offspring. A family is also viewed as an adult male and female living together with their offspring in a more or less permanent relationship such as marriage which is approved by their society. These definitions point out the basics or the minimum essentials of the family as a special kind of social grouping: (i) it involves a sexual relationship between adults of opposite sexes; (ii) it involves their cohabitation or living together, (iii) it involves at least the expectation of relative permanence of the relationship between them; and (iv) most important of all, the relationship is culturally defined and societally sanctioned-it is a marriage. Marriage and the family are not just something people become involved in on their own. Some of the ways in which they must relate to each other are decided for them by their society. It is a well known and recognised fact that marriage is the basis for the family. Since reproduction and control over it has been the concern of all societies, marriage as a legal institution becomes a crucial factor. Marriage is recognised as a special kind of relationship since it is the one in which families are created and perpetuated, and the family is the ultimate basis of human society.

5.2.1 Family as an Institution

In the previous block of this course, ESO-11 you learnt about social institution and how family is one of the pivotal and most significant institution of all societies.

There are various forms of family found all over the world; but most sociologists and anthropologists agree that universally the most common features of a family is that it is composed of individuals related to each other by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Family, like any other institution of society forms around complex, socially significant problems, solving the problems of social existence is critical to collective living in all societies. George Murdock (1949; 4-11) lists four important functions served by the nuclear family, these functions serve to resolve four major problems of society. According to him the nuclear family along with other social institutions, serves to:

i) regulate sexual relations;

ii) account for economic survival ;

iii) controls reproduction; and

iv) socialises children

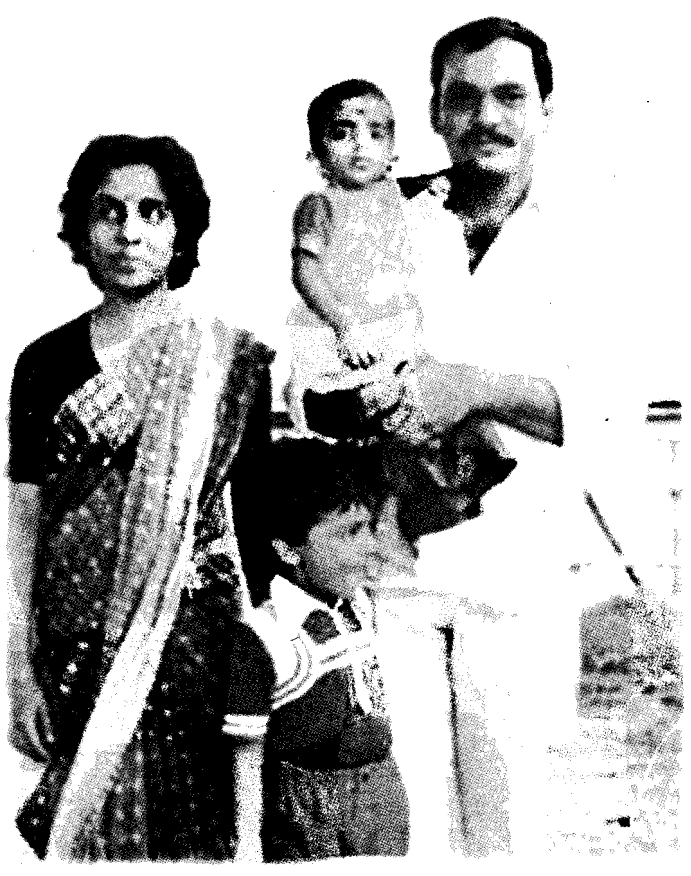
Out of all these functions, some thinkers believe that socialisation of children is one of the most central tasks of the family. Thus, one can see that family, as an institution, helps solve the problem of regulating sexual behaviour, surviving economically, reproducing new members of society and socialising them to become effective members of that society and culture.

5.2.2 Variations in Family Forms

The bewildering variety of family forms, noticed in societies throughout the world in the course of human history, is a cultural phenomenon of considerable interest. For instance, with regard to **residence** some societies are **matrilocal** in their marriage and family customs, while others are **patrilocal**. In the former case, the young married couple takes up residence at the home of the bride's parents, whereas, in the latter type the couple takes up residence at the home of the bridegroom's parents. Residence in most parts of India is patrilocal in that it gives to the husband and not the wife the right to choose the place of residence after marriage.

The issue of **descent** as to who will be related to whom and how, is not as simple as it might first appear. Those who are socially defined by a given society as "related", are called **kin**. Therefore from the point of view of lineage, there are three different systems for tracing descent. In a **matrilineal society** descent is traced through the female line, and in a **patrilineal** society through the male line. It is also common to trace descent bilaterally in some societies.

From the point of view of **authority**, the pattern of dominance and subordination and decision-making in the family, two different patterns are visible in different societies. These are **patriarchy**-male dominant; **matriarchy**-female dominant. Most of the societies have the patriarchal pattern. However, in modern societies of today, social and cultural change is tending to establish more equalitarian pattern of decision-making in which authority is shared between the conjugal pair.



i) Nuclear Family

ii) Extended Family

Yet another distinction is made between the **conjugal family** or family by marriage on the one hand and **consanguine family** or family by blood on the other, based on the membership type of the family. While the conjugal family consists of parents and their children, the consanguine family is made up of either parent and the units' blood relatives, such as, mother, her children, her parents or father, his children, his parents etc.

Finally, we can also classify families into nuclear and extended types based on the way they are organised. The nuclear family consists of a married couple and their children. The extended family is commonly defined as the nuclear family plus all kin belonging to either side, living together. It may be pointed out here that a consanguineous family implies 'ties of blood'. Ties of blood means the relationship between parents and their children, between siblings; even cousins on both paternal and maternal sides. It implies no particular form.

5.2.3 Universal Nature of Family

As stated earlier, the family is the most permanent and pervasive of all social institutions. There is no human society without any family system. All societies both large and small, primitive and civilised, ancient and modern, have institutionalised the process of procreation of the species and the rearing of the young. It is a permanent and universal institution and one of the constants of human life.

However we need to point out here that the same type of family is not found everywhere. There are several types of family. For example in the West the nuclear family is found. This comprises the husband and wife together with their children. In Indian villages and in small towns the extended or joint family is found. In India, too, largely nuclear families are found but often, amongst the better off families in villages, especially where agricultural land is there or amongst the Communities involved in brusiness and trade, one often finds the large joint or extended family. This form of family has people living in it of two, three or sometimes four generations under the same roof.

5.2.4 Biological Basis of the Family

The institution of the family is to be explained in terms of biological factor-the existence of two sexes and the sexual character of reproduction in the human species. It appears as a natural answer to the human sexual drive, a phenomenon solidly based in the biology of the human organism. Family provides legitimacy to all these biological activities with the support of marriage.

The family is characterised by its limited size. Because of this characteristic feature, family is identified as a primary group. It may include parents and their unmarried children or parents and their married as well as unmarried children. The bonds that tie together these limited number of members with limited common interests are the outcome of emotional factors such as love, mutual affection and solicitude. This emotional basis of the family makes it an ideally suitable primary social group in every society.

Activity 1

Examine the type of family in which you live, in terms of residence, emotional attachment, household, size etc. and write a short essay on "My Family and its Social Structure". Compare your answer with those of other learners at your study centre.

5.2.5 Common Residence and Nomenclature

The family is one of the most durable of all social institutions. Each family has a residence, an address and a name. We recognise any family with the help of the family name, location and address. A family can mean two quite different things depending upon the vantage from which we view it. For instance, the family in which one is a

child is the **family of orientation** and the family in which one is a parent is the **family of procreation**. Each family thus has common habitation for its living. Without a dwelling place, the task of child bearing and rearing cannot be adequately met. However, family as a concept has a wider meaning than mere household since a family can be spread out geographically sometimes but yet emotionally, socially and legally be known as a family. For example, a married couple may be living in two different cities or their children may be working somewhere else, even living in a different country/city; but they think of themselves as one family.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Give a definition of the family. Use around three lines.

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2) What is the biological basis of the family? Discuss in about three lines.

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5.3 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

The reasons for the endurance and universality of the family are largely grounded in the functions that it performs for individuals and for society. The major functions the family accomplishes are discussed below:

i) Member replacement and physical maintenance

In order to survive, every society must replace members who die and keep the survivors alive. The regulations of reproduction is centred in the family as are cooking and eating and care of the sick. Once children are born, they will be nurtured and protected within the family. It is the family that feeds, clothes and shelters them.

ii) Regulation of sexual behaviour

The family regulates sexual behaviour. Each and every member's sexual behaviour is influenced to some extent by what is learned in the family setting. The sexual attitudes and patterns of behaviour we learn in the family reflect societal norms and regulate our sexual behaviour. The sociological notion of sexual regulation should not be confused with repression. The norms, on the other hand, specify under what conditions and with what partners sexual needs may be satisfied.

iii) Socialisation of children

The family carries out the serious responsibility of socialising each child. Children are taught largely by their families to conform to socially approved patterns of behaviour. If the family serves society as an instrument for the transmission of culture, it serves the individual as an instrument of socialisation. A family prepares its children for participation in the larger world and acquaints them with the larger culture.

iv) **Status transmission**

Individual's social identity is initially fixed by family membership by being born to parents of a given status and characteristics. Children take on the socio-economic class standing of their parents and the culture of the class into which they are born, including its values, behaviour patterns and definitions of reality. In addition to internalising family attitudes and beliefs, children are treated and defined by others as extensions of the social identity of their parents. In short, family acts as a vehicle of culture transmission from generation to generation.

v) **Economic activity**

Until recent times, the family was an important unit of both production and consumption. The family produced most of the goods it consumed and consumed most of the goods it produced. But today, modern families mainly earn incomes. Thus, their principal function is that of the consumption of goods and services which they purchase. Because of the production of income the provision of economic support for family members is a major function of the modern family.

vi) Social emotional support

The family as a primary group is an important source of affection, love and social interaction. Caring for family members does not end with infancy and childhood. It is seemingly the nature of human beings to establish social interdependencies, not only to meet physical needs, but also to gratify emotional and psychological needs for response and affection as well as.

vii) **Inter-institutional linkage**

Each baby is a potential participant in the group life of the society. Family membership in a religious, political, economic, recreational and other kinds of organisations typically gives individuals an opportunity to participate in activities that might otherwise be closed to them. The family, then, not only prepares the individual to fill social roles and occupy a status in the community, but also provides the opportunities for such activity. Some institutions depend also on the way the family functions in this regard to insure their own continuity and survival.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Briefly discuss, in three lines, one important function of the family.

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5.4 ROLE OF FAMILY IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Many sociologists feel that the family has lost a number of its functions in modern industrial society. Institutions such as business, political parties, schools, welfare and recreational organisations, creche and play schools, now specialise in functions earlier performed only by the family. This reduces the dependency of the individual on his or her family and kin. The high rate of geographical mobility in industrial society decreases the frequency and intimacy of contact among members of the kin-family network. The

relatively high level of social mobility and the importance of 'achieved' status in modern society have weakened the importance of family and its extended form since it has less to offer to its members.

5.4.1 Importance of Family

However, this does not mean that the family is declining in importance. It has in fact become more specialised and its role is still vital. By structuring the personalities of the young and stabilising the personalities of adults, the family provides its members with the psychological training and support necessary to meet the requirements of the social system. In fact, the loss of certain functions of the family has made its remaining functions more important. The family's responsibility for socialising the young remains important as ever. Even though the family has largely lost its functions as a unit of production, it still maintains a vital economic function as a unit of consumption. Parents of today are expected to do their best to guide, encourage, and support their children in their educational and occupational choices and careers. Compared to the past, parents are more preoccupied with their children's health and emotional well being. State health and welfare provisions have provided additional support for the family and made its members more aware of the importance of health and hygiene in the home. In a nutshell, the family has adapted and is adapting to a developing industrial society. It remains as a vital and basic institution in society.

Across the span of history, the form and organisation of the family have varied, but in every social structure it has been a primary group and the basic unit of social organisation. Through the family the individual is a person with status, and children are reared and guided, and the cultural heritage is transmitted to succeeding generations. Families may be organised in an amazing variety of ways. Although the family is rooted in the biological nature of human beings, in human experience it is always a social institution which is governed by cultural norms.

With the growth of industry and the rise of cities, family life and family patterns have changed. The economic functions are largely transferred to outside agencies. Increasing emphasis is, however, placed on psychological values such as affection, companionship and emotional security.

The present is a period of transition. The family withstood the sweeping changes in the cultural pattern and found ways to adjust to each new situation. It will continue to survive, whatever further changes the future may bring.

Activity 2

Take 3 generations of your family, either you, your parents and their parents or you, your children and your parents (whichever is relevant to you). Identify two important changes in the emotional bond between different generations in your family and make a note of it. Compare your answer with other students at your study centre. Discuss this topic with your Academic Counsellor, as well.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the role of the family in industrial society? Use around five lines for your answer.

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2) Why is the family still important in industrial society? Use around five lines for your answer.

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5.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied various aspects of the institutien of family. We began with definitions of the family and then studied variations in family forms. This included describing the biological basis of the family. The universal nature of the family and common residence and nomenclature therein were also described.

We then turned to a description of the social functions of the family. Following this the role of family in industrial society is explained. This part also emphasised the importance of the family and aspects of the industrial family.

5.6 KEY WORDS

Conjugal family : Family in which the members consist of spouses (married couple) and their children.

Consanguine family : Family in which the members are related by descent rather than by marriage.

Extended family : Family consisting of one or more married pairs, their children and other near relatives.

Family of orientation : The family into which one is born.

Family of procreation : The family of which the person concerned is a parent.

Kin : Those who are related through descent or marriage.

Matriarchy : Family dominated by the mother as head of the household.

Matrilocal : The practice whereby a married couple settles in the home of the wife's family.

Mores : Ideas of right and wrong which require certain action and forbid others.

Nuclear family : Family consisting of parents and their children only.

Patriarchy : Family dominated by the father as head of the household.

Patrilocal : The practice whereby a married couple, settles in the home of the husband's family.

5.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Kapadia, K.M. 1966. *Marriage and Family in India*, Oxford University Press, Bombay.

2) Sutherland, R.L., Woodward, J.L., and Maxwell, M.A., (editors), 1961. *Introductory Sociology*, Oxford and IBH Publishing Company, Delhi.

3) Murdock, G.P., 1949. *Social Structure*, Macmillan, New York.

5.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The family can be defined as group based on
   a) Marital relations
   b) Parenthood
   c) Common residence
2) The biological basis of family is explained due to the existence of two sexes and reproduction. Further, it is the natural answer to human sexual urges.

Check Your Progress 2

1) One important function of the family is to transmit the parents' status to the children. The children's social standing is related to the family.

Check Your Progress 3

1) The role of the family in industrial society has weakened quite a bit. Institutions like schools, business houses, political parties, recreational organisations, etc., reduce the role of the family. So, also does the high level of mobility.
2) The importance of the family in industrial society cannot be under-estimated. It still provides socialising functions, psychological training and so on. The family still performs economic functions (support), which allows children to get on in life.

UNIT 6 MARRIAGE

Structure

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 The Institution of Marriage

6.3 Forms of Marriage

- 6.3.1 Monogamy
- 6.3.2 Polygamy
- 6.3.3 Rules of Endogamy and Exogamy

6.4 Mate Selection

- 6.4.1 Preferential Marriage
- 6.4.2 Love Marriage
- 6.4.3 Mate selection among Tribals

6.5 Changes in Marriage

- 6.5.1 Changes in the Forms of Marriage
- 6.5.2 Changes in Mate Selection
- 6.5.3 Changes in Age of Marriage
- 6.5.4 Changes in Marriage Rituals and Customs
- 6.5.5 Changes in Marriage: Goals and Stability

6.6 Let Us Sum Up

6.7 Key words

6.8 Further Readings

6.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

6.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- explain the institution of marriage;
- describe the various forms of marriage;
- explain what is implied by mate-selection;
- discuss changes that have taken place in the institution of marriage; and
- explain marriage goals and stability in marriage.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will explain the institution of marriage. We will also explain various aspects connected with it. This will include discussion on forms of marriage. Such forms include monogamy, polygamy and rules such as those of endogamy and exogamy. We have also described mate-selection as an important aspect of marriage. Some of the related areas covered are love marriages, preferential marriages, and mate selection practices among tribals. The last part deals with changes in marriage, its forms, mate selection practices, age at marriage, and so on. We thus provide a full picture of the institution of marriage.

6.2 THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is an important and universal social institution of society. As a social institution, it provides a recognised form for entering into a relatively enduring heterosexual relationship for the bearing and rearing of children. It is thus primarily a way of regulating human reproduction. This reproduction, however, also has a sociological dimension. The right of sexual relationship, that universally accompanies marriage, provides legitimisation to the children born in wedlock; this legitimacy is of great importance in the matters of inheritance and succession. Besides, through marriage there comes into existence the family, a relatively stable social group, that is responsible for the care and training of children. In all these respects, then, marriage has historically provided the institutional mechanisms necessary for replacement of social members and thereby has been meeting the important prerequisites of human survival and society's continuance. However, these societal prerequisites do not encompass all the values and goals of marriage.

In some societies, particularly in the industrialised western societies, the chief aim of marriage is not only procreation but companionship, emotional, and psychological support are equally emphasised. The idea of companionship in marriage as a main feature, however, is a recent development. For the major part of human history, all societies have emphasised marriage to be a social obligation. It is invested with several familial, social and economic responsibilities.

Historically marriage has been found to exist in a wide variety of forms in different societies. Also it has been found to perform differing functions. Indeed, even the manner in which marriage partners are to be obtained reveals an astonishing variety of modes and customs. There is an almost endless variety in nearly everything concerning marriage. This has led to several definitions of what marriage is.

6.3 FORMS OF MARRIAGE

As has just been pointed out, above, and in Unit 5, marriage has a large variety of forms. These forms can be identified on the basis of the number of partners and rules governing who can marry whom.

In terms of the number of partners that can legitimately enter into matrimony, we have two forms of marriage, namely, monogamy and polygamy.

6.3.1 Monogamy

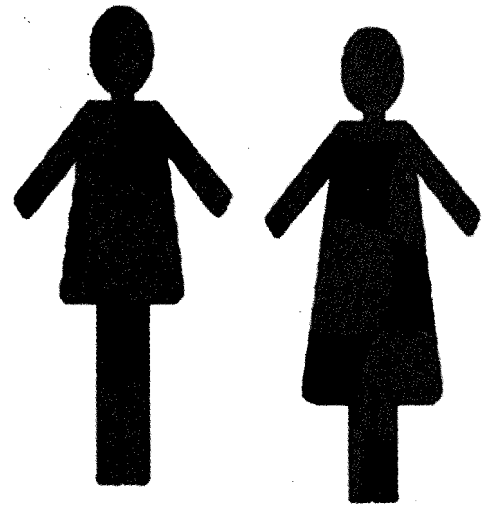
Monogamy restricts the individual to one spouse at a time. Under this system, at any given time a man can have only one wife and a woman can have only one husband. Monogamy is prevalent in all societies and is almost the universal form in all modern industrial societies. Even where polygamy (see Key Words) is permitted, in actual practice, monogamy is more widely prevalent. Due to constraints of financial resources and almost an even balance between the ratio of men and women in the population, a vast majority of individuals living in polygamous societies cannot have more than one spouse at a time.

In many societies, individuals are permitted to marry again often on the death of the first spouse or after divorce; but they cannot have more than one spouse at one and the same time. Such a monogamous marriage is termed as serial monogamy. Most western societies practise serial monogamy.

A society may also practise straight monogamy, in which remarriage is not allowed. Most upper caste Hindu females were obliged to follow the norm of straight monogamy prior to the enactment of Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, as until then widows were not allowed to marry again. These restrictions had not, however, pertained to men.

They were allowed to remarry after their spouse's death. However, in some lower castes, widow remarriage was permitted. In such a remarriage usually the deceased husband's brother was considered a preferred mate. This practice helped keep property within the family. It is also called leviratemarriage.

Monogamy



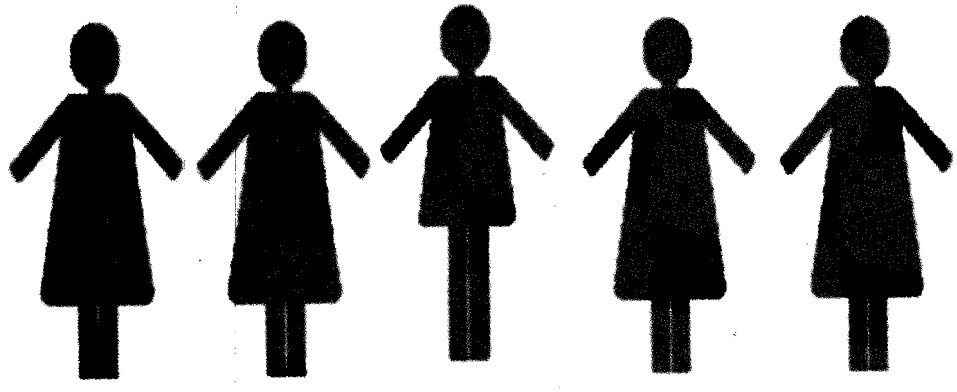
6.3.2 Polygamy

Polygamy denotes marriage to more than one mate at one time and takes the form of either: **Polygyny** (one husband with two or more wives) or **Polyandry** (one wife with two or more husbands).

While monogamy is permitted in all societies, polygamy, in the form of **polygyny**, is the preferred form in several societies. **Murdock's** research, based on an analysis of 283 societies, revealed that 193 of these were characterised by **polygyny**, 43 were **monogamous** and only 2 practiced **polyandry**.

Preferential rules for the choice of wives/husbands are followed in some polygamous societies. In certain societies males marry the wife's sisters, and females their husband's brothers. Such marriages are termed as **sororal polygyny** and **fraternal polyandry**, respectively.

i) Polygyny



Male
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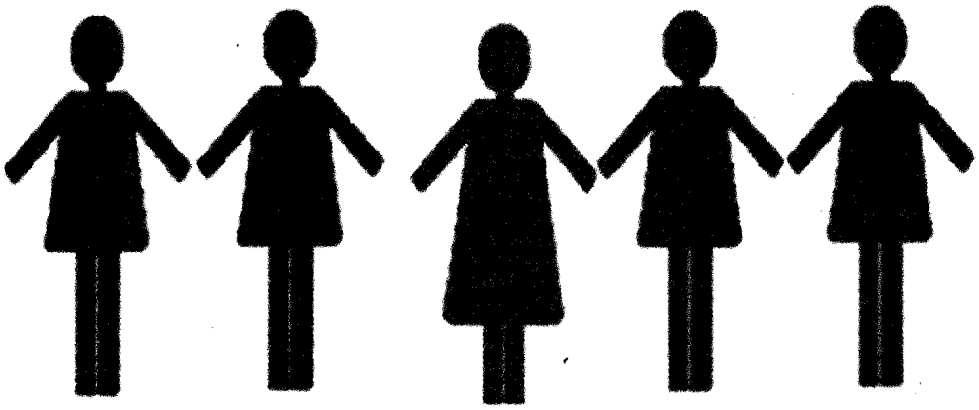
Female



Female
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Male

Polyyandry

Among polyandrous societies, "fraternal" polyandry is by far the most common. In these societies, a groups of brothers, real or classificatory, are collectively the husbands of a woman. This kind of polyandry has been found by the researchers in various parts of the world. Tibet has been described as the largest and most flourishing polyandrous community by Prince Peter. Polyandry is reported to be widely prevalent among some tribes in South India, Todas are considered a classic example of polyandrous people. In North India some groups of Jats are reported to be polyandrous.

Usually where economic conditions are harsh, polyandry may be one response of society, since in such situations a single male cannot adequately support a wife and children. Also, extreme poverty conditions pressurise a group to limit its population.

Activity 1

Which type of marriage has been frequently practiced by your family members and friends and why? Write a short note on "Type of Marriage in My Community" and discuss your note with other learners at your study centre.

6.3.3 Rules of Endogamy and Exogamy

All societies have prescriptions and proscriptions regarding who may or may not marry whom. In some societies these restrictions are subtle, while in some others, individuals who can or cannot be married, are more explicitly and specifically defined. Forms of marriage based on rules governing eligibility/ineligibility of mates is classified as endogamy and exogamy.

Endogamy requires an individual to marry within a culturally defined group of which he or she is already a member, as for example, caste. Exogamy, on the other hand, the reverse of endogamy, requires the individual to marry outside of his/her own group. Endogamy and exogamy are in reference to certain kinship units, such as, clan, caste and racial, ethnic or religious groupings. In India, even village exogamy is practised in certain parts of north India.

i) Religious endogamy is one of the most pervasive form of endogamy. Most religious groups do not permit or like their members to marry individuals of other faiths. In addition, various groups in the social hierarchy such as caste and class also tend to be endogamous. Endogamy is a very important characteristic of the Indian caste system. Among Hindus, there are over three hundred castes/sub-castes and each one of them is endogamous. Despite modernising trends in India, which

have diluted caste restrictions in many respects, inter-caste marriages are still few and mostly limited to educated urban individuals. Although the norms of caste endogamy were widely prevalent, Hindu scriptures by allowing **anuloma** and **pratiloma** marriages, institutionalised, to a limited extent, inter-caste marital alliances. The **anuloma** marriage permits an alliance between a lower class woman and higher caste man, while the **pratiloma** marriage is an alliance between higher caste woman and a lower caste man. The former is referred to by the sociologists as hypergamy and the latter as hypogamy.

ii) Rules of exogamy among Hindus are very specific. Hindus are traditionally prohibited from marrying in their own gotra, pravara and sapinda (gotra, pravara and sapinda refer to a group of individuals assumed to have descended from a paternal or maternal ancestor and are variously termed as clan, sib or lineage). The Hindu Marriage Act (1955) forbids marriage between sapinda, and specifies that marriage between two persons related within five generations on the father's side and three on the mother's side is void, unless permitted by local custom.

The exogamic rule, prohibiting marriage between siblings (brother-sister) and parent-child is followed in virtually all societies. Sexual relations between the members of an elementary nuclear family (other than parents) are termed as incest.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Distinguish between monogamy and polygamy. Use about three lines.

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2) Write a brief note on endogamy and exogamy. Use about four lines.

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6.4 MATE SELECTION

The process whereby people choose marriage partners is called mate selection. While in some societies, individuals are relatively free to choose their mate from the 'field of eligibles', in some other societies those getting married have almost no say regarding whom they wish to marry. Even in the former situation individuals are not entirely free to choose their mates. Culture and social pressures, in subtle or explicit ways, do influence choice.

In all societies there is some notion of a 'good match'. Further, within endogamous limits also, certain relationships are preferred. Thus, mate selection is usually influenced by considerations of 'good match' and preferential mating.

In India, considerations of caste, religious and family background have traditionally been of great importance in selection of mates. In addition, looks of the girl and her competence as housewife, are also considered to be important. In urban middle class families, the earning capacity of the girl is also given considerable weightage, these days, in the selection of a bride.

6.4.1 Preferential Marriage

While some societies prohibit marriage between certain categories of relations (kins), other societies permit or even require certain kind of relatives to get married to. Thus marriage with particular cross cousins (father's, sister's or mother's brother's offsprings) are approved or permitted in many societies. Among Arabs and Muslims in India, marriage between parallel cousins (child of father's brother or mother's sister) is common. Possible reasons for permitting or preferring cousin marriages are: (a) family wealth is not dispersed as it remains within related family groups; and (b) relationships do not fade away as they are constantly renewed among offsprings of related families.

i) Marriage arrangements

In some societies, the decisions regarding mate selection are made by parents/ relatives; in some other societies individuals are relatively free to choose their own mates. Marriage arrangements thus tend to follow two patterns, namely, parent arranged (arranged marriage) and self-choice (love marriage)

ii) Arranged marriage

Traditional societies like India, where extended family network has been crucial, arranging marriage has been the concern of parents and elders. In additions, gains in terms of family prestige, economic prosperity and power (especially in affluent families) have also been sought through 'proper' marriage alliances. Consequently, marriage has been considered to be a serious matter which could not be left to the 'fancies' of the immature. As such, in traditional societies 'arranged' marriages have been the norm. Such marriages have also been unavoidable because in these societies there used to exist rigid sex-segregation, due to which marriageable young girls and boys could not come together and know one another. Even today, heterosexual intermingling is not widely prevalent, and young people especially girls, themselves, seem to prefer arranged marriages, which saves them from many psychological tensions which modern youth undergo in mary of the western societies.

However it should be remembered that arranged marriages are rarely forced marriages; the needs and preferences of the young people getting married are not entirely ignored.

6.4.2 Love Marriage

In the western urban-industrial method of mate selection, individuals go through the process of dating and courtship, they make selections, based on the consideration of feelings for one another. This is termed as 'love marriage' by Asians/Indians. For, in such marriages, mate choice is done by the individuals concerned on grounds of mutual affection and love, rather than on pragmatic considerations of social status, wealth or other familial advantages. These 'love marriages' stress the individual's supreme right to love and be loved in a romantic-sensual sense. Such love is considered as the essence of happiness in marriage.

There is an important difference between love marriage and arranged marriage. Whereas in the latter at the individual's level one has vague expectations from marriage (in fact, individuals enter into it primarily for performing their social duty), in self-choice marriage there are great expectations of happiness and companionship from one's partner in marriage. However, these are not very easy to attain and retain in day-to-day life after marriage, where practical problems of existence confront the couple. Mature personalities are able to adjust to this gap between dream and reality. The less mature find it difficult to adjust. At times the gap between fantasy of romantic love and exigencies of practical life is so wide that the strain becomes impossible to bear and marriage ends in a failure.

Evidently such marriages involve a risk, and since the partners entering such a union had not done so for familial or social reasons, the love marriage tends to be more fragile than the arranged marriage. Many of the love marriages become unstable not so much because of the mistaken selection but because of non-fulfilled expectations in marriage.

Activity 2

Try to arrange a debate cum discussion with students at your study centre on the topic of "Love Marriage Versus Arranged Marriage in the Contemporary Urban Society; and Why?" Request your Academic Counsellors to Co-ordinate the debate.

6.4.3 Mate Selection among Tribals

Though premarital relationships among tribals are tolerated, and self-selection is permitted, all regular marriages are parent arranged. Even marriage by 'capture' is effected, in some tribes, at the instance or connivance of parents. Irregular marriages are effected through elopement, intrusion or forcible application of vermilion, all of which are eventually accepted by the parents and the families concerned, as signifying wedlock. In practice various other forms of mate selection are in existence. The more important among these are discussed below.

i) **Selection by purchase and service**

Mate selection 'by purchase' is the most prevalent practice. In this. bride-price has to be paid to the girl's parents. The amount of bride-price rates from a nominal price (as in case of Regma Naga) to such a high price (as in case of Ho) that many young men and women have to remain unmarried.

Some tribes (Gond) have found a way out of the high bride-price. The would-be groom lives and works in his would-be father-in law's house as a suitor-servant for a number of years before he can ask for the girl's hand in marriage.

Another way of avoiding the payment of bride-price is through an exchange of girls/ women among eligible families.

ii) **Youth dormitories**

Tribes having youth dormitories provide a wide scope for the youth to choose their mates. Therefore, marriage by mutual consent with parents approval has been the general practice. Where parents object, elopement is a solution. Eventually the parents welcome the couple's return.

iii) **Selection by capture**

Mate selection 'by capture' has been a feature of Naga, Ho, Bhil and Gond tribes. Among Nagas, female infanticide was resorted to because of fear of raids for bride capturing. Among the Gond capture takes place often at the instance of parents of the bride and amongst the Ho it is prearranged. Besides physical capture, there is also a ceremonial capture. Among Central Indian tribes peaceful captures are effected on the occasion of certain inter village festivals.

iv) **Selection by trial**

Mate selection by trial also exists among some tribals. A young Bhil has to prove his prowess before he can claim the hand of any girl. This is generally done through a dance game. On Holi festival, young women dancers make a circle around a tree or pole on which a coconut and gud are tied. The men folk make an outer ring. The trial of strength begins when a young man attempts to break the inner circle in order to reach the tree/pole. The women resist his attempt with all their might; and in case the

man is able to reach the tree and eat the gud and break open the coconut. He can choose any girl from the surrounding inner circle, as his wife.

Cases are reported among some tribals, where a girl desirous of marrying an unwilling mate thrusts herself on him, bears all humiliations and harsh treatment till the man yields. Such a marriage is termed as marriage by intrusion.

In addition to the above-mentioned ways of mate selection, probationary marriages are also reported among the Kuki, who permit a young man and woman to live together at the girls home for some weeks, and then decide whether to get married or not. In case they decide to separate, the young man has to pay cash compensation to the girl's parents.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain what is meant by preferential marriage. Use about three lines for your answer.

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2) Explain with examples how mate selection is done among tribals. Use about three lines for your answer.

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6.5 CHANGES IN MARRIAGE

Industrialisation and urbanisation have ushered in changes which have profoundly affected the institution of marriage all over the world. While different societies, and within each society defferent groups, have responded differentially to industrialisation and urbanisation, nonetheless certain common trends in the changes affecting marriage are discernible.

6.5.1 Changes in the Forms of Marriage

Societies with traditions of plural marriages are turning towards monogamy. Due to the general improvement in the status of woman and her gradual emancipation from the clutches of male dominance, even in those societies where polygamy is permissible, incidence of polygamous marriages, and plurality of wives, are on the decrease. In India, the Hindu Marriage Act has banned both polygynous and polyandrous marriages. Even in a Muslim country like Pakistan, legislation was introduced making it necessary for the kazi to solemnize plural marriages only if the first wife gave her written consent. The trend towards monogamy has also been encouraged by the new idea of romantic love as the basis for marriage propogated by the western societies. It is a marriage in which one specific individual is considered to be the ideal partner.

However, it would perhaps be wrong to assume that this trend towards monogamy is also towards straight monogamy. While conditions in modern society have made marriage unstable and the marriage bond is revokable, individuals are willing to risk another marriage in order to find happiness. Parents and friends too are sympathetic in this matter. Hence, societies are likely to move towards the condition of serial monogamy, rather than maintain straight monogamy.

6.5.2 Changes in Mate Selection

In traditional societies like India, where mate selection was entirely a prerogative of parents and elders, a dent has been made. Young men and women are increasingly being given some say in the matter of mate selection. From a position in which they had no say whatsoever concerning whom they were to get married to, a stage has now come in which the concerned individuals are consulted and their consent obtained. In urban middle class families, sons and daughters have even come to enjoy the right to veto marriage proposals initiated by others. In the more advanced and enlightened urban families, parents are now giving opportunities to their children to become acquainted with prospective mates. "Dating" a practice in which a boy and a girl meet each other to get to know each other and enjoy themselves with relative freedom is a phenomenon which can be seen in different colleges and universities of predominantly metropolitan cities in India. It is again an imitation of the Western Society and is the result of exposure of people to Western culture to a far greater extent than it was earlier.

In India, mate selection through newspaper advertisement has become quite a popular practice among urban middle classes and the latest development is the reported harnessing of the services of computers in bringing potentially compatible mates together.

6.5.3 Changes in Age of Marriage

In India where, traditionally, child marriages were prescribed, preferred and encouraged, various efforts were made by social reformers to bring this practice to an end; accordingly, the Child Marriage Restraint Act, popularly known as the Sarda Act, was passed in1929. However, early marriage continues, in spite of the impact of modern industrialisation and urbanisation, especially among the rural people. In urban areas, too, there was a strong tendency to get a daughter married off as soon as possible.

But with increasing enrolment of girls in schools and colleges, and their desire to take up employment, along with the problems of 'settling down' in life for the vast majority of boys, the age at marriage is perforce being pushed up. Further, as part of its population policy, the Government has now prescribed the minimum age of marriage as 18 years for girls and 20 years for boys. In urban areas, however, marriages are now generally taking place beyond these prescribed minimum ages.

6.5.4 Changes in Marriage Rituals and Customs

Contemporary changes in India present us with a paradoxical situation. With greater intrusion of technology and science, it was expected that a secular-scientific outlook would emerge and, consequently, the non-essential rituals and customs have always pleaded for avoiding of wasteful expenditures on meaningless customs and rituals. But observation indicates that, contrary to the expectations of enlightened people, marriages in India are tending to become more traditional insofar as the ritual-custom complex is concerned. Today, there is a revival of many rituals and customs, which, soon after independence, appeared to have become weak. To an extent, this revival is a function of affluence. Many people in society have a lot of money to spend lavishly on weddings, and there is a tendency among the not-so affluent to imitate the affluent.

6.5.5 Changes in Marriage : Goals and Stability

It was seen earlier that procreation has been the most important function of marriage in traditional societies. In all communities, a large number of children, bestowed higher status upon parents and among Hindus sons were particularly desired. Thus, a large-sized family was one of the cherished goals of marriage, and the blessings showered upon the bridal couple included good wishes for several children.

But modern conditions of life have made a large family burdensome; in fact, even those with three or four children are being disfavoured.

Several developing Countries are seized of the problems that exploding populations can cause and are, therefore, committed to encouraging the small family norm. Restriction of family size is the declared official policy of many of these. India, in fact, was the first country to adopt an official family planning programme. In those Asian and African countries where there are democratic governments, through vigorous education efforts, citizens are being made to realise and accept the advantages of limited procreation.

China has also adopted a very strict population control programmes which involves certain disincentives and punishments for couples that do not restrict procreation.

All these efforts are gradually influencing the values of people in India, and other countries. It is being realised that it is better to have about two healthy and well-cared for children than a large number who cannot be adequately fed, clothed or looked after.

As procreation, and along with it parenting role, are tending to become less important, other functions like companionship and emotional support from the spouse and children are becoming the more important goals of marriage. In fact, the younger people today are entering matrimony for happiness and personal fulfilment.

The conditions causing marital instability are likely to worsen rather than improve in the future. Our outlook, values and ideals pertaining to marriage are also undergoing change. What then is the future of marriage? Predictions concerning social life are difficult and risky. But, there appears to be little chance that marriage, as a major event in individual and social life will ever be given up and abandoned. If evidence from western societies is any guide, high rates of divorce will not automatically deter people from getting married. Notwithstanding marital instability, the individual's quest for finding happiness in marriage will continue.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Use space below for your answer.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Comment briefly upon changes in the forms of marriage. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Describe how the goals and stability of marriage are changing. Use about five lines for your answer.

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6.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit various practices related to the institution of marriage were discussed. We have presented the institution and forms of marriage early in the unit. These indicate the wide differences in marriage practices and procedures. Our discussions on mate selections indicate that society and social rules are based upon different aspects of marriage. In many cases marriage happens within a very narrow choice. Finally we have indicated how marriage as an institution has been changing. This shows that marriage itself is a dynamic institution, always undergoing modification.

6.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Gore, M.S., 1965. *"The Traditional Indian Family"* in M.F. Nimkoff (ed.), *Comparative Family Systems*, Houghton-Mifflin: Boston.

2) Kapadia, K.M., 1966. *Marriage and Family in India*, Oxford University Press: Mumbai.

6.8 KEY WORDS

Endogamy : When marriage is within a specific caste, class or tribal group.

Exogamy : When marriage occurs outside a certain group of relations.

Monogamy : When marriage involves one husband and one wife alone.

Polygamy : When marriage involves more than one mate at one time.

Polyandry : When more than one man is married to a woman.

Polygyny : When more than one woman is married to a man.

6.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) In monogamy there is one husband and one wife. In polygamy there is more than one mate at one time. Polygamy has two sub-types: polyandry and polygyny.

2) Endogamy requires that a person marries within a clearly defined group. He or she is forbidden to marry outside it. Exogamy requires that a person marries outside a particular group. There is a certain group within which a person should not marry.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Preferential marriage refers to that type of marriage, which defines, whom we should marry. Such marriages are common in South Indian (Cross cousins) and among Muslims (Parallel cousins)

2) Mate selection among tribals is done in several ways. These include; (i) by purchase of bride, (ii) youth dormitories; (iii) selection by capture of bride; (iv) by athletic trial of bridegrooms.

Check Your Progress 3

1) The forms of marriage are undergoing change. Societies with a tradition of plural marriage are turning towards monogamy. In this way women's place in marriage has improved. However, remarriage for another partner is now acceptable. Thus, serial monogamy is becoming a generally accepted practice.

2) In earlier times marriage had procreation as one of the main objectives. Today the goal is a small family and the drive is to restrict family size. Couples are now entering marriage with the hope of personal and emotional fulfilment. This makes for very high expectations on the part of both, husband and wife.

UNIT 7 KINSHIP

Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Significance of Kinship

7.3 Basic Concepts of Kinship

- 7.3.1 The Principles of Descent
- 7.3.2 Types of Descent
- 7.3.3 Functions of Descent Groups
- 7.3.4 Inheritance Rules
- 7.3.5 Rules of Residence
- 7.3.6 Patriarchy and Matriarchy

7.4 Descent Systems - Further Details

- 7.4.1 Patrilineal Descent
- 7.4.2 Matrilineal Descent
- 7.4.3 Nayars of Kerala: An Illustration
- 7.4.4 Other Matrilineal Communities

7.5 Kinship in India

7.6 Let Us Sum Up

7.7 Further Readings

7.8 Key words

7.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this unit you should be able to describe:

- the significance of kinship;
- the basic concepts of kinship;
- the principles of descent;
- the types of descent; and
- kinship system in India.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will be giving you the basic aspects of kinship. We explain the significance of kinship in social life. We then define the basic concepts of kinship. These include the concepts of descent, inheritance, residence rules and so on. Next we take up descent systems, including the patrilineal and the matrilineal systems. Finally, we deal with kinship modes in India. This unit provides a broad idea about the concept of kinship.

7.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF KINSHIP

The kinship system refers to a set of persons recognised as relatives, either by virtue of a blood relationship technically called consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship, that is through what is called affinity.

Most of us tend to regard the kinship system into which we are born and in which we are reared as natural. It will seem natural and right to us that certain close relatives should be tabooed as marriage and sexual partners, and we feel quite certain that disastrous consequences would follow any infringement of the taboos. We may similarly think it natural that certain classes of persons be preferred as marriage partners, or we may on the contrary think it very unnatural that any persons be so designated.

We all have very strong ideas, too, about what is the correct and proper behaviour of different kin towards each other-deference, respect, familiarity, avoidance, kindliness, protectiveness, and so on, as the case may be. All such aspects of kinship relations tend to be taken for granted unless, or until, one is confronted with the kinship practices of other peoples. Initially, different practices may appear as disgusting or inhuman, exotic or fantastic, strange or primitive, etc. Earlier anthropologists spent a great deal of labour on trying to work out the various stages through which they believed kinship systems had progressed in the course of human history. However strange other peoples' kinship practices may at first appear to be, a closer look will usually show them to be functional. They are useful for the maintenance of the society as a whole, contributing to its continuity over time and containing the conflicts that might potentially disrupt it.

This is not to say that all practices are for the best for all members of the society and for all time. One certainly need not justify customs like sati, female infanticide, child marriage, amniocentesis or killing of the female foetus etc. One would here try to understand how these practices are (or were) consistent with the principles and values at work in the wider society.

7.3 BASIC CONCEPTS OF KINSHIP

We have already made the general point that kinship relations are the outcome of the cultural interpretation of relations given in nature, and discussed some of the different ways in which sociologists have looked at the kinship system. In doing so, we have indirectly introduced some of the basic terms and concepts in kinship studies, which we will now set out more systematically. You certainly do not need to memorise this rather overwhelming set of technical terms, but you should try to understand the basic principles and distinctions that these key terms seek to convey.

7.3.1 The Principles of Descent

Descent is the principle whereby a child is socially affiliated with the group of his or her parents. In some societies the child is regarded as a descendant equally of both the father and the mother, except that titles and surnames are usually passed down along the male line. Such a system is termed Bilateral or Cognatic. The individual belongs simultaneously to several descent groups - those of the two parents, the four grandparents, the eight great-grandparents, and so on. This link is limited only by memory or by some conventionally determined cut-off point at, say, four or five degrees removal. In small intermarrying communities, membership will probably overlap, and in case of dispute or feud, the individual might find his or her loyalties divided. There are some cognatic systems where the individual has the right by descent to membership of several cognatically recruited groups, but this right is actualised only if the person is able to reside in a particular group's territory. Modern nationality laws often make this type of requirement.

7.3.2 Types of Descent

In other societies, by contrast and your own is most probably one of them-descent is reckoned UNILINEALLY, that is, in one line only. The child is affiliated **either** with the group of the father, that is, PATRILINEAL DESCENT, or with the group of the mother, that is, MATRILINEAL DESCENT. Theories of the physiology of procreation

and conception often correlate with these different modes of reckoning descent. In the former, the father is often given the primary role in procreation while the mother is regarded as merely the carrier of the child; in systems of the latter type the father's role may not be acknowledged at all.

Additionally, in some societies one finds that the child is affiliated to the group of either parent, depending on choice, or to one parent for some purposes (for instance, inheritance of property) and to the other parent for other purposes (for instance, the inheritance of ritual or ceremonial roles). This is called DOUBLE UNILINEAL DESCENT.

The principle of unilineal descent provides the individual an unambiguous identification with a bounded social group that exists before he or she is born and that has continuity after he or she dies. Members of a descent group have a sense of shared identity, often referring to each other as 'brother ' and 'sister' even when no genealogical relationship can be traced. Descent groups are also very often, (though not inevitably), characterised by exogamy. That is, marriage must be with persons outside this group. For instance, traditional Chinese society was divided among approximately a hundred 'surname' groups-you could perhaps call them CLANS-within which marriage was disallowed, and these groups further divided into LINEAGES, whose members claimed to be able to trace their descent, perhaps for several hundred year, form a founding ancestor, and then into further localised SUBLINEAGES and so on down to the individual co-resident families. Sometimes a whole village might be settled by members of a single lineage. The gotras of Indian caste society are also exogamous descent groups, segmented in rather the same way.

Activity 1

Interview or discuss with some members of your family and prepare a chart indicating five generations of your family on your fathers' side or mothers' side whichever is relevant to you. Write a note of one page on "The kinship structure of My Family". Discuss your note with other students and Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

7.3.3 Functions of Descent Groups

Apart from the function of exogamy, unilineal descent groups tend to be 'corporate' in several other senses. Their members may often come together for ritual and ceremonial functions, for instance, for collective worship of lineage gods, totems or ancestors. The descent group will have a built-in authority structure, with power normally exercised by senior males, and it may well own corporate property. An individual's economic rights and responsibilities will be defined by his or her position in the descent group. In many societies unilineal descent groups are also jural units, internally deciding their own disputes, and externally acting as a unified group in the conduct of feud, etc. For this reason, lineage structure is often coterminous with the political structure in societies lacking a centralised state structure.

Lineages cannot expand indefinitely in a single locality and often segment into smaller, more manageable and economically viable lineage segments. You can see the lines of segmentation of the ground, as it were. Consider the pattern of land ownership in an Indian village; or at the pattern of village or urban settlement; a particular quarter of the village or town may be inhabited by the descendants of a single founding ancestor. Often, the large **havelis** divide among brothers or step-brothers, and these quarters are further divided among their descendants. In case a line dies out, the property would be reconsolidated.

Given the range of social functions that descent groups may potentially perform, it is little wonder that concern with the principles of unilineal descent has dominated the work of many students of comparative kinship. However, even these scholars realise that unilineal descent is not the whole story. In ancient Rome, women after marriage severed all contact with their natal group. In certain slave societies, the slave has no 'family' of his or her own. In patrilineal systems, the mother's father, mother's sister, and especially the mother's brother, are important relationships which need further discussion. To take note of the importance of relationships, the scholars have identified another principle. This has been termed the principle of COMPLEMENTARY FILIATION which explains the significant ritual and social roles of the mother's brother(s) in the lives of their sister's children. It reminds us that, in most societies, an individual is a child of both parents, however descent is formally reckoned.

7.3.4 Inheritance Rules

Rules of inheritance tend to co-ordinate with the reckoning of descent in most societies, but not necessarily in a one-to-one manner. In fact, it is quite often the case that certain types of property pass from father to son, and other types form mother to daughter. In most parts of India, in the past, immovable property such as land and housing, was inherited only by sons. In the absence of sons, except under rare circumstances, by the nearest male relatives on the father's side. One the other hand, movable property in the form of cash and jewellery was given to the daughter at the time of her marriage, with a certain amount of jewellery also passing from the mother-in-law to the daughter-in-law.

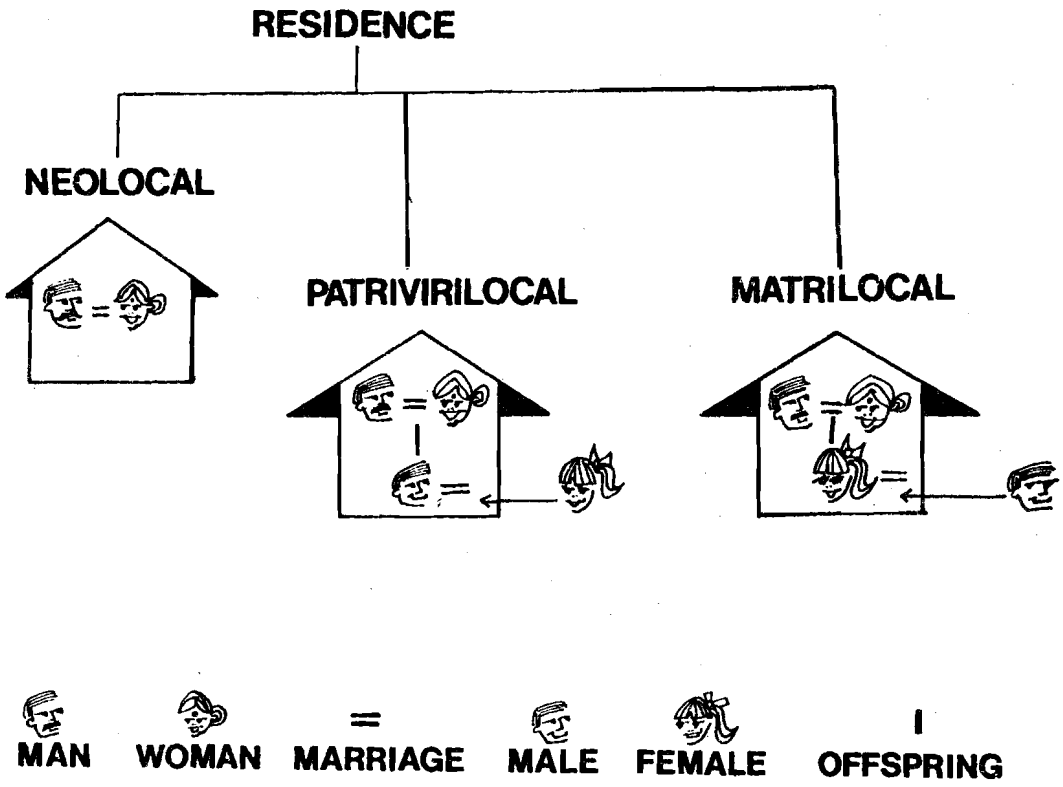
In addition to property of various kinds, rights and obligations, esoteric knowledge, crafts and skills, etc., might be passed on in accordance with kinship roles, succession to office to chieftainship, kingship, etc.-and to other social roles and statuses, is also very often determined by kinship criteria. In such cases, the individual's status is said to be 'ascribed', not 'achieved'. It is commonly asserted that ascriptive status of modern, industrial societies. There is a great deal of truth in this statement, but one should not underestimate the importance of kinship connections in modern societies too. Often one finds that in a family if father is a doctor or lawyer the son or daughter is also likely to choose the same occupation. Most of the Indian women who have been successful in the political domain are either daughters, sisters or wives of people who have been active in politics. One such example is the Nehru family of India.

7.3.5 Rules of Residence

Rules of residence, meaning residence after marriage, are an important variable in a kinship system, and substantially affect the quality of personal relations within the kin network. If husband and wife set up their own independent home after marriage, as is usually the case in modern western society, residence is said to be NEOLOCAL.Where the wife goes to live with the husband in his parents' home, residence is described as VIRILOCAL, PATRILOCAL, or PATRIVIRILOCAL, and where the husband moves to live with the wife, it is termed MATRILOCAL or Rules of residence may or may not 'harmonise' with the rules of descent. On the whole, patrilineal descent systems correlate with either neolocal or patrivirilocal residence patterns. However, matrilineal descent systems may be combined with all three types of residence. It is also combined with what is called AVUNCULOCAL residence, that is, residence with the mother's brother.

ILLUSTRATION : 1 different types of Residence

(i) Neolocal (ii) Patrivirilocal (iii) Matrilocal



Legend:

7.3.6 Patriarchy and Matriarchy

A society is said to have a patriarchal structure when a number of factors coincide, i.e. when descent is reckoned patrilineally, when inheritance of major property is from father to son, when residence is patrilocal, and when authority is concentrated in the hands of senior males. There is, however, no society on earth, nor any society actually known to have existed, whose features are the exact reverse of these. For even in matrilineal, matrilocal systems, which are fairly rare, major property is usually controlled by males. And authority is normally exercised by males, though women may well have a higher status in the family and greater powers of decision-making than in the patriarchal set up. Some anthropologists assert that in societies with very simple technology and minimal property, relations between the sexes are relatively egalitarian, whether descent is formally matrilineal, patrilineal or bilateral, but others insist that women, and children, have played subordinate roles in all human societies.

For this reason, the term 'matriarchy', though often found in the literature, is probably a misnomer, best avoided, and there is certainly no conclusive evidence to support the view that matriarchy was a universal early stage in the development of kinship systems.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the principle of descent? Explain in one line.

.....

.....

2) Explain the types of descent. Use about three lines for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

7.4 DESCENT SYSTEMS-FURTHER DETAILS

The patrilineal descent systems of India have many of the features noted in similar groups elsewhere. A boy at birth becomes a member of his descent group, and a coparcener (partner) in a joint estate. A girl, by contrast, is only a residual member of her natal group: at marriage she is incorporated into her husband's descent group and ultimately (i.e. after her death) offered worship by their male descendants. Residence, as we have already noted, is usually partilocal.

The descent group may participate in joint rituals such as the worship of certain deities and ancestor worship, and will observe mourning restrictions, in various degrees, following a death in the family. It may also own a certain amount of common property. Immovable property such as land and housing is inherited in the male line only (of course, we are speaking here of the traditional system, before the several changes sought to be brought about by post-independence legislation). Whereas daughters are given goods, cash and jewellery as 'dowry' at the time of marriage. The descent group has an in built authority structure based on generation and age. Senior members have the authority to settle disputes within the kin group, and to represent the group in its dealing with outsiders.

7.4.1 Patrilineal Descent

Taken together, the above mentioned features approach the 'patriarchal' model of society. This has patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence, inheritance from father to son, and authority in the hands of seniors as against juniors, and males as against females. A number of social practices testify to the fact that a woman's only legitimate roles are those of wife and mother. Spinsterhood and widowhood are inauspicious and unenviable conditions. A girl is regarded as merely a guest in her natal home and, initially at least, as a rather threatening outsider in her marital home. The poignancy of the transition between these two locales and these two statuses is captured in folklore and folksongs with which you are probably familiar.

The patrilineal systems of the south are not so markedly patriarchal as those of the north. Also a woman after marriage continues to have materially and psychologically important relations with members of her natal group. This is more so with her parents and her brothers, and the residual right to maintenance in their estate in adverse circumstances. And in many other partilineal systems, the mother's brothers have significant ritual and social roles in the lives of their sister's children, and an especially tender and affectionate relationship with them.

Further modifying the starkly 'patriarchal' picture a number of social anthropologists, speaking comparatively, have also drawn attention to the fairly substantial property that devolves on a daughter at her marriage. Others, however, insist that this property cannot be considered as a daughter's 'inheritance', comparable to that of the son, since the greater portion of it is neither owned nor controlled by the girl in her own right. It is really a form of 'bridegroom price', that is, an enticement to the groom's family as part of the settlement of the marriage contract. However, equal rights of inheritance by both son and daughter in one's father's or mother's self made property is recognised and same states have even introduced it in their legislation,

7.4.2 Matrilineal Descent

Matrilineal descent systems, of which there are several well-known examples in south-western and north-eastern India, have their own distinctive characteristics. Empirically you never find matrilineal systems that are an exact inverse of the patrilineal-patriarchal model which we have already described and which is fairly well approximated by the patrilineal descent systems of north and south (but especially north) India. The reason is quite simple: whatever the descent system, that is, matrilineal, patrilineal or indeed bilateral, authority is usually exercised by males, only in extremely simple societies one comes across a fair degree of mutual inter-dependence between males and females. Also, though rights in property might be determined by the principles of matrilineal descent (for instance, passing from mother to daughter or from mother's brother to sister's son rather than from father to son as in patrilineal societies), major property is usually controlled (if not actually owned) by males.

For obvious reasons, residence arrangements are problematic in matrilineal societies. A man may not have authority over his own children, who belong to his wife's descent group and who may also reside after maturity with their mother's brother. Conversely, in cases where the husband customarily resides with his wife and children, he may have difficulty managing the property in which he has an interest by virtue of descent, and in exercising authority over his sister's children. In other words, there seems to be some sort of contradiction in matrilineal kinship systems, brought out in the dilemma over residence, between a man's role as father and his role as mother's brother. His natural love for his own children might easily come into conflict with his special jural responsibilities towards his sister's children.

7.4.3 Nayars of Kerala: An Illustration

Among the matrilineal Nayars of Kerala, formerly, men resided in large and matrilineally recruited joint families, called **taravad,** along with their sisters, sister's children and sister's daughter's children. They visited their wives in other **taravads** at night (this is why the system has been popularly called the 'visiting husband' system). Their own children resided with their mother in their mother's **taravad.** In this system the bond between brother and sister was strongly emphasised, and the bond between husband and wife correspondingly de-emphasised, this is more so because Nayar women could legitimately have a number of visiting husbands (polyandry), provided they were of the correct status (i.e. higher status Nayars or Namboodiri Brahmans). Also, Nayar men could have a number of wives (polygyny). In fact, the marital bond was so minimised among the Nayars that anthropologists have debated endlessly whether Nayar society had the institution of marriage at all! Anthropologists have also cited that the Nayar system disproves the proposition that the elementary or nuclear family is a "universal" human institution. The details of these debates need not detain us here. Indeed, the unique institutions and customs described by the anthropologists no longer exist and have not existed for generations, but the Nayar case is a useful one for illustrating the types of tensions that seem to be coming into matrilineal systems. They had a rather unique way of coping with what anthropologists have called 'the matrilineal puzzle'. Effectively they ensured the unity of the matrilineal at the expense of the solidarity of the marital bond between husband and wife.

7.4.4 Other Matrilineal Communities

There are many other matrilineal communities in India whose kinship organisation is rather different to that of the Nayars. For instance, the Khasis of Assam are matrilineal in descent, inheritance and succession, and practise matrilocal residence. The youngest daughter is the heiress, and lives in her mother's house alone with her husband and her children. The older daughter however may move out of the matrilineal household on marriage and make new nuclear families; their husbands have greater independent

authority than does the husband of the youngest daughter still residing martrilocally. The Garo, also of Assam, have yet another arrangement. Marriage is matrilocal for the husband of the daughter who becomes the head of the household and its manager. A rule of preferential cross-cousin marriage ensures that a man is succeeded in this position by his sister's son in an ongoing alliance relationship between the two linked lineages.

Earlier anthropologists, working within an evolutionary framework, had maintained that the matrilineal descent systems are the surviving traces of an earlier matriarchal or 'mother-right' stage in the development of human kinship organisation, and that these would automatically give way to patriarchal and then bilateral models. There is no conclusive evidence that this has happened or is currently happening. At least in the Nayar case it appears that the decline of the Nayar **taravad** over the last century has given rise to a wide variety of residential patterns in the area, and it has become exactly like the patrilineal groups in their neighbourhood.

Sociologists and anthropologists continue to find matrilineal descent groups of special interest, not only because of the ramifications of the 'matrilineal puzzle', referred to above, but also because issues concerning the status of women or gender relations have come very much to the fore in recent years. It may be, as we have stated, that males have authority and exercise control over property in both patrilineal and matrilineal societies, but most scholars working on matrilineal societies, and the members of these societies themselves, feel that there is nonetheless a qualitative difference in the status of women in matrilineal, as against patrilineal, societies.

Activity 2

Think about emergency situation in your own family, such as, economic crises, death, birth etc. Try to recall the people from whom your sought help and how these people were linked with you. Write a report on "kinship in my Family/ Community" and discuss it with other students at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use space below for your answers.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief note on the patriarchal model of society. Use about three lines for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

2) Explain matrilineal descent. Use about two lines for your answer.

.....

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7.5 KINSHIP IN INDIA

From your general knowledge, what would you say are the distinctive features of kinship in the north and south of India? Almost everyone, spontaneously, thinks of the different rules of marriage, and of the kinship practices that derive from these. We will now briefly enumerate here the sort of contrasts that Iravati Karve, the famous sociologist, had described.

In the Southern Zone, you usually find a preference for marriage with certain categories of close kin, in particular with one or the other or both of the cross-cousins (but never parallel cousins), or even with the elder sister's daughter. On the whole, the inter-marrying groups are of comparable status. Though the actual marriage relationship might give rise to a temporary inferiority of wife-givers in relations to wife-takers. The marriage will probably involve groups which are geographically quite proximate-even from the same village-and the bride will already be familiar with her in-laws. You don't really expect a young bride to be badly treated by her mother-in-laws if that woman is also her aunt or her maternal grandmother!

In north India, by contrast, marriages are never between persons who are already closely related. A rule of village exogamy also ensures that brides are given to and taken from other villages or towns, often at a considerable distance. The bride therefore comes to her husband's family as a 'stranger'. She will always be suspected of trying to alienate her husband's affections, and will usually be blamed for the break up of the joint family, should a partition subsequently take place. The distinction between 'daughters' and 'brides' is very sharply emphasised in this system (think of the practice of veiling), and the new bride's position is relatively vulnerable, unless and until she becomes the mother of a son. In this region it is also often the case that marriages unite groups whose social status is already unequal, the wife-givers being of inferior status to the wife-takers (hypergamy), while the marriage transaction commonly (though again not invariably) takes the form of a 'dowry' payment. However legally taking dowry or giving it, both have become illegal offences punishable by the state. But, in reality it continues to affect a large category of people in India. Even other religions, such as, Muslims, Christians and SC/STs are getting influenced by it. All in all, we have in this combination of features the social-structural locale of also such practices as levirate marriage, sati, female infanticide and, lately, 'bride-burning' or dowry deaths.

Box 7.1

In 1980 the government of India began to take notice of the issue of dowry as oppression against women and took legal action against it. In December 1983 the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act was passed. Section 498-A was added to the Indian Penal Code. Under this Act cruelty to a wife was made a cognisable non-bailable offence, punishable up to three years imprisonment, and a fine. Section 113-A of the Evidence Act was amended so that court could draw an inference of abetement to suicide (which most dowry deaths are claimed to be) under section 174 of the Criminal Procedure Code. (IGNOU: 2000, WED Programme, WED-01, pp. 34)

Other differences between the northern and southern systems noted by Iravati Karve (and others) relate to the rules of descent, inheritance and marriage. In brief, the northern zone is universally patrilineal, though patrilineal systems are also found among different communities in the southern or dravidian zone, along with a variety of residence patterns. We should add here that there are a number of important matrilineal groups (for instance the Khasis and the Garos) in north-eastern India (eastern zone) as well.

Of course, the division of the kinship may develop into major culture areas zones can give only a very crude idea of the salient variations in kinship practices throughout the subcontinent. A more precise picture emerges when one considers the sub-regional varieties corresponding to the different regional languages and dialects. In analysing these regional kinship systems, scholars pay attention not only to kinship terminologies and to the way the people concerned speak about kinship relations and about the moral obligations that stem from them, but also to the data of ritual practices, gift exchanges folklore and other forms of cultural communication.

7.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have provided information about kinship. We have shown quite clearly that kinship is significant to society. Moreover we have clearly indicated that the basic kinship concepts like descent, inheritance and residence are important in all societies. We also showed how patrilineal and matrilineal system are aspects of descent systems. Finally kinship in India was examined in this unit. This unit therefore provides adequate information about various aspects of kinship.

7.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Faber, Bernard (ed.), 1966. *Kinship and Family Organisation,* Johan Wiley and Sons: New York.

2) Fox, Robin 1967, *Kinship and Marriage*. Penguin Books : New York.

7.8 KEY WORDS

Consanguinity : The principle of recognising kinship by virtue of blood relationships.

Affinity : The principle of recognising relationship through marriages.

Descent : The system of deriving relationships from an ancestor.

Bilateral or Cognatic : The system of descent in which a child is recognised as a descendant equally of both the father and the mother.

Unilineal : The system of descent in which relationship with the ancestor is recognised in one line only, i.e. either of father or of mother.

Double unilineal : The system of descent in which the child is affiliated to the group of either parent.

Patrilineal : Implies that descent is traced from the father's side.

Matrilineal : Where descent is traced from the mother's side.

Patriarchal : Where the father is the main authority in the family.

Complementary filiation : The principle which explains the significant ritual and social role of mother's brother in a patrilineal society.

7.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Descent is the principle by which a person traces his/her ancestors.

2) The following is the list of the types of descent:
   i) unilineal descent including (a) patrilineal descent (b) matrilineal descent.
   ii) double-unilineal descent
   iii) bilateral or cognatic descent.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The patriarchal model of society combines (i) patrilineal descent; (ii) patrilocal residence; (iii) inheritance from father to son; (iv) authority in the hands of senior males.

2) In matrilineal descent, though, inheritance goes through the mother to daughter, major property is controlled by males and authority is also exercised by males.

REFERENCES

References, cited in Block II. (These and other works are given here for those students who wish to follow certain points in detail.)

Beattie, J., 1964. *Other Cultures: Aims, Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology,* **Reutledge and Kegan Paul: London, Chapters 7 and 8, pp. 93-138.**

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Murdoch, P.G., 1949. *Social Structure.* **Macmillan: New York. Chapters 6 and 7, pp. 91-183.**

UNIT 8 NATURE OF SOCIALISATION

Structure

8.0 Objectives

8.1 Introduction

8.2 What is Socialisation?

- 8.2.1 Shared Meanings and Values
- 8.2.2 Education and Socialisation

8.3 Socialisation: Norms and Values

- 8.3.1 Transmission of Knowledge
- 8.3.2 Conformity

8.4 Conscious and Unconscious Socialisation

- 8.4.1 Explicit and Implicit Directions
- 8.4.2 Behaviour Patterns

8.5 Role and Socialisation

- 8.5.1 Primary and Secondary Socialisation
- 8.5.2 Child and Adult Socialisation

8.6 Re-socialisation

- 8.6.1 Marital Re-socialisation
- 8.6.2 Attitudinal Change
- 8.6.3 Extensive and Intensive Socialisation

8.7 Anticipatory Socialisation

8.8 Let Us Sum Up

8.9 Further Readings

8.10 Key Words

8.11 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

8.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe the process of socialisation of human infants to become members of their society;
- explain distinctive features of socialisation that takes place in different social settings; and
- analyse types of socialisation.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall discuss various aspects of socialisation. It begins with the process and concept of socialisation and discusses its aims and functions. Among the important aspects of this unit is a discussion on types of socialisation. This includes conscious and unconscious socialisation and socialisation into role playing, anticipatory socialisation and re-socialisation. This unit, thereby, provides an in-depth view of the nature of socialisation.

8.2 WHAT IS SOCIALISATION?

All societies are concerned with the question: "How are the raw products or the human infants born into the society to be transformed into workable human objects or trained to

become members of their societies?" The human infant is born as a biological organism with only animal needs and impulses. It learns to control bowel movements and regulate hunger as it grows up because the child has an inborn capacity to learn and to communicate.

Gradually it also learns the group-defined ways of acting and feeling. The process through which it learns to internalise the values and norms into its self or the mode of learning to live in society is called the process of socialisation. to internalise is to absorb something within the mind so deeply that it becomes part of the person's behaviour, e.g., good manners. Therefore, socialisation is basically the learning of social values and roles by its members. In other words., most human behaviour is learned. It is not spontaneous.

Social scientists have referred to this capacity of the child to learn and to internalise as the plasticity of human nature. This capacity to learn is realised through socialisation; and human infants develop into adequate members of human societies through the training received in the family. This development is largely a process of learning. Therefore, we would like to stress the point that what are known as seemingly inborn attitudes are determined and moulded through the process of socialisation or learning of social norms, values, attitudes beliefs and behaviour patterns.

8.2.1 Shared Meanings and Values

The socialisation of the young means that they learn to appreciate the shared meanings and values of the culture at large or take them and that as guides to direct behaviour patterns in their own life. As the young child grows, he or she learns to utilise role-learning so as to internalise what to expect from other people and how to produce for them what is expected of children. A child learns to recognise and to respond to the shared meanings and expectations from others only through the process of socialisation.

The process of socialisation begins at birth. It is a continuous process because social learning never ends. However, childhood is the most important stage in the process of socialisation during which a child internalises or learns most of the values, beliefs, norms, attitudes and behaviour patterns of its family. The parents can be viewed as the socialising agents and the child as the socialise. "Parents are usually the most potent socialising force working on the individual in the early stages of childhood. Both consciously and unconsciously they push the child in certain directions disposing him to learn in a particular way." (White, G. 1977 : 1) It is viewed by sociologists as a continuous and dynamic process that continues throughout life and demands re-socialisation (discussed in 8-6) at different stages of one's life.

Thus, from the point of view of society, socialisation trains a child to become a member of a society by transmitting its norms, values and beliefs. It also transforms the biological organism into a self, with a sense of identity, capable of disciplining and ordering behaviour endowed with ideals, values and ambitions. However, socialisation regulates behaviour, it is also an indispensable condition for individuality and self-awareness (Broom and Selznick, 1955 : 43).

Activity 1

Do you think a boy and a girl are socialised in the same way in your family/kin group? If not, then why? Write an essay on "Gender Difference and Socialisation in My Family" in about 500 words. Share your ideas and essay with other students and Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

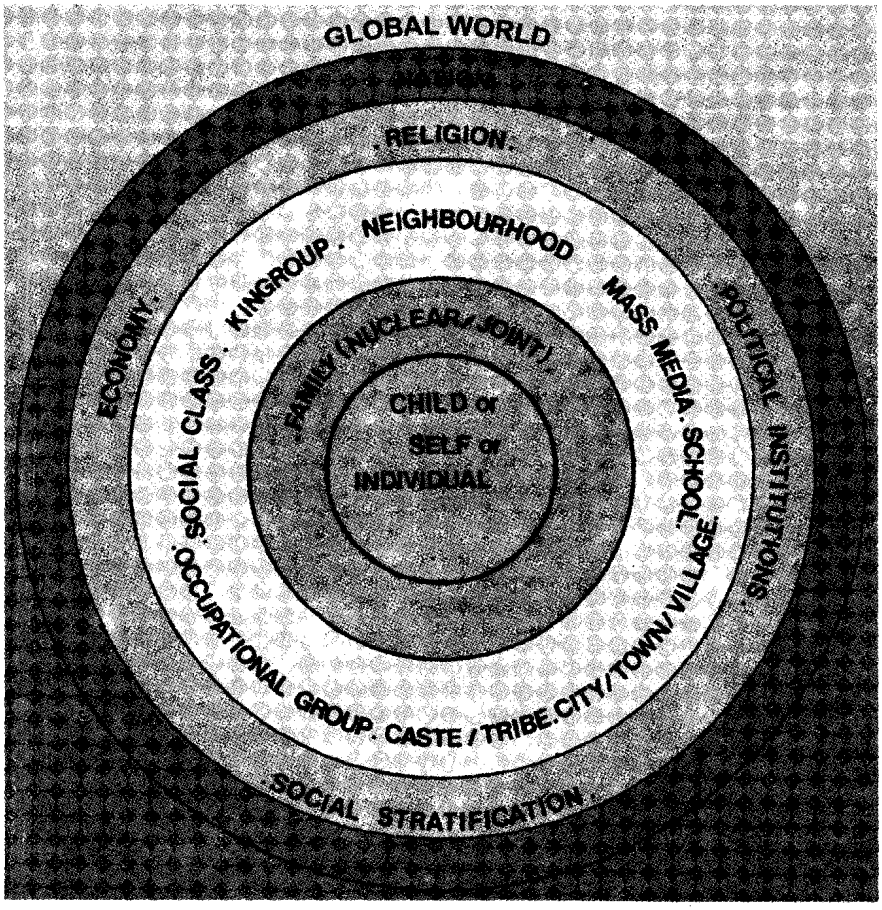
8.2.2 Education and Socialisation

In some societies, especially in tribal societies, the education and socialisation of the young takes place without extensive formal educational institutions. However, education as a process of learning is universal and takes place everywhere whether one lives in a city, village, and jungle or in a desert. The universality of learning however, does not mean that all learning is socialisation just as all education is not socialisation.

We may also mention that all learning is not socialisation since some of what one learns may not be relevant or necessary for participation in given social roles. One could give the example of, learning to smoke cigarette, cigar, etc. which may be irrelevant to that norms of participation in the given social roles among certain social groups. However, the process by

which individuals acquire these values and norms (these are also referred to as culture) is in many ways similar in all societies. They may differ from society to society and according to certain factors within specific societies.

A child, in the first instance, is a member of a family. But he or she is also a member of a larger kin-group (Biradri, Khandan etc.) consisting of brothers, sisters and other relatives of the parents. The family into which he or she is born my be a nuclear family or an extended family (for the difference see Unit 5 of this course). It is also a member of a larger society. Membership of these groups and institutions imposes certain behavioural norms and values on each member. Thus, we are members of various groups simultaneously. For instance, we are a member of family, a biradri, a khandan, or a kunba, or a society, of a school or college all at the same time. Corresponding to these memberships there are roles that are performed, e.g., that of a son, daughter, grand child or a student. These are multiple roles which are performed simultaneously. The process of learning the norms, attitudes, values or behavioural patterns of these groups begins early in life and continues throughout one's life.



Nature of Socialisation

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain in three lines what is meant by socialisation.

.....

.....

.....

8.3 SOCIALISATION: NORMS AND VALUES

The norms, and values may differ within a society in different families belonging to different castes, regions or social classes or religious groups according to whether one lives in a

village or in a city or one belongs to a tribe and whether one is a boy or girl. These social groups can be viewed as socialising agencies. Their role confirms that the variation in norms and values takes place according to some of these affiliations mentioned above. For example, emphasis on cleanliness may vary according to social class. Also the language that one speaks depends on the region one belongs to. A child is not born knowing a particular language but learns it after birth. Again, some people do not eat meat altogether or abstain only from beef or pork according to the religious groups they belong to. Thus the same human infant is capable of growing into different kinds of adults. The adult personality formed in one society will be different from that of an adult in another society: he or she may be unfit for participation in many others. For example, a person who does not eat meat, smoke or drink alcohol may look odd in a family where all these are permitted. Is socialisation a one way process in which the child merely receives from the parents passively without being actively involved in it? There are different views on it. However, in this unit, our position is that it is a two-way process involving mutuality of interaction. True, the young child is not as active as the adult member, it is never a passive receiver.

What we have emphasised so far is that the aim of the socialisation process is to help the child learn to conform to the societal norms, values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour patterns. Here when we refer to societal expectation, it means that there are various levels of expectation. When the individual is born, the first societal experience is through the family but as the child grows up in the modern contemporary societies, his/her experiences expand. It becomes a member of a number of agencies. The school is the second agency of which children become members. Later on they will also become members of the religious groups to which their parents belong. They will also be members of the social classes to which their families belong. They will also become members of the occupational groups. The specific aim of socialisation is to help the child to internalise these norms and become an active member of the society.

A child is integrated into the society in the manner discussed above. Therefore, socialisation is the process of social control to strengthen group life and also to foster the development of the individual. It teaches or trains the individual to conform to the expectations of the social group or groups. Thus, conformity to the group norms and behaviour is basic to the process of socialisation through which society exerts social control on the individual members.

8.3.1 Transmission of Knowledge

According to Emile Durkheim, the categories of thought in the mind of individuals develop during the course of socialisation. Socialisation also transmits knowledge from one generation to the next. Social solidarity requires conformity to norms, rules and values as prescribed by the society. When groups assemble and reinforce the feelings of solidarity e.g., wedding, or religious festivals, mourning etc., these occasions help express the solidarity of the family and the kin group. On the other hand, the Republic Day and the Independence Day are occasions to express the solidarity of the nation. The social customs, rituals and social ceremonies and occasions which bring members of a group together are called socialisation practices. Through these practices, knowledge about norms values and behaviour pattern is transmitted among members of human social groups.

The individual, through socialisation, helps maintain the social order. Thus socialisation brings about social control by enabling the individual to know what to think and what not to think, what to do and what not to do. Here, apart from the sense of group solidarity, the individual has the fear of disapproval, punishment etc. which the society metes out for various acts of deviance from the normal course of conduct.

8.3.2 Conformity

While socialisation produces a degree of conformity to social norms behaviour in every society, yet some individuals may still not conform. In other words, socialisation may not be able to command complete conformity from all members of the society. Many factors may encourage conflict. There may be conflicts between the aims and functions of the socialising agents and of the socialisee. We have already mentioned that an individual is socialised by many agencies – the family, the school, playmates, peer group, occupational group, and in the modern society, also by the written word (i.e. books, magazines) and by the mass media (television, radio, cinema). If they emphasise different values, the individual's conformity to the values of a group or groups will be reduced. For example, students may be encouraged to

be exposed to mass-media. However, if mass-media teaches fundamentalism and extreme conservatism, the conformity of students to liberal values is likely to be reduced.

The cases of non-conformity are referred to as those of deviance from the norms of the group (see unit 30 on Social Control and unit 31 on Social Deviance). The values of the children from the poor families will be at variance with those of the school. These children are referred to as deviants and in extreme cases as juvenile delinquents.

8.4 CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS SOCIALISATION

Much of the socialisation of the child within a family and the school is conscious. In other words, parents consciously inculcate in the child certain behaviour patterns and values that they consider desirable. They achieve this by constantly telling the child what is good from what is bad, what is right form of behaviour from what is wrong. They also reward the child if it conforms to these expectations, and punish in the opposite case. Therefore, the process of socialisation is reinforced through a system of rewards and punishments. For example, the emphasis on cleanliness, obedience, promptness, manliness and womanliness begins early in life in most families. This is conscious socialisation since the socialising agents (parents) are conscious about the aims of socialisation process. Yet a major part of the process of socialisation is unconscious and consists of learning through observation.

However, socialisation process within the family is conscious, as well as unconscious. The same is true of the school where the aims of the school are explicit and are sought to be inculcated in the classroom through text books. For instance, the explicit aim of the school is to teach and to help students to succeed in their examinations. At the same time, the children interact or mix with other children outside the classroom. They make friends and form small groups called peer groups. These are important sources of influence on children. They also become members of peer groups within their neighbourhood where they have a small number of friends with whom they play almost regularly. Sometimes children learn the norms and behaviour patterns of the members of their groups and these may be contradictory to those of their family or the school. For example, if children begin to smoke because their friends smoke whereas their families are opposed to it, there is going to be conflict. Or, children may begin to take serious interest in schoolwork although no member of their families is intellectually inclined. On the other hand, interest in studies may be common to the members of the family as well as to their friends. This process is the unconscious process of the socialisation where children who learn and the children from whom they learn are not conscious of or do not anticipate the consequences of their association and interaction.

8.4.1 Explicit and Implicit Directions

We have distinguished between conscious and unconscious socialisation processes and have given examples of the explicit and implicit injunctions against certain behaviour patterns The aims of the process within the families are not deliberate, and explicit. Families do not say that they are training the children to become honest or hard working, or boys to become fearless, or girls to become passive. On the other hand, the cognitive aims of the schools are well-known. The students are to read well. Pass their examination and so on. Therefore there is a difference between the two processes that take place within the family, on the one hand, and the school and other formal agencies, on the other. We may therefore draw a distinction between the two processes and state that the aims of socialisation process within the secondary groups such as schools are deliberate, more explicit and conscious compared with that of the family. But both the processes take place simultaneously.

8.4.2 Behaviour Patterns

The learning of different behaviour patterns and values from one's friends or peers is the unconscious process of socialisation. In fact, it is difficult to draw a distinction between a socialising agent and a socialisee i.e., the peer group and the socialisee. The staying away from the school could be one such example. A child may become friendly with those children who play truant very often and remain absent from classes, and may learn to play truant after becoming a member of that group. On the other hand, another child who initially did not place high value on punctuality within the school, may learn to do so because he happens to

become friendly with children who are very punctual. These are examples of unconscious socialisation.

In contemporary societies, much of the unconscious learning takes place through the mass media such as the cinema, the television, the comics, and novels (i.e., the print medium). The emulation of the hero in the Indian cinema by the college going youth is a good example of unconscious socialisation.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Fill in the blanks given in the following sentences:

i) The aim of the socialisation process is to help the child to learn to conform to the societal .....

and .....

ii) Socialisation may not be able to command complete ..... from all members of the society.

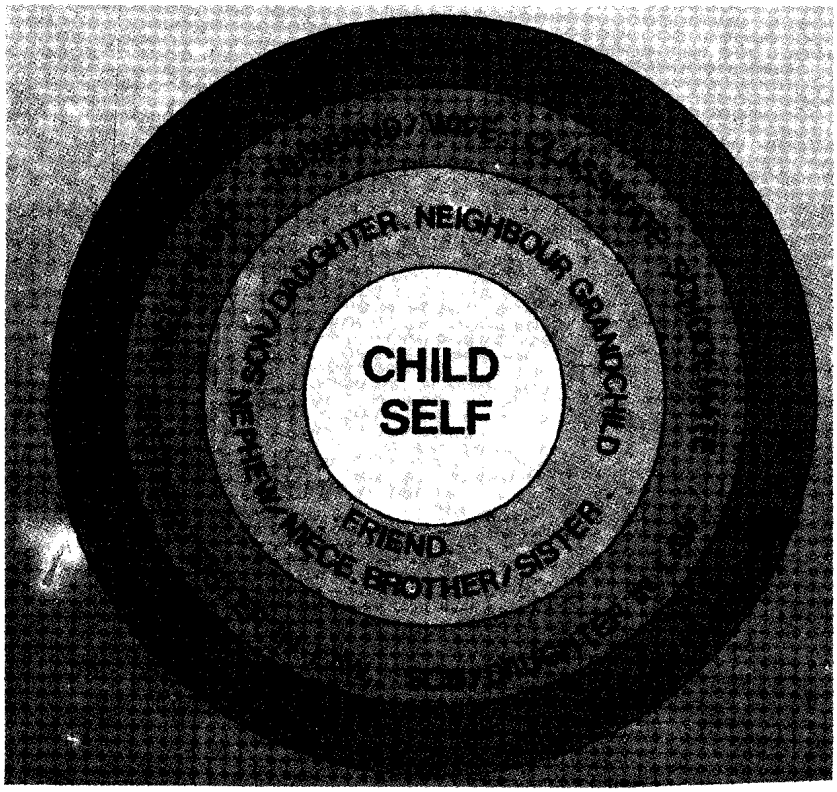
iii) Socialisation process within the family is ..... as well as .....

iv) The aim of socialisation process within the secondary groups such as schools is ..... more ..... and ..... as compared with that of the family.

8.5 ROLE AND SOCIALISATION

A human infant is born in a social group. And soon after birth it becomes a member

of the social group and occupies the social position of a son or a daughter or of a grandson or a grand-daughter. Thus the role refers to the social position one occupies by virtue of one's position in a particular social group, and it entails rights as well as obligations.



VARIOUS ROLES OF A SOCIALISEE

An individual has to play different roles, the role of a son or a daughter, the role of a grandson or a grand-daughter in the due course of his/her life. In other words, a person occupies different social positions which are interrelated. The term role-set is used to refer to the complex of roles occupied or performed by a person at one time (see Unit 25). The implication of this is that a child learns to behave in the manner that is expected of it by different socialising agents. For instance, a child's behaviour with a parent has to be different from that with the sister, or friends or neighbours or classmates. These roles need not follow one after the other but may be performed simultaneously, other roles may be added or deleted. The list however is not exhaustive.

Similarly the behaviour with one's grandmother has to be different from that with one's own mother. The child learns to perceive and internalise these subtleties as part of growing up. As one learns a role well, one is able to interact with others, playing other roles and to engage in role-interaction over time. This is what is called role and role socialisation.

Thus, role is the behaviour pattern based on norms. However, it is invested with specific meaning e.g., the role of a boy/girl in a particular society is part of the culture of that society.

How does one learn a role? Initially, a child merely observes the roles of parents and other members of the family and re-enacts them. Gradually, one learns to distinguish oneself from others and one's role from the roles of others. One learns through observation, constant reinforcement and reminders along with rewards for conformity and punishment for non-conformity.

Activity 2

Do you observe any changes in parent child relationship within your family or friends circle which did not exist earlier? Discuss with your friends and family members and write a one page report on "The Impact of Social Change on the Process of Socialisation Including Parent Child Interaction". Compare your report with those of other students at your study center. Also, discuss the topic with your Academic Counsellor.

8.5.1 Primary and Secondary Socialisation

The needs of individuals are divided by psychologists into primary and secondary needs. The primary needs are those which are in-born such as thirst and hunger. The secondary needs are, for example, the need for learning or to work. Secondary needs are those which emerge, in the way, to satisfy primary needs. Similarly, institutions in the society are also divided into primary and secondary institutions. The family is the first social group in which the child is born, it is also the first group which satisfies and meets the primary needs of the human-infant. It is called a primary group whereas a school is a secondary group because it meets the derived needs of the child. Parents are the primary or the chief socialising agents for the child whereas the school teachers are the secondary socialising agents. We may also distinguish between primary and secondary roles and between primary socialisation and secondary socialisation. Norms and values within the family may be called the process of primary socialisation whereas the learning of the behavioural patterns, norms and values of the school may be called secondary socialisation.

8.5.2 Child and Adult Socialisation

As we have mentioned earlier, the process of socialisation or learning of social roles continues throughout life. As the individual becomes a member of different social groups and institutions, it begins to learn new norms and values. For example, when one joins school one has to learn the discipline of the school and the role of a student. Later on, as an adult, one has to learn to become a parent and to assume family responsibilities. When one takes up an occupation and becomes a member of an occupational group one has to learn the responsibilities and roles that are implied in the membership of that particular group. For example, the role of an executive will be very different from that of a small tea-stall owner, or of a labourer. People have to be socialised in taking on these roles and values. That is why, sociologists believe that the process of socialisation continues throughout life and does not end at adolescence.

8.6 RE-SOCIALISATION

Re-socialisation is a process of altering ones behaviour pattern and in the process imbibing new social values and behaviour patterns. An individual is constantly learning new roles. As a member of different social groups or institutions throughout one's life. For instance, a child becomes a member of its family first, and learns to play the role of a son or daughter, or that of a grandson or a grand-daughter if it is living in an extended family. If the father's sister is living in the family the child also learns to play the role of a nephew or niece. Later when beginning to play in the neighbourhood, one makes friends and follows the norms of the group. For example, if a child disrupts the game too often or fights or cheats, others will boycott that child till he/she stops causing disruption.

Later, a child goes to school and learns to play the role of a student. Still later s/he takes up a job and joins an organisation or sets up one's own enterprise or business. Whatever work is taken up, one has to follow the work ethics of that occupational group and abide by the norms. Thus, one is constantly learning new roles.

However, in some instances an individual has not only to learn a new role but simultaneously has to unlearn part of the norms and behaviour patterns associated with an earlier role in order to be effective in the new role. A very good example of unlearning the old role and learning a new one is the role of an Indian girl before and after marriage. While there may be differences in emphasis and also in the norms and behaviour patterns expected of girls in different parts of India, we may safely generalise behaviour pattern of a daughter before and after marriage.

8.6.1 Marital Re-socialisation

When a daughter is engaged to be married the process of new socialisation or re-socialisation starts. She may be given instructions on how to behave in the presence of her in-laws. Among Punjabi Hindu families a daughter does not cover her head in front of her elders before her marriage nor does she touch their feet. After her engagement she may be trained to cover her head and also to touch the feet of elders, since she will have to do this soon after the marriage. Though, we may mention that this may not be practised any more among the upper and middle class families, especially among the educated in the metropolitan cities.

Her re-socialisation begins after marriage. She has already been given countless instructions to give up the carefree behaviour of her maiden days in the home of her in-laws, and to pay deference to nearly every elder in her husband's family and how not to seem to be independent. A newly married girl goes through the process of unlearning her earlier behaviour gradually. In the initial stage she may only hide it or suppress it, and one may see her behaving normally when she visits her parental home. As for example, she may laugh freely in her parent's home – something that may be considered inappropriate in the home of her in-laws.

Another example of re-socialisation is that of a widowed woman. This is particularly marked in some parts of India where a widow's behaviour has to change very drastically after the death of her husband. The external marks of a married woman are removed from her body, that is, she has to wear a particular dress or a saree of a particular colour, all her jewellery has to be removed, the kumkum and vermilion marks on her forehead and parting between her hair have also to be removed ceremoniously through certain rituals which are performed in these families. Her head is shaven. In addition she has to live in a different part of the house. The kind of tasks she is to perform in the family also change suddenly. She is considered inauspicious and cannot participate in marriage rituals and other religious ceremonies.

8.6.2 Attitudinal Change

Re-socialisation refers to the process through which during their life span, individuals change or are forced to change their attitudes, values, behaviour and self-conceptions as they assume new roles and undergo new experiences. Though the long-range change may be profound, single steps along the way may or may not be gradual. For instance, the new role may be a continuation of the old role or the past roles or may require discontinuation. Again, it may need only minor changes or radical changes involving a wholly new set of behaviour patterns. In addition, it may affect either a part or the whole of the personality or the self of an

individual. It may also involve breaking away from the past values and norms or may just be a projection of the past values and norms.

Thus changes in adulthood that are gradual and partial are called continuous socialisation. Re-socialisation denotes more basic, rapid and radical changes. It involves giving up one way of life for another. It is not only different from the former but is at times incompatible with it. The usual examples given are brain-washing or indoctrination or rehabilitation of criminals. The aim is to fundamentally change the person and to effect a break with the past. Another example would be of persons who have lived all their life in Bombay, Kolkata or Delhi and are asked to live among tribals in a remote village in Madhya Pradesh or vice-versa. If you belong to a city, you may also be familiar with the villagers trying to adjust themselves to city life, by changing their notions of what is proper and what is improper and by changing their behaviour. Similarly if you belong to a village, you may have seen the problems faced by the person from the city, for example, school teacher or medical doctors or nurses or mid-wives and how they adapt to the village life.

8.6.3 Extensive and Intensive Socialisation

Certain occupational and life roles demand extensive and intensive socialisation. This socialisation approximates to re-socialisation, for example, the role of a Christian priest or a nun or a Granthi in a Gurdwara or the role for combat only. Cadets are systematically removed from the society of which they are a part and then they are given assignments involving new personal and social identities; and a sense of identity with the nation and solidarity among themselves is instilled into them through the training given in the institutions. Similarly we have given the example of an Indian girl after marriage or that of a window.

Re-socialisation of a mature individual is difficult to accomplish. Generally speaking it requires that the conditions of childhood socialisation be reproduced in intense and extreme form, specially when this is done through a very deliberate process as in the case of re-socialisation of a cadet or a criminal or of a widow. Re-socialisation may be forced upon the individual (as in brain-washing or indoctrination) or voluntary (as in the case of an anthropologist living in a tribe).

The process of re-socialisation, if it contradicts with the initial socialisation and if the individual is unable to cope with the demand made by the new role, may create conflict in the life of an individual. This is especially so where differing value systems are concerned. For eg. A person coming from a conservative family background in India finds it extremely difficult to adjust to a cultural environment where social taboos, sexual taboos, etc. of his or her own culture do not match at all. In such an environment a person suffers a culture shock and can end up being a mental patient.

8.7 ANTICIPATORY SOCIALISATION

Anticipatory socialisation refers to the process whereby an individual or a group emulates the values, norms and behaviour patterns of a group other than to which one belongs, in anticipation of being accepted as its member. Thus, the concept of anticipatory socialisation is related to the reference group theory. According to this theory, the behaviour, values and norms of an individual are determined with reference to a particular group or groups. As the membership of these groups varies, the individuals who are in the process of moving from one group to another will emulate the behaviour of the members of the group or with reference to the group they wish to belong. An excellent example would be that of individuals who have acquired sudden wealth and who try to conform to the values, and behaviour of the upper strata or upper castes of the society. They will change their dress, behaviour, dietary habits and even their language and customs. For example, those who did not give dowry may start doing so and those women who did not observe parda may be expected to do so.

Anticipatory socialisation is undergone by individuals as well as groups and it happens or takes place in situations of social mobility and social change. Lower castes in the villages, after becoming well-off, try to emulate the upper castes. For example, if the dominant caste in a village are the Brahimins, the lower caste or castes who attain wealth will become vegetarian and teetotallers; they will change their caste names, wear the sacred thread to claim the status of the twice-born, stop sending their women to work for wages and adopt the

rites of Brahmins such as head shaving (Mundan). They may also impose rigid behavioural norms on their widows.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Answer the following questions in 'yes' or 'no' by marking one box:

i)	Does a child play only one role in the family.	Yes	No
ii)	Are thirst and hunger the secondary needs of individuals?	Yes	No
iii)	Does a person constantly learn new roles throughout one's life?	Yes	No
iv)	Is it easy to accomplish the re-socialisation of mature individuals?	Yes	No

8.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied various aspects of socialisation. We began with providing an understanding of socialisation and its various aspects. It includes the norms and values that socialisation inculcates. We also studied in this unit the process by which knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another. The aspects of implicit and explicit socialisation, re-socialisation, and anticipatory socialisation are also discussed here.

8.9 FURTHER READINGS

1) Broom, L and Selznick, P. 1973. Sociology. Harper and Row Publishers: New York.

2) White, G. 1977. Socialisation. Longman : London.

8.10 KEY WORDS

Conformity : To absorb certain social rules and regulations in behaviour, e.g., being appropriately dressed in social gatherings.

Internalisation : To absorb something within the mind so deeply that it becomes part of one's behaviour, e.g., to internalize good manners.

Re-socialisation : To alter one's behaviour pattern and in the process imbibing new social values and behaviour pattern.

Socialisee : A person who is being socialised into the ways of society.

8.11 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Socialisation is a learning process whereby one imbibes social values and behaviour patterns.

Check Your Progress 2

i) norms, values, belief, attitudes, behaviour pattern

ii) conformity

iii) conscious, unconscious

iv) deliberate explicit conscious

Check Your Progress 3

i) No

ii) No

iii) Yes

iv) No

UNIT 9 AGENCIES OF SOCIALISATION

Structure

9.0 Objectives

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Agencies of Socialisation

- 9.2.1 Growing Up
- 9.2.2 Religion and Socialisation

9.3 Differences in Socialisation

- 9.3.1 The Caste Factor
- 9.3.2 Socialisation in Tribes
- 9.3.3 Other Institutions: The Ghotul

9.4 Family, Social Class and Socialisation

- 9.4.1 Behaviour and Family
- 9.4.2 Socialisation and Communication
- 9.4.3 School and Socialisation

9.5 Sex and Gender Identity

- 9.5.1 Gender Related Studies
- 9.5.2 Sexual Discrimination

9.6 Mass Media and Socialisation

- 9.6.1 Messages in Mass Media
- 9.6.2 Impact of Television

9.7 Let Us Sum Up

9.8 Further Readings

9.9 Key Words

9.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe different factors in and agencies of socialisation;
- state the differences in socialisation process with the illustrations of some societies;
- assess the impact of family, class, caste and mass media on socialisation; and
- explain the ways in which socialisation process takes care of gender identity formation.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the various agencies of socialisation. These include the family, religious organisations, mass media, etc. It also discusses differences in socialisation of boys and girls. The significance of caste and tribal culture in the process of socialisation in the Indian context is also discussed. The effect of social class on socialisation and sexual discrimination in the socialisation process are also examined in detail.

9.2 AGENCIES OF SOCIALISATION

The child is socialised by several agencies and institutions in which he or she participates, viz., his or her family, school, peer group, the neighbourhood, the occupational group and by the social class. The position of the family in the social structure is determined by the social class, caste, religion, etc., and by the fact that the family lives in the rural or in the urban areas. We shall also mention some of the other factors which are important. For example,

there is variation in the socialisation process, according to whether one is rich or poor, whether one is tribal or non-tribal, whether one is a boy or a girl or whether one is a child or an adult. The differentiation in socialisation may also be reflected through music, rituals, language, art and literature, which form part of one's culture consisting of complex set of variables.

These are the factors and agencies which introduce differentiation in the socialisation process within different societies. These are very crucial and should be taken into account to dispel the impression that socialisation is uniform across all societies or within a particular society. We shall first discuss some of the factors responsible for the variation in the socialisation process namely age, religion, caste, region, etc. In the next section, we discuss the different agencies of socialisation (namely, family, school etc.) which also prevent uniformity. In the last section, we outline the role of gender and the mass media (especially television) since these cut across all boundaries.

9.2.1 Growing Up

The socialisation process in infancy and childhood is different from that during adulthood. Some social scientists divide socialisation into stages of the life of an individual. Some have referred to various Hindu rites or samskaras as being equivalent to different stages. In addition, there are the ashrams, which divide the life of an individual into stages.

There are various traditional Hindu rites or samskaras which divide childhood into several stages. These are namakarana, nishakarmana, annaprasana, chudakarana or tonsure, vidyarambha and upanayana. Moreover, traditionally the division of an individual's life into four stages, namely, brahmacharya, grihasthashrama, vanaprastha and sanyasa are a direct reflection of the socialisation of a Hindu male.

The agencies of socialisation change as the individual matures. For example, school and the peer group compete with the family for access to the individual through childhood and adolescence. The occupational group and the newly established family after marriage become more important during adulthood.

9.2.2 Religion and Socialisation

Difference in the socialisation processes and practices is noticeable among certain religious communities. As for example, the rites and ceremonies, customs, dress, sometimes language and beliefs, attitudes and values and the behaviour patterns of Christians, Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims are different. These may be at variance with one another although some of the external symbols such as dress, speech, and deportment have become uniform for all religious groups in the big cities during the last few years, so that it has become difficult to distinguish members of one religious community from another on the basis of dress, etc. In the villages, a significant section of people are continuing to wear their traditional dresses and can still be distinguished on the basis of these outward symbols. In addition, and more importantly, the emphasis on what constitutes a good Hindu or a good Muslim or a good Sikh or a good Christian, also creates differences in the values and behaviour of members of a larger society. For instance, a good Muslim must perform prayers five times a day, a Christian must attend church on Sundays, a Sikh should do service at a Gurdwara and a Hindu must give charity in the temples. Similarly, further subdivisions can be drawn on the basis of Shaivite and Vaishnavite Brahmins of southern India. So also the marriage ceremony and rites differ among those who follow the Arya Samaj and Sanatana Dharma, the two Hindu sects in the Punjab. Thus, the differences are not confined to religious ideology but are reflected in the socialisation process through the beliefs, attitudes, norms and behaviour patterns of the people belonging to these sects and subsects.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief note on the major agencies that socialise a person. Use about five lines.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Select the correct matching

A)	Childhood	Family
B)	Adolescene	Professional Group
C)	Adulthood	Peer-Group

9.3 DIFFERENCES IN SOCIALISATION

A city-bred person who comes across a person from the village is likely to notice him or her because of the differences in their dress, speech and their deportment. The villager is recognisable not only by the outward symbols mentioned but also by his or her values norms and behaviour patterns he/she upholds and considers appropriate. On the other hand, a person living in a village will be struck by the difference in dress, speech and deportment of those who belong to the city. You may have often heard that a person hailing from a village or a small town feels that people in the city are too involved in their own affairs to be bothered about their guests or the elders in the family. These differential responses are the outcome of differential socialisation processes in the rural and urban areas.

Box 9.01

An Indian villager generally believes that a "guest" is to be honoured in the same manner as God himself and whatever his/her capacity may be will not neglect a guest. But a city person, especially in the metropolis, may not welcome a guest who has no prior appointment. Reason for visit becomes an essential criteria.

It is not that a city person does not desire or know how to honour a guest but other life style factors, such as, living space, expensive everyday expenditure, children's education often forces people to curtail excessive entertainment of guests. Thus, circumstances change the values which ideally are believed by most Indians.

9.3.1 The Caste Factor

If you are living in a village or in a small town, you may be aware of the behaviour that is expected of you as a member of a small town. Thus, there are certain value norms and behaviour patterns that are common to most villages. Certain rituals and ceremonies may also be common to all the members of a village. However, a village community is also divided into small groups called castes. The castes are divided on the basis of birth because people are born into them. You may be at least able to distinguish a Brahmin from a Harijan or you may even be able to distinguish a blacksmith from a goldsmith or from a washerman. Therefore, within a village, there are likely to be subcultures while the culture of a village itself may have something in common which is shared by all its members and bind all the members together. The language or the dialect also tends to vary. The upper castes speak more refined and sophisticated form of the language than spoken by the lower castes. Similarly, there are differences in the dress that is considered appropriate or inappropriate for a particular caste. Again, the behaviour that is considered proper by one caste may not be so considered by the other. For example, vegetarianism may not be so considered by the other. For example, vegetarianism may be more popular among the Brahmins than among other castes.

9.3.2 Socialisation in Tribes

The socialisation process differs according to whether it occurs in a tribe or non-tribe. We shall give extracts or the socialisation process in a tribe called Muria which inhabits the Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh in central India. However, this should not give the impression that the Muria represent the whole tribal culture. There are several tribes in India about which you have read in Units 5 and 6. There are tremendous variations in the socialisation process among them as are in the non-tribal world. Therefore, this example of socialisation process among the Murias is only one such example. You may be able to think of several others. If you meet people from different parts of India or have such friends, you may notice the differences.

9.3.3 Other Institutions: The Ghotuls

Similar institutions are found among communities of Austro-Asiatic cultures. But Bastar ghotul is highly developed and the most organised in the world. One could think of communes in contemporary society, as for example, the Kibbutz in Israel where an effort was made to bring up children on community-basis by taking them away from their families. Similar institutions are found among other tribals in India, as for example, the village guardroom among the Nagas and the boys' club among the Oraon. Ghotul for the Murias is the centre of social and religious life. It also assigns educational tasks among children. All unmarried Muria boys and girls from the age of five or six years are members of ghotul. They sleep at night in the ghotul and are directly reponsible for its care and maintenance. During the day, they go to their parents' home and help them in various tasks. They leave the ghotul after marriage.

The membership of ghotul is carefully organised. After a period of testing, boys and girls are initiated and given a special title which carries graded rank and social duty Leaders are appointed to organise and discipline the society. The boys' leader is Sirdar and the girl's Belosa. Boy members are known as Chelik and girl members as Motiari. The relations between Chelik and Motiari are governed by the customary rules and regulation of ghotul to which they belong. Indeed, ghotul teaches discipline and introduces the feeling of fraternity and friendship among its members.

9.4 FAMILY, SOCIAL CLASS AND SOCIALISATION

These two dimensions are being taken together because 'family' here includes not only the size, the composition and the type but the social position. The social position of a family is determined by caste, race and social class, etc. However, it is the last dimension namely social class which have received attention of sociologists in the West while race too has been given some importance. Not many studies on socialisation with reference to family or caste or any other dimension or agency have been undertaken in India. Therefore, we shall depend on our own observations to illustrate the relationship between family and socialisation. We shall also take examples from other countries to substantiate the relationship between social class, family and socialisation in the context of school.

It has already been mentioned in the sub section 9.2 that a key agency of socialisation in all human societies is the family which transforms the young infant into a member of a human community. It is the first prolonged and intimate interaction system the individual encounters after birth.

However, the things that members of a given family wish to teach or transmit to the child are limited by that family's unique historical and societal experience. As a result of this, we observe familial differences in child-rearing practices as well as attitudinal and behavioural outcomes regarding social relationships and skills. Each child is more or less uniquely prepared for the cultural reality that his or her family has experienced or wishes to experience.

9.4.1 Behaviour and Family

Family inculcates attitudes relating to proper behaviour, decision-making and obedience to authority, etc. In addition, children learn the attitudes and skills necessary to play a role in the production and consumption of goods and services. Each family adopts division of labour regarding family tasks and prepares its young for the notion of work. Thus, early socialisation into economic roles also takes place within the family.

As contact with others grows, other alternatives, become available to the child. He or she is introduced to the new social institutions or agencies such as the school and the peer group in the neighbourhood. The influence of parents is reduced because new reference groups such as peer group become more important. Thus, a number of secondary group relations and pressures must be coped with by the child alongside the group relations learnt initially in the family.

A number of studies have been undertaken on the effect of family background on the educational performance of the child, which are pertinent to socialisation. One of the salient findings of these studies is the negative impact of a school on a child if he or she belongs to

a working class home with little emphasis on cognitive achievement. This is because the school emphasises good results and a behaviour pattern which is alien to the child's family. Moreover, researchers have also pointed out that middle-class parents more than working-class parents are likely to put emphasis on the need for success in studies to reinforce the socialising function of the school and stress, in general, achievement-oriented values. Again, a relationship is seen between the occupational role of the father and the difference in the socialisation-orientations of the children. For instance, since a working-class father has less autonomy and satisfaction in the work situation, he tends to be authoritarian and severe towards his family members, especially his son.

Activity 1

From your own experience, find out whether your socialisation was done in an authoritarian atmosphere or liberal atmosphere i.e. whether your parents were very strict disciplinarians, allowing you no opinion of your own or were ready to listen to you and guide you on the right path with persuasion rather than tyranny. Write one page essay on "I and my Parents" on this issue. Discuss it with other students at your study centre.

9.4.2 Socialisation and Communication

The importance of language and difference in the pattern of communication between parents and children according to social class are the other dimensions which have been studied by sociologists, notable among them being Basil Bernstein. According to him, patterns of language-use and the teaching styles are class-based. He saw a relationship between social structure, forms of speech and the subsequent regulation of behaviour in the schools. For instance, he argued that children from different social classes respond differently to educational opportunities and an important determinant of their response to the school's cognitive aims and teacher's style etc., is the language or linguistic code of the child. He also argued that different social structures produce different types of speech systems. As the child learns his speech, he learns the requirements of his social structure, which vary according to social class. Therefore, the language of the working-class child is limited in vocabulary while that of the middle-class child does not suffer from this limitation. The teacher is, by and large, from the middle class and can communicate better with the middle-class child since they share the same linguistic code or language with its vocabulary, meanings, syntax etc. Thus, the working class child cannot communicate as well with the teacher and begins with a handicap which affects him or her throughout his/her school career because of this restricted co-operation.

The same factors can be observed in schools in India, where most teachers came from upper caste/class backgrounds in schools and students who belonged to scheduled caste or tribes could not some time even understand the language of the teacher, let alone feel at par with other upper caste/class students.

Several studies have been undertaken linking different dimensions of schooling with the family of the child. We have only given some examples to demonstrate the importance of family and social class in socialisation at home and outside the home, particularly in the school. However, we may also mention that these studies merely indicate a direction and are not conclusive.

9.4.3 School and Socialisation

'School' is used here to refer to a whole range of formal educational institutions which are the characteristics of the contemporary industrial and industrialising, urban complex-societies. We shall only mention here that schools provide two contexts for the students. The first is the formal context of the classroom wherein the content of socialisation is determined by the text books and the cognitive aims of the process of teaching. The second context is informal and can be perceived in the inter-personal relations of students with teachers and those among students (peer group).

Social control comes to be exercised by the school and the increased professionalisation of teaching helps to undermine the authority base of the family as a socialising agency. Again, the content of socialisation as well as the knowledge to be transmitted become the focus of the curriculum and syllabi and a set of carefully prescribed practices. What parents did or do by instinct and with love, professionals must do with clear regulations and justifications.

The socialisation process within the school may or may not supplement and reinforce the process within the family. In fact, it may be in conflict with the socialising values, norms and behaviour patterns of the family.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss briefly how socialisation occurs in tribes. Use about five lines.

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2) Write a comment on the role of school on the socialisation process. Use about five lines.

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9.5 SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY

Every society has a systematic way to deal with sex or gender roles. In other words every culture has a process by which it prepares the children to play the roles that society expects and requires of them as adults and these roles vary according to sex, ethnicity and social class etc. Of course, sex is almost universally the most basic category and refers to biological differences (i.e. differences in their bodies) between men and women while gender refers to the social differences assigned to sex. In other words, it refers to the division between masculine and feminine roles, tasks, attributes, etc. For example, the division of sexual labour refers to the fact that women bear children and men do not. This division is based on biological differences. The sexual division of labour or gender-based division, on the other hand, refers to different tasks, such as agricultural work being masculine and household work as feminine. This division also includes traits such as aggressiveness being masculine and submissiveness being feminine. Of course, the sexual division may vary among societies and social groups.

The success of socialisation process is indicated by the studies which show that gender identity is the unchanging core of the personality formation and is firmly established in the early stages of one's life. However, although biological differences between men and women are universal, there is differentiation of roles by gender, across cultures and societies. This is because when biological differences are projected into the social sphere they give rise to masculine and feminine roles although they are not innate. Anthropologists have given examples from different cultures to demonstrate variation in sex roles from one culture and society to another. For example, in the hunting societies while the male folk took active role in the hunting. in making tools and weapons, females are mostly passive. Their females took active roles in the reproductive activities. On the other hand, in the agricultural society in Africa women play considerably active role in the productive activities. In spite of the stereotype of gender roles which exist in all societies, in reality women may be participating equally in the so-called masculine work, such as, agriculture, unskilled work in factories etc. In the same manner, men quite often assist women folk in domestic work, especially amongst the nuclear families in urban areas where both husband and wife work.

9.5.1 Gender Related Studies

Systematic interest by social scientists in gender-related studies has been very recent. The most widely researched field is the socialisation process which differentiates between men and women in almost all societies, and produces what are called masculine and feminine roles, images, behaviour patterns and tasks. In other words, it helps in producing stereotypes of male and female. For example, in several societies women are considered submissive, passive and dependent as if these were inborn traits whereas the masculine traits are active, aggressive and independent. Again, the division of labour is along gender. For example, housekeeping tasks are assigned to women and most of the external, public and production-related tasks are given to men. (Yet there may be differences among different tribes, see for example, Muria.)

You may have observed that girls have to be obedient, submissive (not only to parents but also to their brothers in most Indian families) not outgoing or to take initiative. They are given elaborate instructions on what dress to wear and on what occasion. There is emphasis on modesty. They are not expected to laugh loudly although the situation may be changing in metropolitan cities. However, the situation goes back to square one at the time of a girl's marriage even in the most enlightened families. In many families they are discouraged to take subjects at school which involve hard work (science and mathematics) or which are likely to lead to a career (for example, medicine or engineering). It may be so even in families where sons are not doing as well in studies as are the daughters. Even then the sons will be encouraged to take up courses like science and other professional courses. When parents can afford to spend only on the education of one child (even in Delhi or Chennai etc.) the chances are higher that the son will be sent for higher education instead of the daughter.

9.5.2 Sexual Discrimination

This is discrimination based on the social expectation that a girl from the upper and middle class will not be working even though a large number of them are working in the metropolitan cities these days. Also, that they will get married and become full-time housewives and leave their families.

Since parents, grand-parents, friends, teachers etc. are agents of socialisation, the situation is further complicated because it takes place within the home and is very personal. Again, it takes place through people who are also emotionally involved in the process. It is further complicated by the fact that boys and girls like to approximate their behaviour to that expected by parents since it is likely to make the latter happy. They would also not like to offend those whom they love i.e., the significant others'.

The discussion of socialisation and sex roles is linked to that of stereotypes and discrimination. When social roles are assigned on the basis of gender, which results in discrimination or puts unreasonable limitations on women, then it needs to be questioned. The other words, used in this context are bias, sexism, and stereotyping. Although, each has separate meanings, these terms underline the discriminatory treatment given to and inferior position assigned to women in society. For example, (a) men are considered superior to women and (b) women are denied access to positions of power. Some well-known examples of discrimination are: paying women less than men for the same jobs and denying them educational opportunities and certain jobs because of their sex. It may be illustrated with the fact that in agriculture women labourers are paid less than their male counterparts. Again boys may be encouraged to go in for higher education because they will bring higher income to the family. But this may not be the case for girls in a majority of the families. Such discrimination is rooted in stereotyping (mental picture held in common by members of a group). It represents an over simplified opinion and judgement about the members of a group, be they women, Hindus or Negroes.

Therefore, when we said earlier that society socialises the new born infant or that it socialises the child into becoming fit member of the society, we referred to certain traits which are expected of all members of society regardless of whether they are boys or girls. Hindus or Muslims, villagers or urbanites, tribals or non-tribals. The task of socialisation is undertaken by various agencies, however, we have focussed on the family since it is the primary agency of socialisation.

9.6 MASS MEDIA AND SOCIALISATION

In contemporary societies, the means of mass communication such as the books radio, newspapers, films or cinema, records, and video are very potent sources of socialising those who are either their readers or the listeners or the viewers. These mass media, especially the films, the radio and the television simultaneously communicate the same message to a nation wide audience cutting across all boundaries. Therefore, its impact on socialisation is crucial.

Here we are concerned basically with the message that is conveyed, the images that are projected because they form the content of the socialisation process through the mass media and the impact of the message and the images. Thus, for example, the specific questions in the context of gender and socialisation will be: What are the images of men and women portrayed on the mass media especially on the television? In the context of the rural population we may ask: What are the images of the rural folk and is the message relevant for the villagers? Is their image really representative of their experience and if that is so, which part of village India does it represent? Or, what is the impact of violence in films on the children? Similar questions can be asked with reference to all the dimensions that cut across Indian society.

Activity 2

Observe at least 5 children between the age group five to ten years in your neighbourhood for at least two days. Write a report of about one page on "Impact of Mass Media (esp. TV) on Children's Behaviour" in your society. Compare your answer with your peers at your study centre.

Another question which is of general relevance would be: Which is/are the most important medium/media and for whom? For example, while television in India has become the most important medium for almost everyone in India, comics are important for the children in the metropolitan cities while the video and now Cable T.V., Computer CD's and Internet communication has become a rage among the elite families even in the rural areas.

9.6.1 Messages in Mass Media

However, the crucial question in the context of socialisation is related to the message as well as the image. Scientific studies on media-use and media-impact are few and far between in our country. Very recently, the images of women in the text books and the comics as well as in the films and television and their impact on children have attracted the attention of scholars, and social activists. For instance, most school text-books portray women as being housewives and men as bread earners. Experts are arguing that this is not true in so far as the lower income strata are concerned since women in these strata always worked to earn money to meet the basic necessities of life. Moreover, even the middle class women in big cities are now-a-days working in order to meet the high cost of living as well as the rising social expectations arising out of higher education. Thus, the portrayal of women's images should reflect this reality.

Most studies on media conducted in other countries have either focused on television or have concluded that television is the predominant medium used by children although other important media exist (e.g., comics, books, films etc.). Watching television has become a central leisure time activity all over the world and remains a major source of leisure time gratification. We shall discuss television as only one example of socialisation through the mass media. While some of the points raised here will be applicable to other media as well, certain others may not be relevant.

9.6.2 Impact of Television

Television contacts the viewer directly through its message and does not involve social and interpersonal interaction. Moreover, it is embedded in another agency, namely, the family since it is generally viewed at home. It can propagate values in contradiction to those rooted in a specific social context. Its message may also get distorted because a large proportion of our population is illiterate and lives in the rural areas while the programmes are oriented to

the urban viewer. Thus, the values and behaviour patterns transmitted through it may be in conflict with those upheld by the parents. Parents react to this in several ways such as rigorous control of viewing (especially on Sundays or during the examination) and not permitting the watching of certain programmes (e.g., late night adult movies). However, the child's peers or friends at school or in the neighbourhood will influence him or her by discussing specific programmes. Teachers may also comment on them. In addition, parents have no direct control over the content of programmes.

What are the dominant concerns of the studies conducted in other countries? Most focus on children as the audience and the effects of television on children. The most widespread view of socialisation through the mass media is that it contains harmful experiences, particularly for children, but also for families in general. Some refer to the hypothesised tendency of television (and even cinema) to incite young people to crime and violence. Although these studies are only speculative, they are pointers to further research.

So far, the impression you may get is that the impact of television is only unidirectional or one way. While it is true that its impact is direct, it is not devoid of the social context. Viewing is a social activity insofar as it is done within the home and in the presence of family members. Viewers comment on programmes favourably or unfavourably. The interpersonal elements of other viewers are important as much as are the timing and the physical environment. Therefore, television is one element in an interlocking system. It does not exist in a vacuum and its effects are mediated and modified by the social context of viewing. In other words, the reaction to the programme is determined to some extent, by the fact that you are watching it along with your parents or not, and whether you are watching it at home or outside, and so on.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a description of how gender-based or sexual discrimination occurs in the socialisation process. Use about five lines.

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2) Comment on the effect of mass media on the process of socialisation. Use about five lines.

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9.7 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit that socialisation has many agencies. It works through these agencies and disseminates different types of behaviour modes. Some of these agencies are the family, caste group, tribe, school, etc. In fact we have emphasised that even gender differences (between boys and girls, men and women) are largely learned processes. Very often the mass media such as cinema and television reinforce ideas and stereotypes of social behaviour. But sometimes they do not. This unit has also examined the impact of mass media on the process of socialisation.

9.8 FURTHER READINGS

Kammeyer, Keaneth C.W. and Yetman, Norman R. 1979, Sociology: Experiencing Changing society. Mass Allyn and Bacon, Inc. Boston

Mckee James, B. 1981, Sociology: The Study of Society. Holt, Rinehart and Winstion. New York.

9.9 KEY WORDS

Agencies : The means whereby the process of socialisation (in our case) is facilitated, e.g. family and school.

Dialect : This is the subordinate form of a language peculiar to a region or a social group with non-standard vocabulary and pronunciation.

Gender : There are two sexes, male and female. It is the social dimension of the differences in the work roles, behaviour and traits of men and women.

Ghotul : Bachelor's hall of both men and women of the Murias of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh.

Linguistic Code : Language including vocabulary, speech patterns etc. used and understood by members of a given social group while communication through them may be difficult across social groups.

9.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The major agencies that socialise a person are the family, school. peer group, the neighbourhood etc. The examples of factors that influence socialisation are (i) membership to a social class or caste, and (ii) whether one is a boy or a girl.

2)

A)	Childhood	Family
B)	Adolescence	Peer-Group
C)	Adulthood	Professional Group

Check Your Progress 2

1) Socialisation occurs in tribes through special institutions like the Ghotuls amongst Murias, village guardroom amongst Nagas etc. In these institutions all unmarried boys and girls from the age of five or six live together. They are assigned educational tasks and are held responsible for its maintenance. During daytime they go to their parents home and help them in various tasks but at night they sleep in the Ghotul. After marriage they leave the Ghotul.

2) The two contexts of socialisation that school provide are formal context and informal context. Formal context is determined by the text books and the cognitive aims of the process of teaching while informal context can be perceived in the interpersonal relations of students with teachers and those among the students (peer group).

Check Your Progress 3

1) During the process of socialisation discrimination occurs. For example, it is assumed that a girl will not work even though a large number are working in the metropolitan cities these days.

2) Sexual stereotypes are certain sets of attitudes, values, norms, customs and expectations based on social differences between men and women but justified on biological grounds, which shape the differential socialisation of men and women. Men are supposed to be independent, capable and aggressive and women, to be dependent, timid and submissive.

3) The mass media for example, radio, television, films, books, cinema, newspapers, etc. cut across all boundaries of region, religion, sex, caste or class. They convey the same message to a nation-wide population. Therefore, its impact on socialisation is crucial. It portrays the messages and images; as in the case of video, film and T.V. etc. They affect the minds of adults as well as children and helps to shape and reshape their values, behaviours and expectations through their messages and images.

UNIT 10 PROCESSES OF EDUCATION

Structure

10.0 Objectives

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Meaning of Education

- 10.2.1 Life-long Learning and Education
- 10.2.2 Formal and Non-formal Education

10.3 Historical Development of the Educational System in India

10.4 Education and Inequality

- 10.4.1 Expansion of Education
- 10.4.2 Findings on Education

10.5 Women's Education

- 10.5.1 Schooling and Literacy
- 10.5.2 Question of Illiteracy
- 10.5.3 Education and Employment

10.6 Let Us Sum Up

10.7 Further Readings

10.8 Key Words

10.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

10.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this lesson you should be able to:

- explain the differences between education and learning processes;
- describe various techniques of education such as formal and non-formal;
- analyse the historical shifts in the system of education in India; and
- narrate the extent of unequal distribution of educational opportunities in society.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier units (Units 8&9) of this block we have introduced you with the nature and agencies of socialisation. In the earlier Units educational institutions have been pointed out to be the important agencies of socialisation. In the forthcoming two units we shall be discussing with you the processes of and the features of educational institutions in India.

In this unit we will explore the meaning of education and its usefulness to us throughout our life. It specifically, focuses upon the formal and non-formal aspects of the educational system. It describes the history and the development of modern education system in India. It also explains the inequality inherent in the system of education; in women's education, and discusses the problem of illiteracy. Problem of education and employment has also been dealt with. The unit, in fact, presents a broad picture of the educational process in the context of Indian society.

10.2 MEANING OF EDUCATION

As you sit down to study and understand the pages of this lesson you are participating in the organised system of education. Presumably you chose to be educated in this manner because you had either left school early and not pursued a college degree or had studied some other subject. These reasons, which may appear to you simple and straight forward, can often be

the result of several factors. Before we go into an examination of these factors, it is necessary to see how this form of education is different from others.

To start with, what do we mean by education? The dictionary meaning stresses "systematic instruction" for the "development of character and of mental powers." The words systematic instruction are of significance implying an organised way of conveying specific meanings or symbols. Instruction is a process where by the learner acquires knowledge from the teacher, which has been processed and graded according to the age and intelligence levels of the average student. When a student goes to school, college or university, he or she is participating in the **formal system of education**. In your case, you do not have before you a teacher; instead what you are reading now seeks to provide to you relevant information in a comprehensive manner so that you do not feel the need for a person to interpret and explain the material being presented. Nonetheless, the information has been provided to you, and you cannot really exercise choices on what comprises your course and what does not. This is where there is an important difference between education and learning.

10.2.1 Life-long Learning and Education

You have probably heard of the phrase 'life-long learning': this means that your capacity or ability to learn is not limited to a specific phase of your life. Every experience can be a potential learning experience; however, unlike education, it is not necessarily imparted through any specific agency like the school. for instance, you can learn about people and perhaps the variety of occupation available to them when you wander through a shopping complex. Similarly you can learn about the caste system. In fact, your learning experiences are essentially enriching and perhaps only something which you alone can appreciate. On the other hand, education in a specific area is something you share in common with a larger group; participation in it is based on a system, an ordering of various topics in a range of subjects or disciplines, and finally an assessment or evaluation by the teacher, or a test which you would have to send in for evaluation. Education is not random and sporadic as learning may be, but it is regular and regulated. To put it briefly, education involves learning but all learning is not education, in the sense in which we are now using the terms. The renowned sociologists Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons believed that the school class, teacher and the entire school-oriented learning process would help in the integration of the child in society. In fact, the school was essential for the child's proper adjustment. However, as we shall see, they did not seem to take into account the social class differences among children and how these created difficulties in adjustment to school.

Activity 1

There are two situations. 1st. A young girl is doing an experiment in a laboratory along with her other class-mates and her teacher supervising them.

2nd. A young girl is learning to knit a sweater from her mother along with her two friends.

Out of these two activities which one is education and which one is learning and why? Write a note of one page on this and share it with other students at your study centre.

10.2.2 Formal and Non-formal Education

Education can be formal or non-formal, be directly transmitted by the teacher or through a prepared text such as this one. In reading this text, you are now participating in the technique of education known as distance-learning. Here your instructional material as well as proposals for projects, additional reading and other related activities are conveyed to you through the written word, and perhaps the radio, and visual media such as TV and Video programmes. You are aiming for a degree in sociology; using the same technique of distance learning, a busy professional may take time off to get packaged information on art history or the restoration of art pieces. This can be done through the written word as well as through audio-visual modes. This would not be a part of his or her formal training as a lawyer or doctor but something that he or she may nonetheless have a deep interest in. While a degree or diploma might not follow, the person concerned would have acquired a certain degree of relevant information in an area quite unrelated to that in which he or she is formally qualified. Thus distance learning, can be used to train for a formal degree as well as to increase one's knowledge

in a range of topics. While in some cases evaluations are important and essential, in others this may not be the case.

Similarly, the non-formal stream in our educational system also aims to give relevant information without necessarily involving assessments, tests and so on. However, there is an important difference in the content as well as the methods of distance teaching and those of non-formal education. In India, non-formal education has had as its target group those section of the population who, due to poverty and/or other related factors, have not been able to participate in formal education. In other words they have either not gone to school or have left or dropped out at an early age. The aim of this programme is to provide functional literacy to those who are left out of the formal educational system. The typical target groups are children from under-privileged categories such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as well as those living in urban slums and remote rural areas. As we shall see, girls form a substantial proportion of those out of school. However, a variety of socio-economic problems limit their participation even in non-formal classes.

A major programme entitled Non-Formal Education was launched in India in 1975/76 for those in the age group of 15-25 years. The object of this, as also of the later National Adult Education Programmes (NAEP), was to provide "meaningful education" to deprived groups. The NAEP which was initiated in April 1979 was to reach out to 10 crores illiterates, particularly in the age group of 15 to 35 years. The curricula, borrowed from Mahatma Gandhi's nai talim or basic education, stressed on learning through the acquisition of a skill. In addition, the programme was to pay attention to the specific needs of the target group which included, apart from the relevance of the course material, flexibility in timing, duration and location of the courses. The aim of these programmes which lie outside the formal educational system, in combination with the latter, is to combat the problem of rampant illiteracy: even after forty years of independence and well over a century and a half since the fist school was started in India, only 50 per cent of the population is literate. Of the illiterates, more than half are women and girls. However, some inroad has been made to eradicate rampant illiteracy in India, in general as well as amongst the special target groups like the scheduled castes/scheduled tribes; women etc. As per the provisional figures of 2001 Census (India 2003: pp. 78-79: GOI) during the decade 1991-2001, there has been unprecedented progress in the field of literacy. For the first time since Independence, the absolute number of illiterates declined by over 31.9 million. A significant milestone reached during this period is that while the 7 plus age-groups of population increased by 171.6 million persons during 1991-2001, 203.6 million additional persons became literate during this decade. It should be now clear to you then that the process of education is linked not only to the availability of resources but also to a variety of other socio-economic factors as well. This is equally applicable in the case of formal and informal education, whether imparted directly in a classroom, or through a text book, a radio broadcast or a class on how to take care of cattle and other livestock.

Box 10.01

In order to make the Non-formal Education scheme (NFE) a more viable alternative to formal education it has been revised as Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovation Education (EGS and AIE). The revised scheme is to cover all the unreserved habitations throughout the country where there are no learning centres within a radius of one kilometer and is a part of an overall national programme framework for universalisation of Elementary Euducation (UEE), the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). This revised scheme was made operational w.e.f. 1 April, 2001 with enhanced cost details. It has became part of the sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) w.e.f 1 April 2002. (India 2003: pp. 78-100: GOI)

10.3 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

If we look briefly at the beginnings of education we find that in India its history can be traced to the **guru-shishya parampara** or tradition of a personalised teaching by the **guru**. While much of this interaction was based on the rich oral tradition, it later became based on the understanding and interpretation of text which discussed anything from the techniques of

warfare to personal ethics. Necessarily such an education was limited to a tiny minority, usually young men from the upper castes and privileged social groups. Sparing a child for a life of prolonged education was possible only among the more affluent. Access to literacy was a closely-guarded secret, and the owners of this privileged knowledge, usually Brahmins among the Hindus, were held in great esteem and treated with reverence. By the end of the eighteenth century, the situation started changing gradually. With the growth of urban areas, newer occupations and groups learning became more wide spread. This was the basis for the indigenous primary school or pathshala which soon came into being in a number of homes.

In the early nineteenth century the British rulers turned their attention to the education of Indians: expanding trade, commerce, business as well as the bureaucracy required local participation, at least at the lower levels. Prior to the introduction of the Western-style schools, a well-knit network of pathshalas existed in large parts of the country. These primary schools were established by the landed and trading elite's with the specific purpose of training the next generation for definite roles and functions. Each pathshala had a male teacher and the average number of students was a little less than 10. Boys normally began their education when they were about 8 years old, and continued for four to six years. That teaching in the pathshala was structured according to very specific rules of pedagogy and discipline. This is evident from a number of descriptions available in the writings of this time.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain what is meant by education. Use about five lines

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2) What is the distinction between education and learning? Use about five lines.

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3) What is formal education and informal education? Use about five lines.

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4) Write a note on the education system in India. use about five lines.

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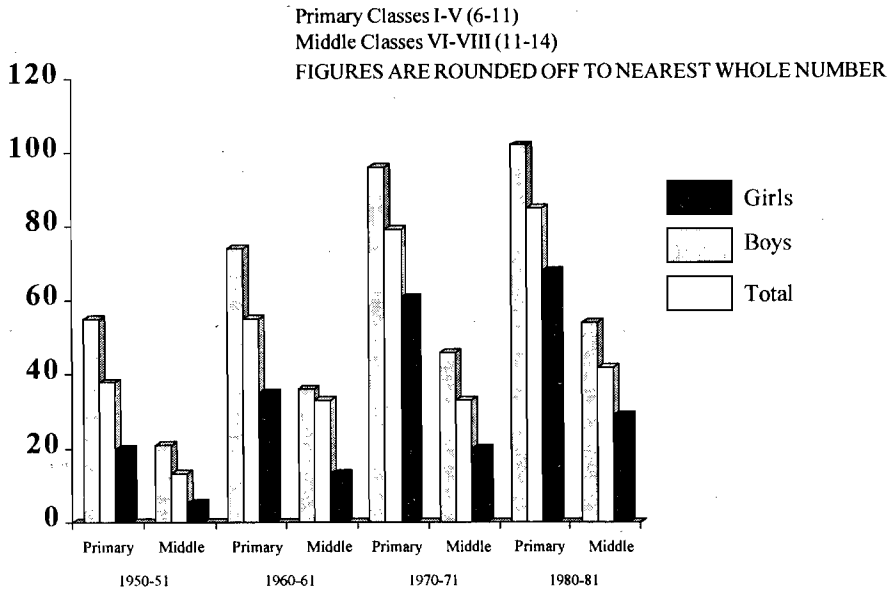
10.4 EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY

We find that when the British left India, there was a well-established network of formal educational institutions; further, there had been some headway in non-formal education as well. Yet, a look at the bar chart will make it clear that as yet, there are large sections of the population which have not been affected by the agencies of education. On the one hand, we have a fast-growing sector which can compete with the best professionals in the world, on the other, there is the expanding population of illiterates and non-school-goers.

Bar Chart: 1

Enrolment at Elementary Stage as Percentage of the Population in the Corresponding Age-Group



There are other Third World Countries which share our problem of illiteracy. In the so-called developed world, the problem is not of illiteracy, but a search for alternatives to the formal school and attempts to create greater equality in access to educational opportunities are important issues. In countries such as the USA, UK, and even the Netherlands, the presence of immigrant group with a substantial percentage of first generation learners, as well as a relative lack of resources among sections of the local population, has made increasingly relevant, the debate on the equality of educational opportunities.

10.4.1 Expansion of Education

During the last few decades, the view that educational institution should play a more active role in bringing about greater equality among individuals, has led to considerable educational expansion. It has also resulted in various interpretations of the notion of equality and its relationship with education. Before we proceed further, it is necessary to have a workable definition of equality in the context of education. Does it imply equal education for all, or does it mean equal opportunity to be educated? For, as it has been pointed out, there is a world of difference between the equal right to education, and the right to equal education. A commitment to equal education for all is based on the assumption that every one is exactly alike. This clearly is not the case. In an unequal society like ours, equality of opportunity means equal opportunity to try for education. In the West, where most of the debates on equality of educational opportunity have originated, the preoccupation is more with differences in the kind of education received rather than with the question of access to the facility itself.

In most developed countries raised questions which relate increasingly to what happens to children who have access to the assorted educational bread basket. Can everyone expect to have a piece of bread which, in relation to another, is of the same size and quality? Or will some, because of certain advantages, be able to stake a claim for a bigger and better slice? To put it more sharply, once within the system, the distribution of bread is determined by causes which may have nothing to do with the basket itself. There are factors which work in favour of some children and against others. This is manifested in a higher rate of drop out, and

unsatisfactory performance in school, among those from socially and economically under privileged groups; the better quality bread goes to those with inherent advantages. By 'drop out' we mean the phenomenon whereby children – or adults – leave a school or a literacy class before its completion. This is due to a variety of reasons. When we began this lesson we asked you to think about why you may have opted for this kind of education rather than the conventional college degree. We also drew your attention to the fact that substantial percentage of the Indian school-going population leaves school or college without finishing. Unlike you, they do not, or cannot, look for alternatives. We shall now look briefly at some of the reasons why individuals cannot or do not stay on to be educated.

10.4.2 Findings on Education

In the nineteen fifties, the work of some British social \scientists established that the working class child was disadvantaged in relation to its middle class peers. It has been shown that environmental and socio-economic factors determine the child's ability to adjust to a largely middle-class school ethos. Other sociologists came to the conclusion that differences in family background account for more differences in achievement than school background. The stage was set for state intervention as Britain launched its programmes for the identification of Educational Priority areas (EPS), and the USA started Project Head start. Briefly, both aimed at providing disadvantaged children in selected geographical pockets, with special teaching capsules, psychological enrichment programmes and stress on extra and co-curricular activities. Started earlier in India, our policy of reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, had the same goal in mind: to enable the under-privileged needed some extra help so that they have a fair chance to compete against the privileged students. By the end of the nineteen sixties it was quite clear that such concessions were not sufficient to cope with an increasingly unequal situation. Further, there was a growing feeling that educational institutions themselves worked against the integration of the child. In the rest of this unit we shall briefly examine empirical data from India, which show us how family background hamper educational progress. In the next unit, we will attempt to discuss these in the light of the functioning of institutions.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note on education and inequality. Use about five lines.

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10.5 WOMEN'S EDUCATION

It is the relatively lower enrolment of girls which accounts for the overall low enrolment rate. However, these facts only tell us a part of the story: even if all girls were in school in 1990, it is equally important to keep track of where they are in 1995: are they still in school or are they back at work in the fields or at home? For instance, in 1975-76, 66-1 pet cent of girls in the age group 6 to 11 years were enrolled in primary school classes. Most of them were in class I; if we look at the corresponding 1980/81 figures, namely at the time when these girls should have been going into class VI, the enrolment figure in this class had dropped to 29.1 per cent. In other words, before primary school is complete, over 50 per cent of girls leave the system. Latest figures made available by the government, reiterate that out of the 10 girls who join class I, barely 2 reach class VIII. Most of those who leave or do not join at all, are from among the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, and from among the urban and rural poor. Relatively far fewer Muslim girls are in schools.

But this dismal picture of literacy in India has however, begun, to change. As per the provisional figures of census 2001 there were 562.01 million literate persons in the country

and 3/4 of the male population and more than half of the female population are literate. The female literacy rate has increased by 14.87 percentage point (from 39.3% to 54-16%) as against 11.72%) (from 64.3% to 75.8%) in case of males. Also, the gap between male-female literacy rate has decreased from 28.84 in 1991 census to 21.70 percentage point in 2001.

10.5.1 Schooling and Literacy

It has been pointed out that in order to be meaningful, a minimum of four to five years of schooling is essential so as to ensure that recipients do not lapse back into illiteracy. However, in a situation where 44 million children comprise the child labour force, and every third household has an earning child, national educational goals have to contend with individual strategies for survival. Sociologists as well as economists and educational planners have been concerned with finding ways to explain, as well as resolve this crisis. It has been clearly established that the high opportunity cost of education in relation to the poverty of families, makes schooling unattractive. The returns on education which normally takes as few years at school are low. Being in school means foregoing, or at any rate, limiting participation in paid work. When families live at the subsistence level, the costs in real terms are too high, and schooling is perceived as a poor investment which provides no definite access to better employment.

A number of studies in urban slums have borne out that formal schooling has a marginal role to play in the lives of girls. A recent Delhi study of Balmikis a sub-caste of the North Indian Bhangis or sweepers, found that as girls were expected to combine housework and traditional employment with marriage, schooling was found to be of little consequence. Almost 75 pert cent of mothers whose sons were being educated, wanted them to complete school, while 50 per cent with daughters, admitted that their girls had not studied beyond class III. They left school because they had secured jobs, were married off or were needed to help with the housework, look after a younger sibling and so on. Also see Table I, showing the reasons for low enrolment of girls as reported by headmaster and teachers.

Table 1: Reasons for Low Enrolment of Girls as Reported by Headmasters and Teachers

Reasons	*Percentage (%) of Headmasters*	*Responses from Teachers*
Economic Backwardness	49	61
Girls engage in domestic/gainful activities	45	37
Indifference/apathy of parents	41	49
Another School nearby	16	7
Social backwardness	14	12
Social backwardness	10	15
Inadequate teaching aids/craft/class equipment/ lack of playgrounds	4	6
Schools at a distance/communication difficulty	–	–
No separate girls' schools	1	7

10.5.2 Question of Illiteracy

In a Bombay slum it was found that illiteracy was three times higher since migrant population were prepared to send their daughters for only a few years to primary school, but hoped that their sons would finish school. As you know, competition for jobs of all kinds is becoming more and more intense. Coupled with the urbanisation process, we have a situation where young men from families with little or no education among the older generation, eagerly flock to classes and courses of various kinds whether one hopes to become a bus conductor, office clerk, or join the civil service, certificates, diplomas and degrees are valuable assets. This increased competitiveness also means that when resources are scarce, families will be more eager to spend them on a son, the traditional bread-winner, than on a daughter. Nonetheless across socio-economic classes and religious and ethnic groups, we find that more and more girls are participating in formal and non-formal methods of education. Among the growing middle classes an educated daughter is an asset. Often, their earnings are crucial for the well-being of the family.

For the bulk of Indian women however, the question, whether or not to work, is of no relevance: for generations, working class women have toiled in the fields, tended cattle, cooked meals for a large family, helped in building roads and so on. It is also among these groups that the indifference to education for girls is the greatest. Early marriage and restraints on the girls who are nearing puberty, reinforce this indifference. In the last two units, you have been introduced to the concept of socialisation; you are therefore familiar with how the family socialises boys and girls differently. When young girls perform deftly the job of stacking together large piles of firewood or make cow dung cakes of the right size and consistency, we know that they have learnt these skills at their mother's side. They do not need to go to school so as to help their families. The process of socialisation takes care of these functions. this is also true of the socialisation of young boys who go in to traditional occupations or are apprenticed early in occupations such as the match-stick making, lock-making and glass bangle industries.

Activity 2

In your family identify 3 women of different generations (such as, your Grandmother, mother, sister) and find out from them what level of education they have had (if at all). What were the reasons for them to dropout. Write a report of one page on "Women's Education in India" based on your findings. Share it with other students and discuss with your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

10.5.3 Education and Employment

Thus, when poor families send their daughters to school, they rarely do so with hopes of better employment prospects: while it would be incorrect on our part to ignore the fact that there is a growing consciousness regarding the benefits of schooling, we should also be aware of the fact that education means different things to different groups. When a share cropper decided to send his six year old girl to the village school he probably does so because others in the village have sent their girls to school. Further, in a society where there is substantial violence against women there is a feeling that if a girl can read and write, she can at least communicate with her family after marriage. This creates a sense of security in the minds of many a parent, troubled by thoughts of their daughter's future. Of greater relevance to pólicy makers, however, is the view that the school can act as a care-taker for a few hours in the day: in a situation where institutionalised child care facilities are so woefully inadequate, policy planners are now thinking of ways by which the school can beg made more attractive to older children as well. Mid-day meals, attaching a balwadi or creche to the primary school, as well as involving health workers in the process of education, are some of the measures being considered.

Thus, the process of making school more attractive to groups which have so far been indifferent, if not hostile, is not always easy. When such efforts have to contend with institutions and individuals who are not themselves convinced of the need to integrate children from varying backgrounds, the problems are magnified.

The fast growing higher education sector which caters to only a small segment of the population, absorbs almost as much, by way of resources, as the primary education sector meant for a much larger section of Indian society. In one way or another, most societies are faced with this issue of the demands of the few versus the needs of the many. Put in another way, quality, and therefore elite education, has to co-exist with mass education. The point at issue of course is whether enough attention is being devoted to strategies for making primary education more relevant, and hence popular. While there is no single crisis affecting Indian education as a whole there are many problem areas in each sector. It is nonetheless true that the issues arising out of the problem of privilege are of paramount importance. Inequalities of access to vital resources necessary for survival, render irrelevant and peripheral city-based discussions on how to increase educational enrolments. In the next unit we shall look at the internal workings of the educational system; this may help to understand better how the school or the text-book has also internalised the values of a hierarchical society. We shall also examine some proposed solutions on how to overcome the problems of illiteracy as well as the more general question, is the school relevant anymore?

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note on women's education. Use about five lines.

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2) Discuss the question of schooling and illiteracy. Use about five lines.

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10.6 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit how education implies a particular system of imparting knowledge. We have seen that this can be done both in formal and informal ways. We have mentioned in this unit how the system of education in India developed. The unit also informed us clearly on the development of education including that meant for women. More is being done to expand education, however, the situation today is much better than ever before.

10.7 FURTHER READINGS

1) Mckee, James B., 1974, Sociology: The Study of Society Holt, Rinehart and Winston New York.

2) Worsley, Peter, 1987, The New Introduction Sociology Penguin Books Ltd.. Middlesex.

10.8 KEY WORDS

Education : Teaching given through a specific organised system e.g. school and college.

Formal : Where there is a clear cut organisation following specific rules.

Inequality : When there is a lack of balance in distribution of rewards of money, benefit of education etc.

Literacy : Ability to read, write and comprehend in any language.

Nai Talim : Basic Education

10.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Education has been defined as 'systematic instruction" for the "development of character and of mental powers". Instruction refers to a process where by the learner acquires knowledge from the teacher. This knowledge has been processed and graded according to the age and intelligence levels of the average student.

2) The distinction between education and learning is that education is conducted in a formal organised system like school, college or university. In this system the teacher

organises the activity of the student. Learning process is one where knowledge is acquired informally without the need of a teacher. It is not time bound and can be life long.

3) Formal education is directly transmitted by the teacher in an organised and structured system. It leads to the acquisition of a formal degree or diploma. In comparison, non-formal education inspite of providing relevant information does not necessarily involves assessments, tests, etc. It imparts information through unconventional means such as use of songs, story-telling, etc.

4) The educational system in India can be traced back to the guru-shishya parampara or tradition of a personalised teaching by the guru. Later the understanding and interpretation of the religious texts became the basis of education. It was, thereby, confined to a minority of elite's who were generally the Brahimns. At the end of eighteenth century growth of urban area lead to the development of indigenous primary school or pathshala. In the early nineteenth century, the British rulers introduced Western style schools and expanded the field of learning trade, commerce, business, as well as, bureaucracy.

Check Your Progress 2

1) It has been universally accepted that educational institutions should play a more active role in bringing about greater equality amongst individuals. However, there is a difference between equal right to education and the right to equal education. A commitment to equal education for all is based on the assumption that everyone is alike. This is not the case. In an unequal society like ours, equality of opportunity means equal opportunity to try for education

Check Your Progress 3

1) The enrolment of girls in schools is very low in India. Even those who go to school are seldom able to complete even their primary education. Girls are the major dropouts in schools due to certain socio-economic reasons. They are required to learn household jobs and help in the care of younger siblings.

2) It is essential to have a minimum of four to five years of schooling. This is to ensure that the recipient of this schooling does not lapse back into illiteracy. The function of schooling is different for different class and section of people. Amongst the poorer section the rate of drop outs from school is very high. This is because very little immediate reward is perceived by them in remaining in school. Going to school means foregoing paid work or being available at home.

UNIT 11 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Structure

11.0 Objectives

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Education and Inequality

- 11.2.1 Primary Schools
- 11.2.2 Private Schools

11.3 Educational Profession

- 11.3.1 Studies on Teachers
- 11.3.2 Education and Teachers
- 11.3.3 Achievement in School
- 11.3.4 Writing Textbooks

11.4 Discrimination in Education

- 11.4.1 Various Disciplines
- 11.4.2 Science and Gender
- 11.4.3 Scheduled Castes and Tribes
- 11.4.4 Education and Voluntary Organisation

11.5 Let Us Sum Up

11.6 Further Readings

11.7 Key Words

11.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After you have read this unit you should be able to:

- explain the factor of inequality in the system of education,
- analyse various aspects of the educational profession;
- identify factors leading to discrimination in education; and
- describe the education of scheduled castes and tribes.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit on educational institutions we are going to teach you about education in various aspects. This unit begins with aspects of education and inequality. This includes types of educational institutions. The unit goes on to study the educational profession in some detail. It touches upon achievement in school, and some comments are made on textbooks that are used. The next section has a fairly detailed discussion on discrimination in education on gender basis, class basis and so on. This unit therefore provides fairly a broad idea of educational institutions.

11.2 EDUCATION AND INEQUALITY

After reading the last unit you may well assume that the hierarchical division within society make it difficult for education to achieve its stated goals. This is undoubtedly true, it is equally important to remember that the educational system itself is not free from inequalities. Over here we shall deal with stratificationís within the school system, biases in text books and the processes of discrimination in the class. We shall then look at how the non-formal stream has been affected by the assumptions of the formal system. Finally we shall briefly examine suggested solutions to some of the issues raised.

In Britain there is a link between education in one of the expensive fee-paying public schools, and admission to the renowned universities of Oxford and Cambridge and access to top professional and management jobs. A small percentage of Britons control the share market as well as dominate in a number of other occupational fields. In India, the colonial legacy has resulted in similar trends: a student from a public school such as Doon School or St. Paul's or a high fee-paying non-residential private school is much more likely to gain admission to the country's better-known colleges and universities than his peer in a government school. The chief reason is that the former not only train students to compete for a limited number of seats but also to use the English Language fluently. Despite all our attempts at giving the national languages place in the sun, English remains the language of the elite or those who occupy dominant positions in society.

11.2.1 Primary Schools

According to recent figures, there are 6.9 lakh educational institutions in the country. Over 70 per cent of these are primary schools. These are funded by the government, municipal corporations and private bodies. The largest number of these institutions are funded and run by the government; however if we look at the figures of those who gain access to the prestigious institutions for higher education such as the IITs, IIMs, Medical Colleges and the professional institutions, a majority come from the small percentage of private schools. Clearly, government support to schools does not guarantee studentsí access to higher education, much of which is also funded by the government. Paying relatively low fees the son of a top civil servant or the daughter of a flourishing doctor train to be architects or engineers in institutions where public funds heavily subsidise education. In time they are absorbed in well-paid jobs in established institutions.

The majority of Indian children go to government and municipal schools, but only a few find their way to college and professional institutions. Again, for many of those in school, facilities are woefully inadequate: government figures indicate that 40 per cent of schools have no proper buildings nor black-boards, while almost 60 per cent have no drinking water facilities. On the other hand, the fifty-five odd public schools modelled after their British counterparts teach their students horse riding and archery, chess and photography in picturesque surroundings, and amidst much luxury. In a somewhat fresh attempt at providing rural and less privileged children access to similar schools, the government has launched its scheme of Navoday Vidyalaya or model schools. The aim of these schools is to provide deserving students, particularly in the rural areas, access to quality education irrespective of the economic status of their parents.

11.2.2 Private Schools

The government is supposedly opposed to the perpetuation of privilege through high fee-paying private schools; however, these Navoday Vidyalayas are doing precisely this, except that their catchment area is somewhat different. The powerful landed elite in rural areas, who had so far felt discriminated against by the educational system are now being provided with prestigious education for their children. In principle, while there is nothing wrong with the establishment of more quality institutions, these do not necessarily spread greater equality. At best they help in widening somewhat the base of privilege & opportunity. A report from Maharashtra, where 7 such schools are functioning, indicate that haste in initiating the programme has resulted in a somewhat uneven beginning. While one of the aims of these 'pace-setting' institutions is to encourage rural girls to participate in quality education, it has been shown time and again that parents are reluctant to send their daughters to co-education institutions. Further, the notion of co-education residential institutions at the school level is itself an innovative one; even the elite would perhaps hesitate to send their children to such institutions. Consequently, in the school at Amaravati, there were 29 girls out of a total of 120 students, and 8 out of 74 in the Tuljapur Navoday Vidyalaya. Given the dismal picture of girlís education, this is quite an encouraging beginning; what remains to be seen however, is how long these girls will stay on in these schools. It is more than possible that these Vidyalayas will soon become an essential part of the selective educational structures catering to the sons of the fast-growing rural upper and middle classes.

Thus we find that the educational system is not an independent agent of change but rather its institutions reinforce existing inequalities as well as create new disparities. For instance, the Navoday Schools are widening the divide in rural society, and even succeeding in

transmitting urban, consumerist norms to those so far protected from the school, namely, the attitude of teachers, biases in text books and so on.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How does inequality enter into primary educational institutions? Use about ten lines for your answer.

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11.3 EDUCATIONAL PROFESSION

If we look at the works of the well-known philosophers of education the assumption appears to be that if the legitimate needs of teachers could be met, they would be successful professionals. In the late twentieth century, the situation is somewhat different: the social base of those to be educated is being increasingly widened, while teachers tend to come from the hard core of the middle classes. In such a situation, a teacherís involvement with the job is determined by other factors which are almost as important as security of tenure and reasonable working hours. Essential for teacher-student empathy is the sharing of a common value code between the teachers and the taught. Further, if this is not possible, there is the need to appreciate that any culture which is different from that of the teacher is not necessarily inferior and in need of immediate reform. In India, students in elite privately-run schools have more facilities than those studying in government and municipal schools. This is also true of the extent of teacher involvement and identification with students and their problems. The typical public school product is expected to be truthful, fearless and cultured. Subsequently, he/she often becomes a member of the country's elite professions or a successful business person. Boys and girls from the top echleons of society are trained by masters familiar with the dominant norms of that particular culture. There is no basic conflict between the broad objectives of elite private and public schools and aspirations of the pupilís families. Both want preparation for high status and well-paid occupations.

11.3.1 Studies on Teachers

Comparative studies of teachers in urban private and government schools have indicated that the former find it easier to identify with their students. In the government schools, lower middle class and middle class teachers are keen to maintain their distance from their students, most of whom are from the working class. The usual reaction of teachers interviewed in the government schools is that their students are stupid, ignorant and cunning. Such attitudes are strengthened by value systems which stress differences in language, sentence construction and vocabulary as well as, the teachers perception of decent behaviour. The British educational sociologist Basil Bernstein has dealt at length with how knowledge is transmitted in schools. He feels that there are distinct social class-based linguistic codes which determine class room interaction, either at the level of speech or through the written word. These codes favour the upper and middle socio-economic groups who consequently have access to and control over a particular style of life. This style of life which the sociologists

have characterised as the piling up of culture capital, constantly reinforces the relationship between social class and a particular kind of education: those children who do not follow the dominant middle class language of the classroom remain isolated, if not alienated.

Studies from the U.S.A. and Britain have shown how race and ethnicity become vital elements in the teacher assessment of students. Often, these are not borne out by objective intelligence tests. A British study established that middle class teachers tended to favour the more neatly dressed children as well as those whom they felt came from 'better' homes. This labelling can be harmful as students themselves soon internalise the stereotypes which teachers have developed of them. A study in an elementary school for black children in the U.S.A. found that students about whom teachers had high expectations became achievers while the performance of low-expectation students decline.

11.3.2 Education and Teachers

In the black area of Harlem in New York city it was found that teachers were systematically imposing white values, culture and language on the students. If children were unable to adapt to this essentially alien way of life, they were treated as potential failures. Teachers who were the primary agents in superimposing this culture were fully convinced of the importance of their role. The above analysis has highlighted two different pedagogical approaches: the first relates to deliberate neglect of the working class child and the second to school reform which attempts to stamp out a subculture and impose another on pupils from different backgrounds. Critics of American educational reforms in the Sixties found that the latter was being practised in many schools throughout the country. On the other hand, in India where the majority of the country's children up to the age of 14 years come from underprivileged homes and share little in common with either their teacher or the formal school curriculum, the problem is more of neglect. Implicit in this neglect is the belief that the middle class school curriculum and the culture it professes is superior to that of the poor child; hence if the child does not understand, the fault lies with him or her, and not with the teacher, teaching method or the curriculum. The assumption is that if the child was able to accept the middle class ways of life, as taught in school, the chances of social and occupational mobility would perhaps be much greater. The initiative for learning, however, lies with te child. On the other hand, in U.S.A., teachers are trained to make children learn an alien idiom. There are few concessions made to cultural and ethnic differences which may affect a childís adjustment process.

Activity 1

Visit a Government School in your neighbourhood one day and find out from its teacher(s) about the class background of their students and whether it is related with their performance in studies or not. Repeat the same in a Public/Convent School one day. Write an essay of two pages on 'Education and Inequality' based on your findings and share it with other students at your Study Centre. Also, discuss this topic with your Academic Counsellor.

11.3.3 Achievement in School

It is now accepted that school achievement is the outcome of a wide range of factors.

In India, where the problem of school drop-outs is admitted to be 'intractable', it is essential to carry out further research into the role of the teacher and curricula in the educational system and also the child's alienation from the system. Again, a working class child's staying on in school is also dependent on whether the family finds education useful. A high opportunity cost will take children away from school; so will the attitudes of parents who feel that teachers and school administration are unsympathetic. Apart from the teacher, textbooks and work assigned in class tends to be geared to the average middle class child. If you look at some of the prescribed school books, you will no doubt be struck by the fact that in the languages, often stories deal with situations and characters with whom children from certain homes can hardly have any familiarity: if the aim of education is to promote understanding, an obvious method would be through learning situations with which the child is familiar. At the same time, the perpetuation, or even creation, of stereotypes can, in the long run, be counter-productive. A case in point is the portrayal of girls and women in textbooks.

11.3.4 Writing Textbooks

It is now being increasingly recognised that the text-book, whether it teaches English or Mathematics, can, through the use of characters and symbols in certain situation become a powerful medium for the perpetuation of stereotypes and role models. For instance, an NCERT sponsored study in Hindi text books which are widely used in the country found that the ratio of boy-centred stories was 21:0. Again when the books made biographical references, 94 out of 110 relate to prominent men. In the thirteen English language text-books published by the Central Institute of English. Hyderabad, boy-centred stories outnumbered girl-centred ones by eighty-one to nine. Further, the general tenor in books, in both the languages was to portray boys as courageous, achieving and interested in science and technology; girls and women were rarely, portrayed in the role associated with economic activity or independence. A study of Marathi text books found that even when girls were seen as being employed, they were invariably portrayed in menial and subordinate roles.

Taking note of the fact that such gross deviations from reality could indeed affect self-perceptions, the women's Education Unit in the NCERT recently undertook projects to devise handbooks on how text books should be written so as to improve the status of women. The handbook for Mathematics demonstrates aptly how change in attitudes can be introduced through a supposedly gender specific subject. Earlier in the text book pro-male gender biases were depicted. At present gender neutral problems are asked to solve. For example, suggested problems ask students of class III to work out how much Lakshman had in his bank account before he distributed equal sums to his daughter and to his son. At the middle school level, ratios, graphs and equations are introduced through the biographical details of women scientists and mathematicians. Of greater importance than the sums themselves are the instructions to teachers who are asked to weave in the text while teaching students how to solve a problem.

The originators of these innovative handbooks are well aware of the fact that unless the teachers are convinced of the need to teach more imaginatively, children will concentrate on the solution only and not on the text. Clearly this is the crux of the problem: teachers are by and large a conservative force, who are not easily convinced of the need to teach or preach greater equality between the sexes through Mathematics, Physics or Hindi. Nor is it easy to start the process of text books revision or ensure that the same text books are to be taught in all the schools in the country. Further, text book writers themselves are singularly resistant to change as they feel that radical deviations would clearly disturb the well-entrenched expectations of both the school community as well as the family.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note on education and values. Use about five lines.

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2) Discuss aspects of achievement in school. Use about five lines for your answer.

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11.4 DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

We find that it is not only text books and teachers who discriminate against certain sections of the student populations but that the process has grown deep roots within the system. Irrespective of the level of education being considered, Indian boys have an advantage over girls in terms of access, retention and the future use of their training. Further, in the case of the small percentage of the population which can exercise the option of going in for higher education, girls are invariably concentrated in the lower status, less competitive forms of education. In this, girls from the upper middle class and middle class share with the first generation literate son of a farmer or a potter, a common destiny. There is a distinct dividing line between the high status of relatively few medical colleges, institutes of technology, management and engineering and the bulk of higher education consisting of the proliferating degree colleges, polytechnics and technical institutes. While, by and large, the former are the preserve of boys from privileged background, the latter cater to their sisters as well as to boys who are unable to succeed in highly competitive selection tests which assume a fluency and familiarity with a certain sub-culture as well as the English language.

Thus the dual system of higher education which separates a select, self perpetuating elite from the majority trained in different institutions is divided not only on the basis of socio-economic status but also on the basis of sex. The relevant difference here is that while boys from certain backgrounds often cannot succeed in gaining admission to elite institutions, the girls in question are not allowed to try to succeed. While middle class boys too have to face pressures of various kinds when making choices, these are of a qualitatively different nature. In male-dominated society, the stress imposed on boys by the syndrome of achievement, examination and selection is not inconsequential; yet there is a commitment to getting into and in succeeding in wider range of courses through open competition. Theoretically, girls are supposed to have access to the same courses as boys. In actual fact, if they are allowed to go to college, they tend to flock to a few, selective 'feminine' areas of study. Boys are socialised to compete and succeed and girls to accept participation in well demarcated, 'safe' educational realms. These statements will become a little clearer to you if we examine some empirical data.

11.4.1 Various Disciplines

There is an assumption that girls are better at somethings than at others. Of equal importance is the labelling of male-dominated disciplines associated with Science, Mathematics, and Engineering as more prestigious and requiring a high level of intelligence. A limited number of institutions specialising in these areas, access to which is determined by highly competitive entrance examinations, serve to create an elite crops in higher education. Girls as we shall see, are rarely among the chosen few. In India one major advantage of the 10+2+3 system (where 10+2 refers to the years in school and +3 to the time spend on a first degree) is that it makes the learning of Science and Mathematics obligatory for all students up to the class X (10) level. Yet, though this pattern of education was officially adopted in 1968, it has still to be accepted in a few states. Consequently, under the old scheme, schools can continue to offer Home Science and Art for girls rather than Science and Mathematics. However, we also find that schools under the new scheme find ways of countering the system due to the professed inadequacy of teaching staff: thus in the Jama Masjid area of Delhi, which caters to a largely Muslim populations, girls' schools are unable to offer Science and Mathematics because qualified women teachers are not available. It is also not improbable that such schools are in fact catering to the demands for education of a certain kind for girls from an essentially purdah society. That the notion of what is right and proper for a girl to study permeates the education system in general is evident from the kind of choices that girls make at the +2 level, that is for classes XI and XII. A recent study of Delhi Schools indicated that while girls constituted about 60 per cent of the Art stream and about 30 per cent in the Science and Commerce stream, over 40 per cent flocked to the relatively new vocational stream. Further, the subject-wise breakdown of vocational options showed that girls were concentrated in typing, weaving, textiles, health care and beauty culture while boys chose ophthalmics and optics, auditing and accounting in addition to office management. Again, for the socially useful productive work options in a non-academic area which was offered in classes IX and X, choices are markedly sex-typed and girls continue to do the same tasks in school as are assigned to them at home. However, a look at the performance of girls in school-leaving examinations in various parts of the country indicate that not only is the level of girls higher

than that of boys but also those who have opted for the Science stream often fare as well if not better; than their male peers. Taking the Delhi Secondary school (class XII) results for 1985, we find that girls secured a higher pass percentage than boys in all the four groups of Science, Humanities, Commerce and Vocational Studies. While over 70 per cent of those who opted for Science were boys, 60 per cent of the Humanities students were girls and the Commerce stream was evenly divided between boys and girls; the vocational group was more popular among girls. Interestingly, though a fewer number of girls were in the Science group, their pass percentage was as high as 83.8 per cent as against 70.7 per cent for boys.

Activity 2

Interview 5 male students and 5 female students about their choice of subject and career options. Write a page on 'Gender & Education: Pattern and its changes'. Discuss your answer with other students at your Study Centre, as well as your Academic Counsellor.

11.4.2 Science and Gender

Two important questions need to be asked. Firstly, how many girls who fare well in Science at the class X examinations do in fact opt for it at the +2 stage? Secondly, how many of those who offer Science for the final school leaving examination continue with it or with related subjects at the degree level? While it is difficult to give precise answers, there are indications that in some of the best schools in the country there is one girl to four boys in the Science section. Further, class room observations of teacher trainees show that these girls are quiet and reserved non-participants. While they were diligent about their home work and performed well in unit tests, they rarely took part in discussions which were dominated by the boys. The fact that they were in a minority may have accounted for their low degree of participation. Nonetheless, those who taught classes VI and VII found that adolescent girls were as assertive and definite in their point of view as boys, indicating that adolescent girls soon internalised the need to be submissive and obedient, rather than be questioning and argumentative, particularly, in a male-dominated environment. A principal of a leading co-educational school in Delhi commented that most girls who did take up Sciences, hoped to become doctors. The majority of those who were not successful in the premedical tests, went in for Home Science, the Natural Sciences, Bio-Chemistry, or switched to Arts subjects. Very few aspired to be Engineers, Research Scientists or Geo-physicists. With approaching adolescence, the socialisation of girls stresses docility, obedience and a sense of duty to the family collectively. Social scientists have pointed out that the inner life of the school reflects a hierarchy of authority, based on middle class domination; as we have seen, this is evident in linguistic codes as well as in the text books used.

Boys from underprivileged homes share many of these disabilities with girls. For instance, if we look at studies conducted among the Scheduled Castes we find that students often suffer because they are unable to comprehend all that is being taught to them. A more or less uniform curriculum in the regional language is not always comprehensible to children from a variety of linguistic and social class backgrounds. Both the language as well as the subject matter are often alien to some students who then drop out of the system. Further, corruption within educational institutions acts as further disincentives as families rarely have the resources to pay for routine "pass karani" and hospitality fee for examiners and others. Even then Scheduled Caste boys manage to make it to the portals of higher learning.

11.4.3 Scheduled Castes and Tribes

A Case study of thirteen Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe students admitted to the B.Tech course at the IIT, Bombay in 1973 found that only five were still enrolled at the end of the second year. Though all had been through a crash course designed to help them overcome some of their social and educational disadvantages, this was clearly not enough to make up for the disabilities of birth. While half left because they found the academic standard too high, the rest complained of antagonism from their caste peers. Staying in the hostel, using cutlery and crockery as well as having to speak and writing English were problematic. Only a very few qualify for these quality institutions; most are concentrated in colleges for general education or ITIs or their equivalent.

This is not to suggest that the Scheduled Castes are a homogeneous category and that all are as fortunate. Here too, some important comments are applicable as we find that some are

more equal than others. Reservation of seats provides the opportunity for a small percentage of the Scheduled Castes to compete while the large majority remain outside the system. The distribution of scarce resources within a large community has certain side effects, and the better organised and politically more powerful Scheduled Castes take the lion's share of seats. By widening the gap between the underprivileged and the more advantaged within the community, education creates new inequalities. Of course, we are not arguing against reservations but merely attempting to make you aware of the fact that even when policy makers intend otherwise, the beneficiaries of a particular strategy are not always those for whom it is really meant.

If we are talking about privilege and opportunity, it would be safe to conclude that large sections of the population which include girls, members of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes and those who are otherwise economically and socially deprived, are in fact non-participants in the formal educational system. In the earlier unit we had mentioned briefly that the non-formal system too suffers from a number of problems. A major difficulty arises out of the inability to devise syllabi and course material which are sufficiently relevant to the target population. Here again, as most text book writers and planning and teaching personnel are from the middle class, perceptions of what is required is often at variance with actual needs. In isolation, non-formal or adult education classes can be of limited use: it is essential that they should be linked to the wider issues of development and skill acquisition. Otherwise these programmes will remain irrelevant and pointless. As those involved with many such projects have pointed out, only those immediate requirements such as accessible drinking water supply, cheaper grain and medical aid when illness keeps them away from work or regarded as relevant matters. For poverty creates a legitimate indifference to "debating the fundamentals of citizenship, social integration, the sharing of political power".

11.4.4 Education and Voluntary Organisation

Increasingly, voluntary organisations, women's groups and others have been concerned with making non-formal education more relevant. This is not always easy in a situation where the education is barely trained to teach differently. Further, course material, flip charts, diagrams and so on are not always relevant. In such a situation, much is to be gained by innovation and enterprise: the experiences of some groups in Maharashtra indicate how a little imagination and initiative can go a long way in stimulating interest. In a non-formal class among women of the nomadic Gosavi group, participation was maximised by combining group singing, story-telling and the dissemination of basic health information with distribution of the primer.

Not many non-formal centres are run like the above. Both the formal as well as non-formal sectors suffer from excessive bureaucratisation and lack of imagination. Obsession with opening institutions without verifying whether existing ones are working as desired has resulted in Navoday Vidyalayas where the Nav Yug schools have not got off the ground. This is a problem which, to a greater or lesser extent, has been shared by several countries. Consequently since the end of the nineteen sixties a period of disillusionment with education set in, and concerned persons have been speaking and writing about alternatives. Few social scientists felt that schools should be abolished as they only spread inequality and taught children to compete excessively in a system based on a hidden curriculum. This curriculum measured a child's ability in terms of the amount of learning he or she consumed: results were more important than content. Experts who devised a unique method of educating the poor in Latin America, believed that it was confusing the issue if we assume that formal, structured education could help combat the disadvantages of birth.

Box 11.01

Ivan Illich (1971) was one of the main proponents of the deschooling society. He wrote a book with the same title **Deschooling Society (1971)**, Harper $ Row. The aim of schools, according to Illich, should be to prepare students to make a better society and to live in the society successfully. This aim, he believes can be fulfilled by getting educated outside the walls of the formal school.

Other social scientists, such as, John Holt (How Children Fail, Del. Publishing Co.); Paul Goodman (Compulsory Miseducation, Horizon Press); Everelt Reimer (School is Dead, Doubleday and Com.), have also led the de-schooling attack on the educational status quo. They all belong to conflict school of thought.

However, these experiments too have only been partially successful. You are by now familiar that education, rather than promote positive change, can often act as a hindrance. For instance, as we have seen, its role in perpetuating new inequalities is not inconsequential. When you read the units on socialisation, social structure, status and role and so on, it will be easier for you to fit these two units into a wider context. Most social institutions change and are subject to modification as soon as they become a part of the essential interactive process. When studying sociology we should not have pre-conceived notions on what institutions should be like; instead we need to constantly remind ourselves that change and modifications are essential for human growth and survival.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Fill in the blanks:

a) Irrespective of the level of education being considered important ..... have an advantage over ..... in terms of access.

b) The dual system of ..... which separates a select, self perpetuating elite from the majority trained in indifferent institutions is divided not only on the basis of ..... status but also on the basis of .....

2) What is the situation for the education of scheduled caste and tribes? Use about five lines.

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11.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt various aspects of educational institutions. We will mention here the themes that were tackled. Firstly the theme of education and inequality was discussed. Secondly various aspects of the educational profession were considered. Thirdly the question of discrimination in education was taken up. These themes have been discussed in various aspects. The discussion was both wide ranging and detailed.

11.6 FURTHER READINGS

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11.7 KEY WORDS

Achievement : Refers here to performance in academic pursuits e.g. marks in class.

Discrimination : To have an attitude against certain types of student, e.g. poor students.

Gender : There are two genders – male or female.

Innovative : Refers to any new steps in education, e.g. audio-visual aspects to ordinary printed lessons.

Purdah : A veil which hides the face. Also refers to the social practice by women of concealing one's face in the presence of certain categories of male relations.

Opportunity Cost : Loosing of particular monetary benefits (opportunity) to gain some other one. For example a young man gives up an opportunity to join a service to pursue his study. Here service is the opportunity cost.

11.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Inequality enters the primary educational institutions through the kind of educational facilities that are provided to the students. The majority of Indian students go to government and municipal schools. Out of these only a few find their way to college and professional institutions. While for a minority of students who come from better off families, public schools provide educations. These schools have best facilities in terms of quality as well as quantity. Students from these institutions generally, go on for higher education and do well there. They also acquire jobs later. Thus inequality is perpetuated in our system of education.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Values enter into education at every level. Often a student and her/his teacher belong to different classes of the society. They are brought up in different value-systems. Therefore, when a teacher tries to change the way of dressing or speaking of a student he or she is imposing his or her values on the child.

2) School achievement is the outcome of a wide range of factors. The role of teachers, the curricula and text books play an important part in encouraging a child, Parental initiative and sympathy and understanding of the teacher affects the child's progress. Otherwise the child becomes alienated and loses interest.

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) Indian boys, girls

   b) Higher education, socio-economic, sex

2) In spite of government support the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe students are not able to overcome some of their social and educational disadvantages. This is clearly evident from the case study conducted in various parts of the country. (referred to in the section 11.4.3)

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UNIT 12 ECONOMY AND TECHNOLOGY

Structure

12.0 Objectives

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Relationship Between Economy, Technology and Society

- 12.2.1 Definition of Economy
- 12.2.2 Definition of Technology
- 12.2.3 Economy and Society

12.3 Development of Technology in Pre-modern Societies

- 12.3.1 Simple Societies
- 12.3.2 Pastoral Societies
- 12.3.3 Peasant Societies
  - 12.3.3.1 Rise of Agricultural Surplus
  - 12.3.3.2 Emergence of New Social Institution
  - 12.3.3.3 Division of Labour
- 12.3.4 Growth of Cities

12.4 Development of Technology in Modern Societies

- 12.4.1 The Industrial Revolution
- 12.4.2 Models of Development

12.5 Social Aspects of Technological Development

- 12.5.1 Industrial Corporations
- 12.5.2 Theses of Karl Marx and Max Weber
- 12.5.3 Emergence of Affluent Workers
- 12.5.4 Alienation of Modern Workers

12.6 Modern Technology and Work Relationships

- 12.6.1 Machines and Production
- 12.6.2 Job Creation
- 12.6.3 Technology and Unionism

12.7 Let Us Sum Up

12.8 Further Readings

12.9 Key words

12.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to describe:

- the inter-relationships between economy, technology and society
- the process of development of technology in pre-modern and modern societies
- the impact of technological development on the process of production, and socio-cultural institutions of the society.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Unit we will study the relation between economy, technology and society. We will study the technological development in simple societies, pastoral societies, peasant agricultural societies and urban industrial societies. We will also learn about industrial revolution and several other aspects of economy. This will include industrially advanced societies. The role of technology and economy in industrially advanced economies in modern societies. This

includes a discussion of technology and work relationship including work ethics. Job creation, role of machines, and unionism are the other issues discussed in this unit.

12.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ECONOMY, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

In all societies we find people struggling to survive. In this struggle for survival they use products of nature like wood, stone, mud, grass, metals etc. to create tools and other inventions to serve their needs. The satisfaction of material, physical and social needs of the people is what constitute the economy of that society. Now we will tell you what economy and technology are and how they are related with a distinct type of society.

12.2.1 Definition of Economy

Individuals everywhere in the world experience wants that can only be satisfied by the use of material goods and the services of others. To meet such wants, human beings rely on the economic system which consists of the provision of goods and services. Any need related to physical well-being is a biological want. People must eat, drink, maintain a constant body temperature, defend themselves and deal with injury and illness. Satisfaction of these needs requires the use of material goods, food, water, clothing, shelter, weapons, medicine and the co-operative services of others. In addition, social wants are essential to the maintenance of social relationships and availability of material goods and services. People identify particular social roles with special clothing and bodily adornments or tools.

For example, a doctor must wear special clothing, use special medical instruments and work in a clinic furnished with examination table, X-ray machine, etc. Without these material items and the services of nurses and technicians the doctor could not play the role successfully. People also use material goods and services to enhance social solidarity by exchanging them with others. Gifts, for instance, reaffirm kinship ties at religious and social functions.

12.2.2 Definition of Technology

Technology has been broadly described as practical arts. These arts range from hunting, gathering, fishing, agriculture, animal husbandry, mining etc., to manufacturing construction, transportation, provision of food, power, heat, light, etc. It also includes means of communication, medicine and military technology. Technologies have been described as bodies of skills, knowledge, and procedures for making, using and doing useful things. It centres on processes that are primarily biological and physical rather than psychological and social processes. They represent the cultural traditions developed in human communities for dealing with the physical and biological environment, which includes the human biological organism itself.î (International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 15)

12.2.3 Economy and Society

Economy of any society is related not only to the social standards of the community but it is also a function of tools and technological inventions that have taken place in that society. This fact is clearly evident when we examine the growth of human societies and the development of technologies from simple, pastoral to agrarian and modern industrial societies.

But before we go on to describe the development of technology in pre-modern and modern societies, we will like to explain that goods and services do not automatically fulfil biological and social wants of human beings. There must be some organised system of behaviour that permits individuals to create and obtain the material items and resources required. The economic system provides this organisation by defining some fundamental areas of activity such as production, distribution and consumption.

12.3 DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN PRE-MODERN SOCIETIES

Broadly speaking the study of technological change merges with the general study of socio-cultural changes. Tools and techniques have developed along with the growth of human societies from simple societies to modern industrial societies via various stages.

12.3.1 Simple Societies

In simple societies people survived in the forests, deserts, mountains etc., by hunting and food gathering. They used simple tools like the bow and arrow for hunting; wore animal skins as clothes and sometimes domesticated dogs for help in hunting. During this time two great discoveries were made which gradually replaced the hunting life with new forms of economic organisations of greater complexities. These discoveries were, (a) the domestication of animals, such as cattle, and (b) agriculture. With these discoveries of agriculture and domestication of animals came other discoveries and mechanical inventions.

Agriculture led to the private ownership of land. However, there are many agricultural people whose land is owned by the clan. This is evident when we study the hunting cultures of the tribals who have plots assigned to each family from this communally owned land. The crops belong to the individual families working on the same plot. In such cultures, generally plough was not used. Instead a digging stick called the hoe was used. Therefore, this culture is also called hoe-culture.

In India we see tribal people practicing 'jhum' cultivation. Each season new plots were cultivated and the old one left fallow. This was possible when population was less and forest lands were more.

12.3.2 Pastoral Societies

Domestication of large animals assured a permanent supply of food as compared to the life in the wild state of nature as well as to the capricious nature of agricultural crops. Thus, we find several pastoral tribes in India, Africa and some other places.

Herds of cattle symbolise not only food but wealth as well, which can be exchanged and traded. However, this task was purely a male task and therefore, men assumed dominant position among pastoral peoples as compared to the hoe-cultures. Use of such animals as elephants, horses and camels led to the development of military techniques. They were used for swift transportation as well.

12.3.3 Peasant Societies

Agriculture, on a large scale brought stability which led to the building of permanent houses. Handicrafts like pottery-making are correlated with stable agriculture. The weaving of hair, or wool, or cotton developed. With cloth, pottery, baskets and crops, property began to accumulate and became very significant. The advanced skills required for these crafts led to further specialisation. The foundation for exchange was thus laid from this early period of agriculture.

12.3.3.1 Rise of Agricultural Surplus

With settled agriculture, plough was added to the domestication of animals and hoe. With the improvement of tools and techniques more land came under cultivation and the yield of crops increased. Individual ownership became the rule. This means that a family owns a plot of land and a family in this context could mean a large group of kins as well.

12.3.3.2 Emergence of New social Institutions

Land became the major basis of wealth in society. Since men desire wealth, there developed large landholdings by the process of purchase, by marriage alliances, and by force in places where surplus labour was available. This labour was in some places kinsmen, in others slaves or serfs, and in still others sharecroppers. This led to the development of social classes, like peasantry and landed aristocracy. The big landholders fought amongst themselves for wealth and power and the most wealthy and powerful among them assumed government functions, including the judicial and military.

The wealthy families sometimes sponsored art, architecture, and religious undertakings. The inception of feudalism took place at this time. Gradually and sometimes by revolution, family control was wrested away from these authoritarian single family dominations. This resulted in the birth of states. Villages developed into towns, and towns into cities and cities into metropolitan centres, etc. with the growth of trade and commerce. (Ogburn & Nimkoff 1968)

12.3.3.3 Division of Labour

Development of handicrafts led to the growth of property, as well as increasing demand for labour. Discovery of metals like copper, tin, gold, sliver and iron led to the development of tools, weapons, valuable ornaments, etc. Since these metals were relatively rare, only some people could master the art of making them. Thus specialisation developed. Agriculture on a mass scale also led to the division of labour in society. In some societies like the Indian, it took the form of caste which had an elaborate division of people, according to birth into different occupational groups which were ranked.

12.3.4 Growth of Cities

With the increase of food surplus, handicrafts, etc. trade and commerce developed. Use of swift transportation led to the development of cities, or metropolitan centres, which gave rise to industrial urban cultures. In cities people do not grow food for themselves but buy it from the market. Thus, expansion of market economy occurred and trade and commerce thrived. Feudalism in Europe gradually gave way to capitalism which we borrowed from the Britishers during the long period of their rule in India. The great impetus of the process of development of capitalism in Europe and America has its origin in the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Let us examine some of the technological changes that have taken place during this revolution.

Activity 1

Interview 5 elders in your family/community about the history, population growth, geographical changes economic development, political and cultural involvement of your village/town/city where you reside. Write an essay of about one page on 'My village, town/city (whichever applicable to you) and its Growth'. Discuss your essay with other learners at your study centre.

12.4 DEVELOPMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN SOCIETIES

One way of explaining the industrial revolution which began in England during the later half of the eighteenth century is to point out that it was made possible by a large number of inventors. Thus, James Hargreaves who invented the Spinning Jenny in 1764 and Richard Arkwright who invented the Spinning Frame in 1768 improved the methods of spinning yarn. James Watt who developed the steam engine in the 1780's showed the way to the use of steam power in the coal mines and textile mills and made it possible for England to increase her industrial production.

The contributions made by these remarkable persons to the industrial development of England are commendable, but the social conditions prevalent during the period are more important. If the social conditions did not encourage the application of these inventions to industrial production, the industrial revolution would not have occurred. For instance, in an earlier period Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the famous Italian painter was also supposed to have been a remarkable engineer and architect who devised new weapons and had even made drawing of aeroplanes. But his drawings largely remained on paper because at that time the social and economic conditions were not ripe enough to apply his ideas to practical uses.

12.4.1 The Industrial Revolution

And when we turn to England during the period of industrial revolution, the industrial workers and craftsmen had formed scientific societies to learn more about science and engineering so that they could use this knowledge to increase industrial production. Similarly, when technological developments of great importance occurred in the U.S.A. during the nineteenth century they could be traced to social and economic conditions prevailing then in that country. There, the availability of vast agricultural lands and the shortage of people to work on it led to the discovery and use of machinery in agricultural universities and engineering colleges. Apart from these circumstances, the freedom, and encouragement that the American

culture gave to entrepreneurship is regarded by some persons as the single most important factor responsible for the technological development in that country. The operation of a free market in America encouraged individual mobility. People starting from small beginnings could make huge fortunes if they worked hard enough and had a good idea to sell. Anybody who was inventive enough could experiment with his ideas and reap the advantages of his inventions by acquiring a legal right over the use of his or her invention through the law of patents.

Change of Technology in Different Societies

Technology Advancement

12.4.2 Models of Development

While the U.S.A. provides us one model of development, Japan provides another. Since 1868 the year of the Meiji Restoration, the Japanese government actively promoted industrialisation by sending her young men to western countries to learn modern science and technology and by setting up several industrial units.

Japan's economic miracle has been spectacular especially since the 1950's. Japan became the first Asian country to be counted among the top ten wealthy nations of the world. The Japanese have become the technological leaders in various industries including electronics, iron and steel, automobiles and shipping. Several American industries have been unable to withstand the competition from the Japanese who are continually improving and upgrading their products.

The Japanese experience raises very interesting questions about the influence of social factors in promoting technological and industrial development in the last few years.

12.5 SOCIAL ASPECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the western civilisation the individual is given importance and the values and norms of the society uphold the individual's rights, but in Japan, the 'individual' is subordinated to the society. The Japanese industrial corporation works like big communities. A corporation is a big business house which provides employment to a large number of people. It also has a large production capacity. Once a person joins a corporation he spends the rest of his working life serving that corporation. Wages and salaries are paid according to the seniority of the worker concerned and not so much by his qualifications. The production plans of the corporation are discussed by the workers in advance and approved. Once the plans are approved, it becomes the duty of everyone in the corporation to do his utmost to attain the production targets. A strong sense of corporate solidarity binds the workers and the managers into a well knit and efficient productive unit.

In comparison with Japan, the U.S.A. in recent years has not shown its industrial dynamism. It is argued that the very individualistic orientations of U.S.A. now comes in the way of gaining an edge in industrial competition. Investment in research and development, especially in the areas of advanced technology is a highly risky proposition. Such investment becomes worthwhile if everyone accepts the unspoken understanding that they will all continue to work together for a long period even if it means that some have to forego attractive opportunities to make profit.

12.5.1 Industrial Corporations

Thus the workers developing a new product or design may gain very valuable experience and may learn new ways of doing a job. For instance they may, in the course of their work, learn how to lower the percentage of defective casting made of some rare alloys. When they gain this experience, they are likely to be waived by other industrial corporations who will be willing to compensate them substantially for changing jobs. If the workers accept such tempting offers the entire investment made in developing the new technology may become wasteful. It is argued that the fierce individualism of the American society protects those who leave the corporation rather than those who remain with it. As a result, corporations and individuals are supposed to be hesitant to take up research and development efforts requiring heavy initial investments.

The comparison of Japan and the U.S.A. shows that in the U.S.A. the very institutions which promoted individualism there and in turn contributed to that country's technological and industrial growth in an earlier period are nowadays, perhaps, preventing it from acquiring industrial leadership in many spheres. This is all the more interesting because the U.S.A. continues to be the leading country in the world in terms of basic research in science and technology. This shows that it is not only important to create conditions for the promotion of modern science and technology but it is also equally important to ensure that these researches are translated into profitable production ventures.

12.5.2 Theses of Karl Marx and Max Weber

In the discussion above, it is possible to interpret the available evidence on technological development either from Marx's point of view or from Weber's point of view. It is important to note here that Weber's ideas on Protestant Ethic and its role in the origin of capitalism were specific to a particular period in European history. Nonetheless, Weber's thesis has been employed in explaining development in Japan and other third world countries. Such a demonstration involves identifying religious ideas of entrepreneurial communities and showing how similar they are to the Protestant Ethic. Such interpretations have been carried out on the Japanese technological and industrial development and with regard to several entrepreneurial communities in different parts of the world. Some of the more important of these studies have influenced the theories of modernisation which will be discussed later.

With regard to Marx's ideas, it is argued that a proper assessment should test Marx's predictions regarding the future of capitalism. This would naturally take our discussion to the study of the effects of technology and industrial production on society.

12.5.3 Emergence of Affluent Workers

One general remark made by many critics of Marx is that Marx's predictions have not come true. Instead of capitalism being overthrown, it flourishes with seemingly greater strength in the industrially advanced countries of the world including the U.S.A. Japan, U.K. and other West European countries. Instead of bringing about a revolution the working class seems to have accepted the capitalist system of production. This is attributed to the steady rise in the standard of living of the industrial workers in these countries. And because they are getting a better deal, the workers are said to be less interested in joining trade unions to fight for their interests. One of the more influential research efforts supporting this thesis is reported in the study on The Affluent Workers in The Class Structure, conducted in England in 1970's by Goldthorpe, Lockwood and others, to examine the embourgeoisement hypothesis. This study, has pictured the affluent worker as someone who regards his factory as only a source of his livelihood. He does not have any sense of pride in belonging to his factory. He does not develop a sense of friendship or comradery with his fellow workers. Work does not anymore give him a sense of identity or meaning in life. He seeks his identity in his leisure time activities. He looks forward to going home and spending time with his family and a small circle of intimate friends. He leads a very private life and zealously guards his privacy. He continues to be a member of the trade union but he is not an active participant in the Union's affairs. He looks upon the union as a mere instrument in his getting higher wages. Thus instead of becoming an active agent of social transformations the worker is becoming a passive acceptor of the system and is interested only in getting a better deal for himself from the system. All this evidence seems to specifically contradict Marx's comments on the role of the working class in capitalist societies.

12.5.4 Alienation of Modern Workers

In fact, even before hard evidence was brought up by the affluent workers study, some leading Marxist thinkers had pointed to such a change in the workers attitudes. Marcuse, a highly influential Marxist theoretician, had commented in the 1960's that in the modern society, even the workers have become profoundly estranged and alienated. Industrialisation has robbed them of their individuality and has deadened their sensibilities. The worker has become a human extension of the machine. Just as a slave who has tasted no freedom cannot imagine what freedom is, the modern worker leads such a mechanical existence that he or she does not even want freedom from this slavery. That is why Marcuse considered that university students who are not yet spoilt by the modern society could be the people who could bring about the revolution.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How did development of technology lead to accumulation of property? Describe using about seven lines.

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2) Write a brief note on industrial corporation. Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) In what way has Marx's prediction regarding revolution failed? Describe using about five lines.

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4) What were the main findings of the affluent worker study? Discuss in about seven lines.

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12.6 MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND WORK RELATIONSHIPS

If we want to understand the nature of modern technology it is important to understand the distinction between using a machine and using a hand tool. When a worker uses a hand tool he is controlling the pace of work himself. In a machine, even the simplest of them, this tool is taken away from the worker's hands and fixed. It can be only moved in a particular direction in contrast to the tool in the human hand which can be moved in many directions. Once the tool is fixed in this manner, the worker has to adjust his speed of work to the machine rather than the other way round. But the advantage is that the machine can do more work and turn out more items than the human being because the machine does not get tired from repeated movements while the human hand does.

A machine comes into use when the number of products that need to be produced is large. Take for instance, the case of a cobbler making shoes. If he has to cut only a pair of leather shoes, he takes leather and cuts a number of pieces according to the shape and size of the foot for which the shoe is being made, places them one on top of the other and stitches them along the edge to make the sole. Then he cuts a large piece of leather to form the upper part of the shoe and stitches this upper part to the sole. Later he cuts leather again to make the heel of the shoe and nails the heel on to the sole of the shoe. This is followed by colouring and polishing of the shoe. After making one shoe he may proceed to make another repeating all the above operations. But if he has to make a large number of shoes, it pays for him to cut all the soles first, then cut the uppers, make the soles then stitch all the uppers to the soles and so on. It may prove worthwhile for him now to develop special tools and machines to undertake the different operations. It pays to standardise the sizes of shoes and use standard patterns for cutting the shoe uppers and the soles. For stitching, it will help if he can use special sewing machines. Use of specialised machines will speed up the work and increase the number of shoes produced. Further, it will prove advantageous to hire more workers and put each in charge of a specialised job. This type of division of labour, into separate operations, is facilitated by the use of machines.

12.6.1 Machines and Production

Once machines are introduced into the production process, a tendency is set in motion which gradually gets intensified. The machine at first takes away the tool from the hands of the worker and forces him to adjust his own motions to the rhythm of machine work. Gradually the machine not only takes away the tools but also the skills from the worker. This has been

facilitated in recent years by the use of computerised machines. For instance, a computer can perform a job today to a greater degree of accuracy than even the most highly skilled machinist. Once the specifications of the particular job are fed into the lathe, the computer itself gives directions to the lathe controlling the entire work process. The machinist can be replaced by an unskilled or a semi-skilled worker who is only required to read a panel and is called to press certain buttons mounted on it. True, the job of instructing the computer or to monitor the operation of the lathe is a highly skilled job and the systems analyst who does that and the engineers who ensure that the machines operate without any hitch, are highly paid personnel. But if the owner of the factory employs only a few of these highly skilled personnel he can dispense with several machinists and employ only a handful of semi-skilled workers at very low wages. This trend is noticed even in office work. For instance, computerisation has made the task of monitoring telephone calls, of maintaining a diary, and of reminding the manager of his appointments, a routine task which can be done without the help of a secretary. Similarly the use of word processors has simplified the task of letter writing, a task which can now be done by an ordinary typist. Thus the secretary's skill is broken down into operations which can now be handled by machines and less skilled workers. This is the process of de-skilling. Modern technology is strengthening this trend towards de-skilling of jobs.

12.6.2 Job Creation

The impact of modern technology on the creation of jobs is a controversial topic. Some hold the view that the new jobs created by modern machines are compensating for the number of jobs displaced by them but it is certainly true that modern technology is rapidly making skills redundant, and is thereby creating problems of adjustment for those rendered redundant. The modern society is getting divided into two classes of workers. On the one hand are a vast majority of the workers who are getting de-skilled whereas on the other a tiny minority is monopolising most of the skills. Already a typical modern industrial plant has become a place which hires only a handful of workers. The management of the company can afford to pay them high enough wages to keep them satisfied and can ensure that there is no militant trade union activity. Under these circumstances protests will stem from workers who have been thrown out of their jobs or those whose jobs have been de-skilled. Such protests, however, are as futile as the protests of drivers of horse-drawn carriages against the modern railways or buses.

12.6.3 Technology and Unionism

Modern technology is not only rendering workers redundant, it is sapping their capacity to collectively fight for their interests. The frustrating end of coal mine workers strike of 1984-85 in England is a pointer to the relative weakness of the working class. In spite of a long drawn strike, the mine workers in England had to ultimately capitulate to the decision of the government to rationalise mining to increase their productivity. Rationalisation means using modern technological devices extensively. The mine workers of England who were till recently famous for maintaining the tradition of working class culture and for retaining their autonomy in work, could not resist the intrusion of computerised machinery which have de-skilled their work. These industrial workers could not gain public sympathy for their actions because the government convincingly argued that rationalisation of mining would increase productivity. It would lead to prosperity for the whole country. The working class has been pushed to a defensive position rather than adopting an aggressive and assertive posture which is associated with trade union struggles.

There is some evidence from Japan which also indirectly supports the position that modern technology is changing the working class consciousness. A recent study of the impact of modern technology points out that the Japanese workers spend more time away from their wives and have bound their women even more securely to the home, because of modern household gadgets and television. The workers do not any more feel the need to come home because their wives can entertain themselves watching the television. Far from emancipating women, modern technology seems to have strengthened conservative attitudes towards women.

Activity 2

Watch at least one or two television serials that are being shown on the different TV Channels. Analyse the roles played by women in these serials and write a report on "Women and Technology : Past and Present" depicting the values and norms that they are displaying in these serials. Share your answer with other students at your study centre.

Some people point out that the helplessness of the workers and the general trend towards conservatism are due to the capitalist system of production that prevails in the advanced industrial countries. Modern technology, they say is capable of reducing the hours of work for every worker. Instead of being thrown out of jobs, under a different system of production the leisure hours of all workers can be increased and indeed it can be ensured that everyone gets a decent wage to pursue his or her creative interests during their leisure hours. Unfortunately, under the capitalist regime, it is argued, an equitable distribution of wealth is not possible and the tendency to create unemployment cannot be avoided. As against this, however, those in favour of capitalism point out that is socialist countries, because a free market did not operate and because there was no profit incentive, the production system became inefficient and there were always shortages. Socialist systems, it was argued only succeeded in redistributing poverty. These critics also point out that the recent policies of China in giving scope for private enterprise demonstrates the soundness of their argument.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss briefly the relation between modern technology and work relationships. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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2) Write a note on technology and Unionism. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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12.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the relationship between economy and technology. We have examined the development of technology in simple pastoral societies and peasant agricultural societies. Here we have described the various technologies developed during the process of industrial revolution. We have seen in this unit that modern technology has a very powerful impact on the production systems and on society. Modern technology has been weakening the position of workers and it is leading to their estrangement and alienation. But at the same time it also holds out a promise of creating a world of plenty. This promise, of course, goes along with the prospect of robbing the workers of their skills and their revolutionary potential. Instead of modernising societies, modern technology is indirectly strengthening the forces of conservatism causing alienation of individuals in society and leading to new social psychological problems of adjustment in societies, like depression, mental tension and stress, etc. However, it is unmistakable that there is an inherent tendency towards making the worker and the poor a vulnerable and dependent class.

12.8 FURTHER READINGS

Blauner, R. 1964: *Alienation and Freedom : The Factory Worker and His Industry*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Mckee James, B. 1981: *Sociology: The Study of Society*, Holt Rinehart and Winston, New Your.

12.9 KEY WORDS

Affluent : A person or group which has great amount of wealth.

Corporation : A big business combine with a large employment and production capacity.

Model : A simplified description of a system which explains its crucial aspects.

Technology : The total sum of the means which provide objects required for human sustenance and comfort.

Unionism : A grouping together of workers to assert/demand their rights.

12.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) When agricultural tools developed from hoe to plough and domestication of larger animals took place, large plots of land could be brought under cultivation. The yield of crops increased leading to the increase in food. This led to building of permanent houses, development of skills like weaving hair, wool and cotton for making clothes, pottery making, etc. which led to accumulation of property. Ownership of land by individual families their increasing landholdings and power led to their patronising art, architecture, religious undertaking, etc.

2) Industrial corporation is an institution where production process takes place. It is a big business combine with a large employment and production capacity. For example in Japan the plans for production of a corporation are discussed by the workers in advance and approved. After this step it becomes the duty of everyone in the corporation to complete the production target.

3) Marx's prediction regarding revolution by the working classes in industrial society has failed. Capitalism has not been overthrown, instead it flourishes with greater strength. The working classes seem to have accepted capitalism due to certain reasons like increase in wealth, standard of living etc.

4) This study revealed that the affluent worker regarded his factory as only a source of his livelihood. It did not give him a sense of pride to belong to that factory. He did not have any friends in the factory. The work in the factory did not give him any sense of satisfaction of identity or meaning in life any more. He sought identity in his leisure time and looked forward to spending time at home with his family and a small group of intimate friends.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The relationship between modern technology and work relationship is that modern technology takes the tedious, repetitive jobs from the worker. But it also creates unemployment by making a large number of unskilled workers redundant. Only a minority of skilled workers are required to operate the modern machines like the computers. This leads to monopolisation of work by a minority, which is well paid.

2) Development of modern technology is one of the reasons for the weakness of the working class. It has led to a decline in their revolutionary potential. The coal mine workers strike of 1984-85 ended without any result. Even the mine workers of England had to capitulate to their government's decision to rationalise mines. Thus, technology has led to the weakening of working class power and unionism.

UNIT 13 PRODUCTION PROCESSES

Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Economic Organisation

13.3 The Economists' Point of View

13.4 Production and Social Factors

- 13.4.1 Aspects of Land Rights
- 13.4.2 Social Aspects of Production
- 13.4.3 Services and Production
- 13.4.4 Women and Production

13.5 Technology and Production

- 13.5.1 Karl Marx's Views
- 13.5.2 Material Forces of Production
- 13.5.3 Economic Structure

13.6 Max Weber's Views

- 13.6.1 Capitalism in Europe
- 13.6.2 Ideas and Values

13.7 Emile Durkheim's Views

13.8 Reconsideration

13.9 Let Us Sum Up

13.10 Further Readings

13.11 Key Words

13.12 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to describe:

- the economic organisation;
- the economists point of view regarding the production process;
- production as a social activity; and
- how eminent sociological thinkers have studied the inter-relationships between production, technology and society.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will read about the economic organisation. You will know about production processes and its various dimensions. This is done by introducing the economist's point of view. Other related issues such as land rights and social factors in production are also considered. We have also discussed the relationship between technology and production. The discussion is concerned with the views of Karl Marx regarding material forces of production. The views of Max Weber on Capitalism in Europe are also explained. The views of Durkheim are also discussed in this unit.

13.2 ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

Economic organisation is defined as the human behaviour by which goods are produced, allocated, distributed and consumed. This is to say, economic organisation is a planned

action that involves the combination of various kinds of human services, with one another and with non-human goods as such. They in turn satisfy the material wants of human beings. In other words, economic organisation is a design of human action by which goods are produced, distributed and consumed. In brief, it is an arrangement that provides the material means of individual and collective life of every society.

Economic organisation, in one form or another, is a functional prerequisite to the survival and continuity of every human society. But every society be it, a simple, a peasant, or an urban society has a distinct type of economic organisation. The simple tribal societies and the peasant societies have some basic difference from the monetised, market-oriented or state directed and industrialised societies of today. The economic organisation of simple and peasant societies are subsistence type which fall under the broad category of production consumption economy. In urban industrial societies economic surplus is enough to sustain a large non-agricultural population. In this unit we are going to discuss the production processes in all its dimensions.

13.3 THE ECONOMISTS' POINT OF VIEW

Economists define production as the process by which land, labour and capital are

combined to produce articles needed for daily consumption, and the machines, components of machines and raw materials which are in turn required to produce the articles of daily consumption. Land refers literally to the land for agricultural activity or land on which a workshop or a factory needs to be erected. Land is also sometimes used as symbol for nature. Economists used to regard that different pieces of land are endowed with different qualities and thought that these qualities are given and could not be appreciably altered.

Labour refers to the work that is put in by labourers. It is labour which uses machinery and raw materials to produce what the people in a society want. The machinery and raw materials refer to the capital that is required in production. Land, labour and capital are regarded as the important 'factors of production' and the behaviour of each of these factors needs to be studied in order to discover the laws of production. Occasionally economists would add another factor called organisation or entrepreneurship to the list, but by and large, they confine themselves to the study of land, labour and capital.

Gradually, however, it dawned on the economists that there is a human component in the process of production. True, labour is a human component in the process of production, but by assuming that a unit of labour can be treated as equivalent to another unit of labour like machines and tools, they overlooked some of the crucial social and human problems that crop up in the task of increasing production. It fell upon the sociologists to point out that the working and living conditions of the workers, their values and beliefs regarding work, and the social institutions and customs prevailing in the society need to be also considered if a country's production is to be increased. They also pointed out that there should be persons available who will be willing to risk their wealth in setting up industries to increase production. Such persons, called entrepreneurs, flourish best in certain societies which value entrepreneurial activity. This way the sociologists paid attention to the social factors that affect production which were by and large ignored by the economists.

13.4 PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL FACTORS

Production is affected by social factors because production itself is a social activity. In the process of manufacturing a certain article or growing food grains, people enter into definite relationships with each other. These relationships are shaped by the rules regarding ownership, and use of the community's resources. Let us take the case of the Mundas or the Kols who live in the forests of Ranchi district in Bihar. The Mundas are now regarded as a Scheduled Tribe by the government of India. Till recently, they used to practice slash and burn agriculture, locally known as *jara*, they used to clear a patch of forest land by burning. They dug the ground up, spread the ash left from burning and broadcast seeds. Every season the land used for cultivation earlier was left fallow and a new plot was prepared by the same procedure. This type of agriculture is now being discouraged by the government as it results in large scale deforestation. N.K. Bose, an anthropologist, has written about the land rights and social organisation among the Mundas. Originally the forests where the Mundas lived had

belonged to them, but as the contact with the outsiders increased during the British rule, the lands came to be controlled by the British Government in India. Middle men, who did not belong to the tribes entered the picture. They were called the *Khuntkattidars*.

Bose writes that *Khuntkattidars* are a class of landowners within the Munda villages who exercised absolute rights over land. But they allowed individuals to cultivate the tracts of land they needed and reap the harvest. It is clear here that there were several gradations of rights over land. Some had only rights to cultivate and harvest, others had more superior rights. These rights define not only the relationship that members of the society have with each other, but the Khuntkattidars apparently derived considerable political powers from their superior rights in land.

13.4.1 Aspects of Land Rights

It should be stated here that the above mentioned type of land rights among the Mundas got modified over the years as they came under the political control of local kings and later of the Moghul rulers, followed by the British. The Khuntkattidars now had to acknowledge the jagirdars and kings to whom they had to pay annual rents and tributes thereby restricting the Mundas rights and impoverishing them considerably.

Another example is the system of bonded labour that existed in many parts of India and has continued to survive today despite specific laws which have been enacted to abolish this institution. In Tehri Garhwal district of Uttaranchal, a labourer, usually belonging to the untouchable castes of Doms and Koltas borrows a small sum of money from a landowner in order to get married and subsequently becomes bonded to his landowner-moneylender. He has to work on the landowner's land till he repays his debt with interest which often takes a long time. Often, not only is he expected to work on the land, but his wife is expected to serve the master's household. It is reported that the landless labourers prefer to enter such bondage rather than remain free because in the former case they are assured of their daily food which is provided by the master, whereas the price of freedom may be deprivation of daily food.

13.4.2 Social Aspects of Production

Production is not only as social activity, but also a socially defined activity. In a way it is the society which determines what production is or is not.

Production involves producing some object that is considered to be valuable by society. The object that is considered valuable is called a product. A procudt has value in use and value in exchange. Value in use or use value, refers to the value that one derives from using a thing or object. Sometimes an object may have use value for some and not for others. For a non-smoker, cigarettes and beedis have no use value but for smokers they have. Besides use value, goods must also possess exchange value, that is, people must consider the object worth exchanging with other objects. Only when these two conditions are fulfilled can an object or thing be regarded as a product. Hence, if somebody spends his time and money to produce some object and if the object is not regarded as valuable in the above senses of the term, then it cannot be regarded as a product. What is regarded as a product in one society may not be regarded so in another. In India cow dung which is used as fuel has value and cow dung cakes are bought and sold. Hence while taking stock of the country's production, the value of cow dung cakes will also have to be added up. This will not be the case in other societies. Or take the instance of gold in India. Gold is considered to be a prestigious metal associated with the gods and hence it has a higher value in India than in other societies. Hence the goods that constitute one society's production need not be the same as that of another. But it should be stressed that as the markets have expanded and are getting integrated to encompass the whole world, there is greater agreement among countries as to the goods that constitute production

13.4.3 Services and Production

Does production only refer to the creation of goods? The answer for this question used to be yes in the past. Thus Adam Smith, who is regarded as the father of modern economics, wrote in his book "Wealth of Nations" published in 1776 that only those who are engaged in the production of goods are productive. Using this criterion, he went on to point out that the services of statesmen, clergymen, professors, artists and others, however prestigious they

may be considered, are not productive. Many of us still carry this idea in our heads when we talk of production consequences. To ignore the services of scientists, researchers, teachers, politicians and such others is to overlook the obvious fact that research, teaching and the framing of proper economic and political policies for the country may substantially contribute to the task of increasing a nation's production. In the modern world, intellectual activity has contributed so much to the production of new products and the development of new processes that the Adam Smithian distinction will be misleading. Moreover, as in the case of medieval professionals and performing artists. their services, though seemingly unconnected with productive activity, indirectly contributes to the well-being of the workers and enhances productivity. Hence services, even those not directly connected with the production of goods have also to be taken into account in calculating the total production of a country. Like in the case of goods, these services also have to be regarded as valuable by the society.

Activity 1

Visit your local library/study centre and collect information about Prof. Amartya Sen as an economist and Nobel Laureate. Write an essay on "Amartya Sen and his Ideas on Economy and Society" of about 1 or 2 pages. Discuss your essay with other students and your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

13.4.4 Women and Production

Even when services are considered, some services are not included in the definition of production. Many economists point out that the method of calculation of a country's total production in a given year ignores the contribution of women. Women who work on a variety of domestic chores, right from helping their menfolk in agriculture to cooking, washing and nurturing children are treated as dependents, not workers. The statisticians ignore their services in adding to the total value of production because their services are unpaid. But the economists rightly point out that statisticians, however, calculate the value of the amount of food grains produced by the farmers (generally male) for their own consumption. This practice shows the inherent bias against women in society. After all, women's work is not only valuable in itself but household work supports in an important way the entire economy of a country. By minding domestic chores, women release their menfolk for work in the various factories and farms and thus help contribute to a nation's production. This example dramatically bring out how a society's values define what is productive and what is non-productive.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a brief note on the social aspects of production. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) What is the relationship between services and production? Write a brief note. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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3) In what ways are the contribution of women in the production process ignored? Give an example using about seven lines.

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13.5 TECHNOLOGY AND PRODUCTION

In the description of production given above, what is missing is the mention of the technological aspects of production and this should not be ignored. The level of production in a society and the variety of goods and services available will depend on the kinds of tools and machines used. Knowledge of how to build machines and improve their performance and the availability of trained technicians and engineers. These are the technological aspects of production. Technology makes possible new products and processes and nowadays, economic development of a country depends on the stress it places on technological development. In modern societies various industrial corporations and government organisations undertake systematic research so that they can develop new products and processes. Such research and development efforts have made several products and services so inexpensive that even common people can now afford to have them whereas in the past only the rich could have access to them. For instance, modern electronic technology has made it possible for even the poor to acquire transistor radios or for that matter Black & White Television. Only a few decades ago even the radio could be found only in the houses of the well-to-do people in India.

The level of production in any society depends on the technology that is available and on the social relationships and values of that society. If we refer to the social structure and if we regard the values as components of the culture of that society, we can say that production is influenced by technology, social structure and culture. In fact, there are interconnections between technology, social structure and culture.

13.5.1 Karl Marx's Views

Karl Marx's name is associated with the Russian revolution in 1917 and the spread of the communist movement in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Cuba and other countries. Karl Marx (1818-1872) wrote on the dominant social and political questions that preoccupied the intellectual and political circles of Europe during his life time. The contemporary social scientists and intellectuals of his time did not recognise his contributions to the understanding of social and economic changes in Europe. But this neglect was more than made up after his death. Almost all social scientists today have to come to terms with Marx's idea or ideas inspired by Marxism. This applies to political movements as well. Marx's deep insights and powerful analysis did provide new ways of understanding social change and development.

13.5.2 Material Forces of Production

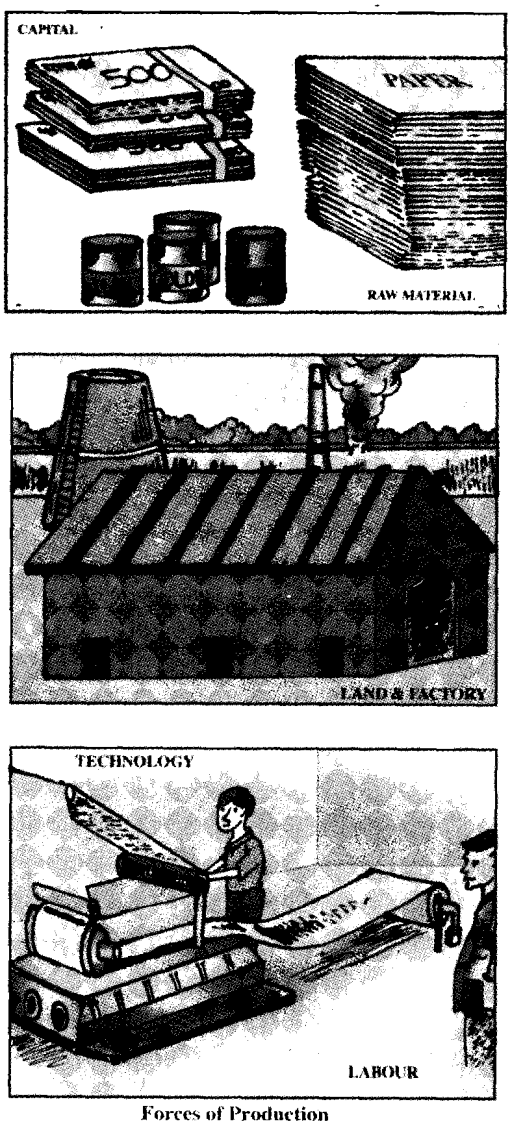
Marx gave importance to what he called the 'material forces of production' and 'relations of production' in explaining the changes that occur in the society. By 'material forces of production' Marx mainly refers to technology. The technological advances that have occurred in human history viz., the printing press, the steam engine, machines to produce goods on a mass scale, all show that these forces of production are continually expanding and social order should be congenial to such technological developments. The printing press or the steam engine could be developed, a time comes when their further development comes in conflict with the prevailing social order. Then the social order must change yielding place to a new order which allows the further development of forces of production. Marx uses the term social order as a substitute for what he calls 'relations of production'. These are definite relationships that men enter into with each other in order to enable the society to produce the goods and services it requires, although these relationships are not entered out of their free will. These relations of production refer to the relationships between a landlord and his serfs, in the feudal period or between the capitalists and the workers under capitalism. The capitalist owns the machines which are the means of production and hires labourers to work on his capital. The labourers hire themselves out to the capitalist because they do not any longer own the means of production and they are only free to sell their labour in the market.

Marx regards that the relations of production, especially the relations between capital and labour are the last antagonistic or conflicting relations. Here the capitalist is able to obtain a profit by exploiting the labourer, the wage the worker gets is much lower than the value of the labour he puts in. When the forces of production under capitalism develop further, a stage will come when the existing relations of production viz., capital-labour relationship prove to be obstacles to the further development of the forces of production. At this stage the social order will undergo a transformation in such a way that the capitalists are eliminated and capital is owned by society at large.

13.5.3 Economic Structure

Marx considers that the forces of production together with the relations of production constitute the economic structure or infrastructure of the society. It is this economic structure that is the foundation on which legal, political and social structure or super structure of the society is built. Marx seems to be using the example of a building here. The foundation of building is not visible but it is very important to decide how many storeys the building can have, the length and width of building and the thickness of its walls. He seems to suggest that it is in this sense that the economic structure of the society determines social relationships, legal and political institutions and the ideas and values that go along with these institutions.

Thus Marx points out that for technology to develop the production relations should be conducive and production relations in turn mature and develop under conducive technological conditions. Technology and production relations together determine the scope for the development of political and social institutions and the ideas and values that accompany these institutions.



Forces of Production according to Marx

13.6 MAX WEBER'S VIEWS

Max Weber (1864-1920) was a leading German sociologist who wrote extensively on not only European societies but also on China, India and Japan. He too was interested in the problems with which Marx was concerned and he took it upon himself to show that the relationship between the economic structure and the social institutions and ideas could be seen in reverse. That is, he specifically set about demonstrating that Marx's interpretation of social change giving the primary role to material conditions rather than ideas or values is at best a one-sided interpretation. In contrast, according to Weber, ideas and values could be shown to shape the material conditions.

13.6.1 Capitalism in Europe

To demonstrate his point, Weber takes as his problem the origin and development of capitalism in Europe. He points out that at the time of the origin of capitalism in Europe there were two other great civilisations which were in some ways more advanced than Europe. One was China, the other India, China was a flourishing civilisation - the first printing press and gun powder had been invented in China. In India, several sciences including mathematics and astronomy had advanced considerably. Yet, it was in England, rather than in China or India, that capitalism took root. To discover the answer, Weber traced the origin of capitalism to the widespread ideas and beliefs that prevailed among the common people belonging to certain sects of Protestant Christianity. These Protestants believed in the notion of predestination, that is the notion that some people had already been chosen by God for redemption. This belief, he argued, created an intense anxiety in them to be among the elect. One way of assuring oneself that one is among the elect is to engage intensely in worldly activities, devotedly working at one's calling or, a task in life that one has been divinely allocated. Mere engagement in one's calling or. a task in life that one has been divinely allocated. Mere engagement in ones' calling is, however, not enough. One has to make sure of success in the calling by working methodically at it. But success should be achieved not for the prospect of enjoyment alone that it provides, but for the greater glory of God. These Protestants believed that any time spent in lazing or relaxation is time wasted from being utilised in working for the greater glory of God. Living in luxury is to practice self-indulgence and being distracted from God's work. Hence they led a simple, ascetic life. They also valued honesty in their transactions with others because when one is engaged in God's work there can be no short-cuts to success. These values, Max Weber argued, were in consonance with the spirit of capitalism. After all, saving and investment needed frugality combined with a desire to attain a profit. Methodical hard work, honesty in one's business dealings with others and meeting one's commitments made for predictability and calculability which are essential to ensure that one can, through one's own efforts, methodically attain success in business. True, the world had witnessed. Before the arrival of Protestant businessmen, several businessmen, traders and usurers who made immense fortunes - but they did so, not methodically but by gambling with their luck. Chance and the element of luck had played a major role in their success. Capitalism, however, emphasises rationality - a methodical way of reducing the chance element and increasing one's own control over the outcome of one's efforts. Thus, Weber is quick to point out that this relationship between Protestantism and capitalism was required only during the time of the origin of capitalism. Once capitalism matures, the Protestant Ethic may not be required so much for its further development.

13.6.2 Ideas and Values

Thus Weber regards the ideas and values as often being critical in supporting a particular system of production. Weber also considered the role of technology and the relationship between the capitalists and the workers but what he found remarkable about both technology and production was the principle of rationality on the basis of which they were organised. Technology gets rationalised in a modern factory by developing standardised parts and by dividing work into routine and repetitive actions. The relationship between the capitalist and the worker is rationalised by the organisation of work Weber finds that this rationality not only deprives the worker alone in an industrial unit from the means of his production, but deprives the officer, worker also from the means of his production. It also separates the office worker from the instruments of the bureaucracy because the office worker too, does not own the stationery, the furniture and the building that are required for conducting official

work. He goes on to point out that even when relations of production change, and a socialist system of society emerges in which the means of production are owned by the society at large, the nature of rational organisation of work does not change. The worker continues to perform repeated monotonous tasks to keep up with the rhythm of machine work. Hence Weber feels that relations of production are not important in modern society. What is significant is the spirit of rationality which spreads to every nook and corner of the society.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe Karl Marx's views on technology and production. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Discuss Max Weber's views on capitalism in Europe. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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13.7 EMILE DURKHEIM'S VIEWS

Durkheim was a leading French sociologist who was a contemporary of Max Weber. Like Weber, Durkheim also tried to come to terms with Marxist thought but his major concerns were different from the major issues of Marxist thought. Durkheim was interested in the problems of morality and social order. But his comments on modern society have relevance in the context of the relationship between production, technology and society.

Durkheim, in his book The Division of Labour in Society (1893) has given a relatively optimistic view of division of labour in society. According to him there is a fundamental difference between the pre-industrial societies and industrial societies. Pre-industrial societies have a form of social solidarity which he calls 'mechanical solidarity'. Mechanical solidarity is a solidarity which comes from likeness and in these societies the 'collective conscience' of society envelops the individual members of that society. In these societies division of labour is based on uniformity and there is relatively little social differentiation, Individual members share the same beliefs and values, and to a large extent the same roles. Thus removal of any one segment of society, in an abstract sense, does not affect the rest of the society. These societies have legal and normative values of restrictive type. A criminal is punished not to reform him, but to satisfy the society.

In industrial societies solidarity is based not on uniformity but on differences. Here each part of the society performs a specialised task and the contribution that these tasks do is to maintain the total society. Thus, this division of labour is the type where all the parts of the society are interdependent. Therefore, we cannot remove one without affecting the others. In these societies the legal system is of the restitutive type where reform of the criminal is aimed at rather than the satisfaction of the society. Individual has more freedom in these societies.

Durkheim thinks that the change from mechanical to organic division of labour is like the evolution of an organism from simple to complex ones. This biological illustration suggests that he does not regard industrialisation or the production system as a key factor, in the shift from the mechanical to the organic order. Thus we can see that modern societies are structurally different from the traditional ones - a point that was implicit in Marx and Weber but which has been prominently highlighted by Durkheim. Modern technology and modern production system go along with a differentiated and complex society.

Activity 2

Observe and understand the nature of society you live in such as, your family, kinship group, school, college etc. and read about a tribal community located in the remote forest areas of our country, such as, the Jarwas of Andaman Nicobar Islands. Now try to compare these two cultures in the light of Emile Durkheim's distinction between "Mechanical Solidarity" and "Organic Solidarity" and write a note of about two pages on this comparison. Compare it with the note of other students at your study centre and also discuss with your Academic Counsellor.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is division of labour? Explain in about three lines

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2) What are mechanical and organic solidarity? Explain in about seven lines.

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13.8 RECONSIDERATION

From the consideration of the views of Marx, Weber and Durkheim, it is clear that all the three recognised that important changes are occurring in he modern society. There is broad agreement between them as far as the description of the changes is concerned but in accounting for them, they differ radically from each other.

Since the time Weber and Durkheim wrote, there have been further social changes in the present day societies. The markets have expanded to cover the entire world. The whole world can now be seen as an integrated economy. Societies which have not developed modern production systems of their own, can import the products of modern technology. Some societies which were till recently working with primitive technologies and continuing with traditional social customs have been forcibly sucked into the vortex of modernisation processes because of the integration of markets. The changes taking place today are so complex that while each of the three thinkers seem to provide some insights into what is happening, there is clearly a need to go further than they have gone in order to raise relevant questions regarding contemporary social changes. In the next unit we therefore, turn our attention to the contemporary social processes.

13.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have studied the production processes. Our discussion has been fairly complete. We saw how various aspects of production are related to social factors. Closely related to this were the various facts of technology and production. Among the important discussions in this unit was that of Karl Marx's views. Both economic structure and material forces of production were discussed. We also discussed Max Weber and Emile Durkheim's views. Finally, we have reconsidered the views of Marx, Weber and Durkheim.

13.10 FURTHER READINGS

Marx, Karl 1970: *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.

Weber, Max 1930: *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Allen and Unwin, London

Durkheim, E. 1964: *The Division of Labour in Society*, Free Press, Glencoe.

13.11 KEY WORDS

Bonded : When a labour becomes bound for a long period to a moneylender because the former owes money to the latter. He works on his land etc.; to pay back the debt.

Capitalism : The economic system, which tries to maximise profits from the production process.

Predestination : The doctrine that God in consequence of his foreknowledge of all events infallibly guides those who are destined for salvation.

Technological Development : The capital intensive method of production which uses a very high proportion of machinery relative to that of labour.

13.12 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Production is a socially defined activity. It is the society that determines what is production and what is not production. The value of the objects produced is socially determined. The object which is socially valuable is called a product. A product has value in use and value in exchange.

2) Services and production are intimately related. Earlier it was considered by people, especially like Adam Smith, that production is creation of goods only. But now we recognise the immense contribution made by scientists, researchers, political planners, economists, etc., to the process of production in the modern society. Without the help of these services the production process will soon decline.

3) Women's contribution in the production process is ignored by the scientists and statisticians. They work in the domestic sphere in a variety of ways, like cooking, cleaning, helping the men folk in agriculture, looking after children and so on. But inspite of their immense contribution they are treated as dependants and their services are underrated.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Karl Marx described the changes that occurred in society in terms of 'material forces of production' and relations of production. By material forces of production' he meant the technology, capital etc. The technological advances that have occurred in human history such as invention of steam engines, printing press, etc., show that technology keeps changing and advancing according to the needs of society.

2) Weber tried to discover the origin and development of capitalism in Europe. Inspite of their advanced civilisations, capitalism did not develop in India or China, but in En-

gland. He traced the origin of capitalism to the widespread ideas and beliefs that prevailed among the people who belonged to a certain sect of Protestant Christianity. These Protestants believed in the notion of predestination of being God's chosen people, in the concept of calling, etc. These values helped in the origin and development of capitalism.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Division of labour refers to the way in which society gets divided into components, or segments with each component performing a special task.

2) Mechanical solidarity, present in traditional pre-industrial societies, refers to the division of society into segments which are similar in organisation and function. Removal of one segment does not affect the total society. But organic solidarity, present in complex industrial societies, is one where each component of society performs a specialised task thereby, leading to the existence of the total society.

UNIT 14 DISTRIBUTION PROCESSES

Structure

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Distribution

14.3 Types of Exchange System

- 14.3.1 Reciprocal Exchange
  - 14.3.1.1 Value of Goods
- 14.3.2 Exchange Based on Redistribution
  - 14.3.2.1 The Potlatch Ceremony
- 14.3.3 Market Exchange
  - 14.3.3.1 Features of Market Exchange
  - 14.3.3.2 Network of Services

14.4 Let Us Sum Up

14.5 Further Readings

14.6 Key words

14.7 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this unit you should be able to describe:

- various aspects of the distribution system;
- different types of distribution and exchange of goods and services in various societies; and
- about market exchange and its features.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about the concepts of distribution. Various types of exchange are discussed here. The idea of reciprocal exchange and the types of economic reciprocity are brought out. Exchange based on redistribution, features of the market exchange, and networks of services are all dealt with in this unit.

14.2 DISTRIBUTION

If people kept their products for themselves, the social benefits of co-operation would be lost. In every society the fruits of production are unevenly dispersed among people and in relation to time. To cope with this problem, every society manifests a system of distribution or a set of strategies for apportioning goods and services among the members of a community. The allocation or exchange of goods and services within a local group or between different local groups is known as distribution or a system of exchange. By far, the most common way people distribute goods and services is through economic exchange. It consists of the cultural rules for the transfer of goods and services that we need to survive and to live normal social lives through exchange. The system of exchange is found in every economy, even the most primitive. There are six possible kinds of exchange according to the items exchanged: goods for goods, services for services, goods for services, money for goods, money for services and money for money. The use of money occurs only in relatively advanced economies. The most notable fact about exchange is that it requires a transaction between people. Exchange system provide the rules and the motivation for individuals to give one another material goods and to provide each other with services.

14.3 TYPES OF EXCHANGE SYSTEMS

Karl Polanyi, an economic historian, has identified three different modes of allocation or principles of exchange: reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange. What we should remember is that every economy is characterised by at least one of these systems of exchange. However, many economies are based on two or all three of these systems of exchange. Let us know about each one of these systems one by one. Each mode embodies a particular system of rules that makes it different from others and each gives the transfer of goods and services special meaning.

14.3.1 Reciprocal Exchange

This method refers to transfer of goods or services between two people or groups based on their role obligations. We visit our grandparents with presents during holidays, offer a friend a ride to school and so on. We behave according to rules defined by reciprocal exchange, revolving around the notion of role obligation. The reason for their reciprocal exchange is not necessarily dictated by the desire for the material goods themselves as it is in the market. Certainly the mother and the son attempt to give each other items they know will be appreciated, but the reason for the exchange is their obligation to one another, an obligation they assume when they take on the status of mother and son. If the son fails to give anything to his mother, she will be hurt and disappointed. Similarly, a mother who did not give gifts would also have to face very disappointed children. For this reason, reciprocal exchange does not usually occur between strangers.

Resiprocal Exchange

Further, reciprocal exchange is not dictated by maximisation which is the basic principle operating in market exchange. When the mother gives her son some gift, she does not bother about what the son is going to give to her in return, nor will she give the set to the boy's sister (daughter) because the girl has a more valuable present for her. She simply makes the exchange because it is a culturally defined obligation associated with her role as a mother.

Activity 1

Find out from close family members or friends about a marriage held recently which you attended; as family or friend; about the kinds of gift exchanges or services hired. List out the kind of economic exchanges of goods and services that took place during the marriage according to its nature; eg. reciprocal exchange or market exchange, etc. Compare your list with other student's lists at your study centre.

14.3.1.1 Value of Goods

The value of the goods given need not be the same, but there is a tendency for an equality of value to characterise exchange between individuals of equal rank. As long as the value of items exchanged reciprocally is within the range of what is culturally defined as proper, the obligation of the parties to the exchange is met. Some forms of reciprocal exchange are difficult to recognise because they seem one-sided. It is easy to see that Christmas gift-giving is reciprocal because the two parties to the exchange give present to each other simultaneously. However, in many circumstances we may only witness a one-way exchange. For example, when a neighbour or a relative gives some money or an article as a gift to a bridegroom on the occasion of his marriage, the groom does not immediately return something of value to the donor. He will wait until the marriage of his friend or a relative. Delayed reciprocity of this sort places the people in a network of outstanding debts. Thus, we have seen two kinds of reciprocity:

i) **Generalised reciprocity**

In which neither the value nor what is given is calculated nor the time of repayment specified. Such transactions do not involve economic or other self-interest. That means generalised reciprocity is gift-giving without any immediate return or conscious thought of return.

ii) **Balanced reciprocity**

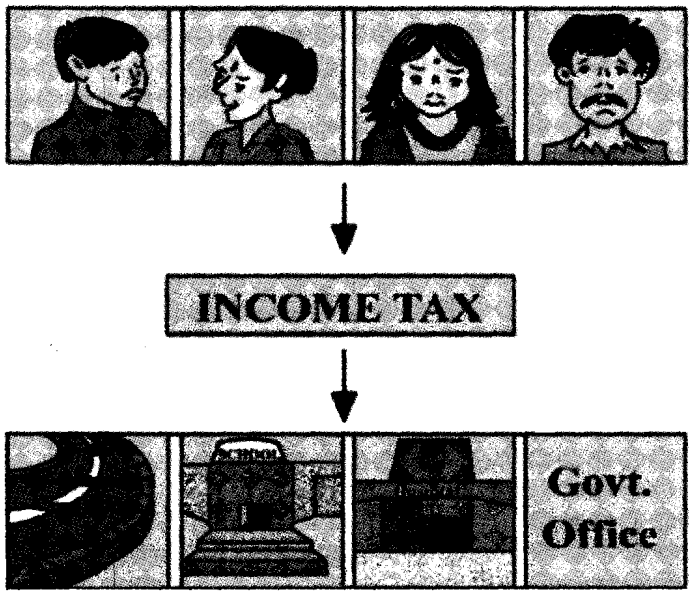
In which goods and services of commensurate worth are traded within a finite period (direct exchange). This sort of exchange is motivated by the desire or need for certain objects.

Thus reciprocal exchange serves as the major mode of transfer for members of hunting and food-gathering societies. For example, the animals caught or killed in the hunting by a solitary hunter are usually distributed among other members of the camp on the basis of obligations associated with kinship.

14.3.2 Exchange Based on Redistribution

This system of exchange refers to the transfer of goods and services between a group of people and a central collecting source based on role obligation. Like reciprocity, redistributive exchange occurs because people are obligated to each other. In other words, goods collected or contributed from members of a group flow to some central point from which they are redistributed to the society. Redistribution may be voluntary on the part of members for a society or it may be involuntary in that the collective centre uses agents to force the members to contribute goods and services to the authorities the redistributive centre varies from the head of a band or tribe to the ruler of a kingdom. Redistribution is the process which is found in all societies but it becomes an important mechanism of distribution only in societies with a relatively complex system of political organisation and s substantial economic surplus.

In all societies, there is some voluntary redistribution, at least within the family. Members of the family pool their labour or products or income for their common good. But redistribution exists in a majority of the hunting and fishing societies, in some horticultural societies, and in almost all pastoral and agricultural societies which contain political machinery of one kind or the other to co-ordinate centralised collection and distribution.



Redistribution

14.3.2.1 The Potlatch Ceremony

Potlatch ceremony among the North-West-Coast American Indians is also a form of redistribution. It involves ritual display of privileges and title and distribution of goods among the guests for the purpose of validating and enhancing the host's privileges and prestige. For example, the house building potlatch is most important, elaborate and spectacular. For example, the house building potlatch is most important, elaborate and spectacular. For about 10 years a man and his wife work hard to accumulate the required property. One year before the potlatch ceremony, the wife lends furs or blankets from the common store to various members of her clan.

Her clan members return them at the time of potlatch with hundred percent interests. At the time of potlatch the guests assemble in the new house and are seated according to their rank. Through this ritual while the recipients gain in material, the hosts acquire social and political prestige. While the host gets a dwelling and becomes thereby the house chief, the hostess gains social status for her children and for her clan. Both the host and the hostess thus gain political and social rank.

The most obvious example of a redistributive system is government taxation. In our role as citizens we are obligated to pay taxes to various governments both local and national. These governments are obligated to return taxes to us in the form of various services. The amount we pay may not equal the amount we get back and indeed, it is often difficult to determine the entire value of services that government provide to the people.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note on reciprocal exchange. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Explain the idea of exchange based on redistribution. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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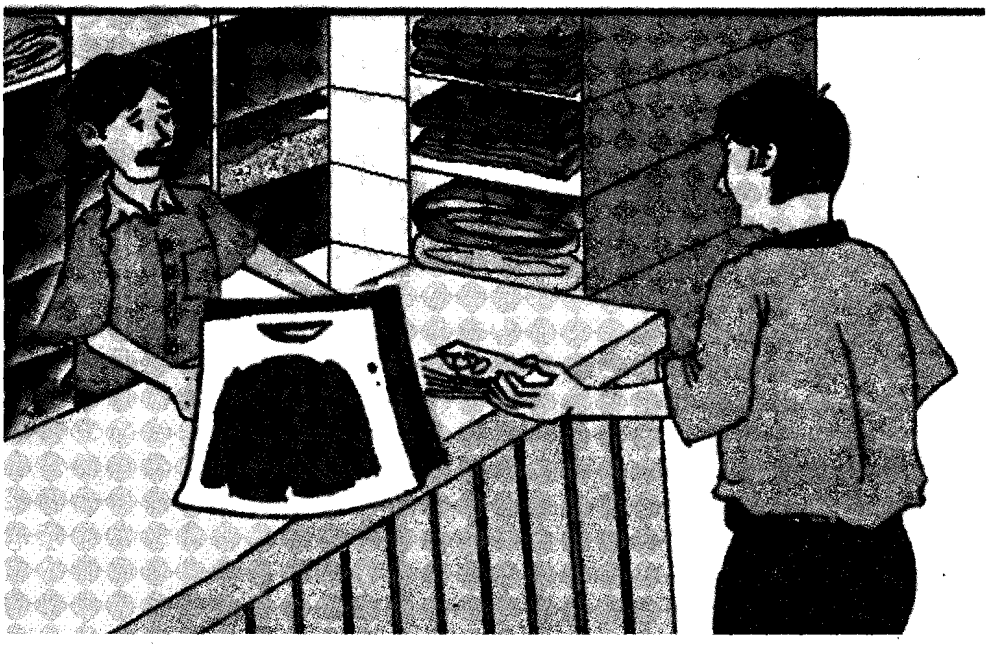
14.3.3 Market Exchange

It is the exchange of goods and services according to the law of supply and demand. The predominant feature of market exchange is that goods and services are bought and sold at a money price which is determined by the impersonal forces of supply and demand. Unlike reciprocity and redistribution, in which the social and political roles of those who exchange are important, a market exchange is impersonal and occurs no matter what the social position of the participants is. Market exchange is thus the most purely economic model of exchange. In this form of exchange social or political goals are less important than economic goals. Therefore, market exchange is also known as money exchange or commercial exchange. These exchange systems involving money emerge when an economy develops to the point where supplies of food regularly exceed the needs of those engaged in food production. Market exchange depends on how much people desire particular goods or services, and how much they must give to obtain them. Every time we speak of selling something or buying something we need, we are using terms associated with market exchange such as buy, sell, discount, price, money, cost, profit, loss etc. These words express various aspects of the many different transactions that characterise our complex market economy.



Market Exchange

14.3.3.1 Features of Market Exchange

Buyers approach the sellers because of their direct need or desire for goods. Similarly, the sellers wish to exchange their goods because they need the money it will bring. They do so because they have an immediate need for other goods or services.

When individuals conduct market exchange, they try to maximise their profit by getting the maximum number of goods and services for the least expenditure of their own resources. This also means that the price of a particular item may change from day to day in relation to supply and the demand.

The third attribute of market exchange is that it determines the parties to the exchange. Because a seller and a buyer attempt to get the most for their limited resources, they will choose to deal with the individual who gives them the maximum value. There is no need to know the person with whom the transaction occurs. Thus market exchange facilitates the transfer of goods among strangers and is ideally suited to large and complex societies of today where most people do not know each other. For example, when we visit a super market, we need not know the sales girls or packers to buy the food we require, nor must we be personally be acquainted with the manager of the State Electricity Board to pay our monthly electricity bill.

Market exchange leads to a setting of the value of goods and services in terms of each other. Over a period of time, the value of each commodity under exchange in the market becomes related. That is, the worth of any one commodity eventually be stated in terms of the values of another. Money facilitates such inter valuation immensely. Normally money is a market device designed to facilitate exchange by acting as a medium for it.

Activity 2

List out the commodities and services that you have purchased during the last week. Make a chart of their value in money. Prepare another chart of the same commodities and services based on prices of the previous year. Compare the two charts and write a report of a page on "Price Fluctuation and the Market". Compare your report with others at your study centre.

14.3.3.2 Network of Services

Two organised networks of services stand out significantly in the modern market economy. They are (1) Banks and (2) Advertising. Banks serve not only to provide capital to investors, but also as accounting and frequently as credit agencies for consumers. Bank cheques serve as an alternative to official currency in financial transactions. In its simplest form advertising entails a mere announcement of where specified goods and services are available usually with a stipulation of price. In competitive distributional systems, the producer, wholesaler, retailer and consumer are aided by advertising agencies. Such agencies in mass society appeal to any consumer interests or irrational motivation that will lead to a sale. For example, an advertising agency conducts a survey to find out certain information regarding parent child relationship. They discover that working parents suffer from guilt and feel that they should compensate their children for leaving them alone at home. They make an advertisement showing the parents bringing chocolate of their brand for the child. This way the sale of chocolates of a brand increases as more parents buy it as gift.

Modern industrial economy is integrated around at least three principles that are not normally found together in primitive economy. These are the economy - wide market, the materially self-gainful economising, that is, the constant attempt, to gain surplus, that motivates the people and the monetisation of both internal and external trade. On the other hand, other principles such as reciprocity and redistribution are important in the movement of goods and services in primitive societies.

In industrial economy, the technological processes of production are very complex, but the distribution process is relatively simple as it depends mainly upon the market principle. The reverse situation is found in the primitive economy where the technological processes of production are very complex in both the organisation and the principles involved. In the simplest societies the division of labour is based on age and sex. This means that the members of each family together control the total production of the whole society. Even in peasant societies it is common to find that most of the families in any given village are engaged in the same agricultural activities. Using the same tools and technological skills. Thus, simplicity in technology is not normally associated with or a cause of simplicity in exchange or distribution.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Define market exchange. Give at least two features of market exchange. Use about seven lines for your answer.

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2) What are the three principles around which modern industrial economy is integrated? Use about five lines.

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14.4 LET US SUM UP

The economic system of any society consists of the cultural knowledge people use to provide goods and services to meet biological and social wants. It defines human productive activity and the distribution and exchange of goods and services. Once goods are produced, they are dispersed by a system of distribution which consists of a set of strategies that apportion goods and services among the members of a group. Distribution is normally effected through economic exchange which represents the cultural rules for the transfer of goods and services among people. Exchange takes three basic forms: reciprocity, redistribution and market exchange. While reciprocal exchange indicated the transfer of goods or services between two people or groups based on role obligations, redistribution refers to the transfer of goods or services between a group of people and a central collecting source based on role obligation. Finally, market exchange refers to a transfer of goods or services based on price, supply and demand. Each mode embodies a particular system of rules that makes it different from the others, and each gives the transfer of goods and services special meaning. However, it is to be noted that all three modes of exchange systems exist together in many economic systems.

14.5 FURTHER READINGS

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14.6 KEY WORDS

Distribution : The method by which goods and services reach the customer(s).

Economic Organisation : The system through which goods are produced, distributed and consumed.

Network : The interconnection of relationships, which are useful and reliable.

Reciprocity : To have a relationship in which giving of goods is accompanied by receiving other goods.

14.7 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Reciprocal exchange refers to transfer of goods or services between two people or groups based on their role obligations. This exchange may or may not be directed by the desire for the material goods themselves as it is in the market. For example exchange of gifts between mother and son.

2) Redistribution system of exchange refers to the transfer of goods and services between a group of people and a central collecting source based on role obligation. Redistribution may be voluntary on the part of members of a society or it may be involuntary. It may be involuntary in the sense that collective centres may use agents to force the members to contribute goods and services to the authorities.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Market exchange is the exchange of goods and services. According to the law of supply and demand some of its major features are that here goods and services are bought and sold at a money price which is determined by the impersonal forces of supply and demand. In this exchange people try to maximise profit by giving less resources for more goods and services.

2) Modern industrial economy is integrated around the three principle which are the economy-wide market, the materially self gainful profit oriented economising which motivates the people, and the monetisation of both internal and external trade.

UNIT 15 CONSUMPTION PATTERN

Structure

15.0 Objectives

15.1 Introduction

15.2 Some Fundamental Questions

15.3 The Nature of Consumption

- 15.3.1 Relationship Between Consumption and Production
- 15.3.2 Social Aspects of Consumption

15.4 The Definition of Concepts

- 15.4.1 The Areas of Consumption
- 15.4.2 The Level of Consumption

15.5 Patterns of Consumption in Pre-industrial Societies

- 15.5.1 Social and Cultural Aspects of Consumption
- 15.5.2 Seasonal Variations in Food Production and Consumption

15.6 Consumption in Industrial Societies

- 15.6.1 Factors Affecting Consumption in Industrial Societies

15.7 Let Us Sum Up

15.8 Further Readings

15.9 Key words

15.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

15.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading the present unit you should be able to

- describe the concept of consumption as one of the dimensions of the economic organisation of any society;
- discuss the nature of consumption;
- elaborate and explain the definitions of various concepts that are associated with consumption;
- present comparative picture about the nature and patterns of consumption in pre-industrial and industrial societies; and
- outline the various factors affecting the consumption process in contemporary industrial societies.

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we are going to discuss some fundamental questions regarding the nature of consumption, the social aspect of consumption and the relationship that it has with production. We will examine the patterns of consumption in both pre-industrial and industrial societies. It includes an account of the factors that affect consumption in technologically advanced societies.

15.2 SOME FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Three fundamental and basic questions will be asked generally in the study of the economic organisation of any human society. They are:

i) How are the goods and services wanted by human societies produced?

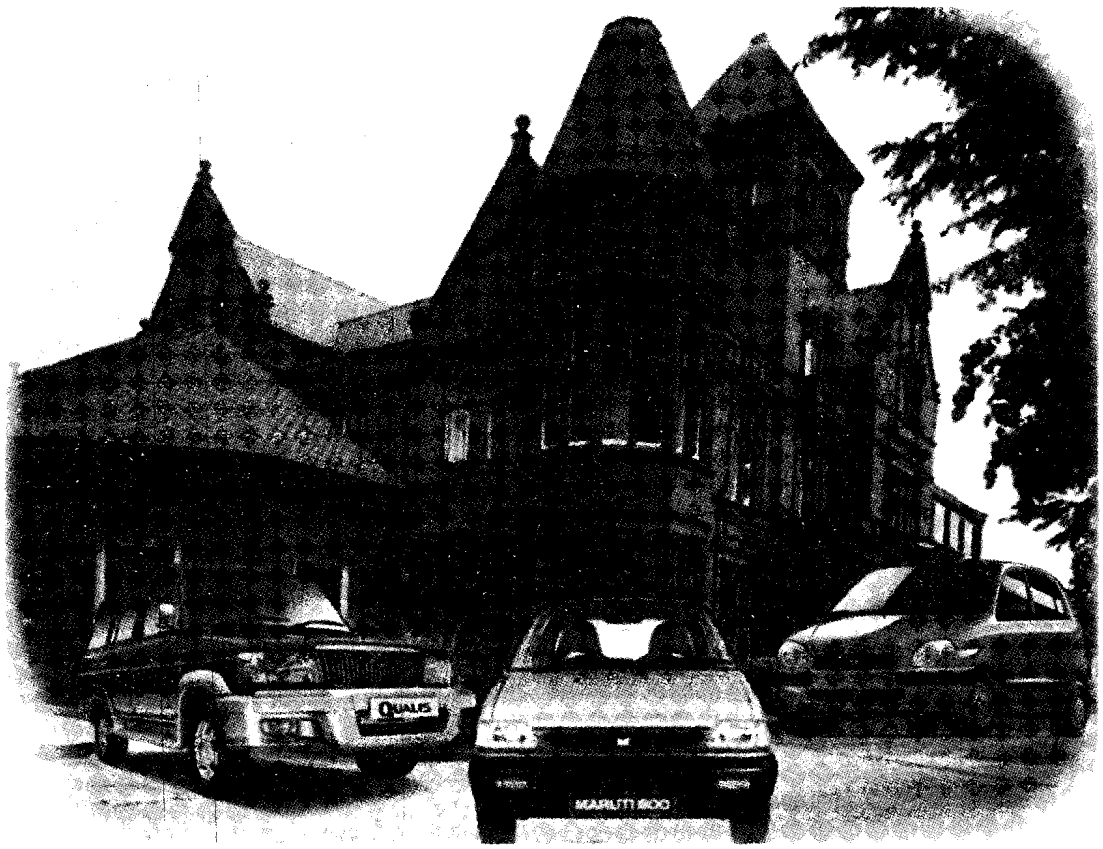
ii) How are the produced goods and services distributed or allocated among the members?

iii) How are the goods and services produced and distributed eventually put to use and consumed and what patterns of behaviour govern this process?

All these three questions involve behaviour networks of goods production and production of artifacts; distribution, exchange and allocation and utilisation, hoarding and consumption everything which is concerned with production and utilisation of goods and services. While the answers to the first two questions were provided in the earlier units of this block the present unit aims at giving an answer to the last question. The consumer and the process of consumption have received relatively little attention from the social scientists. From the earliest times, their interests have been focused more on the production, distribution and exchange of goods than on this phase of economic cycle, namely, consumption. It received only a passing recognition. However, the economics of consumption in both primitive and modern societies is a subject to which sociologists and social anthropologists are attracted only recently.

15.3 THE NATURE OF CONSUMPTION

Consumption involves a broad slice of human activity. It is concerned with all phases of the using up of goods and services in living. Thus, we may be said to be consuming when we are eating food, sleeping on a bed, visiting the doctor or going to school. But there are other aspects of consumption. The choosing or selecting of a particular basket of goods and services is a part of the consumption process. This in turn involves acquiring information, participating in transactions making decisions and so on. Then, it may be suggested that production involves consumption: many white sheets of paper were consumed, used up, in the production of this unit, or the worker eating his lunch is consuming in order to acquire the energy to continue with his production activity.



Consumption

15.3.1 Relationship between Consumption and Production

Consumption is a common feature in human societies. Sometimes even after goods have been produced, a large amount of it goes waste in our economic system. This waste occurs

due to a poor consumption process. This kind of consumption not only results in a loss of satisfaction on the part of those who consume, but it may also results in a misuse of productive resources.

A consumption process which gives little satisfaction to consumers produces individuals in society who lack energy and therefore, the will to work. Whereas a process of production, with little or no waste of goods produced, is likely to lead to greater satisfaction to consumers. This, in turn, will produce relatively more healthy individuals, who will be better equipped to take part in the productive processes in society. In this sense consumption is closely linked with production.

Activity 1

Prepare a list of items that you have purchased from the market in a week; such as, food items, soaps, grocery etc. Write a note of about one page on "Consumption and its Social Nature" where you analyse the nature of your purchase and its utility - was it an essential item or were you driven by what other's are using. Compare your note with others at your study centre. Discuss with your Academic Counsellor at the Study Center.

15.3.2 Social Aspects of Consumption

Consumption is not entirely an individual matter but has important social aspects. For example, much of what we consume is the result of the consumption of others. We often imitate others because we may not know what to consume or because we wish to avoid being conspicuous through the omission of certain articles in our consumption. The consumption problem deals with the final purpose of the products manufactured by society. How much is consumed relative to the amount saved? If there is conspicuous consumption, what forms does it take in societies? Of the amount that is saved, whether and how it is invested or hoarded? These are the basic issues related to the main theme, consumption.

15.4 THE DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Consumption is generally defined as the use of goods and services to give satisfaction to the consumer. There is an element of selection in consumption - the selection of a particular set of goods and services. There is an element of using up in consumption - the using up of different goods and services in living. And there is an element of obtaining something in consumption - this output we call satisfaction or utility. Thus selected goods and services are used up in consumption to produce satisfaction or utility for the consumer.

In this view, consumption is comparable to production - only the nature of product is different. While the output of a productive activity is so many units of physical goods or services, the output of consumption is so many units of satisfaction. A consumer is defined as an individual human being who consumes. in the sense of, using up inputs of goods and services to produce satisfaction. The choice of goods and services to be consumed is often made within the family unit and individual members consume in accordance with that chosen pattern.

15.4.1 The Areas of Consumption

It is convenient to distinguish four categories of consumers, although each could be divided further in terms of such variables as type and volume of purchase. They are: (i) The household or family. (ii) Agencies of the government at national, state and local levels. (iii) Manufacturing and business establishments. (iv) Various non-profit organisations such as voluntary association, private schools, hospitals, and religious and charitable organisation.

The plane of consumption is described by the list of goods and services acquired in the market and actually consumed. The plane of living is described by the list of all goods, services and conditions actually consumed or experienced. It is an inclusive concept in that it includes all things consumed or experienced in living; goods and services acquired in the market plus such things as the use of public facilities like parks, schools, location of residence, etc., which are non-marketable goods, services and conditions.

15.4.2 The Level of Consumption

The level of consumption is described by a composite or aggregate of the list of goods and services acquired in the market and actually consumed. It is expressed in one number which provides a convenient means for ranking different planes of consumption.

The level of living is described by a composite or aggregate of all items which comprise the plane of living. It is an expression of the plane of living in one number or value.

The standard of consumption is described by the list of goods and services that may be acquired in the market which people think they should consume. It is a normative concept in that it refers to what ought to be rather than what is, as in the case of plane or level.

The standard of living is described by a list of goods, services and condition which the individual or group strives to attain, to maintain if once attained and to regain if lost. It is a normative concept describing how the individual or group believes he or she ought to be living.

To summarise these ideas, 'plane of living' is a more inclusive concept than 'plane of consumption'. But in either case 'plane' and 'level' refer to items actually consumed. Similarly, 'standard of living' is a broader concept than 'standard of consumption' but in either case 'standard' refers to some derived performance. A standard of living may be viewed as a level of living which people feel belongs to them.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the fundamental questions regarding the study of economic organisation of any human society? Give two examples. Use about five lines.

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2) Tick the correct answer:

i) Consumption is concerned with all phases of the using up of goods and services in the process of living. yes/No

ii) We often imitate others because we do not want to become conspicuous among others with whom we live, such as in our way of dressing etc. Yes/No

iii) Not all human societies have the process of consumption. Yes/No

3) Give the definition of consumption in about three lines.

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15.5 PATTERNS OF CONSUMPTION IN PRE-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

Sociologists and social anthropologists usually classify the economies of the world, into five types (1) hunting and food gathering, (2) 'herding' (3) horticulture, (4) agriculture and (5) factory-industrialism. In the first four types, groups are normally organised for both production and consumption on the basis of kinship, and there is consequently little separation of the two function in organisation, that is, the family is the basic unit of both production and

consumption. In industrial societies, on the other hand, there is a separation of the production and consumption units as they are organised on different principles. The major consumption unit of final products is still the family although other institutions such as the government also becomes an important consumer. While markets are of less importance in the first four types of economics, production and consumption units are linked through the mechanism of the market under factory-industrialism.

15.5.1 Social and Cultural Aspects of Consumption

A major factor that has rendered the study of consumption difficult in some of the pre-industrial societies has been the absence of a pecuniary standard of value, whereby the worth of resources assigned to various ends can be calculated and the resultant planes of living of a people effectively described. Certain methodological problems were indicated by researchers in their attempts to calculate the exact quantity of food the households consumed, how much was given away or wasted and how much received.

If we turn to the traditions which determine the consumption of goods in non-industrial cultures, we are confronted with some surprises. Food, the most fundamental necessity of life offers the most striking case in point. Even the consumption of this elementary necessity is found to be influenced by ideas of what is and what is not suitable for human nourishment. A comparable selectivity is found in clothing also by considering the differences not only in style but also in the materials that differentiate the clothing of the two sexes. It is easy to recognise how arbitrarily the selections are made from the available supply of goods.

Besides the questions of nourishment and individual taste, patterns of food consumption involves the factor of prestige also. Foods must be served to guests in order to maintain a particular social status, regardless of what may be eaten in private. Further, it is held shameful if a man has to send to the market for food with which to entertain unexpected guests. Also the utilisation of goods for ritual purpose and, in particular ceremonial consumption so as to gain prestige, are among the most important and consistent elements in the use of available foods resources in many pre-industrial societies.

15.5.2 Seasonal Variations in Food Production and Consumption

Further, the food of people in pre-industrial cultures varies with the season of the year and the region of the country in which they live. Similarly, consumption of certain food stuffs can effectively be stopped for a time if a chief decides so in order to save food for a social occasion.

Activity 2

Take an outline map of India. Put the name of various states/regions, such as, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, etc. Try and find out what are the main or staple diet of people of these areas and what major food items like, wheat, coconuts, rice, etc. that they consume. Put this on the map and write a page on "Major Food Products and Preparations Consumed in India". Compare your answer with other students at your study centre.

In several agricultural societies domestic food supplies are at the lowest at the time of the most arduous output of physical labour and highest when there is least agricultural work. In other words, it would seem that food availability is inversely correlated with food requirements, if we assume that more food is needed to sustain the arduous agricultural labour of the rainy season than the leisure months of the dry season.

The agriculturists lack neither the technique of storing food stuffs nor the concepts of thrift and frugality. It must also be remembered that besides differences in the amounts of food available at any given time, the rate of consumption may be affected by the amount of work done at a given season of the year, or by the sudden arrival of guests or unexpected demands from kinsmen in the village. Diversity in food resources holds the level of basic subsistence goods relatively constant and compensates for seasonal variation in supply that can constitute a serious problem where reliance is placed on a single source and the technology is simple.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) On what basis have the sociologists classified the economies of the world into five types? List these types. Use about five lines.

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2) Tick the correct answer:

i) In hunting and food gathering, herding, horticulture and agrarian societies family is the basic unit of both production and consumption. Yes/No

ii) In industrial societies there is no separation of production and consumption units. Yes/No

iii) Patterns of food consumption depend on social variables like prestige and status besides the question of nourishment. Yes/No

iv) The food of people in pre-industrial cultures remains the same throughout the year. Yes/No

15.6 CONSUMPTION IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETIES

Many of the things consumed by modern people in industrial societies are no longer produced at home and the efforts of family members are focused instead on earning a living. Buying is the process through which the varied output of industries must somehow flow to provide acceptable standards of health, possessions and happiness to the members of the society. It is the negotiation of this exchange of money for goods and services that reveal what we call the problems of consumption. We try and balance our income with the necessary items and extra comforts that we require in life. Science, technology, improved merchandising, extension of personal credit facilities. Rising standards of living has created outright, brought into volume production, or raised to the position of necessities of life, a long list of new goods and services. These involve new standard of health, child rearing, comfort, convenience, cleanliness, travel and variety of living. Along with these, there is also a measure of one-up man ship in most societies where consumption pattern denotes your social status, i.e. one tries to emulate those who are better-off and higher in status than ourselves. In the Elective Course, ESO-03 your will learn more about an American sociologist, T. Veblen (1857-1929) who gave the concept of "Conspicuous Consumption" to explain why people tried to imitate their neighbours in terms of consumption.

Also, French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1991) believes that different classes in a society make a distinction among themselves not only on the basis of objective reality but create a demarcation based on symbolic reality. For eg. style of living, model of car one uses, etc.

15.6.1 Factors Affecting Consumption in Industrial Societies

i) Availability of Choice

The consumer's problem now is one of selection to a degree never before known. The production units in turn face the necessity of competing not merely against rival makes of the same commodity, but against the entire field of alternate goods and services in the ever widening arena of competition for a share of the consumer's rupee.

ii) **Amount of Income**

The consumer's ability to buy goods depends on the money he has. Availability of consumer credit widens their range and flexibility of buying power. The instalment and small loan facilities allow a common consumer to buy expensive goods.

iii) **Family Size**

The size of the family is one of the predominant factors affecting the balance among expenditures. Studies conducted on family consistently reveal the declining size of the family unit, particularly in an urban environment, which facilitates a rise in consumption levels over the rural people. There is a trend in our urban culture towards rearing children as major economic outlays rather than as the economic assets of an earlier era. In other words, parents in modern times consider children as economic liabilities rather than assets. Children have come into direct competition with other consumption goods. As the money available for house-building decreases, people go for smaller living units. Rising standards of living, equality between parents and children make it possible to distribute incomes more evenly. There is a growing margin of leisure time activity in the modern family. These leisure-time activities are adapted to the needs of separate age and sex groups. They affect the consumption of a wide group of goods and services in modern 'society' such as cinema, theatre, clubs, restaurants etc. The steady secularisation of Sunday has made it more than ever before an occasion for spending money. The annual vacation habit is also spreading.

iv) **Availability of Goods**

In addition to the amount of income and varying family needs, the differing localities or regions in which people live exert different pressures to consume. Climatic factors influence consumption in such matters as clothing, fuel, housing and automobiles. Since standards of consumption are so largely social rather than private in character, the level of wealth; and availability of goods in a given community exert powerful pressures on the consumer. For example, a farmer is under less compulsion to dress up to a; high standard than is a businessman in a large city; and a family closely surrounded by multiple trading centres with elaborate shop networks and high standards of competitive spending tends to be under more pressure to buy many types of commodities than is a family served by a single and meagre trading centre. Thus the differences in the availability of goods to different sections of the population operate to increase or restrict the area of choice confronting consumers. However, it is significant to note that even in geographically remote and socially isolated areas, more goods are available today as compared with a generation back.

v) **Merchandising Practices**

The pressure to sell more goods, necessitates the development of merchandising practices such as advertising and branding. Advertising goes hand in hand with volume of production and retail distribution. The general aims of advertising are:

i) to create awareness among consumers,

ii) to break down consumer resistance,

iii) to create consumer acceptance, and

iv) to create consumer demand.

Further, the specialisation of commodities and heightened competition of manufacturers in their efforts to create national markets, facilitated the spread of packaged and branded goods. Accordingly, the value of a brand name has mounted steadily and the number of brands of selected commodities has gone up For eg. A report by NCAER N.Delhi (1993) found during ;its research that the Nirma brand of washing powder has the highest sale in India which was about 700,000 tonnes of detergent sold in India. Meanwhile, the consumer is reported to be shifting at an accelerating rate from brand to brand and retailers are lamenting that customer loyalty is now not what it used to be. Style, price, quality and convenience shuttle in and out of the picture as millions of citizens make daily purchases.

vi) **Consumer Literacy**

The increase in new kinds of goods and services, the decline in home handicraft knowledge, the increased complexity of mechanical devices and fabricated commodities, new pressures

on the consumer to buy and new tensions within the consumer, all make new demand for consumer literacy. This problem of literacy involves two things: knowledge of commodities and of what one can afford. The growing co-operation of government with industry and the mounting volume of printed and radio material issued by it to consumers render its role outstandingly significant in the consideration of consumer habits. In addition, certain professional and non-profit agencies have emerged to buttress the consumer. Consumer co-operatives also, play a role in this area of consumer education.

The above analysis, thus, has been concerned with specific factors influencing the consumption process. None of these factors, however, can be isolated as primary cause of consumer behaviour, because they are all so closely part of the complex system of family budgeting. The ways in which individual families allocate their total incomes are revealed to some extent by budget studies. While shopping is still a pleasure to some consumers, there is evidence that, with the multiplication of alternate activities, there is a mounting distaste on the part of both men and women for the labour of buying things. They desire to simplify and expedite the process as much as possible.

In more developed countries like America, people use the Internet facility to purchase nearly everything ranging from jewellery, clothes, plane tickets, cinema tickets to even fruits and vegetables. This trend is catching up in India, as well especially in the metropolitan cities. Thus, in terms of consumption, the world has become a global world.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is meant by the problems of consumption in modern societies? Answer in about seven lines.

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2) In relation to consumption what are the consequences of development in science, technology, improved merchandising, etc. in industrial societies? Use about five lines.

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3) What are the factors that affect consumption in industrial societies? Use about seven lines for your answer.

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15.7 LET US SUM UP

Economic organisation can be explained as the human behaviour by which goods are produced, distributed and used. In non-industrial societies in which the techniques of production and distribution are simple, the mechanism of consumption is prevalent within a small group. They produce only to consume. For them, food, clothing, shelter and articles of protection are the primary consumption goods. In industrial societies in which the techniques of production and distribution are complex and surpluses are produced in large quantities, the mechanisms of consumption have also become complex. The variety of factors which are involved in the formation of consumer habits in modern societies are traced out and explained in this unit.

15.8 FURTHER READINGS

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15.9 KEY WORDS

Conspicuous Consumption : Any consumption which distinguishes one consumer from another consumer by such an action as buying two or more cars in order to show one's wealth.

Transaction : To carry on the exchange of goods and services in a business deal.

Utilisation : To make use of goods and services in the process of consumption.

15.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The two fundamental questions regarding the study of economic organisation of any human society are: i) How are the goods and services wanted by human societies produced? ii) How the produced goods and services are distributed or allocated among the members?

2) i) Yes (Check section 15.3)
   ii) Yes (Check sub-section 15.3.2)
   iii) No (Check Sub-section 15.3.1)

3) Consumption is defined as the use of goods and services to produce satisfaction for the person who consumes, namely, the consumer.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The sociologists classified the economies of the world into five types according to their main subsistence base. These five types are : i) hunting and food gathering; ii) herding; iii) horticulture; iv) agriculture; and v) factory-industrialism.

2) i) Yes (Check section 15.6)
   ii) No (Check section 15.6)
   iii) Yes (Check section 15.6.1)
   iv) No (Check section 15.6.2)

Check Your Progress 3

1) In industrial societies the bulk of things that are consumed are produced outside the home. Therefore, family members concentrate on buying a living. Buying has to take care of the varied outputs of industries. These outputs have to provide for acceptable standards of health, possessions and happiness. This process of exchange of money for goods and services constitutes consumption in industrial societies.

2) Development in science and technology, improved merchandising, credit facilities, etc. have led to the acceptance of large number of products, goods and services as the necessaries of life. These include new standards of health, child rearing, cleanliness, etc.

3) The factors that affect consumption in industrial societies are: i) availability of choice; ii) amount of income; iii) family factors; iv) availability of goods; v) merchandising practices; and vi) consumer literacy. Family affects consumption in industrial society as it constitutes the major consumers of the society. There is a direct relationship between the family size and proportion of consumption in industrial societies.

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UNIT 16 STATELESS SOCIETIES

Structure

16.0 Objectives

16.1 Introduction

16.2 Politics and Political Organisations

16.3 Political Institutions and Stateless Societies

- 16.3.1 Sources of Data about Stateless Societies
- 16.3.2 Types of Stateless Societies
- 16.3.3 Kinship System as a Form of Political Control

16.4 Political Principles of Stateless Society

- 16.4.1 An Example : The Tonga
- 16.4.2 An Example : The Lozis

16.5 Stateless Tribes in India

- 16.5.1 Political Organisation in Indian Tribes
- 16.5.2 The Lineage System
- 16.5.3 Conflict Regulation
- 16.5.4 Crime and Punishment

16.6 Political Institutions and Development of Society

- 16.6.1 Emergence of Simple Form of Government in Society
- 16.6.2 Political Aspect of Religion in Simple Societies

16.7 Let Us Sum Up

16.8 Key Words

16.9 Further Readings

16.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

16.0 OBJECTIVES

By the time you have studied this unit you should be able to:

- describe the stateless societies;
- explain some key features of stateless societies;
- explain the distinction between the stateless society and a society with state; and
- discuss the functions of stateless society.

16.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit in the block "Political Processes". In this unit you are going to learn about politics and political organisation. You will learn about the stateless societies which generally lack a centralised system of authority. Here the significance of kinship organisation is dealt with in relation to political control. We have discussed here the

political principles which are present in stateless societies. We have also described the stateless tribes in India. Finally, we have discussed the emergence of government in stateless societies.

16.2 POLITICS AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION

Politics deals with the distribution of power in society. Political institutions refer to certain kinds of social relations which exist within a particular area. Thus, territorial area is an important aspect in the political process of any society. The territorial structure provides the framework not only for political organisation but for other forms of organisation as well. However, when we study political institutions we deal with the "maintenance and establishing of order within a territorial framework by the organised exercise of coercive authority through the use or possibility of use of physical force" (Fortes M. and Evans, Pritchard, E.E., 1949)

One of the important political institutions in society is state. It has been described as a human community which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory. State is different from government in the sense that government is the agency which carries out the orders of the state. Thus, we can say that political organisation consists of the combination and interrelationship of power and authority in the maintenance of public affairs.

In modern complex societies the police and the army are the instruments by which public order is maintained. Those who offend are punished by law. Law is one of the means by which the state carries out its function of social control.

There has been a progressive growth of political organisation in different societies. As societies have developed from the simple to modern industrial societies, all other aspects of social organisation, even political institutions have become more complex. There are stateless societies without any centralised authority. Unit 16 deals with such societies. Then there are those societies which have some form of centralised authority and administrative machinery. Unit 17 describes these traditional/pre-modern societies. In Units 18 and 19 are discussed developed forms of political institutions in modern societies.

16.3 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND STATELESS SOCIETIES

Simple societies have very low population in comparison to modern societies. There exists a very indeterminate political community in these societies. Here, since face to face relation is possible no formal agency of social control exists. We are now going to discuss the political organisation in the stateless societies. In all types of stateless societies, however simple their organisation might be, they generally have an idea of their territorial rights. These rights are maintained through the notions of age, and social sanctions and social control.

Here, we must make it clear that we are talking generally about the African tribes. In these societies various forms of political institutions such as, councils, monarchies, chiefs, etc., exist. In the stateless societies power and authority are generally diffused in different groups in society. Political order is maintained through the ties of kinship and lineage systems.

A society is called stateless if it:

- has no rigid boundary or permanent physical territory,
- follows oral traditions, and the bureaucratic aspect is absent from it,
- has a single person holding several major powers of religious, economic and political offices within the society,
- there is no fixed rigidly spelt out ideology, and
- has simple economy

16.3.1 Sources of Data about Stateless Societies

There are three sources of knowledge about simple societies without government. It is from these that our information is derived:

- archaeological records about stateless societies,
- literature produced by missionaries, travellers and administrators, and
- monographs written by anthropologists.

The archaeological record is very important in the study of stateless societies. This leads to an important point. All the records of simple societies show that they have always been involved in a process of change, growth and development. We note here that there is no static simple society - they are all dynamic.

Anthropologists studying stateless societies have also used literature, produced by missionaries, travellers and colonial administrators. Last but not the least are the monographs written by anthropologists on stateless societies. These are our main sources of information, given in this unit.

16.3.2 Types of Stateless Societies

The stateless societies can be generally divided into four broad types of societies according to their socio-political organisations:

i) First type of societies are those which usually live by hunting and gathering. Here the largest social units are the co-operating groups of families or close kin. There does not exist any other formal grouping besides this. There are no gradations or stratification's or even any separate institutions. No specific political organisation exists in this type of society. The authority rests with the senior members of these families. But this authority is very limited in scope. Some of the examples of these societies are the Bushmen of South Africa and some of the people of South East Asia, Jarwa of Andaman Islands etc.

ii) Second type of society is that which is made up of village communities which are related to one another by various kinship and economic ties. They have formally appointed councils to maintain administration. In these councils the eligibility for membership varies from one society to another. Some of the criteria for eligibility are descent from either old family or reputed family etc. or any other social eminence such as economic power. Here we can see that there is an emergence of political order. Some of these types of societies are the Ibo and Yako of West Africa.

iii) In the third type, the societies have political control vested in age-set systems. This is a common feature of the societies in East Africa. In these societies the allocation of authority is vested in the elders of the society. Thus age-set

organisation is based on the principle of seniority. An example of such a tribe is the Cheyenne of America and the Nuer of Africa.

iv) Finally, the fourth type of societies are those in which political functions are performed through groups organised in terms of unilineal descent. The unilineal descent is traced along the line of either father or mother. In such societies there are no specific political offices. There are no political chiefs, but the elders of the society may exercise a limited authority. In this type of society the groups within the society may be in a state of balanced opposition. Some of the example of such type of societies are, the Nuer, the Dinka of Southern Sudan. This aspect will be explained later.

16.3.3 Kinship System as a Form of Political Control

Kinship system plays a very crucial role in the socio-political and economic organisation of simple societies. Its functions are extensive and overlapping with functions of the political and economic institutions. It takes up the task of maintaining order and balance in society. The principle of fission or conflict and fusion or cohesion works within the simple societies along the kinship and territorial lines. For example, the Nuer tribe is divided into segments. The primary sections or segment of the tribe is the largest and it occupies the largest territory, the secondary section is smaller than the primary and it occupies the next largest territory and finally the tertiary section, which is the smallest and occupies the smallest territory. This division of Nuer society is not just political or territorial but it is also a kinship distribution. In such a society conflict leads to alliances and opposition along the kinship and especially lineage lines.

Activity 1

Compare the Nuer society (as described here) with the socio-political order of your own society. Write a note on this comparison. Compare your note with other students at your study centre.

In all stateless societies where the society is segmented or divided into sections alliances take place along the lines of territory, residence, kinship, descent, heritage and marriage. Conflict leads to cohesion in such societies. For example, in case of conflict, all the members of a group, descended agnatically from a particular man, many see themselves as a unit against all the agnatic descendants of that man's enemy. The enemy might be a member of one's own lineage or another lineage. The segmentation of society maintains itself through the presence of actual or potential opposition to one another. This opposition is characteristically expressed in the institution of "blood feud" in these societies. If a person has killed a member of another section of the society, that other section will not be satisfied until the murderer or any member of his section is killed. However, these inter-lineage antagonisms are countered by other cross cutting ties like those of affinity and matrilateral kinship. Thus there are always people in opposing groups whose interest is to seek peaceful solution of disputes between lineage's.

Therefore, we can say that in stateless societies the kinship ties are performing political roles. The principles of **exogamy** - where a person marries only outside one's community, and **endogamy** - where a person marries within a particular community - play an important part. It is these principles which decide the nature of one's potential supporters or allies in case of conflict.

16.4 POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF STATELESS SOCIETY

Stateless societies are very many, and their traditions have wide variation. Yet it is possible to distinguish some basic principles to which their organisation adheres. These principles seem to underlie and appear in all stateless societies:

- Society becomes united when different groups or segments unite. They initially owe loyalty to different groups but come together for some particular cause such as defence of territory or 'blood feud', etc.
- Authority, which is delegated or given to a subordinate, becomes independent. Thus juniors who are given power by seniors in a stateless society become powerful in their own right.
- Mystical symbols also 'integrate' and unify stateless societies. This is because the entire society regards these to be sacred and that which should be protected.

16.4.1 An Example: The Tonga

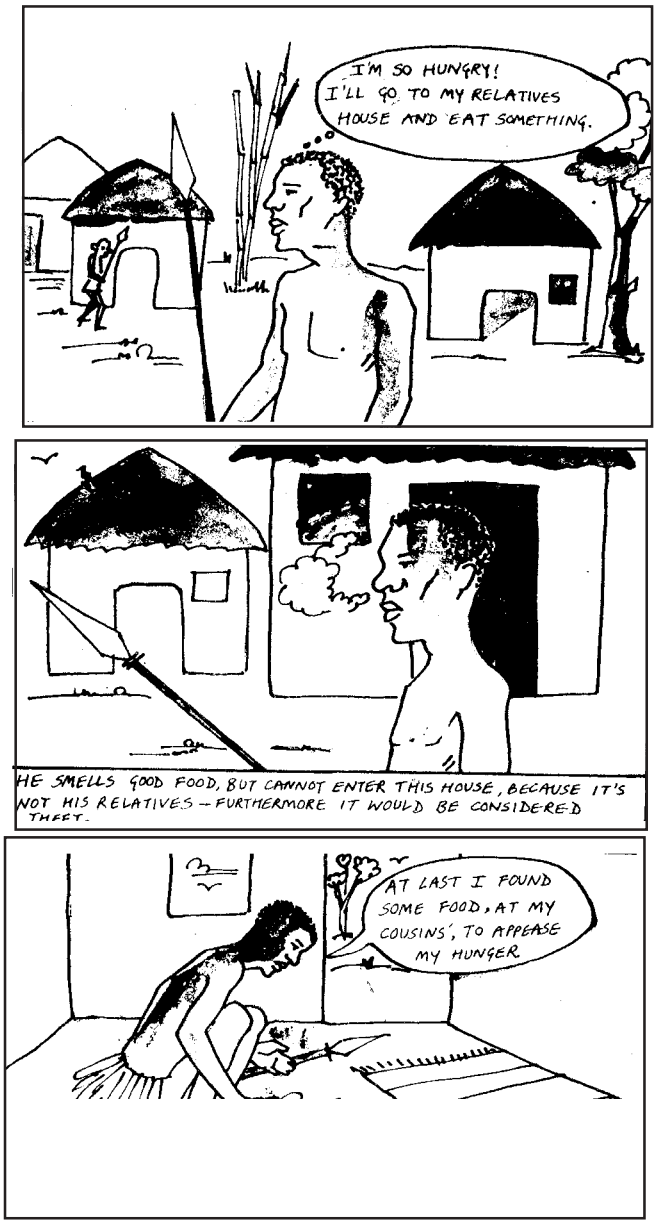
Let us take the **example** of the African tribe Tonga. The Tongas live in small villages in the hope of escaping raids upon them. These raids are performed by unfriendly tribes to steal food and valuables. In this tribe the headman has little power. This is one of the key features of stateless societies. This tribe is nomadic (moves its locations from time to time) due to agricultural needs. In doing so many new friendships are struck up and often old friendships break. Tongas belong to a matrilineally related kin group called the **mukowa**.

Now it is important to note that **no marriage may link up two mukowa**. This principle of exogamy is a primary mechanism for establishing the various alliances and linkages. A very interesting feature is that Tonga clans are related by what are called joking relations' between cross-cousins. A 'joking relationship' is where merriment is made into a ritual and is created perforce. The persons cannot talk normally but must joke and laugh. This institution is very important. Among the Tonga this joking has important political consequences.

This is because "clan joking" creates a large number of friendships, among all the people concerned. Further it provides the privileged go-betweens and judges of morals in a society an opportunity to intervene in the lives of people without looking authoritative. This is because during joking, 'counselling' and 'warnings' are allowed to be given as part of the jokes exchanged. Society functions without the mediations of political power and authority.

16.4.2 An Example: The Lozis

In some stateless societies there are institutions which protects the rights of all the members of society where food is scarce or limited. Since in these societies the concept of accumulation of property and food does not exist, there is always the problem of distribution. Amongst the Lozis of Africa there exists an institution called **kufunda,** which literally means legal theft. It is present in some other tribes also. Any person of the tribe can take any article or food from one's kinsmen's house. It solves the problem of hunger because one can always get food from one kinsman or the other. A person in these tribes has to share his or her food with the others. Thus kufunda or legal theft is a political institution and gives meaning to kinship and economic structures of the society.



Kufunda : Legal Theft

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Explain what is meant by a stateless society? Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Stateless societies are also called simple societies.

Yes No

3) A 'blood feud' is a method of making group members donate blood.

Yes No

4) What are the three sources of knowledge about stateless societies?

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

5) A "joking relationship' is: (Tick the answer)

i) A meeting of humorists.

ii) Competitions of jokes.

iii) A form of institutionalised behaviour.

iv) To make fun of each other.

16.5 STATELESS TRIBES IN INDIA

This section would enable you to explain how the 'stateless' tribes of India function and organise themselves within the Indian nation. This section will show how in contemporary India certain tribes fit into the category of stateless societies. As you will see they have a rich and complex life and maintain order. Sociologically speaking, they have their own inner logic of functioning and to a large extent they still live by it. However, it should not be assumed that they have not changed with time. In fact, they are increasingly getting modernised and attempts are being made to help them to develop.

16.5.1 Political Organisation in Indian Tribes

Political institutions in Indian tribes are based on

i) Clan and lineage

ii) village unit and

iii) group of villages.

Every clan has a common ancestor to which it can trace itself. Over time every clan "breaks" or "splits" up into several lineages.

Lineage segmentation or division into smaller sections is very important as a principle of political structure in stateless societies. Among the Bhils the lineage is structured with a depth of five to six generations as one unit.

16.5.2 The Lineage System

The political functioning and conflict in the lineage system among the Santal, Oraon and Bhil can be illustrated diagrammatically as follow:

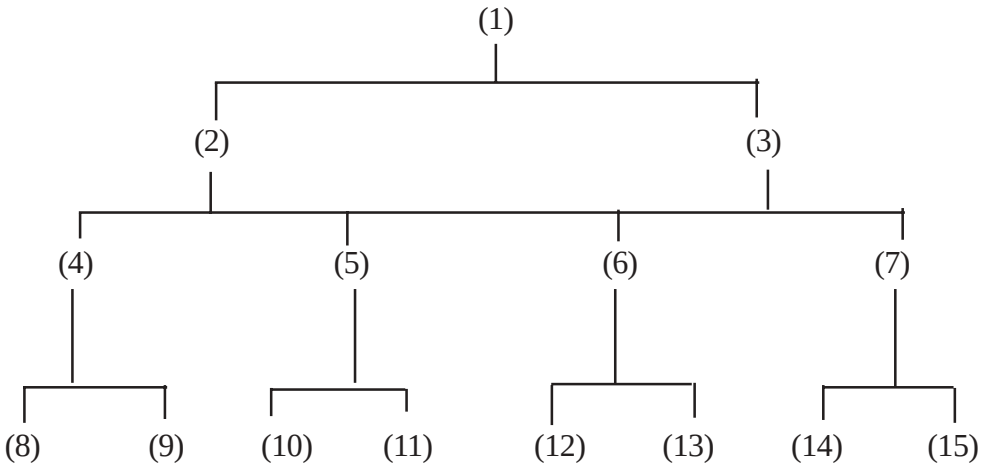

Diagram 1 : Political Functioning in Stateless Societies

In this diagram the members represent lineages of different orders. They all claim descent from (1) The male line goes down from (1) to (2) and (3) and two lineages are formed. After this the lines segment further into (4)–(5) and (6)–(7) respectively. In the next generation we find the lineage segmenting into (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (14), (15) respectively. This structure is very important for conflict regulation.

Now it often happens that there is enemity between members of (8) and (9) as per the diagram. In such a case all the members of (8) and all the members of (9) are potential enemies. All the other branches of the lineage such as (4), (5), (10), (11), (2), etc., are not involved. This is also true of (12), and (13). It is therefore a general principle in case of any conflict within a tribe which, apply to all segements.

Now consider carefully a different situation. If a member of (8) or (9) is engaged in conflict with a member of (10) or (11) then all (8) and (9) "fuse" (unite) or regard themselves as one group. Thus members of (8) and (9) will be pitted against the 'fused' group of (10) and (11).

At a yet higher level of consideration let us see what would happen if a member or members of (4) or (5) were engaged in hostilities with the members of (6) or (7). In such a case the whole lineage directly tracing descent from them will be united under them and be ready to fight for them. That is, lineage members of (8), (9), (10) and (11) will become enemies of lineage members of (12), (13), (14), and (15).

If there is a conflict at a still higher level between members of (2) and (3), all segments subsumed under them will become opposed to each other. Finally if clan (1) become opposed to another clan, all members of the clan (1) would fuse into one group for feuding with the opposing clan members.

When the hostility is over, then "fission" (division) or return to original position in the diagram takes place. This process is important not only in India but elsewhere as well most notably in Africa among the Nuer tribe, discussed in detail by Evans-Pritchard in his book, The Nuer (1940).

Activity 2

Try to find out from other members of your family or kinship network about a recent dispute. Write a note about this dispute in about two pages describing the various factors involved, the reason for the dispute and who all (i.e. their social status); were the people who managed to resolve the dispute.

Compare your answer with those of other students at your study centre.

16.5.3 Conflict Regulation

The territorial separateness prevents casual conflict occurring with other lineage which are bigger or of a different generation.

The tribal village is an active political unit. We find that the way of regulating the village goes downward in authority:

- village officer, and
- village administration.

The political mechanism functions through its officers who are known by different designations in various tribes. In minor tribes (Birhor, Juang) all these activities are in the hands of one man. Among major tribes (Santal, Bhil) authority is rested on two headmen. One is for secular and the other is for sacred purposes. Very often they have assistants.

Most tribes have a proper 'judicial' machinery to deal with breaches of peace and social offences. There is usually a village council or an assembly of elders. For example, among the Malers, the council of elders of the village is presided by Majhi. The **goriat** acts as the public prosecutor. The Panchayat is called at the instance of the **majhi** by the **goriat.**

Informal control over behaviour is done in the evening meetings. Here criticism is very pungent and effective. Public disapproval is also very effective in controlling or rectifying behaviour. This includes making clear what a member would suffer if he goes beyond the unwritten tribal laws. In short the evening meetings are called to keep those going out of line on line. In this way their problem does not become so severe as to call forth punishment.

16.5.4 Crime and Punishment

However there is no society which does not have criminal cases. These cause a severe disequilibrium in society. This has to be rectified by punishment.

The evidence that is called for, while deciding a criminal case, is:

- **Oath,** taken on a sacred deity, and
- **Ordeal,** undergone by tribal standards.

Among the Malers the **oath** taken is of loss of life. The suspect touches the knife at a sacred centre (holy spot etc.), and swears he will tell the truth or die. Here it is both society's pervasive influence as well as the person's own faith that produces a result. The result is almost always true and just.

In the case of **ordeal** the suspect is innocent if he remains unhurt by grasping a red hot axe or putting his hand in burning oil. Malers have the **saveli** ordeal, in which a red hot axe is to be grasped by the accused. In the **pochai** ordeal ritualistic rice beer is used. Only the innocent can grasp the axe or drink the ritualistic beer and get away unscathed. The guilty suffer burns or die of poisoning.

Oath and ordeal are both threatening alternatives as, they serve as a means of voluntary submission of the accused to law. The fine for the guilty depends upon the seriousness of the crime. The most serious punishment is excommunication. The tribals with beating of drums desecrate the house of the accused. They defile it with rubbish and may burn it down.

This symbolises their dislike and hatred for the crime and the criminal. **Bitlaha** (excommunication) occurs in cases where the crime is so severe that the very person

who has committed it would be intolerable. One of these crimes is that of marrying among the taboo or forbidden category of persons. Again a person who disrespects the tribal deity and attacks it, breaks it, spits on it, is liable to be excommunicated.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the process of "fission' and 'fusion' in stateless societies. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Give the names of three 'stateless' tribes of India.

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

3) Describe briefly the method of 'informal control'

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4) In the saveli ordeal the person is made to fast till death.

Yes No

5) Bitlaha is the name of the Santal God.

Yes No

16.6 POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY

Hunting and 'food gathering' societies can be divided into "easy" and "hard" hunters. The easy hunters live almost completely by gathering fruits, vermin, and insects. They live in temporary tenements of branches and leaves. Apart from the dog they have no domestic animals. The hard hunters are more evolved and go for larger animals. They use horses for travelling. Their sense of territory is much more definite. They keep domestic animals and have secondary arts such as spinning, weaving and pottery. In these societies we find that some form of complex centralised authority has emerged. We will examine this aspect now. Diagram 2 shows the levels of development of simple society.

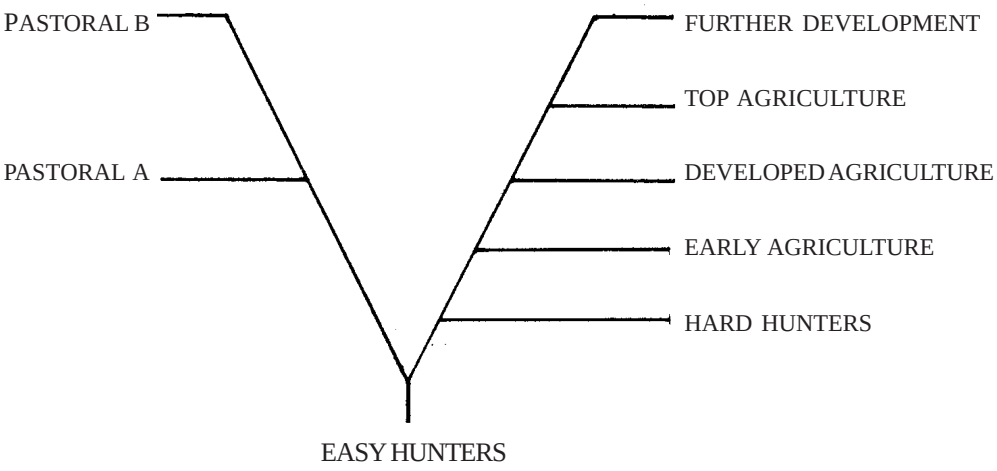

Diagram 2 : Levels of Development

We would like you to note three important facts. These are:

- the anthropologists' account and the information which comes from archaeology are in close agreement.
- there were no successive stages of pastoral and agricultural development. These were simultaneous and in different directions of growth from the social condition of the higher hunters.
- it was only from the highest basis of settled and mixed agriculture that large scale social systems, including state-formation, were able to grow.

That is to say stateless societies, with their hunting and herding can carry the development of the social system to a point. They cannot go beyond this point. Let us now consider briefly what emerges from these developments.

16.6.1 Emergence of Simple Form of Government in Society

First we find that there is the emergence of 'government' in simple form within each community. In the easy hunters there is a very simple form of government but at the top agricultural and pastoral levels settled government is established.

Secondly, there is a clear extension of settled government to embrace wider groupings. In only twenty-five percent of easy hunters does "government" extend beyond the primary community which is the family and kinship group. Almost eighty per cent have proper government with an administrative machinery.

There are several interesting features to note. We find that chieftains usually possess 'authority' within the pattern of custom. This type of government also involves a Council of Elders. All have to observe customary rules. It is called a government by discussion.

The same development is clear in the organisation of law,. In the stateless societies, kinship solves disputes. Some customary procedures of retaliation and retribution such as 'blood feud' the 'customary fight' and so on as found in some African tribes like the Nuer, exist. However in these forms of retribution the guilt of the individual is not involved. There are also forms of compensation where retribution is still visited upon the guilty kin group but punishment takes the form of restitution. This aspect has been discussed earlier.

At the highest pastoral and agricultural levels systems of public justice are established. This is regular with reference to attacks on the social system but sporadic in small-

scale conflicts. In such cases customary procedures can be applied provided they do not become socially distruptive. In more complex societies there is regular public justice.

As a stateless society changes there is a marked movement from tribal concerns and religious offences by corrective punishment towards claim and counter-claims of restitutive punishment. Oath and ordeal are used less and less. The matrilineal principle of descent predominates among the hunters and gatherers. While amongst pastoralists the patrilineal principle of descent predominates.

16.6.2 Political Aspect of Religion in Simple Societies

The function of religion in the simpler societies is two fold: It serves ecological functions, by giving men an interpretation of their relationship with nature. It indicates to them how they should relate with it. Religion also serves social and political functions. It binds men together, and gives meaning and legitimacy to authority. In the higher pastoral and agricultural societies higher forms of authority systems appear. These are the doctrines, rituals and worship.

Though morality is not directly linked with religion, the latter requires regulation of wide areas of behaviour, including various do's and don'ts. In simple societies, religion does not hold the individuals responsible for all their actions.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answer.

b) Compare your answers with those at the end of this unit.

1) What are the stages of stateless societies?

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2) Easy hunters hunt big animals.

Yes No

3) What functions does religion serve in stateless societies?

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16.7 LET US SUM UP

We have seen that stateless societies are those which lack centralised power. There is **hardly any administrative machinery** in them. There are no judicial institutions. Sharp cleavages of wealth, rank and status are missing. These societies include the Nuer and Tallensi, in Africa. They also cover Bhils, Oraons and Santals in India.

In such societies without government, what gives them law and order? We have considered this in the preceding sections. However it is the segmentary lineage system which controls political relations between different territorial segments. Kinship in these societies is very significant in political organisation. This is due to the link between territorial grouping and lineage grouping.

In such societies political office carries no economic privileges. Wealth can confer status and help in acquiring political leadership.

This is because wealth itself accrues from superior status in stateless societies. It was previously held that stateless societies came under the control of those with a state. They were conquered in war and acquired a state. This theory has been questioned and is generally not accepted now. Further there is no association, class, or segment which dominates. It does not control the political system any more than another group. Force when used is met with opposing force. Again the important fact is coexistence: if one segment defeats another it does not try to establish political control over it. Since there is no administrative support, it cannot do so. There is no person or group with absolute authority. Thus stability is maintained by equilibrium at every point of separation.

More than this, unity and cohesion come in these societies through common symbols. These include myths, dogmas, persons, sacred places and so on. These are regarded as final values in themselves.

Thus we can say that stateless societies have an internal cohesion system that is strong and effective. They are 'stateless' but they do not miss out any component that creates efficiency. These societies are, in fact, fully formed political units, and must be treated as such.

16.8 KEY WORDS

Clan : A kin group with a common ancestor

Endogamy : A social practice that prescribes marriage within a specific group

Exogamy : A social practice that prescribes marriage outside a specific group

Kinship system : A system of social ties based on matrimonial (i.e. affinal ties) and blood ties. (i.e. consanguinal ties)

Lineage : A segment of clan based on ancestral heritage in one line, either father's or mother's

Matriarchal : A social system based on female domination and authority

Matrilineal : A social system where descent is traced through the mother

Patriarchal : A social system based on male domination and male authority

Patrilineal : A social system where descent is traced through the father

Sanction : Certain constraints prescribed by the society.

16.9 FURTHER READINGS

Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 1940. *The Nuer.*Oxford University Press: Oxford. (Chapter IV).

Gluckman, Max. 1965. *Politics, Law and Ritual in Tribal Society.* Basil Blackwell: Oxford. (Chapters 3 and 4).

Vidyarthi, L.P. and Rai, B.K., 1985. *The Tribal Culture of India (2nd Ed.).* Concept: Delhi. (Chapter 2, pp. 25 and Chapter 5, pp. 195-235).

16.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) A stateless society has no rigid boundary. It has only oral traditions. Very often a single person is the chief of the entire tribe. There is no rigid boundary and economically these societies are primitive.

2) Yes

3) No

4) i) Archaeological record

   ii) Literature produced by missionaries, travellers and administrators

   iii) Monographs written by anthropologists

Check Your Progress 2

1) Stateless societies comprising a single ancestor divide or create fission in the second or third generation for various purposes. They behave as opposed units. However when under threat from other stateless societies they 'fuse' or join their forces.

2) i) Santal

   ii) Oraon

   iii) Bhil

3) Informal control is exercised during the evening meetings. The criticism is very pungent and effective. Public disapproval is another such method for informal control.

4) No

5) No

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) Early Agriculture

   b) Developed Agriculture

   c) Top Agriculture

2) No

3) Religion serves an ecological purpose. It also serves a social function and binds people together.

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Political Processes

5

UNIT 17 STATE IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES

Structure

17.0 Objectives

17.1 Introduction

17.2 Traditional Societies as Political Systems

17.3 The Nature and Scope of Political Authority

- 17.3.1 The Central Authority
- 17.3.2 Scope of Political Authority
  - 17.3.2.1 Patrimonial Authority
  - 17.3.2.2 Delegation and Distribution of Authority
  - 17.3.2.3 Delegation of Authority as the Balance of Forces

17.4 The Basis of Legitimacy of Political Authority

- 17.4.1 Legitimacy in Primary States
- 17.4.2 Legitimacy in Conquest-type or 'Secondary States'
- 17.4.3 Legitimacy Derived from Myths
- 17.4.4 Grounds on which People Accept Authority

17.5 Institutions to Prevent Abuse of Authority

17.6 Let Us Sum Up

17.7 Key Words

17.8 Further Readings

17.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

17.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Distinguish between traditional and modern societies in terms of their politics;
- Discuss the nature and scope of centralised authority;
- Describe the grounds on which authority is legitimised; and
- List the institutions which prevent a ruler from abusing his powers.

17.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with centralised authority in societies which lie between the two poles of stateless societies and modern states with government and executive. These societies can be called traditional or pre-modem insofar as they lack developed forms of political institutions which are mostly found in modem nation states. In traditional or pre-modem societies, we find distinct and permanent political structures which are clearly dominated by religion and to a lesser extent by kinship.

After a brief description of various types of traditional societies, the unit discusses the nature and scope of political authority in such states. We, then, look into the bases upon which this authority rests and finally we also discuss restraints which are usually exercised upon the political authority.

17.2 TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES AS POLITICAL SYSTEMS

In contrast to modern democratic and totalitarian states on the one hand, and the primitive stateless societies on the other, we have the whole range or pre-modern societies with political traditions which have shaped the political thought and issues of modern times. By acquiring an understanding of these traditions it is possible to follow the complex political institutions of modern states, which are discussed in Unit 18 of this Block.

17.3 THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Taking the wide range of societies, as we have done within the category of traditional/ pre-modem, it is natural that the nature and scope of political authority in them will vary to a large extent. The fact of centralisation of political authority is always a matter of degree. For example, clan-lineage based polities may have only a symbolic tribal chief, while politically centralised principalities and states with political heads may exist independent of each other, or, form part of a feudal systems.

17.3.1 The Central Authority

Let us focus on the nature of the political authority, considered to be central.

i) **Chief Authority as a Titular Head**

By acknowledging a more centralised concentration of power to a chief, a tribal group may achieve greater productivity without changing its technology. It may still maintain its segmentary social structure and acquire a political head to express the group's unity and identity. Surajit Sinha (1987: xi), an anthropologist, holds that, 'the chiefdom is a development of the tribal system to a higher level of integration.' In terms of secular power:, a chief may or may not function as an executive head of state. He may be only a symbol, representing the entire group. Political implications of even a titular or symbolic authority are quite significant.

Such a ruler is often invested with a high degree of deference and is much feared by his people. He is considered almost divine. Politically speaking, a symbolic head of state is a potential source of becoming an authority with secular power. For example, among the Shilluk of the Upper Nile, Evans-Pritchard (1962) observed, the Shilluk king reigned but did not govern. In other words, he was only a titular head. Later, under the impact of British rule, this institution of a symbolic head turned into a secular authority, making political decisions.

ii) **Secular Authority Endowed with Sacredness**

Just as we noted the potential of a symbolic head being invested with real political authority, the secular authority of a king is also generally endowed with 'an aura of sacredness'. Let us take the Indian Rajahs. In Surajit Sinha's (1987: xv-xvi) words: 'The Rajas not only ruled over their kingdoms on behalf of the presiding deities of their lineages, they imbibed in their social being the sacredness of the Deity'. Almost all over the world, most monarchies reflect this tendency. Myths of divine origin of ruling families justify the ruler's claim to exercise political authority.

iii) **Necessity of Acquiring a King**

The secular authority is ceremonially ritualised in order to raise its status above the ordinary people. In some cases, the need to acquire a king of the appropriate status is so strong that persons of royal origin are stolen and reared to become rulers. Mahapatra (1987: 1-50) has shown that small-scale polities in ex-princely states of Orissa felt so insecure in the face of pressures from larger kingdoms that they were compelled to sponsor kingship. According to a legend, in 1200 A.D., Jyotibhanj of the Bhanja dynasty, reigning over Khijjings mandala, was stolen from his palace by the Bhuiyan tribals of Keonjhar in Orissa. This shows that they needed to acquire the necessary aura of sacredness in their ruler. Successors of such kings, then, had to enact the myth of origin through rituals and ceremonies.

iv) **Territory and Demography in Relation to the Range of Political Authority**

Both the territory and people are basic components of the nature of political authority. The area, in which the residents acknowledge the power of a king, defines the range of his political authority. The territorial aspect of a chief's power demarcates the geographical limits of his administrative and judicial measures. Except the political organisation in stateless societies, all other polities are bound by a territorial reference.

In India, the forces of conquest and co-operation always mediated through the principle of territory. The separate units within the state always tried to lay claims to a tiny piece of territory in order to break away from the control of a paramount ruler.

Demography, or, the numerical size of a population, and not the special size, generally introduces elements of complexity in a polity. However, Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940: 7) warn us not to confuse size of population with density of population. Writing about two African tribes, they observe: 'It might be supposed that the dense permanent settlements of the Tallensi would necessarily lead to the development of a centralised form of government, whereas the wide dispersion of shifting villages among the Bemba would be incompatible with centralised rule. The reverse is actually the case.

v) **Economy and Centralisation of a Polity**

Research findings on tribal politics and state systems in India point to an important link between the level of surplus growth and development of a centralised polity. Amalendu Guha (1987: 147-76) writes: '…in India, it was the use of the cattle-driven plough that ensured a relatively large surplus and therefore, also a higher form of political organisation. Larger the surplus, more developed was the state'.

On the other hand, research in Africa show that subsistence economy in most parts of the country provided little scope for surplus growth. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940: 8) report : "Distinctions of rank, status or occupation operate independently of differences of wealth". In such societies, the political authority has economic rights to tax, tribute and labour. In fact, through economic privileges the centralised authority is able to maintain the political system.

Activity 1

Visit a local governing body, such as, the Municipal, Civil, Electrical, or a Panchayat office (if you are in a village). Discuss the various aspects of administration with one or two officers working there and write a report of a page on "Political / Civil Authority and its Structure in My Area". Discuss it with other learners at your study centre.

17.3.2 Scope of Political Authority

The extent, to which a ruler exercises his authority over his people, defines the scope of his political power. It is actually the scope rather than range of power that makes a polity more or less centralised.

Sometimes, the head of state command only respect and recognition of his subject. In other cases, the ruler may also demand tribute or ritual acceptance of his authority from subsidiary vassals. In feudatory states of Orissa in India, the territory controlled by the king was surrounded by segmentary clan-lineage based units. These units acted as vassals and participated in the main rituals and ceremonies of the central kingdom. But besides this token acceptance of centralised authority, the extent of the political authority power exercised on them was almost nil.

In order to find the scope of a central authority, it is necessary to find what aspects of the people's lives are controlled by the political power. If the individuals are free to resort to force or violence, it is a clear indication of the minimal scope of the central authority. On the other hand, a political head, if he is powerful enough, will not allow the use of force. In other words, people cannot take the course of law in their own hands.

Among the Shilluks of the Upper Nile, the king's powers are minimal, as is clear from the fact that blood feud occurs commonly among them and the king has no say in its operations. On the other hand, in most feudal type of politics, homicide is considered a punishable offence by the state.

17.3.2.1 Patrimonial Authority

Scope of a centralised authority can also be discussed in terms of it being diffuse or specific. In many polities, the ruler's authority is quite diffuse, covering almost all aspects of his subject's lives. Max Weber (1964) has described this form of authority as patrimonial, which means that the scope of this kind of authority is not clearly specified, rather it subsumes all kinds of protective measures and cares of his people by the ruler. The ruler considers his subjects as his children and protects them. Mahapatra (1987: 25) remarks: 'The pata-rani or senior most queen was held in the highest affection and solicitousness by the tribal people as their 'mother' and she looked upon the tribesmen as her children'. Sometimes, even in modern context, vestiges of these expectations are found on the part of both the ruler and the ruled.

17.3.2.2 Delegation and Distribution of Authority

In polities with wider scope of authority of the ruler, we also notice the mechanism of delegation of authority. The ruler may seem to possess absolute power, but he distributes it among others. This system gives us a pyramidal formation of authority, i.e. the king on the top and successive grades of subordinate officials below. Each person in the official hierarchy functions under the authority above him. We may mention here the Meiteis of Manipur state, during the first phase of state formation in 18th century R.K. Saha (1987: 214-41) says: Under the kingship the services became institutionalised under distinct categories, **famdon** (prestigious posts), **lalup** (non-menial service) and **loipot** (menial service). We can clearly see the gradation of function, performed by the officials. This delegation of power among the state functionaries takes two forms:

a) **Delegation of Authority among the Relatives of the Ruler**

Quite often, the ruler selects men from among his kinsmen for higher posts. To take again the example of the Meitei of Manipur State. R.K. Saha (1987: 272) reports that the office bearers were recruited at all the three levels of prestigious posts from the genealogically senior most persons. We may say that in such political systems, governing becomes a kind of family affair. From Africa, we can give the example of some Southern Bantu states, such as the Swazi, which follow this pattern (see Kuper 1947).

b) **Delegation of Authority among the Loyal Subjects**

In many states, relatives of the ruler are considered as rivals and therefore not trustworthy. They cannot be invited to share the ruler's authority, lest they conspire and usurp all of it. The distribution of power is then among the trusted and loyal friends. Great value is placed on one's personal loyalty to the ruler. The loyalty is rewarded by the king in the form of a share in his authority. The fact that power is not shared with kinsmen but with loyalists, does not preclude the possibilities of subordinate chief becoming too powerful and eventually deposing the ruler himself.

17.3.2.3 Delegation of Authority as the Balance of Forces

The power of the central authority is reinforced by the institutions of hereditary succession to kingship, distribution of power to kinsmen, and supernatural sanctions of king's status. However, other institutions, such as king's council, royal priest, queen mother's courts, impose checks on the king.

Once the power is distributed between the central authority and regional chiefs, the balance mechanism begins to operate. If a ruler becomes autocratic in his ways, subordinate chiefs may secede. On the other hand, if a subordinate chief becomes too powerful the king may decide to remove him or suppress his power with the help of other subordinate chiefs. In trying to keep all his vassals very much under his control a paramount ruler may also set one against the other. Thus, we can see that delegation of power to regional chiefs is not simply an administrative mechanism. It is also concerned with the representation of various groups and interests in the machinery of government. Or, in other words, we can say that there is always a balance between authority and responsibility. Though abuse of power is noticeable in the forms of constitutional arrangements in practice, in every political system the balance of forces is recognised and instituted in theory. So also in traditional societies, each centralised authority is subject to these forces of balancing mechanism which characterise its nature and scope.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) How do we define the scope of political authority? Use two lines for your answer.

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2) Among whom does a king delegate his powers? Use two lines for your answer.

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17.4 THE BASIS OF LEGITIMACY OF POLITICAL AUTHORITY

In discussing the question of the basis of political authority, we study the process of state formation to see if the state developed as an **endogenous** growth or came into existence as a result of an interaction with **exogenous** state systems. This kind of inquiry provides us with a historical dimension. Ethnographic data at our disposal is full of both types of state formations.

States endogenously come into being as a result of evolutionary process from within, without outside influences. These are sometimes also called 'primary states'. Exogenous state systems are built by conquests. Or, their particular formations are affected by systems from earlier periods or from outside their own territories.

As mentioned earlier, some tribal groups in Orissa, lacking the mechanisms of a centralised authority, took the extreme step of stealing not the idea of kingship but the king himself. Southall (1956) has described how, among the Alur people of Western Uganda, centralised political authority was instituted by peaceful means among uncentralised tribals.

17.4.1 Legitimacy in Primary States

A state based on endogenous evolutionary process reflects a kind of homogeneity in society which is found to be lacking in states of conquest type. The process of state formation among the Meitei of Manipur state, described by R.K. Saha (1987), seems to be the result of inter-clan feuds within the tribal groups in Manipur valley. This case can be given as an example of a primary state. The basis of legitimacy of power in a primary state is rooted in its indigenous traditions. Political relations in such a society are perceived in terms of common structural principle. It may be unilineal kinship, or, it may be military and political groups of states, coming together yet remaining independent in internal affairs.

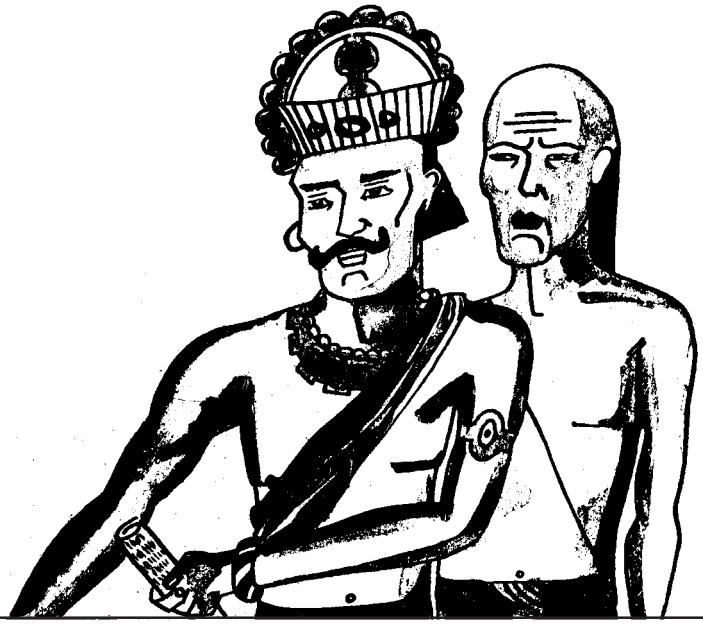
17.4.2 Legitimacy in Conquest Type or 'Secondary States'

The conquest type, also known as 'secondary state', emerges after smaller political units are conquered by more powerful people. The conquest may be in the form of an actual warfare. When the political institutions of neighbouring states influence the process of state formation in an area, even without an actual conquest, a secondary state is born.

Invariably, non-indigenous political institutions are superimposed on conquered groups. In some cases, super imposition of foreign political traditions is quite superficial, that is, the values and ideas behind it are not fully accepted by the conquered people. Subsidiary principalities are therefore able to maintain older polities along with the imposed political order.

However, in most cases, kinship-based community relationships of the peasant groups (e.g. in Indian villages) come in sharp contrast to the feudal type political relations, which are associated with the foreign government. In such a situation, the centralised authority has only the legitimate power to collect taxes and carry out public works. This then, is, the scene of subordinate units trying to break away at the first possible opportunity. Any student of Indian history can see this process at work in the development of political unity in India. Attempts to unite India as a political unit were made from time to time by the Hindu empires, the Muslim dynasties and also by the British colonial powers. During the entire span of Indian history, the control

authority was constantly challenged by smaller political entities. In fact, Wittfogel (1957: 98) has shown that a political authority in Asiatic societies has to be coupled with religious sanction in order to gain legitimacy. A king, advised by a priest (purohit) was the Indian ideal of legitimate political authority.



CHANDRAGUPTA MAURYA AND CHANAKYA

State in Traditional Societies

Then, there is also the element of two levels of political organisation and process. At the first level, lacking a basic political integration, the central authority acts, as a tax collecting and public works body. At the second level, the unity of subsidiary states is maintained according to the obligations of local community membership. In the case of India, the caste system and religion remained as constant factors of unity of the society, no matter how many types of polities were superimposed on its people. Generally, even the people are conscious of the opposition and conflict between two levels. These factors obviously influence the grounds on which people accept the claims of political powers over their lives.

17.4.3 Legitimacy Derived from Myths

All political systems have stories about their origin. Such myths basically reflect the attitudes and values of the society. Stories about the genesis of the system of political authority can be considered as its 'mythical charter'.

Generally, myths show the divine origin of the ruling line. The effect of such myth is to legitimise the existing political authority. In a closed system of stratification, such as the caste system, the political role of priests required religious validation. In India, the law books were created by the priestly class and law in India has always maintained a religious base.

Not only this, as Surajit Sinha (1987 : xi) observes, the ideology of caste system, more than any other feature of Indian society, provided a broad frame of state formation in the tribal regions. It can be said that in India and perhaps so also in Byzatium, the Inca Empire and ancient Egypt, the political role the priestly class has shaped political thought and religion.

17.4.4 Grounds on which People Accept Authority

Max Weber (1964) speaks of three bases upon which the authority can be accepted by people. According to him, there are three types of authority: i) traditional, ii) charismatic and iii) rational-legal. We find that in most of pre-modern political systems the authority is accepted on traditional grounds. When people accept a ruler because of his personal qualities of leadership and they are attracted to him because of his personal charm, he may be described as having charismatic authority. Of course, where such authority becomes institutionalised, it becomes an integral part of traditional authority.

The last type of authority, which Weber called rational legal, is based on the assumption that people recognise a need of being governed and submitting to a rule of law Many myths and proverbs, in pre-literate societies, reflect this attitude of faith in orderly life. In literate societies, usefulness of a government and its machinery' is discussed at length in their law books. Material components of political relations are mostly expressed by people in terms of their utilitarian and practical functions.

17.5 INSTITUTIONS TO PREVENT ABUSE OF AUTHORITY

Maintenance of kingship rests on a constant adherence to its constitutional principles. A king's powers may appear to be absolute but, in practice, their various components function through different offices. The co-operation of all these parts enables the king to govern his people. Thus, it is necessary to recognise that it is not easy for a ruler to disregard certain social institutions which check and control the centralised authority. This does not mean that there are no despots. In fact, history of many political systems is full of such figures. In that sense, no constitution can really prevent a ruler from becoming an oppressor. All the same, tendencies towards despotism are checked by well-recognised mechanisms in most traditional societies. Some of them are given below:

i) The transmission of power from one to the other ruler is ether by inheritance according to patrilineal or matrilineal principles or election/ popular choice. Both ascribed and achieved criteria may be combined when the subject selects a particular son of the king as his successor. On the other hand, not following the rules of proper behaviour may have quite tragic consequences.

   J.B. Bhattacharjee (1987: 190) mentions in his article on Dimasa State Formation in Cachar that Govindachandranarayan (1813-30) became unpopular because he married the widow of his elder brother. This was allowed by neither Hindu nor Dimasa rule in Cachar. That is why the ruler was deposed and when the British reinstated him, he was assassinated in 1830 and the Dimasa rule came to an end in Cachar.

ii) Ceremonies of oath-taking and exhortations by the councillors to the new king also act as guide-lines for proper conduct on the part of the new ruler. For example, Busia (1951) describes how the Ashanti chief was exhorted by his councillors at the time of his accession. In tribal societies, it is common for councillors to reprimand the ruler and even fine him. Interestingly enough, in pre-colonial Jaintia state in north-east India, 'the role of a raja was much despised in the eyes of the people. The office of the raja was viewed with such disdain as a lowly office which no respectable person would occupy' (Pakem 1987: 287).

iii) Lastly, the subject had the right to appeal against the subordinate officials. Many a Muslim rulers have been known to keep a bell at the gates of their palaces for any one to ring in order to get justice from the king.

Activity 2

Do you know a folk tale where a despotic ruler was brought to his senses by the people whom he ruled. If so, write down the story and its analysis and share it with other students at your study centre. Focus on the political power aspect of the story.

Having looked at mechanisms through which rulers were to be prevented from abusing their powers, we need also to consider what happens when a ruler does not pay attention to these social institutions and abuses his authority. Those who know the story of Shaka, the Zulu ruler in South Africa, and his tyrannical rule, would also know how popular disapproval of his rule by the people prompted his brother to assassinate Shaka. To escape a tyrannical political authority, the following set of institutions can be activated:

i) The people may decide to migrate to another area, outside the jurisdiction of the existing ruler.

ii) The paramount ruler may depose his subordinate who has abused the power delegated to him.

iii) The king may be made to feel scared of sorcery or assassination by disgruntled people.

iv) Lastly, there may be a revolt against the intolerable government of a despot. Such a revolt is generally in the form of a rebellion, in which the tyrant is replaced by a just ruler. As no change is brought in the basic values of the society, the revolt does not amount to revolution. It is simply reinstatement of a lawful authority.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define the primary and secondary state. Use three lines for your answer.

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2) Distinguish, in two lines, between rebellion and revolution.

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17.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed main aspects of political authority in traditional or pre-modern societies. We looked at symbolic and secular aspects of centralised authority and described its range and scope in terms of territory, demography and economy. Then we discussed the grounds on which authority is accepted and finally listed those institutions which restrain and prevent the political authority from abusing its powers.

Viewed as historical forms of modern political institutions, these dimensions of state in traditional societies throw light on the political processes in modern context. Today,

our life is dominated by politicisation of social issues and in order to fully understand the implications of this process, this unit will provide us with some categories to systematise our information.

17.7 KEY WORDS

Blood feud : Hostility between two tribes/lineages with murderous assaults in revenge for previous homicide

Clan : Group of people recognising common ancestry

Demography : Vital statistics, showing numerical condition of communities

Despot : Absolute ruler, tyrant, oppressor

Feudal : Polity based on relations of vassal and superior arising from holding of lands in feud.

Homicide : Killing of a human being

Kingship : The institution of sovereign ruler

Legitimacy : Lawfulness

Lineage : Group of people with identifiable ancestors of independent state

Segmentary Social Structure : Social formation of many parts form a single unit

Titular Head : Holder of office without corresponding function

Vassals : Holder of land by feudal tenure

17.8 FURTHER READINGS

Beattie, J. 1964, *Other Cultures: Aims and Methods and Achievements in Social Anthropology*. Cohen and West: London (Ch. 9, pp. 139-64)

Bottomore, T.B. 1972. *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature* Vintage Books: New York (Ch. 9 pp. 151-67).

Mair, L. 1985. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. (Second Edition and Impression) Oxford University Press: New Delhi. (Chs. 7 and 8, pp. 109-138)

17.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The scope of political authority is defined by the extent to which it exercises control over the lives of people.

2) A king delegates his powers among either his kinsmen or loyal subjects.

Check Your Progress 2

1) A primary state evolves from within, without outside influences. A secondary state is built by conquests or is affected by political systems from outside.

2) In a rebellion, a tyrant ruler or authority is replaced by instituting a just and lawful authority while in a revolution, basic values of a society are challenged and sought to be changed.

UNIT 18 STATE IN MODERN SOCIETIES

Structure

18.0 Objectives

18.1 Introduction

18.2 Modern Societies

18.3 Political System in Modern Societies

18.4 Elements of a Political System

- 18.4.1 Ideology
- 18.4.2 Structure and Oligarchy

18.5 Function of the Political System

- 18.5.1 Political Socialisation and Recruitment
- 18.5.2 Interest Articulation
  - 18.5.2.1 Institutional Interest Groups
  - 18.5.2.2 Associational Interest Groups
  - 18.5.2.3 Non-associational Interest Groups
  - 18.5.2.4 Anomic Interest Groups
- 18.5.3 Interest Aggregation
- 18.5.4 Political Communication
- 18.5.5 Government Functions

18.6 Political Processes

18.7 Basis of Legitimacy

- 18.7.1 Traditional and Charismatic Authority
- 18.7.2 Legal Rational Authority
- 18.7.3 Legitimacy of Modern Political System

18.8 Let Us Sum Up

18.9 Key Words

18.10 Further Readings

18.11 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

18.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit introduces you to the political processes of modern society and thereby aims to:

- describe a modern society;
- explain political modernisation;
- discuss the political systems of modern society; and
- analyse the major components of a political system.

18.1 INTRODUCTION

The political system of a modern society is very complex one. A lucid description of this system, indeed, requires coverage on a wide range of items pertaining to society and polity. Here the unit describes a modern society and political system in society. A political system incorporates a few important elements. While explaining these elements of a political system the unit highlights the ideology, the structure and function, the political processes and the basis of legitimacy of a political system. In discussing the structure of a political system the unit explains various forms of the same, viz. traditional oligarchies, totalitarian oligarchies, modernising oligarchies, tutelary democracies, and political democracies. The major area of discussion on the function of the political system has been that of political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation (institutional interest groups, associational interest groups, non-association interest groups, anomic interest groups), interest aggregation, political communication and the function of the government. The unit also covers traditional authority, charismatic authority, legal rational authority and the legitimacy of modern political systems. The unit, lastly, summarises the economic and social indicators of modernisation and the elements of political system.

18.2 MODERN SOCIETIES

In this section we intend to familiarise you with the political system and political process in modern societies. A modern society may be defined as one with a comparatively high per capita income, high rate of literacy, urbanisation and industrialisation, considerable geographical and social mobility, extensive and penetrative mass-communication media and wide-spread participation of the citizens in the social and political processes. Some scholars have included a few more items to measure the level of modernisation. They are quality of life index, per capita availability of doctors and hospital beds, road length, number of vehicles, consumption of electricity etc.

Box 18.01

A developed Country like America uses about 14,000 K whr per capita of electricity which is about 30 times more than the Indian average of 415 K whr per capita. America also produces eight times more electricity i.e. 3235 billion kilowatt hours; than India for a population that is about one-fourth of India's. (TOI, Aug. 16, 2003)

Based on the position which a country has achieved on the above items, one can determine the extent of modernisation of the country. Using the same indices, one can also prepare a ranked list of countries on the modern scale and tell whether one country, for example, India, is more or less modern than another country, for instance, Bangladesh.

The idea of modernisation has a profound appeal in the developing countries of the world. Even traditional societies, which are against modernisation, for example some of the Arab countries, have introduced elements of modernisation in different areas. They have modernised their armies and started industrialisation in a big way. Even in tribal societies, modern items of consumption and modern technologies of agriculture have become popular. An important point to remember in the context of modernisation is that one cannot hold up modernisation in one sector for a long time when other sectors are getting modernised, except at a great strain to the social system. For example, with the modernisation of Indian economy the traditional joint

family system has broken down in many parts of the country. Again, when modernisation takes place in a society, its political set-up also is bound to get modernised. For example, as an impact of modernisation popular movement began in Nepal for the decentralisation of power. This movement challenged the traditional hereditary authority of the King of Nepal. It however, ended with the formation of Rastriya Panchayat, which handed over considerable power to the hand of peoples representatives. As a matter of fact, the process of modernisation has influenced political development in all societies. The state has been exposed to the influence of modernisation and has found it a useful tool for effective transaction of business at both internal and external levels.

18.3 POLITICAL SYSTEM IN MODERN SOCIETIES

The conventional approach to the study of polities was through the "State". Politics in this sense is a set of activities centering in the state. According to Max Weber, a state is a human community which successfully claims, within a given territory, the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force. Hence politics means the striving to share power or to influence the distribution of power either among states or among groups within a state. However, this definition cannot adequately define political process in societies which are apparently stateless or where a regime capturing power through revolutionary means or a **coup d'etat** is still struggling for obtaining legitimacy for its action and position. Political writers, therefore, prefer to use the term "political system" instead of the term "state" to discuss the various agencies and their relationships that were earlier studied under the blanket term politics. A political system, in this sense, may be defined as a sub-system of the general social system. Unlike other sub-systems in society, the political sub-system is characterised by the monopoly of coercive power over citizens and organisations. The political system can therefore force a citizen to behave in the general good. In the case of such force the question some times arises whether this is legitimate or not. The possession of coercive power by an individual or group over the entire societies, the monopoly of power held by the state is in dispute and voluntary organisation pose a challenge to the arbitrary and monopolistic use of power by the state.

A political system in this sense is a system with structures, functions and transactions, which are directed towards the control of individuals and groups within an identifiable and independent social system. It also covers the transactions between different political systems.

A modern political system is characterised by a high degree of differentiation, explicitness and functional specificity of governmental and non-governmental structures. In a modern political system each of these sub-systems plays its assigned role and acts as a mutually regulative mechanism. Since modernisation in different societies shows different levels of attainment, this is reflected in the political development of these societies also.

We have discussed several features of a modern society and the features of the political system of a modern society. We hope you have read and understood this section on the modern society and political system. You will know the level of your understanding by doing the exercises given below.

Activity 1

Have you ever visited the Parliament when it is in session or watched the proceedings on T.V. If so, write a page on "Indian Democracy". Compare your answer with those of other students at your study centre. You may also discuss this topic with your Academic Counsellor.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What is meant by a modern society? Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) What is meant by a political system? Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) A modern political system is characterised by a high degree of differentiation. Yes No

4) The political system is not a sub-system of the society. Yes No.

18.4 ELEMENTS OF A POLITICAL SYSTEM

The political system of modem society can be best described in terms of (1) Ideology, (2) Structure, (3) Function, (4) Process and (5) Basis of Legitimacy.

18.4.1 Ideology

Ideology may be defined as an integrated system of beliefs and symbols which have an appeal to the followers beyond their rational and objective meaning. It has the power to sway the sentiments of the followers. It is accepted as an article of faith by the followers. A political system in general and political parties within that system, in particular may have their own ideologies which will define to the members the nation's or parties' goals and means. By implication, the followers not only accept the goals without question, but become committed to the means and to adopt them' with all the risks involved. The degree of internalisation of an ideology and of its goals and means, are dependent on political socialisation of individual and the party's capacity for disciplining its members. That is to say that the degree to which an ideology is understood differs from individual to individual. The degree to which it is absorbed depends on political exposure of the party members and the extent to which the party considers it important.

Ideology may be based on political, economic or religious elements. Sometimes, ethnic and cultural elements also may provide the necessary basis for ideology. Democracy is a political ideology, communism is an economic ideology and theocracy is a religious ideology. However, none of them can be considered as falling within a single realm alone. Since politics, economics and religion overlap in many areas, especially in the developing societies where the relationship is highly diffuse, a political ideology will have economic and religious overtones. An ideology like democracy

will call for the welfare of all citizens (an economic ideology). In a multi-religious society, it will also call for secularism. Communism is the best example of an ideology which extends to political and other fields. Communism is against religion and, at least in the early stages, calls for a totalitarian social structure. However, communism as an ideology in its purest form, as visualised by Karl Marx, has not been found in practice, anywhere in the world.

A characteristic feature of modern political process is the entry of non-political issues and factors into the political arena in a big way. Thus ethnic, religious and regional considerations have begun to weigh heavily in the ideology of many political parties in the world including India. Religious fundamentalism also has formed a fertile soil 'in many countries'. Another tendency for political parties is to follow extremist methods in most cases terrorism, to achieve their goals. These are becoming more and more the pattern in political process in many of the countries of the world.

The implication of the rise of fundamentalism as a political ideology and terrorism as a means to achieve goals is the potential for destruction of the socio-political basis of the state and unpredictability in the pattern of political modernisation. In India for example, both religious fundamentalism and ethnic and linguistic movements for example the developments in Punjab, Kashmir, Nagaland, Manipur and in North Bengal, Karnataka and many parts of Assam which are often backed by terrorism, has posed a serious threat to its democratic structure. Political elites belonging to dominant ethnic groups in ethnically pluralistic societies are finding ethnicism as a convenient ideology for achieving their political ambitions.

18.4.2 Structure and Oligarchy

Another component of a political system is its structure. The political structure of society at any point of time will be influenced by prevailing dominant ideology, i.e., the ideology of the rulers or ruling party. In turn, this will be influenced by the social structure, values and stage of development of a society. Actually structure and values reinforce each other and influence development. Traditional social structure and authoritarian values go together while modern social structure and democratic values go hand in hand. Of course, permutations are possible and do exist in some societies but they are exceptions. In many cases social structure and values have acted as constraints to development. At least they have slowed down the tempo of development. And dampened modernising efforts in some countries. From the political point of view, they have moulded the political cultures of societies and the orientation of their political elites. These, in turn, have influenced the political system of societies. It should be kept in mind that when we speak of oligarchies no time bar is evident. An oligarchy comprising a small power group may go on indefinitely.

Depending upon the political culture and orientations of political elites, political structures have been divided into the following categories.

i) Traditional Oligarchies

ii) Totalitarian Oligarchies

iii) Modernising Oligarchies

iv) Tutelary Democracies

v) Political Democracies.

i) **Traditional Oligarchies**

This is usually monarchic and dynastic in form and is based on custom rather than any constitution. The ruling elite and the bureaucracy are recruited on the basis of

kinship or status. The goal of the ruler is stability and maintenance of the system. In its own interest it may launch schemes of modernisation - like modernisation of the army and bureaucracy and may even launch welfare programmes, but the primary aim continues to be the perpetuation of the dynastic rule.

ii) **Totalitarian Oligarchies**

Here, there is a total penetration of the society by the polity. There is a high degree of concentration of power in the hands of the ruling elite and a high tempo of social mobilisation. The Chinese regime is a good example of this type of oligarchy.

iii) **Modernising Oligarchies**

These are characterised by the concentration of political functions in a ruling clique and in the bureaucracy. There is an absence of competitive political parties. Associations and interest groups exist with limited activity. The media are controlled by the government. Generally the ruling elite is committed to development and modernisation. Some of the Latin American states are examples of modernising oligarchies.

iv) **Tutelary Democracies**

The dominant characteristic of this system is that it has accepted the formal norms of democracy, viz., universal suffrage, freedom of association and speech and the structural forms of democracy. But there is a concentration of power in the executive and the bureaucracy. The legislature tends to be relatively powerless and the judiciary is not always free from interference. The executive wants to establish democracy only piecemeal. The assumption is that people are not ripe for the democratic process, otherwise the political system may go out of gear and there will be instability. Until the end of 1988 Pakistan was the best example of this system.

v) **Political Democracies**

These are systems which function with autonomous executives, legislatures and judiciary. Political parties and the media are free and competitive. There are autonomous interest groups and pressure groups. Examples are U.S.A. and U.K. some of the developing countries such as India, are examples of political systems which are moving in that direction.

As stated earlier, political structures in the five political systems will differ considerably. It is only in political democracies that the three organs of the state, the executive, the legislature and judiciary, have autonomy and political parties and the media are relatively free and competitive. In the majority of cases, there will be a written constitution which defines the powers and duties of these bodies. In all other political systems, either there is no autonomy for these bodies, or when autonomy exists, it is limited. The non-government structures also will have to fall in line with the wish of the rulers.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the major elements of a political system. Use about five lines for your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Name the major categories of political structures:

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

3) In democracy the executive, legislature and the judiciary are autonomous. Yes No

4) In traditional oligarchies the bureaucrats are selected on merit. Yes No

5) India, is an example of tutelary democracy. Yes No

18.5 FUNCTION OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

A political system usually performs some well defined functions. The major functions of a political system may be categorised into two broad headings: The input functions and the output functions.

Input functions:

i) Political Socialisation and recruitment

ii) Interest articulation

iii) Interest aggregation

iv) Political communication

Output functions:

v) Rule making

vi) Rule application

vii) rule adjudication

Actually, the first set of (input) functions is reflected in the non-governmental sub-systems and the second set of (output) functions is reflected in the government sub-systems.

18.5.1 Political Socialisation and Recruitment

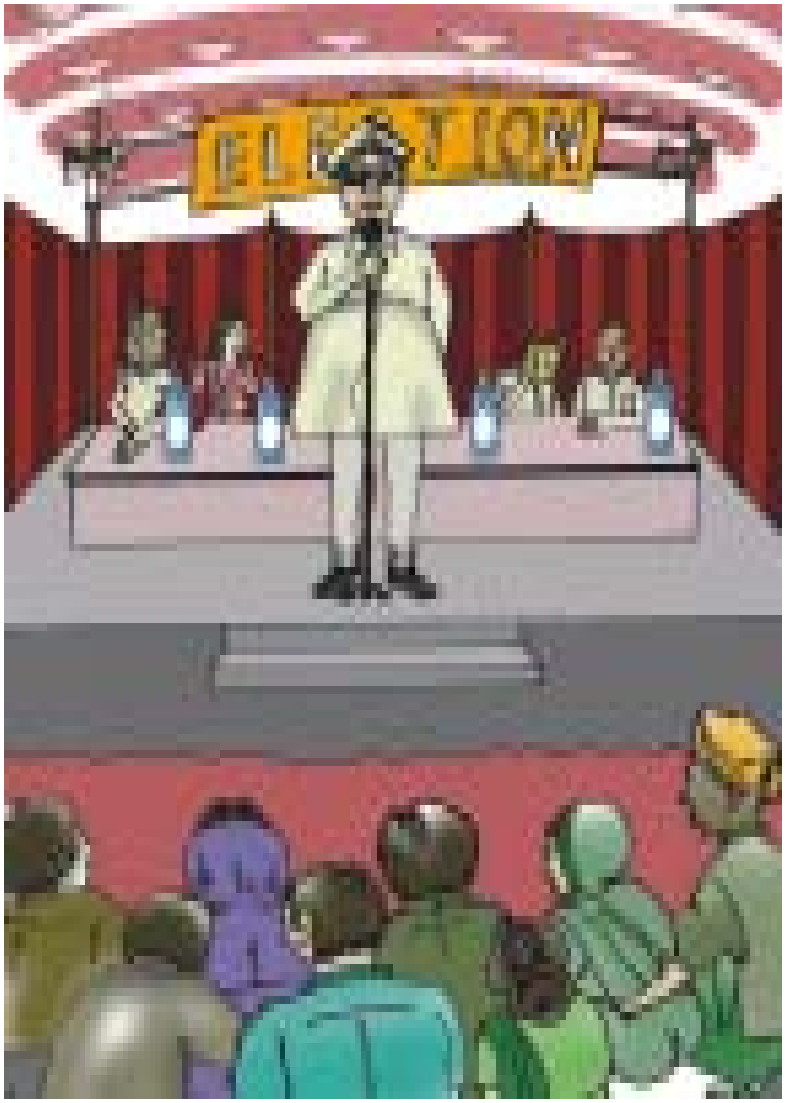
Political socialisation is the process of inducting an individual in the political culture. It is a part of general socialisation but with a different focus and objective. Unlike general socialisation, political socialisation starts later in childhood. There are two main components of political socialisation. One is the inculcation of general values and norms regarding political behaviour and political matters and the other is the induction of the individual into a particular political party and the imparting of the party's ideology and action programmes to her or him.

The first is done by the general educational system and by the other agencies of the state. The second is done by different political parties. In democratic countries and those which are experimenting with democratic models, the two components of political socialisation are different. Whereas the first aims at some general understanding of the what he should and should not do, the second may differ from party to party both in goal and is means adopted. In oligarchies, the socialising

agencies will be more or less, identical, if not the same. The ruling elite would take up the political education of the masses in a manner that will perpetuate their (elite's) power and influence over the masses. This tendency of the ruling elite is in its own interests. Thus the theory that is forwarded will show the ruling elite in a good light.

Another aspect of political socialisation is the socialisation that takes place within the non-political sub-systems which make frequent inroads into polities. These are ethnic, religious, linguistic and other particularistic associations and organisations which play upon the inner feelings of members and enter or try to enter politics in order to enforce their ideology. Actually, they are a threat to the smooth political development of a society, but in so far as they are assuming importance all over the world, they have to be reckoned with. This is more so in the developing societies where they are being used by clever politicians to sway the sympathies of the masses.

Political recruitment means recruitment into political areas and political roles. In a modern political system, all citizens are involved in the political process and even when they are not active workers of any political party, they are aware of the political process to participate in it passively. In the oligarchic type of political systems, elections may be only a ritual even so the citizen will have to undergo the procedures of election with all the political overtones involved. While all persons in a society are thus politically socialised, the actual recruitment to political roles and authorities will be limited to only those who qualify. This is inevitable, as general socialisation itself follows such patterns.



Elections

The social base for entrants into the political file could be broad or narrow. In the Arab countries, the base is narrow, patriarchic and oligarchic, whereas in India it is broad-based and competitive. In the first category, leaders are recruited from social groups which have been historically predominant (wealthy and aristocratic families or clans or classes). Other categories such as civil servants, army officers and professional and business groups may come from the urban educated class. In the patriarchal societies, professional and business elites and other modern groups are largely non-participant but their increase which follows modernisation is bound to make them competitors in the political arena. Social change is bound to enable these groups to come to the forefront, eclipsing the traditional elements.

Broad-based societies are characterised by competition in the political arena but it is mostly the urban, educated middle-class persons, who are increasingly attracted to the catchment area of politics and it is they who are potential material for recuritment by political parties. Social mobility which is a characteristic of competition and which is a part of social change is bound to upset the balance, so that it is possible for non-middle-class persons to be inducted into politics.

18.5.2 Interest Articulation

Interest articulation means the expression of interest in a political system, for the attention of the government. In all political systems, the needs and problems of the citizens are, in the final analysis, to be taken care of by the state. Due to the complex and interdependent nature of modern societies, even small problems of individuals, may have a bearing beyond the area of their occurrence, and may require solutions by an agency located elsewhere. Many of the problems of an individual are beyond his control and need the help of the state for their solution. While the problems may not be political, their solution would require political (state) action. However, for a need to be taken care of, it has to be expressed. Usually since it is difficult to get individual demands heard or attended to by decision-making agencies, they are collectively expressed; persons who have the same problems join together. Depending upon the mode of their articulation, they can be divided into the following institutional interest groups, associational interest groups, non-associational interest groups and economic groups.

18.5.2.1 Institutional Interest Groups

These are duly constituted, stable and institutionalised structures such as the Church, the bureaucracy, the army and the legislature. Though their official functions are clearly spelled out, they, or, an active group among them. may take up the cause of reform or social justice, and use the formal structure for airing their views, even though this is not in the permitted categories of functions. In many developing countries, the elite among the bureaucracy or army may espouse the cause of the underdog or the poor and the down-trodden.

18.5.2.2 Associational Interest Groups

Examples of these are trade unions, associations of managers, businessmen and traders and various agencies organised for non-economic activities such as ethnic, cultural and religious groups or civic groups, youth organisations etc. They will have their own established procedures for formulation of interests and demands, and further transmission of these demands to other political structures such as political parties, legislatures, bureaucracies, etc. In most of the developing countries, many of these associations will have political leanings and some of them, like trade unions and youth organisations, may actually be front organisations of political parties. However, the special feature of these associations or organisations is that they have established goals and means.

18.5.2.3 Non-associational Interest Groups

These are groups that are not formally established, but are nonetheless important due to their caste or religious or family positions. An informal delegation may be formed to meet the official or minister concerned, about some problem, for example, the mode of collection of a certain levy or alterations of a government rule, etc. It is not necessary that the interest is articulated through a delegation. It is possible that in a formal or informal get-together, the spokesmen of a group could air its grievances before the official. In any case the occasion serves the purposes of articulation of the demand.

18.5.2.4 Anomic Interest Groups

These are groups that are spontaneously formed and may be relatively unstable and short-lived, such as in a riot or demonstration. Here we do not include the violent political demonstrations .and show of strength at rallies and route marches of political parties and their front organisation. We have in mind groups that are formed ad hoc and that may find other forms of articulation ineffective. Sometimes they will remain stable for a relatively long period, in which case, they will become associations.

18.5.3 Interest Aggregation

Aggregation is the sorting out and combination of the demands articulated by the different interest groups. Aggregation may be achieved by means of the formulation of general policies in. which interests are combined, accommodated or otherwise taken account of. This could be done by political parties or by the ruling elite or by the government itself. It is also possible that the interest articulation agencies themselves could aggregate these interests and present them to those in charge of policy formulation. It can be exemplified that issues pertaining to the lower status of women in the society were articulated by the women's organisations, and other associations they pressurised the government to formulate policies on women's development. The government, however, realising the urgency of the issue formulated the National Perspective Plan for Women's Development. In societies where political functions are not so clearly divided, the functions of articulation and aggregation will generally be combined. This is because tasks have not been sufficiently specialised. As political functions develop, aggregations and articulation functions, become divided. In modem societies, associations at the national level aggregated the demands of the local units, and present them to the authoritative body for consideration. Here, these apex bodies also act as an interest articulation as well as interest aggregation only. However, it has to be remembered that the two functions are different. The first is the expression of interest while the second is the combination of different interests in an implementable form.

Actually, the aggregative functions could be performed by other systems within the polity. Thus the institutions and associations could, articulate their demands, and put them in an organised form and present them to the political system. They even take up the demands of individuals and groups and incorporate them in their manifestos. Alternatively, in such a political system. Associations which have sympathies with one or the other or the political parties would seek the latter's help in aggregating their demands for action.

This is more so if the associations find it difficult to get their demands accepted by the government. We have many such examples in our own country. Many apparently independent trade unions affiliate themselves with the labour fronts of the political party in power, some trade unions which have their own political learning also would go over to the ruling party. Interest aggregation is an important function in the

political system. It enables the different and, in many cases conflicting, demands of groups to be sorted out and consolidated into a single set or different sets of demands which are pragmatic if the political authority takes them up seriously. In multi-party systems where there is competition between parties it serves the purpose of all important demands being taken care of.

In a political system where there is one dominant party and opposing small parties, interest aggregation is a difficult task. There will be trouble if there is a strong traditional element in the party, for this element is sure to oppose all modernisation efforts. The same would be the case even if the traditional elements were weak or non-existent but heterogeneity among the people is strong. Thus, a society composing of a population which is divided on ethnic, linguistic and communal lines, poses a big problem for the dominant political party to aggregate the interests of groups. In that case, party cohesion is in trouble. The situation could result in splits within the party and in the formation for new parties. Even then, this would not achieve better aggregation of interests. On the other hand, it would strengthen the hands of another subsystem (e.g. bureaucracy) to which the interest groups will turn for help.

18.5.4 Political Communication

Communication is the life-blood of any social system. It is through communication that interpersonal and elite mass relationships are maintained. In a political system this is equally important since all the political functions-socialisation, recruitment, articulation, aggregation and the entire rule-making, enforcement and adjudication process rest on it. Information, which is an essential input in any rational action, is supplied through communication. Again, it is the means of communications that makes the political system work efficiently and in a responsible manner.

An autonomous, neutral and thoroughly penetrative communication system is essential to the development and maintenance of an active and effective electorate and citizenship. This is possible only in a mature democracy. In the developing countries the government will be controlling many of the means of communication, especially the electronic media (radio and television). In these countries, the press will be controlled by interest groups so the information coming out of it will be selective and biased. Low literacy level and poor means of transport will restrict the spread of the newspapers and other print media while poverty will restrict the spread of communication through the radio and television. In many modern political systems, political parties run their own newspapers to educate and inform their followers but the information that flows through them will be selective.

Even in a modern society where there is widespread penetration of the mass-communication media, the role of person-to-person communication is very important. In the developing societies, opinion makers and elites assume great prominence in screening the available information and passing the desired one to other followers. This is one reason where government seeks the support of the opinion leaders to help the Family Welfare Programmes of the Government in India. Political parties in developing countries have used the person-to-person communication in reaching the rural masses who are illiterate and who are beyond the pale of the mass media.

In the modern societies, the political information that flows from the government to the people is much larger in volume than that flowing from the citizen to the government. The government therefore makes extensive use of the communication network-be it the electronic media controlled by government, or newspapers, or official communications sent as circulars and orders through the bureaucracy.

18.5.5 Government Functions

Under this head there are three items which cover all the functions of modern governments. They are: rule making, rule application and rule adjudication.

A characteristic of modern political systems is the increasing tendency to specialise government functions. Thus, rule making is done mostly by the legislature and party by the executive, while rule enforcement is done by the executive with the help of the bureaucracy. Rule adjudication is done by the judiciary which, in modernised countries, is free from the executive and legislature. However, there are two factors which contribute to a difference in the situation. In most modernising societies, there is a wide difference between the formal and informal arrangements in the government functions. While the formal arrangement is embodied in the Constitution of the country, this is seldom observed in actual practice. This, in turn, is because of the political culture and the type of government that a country may have.

Activity 1

Do you think mass media in India, which includes radio, T.V., Newspapers, etc. are effective in educating the masses in the political process of voting and electing a suitable Government? Write a report of two pages on "The Role of Mass Media in Spread of Political Education in India." Share your report with other learners and your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the major functions of a political system. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Name the major interest groups of a political system.

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

3) Political socialisation is the process of induction of individual in the political system of the society. Yes No

4) Political socialisation starts as soon as a child is born. Yes No

5) Describe briefly the functions of the government.

18.6 POLITICAL PROCESSES

The transactions that take place within a political system and between political systems may be called political processes. These include interactions between individuals and groups within the polity, viz., the executive, legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy, political parties, the communication media and other agencies within a state. Interest groups whose activities influence political decisions also form part of the political system. Depending on the type of political structure, these processes would differ. In democracies, for example, the executive will be responsible to the legislature, law-making will be the responsibility of the legislature and the courts will function without interference from the executive or the ruling group. The political parties and the mass media will act with great freedom and could penetrate deep into the society. On the other hand, in a controlled or guided democracy, the freedom that exists under full democracies will not be available. The different agencies may be existing but will be controlled by and be sub-servient to, the whims of the ruling elite or, more often, a single ruler. The three types of oligarchies also will reflect different political processes. In a totalitarian state, for example, there will not be much difference between executive, legislative and judicial functions. All merge together in the hands of the ruling group or individual.

18.7 BASIS OF LEGITIMACY

Use of coercive power is the distinguishing mark of the state. This means that the state possesses the power to coerce individuals and organisations under its jurisdiction to accept its authority and to impose all kinds of punishments, including imprisonment and death, on erring members. The individuals and organisations will have to submit to the authority of the state. This makes the state the final authority. It can authorise any punishment on the members. It is the final collective authority. Otherwise the citizens will not feel obliged to submit themselves legally or even morally to their authority. All holders of power of this kind therefore are anxious to legitimatise their power.

According to Max Weber there are three ways of legitimising authority. They are (1) Traditional, (2) Charismatic and (3) Legal-rational ways.

18.7.1 Traditional and Charismatic Authority

Traditional Authority: This authority is sanctioned by custom and practice. The authority was there from the very beginning and nobody has challenged it so far. The authority of the parents over children and of kings over subjects has rested on such claim.

Charismatic Authority: This is derived from charisma, that is, the extraordinary power of some of the leaders to influence their followers. According to these followers, their leader possesses certain powers which will enable him or her to take them out of a critical situation or give them what they want. They consider their leader as a saviour. The extra-ordinary power attributed to a leader or claimed by him/her may be-real or imaginary, but for the followers it is real. The followers submit to all her/his authority without questioning. Mahatma Gandhi and Napolean were charismatic political leaders.

Activity 2

List out at least five charismatic leaders of India and write an essay on "Charisma as a basis of Social Change." Discuss your answer with your peer group at your study centre.

18.7.2 Legal Rational Authority

Legal rational authority is the authority based on law. The person who uses authority is duly appointed as per rules to the office concerned and this entitles him to exercise all the authority vested in that office. The President or Prime Minister of a State who comes to power through the constitutionally established methods is the legitimate ruler of the country and the subjects consider him or her to be legitimate ruler. Since the rules and regulations are based on reason, they are rational. In fact, law is considered to be an embodiment of reason.

18.7.3 Legitimacy of Modern Political System

Modern political system work on the basis of legal rational authority. All the parts within the system function on the basis of clearly established rules and the persons holding office are entitled to discharge all the functions that are assigned to their offices. Those affected by their action are legally bound to obey them. If anybody has any complaint or grievance that an official has acted arbitrarily or beyond the power vested in his office, there are again, legal and constitutional remedies for him i.e., he can go to a court. But if the court also decrees that the official concerned is right, he has to accept the decision.

In the modern political system, there are instances of persons coming to power through revolutions or **coup d' etats**. Such methods are not permitted by law and the persons who come to office by using these methods are not considered legitimate rulers. These persons, therefore, are under increasing anxiety to legitimise their position. They may either claim themselves to be saviours (invocation to charisma) or if this is not convincing to people, they will offer to stand for election so as to come to power through legitimate means. In the long run, none of these leaders feel secure without giving some cloak of legitimacy to their claim to hold power.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe briefly the basis of legitimatising authority. Use about five lines.

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2) Describe the basis of legitimacy of a modern political system. Use about five lines

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3) In modern democracies executive is responsible to the legislature. Yes No

4) Charismatic authority of a leader is derived from traditional rules and regulations. Yes No

5) The legal-rational authority is based on the law. Yes No

18.8 LET US SUM UP

A modern society is characterised by a comparatively high per capita income, and a high rate of literacy. It has high rates of urbanisation, industrialisation, geographic and social mobility. It also uses mass communications and its citizens actively participate in the social and political processes. The political set-up of a modern society gets modernised as modernisation takes place in society.

The political system is a sub-system of the social system. A modern political system is characterised by a high degree of differentiation, effectiveness and functional specificity of government and non-government structures.

A political system possesses five elements viz ideology, structure, function, process and the basis of legitimacy. Ideology defines a political system's goals and means. The political structure of a society is also influenced by the prevailing ideology. However depending upon the political culture the political system of a society may have any of the following forms: traditional oligarchy, modernising oligarchies, tutelary democracies, and political democracies.

A political system is to perform certain functions for the maintenance of the systems. The major functions of a political system are political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rule making, rule application and rule adjustment.

Political processes that emerge out of the interaction between and within the political system is an important element of a political system. Depending upon the types of political structures these processes indeed differ.

There are three distinctive ways of legitimatising political authority. These are: i) traditional ii) charismatic and iii) rational-legal.

A modern political system is based on a rational-legal authority. Here people hold office of the government and discharge all of their functions based on the established rules and laws.

18.9 KEY WORDS

Anomic : A social condition without any rules of law.

Authority : One's legitimised capacity to impose his or her influence on others. The legitimacy can be derived from traditional, rational-legal and charismatic basis.

Elite : People who have excelled themselves in the field of their activity: social, political, economic, religious, etc.

Coup d' etat : A regime capturing power through extra legal military means. The capturing of power may or may not be violent.

Charisma : An extra-ordinary power of some leaders to influence followers.

Interest group : Groups formed especially for the attainment of certain common interests of its members.

Ideologies : A system of beliefs and symbols which have an appeal to the followers.

Modernisation : A process of achieving the composite features of a modernised nation through high per capita income, high rate of literacy, urbanisation, industrialisation, social mobility, extensive penetration of mass communication, and wide-spread participation of the citizen in the social and political processes etc.

Power : One's capacity to impose his/her influence on others.

Structure : Network of relationships between the individuals, groups, institutions or organisations.

18.10 FURTHER READINGS

Kornblum, William, 1988. *Sociology in a Changing World*. Holt, Renehant and Winston Inc. New York (Ch. 16)

Macionis, John J. 1987, *Sociology*, Prentice Hall: Inc. New Jersey. (Ch. 16 and 17)

18.11 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) A modern society may be defined as one with comparatively high per-capita income. It has a high rate of literacy, urbanisation, industrialisation, geographical and social mobility. It also has extensive mass-communication and wide-spread participation of the citizens in the social and political processes.

2) A political system is a sub-system of the social system and is characterised by the monopoly of coercive power over citizens and organisations. A political system is directed towards the control of individuals and groups within an identifiable and independent social system.

3) Yes

4) No

Check Your Progress 2

1) The principle elements of a political system are: i) ideology, ii) the structure, iii) function, iv) the process and (v) the basis of legitimacy. These elements, have their coherent meanings specific to a particular political system.

2) a) Traditional Oligarchies:

   b) Totalitarian Oligarchies:

c) Modernising Oligarchies:

d) Tutelary Democracies: and

e) Political Democracies.

3) Yes

4) No

5) No

Check Your Progress 3

1) The vital functions performed by a political system may be enlisted as follows: political socialisation and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rule making, rule application and rule adjustment.

2) a) Institutional Interest groups.

b) Associational Interest groups.

c) Non-associational Interest groups and

d) Anomic Interest groups.

3) Yes

4) No

5) Rule-making rule-enforcement and rule-adjudication are the major functions of government. For rule-making there is legislature, while rule enforcement and rule adjudication are looked after by the executive and the judiciary.

Check Your Progress 4

1) There are three main bases of legitimatising authority: Traditional basis, charismatic basis and rational legal basis. The traditional basis is sanctioned by the traditional customs and practices of a society. The charismatic basis by the extraordinary quality of the leadership and rational legal by the law of the land.

2) A modern political system works on the basis of rational legal authority. On the basis of the established rules all the persons in the government office discharge their duties. The Indian political system works on the basis of rational legal authority.

3) Yes

4) No

5) Yes

UNIT 19 STATE AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Structure

19.0 Objectives

19.1 Introduction

19.2 The State

- 19.2.1 Population
- 19.2.2 Territory
- 19.2.3 Government
- 19.2.4 Sovereignty

19.3 State and the Government

19.4 State and Society

19.5 State and other Associations

19.6 State and the Nation

19.7 Institutions Under the Political System

- 19.7.1 The Government Organisation
  - 19.7.1.1 The Legislature
  - 19.7.1.2 The Executive
  - 19.7.1.3 The Judiciary
  - 19.7.1.4 The Bureaucracy
- 19.7.2 The Non-Government Agencies
  - 19.7.2.1 Political Parties
  - 19.7.2.2 Interest Groups
  - 19.7.2.3 The Press

19.8 The Individual and the State

19.9 Democracy and Individual

19.10 Let Us Sum Up

19.11 Key Words

19.12 Further Readings

19.13 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

19.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit introduces you to the state and other institutions of the society and specifically aims to:

- describe a state;
- explain the interrelationships between the state and other organisation of the society;
- discuss the major institutions of a political system; and
- highlight the position of individual in the state and democracy.

19.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we shall describe the state and other institutions of the political system. The institutions discussed here are the government institutions, that is, the executive, legislature, judiciary and bureaucracy and the non-governmental institutions, that is, political parties, interest groups and the press. The press is included as part of the political system because of the unique role it plays in influencing the other elements of the political system. The role of the individual in the state and in the democratic system is also given.

19.2 THE STATE

The term "political system" has been preferred by political sociologists instead of the conventional term "state" in order to accommodate several sub-systems that do not form a direct part of the state in the strict sense of the term. However, it is important to recognise the supremacy of the state, in an analysis of political system, as the state alone possesses coercive power in society. The term state has a different meaning in political science from the one given to it in ordinary parlance. In common talk, the term state is used for a variety of things. Thus we speak of Uttar Pradesh as a state, we speak of "state support", etc., we have in mind the word government instead of the word "state". Political scientists do not agree on a common definition for the term "state". We may therefore give a few definitions that bring out all the attributes of the state.

Greek philosophers have viewed the state as a natural and necessary institution coming out of the needs of human beings as a political animal. Marxists have viewed the state as an instrument of exploitation in the hands of the ruling class. Sociologists have defined the state as an association which legally maintains social order within a community. The state has also been viewed as society, divided into government and subjects, claiming, within the allotted physical area, a supremacy over all other institutions. Some political scientists maintain that the state is the people organised for law within a given territory.

The marks of an independent state are that the community constituting it is permanently established for a political end, that it possesses a defined territory, and that it is independent of external control. Taking all the accepted elements of the state, the state could be defined as a community of persons, more or less in number, permanently occupying a fixed portion of territory, independent of external control and possessing an organised government to which the vast majority of people render obedience.

From the above definitions certain essential properties of the state emerge, viz., (i) a population, (ii) a territory, (iii) a government and iv) sovereignty. We may briefly examine these attributes.

19.2.1 Population

The state arises out of the gregarious instinct of human beings combined with his or her political instinct. The state comes into existence originating in the bare needs of life, and continues in existence for the sake of a good life. Here people are basic to the state. Without people, no state can exist. However, one single family or a group of families does not make a state. There should be a viable number of people in a state. China with over 100 crores of people and Maldives with a little over one lakh of people are both states. States with large populations have certain political advantage over states with very small populations.

19.2.2 Territory

Some writers feel that territory is not an indispensable attribute of a state. They say that nomadic people have political arrangements but they have to move from place to place in search of food. As such they cannot afford to have a fixed territory. However, the widely accepted view is that a state should have a fixed territory, the boundaries of which can be identified. There is no state at present which has no proper territory and no mechanism to enforce authority over citizens. Such a state cannot carry on relationship with other nations.

There is also another need for the state to have its territory. All states require revenue which will not be forthcoming. The economic base is provided by the land (including water) under the authority of the state. The state can establish authority over its subjects only if they live in a territory. Territory is very important because it identifies a certain population within it. As such it provides physical limits. It is quite evident that the Government of India cannot have any control over citizens staying outside its territory except with the help of the state of their residence. Territory is therefore a pre-requisite. Again, as in the case of population, there cannot be any rule regarding the minimum area required for a state. There are states like the Soviet Union with an area of 12.4 million sq. km. And there are small states such as Maldives with an area of only some hundred square kilometres.

An argument is sometimes advanced that small states are more conducive to democracy than big states. The abode of direct democracy, Switzerland, is cited as an example. But with rapid developments in the means of transport and communication, it has been possible to make democratic systems of government work efficiently in bigger states. At the same time, states with large territories have the advantage of mobilising huge natural resources which small states do not have, especially when resources dry over time.

19.2.3 Government

As stated earlier, there is a confusion in common language between the state and government. Actually the government is the agency of the state, and exists for carrying out the will of the state. Without a government a state cannot function. As a matter of fact, the very justification for a state is that it provides people with a machinery for orderly life. The state does this through a government. A state cannot be conceived of without a government.

19.2.4 Sovereignty

The word sovereignty means ultimate power. The distinguishing character of a state is the monopoly of coercive power over all individuals and institutions within its territory. No one can question this power of the state. But sovereignty is not confined to the area within the state. It extends to the relationship with other sovereign states. No state has power to impose restriction on another state and this is recognised by international law. Indeed, all writers on the state agree that sovereignty is the outstanding characteristic of a state.

From the foregoing discussion it is evident that in order to be called a state, the institution should have all the four attributes referred to above. If it misses any of them, it ceases to be a state.

It is necessary at this point to give a few clarifications which are related to the state. These are given in sub-sections 3 to 6 below.

We have discussed several features of the state. We hope you have read and understood this section. You will know the levels of your understanding by doing the exercises given below:

Activity 1

"Is India a state or a Nation" write an essay of one page on this topic. You can take the help of other books or articles, if possible. Compare your essay with those of other learners at your study centre, and discuss the topic with your Academic Counseller.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the essential attributes of a state? Use five lines for your answer.

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2) Is sovereignty an essential criterion of a state? Give reasons for your answer. Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) Uttar Pradesh is a State with all the attributes of an independent State. Yes No

4) A government has control over the population even outside the territory. Yes No

19.3 STATE AND THE GOVERNMENT

In everyday language, the terms state and government are often used interchangeably. But they are, by no means, the same. Government can exist independent of the state as in the so called stateless societies. Historically the family preceded the state. But while a government can exist without a state, a state cannot exist without a government. Government, as we have seen earlier is an element of the state. It is created to achieve the goal of the state. Without government, a population would be a mass of incoherent, unorganised anarchic people with no means of collective action. Government is an instrument of the state to carry out its will. For this purpose it is vested with sovereignty. Government can take different forms such as democratic, totalitarian etc., and can have different goals such as communism, socialism, capitalism, welfare ideology, etc.

The difference between the state and the government may now be summarised.

i) The state is an abstraction, but the government is a concrete element of the state.

ii) The state is a supreme body, but the government is an element of the state.

iii) The state is more or less permanent, whereas the government's authority is derived and limited by the terms of the Constitution. Sovereignty is an attribute of the state and not of the government.

19.4 STATE AND SOCIETY

The state is the agency which performs the political function in society and as such is a sub-system of the society. The political function is different from the functions performed by other agencies in a society but is functionally integrated with those functions. Thus, while the society is concerned with the functions of procuring food and meeting other economic needs, related integration needs, and security and related political needs, the state is invested with ensuring the satisfaction of all these needs in a smooth and continuous manner. The state does this by using the coercive power vested in it. This coercive power, further, enables the state to ensure that all individual, institution, associations and agencies within its territory, perform their appropriate roles. Besides this the state has also to protect the citizens from external interference. The state has also to pursue its interests in the international field. For this, the state is endowed with the additional attribute, the sovereignty, which the society does not have. Indeed, it is this attribute that differentiates the state from the society and it is this that enables the state to rule over the members of the society. It is possible that the territorial boundary and population of a state may be coterminous with the territory and population of the society as in many of the countries of the world (e.g. England and France).

19.5 STATE AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

There are other associations which perform important roles within the state. But for them, the citizens will be denied many things that enrich their life. While they are important, each in its own way, the overriding power of the state enables it to control and regulate them and even to dissolve them at will. However, in some states the associations have become so strong that they are able, to put a break on the state's arbitrary use of power. These associations argue that the state is only one among them. Though they are willing to grant it the primacy of place. This argument is called **Political Pluralism**. In countries such as U.K. and U.S.A. where democracy has reached some level of maturity, pluralism has become a very strong challenge to the state's arbitrary use of power. Because of the threat from these associations, many states with oligarchic forms of government do not encourage the growth of associations, especially if they develop into **interest groups**. However, it is admitted, even by pluralists, that the state has, and should have, the ultimate and coercive power which alone will, in the last analysis, enable the associations to function properly and settle disputes among them. In the days of multi-national organisations, the need for the state's help in pursuing their activities abroad is more strongly felt.

19.6 STATE AND THE NATION

There is a difference between the state and nation. The word nation is derived from the Latin word *nation* which means "born". This means that a nation is a people

descended from a common stock. The ethnic attribute of nation is seen in most of the definitions of nation. The nation has been defined as a population of an ethnic unity, inhabiting a territory of a geographic unity. By ethnic unity, we mean a population having a common custom and a common consciousness of rights and wrongs. Actually the ties that bind people together into a nation are more psychological and spiritual than ethnic, linguistic or religious. **A nation is the people's consciousness of unity**. Once this consciousness is achieved, ethnic difference lose their importance. Switzerland is a good example. It is inhabited by three ethnic groups.

We may now examine the distinction between state and nation. The theory of one-nation-one state, or the creation of states on the basis of self-determination, became practical politics after World War I. New nation-states were created and the term nation and state began to be accepted as synonymous. Even now we hear and read of countries being described as nations when the word 'states' should have been more appropriate. The United Nations Organisation (UNO) is a union of sovereign states and not of nations. The state is different from the nation in the following respects.

i) The state is a people organised for law within a definite territory, whereas a nation is a people psychologically bound together..

ii) Statehood is objective, nationhood is subjective.

iii) Statehood is an obligation enforceable by law, whereas nationhood is a condition of the mind, a spiritual possession.

iv) A state may consist of one nation (Rumania, Albania, France) or different nations, (India, Canada). For the same reason, a nation may be split into two or more states (North and South Korea, People's Republic of China and Republic of China).

Related to the word nation are two other words, nationality, and nationalism. Nationality is a spiritual or psychological identification among people having common affinities like common origin, race, language, tradition or history and common political aspirations. It is a way of feeling, thinking and living together. Nationalism is the growth of a feeling of oneness among people based on the same attributes that contribute to nationhood and nationality. Nationalism brings together people into a nation by creating in them a sense of identity (nationality).

In conclusion, we may say that states will be more viable if they are formed on the basis of single nations but many of the pluri-national states have also proved to be viable, showing that nationalism is only one aspect of a state's strength.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the fundamental differences between the sate and a government? Use five lines for your answer.

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2) Political pluralism recognises the state to be the only important association. Yes No

3) Self-determination means right of self-development of the citizens. Yes No

4) United Nation's Organisation is a union of only sovereign states of the world. Yes No

19.7 INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

In this section, we shall describe two sets of institutions that enable the state to function in modern societies:

i) Government organisations, and

ii) Non-government organisations.

Government organisation are:

i) Executive,

ii) Legislature,

iii) Judiciary, and

iv) Bureaucracy.

The non-governmental organisations are:

i) Political parties,

ii) Interest groups, and

iii) The press.

19.7.1 Governmental Organisation

Depending upon the number of persons sharing authority, we can speak of rule by one or rule by many persons. The former can be a monarchy or a dictatorship. Rule by many can take different forms. If power is in the hands of a few persons, it is called oligarchy, if it is in many hands, it is a democracy. **These descriptions are not precise but only approximations.** Democracy can take different forms Parliamentary and Presidential, the former means that the Parliament is the supreme body in the state. United Kingdom and India are examples of Parliamentary democracy. In fact India borrowed its democratic set-up from the United Kingdom. Presidential democracy is one where the President holds supreme power and is not answerable to the legislature. United States of America is the best example of Presidential democracy. In India, the Prime Minister, who heads the Union Cabinet, can be removed by a vote of Parliament. In the United States of America, the President can be removed only by impeachment by the two-third majority of the Congress (American equivalent of Parliament). Yet another distinction in the form of government is whether it is of the Unitary or the Federal type. The Unitary type exists where the government is centralised and there is local autonomy (e.g. Sri Lanka). In the Federal type, the local governments have autonomy over limited area of power (e.g. U.S.A., India).

19.7.1.1 The Legislature

The legislature is one of the three branches of the government. It is the law-making body of a state. In parliamentary democracies, the legislature has unlimited power to make or annul any law, but in states where the Presidential form of government prevails, or in oligarchies or dictatorships, the legislature's power to make or annul laws is limited. Even in democracies where the Constitution safeguards the legislature's supremacy in law-making, the ruling elite can, in several ways, undermine this and install its laws through the backdoor.

Thus legislatures differ both in type and composition. The two major types are uni-cameral and bi-cameral; whereas in the former there is only one law-making house in the state (e.g. Norway, Israel) in the latter the legislature consists of two houses, generally called the Assembly (lower house) and the Council (upper house). Almost all the states in the world, including India, have the bi-cameral system. In India, the lower house is called Lok Sabha and the upper house, Rajya Sabha. In England they are respectively called the House of Commons and the House of Lords. In both India and England, the two houses are together called the Parliament In U.S.A., the House of Representatives is the lower house and the Senate is the upper house. Together, they are called the Congress. Many Indian States have the bi-cameral system (e.g. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar) but many other states (e.g. Kerala, Andhra Pradesh) have house.

The composition of the legislature also differs from state to state. In some states which are under the dictatorial rule, all the members of the legislature, or at least, a majority of them will be the nominees of the ruler. Sometimes the members of the upper house will be elected by the people directly. In India, the Lok Sabha consists of members directly elected by the people while the Rajya Sabha members are elected by the members of State Legislative Assemblies. In the United Kingdom, the House of Lords (Upper House) consists of hereditary nobles (except the Church officials). In U.S.A. members of both houses of the Congress are directly elected.

When there are two houses for making law, the upper house will have lesser power than the lower house (except in U.S.A.). Both in India and the United Kingdom, the upper house has only limited powers.

It has to be mentioned that even though the main purpose of legislatures is law-making, in almost all states of the world, they have financial as well as judicial functions. As all of us know, the annual budget of the government has to be passed by it. A large part of the time of the legislature is spent on deliberations or discussion of the work of the government.

19.7.1.2 The Executive

This is the second branch of the government. The term is used to designate all those officers of the government, whose business is to execute or put into effect the laws passed by the enforcement of the law alone. The formulation of policy and its implementation through programmes are also the work of the executive. These activities vest in the executive's enormous power and, as a result, many of the legislators will look towards the executive for patronage.

The executive can be one person such as a dictator or king or several persons such as a Council or Cabinet. Even when the latter form exists, the executive is still known by the person who is its chief-the King, President, Prime Minister, Chairman etc.

An important question regarding the executive is the mode of appointment. The following are the ways through which the chief executive comes to power.

a) **Hereditary Principle**

This is the way Kings come to power. There are only very few monarchs as heads of state in modern times and even though they rule with limited power, most well-known hereditary rulers are the Queen of England, the King of Saudi Arabia, the King of Nepal, the King of Thailand, the King of Japan etc.

b) **Election**

Prime Minister of India is elected. So also are the Presidents of the United States of America, France and most of the democratic countries of the world. Elected executives rule only for a limited period, as prescribed by the Constitution and the country concerned.

In some cases the chief executive comes to power through unconstitutional means, a revolution or **coup d' etat**. For example. Zia-ul-Haq, the late President of Pakistan, came into power through coup d'etat.

19.7.1.3 The Judiciary

The Judiciary is the body which adjudicates the laws made by the legislature. The judiciary consists of a hierarchy of courts. Usually at the lower level, there are two parallel systems of courts-the civil courts and criminal courts. The highest court is usually called Supreme Court. In England, it is the Privy Council. In India, the highest court at the state level is called High Court. There are district (Zilla) and Munsiff or Magistrates Courts at the lower levels.

Courts at the lower level have original jurisdiction while courts at higher level have appellate jurisdiction (hearing of appeals on the judgement) of lower courts. The High Courts and the Supreme Court in India take up both original and appellate petitions. They have also the power of dealing with constitutional issues.

On democracies, the courts are free from the interference of other branches of the government. To ensure their freedom, judges, once appointed, cannot be removed except for very grave offences. In totalitarian states, the judiciary is a wing of the executive as is the legislature, and will have to obey the command of the dictator.

19.7.1.4 The Bureaucracy

This is an arm of the executive. In modern times, the functions of the state have increased by leaps and bounds, and many of these functions (e.g. planning and programming) have become highly technical. Under this circumstance, the executive will have neither the time nor the expertise to perform its role efficiently. Therefore, the civil service has stepped in to fill the gap. The Civil Service, in the modern state, is recruited on modern lines. Officials are recruited through competitive examinations, usually by an impartial agency such as, the Public Service Commission – which enables the appointment of the person maximally suited for the job. Elaborate rules are framed for guiding the officials in their work. The whole system has been highly professionalised. This system is called bureaucracy – rule by bureaucrats. The bureaucrats are not just servants of the executive. In many cases, they perform the functions of the executive in their limited area. The ordinary citizen generally sees the bureaucrat as a person wielding enormous power. In some states such as France, recruitment to the executive is mostly from the top bureaucracy so that the difference between the two gets blurred. It is the unique role of the bureaucracy in policy

making and programme implementation (though next only to the executive), that has enabled it to consider as a vital part of the political system.

19.7.2 The Non-Government Agencies

We have listed three agencies – political parties, interest groups and the press as important units of this sub-system. Let us cover these three important areas. This will make their functioning clear.

19.7.2.1 Political Parties

These are organised groups of citizens who hold common views on public issues and, acting as political units, seek it obtain control of the government with a view to further the programme and policy which they profess. A political party has been defined as an association organised in support of some principle or policy which, by constitutional means, it endeavours to make the determinant of government.

Political parties are indispensable for the working of a democratic government. They are the connecting link between the people and the government. They are the vehicle through which individuals and groups work to secure and exercise political power. They make people politically conscious of their role as citizens. They are the agencies that maintain a continuous link between the people and those who represent them in government or in the opposition.

Political parties may differ on ideologies, and consequently, on their goals and means. The modern trend is to divide them broadly into two categories - right and left. The rightist parties are conservative and status quo oriented whereas the leftist parties are revolutionary and change-oriented. In many European countries there are centrist parties which do not belong either to the right or to the left. Of late, religious fundamentalism has also entered the arena of political parties. Several states in the world today are under the grip of religious fundamentalism (e.g. Iran). In India religious fundamentalism is gathering strength every day among all major communities (Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs)

The number of political parties functioning within a state is also an important aspect of a political system. There are states with only one political party (For eg. China). There are also states with a number of parties. A few states have only two parties (e.g. U.K. and U.S.A.). The number of parties does not affect a political system in any serious manner even though a two-party system can be more healthy for a democracy. In states with multiple parties, political coalition have emerged. Parties with similar ideologies may decide to make a common front to achieve their common objectives. In a multiparty system where the coalition government consists of a number of small parties, there can be political instability as some parties may withdraw their allegiance from the ruling coalition and join the opposition on flimsy grounds. The chances for such change of allegiance are greater when the differences between parties are less ideological and when party loyalties are based on personal considerations and loyalties. France, before the coming of Charles de Gulle, is a good example. Till then in France, the ministries used to come and go within months. Currently, Italy is an example.

In India, we have a multiparty system. In some states there are coalition cabinets. In the Centre, at present in Sept. 2004. Congress and its allies i.e. the UPA is at the Centre. But in some of the states such as Uttar Pradesh, the alliance of BJP and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) headed by Chief Minister Mayawati who belongs to BSP, had existed. Each faction followed a separate leader. Transfer of loyalty by members of the legislature is quite common in these states as this has led to the instability of cabinets.

In fact Communist countries and non-communist totalitarian states do not tolerate any opposition. They have only one political party. Pakistan, a non-communist country, until recently had one political party. Other parties then worked under severe restrictions.

A multiparty system is a basic requirement for the survival and growth of democracy. The presence of several parties competing for the loyalty of the citizens and acting as a control on one another is the strongest safeguard for democracy. If there is only one party, it can become indifferent to the needs of the people and can use its power arbitrarily, there is no check on the ruling party as it does not have to face any opposition either from the legislature or from the people.

Political parties play a very important part in the political system of a country. They socialise the people into political behaviour, sort out the needs and aspirations of the people and place them before the people in the form of a party programme (manifesto), present the people's needs and demands before the government and provide a link between people and their elected representatives. The citizens pick up the parties of their choice and the ambitious among them use the party as a channel for mobility and for fulfilling their political aspirations.

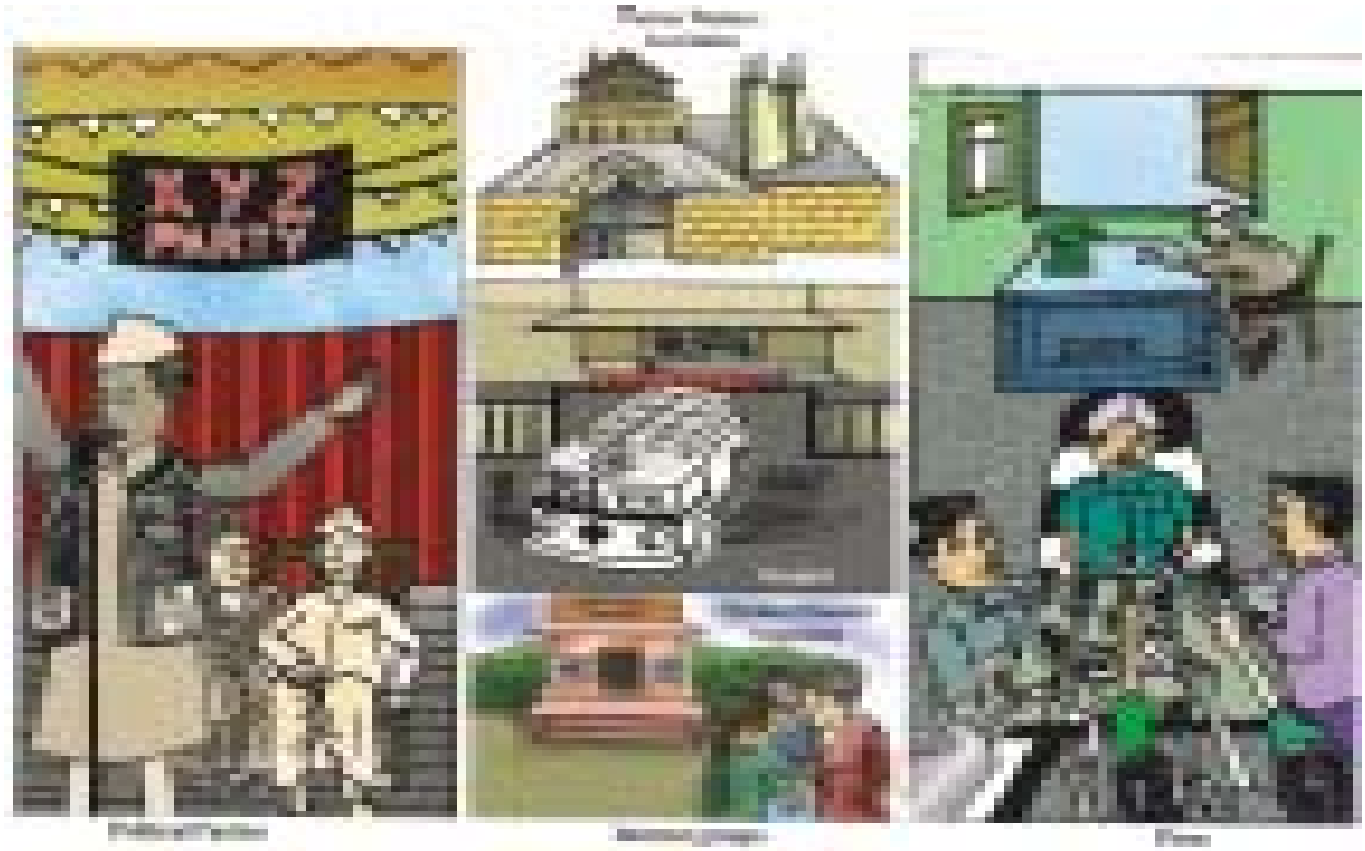
19.7.2.2 Interest Groups

These are associations or groups which have objectives different from those of political parties. Some times members of these groups may join political parties but this is much more to further their particularistic interests then out of conviction in the party's ideology or action programme. Interest groups may be based on economic, ethnic, linguistic, religious, regional or other considerations. Sometimes they would convert themselves into political parties or win over some members of the government (ruling party) and pressure the government to concede their demands. In this case, the group could be considered as a pressure group. Within the legislature, their friends and fellow-travellers could form an informal (or even formal groups and may lobby their cause. Such groups are called pressure lobbies. The Federation of Indian Chamber of commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the All India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AIMA) are examples of interest groups. At times, when the government introduces a bill or the budget proposal in Parliament, the interest groups will use their influence and lobby the Parliament members to use pressure on the government either to withdraw or to amend it in a form acceptable to them. Interest groups and pressure groups use a number of strategies to influence the government and to get their demands accepted. These strategies include threats of direct action like boycott, threat of holding back essential services, protest closure of shops and agitation's such as street demonstrations and strikes. However, the strategy is decided by the probability of success. Interest groups play an important part in government decision-making.

19.7.2.3 The Press

We have taken only the press from among the mass communication media and avoided the ratio and television in our discussion because the latter are controlled by the government in almost all countries. In some totalitarian countries, the press also is controlled. By and large, the press has become an important part of all political parties. A free press is the strongest safeguard of democracy. In fact a free press has become synonymous with real democracy. The press enables the citizens to know what is really happening in the country, especially what the government does or does not, for them. In this way, they could mould the citizens' attitude and behaviour towards the government and the party in power, and show their support

or opposition at the next election. For a political party, the press is a sure medium for propagating their programmes. Since the press itself may have political leaning, each newspaper may become partisan, but since all parties have the freedom to have their own media of communication, the disadvantages of this will be. to a great extent, neutralised. In any case, the citizen would be best informed about the political developments and political processes in the state through the press and other mass media like, Radio & T.V., Internet, etc.



Non Government Agencies

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the major institutions of a political system? Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) In parliamentary democracy parliament is supreme. Yes No

3) Name major types of legislatures with examples:

a)

b)

4) Tick mark the correct answer

Multi-party system is indispensable in:

a) Democracy

b) Oligarchy

5) Opposition parties are not tolerated in the Communist countries. Yes No

6) Free press is dangerous to the democracy Yes No

19.8 THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE STATE

Some political writers were of the view that the individual exists for the state. This view was also advocated by Fascism and Nazism. Both Mussolini in Italy and Hitler in Germany advocated this view. However, from early times, the opposite view also was voiced. According to this view, the state came into existence to meet the needs of life and continues to exist to assure a good life. Modern welfare theories have accepted this view. The declared goal of all government is the welfare of their citizens. While the state has the responsibility to cater to the needs of the individual, the individual, in turn, also has the responsibility to enable the State to perform its task by discharging his or her duties towards the state. The relationship is reciprocal. The modern democratic state confers the following rights on the individual: right to life, liberty and (limited right to) property: right to freedom of speech and religion, right to equality, right to education and right to public offices. These rights to education and right to public offices are sometimes called "Fundamental Rights" and are embodied in the Constitution. The Indian Constitution contains a chapter on fundamental rights. In return for these rights, the individual has the following duties to the state: (i) duty to obey the law, (ii) duty to pay taxes and, above all, (iii) duty to by loyal to the state.

Activity 2

List out at least five duties that you have as a citizen of the state to which you belong and to the Indian Nation. Write a note of one page on these duties and your performance of these duties. Compare your answer with those of other learners at your study centre. You may further discuss your rights and duties as a citizen with your Academic Counsellor.

19.9 DEMOCRACY AND INDIVIDUAL

We are living in a democratic state and it is necessary to know what democracy brings to us. Many of us have a tendency to take democracy for granted, and very few of us realise that democracy is a form of government whose continuance can be guaranteed only by a vigilant citizenry. Democracy is most vulnerable to ills like mobocracy (rule by the mob) or dictatorship (rule by one person). In either case, the majority (mobocracy) or arbitration of a single person (dictatorship) will replace. It is very necessary that the two extreme forms of democracy are avoided. **This can be best ensured only if the citizens are enlightened.** Enlightenment has several attributes. These are participation in the political process, especially exercise of voting rights, tolerance of, if not respect for, the opposition and other points of view, knowledge about one's rights and duties and honest exercise of rights and performance of duties and avoidance of unconstitutional or extra-constitutional methods to achieve one's goals. All these could be subsumed in the term civic

responsibilities. Democracy ideally is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. All people in a democracy have to realise that the rules of the game of democracy have to be honestly observed not only to achieve the goal but to keep the game going.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the fundamental rights conferred on the citizens by modern democratic state? Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) What are the civic responsibilities of the citizen of democracy. Use about five lines for your answer.

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3) Democracy can be safeguarded by:

a) Vigilant citizenry

b) Strong Military power

c) Strong Executive

d) Vigilant bureaucracy

(Tick mark the correct answer)

4) In a democracy a citizen should have knowledge about:

a) Rights only

b) Duties only

c) Both rights and duties

d) None of the above

(Tick mark the correct answer)

19.10 LET US SUM UP

The state is a distinguishing social organisation. The state has been defined as a community of persons. More or less in number permanently occupying a definite part of a territory. It is independent of external control and possesses an organised government to which the majority of citizens remain obedient. Political scientists, however, recognise the following essential properties of the state viz. a population, a territory, a government and sovereignty. Sovereignty, indeed, confers the ultimate power on the state.

Nationalism is the growth of a feeling of oneness among people based on the same attributes to contribute to nationality. The nation is the peoples consciousness of unity.

Government is an essential element of a state as the day to day function of the state is carried out by the government. Though the terms government and the state are used interchangeably, to speak of differences: (i) the government is concrete while the state is an abstraction: (ii) the state is supreme while the Government is an element, (iii) the state is permanent, but government is not, (iv) the authority of the state is unlimited, but for the government it is limited (v) the states have common attributes, while types of government vary. The state performs the political functions as the political sub-system of the society. There are some other organisations in the society looking after the welfare and other activities. Though the political pluralists claim the state to be one of the associations of the many associations of the Society, but the State stands to be a distinctive organisation because of its sovereign power.

A state, however, carries on its function through two main types of organisations; (i) Governmental organisation viz, executive, legislative, judiciary and bureaucracy (ii) Non-government agencies viz-political parties, interest groups and the press & other mass media. These organisation, indeed, perform distinctive functions in their respective fields of specialisation.

The relationship between the individual and the state is not uniform all over the world as there are different forms of governments. A modern democratic state confers certain fundamental rights on its citizens viz the right to life, property, liberty, expression, equality and education. In return citizens are also expected to perform certain duties of the state viz, obey law, pay taxes, to be loyal to the state, exercise voting rights, avoidance of unconstitutional means to achieve one's goal. It also expects citizens to be knowledgeable about their rights and duties.

19.11 KEY WORDS

Fundamental Rights : Certain rights guaranteed by the state to its citizens and given in the Constitution. These include civil liberties like freedom of expression, freedom of speech and religion, equality before law

Nationalism : Growth of a feeling of oneness among the people based on some common attributes to contribute to nationhood or nationality. These could include religion, economics, politics, language culture and so on.

Political Pluralism : Political thought of a group of thinkers who propagate that there are multiple social organisation in the society and the state is only one of them.

Sovereignty : The supreme power of the state over individuals and organisation.

19.12 FURTHER READINGS

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19.13 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) a) a population b) a territory c) a government and
   e) sovereignty.

2) Yes

   It confers ultimate power to the state in exercising its monopoly of power over all individual and institutions within its territory. Again, it extends to the relationship with other sovereign states and formulates its own policy avoiding external interference.

3) No

4) No

Check Your Progress 2

1) The state is an abstraction while the government is concrete; (ii) the state is supreme but the government is an element of the state only; (iii) the states have similar attributes, but types of government vary, (iv) the state is permanent but the government can change and (v) authority of the state is unlimited but that of the government is limited.

2) No

3) No

4) Yes

Check Your Progress 3

1) Executive, legislature, judiciary, bureaucracy are the major governmental organisations of the state. Besides these, there are several non-governmental organisations viz. political parties, interest groups and the press.

2) Yes

3) a) Uni-cameral b) Bi-cameral

4) a) Democracy

5) Yes

6) No

Check Your Progress 4

The fundamental rights are:

1) Right to life, right to liberty and (limited rights to) property, right to freedom of speech and religion, right to equality, right to education and right to public offices.

The civic responsibilities are:

2) Duty to obey law, paying taxes, loyalty to the state, exercising voting rights, tolerance of the opposition, performing duties and avoidance of unconstitutional methods to achieve one's goal.

3) a) Vigilant citizenry.

4) c) Both rights and duties.

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UNIT 20 RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Structure

20.0 Objectives

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- 20.2.1 Religion and Society
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20.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this unit you should be able to:

- describe the meaning of religion;
- analyse religion as part of the social organisation and its relation to the concept of faith;
- explain the simple, complex, and mixed forms of religion; and
- examine the changing aspects of religion in society.

20.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you are going to learn about the meaning of religion and various ways in which religion affects society and how it leads to the maintenance of the social order. Here we have also mentioned the negative aspects of religion such as superstition,

fanaticism, etc. In this unit you will also learn about the culturally diverse forms of religion like the simple, complex and mixed forms. Finally, in this unit you will learn about the changing aspects of religion.

20.2 RELIGION : AN ASPECT OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION

Religion is concerned with the shared beliefs and practices of human beings. It is the human response to those elements in the life and environment of mankind which are beyond their ordinary comprehension. Most religions deal with the attempt of human beings to understand something or some power which is supernatural and suprasensory. It is pre-eminently social and is found in nearly all societies. Majumdar and Madan (1956 : 151) explain that the word religion has its origin in the Latin word **rel** (1) igio. This is derived from two root words. The first root is leg, meaning 'to gather, count, or observe'. The second root is **lig**, meaning 'to bind'. The first root refers to belief in and practice of 'signs of Divine Communication'. The second root refers to the carrying out of those activities which link human beings with the supernatural powers. Thus, we find that the word religion basically represents beliefs and practices which are generally the main characteristics of all religions.

20.2.1 Religion and Society

Religion has also been characterised as that aspect of human social and personal life which embodies the most sublime of human aspirations. It is the foundation on which the normative structure of society stands. It is the upholder of all values, morality and ethics of society. In this sense, it is the source of public order in society and provides the source of inner individual peace to men and women. It has both ennobling, as well as, civilising effect on mankind. Yet, it has also led to the creation of obstacles in the path of progress. Its negative effects amongst mankind have been of promoting fanaticism and intolerance, ignorance, superstition and obscurantism (O'Dea 1966 :20).

Religion has led to the unification of the members of a society. But, it has also led to religious wars and communal tensions. However, we must keep in mind that often non-religious issues and conflicts of interests are the root causes of communal tensions in a plural society such as India.

While most people consider religion as a universal and, therefore, a significant institution of societies, Marxist scholars do not see it as necessary component of society. In Karl Marx's words : "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people". He believed that religious beliefs act as an opiate which reduces the pain of poverty and oppression from the minds of the exploited masses. It is, therefore, required by human beings only so long as they are oppressed and exploited by a dominant class. It will cease to exist in the communist society which will be the ultimate stage of social development, according to him.

20.2.2 Religion and Faith

Central to all religions is the concept of faith. Religion in this sense is the organisation of faith which binds human beings to their temporal and transcendental foundation. By faith human being is distinguished from other beings. It is essentially a subjective and private matter. We share the belief of others. This elevates us to a wider human plane. Thus, faith is something which binds us together and is, therefore, more important than reason.

According to the classical Indian thought. "Man is made by faith : As the faith so the Man" **(The Bhagvad Gita)**. The Buddhist scriptures recognise faith as one of the five faculties of Man (the other faculties are energy, mindfulness, concentration and full knowledge). Faith is the foundation and guarantee of human relations. It is also a condition for love. Through faith the believer 'communicates' and fraternises with the non-believer. It makes possible the unity of life in one's daily existence.

20.2.3 Link Between Faith and Religious Life

Using the Biblical metaphor, we can say: faith is the bridge that links the termporal with the transcendental, the exterior with the interior. But how? Let us consider the mechanism.

All traditional societies constitute their faith in such order as may make interaction between individuals possible, and the movement from temporal to transcendental a reality. What follows is an inverted triangle ABC (Illustration 1), where:

A represents the transcendental value

B represents the temporal element

C represents the human response of ethical value

R stands for religion

What links B to C to A is faith.

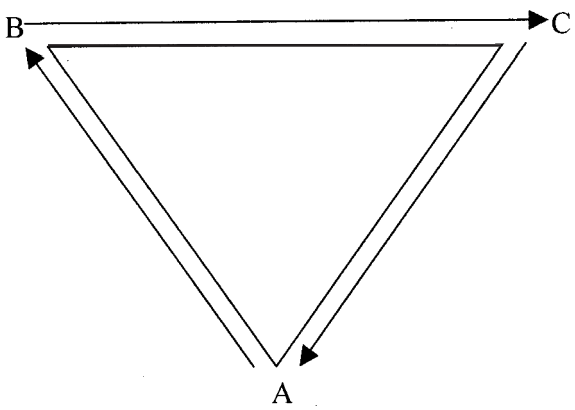

Illustration I

Let the significance of this triangle be elaborated further (Illustration 2).

	(B)	(C)	(D)
	Temporal element	**Human response**	**Transcendental**
FAITH	Self →	Reverence →	Liberation
	Marriage →	Fidelity →	Love
	Family →	Ancestor →	Unity
	Society →	Tolerance →	Perfection

Illustrations 2

Self, marriage, family and society refer to the basic constitutions of social life. These correspond to human response and transcendental value, through faith. The individual (self) in deep faith develops reverence for life, the condition which liberates him from suffering. A married person endowed with faith observes fidelity, which is the state of highest love. A faithful man is duty-bound not only for the living members but also

for the deceased kins. Hence, performs ancestor-worship, the act of divine unity. He also cultivates ideological tolerance, whereby the society rests in peace and he himself reaches the highest stage of perfection. Now, if you recollect the experiences and sayings of your own tradition, you will find that what we have just explained is nothing very new. Such interpretations of religious life are available in all traditions, may be in many different ways. But in essence they all agree that faith is the foundation of religion. In other words, the thread that binds all forms of religious organisation is invariably the faith.

Activity 1

Talk to at least three people of different religious faiths about their religion. Identify the common features in all these religions and write a note of one page on "Religion: Belief and Practices". Compare your answer with other learners at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Define religion using about three lines.

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2) What are the negative aspects of religion? Give an example. Use about three lines.

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3) In what way is faith central to all religions? Describe in about three lines.

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20.3 CULTURALLY DIVERSE FORMS OF RELIGION

Human cultures in time and space have envisioned various articles of faith. So there are different forms of religion. Broadly we can classify them into three classes: (i) simple form of religion; (ii) complex form of religion; and (iii) mixed form of religion. Sociologically speaking category (ii) has evolved from the category (i); however, this development need not be unidirectional. It can be in the opposite direction too, just as it can be a mixture of both as in the case of (iii). In this part of the unit, you are going to learn about the characteristic features of all the three forms of religions.

20.3.1 Simple Forms of Religion

The simple forms of religion can be distinguished from the complex forms of religion. There are some important characteristic features which are found in the simple forms. These characteristic features of the simple form of religion are as follows:

i) The archaic form of religion is ahistorical, that is timeless. It is believed as a divinely given form of life, which has been in existence since the appearance, or creation, of human being, the beginning of the World.

ii) As it is ahistorical, it is not founded or formalised by human being.

iii) In this form of religion, the knowledge of belief and ritual is trans,mitted orally from one generation to the next.

iv) In it, the religious experience is also an aesthetic experience, shared collectively in such performances as ritual dance and festivity.

v) It is essentially descriptive, not explanatory. It is practised in 'good faith' a faith that needs no interpretation, no philosophical debate, no dialectical discussion.

In this description of simple forms of religion we can see that the tendency to philosophise does not exist here. The practical aspect of religion and magic are present. Therefore, there are no scriptures or Holy books present in such religions.

According to Emile Durkheim (1912) the simple form of religion forms the inner ring, as of a tree, of which the complex forms of religions form the outer, more evolved, ring. He says that in primitive societies there generally exist two

component elements in the supernatural field. One is the sacred element and the other is the profane. Durkheim calls the sacred element as religion and the profane element as magic or primitive science. As a contrast to Durkheim, Malinowski (1948) has classified religion and magic as the sacred part and science as the profane part.

Every society possesses its own set of religious myths. Myths actually are the carriers of beliefs from one generation to another in a simple sense. These beliefs are shared by the group in general whether this be a simple society or a modern society. However, the conception of the exact nature of the supernatural varies from one society to another. In the belief system of some societies "the supernatural may consist of ghosts and spirits, for others it may be a belief in the impersonal power which pervades everything in this world, while for some other people the supernatural may be manifested through a pantheon of anthropomorphic Gods and Goddesses, or through a simple God" (Majumdar and Madan 1956 : 152).

20.3.1.1 Varieties of Explanations Regarding Simple Religious Forms

It has been a major concern of evolutionary anthropologists to examine the content of various conceptions of the supernatural element found in different societies. Some of the major explanations are as follows:

i) One of the first attempts to explain religious beliefs and its origin in the primitive society was made by Tylor (1871). He formulated the theory of animism which is the belief in the soul (anima). Therefore, he called this theory animism. He says that there can be multiple sources through which religion has originated but belief in the soul is crucial.

Tylor visualised the following phases in the evolution of simple form of religions:

a) **Lower Animism:** It tends to be amoral, that is, the soul is continued after death in a condition which does not depend on its death during life.

b) **Higher Animism:** It is based on the "retribution doctrine", that is, there are rewards and punishments for the soul, depending on the lifetime performance.

ii) According to the critics of Tylor, animism is a later development in the history of religion. Scholars like Preuss and Max Mueller propogated a pre- animistic theory or religion called Animatism. Animatism is the belief that everything in Nature has life and is animate. Manaism is a special form of animatism. According to Majumdar and Madan (1956: 156) this theory is based on the notion that the primitive religion is based on belief in an all- pervad1ng supernatural power. Though 'beyond the reach of the senses', it exists in all objects, including human beings and expresses as physical force or such other power. According to Marett, such -belief can be called Manaism after the Polynesian term 'mana' to represent this power.

To take an Indian example, amongst the Hos of Singhbhumi, Bihar, there exists a similar kind of religious belief which Majumdar (1956) has called 'Bongaism'. These people believe in the concept of 'bonga' which resides in trees, natural objects and sometimes in manmade articles like bi-cycles, etc. It is the manifestation of a vague supernatural power which is, according to believers, the cause of all energy.

iii) According to Frazer, religion and magic are the two ways of dealing with the major crises of life. In primitive societies men adopted two ways of facing the realities of life. One was through magic which is the belief in the superior supernatural power, which coerces it into service. For example, through chanting magical words supernatural spirits are made to obey the demands of the magician. The other way is to become subservient to the supernatural powers and worship it. This subservience to the supernatural forces is called religion. However, in Frazer's opinion, magic and religion existed together in primitive societies in simpler forms of religions. There is the last stage in the progress of knowledge called science which, like magic is based on the principles of cause and effect, but unlike magic is based on true correlations which can be proved. Thus, magic, religion and science- are the three phases of the same reality in society.

20.3.2 Complex Forms of Religion

This form of religion has the following main features, which are radically different from the simple form of religion.

i) It is historical, that is, its origin can be traced.

ii) It is also a founded religion. The founder is attributed with divine powers, recognised as the Incarnation of God, the Son of God, or the Messenger of 'God. The adherents look upon the founder as saviour.

iii) The knowledge of belief and ritual is codified and textualised. The scriptures are considered holy and believed to contain the sacred words of God, or of his representative, and worshipped as a deity.

iv) In this form of religion there is a large measure of personalism. The emphasis is on personal experience of religious phenomena. Faith is organised around the personality of the founder.

v) This is a highly intellectualised form of religion. It possesses a body of doctrine which the adherents are required to believe and follow. The new doctrines are added in course of scholastic development. New interpreters belong to the same spiritual lineage. This leads to the formation of cults and sects. To

continue the doctrinal system and to propagate a' particular ideology there comes up a class of specialists, preachers, monks and ascetics. who devote their lives exclusively for this purpose.

Religious Beliefs

20.3.2.1 Buddhism: An Example

Buddhism as a complex form of religion has the following features which put it in this category.

i) **Historical Origin:** 6th - 5th centuries B.C. First preached at Sarnath (near Varanasi).

ii) **The Founder:** Siddhartha Gautama or Sakyamuni Buddha, the son of King - Suddhodana and Queen Maya Devi of Kapilavastu (Nepal).

iii) **Main Tenets:** The Middle Path or the Eightfold Path: the practices of right view: right aim, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation. These are the means of Nirvana, the release from the Wheel of Life. Those desirous of setting foot on the Eightfold Path have to take refuge in the Triple Gem: the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha (community of monks).

iv) **Distinguishing Features:** (i) **Materialism,** the doctrine of nonsoul : man is an aggregate of material factors and processes which at death, disintegrate without residue, (ii) **Atheism,** a religion without the concept of God (in practice its followers worship the gods who are lesser than the Buddha), (iii) Nihilism, the doctrine of impermanence, (iv) **Renunciation,** a religion of other wordly asceticism.

v) **Sects:** Main divide: (i): **Theravada** or Hinayana with Arhat ideal, emphasising salvation of the spiritually advanced individuals. Main concentration in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand. (ii) **Mahayana** with Bodhisatva ideal, preaching attainability of enlightenment by all, the householder as well as the recluse. Mahayana or Tantric Lamaism, further subdivided into Kadampa, Kargyupa, Sakyapa and Ningmapa. The sects of Kargypa (with two offshoots: Norpa

and Jonanpa) are regarded as semi-reformed. Main concentration in Tibet and the Himalayan region of India, especially Ladakh, Lahaul-Spiti and Arunachal Pradesh.

vi) **Scriptures:** The most important ones: **Dhammapada, Tipitaka** of the early school, and a large collection of Mahayanist scriptures called **Tanjur**.

20.3.3 Mixed Forms of Religion

This type of religion is characterised by the elements of both the simple and the complex forms. In particular, it is a religion with scholastic explanation but without history. One of the best examples of this type of religion is Hinduism, traditionally called. Sanatana Dharma or the Eternal Religion.

Hinduism as a mixed form of religion does not have a historical origin as found in Islam, Buddhism or Christianity. It has no founder and its source is not in space and time. Unlike the complex forms of religions, it does not possess an organised, bureaucratic religious order of the type present in Christianity or Islam. Even its sects are without ties. Though they are founded like Christianity, Islam, or any other historical religion, they do not form a self-governing system. Each sect defines its boundary, but all are together in Sanatana Hinduism. The basis upon which the Sanatana Hinduism and its sects are related is the principle of one-and-many.

20.3.3.1 Hindu Religion and Caste System

Hindu religion can not be understood apart from the caste system. It does not have an organised clergy or religious order as in the case of Christianity.

Therefore, the system of caste acts as a means of maintaining order in society.

This system derives its legitimacy from the Hindu religion, especially the Manu Smriti. The caste system consists of about 3,000 castes which are separated from each other in marriage practices, food habits, linguistic differences, etc.

The Indian caste system was originally derived from the four Varnas, but territorial, linguistic and occupational factors gave rise to numerous hereditary groups which came to be known as castes. Each caste has a set of beliefs and rituals. These differences are marked in the observance of domestic rites (marriage, funeral etc.).

For the Hindu, there are two important guides for practice: The **Dharmasutra** and **Grihyasutra**. These are the parts of the Vedas dealing with the rules or procedures for religious activity. The Grihyasutra (domestic rites) incorporate a number of specific features of the castes. Hence, the rules relating to domesticity are very elaborate. Many of the rituals are preserved in memory rather than recorded: The women are the repositories of informal rituals. So, apart from the priest who recites mantra there are family elders-mainly women who perform rites for the new born child, the newly-wed couple, for the dead members of the family, etc. Hence, Hindu religious practices contain both formal and informal rites. In the formation of informal rites the castes are a major source.

20.3.3.2 Notions About Dharma, Karma and Moksha

For the Hindus, and also Buddhists and Jains, the notions **dharma, karma and moksha** are important.

i) Dharma stands for the balance between social and cosmic orders; in ordinary terms it stands for justice or fairplay. Both for individuals and groups, it is the guiding socio-religious principle. It is the first of the four Hindu principles, the

others being **artha, kama** and **moksha**. The two middle terms mean pursuit of material and social goals. Together, they are called the **purusharthas**.

These four principles are for individual's guidance. On the social plane, any imbalance in this system results in **adharma** or disturbance of social order.

The demons in Purana are the forces which create **adharma**, hence the gods and goddesses incarnate on this earth, often in human form, to destroy adharma and restore **dharma**.

ii) **Karma** is the consequence of the individual's or group's action. It can be bad or good depending on the actions. Human beings pass through a long cycle of births and deaths during which they accumulate **karma** or the consequences of actions in one's life. The present status of an individual, good or bad, high or low, is the result of actions performed in the past life. If an individual accumulates **punya** (merit) through good actions then he enjoys happiness in this life, but if he accumulates **papa** (sin) through evil doing he suffers as a result. Karma is not fatalism. The individual can improve his destiny through his or her actions. An important outcome of Karma theory is that the individuals do not blame gods or blind fate or the society for their sufferings; they alone are responsible for their present status.

iii) **Moksha** or liberation means cessation of births and deaths. Hindus, Buddhists and Jains firmly believe in **karma**. Usually Buddhist and Jain monks take more rigorous steps than lay people, to overcome **karmic** bondage and escape from the cycle of births and deaths to attain **moksha** or **nirvana**.

Therefore, dharma, karma and moksha are dynamic principles motivating people to action. Hence, in Bhagvad Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna to act firmly and dutifully. In caste system, all castes, high or low, had a sphere of duties. The performance of the duties in the prescribed manner conferred on individuals a better rebirth in the next round. Therefore, low caste members performing their duties correctly were regarded as worthy human beings. In the Mahabharata, there is a reference to the low caste hunter who was proud of his life style rather than regret it. For the upper-caste members also, ethical and religious norms were binding. Whether born high or low, all individuals were required to follow the caste rules and practices. Otherwise they were punished by suffering in this life or next.

Thus, in Hinduism, an example of a mixed form of religion, we see a combination of the features of simple forms of religion, as well as, complex forms of religion. It is complex in terms of its foundation in higher philosophical thinking. Its scriptures like the Veda, Upanishad, Bhagvad Gita, etc. are highly sophisticated.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer .

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Tick the correct answer:

i) Simple forms of religion are historical and creative. Yes No

ii) Animism is a form of simple religion. Yes No

iii) Simple forms of religions have an elaborate philosophical foundation. Yes No

iv) Complex forms of religion are ahistorical. Yes No

v) The knowledge of belief and ritual is codified and textualised in complex, form of religion. Yes No

vi) Hinduism is an example of complex form of religion. Yes No

2) Give an example each of a simple form, a complex form and a mixed form of religion in India.

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20.4 RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Change is the very essence of a living thing. A living religion must grow, must advance and must change. No form of religion is static. In some cases the change may he slow and minor, in others relatively rapid and major. Every religion claims its first principle supreme, original and eternal. Hence, there is also an element of censure for change. Change in religion may be compared with a growing tree. The dead branches wither away and new offshoots of fresh sap come up from the same tree. Change of religion is, on the other hand, an entirely different process. It implies rejection of the old form and acceptance of the new. It is technically known as conversion.

Broadly, there are three types of change in religion: (i) from simple to complex, (ii) from complex to simple and (iii) mixing of forms.

20.4.1 Simple to Complex Form

Contact with complex form of religion adds many new elements in the simple form of tribal religion For example. with" the gradual spread of Vaisnavism in Chotanagpur, the Oraons, a tribe which lives in that region, began to re-organise their traditional faith.

The consequences were as follows:

i) The Oraons lost faith in the powers of their old spirits. , ..

ii) A few of the spirits such as the ancestor spirits and the clan-spirits, came to be shorn of much of their maleficence and came to be regarded as ordinarily beneficent.

iii) The original conception of the Spirit of Good developed into a small pantheon, which in turn evolved elaborate rites and ceremonies, actions and observations to please different grades of supernatural powers.

iv) The Oraons aspiring for a higher spiritual life imposed upon themselves the restrictions against the use of alcoholic liquors as drink or libation, and of fowls, pigs and oxen as food or sacrifice.

v) The institutions of temple and guru or spiritual guide, and loving adoration of a personal deity (bhakti) became acceptable.

vi) Religious life began to find expressions through different denominations. Some turned into Bhuiput Bhagat, some into Nemha Bhagat, some into Visnu Bhagat, some into Kabirpanthi Bhagat, and some into Tana Bhagat.

To take another example, the impact of Vaisnavism on the Meitei religion of Manipur has been much deeper. There were three distinct stages which marked the introduction of Vaisnavism into Manipur. The first emissaries of the new faith, which arrived in l704, belonged to the school of Nimbarka. The second quarter of the 18th century marked the arrival of the Ramanadi, and finally the school of Chaitanya replaced the earlier schools. There has been a remarkable coexistence of the old and the new forms of religion. This needs illustrations.

i) Some of the tribal gods, called **lai,** which were not very significant, disappeared from the scene. Household **lai** continue to be worshipped; but the public lai, those which were the common property of all the Meitei, became fewer.

ii) New Brahmanical gods became identified with the traditional deities. Panthoibi, the Meitei goddess, has become identified with Durga; Nongpok Ningthou with Shiva.

iii) Traditional **lai** came to be worshipped according to Brahmanic ritual prescription (for example in the substitution of bloodless offerings of animal sacrifice).

iv) The worship of the Vaisnava deities has developed and deepened. Krishna, in his cowherd aspect of Sri Govind, has become the dominant deity. This has caused strong emphasis on cow protection.

v) Growth in the Radha cult. Introduction of the **Ras Lila,** enacting the relationship of Krishna and the Gopis. This has caused the development of the most beautiful form of religious dancing; generally known as Manipuri dance.

(vi) Reading of the **Bhagavat Purana** and the **Mahabharata,** and singing **Kirtana.**

vii) Emphasis on Brahmanic purification rites, and puritanical sexual ethics.

20.4.2 Complex to Simple Form

There are also examples of simplification of the complex form of religion, specially of rituals and ceremonies. Buddhism, for instance, came as a revolt against the Vedic ritual which was both complex and expensive, .and also beyond the reach of ordinary people. It also required the services of the specialists, and knowledge of Sanskrit. The Buddha showed a path far simpler than this. He spoke to the people in everyday language and prescribed the Eightfold Noble Path. It is a different matter that in course of time his disciples, especially the Mahayanist, gave themselves up to the mystical Tantric form of complex religion. Later, the 19th century Brahmo Samaj again tried to simplify the complex nature of Brahmanic Hinduism. Its impact has been limited to Bengal. The Arya Samaj had also made a similar venture. It denied the Pauranic rituals and tried to establish the Vedic fire-sacrifice in a simple form. The impact of Arya Samaj can still be seen mainly in the western parts of north India.

20.4.3 Mixing of Multiple Form

Mixing of more than one form has caused development of new religious organisations. The most excellent example is of Sufism. It has evolved from Persian Zoroastrianism and Arab Islamism. The sublimity of this faith lies in its conception of the unity of Eternal Spirit and the intimate association of the Divine with the manifest. The Arab Muslims believe in a personal God. They also hold that mankind and the world are mere objects upon which the will of God is exercised. The Sufis approached nearer to the Christian sentiment embodied in the phrase "Christ in us". The Persian conquerors of India carried 'with them the mysticism and spirituality of Sufism.

Sikhism, Kabirpanth and many other Santa-Sampradayas of their kind are Sanatan Hinduism, modified by Buddhism and Sufism. In these forms of religion, the prime object of attainment is not Paradise but the total cessation of individual existence, or what is called Nirvana in Buddhism. Also there is no personal God. The Sufi idea of the unity of God is well-founded in most of the medieval religions. Guru Govind Singh, the last Guru of the Sikh Panth, was a staunch devotee of the goddess Durga. He established **khalsa** by which he bound his disciples into an army and conferred upon each of them the name Singh, or Lion. He asked his followers that after his death the **Granth Sahib** or "the Lord of the Book" was to be their guide in every respect. This holy scripture contains the devotional songs sung by practically all the Hindu saints of medieval India. It also contains 142 stanzas composed by Shaikh Baba Farid, the most celebrated Sufi . saint who accompanied Nanak, the illustrious founder of Sikhism, for more than twelve years.

The Bisnois of Rajasthan claim that their religious organisation is composed of twenty Hindu and nine Muslim tenets, and hence "Bisnoi" (**Bis** = twenty + **nau** = nine).

Activity 2

Find out whether in your region there exists worship of a Sufi Saint or Baba who is worshiped by people of more then one religion. Write a report on the religious practice and nature of religion of this Saint/Baba.

Compare your answer with those of your peers at your study centre and discuss with your Academic Counsellor.

20.4.4 Sects and Cults

Sects are like the various branches of a tree, which is a religion. They are a reaction to what is not acceptable in a religion. In fact, the sects rise as a protest movement against established religions. Protestant Christianity is a sect of Catholic Christianity; just as Jainism and Buddhism are some of the sects of Hinduism.

Sects often reject many of the norms and values of the main religion and replace them with beliefs and practices which appear to. be unusual to the people who are not members of that sect. They are insular to, and closed to others who have not gone through the initiation procedures for membership. In most sects a strict pattern of behaviour for members to follow is present. Membership demands extreme loyalty to the sect and it becomes the most dominant factor in the member's life.

Cult is another aspect of religion, which is an offshoot but unlike a sect it does not arise as a protest movement but remains part of the main religion. It is an acting out of feelings, attitudes, and relationships which are an end in themselves. For example, the cult of Devi, or the cult of Krishna etc. have a following of a large number of people who believe in it and sing the devotional songs, etc. for its own sake.

Sects and cults are the processual aspects of religion i.e., religion in the process of being practiced. Sect is much more formalised and definite, while cults are only minor expressions of variety within a religion.

20.4.5 Conversion

Conversion is the chief end of all teaching and preaching in some religions. It is a process of growing up in spiritual life. In protestant theology it is called "the rebirth

of the soul". As a constant challenge of faith, conversion is an ongoing discovery of the real nature of religion. In practice, however, such personal freedom of experience is hardly attainable. For, one is either born in a religious tradition to follow the prescribed way, or alternatively may give up 'the inherited tradition to adopt another prescribed way. In either case he is not involved in the discovery of faith. Religious missions are motivated by a desire to convert others to their faith. The supreme task of the Christian Church is the conversion of the World, making disciples from all nations. That is the objective of Islam also. The ethics of conversion grants moral rights to seek for more followers to one's way of religious beliefs. The missionaries believe that theirs is the best form of religion received from God and that it is their religious duty to impart to others who are not yet within it. When this pious motive gets distorted the method of coercion is employed only with a view to increasing the number of fellow religionists. It is no longer then a real conversion.

Many Hindus embraced Islam under different situations. The Mopla fisherfolk of Kerala were the first Indians to have accepted Islam. The Sufi saints and other religious faqirs or **darwesh** converted a large number of Hindus to Islamic faith. The Muhammadan rulers were also instrumental in conversion but more often than not they exercised force. Conversion to Christianity has generally been through missionaries, and largely among the tribes of India. Kerala again is the home of the first Indian converts to Christianity. Traditions die hard. Most converts to Islam and Christianity continue to follow some of their old beliefs and practices which are even against the tenets of the new faith. This they do either secretly, or openly. A proselytising religion wanting to hold on to the neophytes or new converts cannot do anything in this regard. Like Islam and Christianity, Buddhism also practises conversion. The Buddha had asked his mendicants to convert their adversaries to the Path not by reasoning but by reduction to the sublime. Sanatan Hinduism does not believe in proselytising, because in its view there are different paths to the Ultimate, each equally valid and worthy to follow: As there is no conversion, so also no reversion. The Arya Samaj theory of conversion was never accepted by the orthodox followers of Hinduism.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

i) …… with…… form of religion has added many new elements in the simple form of tribal religion.

ii) The impact of …… on the Meitei religion on Manipur has been very deep.

iii) Buddhism came as a revolt against the …… ritual which was complex and beyond the common peoples reach.

iv) Sects and cults depict the …… aspects of religion.

v) In Protestant theology conversion is called "the rebirth of the ……".

20.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have explained the social nature of religion and how religion forms a part of the social organisation of all societies? Here we have discussed the concept of faith and its relationship with religion and society. We have discussed the intimate relationship between the transcendental values, temporal elements arid human response which forms the basis of religion and which are linked with each other by the element of faith.

We have also described the crucial features of simple, complex and mixed forms of religions with some examples of each. Finally, we have discussed the concept of change within religion. We have analysed the process of change from simple to complex, from complex to simple, and the mixed forms found in the religions in India. The nature of sects and cults, and religious conversions have also been explained in this unit.

20.6 KEY WORDS

Ahistorical : anything which does not "have any history".

Dialectical : a logical discussion by question and answer as means of investigating truths in philosophy.

Embody : to include.

Fraternise : to associate with people to make friends.

Normative : that aspect of social order which deals, with the norms of the society, such as the do's and don'ts.

Opiate : anything which acts like a drug or alcohol which either deludes 'you or puts you to sleep.

20.7 FURTHER READINGS

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O'Dea, Thomas F. 1966. *The Sociology of Religion,* Prentice Hall, Inc.: Englewood Cliffs.

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20.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Religion is an organisation of faith. It deals with the shared beliefs and practices of human beings.

2) Some of the negative aspects of religion are that sometimes they create obstructions in the path of progress of a society. They promote fanaticism, ignorance and superstitions also.

3) Faith is central to all religions as it binds human beings to their temporal and transcendental foundation. It is faith which distinguishes human beings from all other living beings.

Check Your Progress 2

1) i) No (See section 20.3.1)

   ii) Yes (See section 20.3.1.1)

   iii) No (See section 20.3.1)

   iv) No (See section 20.3.2)

   v) Yes (See section 20.3.2)

   vi) No (See section 20.3.3)

2) Religion of some of the tribes in India, eg. "Bongaism" of Ho's of Kolhan, Bihar is an example of simple religion. Buddhism is a complex religion and Hindusim is a mixed form of religion.

Check Your Progress 3

1) i) Contact, complex

   ii) Vaisnavism

   iii) Vedic

   iv) Processual

   v) Soul

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Block

6

CULTURE AND RELIGION

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UNIT 21 CULTURE I : MAIN CHARACTERISTICS

Structure

21.0 Objectives

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21.6 Key Words

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21.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

21.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this unit you should be able to understand:

- the concept of culture, as used in anthropology and sociology;
- that culture as a distinctively human phenomenon, rooted in human being's unique nature; and
- that culture is closely inter-related to biological process.

21.1 INTRODUCTION

If you have been to a zoo or a circus, and have observed the behaviour of monkeys and chimpanzees, you must have been struck by the similarities between their gestures and ours. Some of you might have wondered whether we are just like these animals, albeit a little more developed.

In recent years, a number of sciences have devoted attention to animal behaviour. As a result of extensive researches and investigations, we now. know a good deal about what we share with other animals, as well as the ways in which we differ from

them. The concept of culture has greatly expanded our understanding of the nature and behaviour of human beings in all its richness and diversity, as well as in relation to the behaviour of animals. It has greatly helped us in understanding the diverse ways in which the basic biological needs of human beings are satisfied. It has brought to our awareness the differences among the various communities and groups of mankind, and the manner in which these differences are continued and passed on from one generation to another .

The concept of culture is immensely helpful in that it offers us a truly broad perspective on mankind, and thereby expands our intellectual horizons. It liberates us from the chains of prejudice and groups-centredness, and thus humanizes our consciousness.

21.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

We sometimes describe an individual as "a highly cultured person", meaning thereby that the person in question has certain features such as his or her speech, manners, taste for literature, music or painting, which distinguish him/her from others. Culture, in this sense, refers to certain personal characteristics of an individual. However, this is not the sense in which the word culture is used and understood in social sciences.

Sometimes, culture is used in popular discourse to refer to a celebration or an evening of entertainment, as when one speaks of a "cultural show". In this sense, culture is identified with aesthetics or the fine arts, such as dance, music or drama. This also is different from the technical meaning of the word culture.

Culture is used in a special sense in anthropology and sociology. It refers to the sum total of human beings' behaviour, feelings, beliefs, thoughts; it connotes everything that is acquired by them as social beings. One of the most comprehensive definition of the term culture was provided by the 19th century British anthropologist, Edward Tylor. He defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society."

21.2.1 Role of Culture

Culture has two distinctive, but inter-related aspects. On the one hand, it is an expression of human beings ingenuity; it cannot be adequately understood without reference to certain characteristics which are unique to human beings. These unique characteristics include rationality and imagination, capacity for self-awareness and self-reflection, and capacity for symbolic communication or language.

On the other hand, culture has played a crucial role in the fulfilment of capacities and potentialities. Their survival in the evolutionary process was made possible due to culture. Such factors as co-operations, the domestication of plants and animals, the discovery and use of fire, the making of tools and implements, and the invention and use of language greatly facilitated their adaptation to the natural environment. Modern biologists point out that, unlike animals, human beings played an active role in their own evolutionary career.

Co-operation among human beings provided security from wild animals and external threats. It facilitated the hunting of wild animals by making it a group activity. The domestication of plants and animals helped in the adaptation of human groups and communities to the environment. Obtaining food through gathering, fishing and hunting was made easier by the use of tools and implements. The discovery and use of fire provided security from wild animals. Language made possible the sharing,

accumulation and transmission of experience and skill. If not for culture, human beings would have probably perished in the long and arduous process of evolution.

21.2.2 Features of Culture

Culture is used in two senses, a general and a specific sense. Used in a general sense, it implied the sum total of those characteristics which are unique to mankind and which have no parallel in the animal kingdom. When used in a specific sense, it refers to the totality of the life ways and behaviour patterns of a community or a group. One may speak, for example, of Chinese culture, Eskimo culture, Hindu culture, etc.

Culture is characterised by the following features:

i) It is shared in common by the members of a given society or community. Culture therefore, refers not to beliefs and activities of individuals, but to those of groups of people who are organised in communities. It is fundamentally a social, rather than personal or individual, phenomenon.

ii) Culture is learnt and acquired by human beings in interaction with others. An individual acquires the characteristics of his parents and his group in two ways. On the one hand, she or he acquires the physical characteristics and features of her or his parents, such as skin colour, stature, texture of hair and colour of the eyes, through **genetic transmission**, over which he or she has no control. On the other hand, he or she learns and acquires the thoughts, attitudes, language and habits of his or her parents, and through them, of his or her group, by way of **cultural transmission**.

It follows from the above observation that differences among various groups and communities in regard to language, beliefs, customs and rituals are to be understood and explained not in terms of physical or racial differences, which are biologically inherited, but in terms of learnt and acquired cultural differences.

iii) Culture is not only learnt and acquired by individuals in a social context, but it is also accumulated and transmitted from generation to generation, through the mechanism of symbolic communication or language. In other words, a society or a community accumulates, over long periods of time, experiences, knowledge and skill, which are shared in common by its members, and it passes from one generation to another.

Activity 1

Interview one member of your Grandparent's generation, one of your own generation and one of a child's generation in your family on what they think about the role of men, women and children in your family/community and society. Write a report on "Social and Cultural Changes in my Society" of about 2 pages. Compare your note with others students and discuss the topic with your counsellor at your study centre.

21.3 CULTURE AND HUMAN NATURE

You have learnt in the foregoing sections that culture is essentially an expression of certain characteristics which are unique to human beings. A comparison between animal nature. In recent years, several disciplines such as physiological psychology, neuro-physiology, ethology (which is concerned with the study of animal behaviour in the wild) and sociology (which studies animal and human behaviour in a comparative framework) have provided us with valuable information on animal behaviour.

Consequently, we are now in a better position to know what human beings share with other animals, and what is unique to them.

21.3.1 Human Beings and Other Animals

A few decades ago, it was commonly believed that animals can neither learn to make and use tools, nor can they plan ahead or count. Modern researches in animal behaviour have established that all these assumptions about animals are not correct.

The fact that animals are capable of learning has been known to animal trainers and zoo keepers for a long time. You too must have observed this fact if you have pets such as parrots or dogs or cats at home. Researches in ethology and ornithology (the systematic study of the behaviour of birds) indicate that a number of animal species are capable of learning patterns of behaviour. For example, the young one of a bird learns the song pattern of its species during the first spring of its life. A young chimpanzee learns from its mother how to identify poisonous fruits and berries in the forest.

Many species of birds have a remarkable sense of direction and planning. This is evident in their seasonal migration. When the freezing cold of the Arctic becomes too harsh, the Siberian cranes cross a distance of several thousand miles and fly over to places like Bombay, Mysore, where the weather is more pleasant for them. They go back to their native habitat soon after the cold subsides.

The higher primates, such as monkeys and apes, make and use crude tools. The chimpanzees in the wild feed on white ants, which breed in the hollow recesses of tree trunks, when the chimpanzee's hand cannot reach right inside, he plucks the branch of a tree, inserts it inside the trunk and waits. When the white ants cling to the branch, he takes it out and gobbles up the ants.

The emu is an Australian animal which lays big eggs. The Australian buzzard, who is very fond of the eggs, drives the emu from its eggs, and then flies aloft with a stone in its claws. It drops the stone on the eggs and when they break, it swoops down and swallows the contents.

There are striking similarities between human beings and the chimpanzees in the number and form of chromosomes, the proteins of the blood, and the structure of the genetic material DNA. Jane Goodall, an ethnologist, studies the behaviour of chimpanzees in their natural setting in Tanzania. She found interesting similarities between certain aspects of chimpanzee behaviour and human behaviour. She found that, much like human beings, the chimpanzees have a lengthy childhood; they form close family attachment; they make and use primitive tools, and hunt in a collective manner. She also found similarities in respect of communication, such as facial expressions and gestures.

21.3.2 Uniqueness of Human Beings

In certain respects, human beings are part of the animal kingdom, in that certain biological and physiological processes are commonly shared between them and animals. Yet, they differ from the other species of animals in several crucial aspects, which set them apart from the rest of the animal world.

1) In animals, the satisfaction of basic biological urges, such as hunger, thirst and sex, is determined by instincts. In human beings, instincts have almost disappeared. Consequently, the satisfaction of biological needs in them takes place through culture. Animal responses to the environment are fixed and

stereotyped, whereas human beings responds to his or her environment in a flexible manner and in a variety of ways.

2) Though some species of animals make and use tools of a primitive nature, human beings' tool making ability is of a qualitatively superior kind. In animals, tools are made and used only for the present; as soon as their purpose is served, they are thrown away. Human beings on the other hand, make tools not only for the present, but also in anticipation of their future use.

Furthermore, culture makes it possible for men and women to accumulate their experience and skill in regard to tool making and pass it on from generation to generation. Thus, over several thousand years there has been a continuous improvement in their tools making ability.

3) Human being is the only species in which the female is sexually receptive throughout the year. This has important consequences for marital and social behaviour.

4) The human child is dependent, physically and emotionally on the mother for a much longer period, as compared to other species of animals. This has a significant bearing on woman's roles, on the mother-child relationship, as well as on the network of kinship in human society.

5) There are certain characteristics of human beings, which are described as 'species-specific'. The human brain has developed certain devices such as control of hand and speech, foresight and planning. The main organisation of the brain is located in the frontal and the pre-frontal lobes, which enable people to think of actions in the future.

6) Human being is essentially a symbolic animal. She/He is the only animal capable of self consciousness, of self-reflection. The rational and imaginative faculties enable them to create concepts, meanings and values which have universal significance. Their symbolic nature enables them to transcend the immediate environment of which they are a part.

7) Human beings capacity for symbolic communication or language is unique to them. The development of the vocal cords in human beings and the close location of the speech and hearing centres in the brain made possible the emergence of language.

Check Your Progress 1

Note : a) Use the space below for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Discuss the main characteristics of culture. Use about five lines.

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2) Give some examples of the uniqueness of human beings. Use about four lines

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21.4 CULTURE AND BIOLOGY

Human being shares with animals certain basic biological urges, such as hunger, thirst and sex, which press for satisfaction. However, there is a significant difference in the manner in which the satisfaction of basic biological needs takes place in them and in animals. Among the animals, the basic needs are satisfied through the mechanism of instincts, whereas in human beings they are fulfilled and regulated through culture.

21.4.1 Culture and the Satisfaction of Hunger

There are tremendous variations in the manner in which the biological urge of hunger is satisfied among human groups and communities in different parts of the world. The Bushmen, who live in the hot, sandy Kalahari desert in Southern Africa, survive on wild plants, insects, locusts, scorpions, bustards and ostriches. The Eskimos,, who live in the freezing cold of the Arctic, survive on the meat and fat of the walrus. The Lapps of Scandinavia survive on the milk and meat of the reindeer. The Andaman Islanders in the Bay of Bengal live by means of fruits and roots gathering, fishing, and hunting. The Semang hunters of Malaysia, who survive on yams, berries, roots and nuts, supplement their diet with squirrels, monkeys and lizards. The Australian aborigines hunt the kangaroo and relish its meat.

21.4.2 Food Taboos and Rituals

Culture defines what types of food are worthy of consumption by a given people or a community, and what food items are to be avoided. Consequently, a given food item, which is relished by one people may be abhorred by another. The aphorism a short sentence packed with meaning, "one man's food is another man's poison" is very true in a cultural sense. Pork, which is forbidden to Jews and Muslims is eaten with relish by the Christians. Milk and milk products are regarded as luxury food by the Baganda of East Africa, and the people of West Africa and the Chinese consider them as inedible and nauseating. The Navahos and the Apaches of New Guinea and Arizona consider fish nauseating and unfit for human consumption. Dog meat, which will be nauseating to most modern people, is eaten with relish by the Mexican Indians and some Naga tribals in India. The American Indians, until recently, considered tomatoes poisonous and refused to eat them. Certain types of fish are considered a delicacy and eaten raw in Japan. Eating raw meat is widely prevalent in several parts of Africa.

Various shades of vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism exist side by side in the Indian society. Thus, you find some strict vegetarians in South India (Vira Saiva) and Gujarat (Jain), who consider meat, eggs and fish as taboo. There are strict Jains who do not eat tubers. Many traditional families forbid elderly ladies and widows of all ages from eating onions and garlic.

Many cultures prescribe that certain types of food are not to be combined with others. Orthodox Jews, for example, do not combine meat and milk products in the same meal. Orthodox Muslims avoid eating dairy products immediately after eating fish. The Eskimo keep the sea foods separate from foods obtained from land animals.

Rituals are invariably associated with the consumption of food. In India for example, one is supposed to have a ritual bath before taking one's meal, which is followed by wearing ritually clean clothes. Thereafter, the person is to sit in a ritually clean place, and then eat the food. The Brahmans of Nepal can take their food only while wearing unsewn garments.

Activity 2

List at least two items of food which are considered to be auspicious in your culture/religion/society and why? Write a note of one page on "Food and its Social Nature". Discuss your note with your peers and Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

Food Culture

The rules of ritual purity and pollution in India are particularly observed in regard to food. Some foods such as milk are regarded as having inherent purity; other foods are made pure with frying. Food that has been fried in oil or ghee is less likely to be polluted. Such fried food called **pukka** food, in contrast with **kaccha** food cooked in water, can be exchanged between different communities in North India. In North India, cooking or eating in an earthen vessel is considered ritually clean. However, in South India, a Brahman will never eat from an earthen vessel, as it is considered polluting.

Many cultures prescribe fasting and abstinence from food. Devout Jews fast every Thursday and Monday in addition they fast for 24 hours on Yom Kippur. The early Christians observed Lent which lasted for forty days. The Muslims fast for a whole month during Ramzan (the 9th month of the Muhammadan Year) Hinduism considers fasting a meritorious act, to be observed on auspicious occasions. It is important to note that the act of fasting represents a symbolic transcendence of the biological urge of hunger and thirst.

21.4.3 Patterns of Sexual Gratification

There are infinite variations among groups of mankind in regard to the fulfilment of the sexual impulse. In almost all cultures, sexual mating is institutionalised in marriage. Furthermore, every culture has rules of incest, which prohibit marital relations among close relatives. The incest taboo is a universal cultural invention which is aimed at regulating sexual behaviour. There are great diversities in respect of incest regulations from one culture to another, and even within a single society. In North India, for example, cross-cousin marriages are not allowed, whereas they are preferred in south India. In some south Indian castes, an elder sister is expected to ask her younger brother to marry her own daughter. This would be considered incestuous in North India.

Furthermore, there are rules of endogamy in many cultures, which prescribe that one should marry within one's own kin group lineage. Rules of exogamy, on the other hand require an individual to marry outside the group of gotra. In many parts of North India, the system of village exogamy exists, which requires that an individual may marry a girl only from another village.

Great diversities exist among groups of mankind in respect of partners in marriage. Polygyny (the union of one man and more than one woman) is a favoured form of marriage in Africa, the Near East, China, Melanesia, Polynesia and among the tribal communities in North and South America. King Mtessa of Uganda is said to have had 7000 wives. Among the Trobriand Islanders, who are generally monogamous, a chief may have as many as 60 wives. Polyandry (the union of one woman and several men) is prevalent among the Marquesans of Polynesia, the Todas in India, the Kandyans of Sri Lanka, the Da-la of Indo-China and the Paviotso Indians of North America. Among the Khasas of Jaunsar-Bawar in Himachal Pradesh, there exists a system of fraternal polyandry, in which a woman is married to two or more brothers at the same time.

Certain religious traditions, such as ancient and medieval asceticism and Roman Catholicism encourage celibacy. Thus, cultural factors regulate the satisfaction, or wilful negation of the sexual impulse among human beings to a remarkable extent.

21.4.4 Culture in Relation to Health and Sickness

Cultural factors significantly influence health and sickness in society. Certain types of ailments are significantly correlated with such factors as class, occupation, ethnicity and food habits. Hypertension, diabetes and ulcers may be regarded as urban diseases, generally connected with sedentary occupations. Environmental pollution, brought about by technological advancement, is now identified as one of the major causes for the growing incidence of cancer.

Food habits, particularly the consumption of fatty foods and high salt intake, are significantly correlated with cardiovascular diseases. Several tribal communities in the South Pacific islands, the Kirghiz of Turkey, certain African tribes, the Australian aborigines, and the Eskimos use no salt in their diet. Consequently, diseases such as high blood pressure are unknown among them. On the other hand, one-fourth of the diet of Eastern Finlanders consists of animal fat; consequently, they are most prone to heart attacks.

A culture generally defines what diseases are to be considered as illness, and therefore requiring treatment. Intestinal worms are regarded as necessary for digestion among the Thonga of Africa and the Yap Islanders. In most primitive societies, diagnosis and treatment of diseases are invariably associated with magical beliefs and rites and

shamanistic practices. In some cultures, diseases are associated with the violation of taboos. Among the Ojibwa Indians, a person who is guilty of violating food taboos, invites sickness on himself and his family members.

21.4.5 Culture and Sex Roles

Men and women differ not only in anatomical and physical features, but also in respect of behaviour, role and attitudes. It is generally held that men and women behave differently because nature has prescribed different roles and behaviour patterns for them. This is a mistaken view.

The differences between the roles and behaviour patterns of men and women, though related to certain anatomical and physical processes, are not entirely determined by them. Sex roles and traits, in other words, are not biologically given, they are conditioned by culture.

In India and in many other cultures, men are supposed to be dominant, aggressive and rational, while women are supposed to be submissive, impulsive emotional and delicate. Margaret Mead, a distinguished American anthropologist, made a comparative study of the respective roles of men and women in three primitive societies in New Guinea. She found that in each of these cultures, the sex roles were radically different from those of Western culture. For example, in the Tehambuli tribe, women are masculine and men feminine, in terms of Western cultural standards. Women are dominant, responsible and are engaged in gardening and fishing activities. Men, on the other hand, are concerned with aesthetic matters, and with being charming. Among the Arapesh, both men and women show feminine traits; they do not indulge in aggressive behaviour. Among the Mundugumor, both men and women exhibit masculine traits. Their behaviour reflects violence and aggressiveness. Mead, therefore, concluded that sex roles are culturally conditioned.

21.4.6 Culture and Race

Differences in physical characteristics and features among people belonging to different countries of groups are often confused with differences in culture and behaviour. One hears, for example, of Jewish race, Negro race, Aryan race, etc. When the term race is used in this manner, it combines a set of unrelated features, such as physical characteristics, language, religion, cultural traditions and behaviour patterns, which differentiate a given people from others. Furthermore, there is invariably an implicit value-judgement in this sense of the term race. Some races are regarded as being naturally and inherently superior to the others.

This is a wholly fallacious view. There is no necessary connection between race, language, culture and nationality. Racial features are largely determined by genetic and biological factors, whereas culture and language are learnt, acquired and transmitted through training and education.

Race prejudice is based on false and irrational premises. In fact, racism has proved to be one of the most dangerous myths of modern times. Hitler's belief in the superiority of the Nordic race led to the most inhuman massacre of six million Jews in Nazi Germany. Race prejudice has been responsible for the persecution and harassment of thousands of Negroes in the United States. The obnoxious phenomenon of apartheid in South Africa, whereby a small white minority had ruthlessly ruled over a vast black population, is an expression of the ideology of racism.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Bring out the relationship between culture and biology. Use about eight lines.

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2) Distinguish between race and culture. Use about six lines.

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21.5 LET US SUM UP

i) Culture, which differentiates human beings from other animals, refers to the sum total of their activities, thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and all that is characteristic of them as social beings.

ii) Culture is shared by the members of a group or community. It is learnt and acquired by individuals through language. It is transmitted from one generation to another through training and education.

iii) Culture is an expression of human beings' unique capabilities and potentialities. On the other hand, it plays an active role in the fulfilment of these potentialities. Culture has been instrumental in the evolutionary survival of human race.

iv) Culture is significantly related to biological processes. It regulates the manner in which basic biological urges, such as hunger, thirst and sex, are satisfied. Consequently, there are tremendous variations in respect of satisfactions of these urges.

v) Cultural processes have a significant bearing on health and sickness in society. Factors such as class, occupation, urbanisation and food habits are significantly correlated with certain types of diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes and ulcer.

vi) The respective roles of men and women are not determined by biological processes, but are defined and influenced by cultural conditions. In other words, a culture defines what roles and activities are appropriate for men and women.

21.6 KEY WORDS

Cultural Transmission : The process whereby elements of culture, such as language, attitudes and beliefs, are passed on from one generation to another through training and education.

Endogamy : The system of marrying within one's own group or caste.

Exogamy : The system of marriage which requires that a person may marry only in another group or village.

Fraternal Polyandry : A system of marriage in which a woman is married to two or more brothers in the same household.

Genetic Transmission : The mechanism whereby the parents pass on their hereditary physical characteristics to their offspring.

Gotra : A Hindu clan which traces descent from a common ancestor.

Lineage : A group of people who are related by blood ties, and who trace their descent from a common ancestor.

Polyandry : A system of marriage in which a woman is married to two or more men at the same time.

Polygyny : A system of marriage in which a man is allowed to have more than one wife.

Race : A human population whose members share some hereditary biological characteristics which separate them from other groups.

Rules of Incest : Universally prevalent rules in human society which prohibit marital or sex relations among close relatives, such as between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister.

Shamanism : The widely prevalent belief among privitive people in the power of medicine men and sorcerers, who act on behalf of spiritual forces and heal the sick.

Species Specific : Those characteristics and features, mainly of a biological and physiological nature, which are unique to human beings or any other organisation.

Symdolic Communication : Communication through language which is unique to human beings.

21.7 FURTHER READINGS

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21.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Culture has three major features. It is commonly shared among the members of a group or community. It is the attribute of a group, rather than an individual and therefore a social phenomena. It is learnt and acquired by individual human beings in the course of growing up in a social milieu largely through language. It is transmitted, through education, from one generation to another.

2) Human being is a unique animal in the animal kingdom because unlike other animals they do not behave by instinct but according to the cultural pattern of their society. They use tools of increasing complexity and functionality than any animal, Culture is unique to the human species.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Culture and biological processes are closely related. Culture regulates the satisfaction of basic biological urges, such as hunger, thirst and sex. Consequently, these urges are satisfied in scores of ways by various groups of mankind.

   There is a significant correlation between certain types of diseases (such as hypertension, diabetes and ulcer) and certain cultural factors, such as food habits, urbanisation, occupation and class. Roles of men and women are not determined by biological factors. These are conditioned by cultural processes.

2) Race constitutes the differences in physical features and characteristics which are transmitted generically from one people to another. The racial features have nothing to do with cultural or linguistic features, although culture is often confused with them. Culture, as a contrast, is the sum total of human beings life ways, their behaviour, feelings and thoughts. It constitutes everything that is acquired by them as social beings.

UNIT 22 CULTURE II : DIVERSITY AND CHANGE

Structure

22.0 Objectives

22.1 Introduction

22.2 Culture and Environment

22.3 Culture and Society

22.4 Culture and Language

22.5 Structure of Culture

- 22.5.1 Cultural Patterns
- 22.5.2 Cultural Traits and Cultural Complex
- 22.5.3 Cultural Symbols
- 22.5.4 Cultural Ethos
- 22.5.5 Cultural Areas
- 22.5.6 Major Components of Culture

22.6 Cultural Diversity

- 22.6.1 Cultural Diversity in India
- 22.6.2 Cultural Diversity and the Unity of Mankind

22.7 Cultural Conditioning

- 22.7.1 Purity and Pollution in India
- 22.7.2 Cultural Relativism

22.8 Cultural Change

- 22.8.1 Acculturation and Diffusion
- 22.8.2 Diffusion of Paper Making
- 22.8.3 Story of the Alphabet
- 22.8.4 Diffusion and Language

22.9 Let Us Sum Up

22.10 Key Words

22.11 Further Readings

22.12 Model Answer to Check Your Progress

22.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to describe that:

- Culture and environment are closely related;
- Language is one of the most important agencies through which elements of culture are shared among the members of society, and through which cultural traditions are transmitted from generation to generation;

- Though culture constitutes a unity of whole, it can be analytically separated into its constituent elements, such as traits, patterns, symbols and ethos;
- Cultural diversity and cultural conditioning are the two major dimensions of the concept of culture; and
- Culture is subject to changes over time.

22.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 21, you have learnt about the main characteristics of culture, You have learnt how culture has played a crucial role in the survival of human race, and how it represents the fulfilment of human beings' unique capacities.

You have also learnt about the relations between culture and biology; the diverse ways in which human beings basic needs are satisfied; the manner in which the processes of health and sickness are influenced by cultural factors; and the extent to which the roles of men and women are defined by culture,

In this unit, we shall carry the discussion further and bring out the relation between culture and environment, as well as, between culture and language. In this unit you will learn about the manner in which human behaviour is organised and regulated in terms of traits, symbols and ethos.

This unit will provide you with a better understanding of the variations and differences which exist in groups of mankind in all aspects of life, as well as the ways in which these differences persist and are passed on from generation to generation.

You will also learn how cultural artefacts, traits, inventions and innovations spread from one region to another. The processes of cultural change are explained with concrete illustrations.

It is hoped that the two units 21 and 22 will considerably enrich and expand your understanding of human behaviour. By sharpening your perception and sensitivity, these units will hopefully provide you with a broader and truly human perspective on mankind.

22.2 CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

You have learnt in the foregoing unit that culture played a crucial role in the successful adaptation, and thereby evolutionary survival of mankind. Such innovations and inventions as the discovery and use of fire, the domestication of plants and animals, the making of tools and implements, and the use of language greatly helped human beings in meetings the challenges of the environment.

Both human beings and animals have to adapt themselves to the natural environment. The adaptation of animals is governed by instinctual mechanisms. Hunan being, on the other hand, adapts herself or himself to the environment in a variety of ingenious ways. The great apes, who are zoologically the nearest to human beings, can survive in tropical conditions and on specialised diets only in very limited numbers. Human being is capable of living and multiplying on various sorts of diets in all kinds of environmental conditions. Thus the Eskimos have lived in the freezing cold of the Arctic; the Lapps who move with the reindeer and live on its milk and meat, have survived and multiplied in the Iceland of Scandinavia; similarly, the Bushmen, who live on wild roots, berries and plants, have managed to survive in the hot, sandy deserts of South Africa.

The environment may be seen as a dependent or an independent variable in different situations. A harsh habitat, such as the Arctic or desert regions offers a strong challenge to human communities, particularly when their economic and technological resources are limited and simple. Consider, for example, the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert in South Africa, who hunt ostriches in an ingenious manner. The Bushmen hunter with his small bow and arrow, disguises himself under the skin of an ostrich, which is mounted on a frame. Then he cautiously joins the herd of ostriches, and imitates their movements so cleverly that the ostriches do not suspects his presence at all. When he comes closer to an ostrich, he quietly throws his arrow at it, killing the animal.

Water is of paramount importance to the Bushmen since the Kalahari desert is one of the most inhospitable desert regions in the world. They store water in ostrich egg shells. In addition, they suck roots, bulbs and fruits which contain moisture or liquids.

The interplay between culture and environment is best illustrated through what anthropologists refer to as transhumance. The pastoral nomads move about with their livestock from one region to another in search of fresh pastures. The pastoral Fulani of West Africa, for example, move with their animals almost constantly in search ;of fresh grazing lands. The Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir and the pastoral nomads of Nepal move in late spring and summer to pastures at hills where they live in camps.

The failure of monsoon in certain regions for two or more successive years sometimes forces the farmers to abandon their villages. They come to be heavily dependent on their flocks of sheep, goats and other animals, and quite often move with their herds in search of water and grazing land. In the course of time, many of them shift from agriculture to pastoral nomadism.

Different groups, who live under the same environmental conditions, sometimes adapt themselves to the environment in different ways. Consider for example, the Eskimos of North America. They build their snow houses, called igloos, with blocks of snow. The igloo provides shelter and comfort in the freezing cold of the Arctic. The Eskimos hunt the walrus and survive on its flesh and fat. The walrus ivory is used for sledge runners and for the water-proof boats, known as *kavaks*, in which the Eskimos go out on hunting expeditions.

When we compare the Chukchi and the Yukaghir of the Siberian Arctic, who live under the same harsh climate, as the Eskimos, we find a different pattern ;of adaptation. The igloo is unknown to them. Skins are attached to a wooden frame, which serves as a shelter. Unlike the Eskimos, who are hunters, the Siberian tribes are herders, depending on the reindeer. The reindeers feed on the tundra, and when there is hardly; any **tundra** left for the reindeers to graze on, the Chunkchi and the Yukaghir drive off their herd to a new grazing ground. The women, who are left behind along with the children, dismantle the skin tents, pack them on the reindeer, and follow the group.

22.3 CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Society is perceived as a chain of social relations among groups of individuals who are held together by commonly shared institutions and processes. All processes of human life-cycle are carried out and regulated in society. Thus, there is an integral reality of the individual, culture and society. All these are mutually inter-dependent, so that any one of them cannot be adequately understood without reference to the

other. Culture depends for its existence and continuity on groups of individuals whose social relations form society.

Human being is generally defined as a social animal. However, their social nature is not particularly unique to them. A society can exist at the sub-human level. Ants and bees, for example, have genuine societies. The chimpanzees and Gorillas in the wild live in their society much like human beings: they form stable relationships; they move about and hunt in groups.

Culture exists only in human societies. There can be an animal society without culture, but no human society is found without having to own culture. Consequently, what differentiates men and women qualitatively from other species of animals is not their social nature, but their culture. Human being is essentially a cultural or symbolic animal.

In actual life, society and culture cannot be separated. Even though culture is a broader category, it cannot exist and function without society. Society, in other words, is a necessary pre-condition for culture. Similarly, neither society nor culture can exist independent of human beings.

In the same way culture and civilisation are closely related. Civilisation refers to a historical phase of culture. A civilisation is characterised by certain distinctive features, such as cities and urbanisation, occupational specialisation, monumental structures such as temples, places and tombs, classes and hierachies, and above all, the art of writing. Civilisation emerged for the first time in human history in ancient Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium B.C.

22.4 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

You have learnt in Unit 21 that human beings capacity for symbolic communication or language sharply differentiates them from other animals. Language plays a crucial role in the process of enculturation, whereby the individual acquires and imbibes the values, beliefs, customs and habits of his society. Language facilitates the sharing and accumulation of experiences and skills; it is also instrumental in the transmission of cultural traditions from one generation to another. Language has played a pivotal role in the evolutionary survival of *homo sapiens* and the continuity of human society.

Language is learnt and acquired by the human child in a social and inter-personal context. A human being's mind is especially programmed for learning language, and a child of average ability can master any complex language of the world, be it Chinese, Sanskrit or Arabic. The primates, such as monkeys and apes, have quite an elaborate repertoire of gestures and sounds, which serve as the basis of primate communication. A rhesus monkey has a vocabulary of somewhere between forty and hundred sounds and gestures, which are understood by the members of the tribe. They all share the same vocabulary and use it in exactly the same way, without any variations or re-combinations. Human languages, on the other hand, are characterised by infinite variations in respect of vocabulary, usage and expression. The Oxford English Dictionary, for example contains 2,50,000 words, many of which are derived from scores of other languages.

Language reflects the cultural patterns and traditions of people. The Eskimo language, for example, has twelve different words for different kinds of snow, which cannot be adequately rendered into English or any other language. This is because snow occupies a central place in the life of the Eskimo. Similarly, the Arabic language has scores of words for the camel, for which there could be no exact equivalents in

English. The life of the Bedouin nomad in the Arabian desert is centred around the camel. The Navaho Indians, who are pastoral nomads, move continually from one pasture to another with their flock of sheep. Their cultural life is reflected in their language, folklore, myths and legends: their gods and heroes move restlessly from one place to another. The caste system occupies a central place in the Indian society. Aspects of caste, such as ritual ranking and notions of purity and pollution, are reflected not only in behaviour patterns but also in the vocabulary and usage of Indo-European and Dravidian languages. Thus, aspects of culture, which are of central importance to a people, find an extensive elaboration in their language.

Language not only reflects the cultural traditions of a people, but it also influences their perception and thinking. Linguistic patterns in other words, condition, perception and thought. The Zuni language has a common term for orange and yellow; correspondingly the Zunis make no distinction between these two shades. The Hopi language has two grammatical categories, which do not exist in English and many other languages. The first category has names only for temporary events, such as thunder, lightning. The second category has names only for long term events, such as stars, man. The distinction in the Hopi language between these two categories is indicative of the manner in which the Hopi people organise their experience. Many Dravidian languages and also a few contiguous Indo-Aryan languages like Marathi have two First Person Plural Pronouns called Inclusive (of the listener) and Exclusive (of the listener). The distinction is culturally important for them. Thus, the relationship between culture and language is one of mutual interaction and influence.

Activity 1

List at least two differences in linguistic usage which have cultural connotation, such as, dating in the West, in our own Indian language (Hindi, your Mother tongue/Father tongue). Compare your list with those of other students at your Study Centre.

22.5 STRUCTURE OF CULTURE

Culture is constituted by inter-related parts of elements. The internal organisation of culture comprises its structure. The term culture is essentially an abstraction which is derived from an observation of human behaviour. Human behaviour is organised and ordered in terms of traits and patterns. Similarly every culture possesses a unifying principle, a philosophy of life, which permeates every aspect of it. In what follows, we shall examine the structure of culture in terms of patterns, traits, symbols and ethos.

22.5.1 Cultural Patterns

A cultural pattern refers to an ordered sequence of behaviour. It represents a form of behaviour which is shared among the members of a given community or group. In western society, for example, a man is expected to raise his hat while greeting a lady on the street. This is a cultural pattern. In Indian society, one touches the feet of his/her parents, elders and teachers as a mark of respect towards them. This is also an example of a cultural pattern.

Cultural patterns are of two types; ideal cultural patterns and actual behaviour patterns. Ideal cultural patterns define how the people of a society should behave in particular situations. But people do not always behave according to the ideal patterns as

defined by their society, they sometimes deviate from them. Actual behaviour patterns refer to the manner in which people actually behave in particular situations.

A cultural pattern generally combines two or more elements in a given culture. The pattern of plough agriculture, which first originated in Western Asia, comprises the following elements: the plough, animals to draw the plough, domestication of these animals, grains of rice or wheat to be sown, and fertilisation with dung.

The tradition of untouchability which has been abolished way back in India at the time of framing of our Constitution in India comprised the following elements: the notion of inequality among human beings, the ranking of individuals and groups in terms of high and low, the association of ritual purity and pollution, birth and occupation, food and touch.

22.5.2 Cultural Traits and Cultural Complex

A cultural trait is the smallest identifiable unit of a culture, such as bow and arrow. The system of primogeniture, which is prevalent in most parts of India and other countries and according to which the eldest son succeeds his father after his death, is an example of a cultural trait.

A cultural complex, on the other hand, is an aggregate of traits. The jajmani system, which was prevalent in many parts of rural India, provides an illustration of a cultural complex. The jajmani system refers to a complex network of economic, social and cultural relationship 'say' between a food producing family and an artisan family. ; A farming family, for example, get its agricultural tools and implements made and repaired by the former a part of the crop at harvest-time. Thus, the jajmani system, which represented a reciprocity of relationship, functioned as a cultural complex. However, in recent times this cultured complex has more or less disappeared even from our rural societies.

22.5.3 Cultural Symbols

Every culture bestows a special meaning and significance on certain objects and things. Material objects, colours, figures, and gestures thus assume special importance for the members of a given culture. They represent cultural symbols.

A flag, for example, is the symbol of a nation. The **bindiya** or **bottu** on the forehead of some Indian women is a traditional symbol of her married status. The use of **sindoor** or vermilion in the parting of her hair is also a symbolic index of the same. The sacred thread worn by Hindu men in India is a symbolic index of the same. It is a symbolic pointer to their *dwija* or twice-born status. The vertical or horizontal marks made with ash or coloured powder on the forehead of an Indian is a symbolic mark of his/her caste and sect. The Nagas of Assam believe that the forehead is the special seat of the soul, which needs to be guarded from the evil effect of strangers. This is done by pasting on the forehead a small fragment of the leaf of wormwood. This cultural symbol is believed to be efficacious in warding off evil influences.

22.5.4 Cultural Ethos

A culture has two distinctive, but inter-related, aspects. One can be described as **eidos** or the external form of a culture, and the other as **ethos** or the world-view of a people, their conception of the world and of man's relationship with the world. The **eidos** includes the formal structure of a culture, such as its institutions, customs, habits, rituals and behaviour patterns. The ethos of a culture refers to its total quality, the system of ideas and values which permeates and dominates the whole culture.

The ethos of Indian culture is expressed in terms of the concept of **dharma** which refers to moral duty or right conduct. It is often described as "the Foundation of the Universe" in the Indian philosophical thought. The concept of **dharma** finds expression in the four life-stages (varnashrama dharma): student, householder, forest dweller and ascetic. Each of these stages is associated with a distinct set of duties and obligations.

22.5.5 Cultural Areas

The area in which similar cultural traits are found is called a cultural area. The great regions of the pacific, such as Australia, Polynesia, Micronesia, Melanesia and Indonesia are described as cultural areas, because each one of them is marked by a concentration of distinctive cultural traits and features.

The present boundaries of states in India, which have been drawn on the basis of languages, generally represent cultural areas. For example, Rajasthan, Kashmir, Assam and Tamil Nadu are distinguished from each other not only in respect of the languages but also in regard to certain distinctive cultural traits and characteristics. The north-eastern region, in a general sense, may be regarded as a cultural area. Similarly, the Dravidian south could be broadly regarded as a cultural area, which differs from North India in respect of temple architecture, kinship system and language. However, it should be kept in view that a large cultural area also possesses internal variations.

22.5.6 Major Components of Culture

A culture constitutes a structural unity, in that its various elements or constituent parts are mutually inter-related and inter-dependent. However, it is possible, for the purposes of analysis and understanding to delineate the major components or divisions of culture.

The major components of culture, which are universal in nature, can be analytically separated into the following units:

i) **Technology :** it refers to the system of tools, implements and artifacts, made and used by a people to meet their basic needs.

ii) **Economic organisation :** it includes the techniques which are employed by a people in organising the production and distribution of goods and services.

iii) **Social organisation :** it refers to the framework of social and inter-personal relations.

iv) **Political organisation :** it refers to the ways and methods of controlling conflict, and deals with the maintenance of the social order.

v) **Ideology :** it includes a guiding set of beliefs, values and ideals.

vi) **Arts :** that is the forms which ensure the fulfilment of human beings' aesthetic urges.

vii) **Language :** it is the medium through which all the above operate.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Bring out the relationship between culture and environment in a paragraph of about ten lines.

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2) Tick the correct answer

i) Language has played a pivotal role in the evolutionary survival of homosapiens. Yes No

ii) A cultural trait is one of the largest identifiable unit of a culture. Yes No

iii) Technology refers to the system of values and beliefs in society. Yes No

22.6 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Mankind is characterised by tremendous diversities not only in regard to observable features but also in respect of languages, religious beliefs and practices, customs and traditions, and rituals and ceremonies.

You have learnt in Unit 21 that human beings basic needs are satisfied and regulated through culture. Infinite variations exist in the ways in which these needs are satisfied, in the manner in which human groups and communities adapt themselves to the environment, as well as in the expression of universal cultural patterns such as religion, language technology and art. We shall explain cultural diversity with some illustrations.

There are great variations among different human groups in regard to the disposal of the dead. The Jews, Muslims, Christians and several other communities bury their dead. The Hindus cremate the dead. The Parsis in India expose the dead bodies to vultures. The ancient Egyptians mummified the dead bodies of kings, queens and other important individuals. In India, dead bodies are sometimes set afloat in the river Ganga. In addition to these there are other methods of the disposal of the dead, which are practised by human communities in various parts of the world. These include, seafold burial, simple abandonment, dismemberment and setting away in vaults or canoes.

Likewise, religious beliefs, practices and rituals exhibit great variations. Most primitive people believe that natural objects and phenomena such as trees, rivers and the stars, have souls. This is known as *animism*. Others believe in totemism, in which certain species of animals are ritually associated with a clan or a tribe and worshipped

as its ancestor. The Australian aborigines, for example, trace their descent from an ancestor, who is symbolically identified with a honey, ant or kangaroo. Many primitive people also worship the souls of their dead ancestors. On the other hand, there are religions such as Hinduism which believe in a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, and which hold that the divine essence permeates the whole universe. Monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Islam believe in supreme God who is the master and creator of the universe. Buddhism has no notion of a supreme being.

22.6.1 Cultural Diversity In India

Cultural variations exist in all groups of people world wide. Consider, for example, Indian society, which has scores of languages and dialects, beliefs and rites, customs and traditions, habits and behaviour patterns. We shall provide a couple of examples to illustrate the extent of cultural diversity in India.

The Brahmin constitute a single *varna*. However the Brahmin in different parts of the country are not a culturally homogeneous group. They are divided into hundreds of castes and sub-castes called jatis who marry only among themselves. There are great variations among the various Brahmin sub-castes in respect of language, food habits, customs and rituals. The Brahmin sub-castes are divided into two major sects, the Vaishnava and the Shaivite. These sects are divided into numerous smaller sects. For example, in South India, the Vaishnava are divided into Madhava and Shri Vaishnava. The Shri Vaishnava in turn are sub-divided into northern and southern sects. In North India, the Vaishnava are divided into worshippers of Rama and worshippers of Krishna. the worshippers of Rama are sub-divided into Madhava and Ramanandi. The worshippers of Krishna are sub-divided into Chaitanya and Radha-Vallabha.

There are significant variations among the various Brahmin sub-castes in respect of food habits. The Kashmiri pandits eat meat, but not fish. The Maithili Brahmin of Bihar eat meat and fish, but not chicken. Similarly, the Bengali Brahmin and the Saraswat Brahmin eat fish. The Punjabi, Gujarati and South Indian Brahmin on the other hand are strictly vegetarians.

There are differences in the various regions of India in respect of dress pattern. In eastern India the ritual wearing of unsewn garments is widely prevalent. Similarly, one can enter the inner sanctum of a Jain temple only while wearing an unstitched piece of cloth. The Brahmin of eastern Nepal eat their food only while wearing unsewn garments. However, as one moves from Bengal to Western and Northern India, unsewn garments are replaced by stitched garments.

22.6.2 Cultural Diversity and the Unity of Mankind

Cultural variations among the various peoples of the world may appear to be confusing and mind-boggling. However behind the facade of diversity lies the fundamental unity of mankind. All human beings, regardless of social and cultural differences, belong to a single biological species **homo sapiens**. All human groups and populations can inter-breed and produce their own kind. Moreover all human communities share the cultural universals: the capacity for learning and acquiring culture, the capacity for language, incest rules, funerary rites, institutions such as marriage, family and religion, among others.

22.7 CULTURAL CONDITIONING

Human beings, as individuals and as members of groups think, feel, and behave in certain ways because they have been brought up under certain conditions in a given

society or community. The culture of a people influences their perception and attitudes, their values and beliefs their habits and customs. In other words, it is largely our culture which forms our character and builds our personality. This fact is known as cultural conditioning.

A culture influences and conditions people to attach a special meaning to certain objects, things and colours. Certain colours, for example, are regarded as auspicious and are used during festive occasions, ceremonies and rituals. Red is considered auspicious in most parts of India. Brides are dressed in red in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and several other regions. Green has a special cultural significance in Maharashtra. When a girl reaches puberty, the first sari presented to her by her parents is green. The bridal dress is green. A woman wears a green sari during pregnancy. When her son is married, she receives a green sari as a gift from the bride's mother. In South India, particularly Andhra, yellow is considered auspicious at marriages, house warming ceremonies, and religious functions.

You have learnt in unit 21 that food habits are influenced by cultural factors. This conditioning manifests itself in strange but interesting ways. Mushrooms, which are considered a delicacy in the west, are avoided by many vegetarians in India because they are supposed to resemble meat in texture and taste. Similarly, the Jain vegetarians have an initial aversion to tomatoes and beetroot because their colour resembles that of blood.

22.7.1 Purity and Pollution in India

An interesting illustration of the manner in which culture influences and conditions behaviour is provided by an aspect of the caste system which is known as ritual purity and pollution.

Pollution is supposed to be brought about by birth, unclean occupation and contact with death and bodily emissions such as blood, excreta, urine, saliva, nail pairings and hair. Any contact with these things renders a person impure. Pollution is believed to be transferable by physical contact. A more interesting aspect of ritual defilement is known as distance pollution, which is particularly prevalent in South India. It is believed that pollution or impurity can be transmitted by the mere shadow of an untouchable, or by his or her proximity within a certain distance.

In Tamil Nadu and Kerala, certain castes in earlier time had to keep a certain distance between themselves on the one hand and the Brahmins and other higher castes, on the other so as not to defile the latter. Thus, the Shanar, of the toddy-tapper caste of Tamil Nadu, contaminates a Brahmin if he approached him within 24 paces. In Kerala, a Nayar may approach a Brahmin but must not touch him. A Tiyan was allowed to keep himself at a distance of 36 steps from the Brahmin and a Pulayan was not permitted to approach him within 96 paces.

22.7.2 Cultural Relativism

Ethnocentrism is the view that one's way of life, religion and ideals are to be preferred to others. This is a narrow, but widely held, view, and antidote to it is provided by the idea of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism refers to the view that the values, ideals and behaviour patterns of a people are not to be evaluated and judged in terms of our own values and ideas but must be understood and appreciated in their cultural context.

The idea of cultural relativism emphasises the point that we should try to transcend our own cultural conditioning and make an attempt to understand another culture the way it is understood by the individuals who participate in it. This requires a measure

of imagination, understanding and breadth of vision. It is only when we set aside our prejudices and stereotypes about a given people that we can understand them in a realistic and humane manner.

22.8 CULTURAL CHANGE

Human society is characterised, on the one hand, by the persistence and continuity of cultural forms and, on the other, by change and innovation. No society can be totally static or isolated for long periods of time. Changes in a given culture may come about from its internal dynamics, such as revolutions or upheavals, or from contact with other cultures. The coming into contact of two or more cultures generally leads to changes, in different measures, in the interacting cultures. Quite often, cultural traits and patterns spread from the important centres of civilisation to the smaller regions. Since the dawn of civilisation in ancient Mesopotamia during the 4th millennium B.C. to the present, the process of cultural borrowing has been going on in all parts of the world.

22.8.1 Acculturation and Diffusion

When groups of individuals, having different cultural traditions, come into contact, changes take place in their original cultural patterns. This is referred to as acculturation or culture contact. Diffusion on the other hand, refers to the spread of cultural traits and patterns from major centres of civilisation to smaller cultures and occasionally the other way round. Acculturation and diffusion involve one another.

Diffusion generally refers to the spread of specific cultural traits or elements, whereas acculturation refers to the changes brought about in whole cultures.

The processes of acculturation and diffusion have been going on in human society since very ancient times. Thus as far back as the third millennium B.C. we find trade and cultural relations between the Mesopotamian civilisation and the Indus civilisation.

An interesting illustration of the diffusion of cultural traits is provided by the mathematical symbol of zero. The zero can increase the value of symbol one to ten, hundred, thousand and million. The zero was invented, along with the system of numerals, for the first time in India. This system of numerals was adopted by the Arabs during the 5th century. Earlier, in Arabic writing only letters were used in place of numbers. The Arabs, in turn, transmitted the Indian system of numerals to Europe. Interestingly enough, in English the system of writing numerals is still referred to as Arabic numerals whereas in Arabic it is described as Indian numerals.

22.8.2 Diffusion of Paper Making

Paper was invented in china during the beginning of the first century A.D. In A.D. 751, the Chinese attacked Samarkand which was under the control of Muslims. The Arabs repulsed the attack and a number of Chinese were held by them as prisoners of war. The Arabs were aware of the fact that the Chinese knew the technique of paper making. They told the Chinese prisoners that they could secure their release if they taught the Arabs how to make paper. The Chinese prisoners agreed to the condition and taught the technique of paper making to the Arabs.

Within two centuries paper mills were set up in Baghdad and Cairo. Paper making spread through the Muslim world from Samarkand and reached Europe in 1189. In

the course of time, it spread from Muslim Spain to Italy, France, Germany, England and the U.S.A. The following figure brings out the diffusion of paper making from China through the Muslim world to the West.

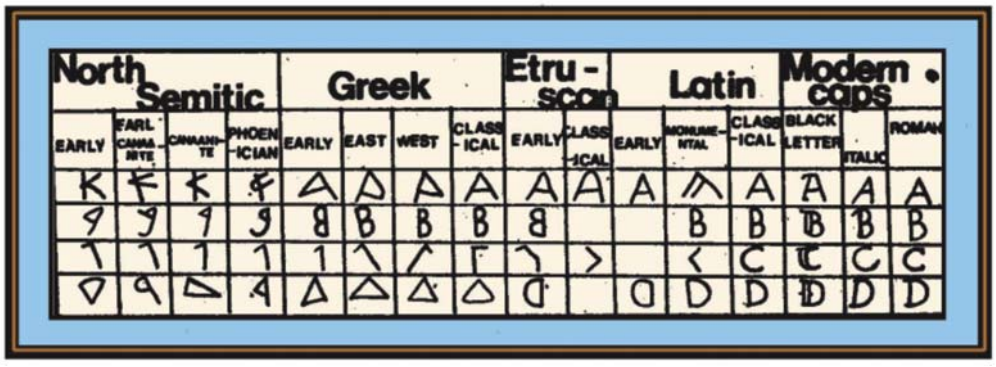
The Spread of Paper Making

22.8.3 Story of the Alphabet

Writing originated in ancient Mesopotamia during the third millennium B.C. Systems of writing are divided into two main categories, non-alphabetical and alphabetical. The Mesopotamian system of writing, known as cuneiform or wedge- shaped, was non-alphabetical. The first alphabetical system of writing emerged during the 18th century B.C. in Syria and Palestine. It is known as the North Semitic script. It was written from right to left, and it had 22 characters.

During the 9th century B.C., the Greeks borrowed the North Semitic alphabet from the Phoenicians. They improved the system. The Greek alphabet is the mother of all modem European alphabets, including English. The word alphabet comprises the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, namely, alpha and beta, which in turn were derived from the first two letters of the Semitic alphabet, namely Aleph and Beth.

The following chart brings out the evolution of the English alphabet from the 18th century B.C. to the present.



Evolution of English Alphabet

22.8.4 Diffusion and Language

A comparative study of languages provides an interesting illustration of the dimensions of cultural diffusion. The English language has borrowed and adopted hundreds of words from Chinese. Indian, Semitic, African and other languages of the world in the course of its development. Consider, for example, the following words which are widely used in English but which are of Indian origin: bungalow, chit, loot, jungle, bamboo, bandicoot, verandah. The following words are of Arabic origin: sofa,

cotton, tamarind, algebra, admiral, cipher, tarrif, alcohol, atlas, arrack. English has contributed a large body of vocabulary related to technology, industry and mechanics.

Another interesting illustration of cross-cultural diffusion is provided by the manner in which certain words are borrowed and modified in different languages. The following chart provides the origin of some English words.

English	Arabic	Sanskrit
Sandal (wood)	Sandal	Chandan
Ginger	Zanjabil	Shrangaver
Camphor	Kafur	Karpur (which in turn was drived from the Chinese)

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Show how the concepts of cultural diversity and cultural conditioning broaden our understanding of human behaviour. Use about ten lines.

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2) Fill in the blank in the given space.

i) Cultural variations exist not only world-wide but within the same ..... also.

iii) In the South of India, the Vaishnavas are divided into ..... and .....

22.9 LET US SUM UP

1) Culture and environment are closely inter-related. The environment may be seen as an independent or a dependent variable in different situations.

2) There is a close relationship between society and culture. A society may exist at the sub-human level, but only human society possesses culture. Thus, what differentiates human beings from other animals is culture.

3) Language reflects the culture of a people; it also influences and conditions their perception and thinking.

4) Though culture constitutes a unity, it can be analytically separated into its constituent elements, such as patterns, traits, symbols, and ethos.

5) Communities and groups of mankind in all parts of the world are characterised by tremendous variations not only in respect of physical and racial features, but also in regard to religious beliefs and practices, customs and traditions, rituals and ceremonies.

6) The cultural differences among groups of mankind persist and are passed on from one generation to another through training and education.

7) No culture can remain static or totally isolated for long periods of time. Cultural traits, inventions and innovations often spread from the major centres of civilisations and find their way, often in modified forms, into other cultures.

21.10 KEY WORDS

Acculturation : The coming into contact of two cultures, as result of which one is influenced by the other.

Cultural Area : The area in which similar cultural traits are found.

Cultural Complex : An aggregate or collection of cultural traits.

Cultural Conditioning : The process whereby the thought and behaviour of individuals in a given society are influenced by its culture.

Cultural Ethos : The world-view of a people.

Cultural Relativism : The view that the values and ideals of a culture are to be judged in their own terms.

Cultural Symbols : Objects and things which are endowed with a special meaning or significance by people.

Cultural Trait : The smallest identifiable unit of a culture.

Cultural Universals : Institutions and cultural patterns which are universally found in all human regions.

Ritual Pollution : The belief that contact with unclean occupations, untouchable persons, death and bodily emissions renders a person impure.

Transhumance : The regular movement of pastoral nomads with their livestock in search of fresh pasturage.

Tundra : A treeless plain, comprising black mucky soil and a dense growth of dwarf herbs.

22.11 FURTHER READINGS

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22.12 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Culture and environment are closely related. Human communities and groups adapt themselves to their environment in a variety of ingeneous ways. Environmental conditions facilitate, as well as block, the fulfilment of human potentialities in different situations. A harsh environment, such as the Arctic or desert regions, creates greater problems of adjustment, especially when the economic and technological resources of a people are limited.

   A community or group may relate differently to the same milieu at different times. In the same way, different groups in the same environment may adapt themselves to their habitat in different ways.

2) i) Yes. (See Section 22.4)

   ii) No. (See Section 22.5.2)

   iii) No. (See Section 22.5.6)

Check Your Progress 2

1) The concept of cultural diversity makes us aware of the tremendous differences which exist among groups of mankind in respect of languages, religious beliefs and practices, customs and traditions. It also makes us aware of the diverse ways in which human beings adapt themselves to the environment, and the different ways in which their basic needs are satisfied.

   The concept of cultural conditioning, on the other hand, brings to our awareness the fact that the differences among groups of mankind in respect of values, ideas and behaviour are neither biologically given, nor are they genetically transmitted from parents to children.

   Human beings think, feel and behave in certain ways because they have been brought up in a given social and cultural milieu. These distinct ways of thinking and behaviour are acquired by individuals through the cultural process.

2) i) Country

   ii) Madhavas, Shri Vaishnavas.

UNIT 23 VALUES

Structure

23.0 Objectives

23.1 Introduction

23.2 Values in Social Sciences

- 23.2.1 Definition of Values
- 23.2.2 Nature of Values

23.3 Distinction Between Values and Norms

23.4 Values in Personality and Socio cultural Systems

- 23.4.1 Human being as a Value-creating and Value-fulfilling Animal
- 23.4.2 Hierarchy of Values
- 23.4.3 Values as Core of Culture-Personality
- 23.4.4 Values and Environment

23.5 Change in Systems of Values In Indian society

- 23.5.1 Values in the Vedic Period
- 23.5.2 Values in the Post-Vedic Period
- 23.5.3 Values in the Buddhist Period
- 23.5.4 Manusmriti : Veda of the Brahmanical Revival
- 23.5.5 Values in the Islamic Period
- 23.5.6 The Modern Value System

23.6 Let Us Sum Up

23.7 Key Words

23.8 Further Readings

23.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

23.0 OBJECTIVES

On studying this unit you should be able to:

- describe what values are;
- distinguish between values and norms;
- explain how values integrate personalities and cultures; and
- discuss how they change from time to time in the same society.

23.1 INTRODUCTION

By now you are familiar with the fact that cultures differ from one another and a person belonging to the same culture behaves more or less in the same way. Underlying such differentiation and similarities are values and norms. In this unit you will learn about the meaning of values and how values can be distinguished from

norms. You will also learn about the role of values in the personality formation and the socio-cultural system. In this unit we have discussed the process in which values change within a society from one period to another. As an example we have discussed the change of values in Indian society from the Vedic period to the modern times.

23.2 VALUES IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

It is not easy to define social values. Like most terms employed in the social sciences, the term value too has been taken from common parlance. And in common parlance the same word is used by various people in a number of different senses. However, when we use a word in scientific discussion, we should do our best to make its meaning as precise and well-defined as possible. Otherwise statements would become loose, and discussions are likely to be confusing. Unless crucial terms are properly defined, it would be difficult to make headway in understanding and analysis and in furtherance of knowledge through research work.

23.2.1 Definition of Values

Broadly speaking, values are conceptions of the desirable, which influence selective behaviour. Values may be defined as the criteria and moral judgement or certain subjective standards through which individuals or groups distinguish between good or bad, true or false and between ought to be or not to be etc. It shapes individual personality, social morality and guides individuals to be a part of or function within distinctive socio-cultural system.

23.2.2 Nature of Values

Values are the generally accepted basic assumptions about what is right and important. They define the purposes of life and the means of achieving them. According to International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (ISSS: 1968) all "purposive actions fall within the boundaries of evaluative action. Within purposive actions we can identify three main kinds of value: conative (desire, liking), achievement (success versus frustration), and affective (pleasure versus pain or unpleasantness)".

Some writers take such view of this concept that for them anything good or bad is a value, or a value is anything of interest to a human subject. However, it seems inappropriate to extend the meaning to the terms so widely as to make it meaningless.

Activity 1

In what ways do you think values are changing in society today? Observe different relationships, such as, between father and son, daughter and mother, teacher and the taught in you family/community. Write an essay of two pages on "The changing Values in My Society."

Discuss your essay with other students and your Academic Counsellor at your Study Centre.

23.3 DISTINCTION BETWEEN VALUES AND NORMS

Values and norms are deeply related to each other; both are concerned with accepted assumptions about what is considered to be right or wrong, or desirable or undesirable. Values constitute the basis of norms. Norms depend upon values and are justified through standards of "true", "good" and "beautiful".

Relatively speaking, values are more general and abstract then norms. Norms are relatively more specific: they refer to sets of expected behaviour associated with a particular situation or with a given position in the social order. Widely shared values such as truthfulness, loyalty or respect for elders find expression through (relatively) concrete norms which vary with different situations; strata and professions.

Values : Touching the Fect of Elders

Norms themselves are sometimes evaluated. Behaviour conforming to two different norms (both of which may be acceptable) may be regarded as better or worse in terms of values which are more fundamental.

Norms provide specific rules about what should be done or should not be done by various kinds of actors in particular situations. On the other hand values are abstract standards of desirability, so that they are relatively independent of specific situation.

Since values are more general, the same value may be embedded in a wide variety of norms. For instance, the values of respect and obedience to superiors underline various sets of norms related to widely different institutions such as the family, military, schools, and administrative, political or religious organisation.

On the other hand, it is not unusual for a particular norm to embody simultaneously a number of separable values. For example, the norms which forbid cheating in an examination are based on several values such as those of honesty, achievement, equality of opportunity and pursuit of knowledge.

Apart from the differences in the levels of generality and specificity, another useful basis of distinction exists between values and norms.

This is the field of value inquiry which refers to attitudinal directives like choice preference, likes and dislikes while the field of normative inquiry refers to those attitudinal directives which consist of obligations and prescriptions. We can also define values as the preferred mode of orientation to specified categories of human experience. The characteristics of norms can be best explained in comparison with categories of values. Therefore, since values involve preferences whereas norms

involve prescriptions, there are higher degrees of freedom and more room for deviance in the realm of value orientation.

Values provide standards for judging a wide variety of aspects of socio-cultural life: actions, goals, means, ideas, attitudes, qualities, objects, persons and groups.

Dominant values have been found to involve (i) extensiveness, (ii) persistence (duration), (iii) intensity (iv) prestige of value carriers.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Define values and describe its nature. Use about five lines.

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2) How are values different from norms? Give an example. Use about five lines.

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23.4 VALUES IN PERSONALITY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEMS

Values play an important part in the integration of the personality and the socio-cultural systems. They serve as the means of forestalling, resolving or minimising conflict both at the level of personality and that of the system of social interaction.

23.4.1 Human Being As a Value-creating and Value-fulfilling Animal

As Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960: 10), whose contribution to the study of values is widely recognised, points out that human beings create values and also fulfil them. This particular ability affects both the formation of personality and the formation of groups and institutions in society. In this sense human beings are not only the source of values but also those who judge the behaviour involved in day to day functioning of society.

A difference is sometimes drawn between personal and social values. However, even those values which are regarded as personal, are largely acquired by the individual from the society, or a segment of it, to which he/she belongs. A human infant is hardly a social being or person at the time of its birth, though it does possess

the potentiality to become one. It is through the process of socialisation that it becomes a social being or a person. Internalisation of the values of the group is an integral and important part of this process of socialisation.

23.4.2 Hierarchy of Values

A person does not attach equal importance to all his or her values. There is a hierarchy of values. In a situation of competing claims, the lower values must yield to the higher one. Thus, when the examinations are close, a student would rather study than go to see a movie. Undoubtedly, in many situations the individual is faced with a conflict of values. But these conflicts are resolved or kept to a minimum through the hierarchical ordering of values. In the absence of such hierarchy of values, the integration of an individual's personality is likely to be seriously threatened, and his actions may become chaotic.

A socio-cultural system too is integrated through a degree of coherence among its diverse values and the general consensus about their hierarchical ordering. According to Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960: 13) the values pertaining to various aspects of life, such as economic, political, moral or religious, form a network. The values of all social groups and institutions like political, economic, religious, etc., also affect each other in the process of interaction and they overlap with each other.

23.4.3 Values as Core of Culture - Personality

Sets of values form the core and ethos of every culture. People belonging to a culture, however, are often not conscious of many of the values, for, values are internalised and become a part of their personality. Radhakamal Mukerjee (1960 : 13) says that a normal person is one who successfully obtains a balance between the various conflicting values and goals faced in life. When a person is unable to resolve the value conflicts it leads to severe mental strain and imbalance in his or her personality. Therefore, he considers that in all normal human beings the person should be a "whole" person just as a normal society is that which is an integrated whole.

23.4.4 Values and Environment

Values also reflect a society's adjustment to environment. Those activities and objects which promote adjustment are assigned a higher value. For example, the tribals who are dependent on hunting and gathering assign high degree of value to their bows and arrows and to the preservation of the forest as well. Indeed different aspects of life and spheres of activity have different kinds of value.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How is a human being a value-creating and a value-fulfilling animal? Describe in about four lines.

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2) In what way people resolve conflicts of values in their daily life? Use about five lines.

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3) Tick the correct answer.

i) Social values and personal values are both acquired by the individual from its society. Yes No

ii) Hierarchy of values leads to conflict of values in an individual's personality. Yes No

iii) Values have much to do with the environment and culture of a society. Yes No

23.5 CHANGE IN SYSTEMS OF VALUES IN INDIAN SOCIETY

Though systems of values are quite stable and tenacious, they do undergo basic changes in course of time. Values are strongly bound to other aspects of the social system to which they belong; and change in the value system goes hand in hand with changes in the social system as a whole. Whether it is the change in the value system that causes social change, that is, the change of the social system; or it is some other factors which bring about basic social change, including a change in the value systems - is a question on which opinion is sharply divided. Let us have a glimpse of the change in the system of values of the civilisation to which we ourselves belong.

It is customary to talk of "Indian Values" in a way as if all sections of Indian people share the very same values in all historical eras. This is obviously not so. Besides variations in the value systems of the people of different strata and other segments of Indian society, the values of the dominant elites themselves have undergone tremendous changes over various socio-cultural eras, about which we have ample evidence from textual and other sources.

Since socio-cultural systems are wholes, attempts to study particular values in isolation from the dynamics of the system as a whole tend to remain superficial. Sometimes they are even misleading. This is all the more true in the case of traditional socio-cultural systems, such as that of India, which have grown over long periods of time; when their structural and cultural elements have developed a high degree of consistency. We shall therefore view the changes in the Indian value system in the perspective of the dynamics of the traditional socio-cultural system as a whole from the Rigvedic times onwards. This would illustrate how the systematic values of a civilisation which has maintained remarkable continuity have undergone numerous changes in the course of time.

23.5.1 Values in the Vedic Period

Rigveda, the earliest literary source, provides us a good deal of information about the people who migrated and settled in India around 1500 B.C.

It tells us that the militant Aryans destroyed ninety nine cities and overpowered their inhabitants, who are referred as "dasa". After the victory, the following pattern appears to emerge.

i) **Conflict of Values Between the Conquerors and the Vanquished**

The vanquished people are referred to as **dasa** (slave) and **pani.** The **pani** are portrayed as wealthy traders. The cattle wealth of the **pani** was a great attraction for the Aryan. Being traders the **pani** did not want to part with their cows and other wealth without compensation. The tendency of **pani** to expect something in exchange for everything that they gave, appeared absurd to the semi-nomadic Aryan.

Such a clash of race and culture between the Aryan and the non-Aryan contributed, in a myriad subtle ways, to the shaping of the Indian traditions of culture and patterns of values. The varna stratification, the distinctiveness of the elite and the folk streams of culture, and the double standards that prevail in the sacred and the secular law - all these owe a good deal to this clash, and the consequent patterns of adjustment that came into being .

ii) **Duality of Norms and Values**

The hatred towards the racially distinct subjugated people found expression in social values and norms. In Rigveda, we find two sets of norms, one for the Aryan and the other for the non-Aryan. The poet, Samvanana, exhorts Aryans to live together in a spirit of harmony and unity. He says, "May you go together, speak together, may your minds know together just as the gods of earlier times take their portions together". But none of the poets of Rigveda ever expressed the desirability of the Aryan living peacefully with the dasa.

It would appear thus that the foundations of the valuational patterns that have persisted till the present day were laid long ago, perhaps in the Vedic era itself. The facts briefly mentioned above indicate how the Aryan priests and warriors had begun to look upon the non-Aryan traders (Pani) as a perennial source of wealth for extortion and the dasa as the people whose only duty was to serve the Aryan master. The elaborate legal system found in the Smriti, which prescribes different codes of conduct, privilege and penalties for persons of different Varna. This also has its roots in the double standards of morality and law for the Aryan and the non-Aryan laid down in the Veda.

However, after the Aryan settled down in the Indo-Gangetic plains and established a working relationship with the pre-Aryan people, their militant spirit declined. They took over many non-Aryan values and beliefs. Conflicts within the Aryan elites also began to take shape. Through the Brahmana Grantha, the priestly Brahmana asserted their superiority over the Kshatriya who were kings and warriors. Many elaborate and expensive *yajna* were prescribed for which the Kshatriya had to pay. The Kshatriya revolted against this dispensation. Their protest found expression in the Upanishad.

23.5.2 Values in the Post-Vedic Period

In the Upanishad, the knowledge of the Self is considered the ultimate aim of life. Persons from all walks of life participated and made contribution to it. The language of Upanishad was easy to understand and therefore attracted people. People belonging even to the younger generation of the priestly elite had lost their interest in the intricate sacrifice and rituals. This wave gave a strong blow to the supreme position of the priestly elites as well as to the Varna hierarchy.

It appears that by the time of the Upanishadic era, the notion of racial purity was compromised to such an extent that it became a part of the ritual purity. Thus for getting formal entry into the community, it was made obligatory for each child to undergo certain sacraments or Sanskara. From conception to death, these sacraments are to be performed to mark the turning points in a person's life.

It seems that in all traditional societies, whenever the elites want to get rid of the immediate past, they try to revive the ancient past. Due to the long interval of time, a complete revival of the bygone age is never possible. Usually what is revived is only some outer form of the ancient past. During the Upanishadic era the values of Varna-hierarchy lost their hold. The lower castes, women and the younger generation of elites revolted against the traditional social order. During this era many popular non-Aryan values got entry into the elite stream. The stronghold of the priestly elites loosened to such an extent that even the priests had to get acquainted with the newly emerging metaphysical ideas.

23.5.3 Values in the Buddhist Period

The social values sought to be re-established in the Post-Vedic period were challenged again by Buddhism. The impact of Buddhism was very great. Unlike Brahmanical elites, Buddha preached in the common man's language. He preached equality of all human beings. The Brahmanical lore was in Sanskrit. It was the preserve of the elite only. Buddha's teachings were open to all castes. Buddha attacked the great Vedic sacrifices and declared them wasteful and futile. Buddhism became popular among rulers, well-to-do merchants, artisans and peasants.

The value of equality among castes and the stress on hard work and frugality propagated by Buddhism, promoted industrial and business activity. People made remarkable progress in trade and industry during this era. Many industries and crafts are mentioned in Buddhist literature. The Jataka mentions eighteen types of guilds of artisans and workers. They are mentioned as **sheni** or **puga** (**seni** and **puga** in Sanskrit). The royal court recognised these guilds. There used to be a head craftsman in each guild. He is called **Jethaka** or **pamukha** (**jyeshtha** or **pramukha** in Sanskrit). He was an important member of the royal court. Gradually there developed a prosperous commercial class.

Buddhism disturbed the caste hierarchy and the division of society entirely on the basis of birth. The racial factor which was the basis of colour doctrine got another jolt from foreign hordes who continually came to India. They fulfilled very well the criteria of white complexion and blond hair propounded by Patanjali as the physical qualities of a Brahmana.

23.5.4 Manusmriti: Veda of the Brahmanical Revival

Therefore in order to maintain the uniqueness of the Brahman the criteria of racial purity had to be replaced by ritual purity. The Brahman too had lost their racial purity to some extent, despite theoretically emphasising the colour/doctrine. Still another threat was from the pre-Aryan darker people who were at the lower rungs of the social hierarchy. They constituted the majority in the society. Their norms and culture were basically different from the Aryan.

In order to survive, the priestly elites had to meet all these challenges, and at the same time revive the flickering Brahmanical tradition. In this period of crisis Manusmriti, the Veda of the Brahmanical revival, appeared on the horizon. Unlike the Sutra of the Post-Vedic period which were recognised to be creations of human being, Smriti were presented as the dictates of mythical seers. It is indeed appropriate

to attribute the Manusmriti, the grand treatise of revivalist era, to Manu, the primeval father, since work really laid the foundations of the social and moral order supposed to be based on Vedic tradition.

23.5.5 Values in the Islamic Period

Impact of Islam in India can be traced back to the Arab conquest of the Sind in the beginning of the eighth century. The Muslim, population in India was sixty million in 1973. In 1991 (Census 1991) the population of Muslim in India was about 101 million which is about 12.1% of total population of India. Historically and sociologically speaking Islamic values play a very important role in the cultural tradition of India.

When we talk about the values in the Vedic period, in the Upanishadic period, and so on, we are basically talking about the Hindu Great tradition. In contrast, the Islamic Great tradition is founded on a world-view which more or less "is non-hierarchical, is purely monotheistic, and messianic-historical in ethos" (Singh 1973 : 68). It is non-hierarchical in the sense that according to Islam all men are equal in the eyes of God, unlike the Hindu tradition. In the Hindu tradition, as Manu has accorded, the Brahmin are at the top; the Kshatriya are next to them, followed by the Vaishya and at the lowest rung are the Sudra.

Islam is monotheistic in the sense that its people believe in the existence of one supreme God, unlike Hinduism where multitude of Gods and Goddesses are worshiped. It is messianic-historical in ethos because its origin is traced to the time of Abrahim, or Ibrahim. From the sons of Abrahim the three religions of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are traced. It believes in the notion of messiah who will redeem the world and that there will be the day of judgement when the world ends.

Islamic values, like Hindu values, or for that matter any other values, have not remained constant. There has been a lot of intermixture between Hinduism and Islam. Sufism, a sect of Muslim religious mystics, has the elements of 'bhakti' of Hinduism. Similarly, Sikh religion has values of both the great traditions, Hindu, as well as Islam. Because of a long period of socio-cultural interaction the Muslim population of India had elements which are not present amongst the Muslims of other countries. They have caste-like structures in their society. Certain customs are also borrowed from the Hindu population. Similarly, the Hindu communities have borrowed the custom of 'purdah' or veil in North India from the Muslims.

23.5.6 The Modern Value System

The traditional value system of India, which formed the basis of its social structure and institutions for more than fifteen hundred years, began to show signs of rapid change and decline as a result of the impact of modern social forces. These forces were brought about, for the most part, by the British rule. The change did not come merely because the rulers were foreigners. It came about primarily because the British represented a radically different type of society - the modern, industrial-capitalist society in all its economic-technical, political-legal, and cultural-ideological dimensions. Moreover, the industrial-capitalist civilisation is an expanding one. It cannot leave the traditional societies to continue as they have been. Because of its own dynamics, it tends to bring about structural and valuational changes in the traditional societies.

i) The British Rule and Indian Value System

The impact of the British rule on the Indian society gave birth to an urban middle class which had values that were not only different but even opposed to the traditional values. It became imbued with the values of modern capitalist society such as

individualism, rationality, competitiveness, acquisitiveness, and activeness. This was a far cry from the unified life of the traditional society where the values of co-operation and contentment prevail. In India the concept of individualism never existed, except in the case of the 'sanyasi' otherwise family group was the basic unit of society to which every person belonged.

Impact of the British rule also opened the channels of communication between the Indian elites and the Western society. The English language became the window through which, the Indians could view the changes in Western society. They imbibed the values of freedom. The notions of equality, liberty and fraternity came to be understood and internalised by them. Notion of democracy and self-rule or swaraj became a popular ambition for our leaders during the national movement for freedom in India. In fact, we can see the impact of western values on our national leaders such as, from Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekanand, Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore.

ii) **Impact of Modern Values on Indian Villages**

Modern values did not remain confined to the cities. Modern forces brought about a basic transformation in the relationship between urban centres and the villages; and thus the life and values in the countryside also began to change. It was not that because of the new means of transport and communication, peasant villages were connected with transport and communication, for the first time. In peasant civilisations villages are always related with towns. Unless a stable relationship existed between the villages and the towns the latter could not have survived as they did not produce such essential things as food and cotton. The fact is that a certain kind of relationship always existed between the villages and the towns belonging to the peasant civilisation; but the modern economic, technological, political and cultural factors have brought about a qualitative change in the nature of this relationship, thereby beginning a process of transformation of the village life itself.

In the traditional peasant civilisations, towns thrive on the revenue collected from the villages. Apart from getting such surpluses from the villages, the towns people are not interested in transforming the countryside or in manipulating its life in any way. This picture changes dramatically when towns become centres of commerce and industry. Now the towns people make an all out effort to sell the mass-produced goods in the country side, and to acquire cheap labour and raw material from there.

This has important consequences for the traditional way of life in the villages. The village industries decline, and together with mass-produced commodities which are pumped into the villages, modern attitudes and values also invade the rural areas. The production in the villages also is motivated more and more by the desire for earning the maximum profit, rather than primarily fulfilling one's requirements. Together, with this, the values of individualism, competition, and unlimited acquisitiveness also has gathered strength.

Activity 2

Are the values of idealism, patriotism, humanism still important to us in India or the values of "Money mindedness" or achievement oriented behaviour along with consumption orientation become important to us? Comment on this in about one page and share your views with other students and Academic Counsellor at your Study Centre.

Modern forces dealt a blow to folk values, as well as to the folkway of life. In traditional, peasant civilisations, the basic values underlying the elite and the folk

traditions of culture were the same. The difference between the two traditions was primarily that of the degree of refinement, systematisation, and self-consciousness. It was because of the sharing of the basic values and worldview that the traditional elite culture did not damage or weaken the folk cultures, even though they were in constant interaction with each other. The modern elite culture on the other hand is imbued with values which are not only different from folk values but are opposed to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that the influence of modern elite culture poses a threat to the very existence of folk culture and folk values. We find thus that although the values of a social system tends to form a coherent and relatively stable pattern, they do not remain static.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) In what way were the values of the Aryans different form the Pani? Explain in about six lines.

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2) Tick the correct answer.

i) Social values and norms in the Vedic period reflected the hatred felt by the subjugated people. Yes No

ii) Poets of Rigveda expressed the desirability of the Aryan to live peacefully with the Dasa. Yes No

iii) In the Upanishad, the knowledge of the self is considered to be the ultimate aim of life. Yes No

iv) Buddha attacked the great Vedic sacrifices and declared them wasteful and futile. Yes No

v) The concept of hierarchy is central to Islamic values. Yes No

23.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have learnt about the meaning of values in social sciences and how values are different from norms in several ways. You have also come to know about the role of values in the personality structure and socio-cultural systems of society. The unit has also explained the process in which the values change with time in the same society and how the historical circumstances shape and reshape the values of a society.

23.7 KEY WORDS

Achievement : a result brought about by resolve, persistence or endeavour.

Acquisitiveness : the behaviour which implies a strong desire to acquire or possess.

Affective : belonging to the sphere of emotions.

Attitudinal : according to the personal attitudes or feelings or judgements.

Cognitive : that which can be known, including both the processes of awareness and judgements, such as good and bad, ugly and beautiful etc.

Conative : an inclination (such as an instinct, a drive, a wish or a craving) to act purposefully.

Concreteness : something which is definite, factual and real.

Generality : something which is present in all cases, that is which is common to all.

Psychic : which belongs to the sphere of the mind or that which is mental.

Specificity : the condition of being peculiar to a particular individual or group of organisms.

23.8 FURTHER READINGS

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23.9 MODEL ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Values are conceptions of the desirable which influence selective behaviour. They are deeply associated with the human personality and the socio-cultural system of the society. They are the generally accepted basic assumptions of what is right and important in society and what is not. Values define the purposes of life and the means of achieving them.

2) Values are intimately related to norms since they constitute the basis of norms. Norms depend upon values and are justified through standards of values like "true", "good" and "beautiful". However, norms are more specific in comparison with values which are more general and abstract. Norms are

more prescriptive or prohibitive and therefore, involves lesser freedom than values.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Human being is a value-creating and a value-fulfilling animal in the sense that she or he is not only the fountain of values but also makes value judgements which are embodied in all inter-personal goals, relations and behaviour in the normal functioning of groups and institutions.

2) People resolve the conflicts of values which they face in their daily life by placing these values in a hierarchy. According to the priority of their goals in life and actions required to fulfil those goals, they follow these values. Therefore, value conflicts are resolved through the process of selection of each value.

3) i) Yes (See section 24.4.1)

   ii) No (See section 23.4.2)

   iii) Yes (See section 23.4.4)

Check Your Progress 3

1) the Aryan were the conquerors, robust and lively in spirit. They were militant and being semi-nomadic they did not believe in accumulation. They readily shared their food with their guests. While the Pani were the vanquished people who were the wealthy traders of that time. Being traders they did not like parting with their wealth, including cattle, without getting something in compensation.

2) i) Yes (See section 23.5.1.2)

   ii) No (See section 23.5.1.2)

   iii) Yes (See section 23.5.2)

   iv) Yes (See section 23.5.3)

   v) No (See section 23.5.5)

UNIT 24 NORMS

Structure

24.0 Objectives

24.1 Introduction

24.2 The Nature of Social Norms

- 24.2.1 Changing Nature of Social Norms
- 24.2.2 Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft Norms
- 24.2.3 Discord in Norms

24.3 Aspects of Norms

- 24.3.1 Folkways and Mores : Kindred Concepts
- 24.3.2 Types of Norms
- 24.3.3 Integration and Conflict of Norms
- 24.3.4 Diversity of Norms in Different Cultures

24.4 The Function of Norms in Socialisation and Social Control

- 24.4.1 Deviance
- 24.4.2 Anomie

24.5 Let Us Sum Up

24.6 Key Words

24.7 Further Readings

24.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

24.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- describe the characteristics of norms;
- discuss the different types of norms;
- analyse the role played by norms in the integration of society;
- describe the diversity of norms in different cultures; and
- list the function of norms in socialisation and social control.

24.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you are going to learn about the nature of social norms. The ways in which social norms are changing and the differences between the various types of norms. Here the diversity of norms in different cultures has been discussed. You will also learn about the function of norms in the process of socialisation and social control. The unit discusses the problem of deviance and anomie in society.

24.2 THE NATURE OF SOCIAL NORMS

the use of "norms" as a technical term in the social sciences is rather new. This is shown by the fact that the 1930 edition of the **Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences**

did not even include this term. The word "norm" is derived from the Latin **"norms",** which is a carpenter's square or rule.

Social norms are standards of behaviour shared by the members of a social group, to which they are expected to conform. Norms refer to accepted and required behaviour for a person or a group in a particular setting. They are rules for social living.

No social structure can survive without social norms; for social structure is made up of patterned social behaviour, and unless the behaviour of people is regulated by a vast variety of prescriptive and prohibitive norms, human society is bound to be thrown into unthinkable chaos.

24.2.1 Changing Nature of Social Norms

Unlike physical reality, human society is sustained by laws that are normative. While the laws of the physical world operate by themselves and are not disobeyed, the norms of various kinds which regulate social relationships, and ultimately the social structure, can be violated and also changed.

Social norms are standards of a group for controlling the conduct of its members in relation to each other and to the community as a whole. Norms are both prescriptive and prohibitive. In other words, norms require people to do certain things, and forbid them from doing certain other things.

Norms surely regulate the conduct of people, but it does not mean that this is necessarily achieved through physical coercion. As we shall see, there are numerous kinds of norms and the mechanisms of punishment and reward through which they control behaviour vary considerably. It may be mentioned, however, that physical coercion is not really required in most of the cases, because the members of a group usually take for granted the norms upheld by the group and do not consider it proper to deviate from them.

Activity 1

List two norms and two values which are part of your society and culture. Write a note of one page on "Values and Norms : Nature and Distinction". Share your answer with other students at your Study Centre and also discuss it with your Academic Counsellor in your counselling session, if possible.

24.2.2 Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft Norms

Not all the norms of a society are written down. In fact many of them are not even specifically spelt out. For example, the rich variety of customs and manners which govern the behaviour of various members of a joint-family towards each other are not coded or written down. We learn them by watching the behaviour of our elders from ever since our childhood. The same is more or less true of other familistic or primary groups. On the other hand, the norms of the contractual and secondary groups or associations are more formally laid down. Often the norms or rules which regulate the associations are written down. On the basis of this difference, Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft norms have been distinguished. According to Earl Bell (1961), the action norms which belong to the Gesellschaft category are both rational and efficient where the achievement of goals in society is concerned. Only the efficiency of achieving one's aims counts in this sphere. Whereas, in Gemeinschaft category the society or community will follow the traditional ways and habits of doing things even though they may not achieve results. In spite of the evidences which show the

inefficiency of their methods and procedures, the people keep on following their old ways.

However, Bell believes that in Gemeinschaft organisation or systems, it is very difficult to measure the efficiency of the action norms because they are multipurpose. They are more geared towards the satisfaction of the needs of the members rather than towards attaining specific goals or ends.

24.2.3 Discord in Norms

Norms are based on values. They prescribe through relatively specific rules what is considered to be good or desirable by the society as a whole, or by a particular group. There is a diversity of norms belonging to various groups, and these sometimes come in variance with each other. For instance, the norms of the family and the broader kin-group require that one should help his or her kinsmen in every way.

If someone holds a position of power in a government or some other organisation, he/she is expected to help and provide employment to his or her kinsmen but the norms of the organisation require a person to select the most efficient candidate. This is only one example of discord in norms. They arise not only in the norms of different groups, but also between various norms of the same group. These disagreements are sought to be reconciled with reference to values which are considered higher and are more generally accepted. Norms themselves are ordered as higher or lower in terms of the more general and fundamental values.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are social norms? Explain in about five lines.

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2) Tick the correct answer.

vi) Social norms are crucial to the survival of any social structure. Yes No

vii) Physical coercion is often required to make people follow the social norms of their society. Yes No

viii) All the norms of a society are written and coded. Yes No

ix) The norms which are contractual and formally laid out are called Gemeinschaft norms. Yes No

24.3 ASPECTS OF NORMS

There are many concepts which are close to the concept of norm, or can be looked upon as its types. For a clear understanding of social norms it is necessary to be

familiar with various terms and concepts that are related to the concept of norm, and are frequently employed in sociological literature. Among these, "folkways" and "mores" are used more or less as equivalents of social norms. There are other widely employed terms such as manners, fashions, customs, institutions, and laws that represent norms of different types that are supported by various kinds of sanctions of reward and punishment which go with each of them. In order to be conversant with the whole array of social norms we must be clear about these also.

24.3.1 Folkways and Mores: Kindred Concepts

It was W.G. Sumner who made popular these concepts through his book Folkways which was first published in 1906. The terms folkways is so broad that it encompasses all kinds of social usages and social codes. According to Sumner (1906) folkways often "are like products of natural forces which men unconsciously set in operation", and "are developed out of experience". He again points out that folkways are "handed down by tradition and admit of no exception or variation, yet change to meet new conditions. From this results that all the life of human beings, in all ages and stages of culture, is primarily controlled by a vast mass of folkways.: Now, we look at the relations and distinctions between folkways and mores.

i) **Relations between folkways and mores**

Mores are those folkways which are viewed *as regulators* of the society. Thus "folkways" is a wider concept, and those folkways which are considered to be important for the sustenance of the society are "mores". In this sense mores are a kind of folkways, which are more binding than the latter.

ii) **Distinctions between folkways and mores**

However, some writers treat folkways and mores as separate categories. For example, Kimball Young and Raymond Mack (1972) observe that in Sumner's own work the concept of folkways is employed in a general sense while mores are defined as a particular kind of folkways but it would help clarity of thought if the two are distinguished. Young & Mack (1972) have drawn a distinction between folkways and mores. They say that folkways are more general in comparison to mores; while mores are folkways which have been given greater importance by the society. To have a clear conceptual idea about them, it is essential to treat the less important or significant norms as folkways and more crucial norms as mores. The violation of folkways is lightly judged while the violation of the morally judged norms or mores is punished severely.

In comparison to Young & Mack, Broom and Selznick (1963 : 69) believe that the intensity of feelings and the procedure for enforcing them distinguishes the folkways from the mores. They say that in the scale of norms, the mores find their place at the top and the folkways at the bottom. The folkways concerned with such things as dress, fashion, table manners, etc., do not evoke much emotion. If somebody wears the wrong clothes at a formal occasion, at the most that person will be asked to leave or will be ridiculed. However, the dress or uniform of such positions as the clergy, the military etc., are different since they are not merely clothes. They are badges of membership and rank which cannot be substituted by other clothes, as in the case of civilians. These authors maintain that though folkways are considered to be right proper and rational, objectively they may not be rational.

Koller and Couse (1965 : 665) also treat folkways and mores as distinct concepts. To them folkways are "customary ways of doing things, but they are not vital to a

society's well being. Consequently, an individual who fails to conform to a folkway usually suffers only a mild disapproval". Mores on the other hand, are viewed as "essential to a society's well being. Consequently, they are strictly enforced".

However, there is much to be said in favour of regarding "folkways" as the broad category of which mores are the more effective manifestation. The difference between them is only that of degree; for, all folkways regulate socio-cultural life in some way, to a greater or a lesser extent.

24.3.2 Types of Norms

Customs, fashions, institutions (in the sense of established procedures) and laws embody different types of social norms. Different types of norms are upheld by their particular kinds of sanctions - that is ways of punishment and reward. In fact, the nature of social sanctions that go with various kinds of norms are good indicators of the types of norms.

i) **Customs as Norms**

The primary sanction against the violation of the norms of custom is social disapproval. Deviation from the norms of prevailing fashions is prevented or minimised through the fear of ridicule or contempt. And institutions (such as marriage) are procedures which are established so strongly that they become necessary conditions of behaviour. Law or legal norms have the power of the state behind them. The violation of law or legal norms, is punished through fine, imprisonment and even with death penalty.

Customs regulate most of our day-to-day behaviour. They underlie the more formal order of legal and institutional norms. Customs are socially accredited ways of action. They are so deeply rooted in the way of life of a society, that people conform to them almost by force of habit, without being conscious about it. Customs are seldom coded or written down by the people who are governed by them. They are group procedures that emerge gradually. They are not enacted by any established authority. They are spontaneous and yet they are perhaps the most pervasive and effective of all social norms.

ii) **Fashion as Norms**

While customs hold sway in traditional societies, modern societies are marked by the rise of fashions. Fashion is a term which applies to a wide variety of aspects of life as opinions, beliefs, recreation, dress, jewellery, furnishing, architecture, etc. It is according to Maclver and Page (1949 : 181) "the socially approved sequence of variation on a customary theme". They see fashions changing in a cyclical way with time. Fashions are cultural factors which are not very much concerned with the basic values of society, although they do not go beyond the customs. They rather supplement the customs of the society.

A fashion which is the latest, tends to be the most preferred, even when it may be ugly or uncomfortable. On the other hand, the older a custom is believed to be, stronger is its grip on the people, even though it may be unjust or repressive. It appears thus that a major difference between traditional and modern societies is that while the traditional societies tend to value whatever is old, modern societies tend to place a value on whatever is new.

Activity 2

Interview a person from your Grandparents generation, one from your parents and one from your own generation on the style of dress worn during their times. Ask them to draw the shape and designs which were fashionable then, today and during your parents' generation and the latest style worn by today's teenagers. Do you think fashion is linear, cyclical or haphazard. Discuss your findings with other students at your study centre.

Changing Fashions and Dress Styles

iii) **Institutions as Social Norms**

The term institutions has been employed in various ways. Some sociologists use it in such a broad sense that it includes almost anything that is socially established. Maclver (1949 : 15), however, has defined institution in a narrower sense. According to him, institutions are "established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity". In this sense institutions too constitute social norms. These social norms are so compelling that they become the necessary conditions of behaviour. Institutions embody more social recognition and compulsion than customs.

iv) **Legal Norms**

As mentioned already legal norms have the power of the state behind them. In modern society the state alone wields the ultimate sanction of physical enforcement through imposition or threat of imposition of fine, imprisonment, or death. Laws are often derived from customs, but norms become a part of law only when they are upheld by the state.

24.3.3 Integration and Conflict of Norms

In stable societies, even though there are diverse kinds of social norms, these are ordered and integrated through values which are unanimously accepted by almost everyone. In no society there is complete conformity to norms by all the people. But in stable traditional societies, there tends to be a high degree of unanimity about

basic values and the propriety of social norms that they underline. Yet, even in such societies, conflict between various norms is not totally absent.

However, in modern complex societies which are marked by unprecedented social differentiation and a fast rate of social change, conflict of norms reaches new heights. Such societies tend to have subgroups whose particular norms violate the norms of the larger social system. For example, there are criminal subcultures. There is also deviance which does not necessarily come within the perview of criminality. These lead to deviant subcultures.

A high pace of social change also tends to enhance the conflict of norms, and deviance. When values are changing fast, it is difficult to judge what is right and what is wrong. The simultaneous existence of diverse systems of values and norms weakens the spirit of conformity because of rapid social change as well as vastly increasing contact between different cultures and ethnic groups. When people know only one set of values and norms, they tend to adhere to them steadfastly. But when they are aware of numerous alternative values and norms, they no more consider any of these as sacred and inviolable. Prime example of role conflict experienced is by women in contemporary urban life. Women as mothers, as wives, as working women, as daughters and daughters-in-law experience role conflict in their everyday lives since the values attached to each role they perform tend to conflict with each other. Even men in today's society face role conflict since traditional male superiority expected from them may conflict with their modern value of treating their women as their equals.

24.3.4 Diversity of Norms in Different Cultures

Innumerable variations are found in the norms of different cultures. Sociological and anthropological literature is replete with illustrative material regarding the variety of norms in different societies, and different strata of the same society. The variety in norms is so large that it would be difficult even to classify them.

As Maclver and Page (1949 : 20-21) point out, that there are very few universally prohibited behaviours in society, exception being the taboo on mother-son incest. There are wide variations in cultural practices. In some societies we find people covering their heads to show respect, in others uncovering. Some people prohibit marriage within their community while others prohibit outside the community. In some societies a strict sex code exists for the married but not the unmarried, while in others the strictness applies to the unmarried but not the married. Thus, we see that a great variation in the crucial norms exists from one society to another, from one social group to another. Maclver and Page, therefore, warn the student of sociology that to be scientific in our investigations we must develop an unbiased approach to the study of other cultural systems.

Even in the face of such wide diversity of social norms, ethnocentrism is far from non-existent. Wide variation in the norms of different societies underscores the need of viewing social phenomenon in relation to their cultural setting. However, there is often a tendency to evaluate the ways of other people in terms of our own norms. This is ethnocentrism. Much of the prevailing social science itself seems to suffer from deep western ethnocentrism.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe the nature of folkways. Use about five lines.

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2) Give an example of folkway and mores of society to make a distinction between the two. Use about six lines.

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3) Tick the correct answer.

i) While customs and institutions are social norms the fashions are not. Yes No

ii) People conform to the customs of their society because otherwise they will have problems with the police. Yes No

iii) Customs are seldom coded or written down by the people who are governed by them. Yes No

iv) Marriage is an institution found in most societies. Yes No

24.4 THE FUNCTION OF NORMS IN SOCIALISATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Socialisation refers to the processes through which human infants develop into social beings. Socialisation inevitably involves the internalisation of the social norms of the group to which the individual belongs. In other word, social norms become a part of the personality of the individual through the process of socialisation.

Thus an adequately socialised individual does not look upon social norms of his or her community as outside objects that hinder him or her. On the other hand one believes them to be right and proper, and tends even to think that one is acting according to the dictates of one's own conscience when one conforms to the norms and values of one's society.

By social control we mean the way in which the social order is organised and sustained. In the process of social control, norms play the most crucial part for it is norms that regulate social behaviour. And without such regulation no stable patterning of social relationship is possible. Thus social groups; which embody distinctive patterns of social relationships, cannot survive. The maintenance of social organisation is unthinkable without the operation of norms.

24.4.1 Deviance

Norms provide the standards for the control of behaviour of individuals towards each other, and in relation to various groups and the community as a whole. This does not mean, however, that there is absolute conformity to social norms by all the members of a society at any time. Deviance from norms does exist, and there are a variety of reasons for deviance which merit serious study in terms of general theory and also with reference to particular societies. Such study would inevitably imply better understanding of the nature and functioning of social norms.

24.4.2 Anomie

Anomie literally means the lack of norms or normlessness. But the situation of complete normlessness seldom exists. Sometimes there is lack of clarity about norms. But the term anomie is more frequently used to indicate ambivalent orientation towards norms. R.K. Merton has explained anomie in terms of the gap between culturally defined goals and the legitimate means to reach them.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) How does a person conform to the social norms of his/her society. Describe in about five lines.

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2) What is anomie? How does R.K. Merton describe anomie? Use about two lines.

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3) Tick the correct answer.

i) When social change occurs very fast, it leads to change of values at a fast pace giving rise to conflict of norms Yes No

ii) Norms of all societies are the same. Yes No

24.5 LET US SUM UP

You have learnt in this unit about the nature of social norms. You have also learnt about the kindred concepts and types of norms like the folkways and mores. Integration and conflicts of norms have also been explained. In this unit the function of norms in the process of socialisation and social control has been discussed. We have described the problem of deviance and anomie in society. Finally, diversity of norms in different cultures has also been discussed.

24.6 KEY WORDS

Ethnocentrism : The attitude that one's own group is superior.

Fundamental : Anything which forms the basis or the crux of a system or organisation.

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

Gesellschaft : Impersonally contracted association between persons.

Kindred : Any concept which is related to the given concept or similar to it.

Oppressive : Any custom which is coercive in nature.

Penalties : Disadvantages imposed on a person or persons for breaking any rule or norm.

Prohibitive Norms : Any norm which stops a person from doing some thing. For example, touching one's husband's elder brother, in some parts of India is prohibited.

Regulate : An action which leads to establishment of order.

Sanction : Approval given to an action etc., by custom or tradition.

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24.8 MODEL ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Social norms are standards of behaviour shared by the members of a social group, to which they are expected to conform. The word "norm" is derived from the Latin **"norma"** which is a carpenter's square or rule. Thus, social norms refer to accepted and required behaviour for a person or a group in a particular setting. They are rules for social living.

2) i) Yes (See section 24.2)

   ii) No (See section 24.2.1)

iii) No (See section 24.2.2)

iv) No (See section 24.2.2)

Check Your Progress 2

1) Folkways are described as products of natural forces which people unconsciously set in operation. These products of natural forces reach a final form of maximum adaptation to an interest which is then handed down from one generation to another by tradition. These folkways do not vary much from one period to another. Yet, they do shape themselves to meet new conditions within a certain limit.

2) In India to touch the feet of one's elders is a folkway but if a person refuses to do that, he or she is not thrown out of the community. One of the mores of Hindu society is not to eat beef and even now if a Hindu in a village eats beef, he will be excommunicated from his community. Therefore, to refuse to conform to a folkway is easy but to refuse to conform to a mores of one's society is very difficult.

3) i) No (See section 24.3.2)

ii) No

iii) Yes (See section 24.3.2)

iv) Yes (See section 24.3.2)

Check Your Progress 3

1) A person conforms to the social norms of his or her society through the process of internalisation of these norms. This internalisation takes place through the process of socialisation of a person from early childhood to adulthood status. They become part of a person and his or her habit. They are also associated with rewards and punishments according to the nature of the norms.

2) Anomie literally means the lack of norms. Merton has described anomie as the gap between culturally required goals and the legitimate means to reach them.

3) i) Yes (See section 24.3.3)

ii) No (See section 24.3.4)

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UNIT 25 CONCEPTS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Structure

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25.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- distinguish social structure from social organisation;
- state and describe the meaning of the concept of social structure put forward by the structural-functionalists;
- describe the structuralists' point of view regarding social structure;
- explain the Marxist understanding of social structure; and
- establish the relationship between social structure and social change.

25.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss about social structure. This is a broader and more general concept than other concepts discussed in this block. Generally speaking, anything whether an object or an idea has a structure. It is only through the enduring aspects of a structure that we comprehend its existence. Similarly, we can say that each society in the world has a structure, which can be called its social structure. We can

understand a society through the permanent and enduring aspects of its structure. Put in this way, social structure appears to be a very broad and simple concept. But, while studying a particular social structure, sociologists have differed widely in their interpretation and use of this concept.

It is due to these disparities in perspectives, that discussion on social structure has become conceptually complex and confusing. This need not be so. We maintain that at a simple level, the idea of social structure is basically quite elementary. It helps us to describe the permanent and enduring aspects of social relationships. As such it is a very useful tool to understand social reality.

In this unit you will learn about various interpretations and uses, of this basic concept in sociological thought. We begin with a broad definition of the concept. It has, generally, been understood by the structural—functionalist school of thought as the network of permanent and enduring aspects of social relationships. These relationships are distinct from individual relationships.

When two individuals have a relationship where each expects something from the other, their behaviour is predictable and social. Social behaviour is, thus, an expected and organised behaviour. It is defined by the social norms and given sanction by society. Different sociologists and social anthropologists have defined this concept in various ways. Its use and applicability, this concept is understood in different ways in Britain, France, and in North America. There may be some exceptions, but generally in North America the "Culture" aspect of social structure is given more emphasis. British sociologists like Radcliffe-Brown and his followers give more emphasis to the 'relational' aspect. In France, the concept is understood in terms of models, discussed by Levi Strauss. We will discuss more elaborately about these distinctions, as well as, the development of this concept in the next section.

25.2 THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The word structure meant originally, the construction of a building. Gradually, structure began to imply inter-relations between the parts of any whole. It also began to be used in anatomical studies. The concept of social structure became popular amongst the sociologists and social anthropologists, in the decade following World War II. During that period it became so fashionable to use this term, that it came to be applied to "almost any ordered arrangement of social phenomenon" (see Leach 1968 : 482).

It is essential to look at the different ways, in which sociologists and social anthropologists, have applied this concept. In this process you will learn how it was understood by the structural-functionalists, the structuralists, and the Marxists – the three main schools of sociological thought. But before proceeding to these three views of social structure, let us also look at the difference between social structure and social organisation. We also briefly mention how some scholars used the notion of social structure in terms of social groups and roles.

25.2.1 Social Structure and Social Organisation

The term "social organisation" has often been used interchangeably for "social structure". Some scholars, like Raymond Firth, have clearly distinguished between both these terms. In his book, *Elements of Social Organisation* (1956), Firth has made this distinction very clear. He regards both these terms as only heuristic devices or tools rather than precise concepts. According to him, social organisation is concerned with the choices and decisions involved in actual social relations; while

the concept of social structure deals with the more fundamental social relations, which give a society its basic form, and which provide limits to the range of action organisationally possible within it.

Firth says that in the aspect of structure, the continuity principle of society is found, while in the aspect of organisation is to be found the variation, or change principle. The latter aspect allows evaluation of situations with the scope for individual choice.

He studied the social structure, and organisation of small communities, such as the Tikopians of Solomon Islands. He described a human community as "a body of people sharing in common activities and bound by multiple relationships in such a way that the aims of any individual can be achieved only by participation in action with others". This definition of the term "community" subsumes the *spatial* aspect, which is that the people who form the community generally occupy a common territory. Therefore, they are in direct contact with each other, and their relationship is of more emotional and intimate nature, than those found in the complex societies.

According to Firth (1956 : 41) the structure and organisation of the community life possess certain constituents which are essential for social existence within a community. These constituents are : social alignment, social controls, social media, and social standards.

25.2.2 Social Structure and Social Groups

There are some scholars who use the term social structure for only persistent social groups in society like nation, tribe, clan, etc. One of them is E.E. Evans-Pritchard. His theory of social structure arose as a reaction to Radcliffe-Brown's understanding of social structure. In fact, it was Evans-Pritchard who first brought about the shift from pure structure-functionalism to structuralism in social anthropological studies of societies.

In his book, *The Nuer* (1940), he has dealt with these persistent and permanent groups, whose individual membership keeps on changing, but whose structural form remains approximately the same throughout time. His definition of social structure differs from Radcliffe-Brown's, in the sense that he is not concerned with the social behaviour of person to person. He has concentrated his attention in his study of the Nuer of Sudan, on the relationship of the homestead with the wider group of the village. The village he studies in relation to the tertiary group-composed of few villages; the tertiary group with the secondary group-composed of several tertiary groups, the secondary group with the primary group-composed of several tertiary groups, the secondary group with the primary group-composed of several secondary groups; and so on, till the whole tribe is included. In this segmentary social structure, clans, lineages, consanguineal and affinal kins, etc. form major components.

Thus, Evans-Pritchard's conception of social structure has the family or the homestead (as in the case of the Nuer society) as its basic unit, rather than the individuals.

Activity 1

Take a plain sheet of paper. Using the triangle △ for male and circle O for female of each generation, draw the network of relationships of each of your family member with others in your wider kinship circle. Link members of other families in your neighbourhood as well. Write a short note of two pages on your "Family and social structure". Compare your answer with those of others at your study centre.

25.2.3 Social Structure and the Concept of Social Roles

Fred Eggan, an American anthropologist, describes that the component or units of social structure, are around the interpersonal relations which 'become part of the social structure in the form of status positions' occupied by individuals. He was not the only one who has defined social structure in terms of social status and position occupied by individuals in society.

One of the major theories of social structure has been outlined by Nadel in his book, *The Theory of Social Structure* (1969). He, too, has defined social structure in terms of the roles played by the individual actors in society and their consequent social status. Nadel (1969 : 5) says : "We arrive at the structure of a society through abstracting from the concrete population and its behaviour the pattern or network (or "system") of relationships obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another". His definition of roles is far more specific than the one given by most other sociologists.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the main difference, according to Firth between social organisation and social structure. Use five lines for your answer.

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2) What is the basic unit of social structure in the study of the Nuer tribes by E.Evans-Pritchard? Use one line for your answer.

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3) Who defined social structure in terms of social status and position occupied by individuals in society? Use one line for your answer.

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25.3 THREE MAJOR VIEWS OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Now, we look at the three major views of social structure, as propounded by structural-functionalist school, structuralist school and Marxist school.

25.3.1 The Structural Functionalist Point of View

Social structure is one of the core concepts, in the structural-functionalist approach, to the study of society. This approach is founded on the analogy between a society and an organism, which gained credence when it was presented in a scientific way, modelled on the natural science methods of biology. We will discuss here three sociologists from this school.

i) Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was one of the initiators of this approach, and was also one of the first sociologists to use the term. He was quite fascinated

by the biological analogy : between society and organism, and between social evolution and biological evolution. But in spite of this fascination, he did not make the term "structure of society" very clear.

For him, a society is made up of different parts, all of which have to work in order to remain healthy, meet the demands of the environment and to survive. Just like an organism, the society adjusts and adapts itself to the demands and pressures of social change is order to survive. Unlike the case of animals the "parts" in society are not eyes, ears or a nose but certain social arrangements which are indispensable to the life of the society, since they ensure the discharge of vital functions in society.

Spencer introduced the concept of social structure but did not develop it further. Many of his ideas regarding the study of society have become redundant, yet his ideas on concepts like "structure" and "function" are still popular (see Cuff and Payne 1984 : 28-30)

ii) Although Durkheim has not directly talked about the term social structure, the understanding of some sort of a social structure is implicit in his writings. He applied the natural science methods, especially of biology, to the study of society. In his book, The Rules of Sociological Method, he has clearly stated that "social facts", are distinct from individual facts. They are, external to the individual and exercise constraint over his or her conduct. For example, laws of a society are "social facts" or the coinage of society is a "social fact". These are external to all the individual members of the society and at the same time exercise constraint on them.

For Durkheim, social order is a moral order. Society as not just the sum total of all its members but it is a reality *sui generis*, i.e., an emergent reality. It includes the collective values shared by the members of the society in general. According to him all social relationships give rise to expectations of patterns of conduct. In the process of developing the social relationships human beings develop common ways of looking at reality, of evaluating, feeling, thinking and behaving in society. This common way of behaving, acting and perceiving reality leads to the development of a common pattern of values and norms. It gives rise to certain expectations from members of the society and puts constraint on them. The result of this common way of social behaviour, of sharing the collective values, etc. leads to the emergence of the "collective consciousness" in society. We may say that for Durkheim to study the collective consciousness in a society was akin to discussing its social structure. But like Herbert Spencer, he too, did not clearly spell out this concept.

iii) Radcliffe-Brown defined social structure far more precisely than Durkheim, who was the source of many of his major ideas. However, it was from Herbert Spencer that he borrowed the organic analogy which has shaped his ideas on social structure and his structure-functionalist approach to the study of society.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952 : 11) defined social structure as "an arrangement of parts of components related to one another in some sort of a larger unity". It is "an arrangement of persons in relationships institutionally defined and regulated". He has described the "institutionally defined and regulated" relationship as that between the King and his subject, between husband and wife, etc. Thus relationships within society are ordered by various mores and norms.

a) **Social Morphology and Social Physiology**

He has related the concept of social structure to the concept of social function. Concept of function, according to him is the "contribution which a partial activity makes to the total activity of which it is a part" (Radcliffe-Brown 1952 : 181). This concept involves the notion of a structure consisting of a set of relations amongst unit entities. The continuity of the structure is maintained by a life-process made up of the activities of the constituent units. He called the structural aspect of society *Social Morphology*, and the functional aspect of society *Social Physiology*. Thus, for Radcliffe-Brown social structure consists of a network, of person to person relations, and when we study social structure we are concerned with the set of actually existing relations at a given point of time.

b) **Dyadic Relations and Social Structure**

Radcliffe-Brown's definition (1952 : 191) deals with all social relations of person to person which he calls dyadic relations, such as, between a father and son, or a mother's brother and his sister's son. He says that in an Australian tribe the whole social structure, is based on a network of person to person type of relations, which are established through genealogical connections. He includes under social structure, the differentiation of individuals and classes by their social role, for example, the differential social positions of master and servant, of ruler and the ruled, etc.

He distinguished between structure as an actually existing concrete reality empirically given and structural form. Just like the cells of an organism die out and are renewed, so also the individual members of society die and are replaced by new people born. Yet, the form of body remains same and so does the form of the social structure. Even during wars and revolutions, not all the framework of society is destroyed. For example, family institution is not only found universally but persists in all societies in spite of all changes.

c) **Spatial Aspect of Social Structure**

Society as an object of study is difficult to conceive of. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1952 : 193), we do not often find a society or community which is absolutely isolated and having no contact with the outside world. In the contemporary period, we find the network of social relations extending throughout the world, having no clear-cut boundary as such. Thus, for example in the case of India we do not know whether India as a whole is "a society" or whether the several religious groups, linguistic groups, tribal groups, etc. are distinct societies. Therefore, we have to define, first of all, the unit of study and compare it with other units of suitable size to study the structural system as it appears in and around that region. This is the *spatial aspect* of social structure which can vary from a village or family to a whole nation or the world, depending upon the unit of study.

d) **Social Structure and Social Laws**

Law, economic institution, education, moral ideas, values, etc. are the complex mechanisms by which a social structure exits and persists.

Most of the primitive institutions, values and belief appear in quite a new light if seen in relations to the social structure. For example, the 'Potlach' system of the Indians of the north-west America, appeared to the Canadian politicians as a wasteful foolishness. But for the social anthropologist it was a machinery for maintaining the social structure of lineages, clans and moieties, with which was combined an arrangement of rank defined by privileges. There are many other customs which appear ridiculous, but which perform tension removing functions in simple societies.

Law is the mechanism by which the social structure is maintained, social relations between persons and social groups are defined, restored and maintained. The system of law of a society can only be fully understood if it is studied in relation to the social structure and vice versa.

e) **Interests and Values in Society**

The study of social structure leads immediately to the study of interests or values in terms of which social relations are defined. "A social relation", according to Radcliffe-Brown (1952 : 194) "exists between two or more individuals when there is some adjustment of their respective interests by convergence of interests, or by limitation of conflicts that might arise from divergence of interests".

A social relation is not just similarity of interests, but is also based on mutual interests of persons in one another. The social solidarity results when two or more people have same goals and they cooperate with each other to achieve those goals.

f) **Social Structure and Social Institutions**

The study of social structure leads to the understanding of the network of social roles and, therefore, of social behaviour. Society reacts through its sanctions, in a positive or a negative way, to social behaviour. Sanctions maintain a given standard of social life. This include social laws, besides the norms, values, customs etc. of the society. The norms of society function through the social institutions of the society. Radcliffe-Brown (1952 : 10) has defined social institution as a social group which observes certain norms of conduct. The institution of a society, therefore, provides social ordering to interactions of persons in social relationship. This has two aspects, one is in terms of the social structure where it provides the norms to relationships, as within a family. The other aspect is the group or class, in which persons interact briefly or casually. An example of the first case, is the behaviour of a father in the family, of a doctor in the clinic, etc. The second case is that of the behaviour of a neighbour, a friend, etc.

Thus, according to Radcliffe-Brown, institutions, being standardised modes of behaviour, constitute the machinery by which a social structure maintains its existence and continuity.

In spite of his extensive explanations regarding the concept of social structure, Radcliffe-Brown has been accused of being too general. Amongst others, Raymond Firth criticised his analysis of social structure "for not making a distinction between the ephemeral, i.e., short-lived and enduring elements in social activity and also for making it impossible to distinguish the idea of the structure of the society from that of the totality of the society itself" (see Bottomore 1962: 109).

Other major contributions within the structural-functionalist school to the theory of social structure have been given by such sociologists and anthropologists as P.G. Murdock, Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Metton. Murdock used the term "social structure" as the very title of his book in which he has studied the institution of family in several tribes by using Human Relations Area Files, located at Yale University in the USA. He was the first person to collect these files and they remained his principal research tool in all his other works, as well.

Talcott Parsons defines social structure as a natural persistent system which maintains its continuity despite internal changes from time to time, in the same way as the organism does in reality. By natural persistent system, we mean that it has a life of its own. For him, social system is a much wider concept, including both the functional and structural aspect than just social structure.

Merton has also talked about the concept of social structure. Like many structural-functionalists social structure for him is the interrelation of social positions and roles.

25.3.2 The Structuralist Point of View

Claude Levi-Strauss of France is one of the major structuralists, who has given a distinct meaning to the concept of social structure. According to him the term "social structure" has nothing to do with empirical reality but it should deal with models which are built after it. Thus, Levi-Strauss (1953 : 524) says that social structure "can by no means be reduced to the ensemble of social relations to be described in a given society."

This model building on the basis of existing social relations will help one to clarify the difference between the two closely-related concepts of s*ocial structure and social relations.*

He says that it will be enough to state that social relations, consist of the raw materials out of which the models making up the social structure are built. Therefore, he believes that social structure cannot claim a field of its own among others, in the study of societies. It is rather a method to be applied to any kind of social studies. It is similar to the structural analysis which is current in other disciplines like linguistics, literature, political science, etc. (see Levi-Strauss 1953 : 525-553).

Applying the structuralist method, Louis Dumont (1970) in the study of caste system in India, shows that it is based on the fundamental social principle of hierarchy. He says that the principle of hierarchy, is the core of the caste system, and is opposed to the principle of equality. In this system, man as the member of society is given more importance than the individual. Here the concepts of the individual, freedom, and equality of mankind are relatively less important.

These ideals of individualism, freedom and equality are negated by the three basic features of caste system, such as heredity, hierarchy and endogamy. Like Levi-Strauss, Louis Dumont too has used the kinship system, to explain many of his views regarding the structuralist approach.

25.3.3 The Marxist Point of View

The Marxist theories regarding the concept of social structure are free from the bias of organic analogy of the structure functionalists Karl Marx (1877) has written about the relations of production as constituting "the economic structure, the real basis on which is erected a judicial and political super-structure and to which correspond the forms of the determined social conscience". In this explanation Marx has used the term structure, not in the biological sense, but in the sense of a building or construction.

But his notion of structure cannot be clearly distinguished from the other related concepts.

Edmund Leach (1968 : 482-88) a British social anthropologist, says that "in Marx's work there are references made to political, juridical, religious, and philosophical system. But here the term "system" is almost indistinguishable from the above uses of "structure", "superstructure", and "form". In both Marxist and non-Marxist literature, lately, sociologists have added such variants as "infrastructure", "macrostructure", "microstructure" etc.

Marx had viewed the historical development of societies in terms of stages such as the primitive, ancient, feudal, capitalist and, finally communist according to their distinctive modes of production. This historical development is governed by the law of "dialectical materialism" about which you will learn more in elective course 3. In each stage of social development, society is divided into social classes on the basis of ownership or non-ownership of property. The owners as a class, have a dominant position in society and they exploit the class of non-owners. The owners are in minority in all societies while the non-owners are in majority. Yet the owners as a class are able to exploit the masses by extracting surplus value of their labour. This exploitation goes on till the masses become united and the 'seeds of revolution' becomes ripe. When a revolution occurs, the mode of production changes.

According to Marx, societies will develop till the stage of communism where there will not be any classes; where society will be based on equality in all respects. This view gives an ideal picture of society and is not yet found in reality. Even the Russian and Chinese societies, which are generally referred to as socialist societies, do not reach up to this ideal.

Most of the Marxist sociologists, both in India and abroad, use the concept of class in studying the structure and process of a society.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Define Radcliffe-Brown's concept of social structure. Give an example. Use about five lines.

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2) What is the spatial aspect of social structure? Explain in about five lines.

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3) According to Levi-Strauss, social structure can be reduced to the ensemble of social relations in a given society. Tick the correct box.

True		False

25.4 SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Social structure, in all societies and at all times, experiences change. Change is an essential aspect of all societies, and it is brought about by the process of social evolution, in all societies. Several social anthropologists and sociologists have attempted to study the process of social evolution in societies, which brings about change in the structure and the functioning of societies. Here we are going to discuss some of these processes of change, as explained by some sociological thinkers.

25.4.1 Social Differentiation in Societies

There have been many ways in which social thinkers have explained social differentiation in societies. Social differentiation means the process in which the various parts; i.e., social groups and institutions of society become more complex, and each of them performs some specialised tasks. Some of these thinkers are:

i) **Henry Maine** has made a distinction between the societies based on *social status* and those based on *social contract*. According to him traditional societies, like Indian society, were based on the relations of social status, where the prestige and ascriptive criteria, determine the status of the person in society. The caste system, especially the *jajmani* system, found within the caste system in India, depicts the relations of social status.

Jajmani system in India was based on the patron-client relationship, where each caste had certain rights and obligations towards the other. In this relationship prestige element, and a sense of obligation of the patron to protect his clients; formed a significant feature. It was above all an economic system which took care of the distribution of agricultural and material goods produced within the society and exchange of services rendered.

In contrast to this society, the society having social contract type of relationship, gives, importance to the role of the individual. Here achievement is more important than ascriptive criteria. All exchanges of goods and services are based on rational grounds of profit. Social values of prestige, of obligations, etc. do not count in this type of relationship. This type of relationship is found in modern, complex societies where all formal exchange are contractual.

ii) **Emile Durkheim** (1964) has described the nature of social solidarity in two types of societies, depending on the division of labour present in it. Thus, he says that mechanical solidarity is found in pre-industrial societies. In these societies there are relatively little social differentiation in the sense that division of labour in these societies is based on criteria of age, sex, etc. rather than specialised skills. Here solidarity is based on similarities between the members of society. They have more scope for face-to-face contact and share values, beliefs and social norms. Even the roles performed within the society are shared to a great degree. In these societies the "collective conscience" which includes the moral values and belief aspect of society is very strong. Therefore, in these societies, according to Durkheim laws of repressive kind are practised which are based on the idea of punishing the criminal for hurting the "collective conscience".

In the industrial societies based on *organic solidarity* society is based on differences. All the parts of the society performs a different function which contributes to the life of the total society. Thus, division of labour in these societies is more complicated. Unlike the societies having "mechanical solidarity" these societies are based on restitutive laws which emphasises the reform of the criminal. Here we find numerous occupational roles and social differentiation is based on several criteria's of occupation, income, power, prestige, age, sex, etc.

25.4.2 Evolution versus Revolution

The concept of social evolution is derived from Darwins' theory of biological evolution. It implies order, change and progress. It has been used to refer to certain definite stages, through which all societies were supposed to have passed, from a simple to a more complex form. Thus, social evolution like biological evolution, refers to gradual change in which change is measured in terms of greater complex, refers to gradual change in which change is measured in terms of greater complexity of structure. Evolution is a one way process; but in societies we find that sometimes change can be from complex to simple, as well. For example, it has been seen in some places, that a major trading centre or city became a small village, within a period of time, due to economic and political factors. Some of the major social evolutionists are Morgan, Spencer, Henry Maine, etc.

Social revolution implies total transformation of the structure of society, as has been explicated by Karl Marx. According to him the mode of production of a society changes after a revolution, and with it the "super-structure", (which includes all values, beliefs, all socio-political institutions etc.) also changes. Unlike evolution, revolution is quick and often violent. It could be a non- violent revolution also; such as the one brought about by Mahatma Gandhi during the Nationalist Movement in India. But revolution is never gradual. It is immediately perceptible to the members of the society.

However, the functionalists believe that no society can be totally transformed. Some institutions, like marriage, family, etc. survive all social transformations. These are some of the views regarding evolution, as against revolution, in relation to the structure of society.

25.4.3 Social Structure and Anomie

Emile Durkheim for the first time used the concept of anomie in his book. The *Division of Labour in Society* (1964). He defined anomie as the state of normlessness in society. He said that members of society need certain social conditions for social participation, in which they can attain happiness. If these social conditions are not present the members of that society loose the necessary social integration and become anomie. These necessary social conditions are those where the conduct of men and women is governed by norms, which are integrated and not conflicting in the society. The individual members of the society, should be morally involved with other people in the society.

Robert K. Merton's use of the term anomie varies from Durkheims', in the sense that he has defined anomie, on the basis of the gap between the cultural goals in society, and the norms or the available institutional means to attain them. He says that conformity in society is achieved when both the cultural goals and available norms are accepted by the members of the society.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer .

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Describe mechanical solidarity. Use about six lines.

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2) Give an example to show the difference between social evolution and revolution. Use about two lines.

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3) What is anomie? Distinguish between Durkheim's definition and Robert K. Merton's definition of anomie. Use about seven lines.

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25.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have explained the history and development of the concept of social structure amongst some of the major schools of sociological thought. We have first discussed the structural-functionalist's view of social structure as described by Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, etc. It has been shown that the concept of social structure is at the core of their understanding of society.

We have discussed the structuralists point of view. The way Claude Levi-Strauss has defined social structure and made a distinction between this concept and the concept of social relations. His concept is only a model of the actually existing social relations in a society. We have also discussed here the application of structuralist approach by Louis Dumont to study the caste system in India.

We have described the Marxist point of view of social structure which is implicit in the terminology used like "superstructure", "infrastructure" etc. In this unit we have also described the relations between social structure and social change, including the process of social differentiation in society. We have also discussed here the relationship between social structure and anomie.

25.6 KEY WORDS

Affinal : The relationships which are acquired through marriage, such as, wife's brother, husband's sister, etc.

Analogy : Similarity or correspondence between two things or ideas.

Consanguineal : The relationships which one has through the blood ties, such as, of mother and child, or brothers and sisters, etc.

Constraint : Any kind of restraint or compulsion felt by an individual.

Genealogical : Any link which corresponds to the descent traced continuously from an ancestor.

Heuristic devices : The means to provide aid in solving problems.

Indispensable : Something which is essential and cannot be substituted.

Methodology : It is the body of methods, tools and techniques of studying society, as in the case of a student of sociology.

Morphology : It is the study of forms or structure of animals, plants or the society as in our case.

Physiology : It is the study of the life-process or functioning of animals, plants or the society.

Potlatch : The practice of holding feasts among the American North-West tribals was known as the institution of potlatch, which is cited as an example of to show how giving of goods to the extent of physically destroying them was linked with the particular tribal group's claims to a higher status.

Segmentary : Anything which is divided into different parts or sections.

25.7 FURTHER READINGS

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25.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) According to Firth, social structure is concerned with the more basic social relations which give a society its basic structure, while social organisation deals with the choices and decisions involved in actual relations.

2) The homestead is the basic unit of social structure in Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer tribe.

3) Both Fred Eggan and S.F. Nadel defined social structure in terms of social status and roles of the individuals in society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Radcliffe-Brown has defined social structure as "an arrangement of persons, in relationships institutionally defined and regulated". These institutionally defined and regulated network of relationships are of the kind, such as, of mother and father in a family; of a judge in the court, etc.

2) The spatial aspect of social structure defines the limit or the size of the society to be studied. It provides the unit of study which can be compared with other units of similar size to arrive at the structural system of that society.

3) False

Check Your Progress 3

1) Mechanical solidarity is the solidarity found in pre-industrial societies. It is the solidarity of likeness or similarities. In such societies social differentiation is minimal and division of labour is based on criteria's of age, sex, etc. Here the collective conscience of the society is very strong.

2) Social evolution is a gradual, slow progress while revolution is relatively short and swift change in the structure of society.

3) Anomie is the virtual normlessness in society. According to Durkheim when the normative structure of the society breaks down the integration of the individual in the society becomes weak. This leads to anomie in society. For Merton, anomie occurs when there is a gap between the culturally defined goals and the socially available means to acquire them.

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Social Structure

7

UNIT 26 SOCIAL ROLES

Structure

26.0 Objectives

26.1 Introduction

26.2 The Concept of Role

- 26.2.1 Role as a Dynamic Aspect of Status
- 26.2.2 Refinement of the Concept of Role

26.3 Classification of Roles

- 26.3.1 Ascribed and Achieved Roles
- 26.3.2 Relational and Non-relational Roles
- 26.3.3 Basic, General and Independent Roles

26.4 Role Systems : Simple and Complex

- 26.4.1 Roles in Simple Societies
- 26.4.2 Roles in Complex Societies

26.5 Dimensions of Roles

- 26.5.1 Multiple Roles and Role-set
- 26.5.2 Role Signs
- 26.5.3 Role Changing
- 26.5.4 Role Conflict and Strain

26.6 Use of Role Theory

26.7 Let Us Sum Up

26.8 Key Words

26.9 Further Readings

26.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

26.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept of role;
- describe various models of classifying roles;
- identify roles in simple and complex societies;
- discuss the notions of the multiple roles and role-set;
- describe role signs and role changing;
- explain role conflict and role strain; and
- discuss how role theory can be used in sociological research.

26.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we have covered the concept of role as a dynamic aspect of status. This unit follows the one on social structure. We have indicated how roles have been classified. We also describe roles in both simple and complex system. Next, the dimensions of role are taken up. These include a discussion of multiple roles and role set, role signs and role changing, role conflict and role structure. Finally, we examine the use of role theory.

26.2 THE CONCEPT OF ROLE

In everyday usage the word role is used for the part an actor undertakes in a theatrical production, or in a motion picture. Suppose an actor or actress is assigned a part (role) in a play or motion picture. He or she is now supposed to play the role in a convincing manner. To make the playing of the part successful, the actor or actress, must be able to really understand the role, he or she is playing. This includes portraying the feelings. It also includes portraying the responsibilities, and the gestures that go with the role. The dress and speech must also conform to the role. That is, there must be a certain degree of naturalness and consistency in the role performance. If the actor or actress succeeds in his or her performance, he or she is well appreciated. According to Shakespeare, the world is a stage and each person is playing a role. In this view all people are playing roles in life. However, Shakespeare did not elaborate what he meant by this. In Sociology, role and role-playing have been developed as specific concepts. Let us examine how this is so by looking at the concept of role as an aspect of status.

26.2.1 Role as a Dynamic Aspect of Status

The concept of role was initially developed by Ralph Linton (1936). According to Linton, individuals occupy positions in different aspects of social life. Some examples of this are being a father or mother in a family. A person can also be a teacher in a school. He or she can also simultaneously be an office holder in an association. There positions are called statuses by Linton. In Linton's words (1936 : 113-4), 'statuses are the polar positions ... in patterns of reciprocal behaviour'. A polar position comprises 'a collection of rights and duties'. Thus he conceived of status as a group of rights and duties. When a person is enacting these rights and duties, he is said to be performing a role. For example, when a teacher gives a lecture, he is performing his duty or performing his role of a teacher.

Going on from there Lintion pointed out that a role is the "dynamic" side of status. It puts into action the various rights and duties. Thus, a teacher when he/she enters the school begins immediately to display the role that is attached to his or her status.

26.2.2 Refinement of the Concept of Role

The above formulation of the concept of role was refined further by Newcomb and Banton. Newcomb (1942) made a distinction between the expected behaviour related to a position and the actual behaviour. He pointed out that the way in which a person behaves may not always be what is expected of him. The expected behaviour conforms to the position that one occupies. That is to say, one's role is directly associated with one's position, and sometimes a person's actual behaviour, may not conform to his or her expected role. Michael Banton (1965) further refined the concept and noted that a role is a set of norms and expectations, applied to the holder of any particular position. Banton distinguished between:

i) **norms,** which are to be observed as a matter of course. These carry the message that the holder of a role *should behave* in a particular kind of manner; and

ii) **general expectations,** which indicate that the holder of a position, *will behave* in a certain way in any specific situation.

To understand Banton's ideas, let us take an example. Suppose Rita is a teacher in a school. In this case, Rita becomes the holder of the position of teacher. The school itself has a set of rules and regulations. These are in existence to guide every teacher's conduct in class. This will include;

i) going to the class, when the bell rings, and

ii) take the attendance of her students, and so on.

As is usual these norms have sanctions to back them up and make them effective. Apart from this, there are the expectations, such as being well dressed. Also, good conduct in the class is expected. This second set of expectations, includes efficient teaching and so on. These comprise only expectation, because they are not necessarily backed by sanctions.

26.3 CLASSIFICATION OF ROLES

Various methods of classifying roles have been used by sociologists. We are here concerned with classifications of roles in terms of social status.

26.3.1 Ascribed and Achieved Roles

According to Linton roles can be divided into:

i) ascribed roles; and

ii) achieved roles.

The ascribed roles are those obtained at birth. Here role learning commences at birth itself. Such learning pertains to one's caste, class, family, gender and so on. Each caste, for example, has its own set of rituals to be performed at the birth of a child, who is subjected to various ceremonial procedures at every stage of growing-up.

Achieved roles are acquired by individuals through merit and competition. Thus, this method of classification is based on the way that roles are allocated.

26.3.2 Relational and Non-relational Roles

Nadel (1957) adopted the principle of content (i.e., the kind of conduct expected) of roles and divided them, like Linton, into two categories of ascribed-achieved roles. He further subdivided them into relational and non-relational roles. A relational role can be played only in relation to a complementary role, while non-relational role is not dependent on a complementary role. A husband's role cannot be perceived without the wife's role. Similarly a creditor's role is inconceivable without a debtor. Thus, these can be taken as examples of relational roles. On the other hand, the examples of the role of a poet or a scholar do not require a complementary role, in the sense that a poet does not have to interact with others for writing poetry. Thus, such roles can be described as non-relational. Nadel's classification is based mainly on the conduct that is implied in them. Thus, role differentiation for Nadel indicated to what extent holding of one role, is independent of holding or relating to other roles.

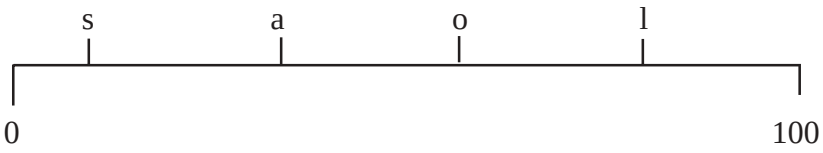
26.3.3 Basic, General and Independent Roles

Banton (1965) outlines a three fold classification which is based on the differentiation. For him, this kind of classification "reveals new facts of social organisation and suggests new problems for investigation" (Banton 1965 : 33). These three types of roles are:

i) basic roles;

ii) general roles;

iii) independent roles, Banton (1965 : 33) uses a scale to indicate these roles:



basic roles general roles independent roles

s = sex roles

a = age roles

o = occupational roles

l = leisure roles

This scale given by Banton compares the degree to which in relation to others certain roles are independent. According to Banton independent roles have few implications outside the concerned activity. Compared to independent roles, one's occupational roles determine other peoples behaviour in different contexts also. On the other hand, a person's age and sex roles define his or her conduct in most situations. Banton makes it clear that placing of roles, on his scale, will differ from society to society. According to him primitive societies have a small number of undifferentiated basic roles, linked to sex and age. In technologically advanced societies independent roles become more numerous.

Finally, Aidan Southall (1959) classified roles according to the principal social domains in which they are exercised. They are five: kinship, economic, political, religious and recreational domains. Looking at different ways of classifying roles, we can say that no classification of roles can be said to be the only valid classification. Each of the classification is developed for some specific purpose.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Write a note on the concept of role. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) Is there only one valid way of classifying roles? Use two lines for your answer.

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26.4 ROLE SYSTEMS : SIMPLE AND COMPLEX

The concept of role can be applied to understand various aspects of life in both simple and complex societies. As every member of the social group has a role to play, an examination of each role shows, what lies behind cooperation or conflict among its members.

26.4.1 Roles in Simple Societies

Let us consider roles in simple societies-such as those of the Bushmen of the Kalahari desert in southern Africa. Roles among the Bushmen are dependent on (i) sex, (ii) age and (iii) kinship/affinity. These roles form a rigid role system in these societies. The role of spirit-medium, is the only role which is independent of this rigid role system. A spirit-medium functions as a person who can contact the other world on behalf of society. He can do this for determining agricultural or any other problems. Here, we first describe the three bases of roles, and then discuss the role of spirit medium.

i) Differences upon sex provide different roles to males and females. The male takes care of hunting, making weapons and also assisting his wife in collecting wood and water. His wife looks after the hearth and home. She also helps keep the camp clean.

ii) Age based roles are also very important. For a boy the transition to adulthood comes when he shoots a buck. Following this he is decorated with facial and chest scars. He is also free to marry. He may marry a baby, but the marriage becomes effective only when she matures. Bushmen respect their elders. In old age men and women, take on the role of experts on traditional myths and legends, and family history.

iii) The ties of kinship and affinity define mutual obligations among the people. Mothers and fathers bring up the children in the traditional way. The grown up children have a set of mutual obligations with their parents. The relationship between husband and wife, also determines the allocation of roles. Again a marriage can be severed very easily. However, divorce is rare, and so are marital quarrels. Marriage between closely related persons is avoided. This is to keep kin ties clear.

These distinctions of sex, age and kinship are all represented in organising socio-political life of the bands. The leader of a band is selected mainly on the basis of a person's ability to plan the band's movements, and consideration of its resources. This extra responsibility is not rewarded in any way and an inefficient leader can be easily replaced by another person. However, the role of spirit-medium cannot be replaced in an arbitrary way. The old and experienced mediums, choose men of proven healing ability to act as spirit-medium. Thus, the overall system for allocating roles is very rigid. The harsh environment preclude conflicts in roles. In simple societies, physical distinctions are usually not translated into social distinctions. Thus, men and women feel it is wrong to perform tasks that belong to the other. Among the Bushmen, they even have fixed places to sit.' Let us see how roles are allocated in complex societies.

Activity 1

Prepare a chart of all the roles that you play as a member of your society, beginning from your family. Relate the kind of status that you occupy as per that role and what are the duties or privileges that you enjoy as a result of your status. Write an essay of about two pages on "My Role and Status in My Society". Compare your essay with your peers at your study centre and discuss the topic with your Academic Counsellor.

26.4.2 Roles in Complex Societies

Often societies have to develop new ways of role allocation. Societies with advanced technologies have to develop, wider range of criteria for allocating roles. For example, problems arise if one tribe conquers another, and wants to administer it permanently. The simple method of role allocation by age, sex and so on is then not workable, because the king must have retainers. He also needs soldiers whose loyalty is primarily to him. This obligation is even greater than the one to their kinsmen. The king rewards them for their services in money. In this type of society the family into which a person is born, becomes important and the family status assumes greater significance. Thus, we arrive at an important basis for role allocation in a relatively more complex society. In such circumstances, there are developed new criteria for role allocation. Social strata are one such criterion.

i) **Social Strata**

Clear social strata (estates) make their presence: nobles, commoners and serfs. All the people in the same strata lead a similar-existence. They also have the same obligations and privileges towards the king. Although more flexible than the rigid role system in simple societies, social strata can, become so rigid that they cannot be entered except by birth. After birth they cannot be left. An example of this is the caste system. In India, under Hinduism everyone belongs to a caste.

Caste members pursue the same occupations and have the same religious rites. They are governed by prescribed rules, in the matters of eating and social mixing with other castes. If they contact lower castes they must cleanse themselves of pollution. Similarly in the medieval period, feudal system gave rise to a series of distinct groups (nobels, clergy, commoners, peasants) in Western Europe. A pattern of closed social strata was formed on the basis of these groups.

ii) **Specialisation and Diversification**

In Industrial systems of today the categories of sex, age and kinship; retain their importance for role allocation, but, the major factor is the increased specialisation of social tasks. There is also a diversification of society into very many sectors with their own rules. Even the smallest of an organisations role have to be defined clearly. Even a small roadside restaurant will have specialist cooks, washerman, cleaners, waiters, gardener, manager and so on. When these roles are all well-defined, there are fewer frictions.

Let us suppose that this restaurant expands, and begins to run its own tours. It then launches its own car rental service. As a consequence the roles needing to be played

will be multiplied. Industrial societies require highly complex incentives. They also require a great deal of flexibility. Large business concerns cannot depend on one person alone. Records and files must be kept meticulously. Rules and regulations

imply much record keeping. The personal touch is lost, and the needs of the complex system very often begins to dominate human beings.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Rules in a simple system are very many and also very difficult to play. Tick the correct box.

Yes ☐ No ☐

2) In a complex society roles are very specialised. Comment using about five lines.

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26.5 DIMENSIONS OF ROLES

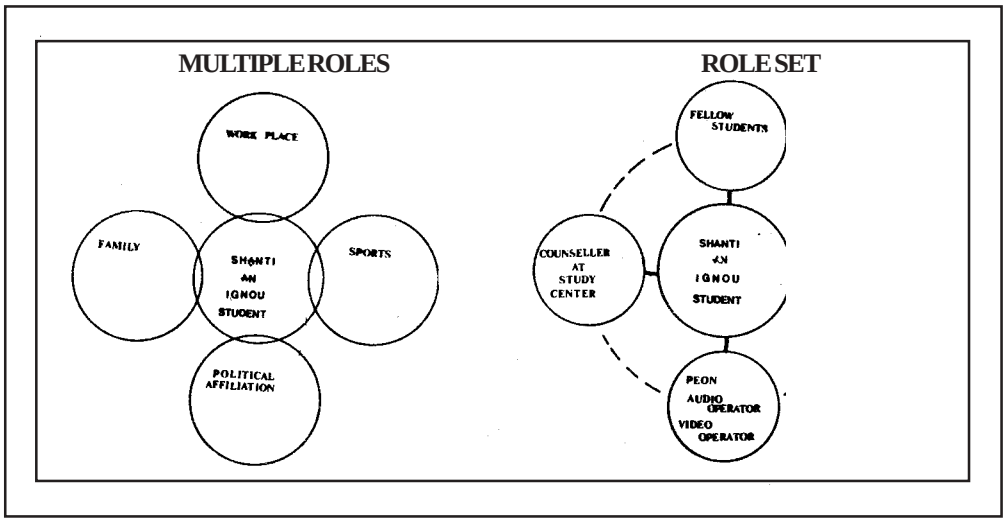
Now, we look at various aspects of the concept of role. First, we speak of the array of roles that an individual may perform, then we discuss the different role-relationships which make up a role-set. Similarly, we discuss the array of role sign, changing of roles, role conflict and strain.

26.5.1 Multiple Roles and Role-set

It is important to realise that one person can occupy more than one role. For example, in the area of kinship alone, one cannot avoid holding many roles at the same time. Try to count how many kinship roles you occupy. In the modern times, we find that people have several roles in other areas of social life than kinship. For example, besides being a son/daughter, brother/sister, husband/wife, father/mother etc., you are an IGNOU student, the citizen of your nation, and you may be occupying many other roles of various types. Occupying of many roles is given the term multiple roles.

Of these multiple roles, some are played together while others are separated. Similarly, some may be carried out in a sequence and other over many years. It is quite common to observe the situation of intra-role conflict, because often a person occupying several roles faces opposite expectations in different role sectors.

While playing one role, a person is linked with many 'role-others'. According to Merton (1968-84) these 'role-others' with regard to a particular person form his/her role-set. Merton distinguishes this idea of role-set from multiple roles, which are several roles of the same person. A role-set, on the other hand, refers to 'role-others' in relation to a person playing a role. For example, a student of IGNOU will carry on his/her role (as a student) in relation to specific 'role-others' such as the counsellor, fellow students, the librarian, the audio/video operator, the peon at the study-centre. Thus, in relation to a student, all these are 'role-others' from role-set. The following diagrams clearly show the difference between multiple roles and a role-set.



26.5.2 Role Signs

The area of role signs is a vast topic and here we will touch only the main points. In all cultures across the world, we find that costume is basic as a role sign that differentiates males from females. Why is this the case?

This is because these role signs serve as an indicator of differences between men and women. Their roles are also different in the social organisation. Thus a role sign tells us more about a person or group. Just as a broken window is sign of violence and a wasted appearance a sign of ill health, a dress can serve as a sign of a role. There are some roles which have more signs while in other cases role signs are few or not at all. Let us consider a situation where all role signs are removed: the general takes off his uniform, and the policeman follows suit. Men start wearing skirts and saris and ladies pants and coats! What would be the result? Basic information would become muddled up. It would take a long time to find out the fundamental information. Thus role signs provide a better means of conveying information than does verbal communication. It would also become difficult to know what good conduct is, as the examples in daily life will be difficult to follow. Thus, role signs further communication as well as control. According to Banton (1965 : 689-92) signs of various roles can be usefully described in terms of basic, general and independent roles.

i) Signs of Basic Roles

In social life basic roles involve a combination of sexual differences, distinctions of age and domestic relations. For example, first name for two sexes are almost always different. Again in both cases, male and female, ways of dressing up, kind of work taken up generally differ as the infant boy/girl matures into adolescence; and then into a young man/woman. In modern Western society efforts are being made to bring about egalitarianism in matters of domestic relations.

Basic role signs provide us fundamental information about what we might expect in behavioural terms. Thus head gear, wearing of rings, skirts, trousers -all have specific indications.

Activity 2

Identify some signs and symbols used by people in your community which relate to the kind of role they are playing in society and the status which they occupy. For eg. The "mangalsutra" or gold necklace that your mother or wife or you may be wearing which denotes your/her married status. Write a note of one page on; "Role Signs" and discuss it with other students at your study centre.

ii) **Signs of General Roles**

In using signs for general roles, the idea is to distinguish a role because of its relevance in a particular situation. Secondly signs for general roles, are also allocated on the basis of a role's implications, for other role relationships. The role, that is interdependent with other roles is likely to be distinguished by a role sign. In this way, role signs also serve to control and prevent deviant behaviour. For example in the eyes of an ordinary citizen, the uniform of a policeman gives him power to maintain law and order.

iii) **Signs for Independent Roles**

As independent roles have few, if any, implications for other roles, they hardly require role signs. When placed within a particular setting, such roles may need some distinguishing signs. Within an organisation, such signs may serve a specific purpose while for outsiders, these may simply be prestige signs. Clearly, signs of independent roles carry a specific meaning only in a limited sense, for example, the badge of a particular office in an exclusive club will have relevance for its members only.

26.5.3 Role Changing

To change roles is often very difficult. The person must know the rights and obligations concerning new roles. He or she must change his/her behaviour accordingly. Other people also have to change their roles towards him/her. Role change, therefore, can be problematic. Let us consider the above with the help of some examples. In almost all tribal societies childhood and adulthood are comparatively difficult. A youth, unable to pass his initiation test, is in a bad position. He may never be able to marry if he lives among the Bushmen! Thus, role changing here, is a must if negative sanctions are to be avoided.

Take another example. In an industrial society which changes rapidly, role models themselves undergo change. None of them can be followed uncritically. There is no ready way in which role change can be made.

Let us consider adulthood. This implies readiness for marriage. 'This involves a role change. It is also a fact which alters social relations. All these require alteration of role behaviour by husband, wife, relations and friends. In marriage, the bride undergoes a greater change since it is often a time of extreme emotional changes for her. She may have to leave her home and go to the place where her husband lives.

Finally, a word about retirement and death. Retirement tends to be an individual event. Further there is a sense of loss and despair. This comes from being jerked out of a particular routine. What follows is a lack of routine. This can be very disorienting, and it takes a person time to pick up the threads. Death itself, is a period of adjustment for the widow/widower and others. They will now have to take on more responsibilities. Role changes often take long and tend to be a period of frustrating adjustments.

26.5.4 Role Conflict and Strain

Society is structured in a manner that keeps conflict of roles down to a minimum. However, there are occasions that individuals have to play rather incompatible roles. For example, stepfather and stepson, or the role of divided loyalties between two employers. Such situations cause role conflict to increase. Role-conflict comes when commitment is divided between two or more roles. As a result, usually the overall performance suffers.

Role strain occurs in case of situations where a person does not fit into the slot given to him/her. Thus, if a woman is physically mature but does not marry we have role strain. If a woman marries but is sterile, this again creates role strain. The position is very difficult for a barren woman. She cannot lead the life of an ordinary wife. Among the Nuer of Sudan, she can become a diviner or a trader. She is considered to be almost a man. Again, among the Hindus, the spinster creates role strain. In some communities, this is reduced by marrying her to a tree or a fruit. The small number of roles in society also creates strains. There are customs, therefore, which reduce these strains in an innocuous manner. One such device is the festival or carnival which takes place each year. Ranks are forgotten and everybody intermingles. Role adjustment is more difficult in tribal and peasant societies. In industrial societies the chances of acceptance of roles that do not go into a slot are much larger. However, strain does exist whenever a role faces the problems of choice and adjustment.

Role Conflict

26.6 USE OF ROLE THEORY

The concept of role has been applied in sociological analyses of various dimensions of social life. As we record changes in the notions and expectations around particular roles we arrive at the process of social changes. Similarly, in studying role relationships, we focus our attention at the complex nature of organisational links in social life. Here we point out some of such applications of role-theory in sociological research. Both functionalists and interactionists use this concept.

The functionalists view roles as the culturally defined behaviour which is linked with particular social statuses. For them, roles are determined by social values, norms and attitudes. The interactionists believe that the sense of self comes fully through interaction. They emphasise that we learn meanings by interacting with others, and then organise our social life around these meanings. They lay special stress on the interaction aspect than the social role aspect. They discuss roles in terms of individual choices and interpretation of one's roles.

Both the schools of sociological thought increase our understanding of the concept of role, and each perspective can be used advantageously in different ways. Social roles, patterned either flexibly or rigidly, are better explained in terms of functionalist approach. The roles, attached to positions with a wide range of feelings, beliefs and behaviour can be fully discussed in terms of interactive view of role. Thus, we find that both approaches are useful.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is a role sign? Comment in about five lines.

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2) Role change requires only a different dress.

Yes No

3) What is role strain? Use about three lines for your answer.

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4) How do the interactionists view the concept of role? Use one line for your answer.

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26.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have described various aspects of social roles. We began by pointing out various conceptions of role. We also pointed out how roles can be classified. We then examined the ideas related to multiple roles and role-sets. These concepts were then seen to exist in simple and complex role systems. Our unit continued with the discussion of role signs and role changing. Finally, we dwelt upon the use of role theory. We have, thus covered the basic issues connected with the subject of social roles.

26.8 KEY WORDS

Achieved roles : These are roles, which are gained by personal efforts, such as a General in the army, Prime Minister in a democracy and so on.

Ascribed roles : In these type of roles, birth is the basic influence. For example, being born in a certain caste will imply certain role behaviours e.g., a priest's son will train to be a priest.

Complex role system : In such role systems there is a great variety and specialisation in roles.

Cooperation : This implies that members in a team pull together in the direction of the goal.

Multiple role : This indicates the fact that every man or woman has to play different roles in different situations. For example, a teacher in the school; a worshipper in the temple and so on.

Role : This is a combination of rights and duties. It is the dynamic aspect of status.

Role-other : A role-other is a person with whom a person ;interacts while performing a role.

Role-set : Here the multi-links of a single role in a single situation are highlighted, eg. see the diagram in this unit.

Role signs : These arise when a person is not able to fully play a role assigned to him or her. Eg. a sterile husband or a barren wife.

Simple role system : In such social systems, mainly tribal ones, there are few roles, relatively speaking, in the division of labour.

26.9 FURTHER READINGS

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Goodenough,l Ward H., 1965. *Rethinking 'Status' and 'Role' : Toward a General Model of the Cultural Organisation of Social Relationships. In Michael* Banton (ed) *The Relevance of Models; for Social Anthropology*. Tavistock Publications : London, pp. 1-22

Worsely, Peter, 1970. *Introducing Sociology*. Penguin Books : London Chapter 2, pp. 294-301

26.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Individuals have different positions in social life. For example, being a managing director of a company or an editor in a publishing house. Such position are called statuses. A status is, therefore, a set of rights and duties. When a person is enacting these, a person is performing a role.

2) No, there are more than one way of classifying roles. One can give at least four different ways of classifying them. Each of these classification has been developed for a specific aim.

Check Your Progress 2

1) No

2) In complex systems, specialisation of social tasks is a necessity. Even in small companies, well-defined roles are needed to make it work properly. Very many roles are subsumed in every endeavour of complex systems.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Role signs give pointers to differences between roles. For example, dresses/ costumes differentiate between men and women. Role signs tell us, for example, more about the role of a person.

2) False.

3) Role strain results when the incumbent of a role cannot properly play it. For example, a lady police officer may find it difficult to handle criminals on the one hand and behave in a lady like manner otherwise, as generaly a lady of a good family is expected to behave.

4) The interactionsists explain the concept of role in terms of individual choices, and interpretation of person's roles.

UNIT 27 SOCIAL NETWORKS

Structure

27.0 Objectives

27.1 Introduction

27.2 Social Network : Basic Concept

- 27.2.1 The Total Network of Social Relationships
- 27.2.2 Formation and Operation of Social Networks

27.3 Types of Social Network

- 27.3.1 Personal and Group-based Networks
- 27.3.2 Characteristics of Personal Networks

27.4 Ego-Centric Personal Network

- 27.4.1 Ego-Centric and Non-ego Centric Personal Networks Defined
- 27.4.2 Problems in the Delineation of Ego-Centric Personal Network

27.5 Personal Network and the Social Structure

- 27.5.1 Personal Network and Formal Organisation
- 27.5.2 The Concept of 'Source'
- 27.5.3 Resource Networks and Resource Groups

27.6 Let Us Sum Up

27.7 Key Words

27.8 Further Readings

27.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

27.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- define a social network;
- describe the process of formation and operation of social network;
- discuss characteristics of personal networks; and
- show the relationship between personal networks and social structure.

27.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit follows those on social structure and social roles. It concerns social networks. Networks or social relationships between individuals are the smallest observable units of social behaviour. These are better known as *personal networks* which are, for purposes of study, extracted from the total networking in society. This unit discuses the process of formation and operation of social networks. After examining characteristics of personal networks the unit focuses on ego-centric personal networks,

and describes some problems in applying this idea to empirical research. Then, we examine the relationship between personal networks and social structure. This is explained in terms of relationships formed in formal organisations. We also discuss the ideas of resource networks and resource groups.

27.2 SOCIAL NETWORK : BASIC CONCEPT

The term "network' has been added only recently to the vocabulary of sociology. It refers to the set of relationships or links, a person has with others. By the fact of birth, one automatically becomes a member of a family network. Then there are social networks which are created out of individual efforts e.g., membership of a club, a circle of friends and so on. The social networks are both structured and created. This means, that networks have a series of social relationships, ordered in a certain way, and secondly they are built by conscious efforts of individuals for certain goals. As such social factors influence the formation of networks, individuals also play an active role in their formation and continuity.

Social networks basically reflect the nature of links between individuals. That is, they show how individuals relate to each other. Those who can be trusted to provide support are recruited into a network, which then becomes a medium of mobilising resources. Defining networks in this way shows us how significant this concept can be for explaining social behaviour in any organisational setting.

27.2.1 The Total Network of Social Relationships

Society itself is visualised as a chain of social relations. This chain includes various kinds of relations, e.g., acquaintance, friendship, kinship, classmateship etc. Some of the individuals in the chain are in direct contact with each other, while others are linked only indirectly. A chain of social relationships among individuals has no boundary except that of the society concerned. The total chain of social relationships may thus be viewed as coinciding with society itself.

Activity 1

Do you think you are linked up with the wider world and societies? This world may include a range of relationships from your friends, family, kinsmen, etc. doctors, hospital staff, schools, teachers, etc. to the global level of influences on you and your people of other societies, such as, the American society, the British and so on through the mass media, satellite channels on T.V., E-mail or Internet Website etc. Write a report on "My Social Network" of about one page. Discuss your report with your fellow students at the Study Centre.

the basic unit of such a chain is the relationship between individuals. The *dyadic relations*, i.e., between two individuals, from the chain interconnected through the coupling links of individuals. We may, therefore, conclude that the concept of total network is oriented to the individual, and we can delimit and extract personal networks out of the total network. However, before discussing the types of social networks, let us first look briefly at the process of their formation and operation.

27.2.2 Formation and Operation of Social Networks

Right from one's birth, each person becomes a part of a network. The immediate network of newly born human beings, is their families and kin groups. They are introduced to the social networks of their parents. As children grow, they develop social links with other children in the neighbourhood and school. They begin to look up to their peer groups. By the time they are adults, they are tied with wider networks,

formed on the basis of their profession in groups, social clubs, political parties, affinal relatives etc. The basic parameters of social status, such as caste, class, sex, education, occupation etc., determine how many and what type of networks would be formed. People with more resources and information usually have wider networks. Such persons are able to easily achieve their goals in their life.

The operational nature of social networks is diversified on the basis of social values, beliefs, norms, traditions and customs. Access to information, status and power are achieved through one's social networks. Recent studies on the use of social relationships in finding jobs. Show that knowing people in right places, (also known as 'source') helps young people to find better jobs. The occupational status of the 'source' in such cases, is often linked with the status of the parents of those seeking jobs. In section 27.5.2 of this unit we will discuss the concept of 'source'.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the basic unit of a chain of social relationships in a society. Use two lines for your answer.

.....

.....

2) When does the process of formation of a social network begin? use one line for your answer.

.....

.....

27.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

While defining social networks, we have discussed how the total network of chains of social relationships covers the society itself. To learn about the types of social networks, we need to focus on the basic unit of relationships between persons. Such personal networks can be extracted out of the total network. In contrast to personal networks, we can also discuss impersonal networks which are based on group relationships. Let us look at both of networks.

27.3.1 Personal and Group-based Networks

A personal network is a set of linkages which an individual establishes around himself. These linkages may be structurally diverse. Some may be based on kin or caste, while others may be based on classmateships, friendship, workmateship and so on. They possess the *morphological* characteristics of *density*, *reachability* and *range* (See Section 27.3.2). They possess also the *interactional* characteristics of content, *directedness*, *durability, intensity* and *frequency*. If a personal network has the additional morphological characteristic of *anchorage*, or an ego being the anchor of a personal network, then it becomes an ego-centric personal network.

In contrast to the personal network, the group or impersonal network is viewed in terms of the nature of interaction among its members, and in terms of incorporation of its members in the groups. In terms of interaction, we can characterise a group as an aggregate of persons who interact more with each other. Through these interactions

they form a unit, and identify the groups, and thus the members develop the consciousness of being together. In terms of incorporations, the group assumes more formal characteristics such as common interests, right and obligations of members, organisation and structure.

27.3.2 Characteristics of Personal Networks

Personal networks have morphological and interactional characteristics. Morphological characteristics help in the identification of the form of networks, while interactional characteristics of personal networks are discussed in terms of their constituents.

i) **Morphological Characteristics :** Mitchell (1969) has identified anchorage, density, reachability and range as the morphological characteristics of personal networks:

   a) **Anchorage :** The word anchorage indicates that the ego is the centre of his network. He or she is its coordinator. Without her or him the network will become amorphous. Thus, emerges an ego-centric personal network. However, an ego may form a personal network without becoming its coordinator. In fact, in a non-ego-centric personal network nobody may act as a coordinator.

   b) **Density :** The density in personal network signifies the density of social relations. It can be gauged by the proportion of persons in a network, who know one another. For example members of a club have higher density than people in a crowd.

   c) **Reachability :** The individual who can be relied upon to act as on the request of another individual is reachable or mobilisable. For example, a friend of a friend can be reached or mobilised by a person.

   d) **Range :** The term 'range' denotes the limit of direct and regular contacts which an individual has. Thus, the total number of persons ego can contact over telephone, letter or personally, is that person's range of contacts. He or she must also be in touch with these 'contacts' regularly.

BOX 27.01

In this context, it is important to know that in the 21st century the very concept of 'network' has changed. It has expanded to include the world at large. This is because the new technologies of mass communication, such as, computers, Internet, E-mail, teleconferencing and so on has expanded the very notion of range and reachability. It is possible to chat with your pen-pal or childhood friend on the internet even though she or he may be sitting thousands of miles away from you. These developments have had a great impact on the very idea of social network.

ii) **Interactional Characteristics :** There are five *interactional* characteristics. They are *content, directedness, durability, intensity* and *frequency.*

   a) **Content :** It refers to the normative context in which an interaction takes place, such as friendship, classmateship, caste, membership, kinship etc. For example, family interaction has kinship content and family members behave towards each other on the basis of their kin relationships.

   b) **Directedness :** *Directedness* means whether the relationship between ego and a member of his network is reciprocal or only one-sided. One

can, put it differently : whether the relationship flows from one direction or both the directions. For example, in friendship, the directedness is reciprocal.

c) **Durability :** It signifies the continuity and stability of relationship over a period of time. A relationship is durable if interaction between two individuals continues over a period of time and vice versa.

d) **Intensity :** Intensity refers to the degree to which individuals are prepared to honour obligations. If a member of an ego-centric personal network feels free to dishonour his or her obligation, (flowing from a favour done to him or her by the ego) the intensity of the relationship is low.

e) **Frequency :** Frequency signifies the number of times the interaction occurs between two individuals. For example, if the individuals meet daily the frequency of their contacts, is high in contrast to a situation in which they meet only occasionally. The higher the frequency of contacts, the greater are the chances of intensity and durability of relationships.

27.4 EGO-CENTRIC PERSONAL NETWORK

It has been already mentioned in section 27.3.2, that a personal network may become an ego-centric network, when somebody emerges as the coordinator of a network. Here we have an example of the kind of problems sociologists face, while applying theory to empirical research. It is easy to define ego-centric personal networks, and identify their characteristics. But when one is conducting research, one encounters a number of problems, in describing the ego-centric personal networks of any individual actor. Here, we first give a definition of the ego-centric personal network, and then discuss the problems in applying this idea to a research situation.

27.4.1 Ego-centric and Non-ego centric Personal Networks Defined

An ego-centric personal network is anchored on an individual. It includes all those

persons with whom he or she is in actual contact. Looked at from the point of view of the members of the network, the ego or the individual on whom it is anchored, is the common connection of all of them. It does not mean that it is the only personal network, and all these personal networks may or may not overlap. The following diagram explains the distinction between the two situations.

Ego-Centric Personal Networks

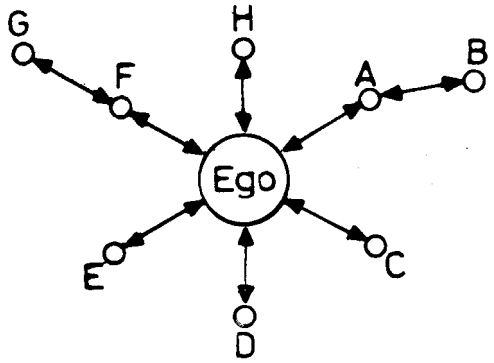


Figure 1

Figure 2

The dotted lines indicate the links of A in his ego-centric personal network

In Figure 1 of the above diagram, you have seen the personal network of the ego. It includes ego's direct relationship with A, C, D, E, F, and H and indirect relationships with B mediated through A and G mediated through F. Figure 2 also includes the non-ego-centric personal network of A. In his network are included B, Q, P and R besides the ego of Figure 1. Similarly there can be personal networks of other members of the members of the network of ego. As you can see there is an overlap between the two personal networks. A and B are common to both the ego-centric and non-ego-centric personal networks.

In the diagram Figure 1 and Figure 2 both show the ego-centric personal networks. Figure 1 shows the personal network of ego alone. It shows he has A, B, C, D, E, F. Of these, G and B are indirect contacts. In Figure 2A is shown to have links with ego and these are reciprocal. Thus, two ego-centric networks can be connected and spread outward as a social network.

27.4.2 Problems in the Delineation of Ego-Centric Personal Network

In applying these ideas of ego-centric personal network to empirical research, the most significant problems faced are six in number:

i) nature of contacts,

ii) centricity of the ego,

iii) nature of transactions,

iv) types of social relations,

v) mobilisability of the members, and

vi) identification of the boundary.

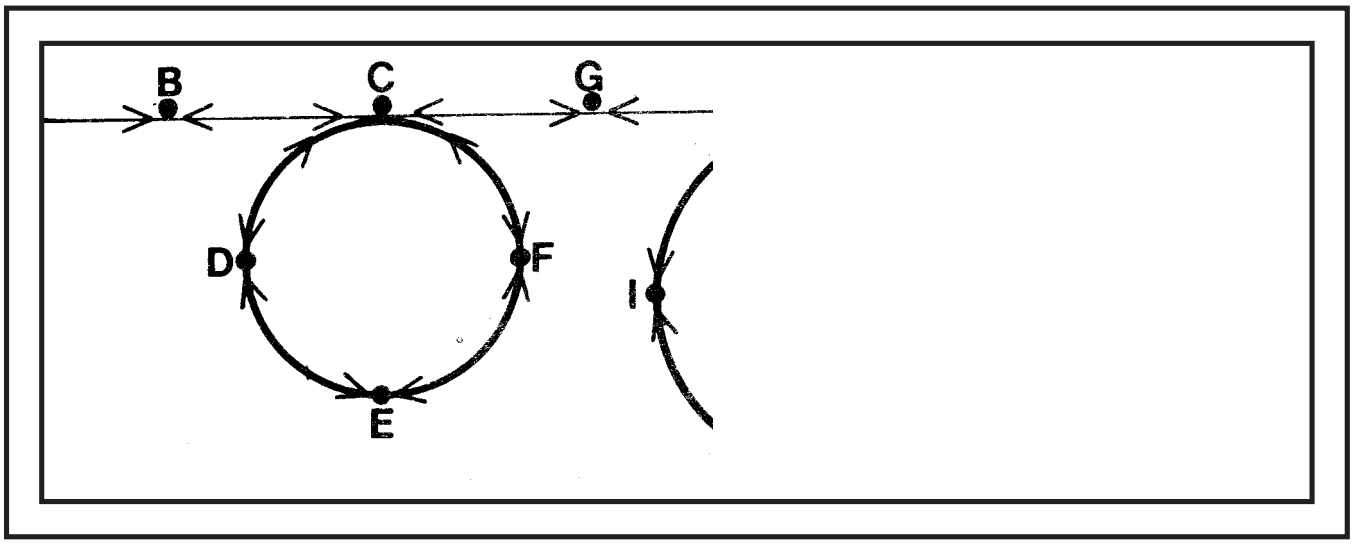
i) Nature of Contacts

The social contact, between any two individuals, may vary from a nodding acquaintance and exchange of greetings and pleasantries, (say, in morning walks) to a continual exchange of 'obligations', with built-in expectation of reciprocity. One may have a greeting relationship with many persons in one's neighbourhood or work-place. But can one expect 'help' from all such persons, in all kinds of requirements? Will all such individuals be always prepared to 'help' the ;ego who is in contact? Obviously not!

ii) Centricity of the Ego

The centricity of the ego is crucial in an ego-centric personal network. An individual may have meaningful contacts with several individuals, on the basis of which a social network may emerge. But he or she may or may not be the centre of this network. In fact, there need not be a centre at all. There could be a situation of a kind of chain of relationships, with a few large or small meshes hanging around the chain, as is depicted below.

Chain of Relationships with Hanging Meshes



In such a chain or mesh of relationship, any one of the members may activate or mobilise others. At the time of mobilisation he or she may be considered the centre of the network. Thus, the centres may shift from one action-set to another action-set. Such chains of links are called non-ego-centric personal network.

The above problem necessitates a distinction between ego-centric and non-ego-centric personal networks. The recruitment of members by an ego, and his or her functioning as the centre of all relationships within the network, make the difference between ego-centric and non-ego-centric personal networks. The latter may not be formed on the initiative of any single person, and nobody acts as its centre or coordinating agency. In this context an action-set would mean, a temporary set of people recruited through various channels to serve some short-term goal.

For example in the diagram on p. 38, we may visualise a situation in which C is the son of D. D approaches E (a doctor) to request F (another doctor) to examine his son C in the hospital of F, and C is examined. This is one action-set in which D has initiated an action of which he may be deemed as the centre. Similarly on another occasion E may initiate an action for achieving some other specific goal. In an ego-centric personal network, all such demands on the network must pass through the centre, or the ego who is the coordinating agency of his or her personal network.

iii) **Nature of Transactions**

Interactions between the members of a personal network are viewed as transactions. Sometimes even a transaction of market place, may involve a series of interactions. Therefore, transactions signify those sequences of interactions, which are systematically governed by reciprocity. It may be added that reciprocity assumes, that both the parties involved in an interaction are satisfied, both consider it beneficial or profitable. However, two things must be borne in mind.

First, it is difficult, if not impossible, to calculate profitability in all transaction. Secondly, when one does oblige another person, normally he or she does not specify the expectation of the return. He or she may make demands later as a result of several interactions.

iv) **Types of Social Relations**

In this context, the distinction between expressive and instrumental relationships is relevant. In expressive relationships, one derives satisfaction from the relationship itself. For example, the relationship between a mother and her child. In contrast, an

instrumental relationship is that, in which the relationship is a means to certain ends, rather than an end in itself. As personal networks are formed by individuals in the pursuit of their self-interests, then relationships are basically instrumental. They may sometimes be couched in an expressive form. For example instrumental. They may sometimes be couched in an expressive form. For example, an employee of an organisation may address the wife of his employer as "Mataji" (mother), but in doing so his basic intention is to secure access to the employer through his wife for instrumental purposes. For this he is using the mode of an expressive relationship. While studying a personal network it may be difficult to distinguish between the two kinds of relations. Nevertheless the distinction is important.

Activity 2

Identify at least five social networks in your social life and distinguish between their types, i.e. whether they are expressive or instrumental in nature. Write a report on these five social networks and their nature in about one page. Discuss your report with other fellow students at your Study Centre and also your Academic Counsellor.

v) Mobilisability of the Members

One of the crucial problems in identifying a personal network, is the mobilisability of members of the personal network by an ego. It is not easy to predict whether a member of one's network, will act definitely in accordance with the request of ego. However, there are four major factors which have a bearing on the mobilisability of a member: (a) relative resources of the ego and the member (let us call him alter in accordance with sociological usage) (b) degree of dependence of the alter on the ego, (c) number of intermediaries between the ego and the alter, and (d) The bearing of the demand action on the interest of the alter. On these four factors one can make the following generalisations : (a) The less the material resources of the alter in comparison with those of ego, the greater are the chances of his acting in accordance with the desire of ego, (b) The more an alter is dependent on ego and his network, the greater are the chances of his acting in accordance with the desire of ego. (c) The more the number of intermediaries between ego, and the terminal alter the less are the chances of this acting in accordance with the desire of ego. (d) The less the adverse effect of the demand action on the interests of the alter, the greater are the chances of his acting in accordance with the desire of ego.

vi) Identification of the Boundary

In an empirical research on personal networks, the most difficult problem is the determination of the boundary of a personal network. For this purpose, two criteria are suggested. It is held by some people that all those persons with whom ego is in contact, are members of his personal network. Others object to this criterion on the ground, that all the persons with whom a person is in contact may not be mobilisable. They assert that the criterion should be actual mobilisation in an action situation. The main difficulty in the second criterion is that, if one draws the boundary of a network on the basis of an actual mobilisation in a situation, then the distinction between a personal and an action-set is blurred, (if not lost), because an action-set is delineated in terms of a specific action that brings it into being. A personal network, on the other hand, denotes a set of linkages which exist beyond the duration of any particular action or transaction. Therefore, the boundary of an action-set will vary, while that of the personal network, (if it is conceived as more durable than an action-set), has to be more or less stable. However, its boundary remains indistinct.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) List the morphological and interactional characteristics of personal networks. Use three lines for your answers.

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.....

2) Define the ego-centric personal network. Use two lines for your answer.

.....

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27.5 PERSONAL NETWORK AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE

It may be emphasised that a personal network may become an ego-centric network, when somebody emerges as the coordinator of a network, and an ego-centric personal network may develop into a group. It all depends on the acquisition of additional characteristics, through interaction and change in the nature of social relations. The changes can proceed in the opposite direction as well. The structure of a group may weaken, and it may turn into a personal network or an ego-centric network. This depends on the non-emergence or emergence, of an individual as its coordinator. Thus, personal networks are intimately related to the social structure both in its integrational and disintegrational aspects. They provide a window to look at the social structure both in its integrational and disintegrational aspects. They provide a window to look at the social structure and changes going on in it. As personal networks play an important role in the functioning of formal organisations, the relationship between personal networks and social structure can be illustrated, by showing how personal networks operate in formal organisations. Here, we are taking formal organisation as a social collectivity, and hence a unit of social structure.

27.5.1 Personal Network and Formal Organisations

We can illustrate the relationship between the social structure and personal network, through the study of an interface between personal networks and formal organisations. Before doing so it is in order to explain what we mean by formal organisations.

i) **Nature of Formal Organisations**

Without going into the technical details, we can say that a formal organisation is a social collectivity, the goals of which are formally defined. It has authority(ies) vested with power. The authorities are expected to mobilise the power vested in them for achieving the goals of the formal organisation. Formal organisations operate through impersonal, universalistic rules and procedures, which are expected to be mobilised across the board impersonally.

ii) **Illustration of Formal Organisation**

A University may be taken as an example of a formal organisation. Its goals of education are formally defined. It has various authorities such as the Chancellor, the

Vice-Chancellor, Deans, Heads of departments and so on. Each one of the authorities is vested with some defined power to carry out the functions of the university, which may include recruitment of staff, admission of students, administration of educational functions, and conduct of the examinations.

iii) **Formal Organisation in a Traditional Society**

In India, a traditional society, the collectivities such as the family, kin, caste, religion and language, help an individual to achieve his ends through personal and informal relationships. The introduction of formal organisation has created a serious problem. Indians, generally speaking, are used to personal and informal relations. Armed with such relations they feel safe. However, formal organisations function on the basis of universalistic rules and procedures, which operate impersonally and formally. Thus, the juxtaposition of formal organisation with traditional collectivities, such as caste, has created an anomaly.

27.5.2 The Concept of 'Source'

The people who are used to operating on a personal basis do not feel secure with an impersonal system. You must have heard people using the word 'source' and trying to find 'sources', for getting things done through informal organisations. A source may be conceived of as a person, through whom the power vested in an authority of a formal organisation may be utilised for personal ends. These may or may not be in conflict with the goals of formal organisation.

27.5.3 Resource Networks and Resource Groups

These networks and groups are called resource networks and groups. Resource networks are extracts from the total network. They are based on the criterion of shared interest, in the mobilisation of power of formal organisations for personal ends. Therefore, they may be called *partial networks*. They may be either ego-centric personal networks, or non-ego-centric personal networks.

The linkages between the members of a personal resource network may be diverse. They may be based on kin, caste, family, classmateship, etc. An ego may have different degrees of understanding with the members of his resource network, regarding the *mobilisability* of each other. The transactions on which resource networks develop lead to the development of instrumental relationships. Finally, the uncertainties inherent in the mobilisability of members, marks the boundary of a resource network indistinct. Let us now look at the idea of *resource groups*, and functions of resources networks and groups.

i) **Resource Groups**

When the exchange of obligations between the members of a resource group stabilises the unity, then identity and consciousness of kind emerge. Thus, a resource network would turn into a resource group. Its boundary is identifiable and interactions between the members become patterned.

ii) **Functions of Resource Networks and Groups**

The functions of resource networks and groups, may be seen from the viewpoint of individuals, formal organisations and the Indian society. For individuals, they are functional or beneficial because they serve their interest, whether it is in the context of formal organisations or conflicts. They guarantee the requisite support. but for formal organisations they are highly dysfunctional. In other words, they contribute negatively to the achievement of goals of formal organisations, by putting a premium on individual ends vis-a-vis the goals of formal organisation.

The social structure is affected by resource networks in a very fundamental manner. The social relations inherent in resource networks and groups, as particular and personal, and, therefore, may be treated as extensions from the traditional social structure. The traditional social structure, however is based on greater normative and juridical support for the corporate groups. Besides these, love, respect and loyalty play significant roles in the maintenance of the traditional collectivities. In contrast to such collectivities, resource networks are based on instrumental relationships, which affect a much larger number of social interactions. The underlined expectations about reciprocal obligations in such relationships, bring uncertainty and fluidity in social relationships, whether in the traditional colletivities or in formal organisations.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the resource network? Explain briefly in three lines.

.....

.....

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2) A resource group is one from which one can get a loan without interest.

Yes No

27.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you were introduced to the concept of social networks, which was defined in terms of the chain of social relationships. In this perspective, individuals establish social relations in the pursuit of their self-interests, and the society is viewed as a chain of social relations which forms the total network.

Then, personal network was contrasted with group-based social network. This was followed by an outline of the *morphological* and *interactional* characteristics of personal networks. The morphological characteristics are anchorage, density, reachability and range, while the interactional characteristics are content, directedness, durability, intensity and frequency of interactions. On the basis of anchorage, a further distinction was made between ego-centric personal networks which are co-ordinated by an individual, and non-egocentric personal networks which are not so co-ordinated. However, in a specific situation, for achieving a specific objective, any member can mobilise others. For such an action-set the ego performs the role of the coordinator.

The unit also pointed out the problems one encounters in identifying a personal network empirically. These problems are:

i) nature of contacts,

ii) centricity of the ego,

iii) nature of transactions,

iv) types of social relations,

v) mobilisability of the members, and

vi) identification of the boundary.

This discussion was followed by a focus on the relationship between personal networks, and the social structure. This relationship was illustrated by describing the introduction of formal organisations in a traditional society. It was pointed out that personal networks and groups are formed for the mobilisation of the power of formal organisations for personal ends. Such networks and groups have been termed as resource networks and resource groups.

27.7 KEY WORDS

Anchorage : Ego as the centre of his/her network.

Centricity : The central nature of ego in a network.

Density : The proportion of persons in a network who know each other.

Directedness : Whether a relation is one sided or reciprocal.

Ego : Terms used to denote an individual.

Expressive Relationship : Relationship in which one derives satisfaction from the relationship itself.

Formal Organisation : A social collectivity, the goals of which are formally defined.

Mobilisability : The ability to put into circulation the resources or contacts for action.

Morphological : Those features which help in the form and structure of something e.g., density, reachability etc. of personal networks.

Personal Network : This indicates all those persons with which ego is in contact.

Range : Denotes the limit or span of direct and regular contacts which an individual has.

Total Network : Chains of social relationship which cover the whole of society.

27.8 FURTHER READINGS

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Mayer, Adrian c., 1966. *The Significance of Quasi-Groups in the Study of Complex Societies.* In M. Banton (ed.), *The Social Anthropology of Complex Societies.* Tavistock Pulications : London. pp. 97-119.

Persell, C.H., 1987. *Understanding Society*. Harper and Row Publishers : New York. Chapter IV.

Sharma, K.N., 1975. *Institutions, Networks and Social Change*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study : Simla. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, pp. 191-197.

27.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The basic unit in social networks is a dyadic relationship i.e., between two individuals.

2) The process of formation of a social network begins right from the time of birth of a human being.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The morphological characteristics of personal networks are:

   i) anchorage;

   ii) density;

   iii) reachability; and

   iv) range.

   The interactional characteristics of personal networks are :

   i) content;

   ii) directedness;

   iii) durability;

   iv) intensity; and

   v) frequency.

2) When a person or the ego is the centre of a network and he or she coordinates it, we find the emergence of an ego-centric personal network.

Check Your Progress 3

1) A resource network is a part of the total network. Shared interest is basic to them. They are partial networks and may be ego-centric or non-ego-centric personal networks.

2) No.

UNIT 28 SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

Structure

28.0 Objectives

28.1 Introduction

28.2 Definition of Function

28.3 Function and Collective Conscience

28.4 Function : Cultural Perspective

28.5 Function : Biological Perspective

28.6 Function : System Perspective

28.7 Function : Critical Perspective

28.7.1 Functions and Dysfunctions of Religion

28.7.2 Manifest and Latent Functions

28.8 Uses of Functional Analysis

28.9 Limitations of Functional Analysis

28.10 Let Us Sum Up

28.11 Key Words

28.12 Further Readings

28.13 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

28.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- define functionalism;
- state Durkheim's view on social function and describe his analysis of social life;
- describe social function as given by Malinowski from a cultural perspective;
- describe the biological perspective of social function;
- describe social function from the critical perspective; and
- explain the uses and limitations of functional analysis.

28.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will discuss the concept of social function. You will learn about the meaning of social function and the major ideas developed around this concept. We first describe the concept of function and collective conscience, as formulated by Emile Durkheim. This is followed by a discussion of the cultural perspective, and its relation to social function as described by Malinowski. His ideas regarding the relationship of magic with the concept of social function, have been outlined in this

unit. Then, the unit explains the organic analogy between society and biological organism. In this biological perspective, we have given Radcliffe-Brown's contribution, especially his analysis of structure and function. We will discuss Talcott Parson's system perspective which considers the "social system", as the unit of study and Robert K. Merton's critical analysis of the pre-existing functional thesis. Finally, we will explain to you the uses and limitations of functional analysis in this unit.

28.2 DEFINITION OF FUNCTION

The term 'function' is often used, (in popular usage as well as in academic discussion) in more than one sense. Hence, it is necessary to clarify and explain its various connotations. As the eminent American sociologist, Robert K. Merton has explained, the term 'function' is used in five major senses. First, it is used to refer to some public gathering or festive occasion (e.g., "Republic Day function", "the annual function of a College" etc.). Second, it is used alternatively for occupation. Third, it is used to refer to the activities of the incumbent of an office, as for example, one may speak of the function of a bureaucrat. Fourth, it is used in a mathematical sense. For example, when X is said to be a function of Y, it is understood that change in Y would lead to a change in X Fifth, as used in sociology and social anthropology, functions are social procedures or processes which help the maintenance of social equilibrium.

SOCIAL EQUILIBRIUM

This view of human society is known as functionalism. Sometimes it is referred to, in a broader sense, as structural-functionalism. Broadly defined, functionalism is a theoretical and methodological perspective in sociology and social anthropology, which views society as a system of inter-related and inter-dependent parts. These inter-related parts of the social system contribute to the stability and maintenance of society. Functionalism seeks to understand and explain a custom or a cultural feature in terms of its functions or consequences, for the various parts of society as well as for the social system as a whole.

28.3 FUNCTION AND COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE

The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) systematically formulated the concept of social function. He held that society has a reality of its own, beyond the individuals who constitute it. It is not merely the sum total of all the individuals of the society. It is an entity external to the individuals and exercises constraint over them. He sought to analyse and explain life in terms of society itself, and not in terms of psychological or biological factors.

Durkheim's analysis of social life is centred on what he calls "social facts". He says that members of society are constrained by "social facts", by ways of acting thinking and feeling, external to the individual. For example, mores and norms (social facts) make a person behave in a certain manner. Durkheim held that social facts should be examined as things, which were independent of the consciousness of individuals who comprise society.

Durkheim made a distinction between two types of inquiry, historical and functional. The historical type of inquiry is concerned with the origins of social institutions and cultural traits The evolutionary anthropologists of the 19th century, such as James Frazer and Edward Taylor employed this type of inquiry. Durkheim disagreed with it and advocated the functional type of inquiry. According to him, social life must be examined and explained in relation to its function. He held that the reason for the continued existence of a social fact or a cultural item must be sought in its function, in its usefulness for society. ***He defined the function of social institutions as the satisfaction of the needs of the social organism.***

Durkheim held that society has certain basic needs or functional prerequisites, which must be fulfilled if it is to maintain its stability and continuity. The need for social order is the most important need of society. It is fulfilled through consensus or *"collective conscience"*, which comprises commonly held norms, beliefs and sentiments.

Functional analysis lies at the heart of Durkheim's major works. In the *Division of Labour in Society* (1897) he examined the functions of division of labour in society. *In the Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1917) he sought to examine the integrative functions of religious beliefs and practices. He analysed the functions of religions in terms of social cohesiveness and solidarity. The sharing of religious beliefs and rites, produces a sense of unity among the believers. This sense of unity is symbolically expressed in rituals.

Activity 1

Think carefully about different aspects of your Community/Society. Note down five features which you think help your Community/Society to maintain it self i.e. to continue from one generation to another. Discuss these features with other students at your Study Centre and your Academic Counsellor.

Function of Crime

Durkheim discussed crime and deviant behaviour from a radically unconventional perspective. Criminology views crime as a pathological phenomenon, and explains it in terms of psychopathological factors. Durkheim rejected this view, and held that crime is a normal and positive aspect of social life. Durkheim maintained that some measure of deviance from the commonly held norms and values of society is inevitable. Since no society can possibly enforce total conformity to its norms.

Durkheim argued that crime is normal in that it reinforces the moral values and norms of society. A criminal act violates the commonly held norms or society, and therefore arouses collective sentiments of anger and outrage. It strengthens and reinforces the normative consensus. As Durkheim put it in his characteristic way: Crime brings together upright consciences and concentrates them.

Durkheim's functionalist view influenced a number of sociologists and anthropologists. particularly the British social anthropologist A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and, to a lesser extent, Bronislaw Malinowski, who made extensive use of the concept in their theoretical and field researches.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Define what is meant by function. Use about five lines for your answer.

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2) What is the function of crime according to Durkheim? Use about three lines for your answer.

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28.4 FUNCTION : CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Malinowski (1884-1942) maintained that culture has a reality of its own. He was against the evolutionary and the diffusionist interpretations of culture, which dominated British anthropology during the 19th century. The evolutionary anthropologists (such as Frazer and Tylor) sought to reconstruct the past and trace the origin and evolution of social institutions. The diffusionists, such as W.J. Perry and Elliot Smith, where interested in reconstructing the history of mankind, by studying the spread of cultural patterns and artefacts from one region to another.

Malinowski held that cultures form wholes, because essentially they are working and on-going units. Every custom or cultural trait, according to him, exists to fulfil a vital function. He maintained that the most important units of culture are institutions. A social institution, according to him, is a set of activities organised around some need. Social institutions are responses to fundamental biological and psychological needs of individuals, such as hunger and security. Human needs or drives, according to Malinowski, are physiological in nature but they are restructured by acquired habits. This conception of needs, both biological and psychological is at the core of his functionalist theory.

Function of Magic

In his book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) Malinowski has analysed the role of magical and religious rites, in the stability and maintenance of the social structure of the Trobriand Islanders. He observed that magic arises and functions in situations of uncertainty and emotional anxiety. It fulfils the vital need of relieving anxiety in situations of crisis. The function of magic, according to Malinowski, is to enhance primitive man's hope and faith, in the face of uncertainty and fear. It is criticised as being an over-simplistic explanation of the function of magic in societies.

28.5 FUNCTION : BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Radcliffe-Brown was deeply influenced by the sociological functionalism of Emile Durkheim. He held that human societies are natural systems, governed by the inexorable laws of nature. The various parts of the social system, according to him, are inter-related and inter-dependent. The inter-relations between the parts help in the maintenance of the whole.

Radcliffe-Brown favoured the analogy between society and biological organisms. He held that cultures and social systems should be studied with the methods of the natural sciences, especially biology and zoology. Radcliffe-Brown, like Malinowski, advocated a *synchronic* perspective, in preference to a diachronic one. The *synchronic* perspective is essentially concerned with the present, and holds that societies can be analysed and explained without any necessary reference to their past. The diachronic perspective, on the other hand, holds that the present structure of a given society cannot be adequately understood, without taking into consideration its past and the changing aspect of social reality. Radcliffe-Brown maintained that it is possible and imperative to discover the underlying regularities or laws of social life.

Structure and Function

Radcliffe-Brown maintained that organic systems are characterised by three features: Morphology (which deals with the structure), Physiology (which is concerned with function), and Evolution (the development of the system). These features are found in equal measure in human societies. There is, in the first place, the social structure, which comprises the social relations between individuals occupying social roles. Secondly, the function of a social activity or cultural item, relates to its contribution to the social system as a whole. Radcliffe-Brown stated his ideas in his well-known book, **Structure and Function in Primitive Society** (1952). According to him, individuals are connected by social relations within a social structure. He maintained that the basic need of all societies was 'co-adaptation', or the mutual adjustment of the interests of members of society. Durkheim defined the function of social institutions as the satisfaction of the needs of the social organism. Radcliffe-Brown replaced the word 'needs' with the term, "necessary conditions of existence".

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) According to functionalists, social institutions are responses to fundamental biological and psychological needs of individuals.

Yes No

2) What does Radcliffe-Brown mean by synchronic perspective? Use three lines for your answer.

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28.6 FUNCTION : SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

All functionalists assumed that the satisfaction of basic needs, was necessary for the survival and stability of social systems. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), the doyen of American sociology, held that any social system has four functional-prerequisites: (i) *adaptation,* (ii) *goal attainment,* (iii) *integration,* and (iv) *pattern maintenance*.

Adaptation refers to the relationship between the system and the environment. Parsons maintains that social systems, must have some degree of control over the environment. According to him, this basic function is fulfilled by the economy. Goal attainment refers to the need for the social system, to set goals towards which the activities of its members may be directed. This function is fulfilled by the polity. Integration refers to the adjustment and management of conflict. It has to do with the coordination of the parts of the social system. This function according to Parsons, is fulfilled by the judicial system. Pattern maintenance refers to the maintenance of the basic pattern of values and norms. This function is fulfilled by the family, religion and the educational system.

Parsons' view of the functional prerequisites of society has been criticised on the ground that it is difficult to test whether these prerequisites are empirically valid.

28.7 FUNCTION : CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Robert K. Merton (1910), the most influential among contemporary American sociologists, has made significant contributions to functional analysis. He has perceptively differentiated between the popular, and the sociological connotations of the term function. He has also sought to explain and clarify the functional units.

Merton examined three major prevalent ideas in functionalist theory, and proved their redundancy in sociological analysis. The first is the idea of the functional unity of society, which holds that social activities or cultural items, are functional for the whole social system. The second is the idea of universal functionalism, according to which all social and cultural items fulfil social functions. The third is the idea of indispensability, which holds that these social items are indispensable for society.

Merton criticised these prevailing postulates of functional analysis. He pointed out that the first idea presumes the total integration of all societies. However, we cannot assume that all societies are fully integrated. Small-scale, primitive societies may be highly integrated, but not the large-scale, complex urban-industrial societies. The second idea of universal functionalism. This he considers to be a misjudgement, since not all aspects of society are functional for the whole society. It can be functional dysfunctional or non-functional. He criticised the third idea on the grounds that all cultural items, e.g., religion, are not indispensable for the whole society.

28.7.1 Functions and Dysfunctions of Religion

To explain his views, Merton gives an example of religion. Anthropologists speak of the integrative functions of religion, on the basis of their observation of pre-literate

societies. Some sociologists have generalised this observation, and have maintained that religion fulfils integrative functions in all societies. They neglect the disintegrative functions of religion in certain types of societies. Societies which have several religions are quite often faced with deep conflicts and antagonisms among religious groups. An illustration from the contemporary Indian scene would bring out the disintegrative consequences of religious pluralism. Religious diversity itself does not account for communal discord and antagonism in contemporary Indian society. But religious rites and rituals are often used (or misused) by various religious groups and communities, for fanning the fires of communal hatred and animosity.

Merton maintains that a given institution or social item may have diverse consequences, functional as well as dysfunctional. He calls for a specification of the units for which a social item may be functional. Merton criticises the view that certain functions are indispensable for the survival of society, or that certain social or cultural forms are essential for fulfilling each of these functions. He observes that alternative social forms or items, may serve the functions necessary for the survival of a group or society. In other words, as Merton (1957) succinctly puts it : Just as the same item may have multiple functions, so may the same function be diversely fulfilled by alternative items.

28.7.2 Manifest and Latent Functions

Perhaps the most significant contribution to functional analysis has come from Merton's distinction between manifest and latent functions of social action. Manifest functions refer to those consequences of social behaviour which are ***intended, anticipated*** **and** ***recognised*** by the participants. Latent functions, on the other hand, are those consequences which are neither intended nor recognised. Merton maintains that it is the latent functions of social behaviour, which deserve our closest attention, and which can significantly add to our understanding of social life. The study of latent functions, according to him, clarifies the analysis of seemingly irrational customs and rituals. Let us examine two examples of the social practices which have latent functions for the society.

i) **Function of Rain making Ceremony**

Rituals and ceremonies quite often serve the latent function of reinforcing group identity and collective solidarity. Merton gives the examples of the rain making ceremony, among the Hopi Indians of Northern Arizona. The Hopi Indians have an elaborate rain making ceremony, which is significant in regard to its consequences. The manifest function of this ceremony (it is believed that it brings about rain) is not significant, simply because the ceremony does not bring about rain. However, the latent function of the ceremony is important because it provides an occasion to the Hopi Indians to participate in a common activity. This participation strengthens and enhances their group solidarity and cohesiveness.

Activity 2

Do you have knowledge of some social activity; for example, an elaborate ritual ceremony or festival etc. which serves a latent function, as well. Write a note of one page on ''Latent and Manifest function of ritual/ceremony/festival in My Society". Discuss your note with other students at your Study Centre.

ii) **Function of Conspicuous Consumption**

The celebrated American economist and sociologist. Thornstein Veblen (1857-1929). perceptively analysed the consumption pattern of the rich class. The manifest

function of buying expensive goods and commodities is the satisfaction of the needs of consumers. Veblen, however, was mainly concerned with the latent function of what he called conspicuous consumption. He observed that conspicuous consumption leads to a heightening of social status and prestige. Rich people buy expensive goods not so much because of their superior quality, but because they are expensive. The purchase of expensive goods is a symbolic pointer to the high social status of the buyer. Veblen gives examples of candlelight dinner and possession of expensive automobiles. The manifest function of candles is to provide light, and that of an automobile transportation. However, the latent functions of candlelight at dinner and possession of a Maruti or a Gypsy are quite different and much more significant : they enhance one's status, and provide an index to one's higher social position.

28.8 USES OF FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Functionalism, as a theoretical perspective in sociology and social anthropology, has significantly contributed to our understanding of human society and social processes.

The main contribution of functionalism lies in its emphasis on the wholeness of society, and its insistence on the inter-relationship of its parts. It regards society as an on-going system, which must be studied in its entirety.

The functional orientation has been largely responsible for the detailed and comprehensive field studies of modern anthropology. The holistic approach, a characteristic of functionalism, has been particularly fruitful in the study of small-scale, primitive societies.

Another merit of functionalism is that it clarifies understanding of seemingly irrational beliefs and cultural patterns. Consider, for example, the custom of head hunting. This was prevalent among the Aucas of Brazil and Bolivia, the Ganawri of West Africa, the Dyaks of Borneo, the Lampongs of Sumatra, and the Nagas of Assam. When the enemies were killed in a warfare or battle, their heads were cut off and taken as souvenirs. The function of head hunting among these people was to enable the unmarried warrior to prove his worth and physical prowess before his community, and thereby to endear him to his beloved.

Merton's distinction between manifest and latent functions is particularly illuminating, since it focuses attention on those consequences of social behaviour which may not be intended or recognised by the participants, and yet they positively contribute to the maintenance and stability of society.

28.9 LIMITATIONS OF FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

The most frequently repeated logical criticism against functionalism is that it entails teleology. It holds, in effect, that the parts of society exist because of their functional consequences for the system as a whole. In other words, an effect is treated as a cause. Similarly, function is fallaciously equated with purpose. For example, if we say that religion exists in societies, because it sustains the moral foundations of society, we are using the effect of the moral foundation of society to explain the existence of the cause, namely religion. Critics of functionalism believe that this kind of explanation defies the laws of logic, since what has come later cannot be the cause of what has preceded (Cohen 1979 : 45).

Functionalism is also criticised for presenting a deterministic view of human behaviour. Human action is portrayed as being determined by the social system, and human being is pictured as an automation, controlled by the forces of society over which he or she has little or no control.

According to Percy Cohen (1968 : 56) the major substantive criticisms against functionalism are :

i) the role of norms is overstressed,

ii) social conflict is almost ignored,

iii) social harmony is overstressed as being basic to human society, and

iv) social change is not accounted for.

Out of these criticisms, the first does not hold true since not all functionalists considered the normative element is social life as of supreme importance, such as Malinowski.

The second criticism is inter-related to the first, because if all members of the society follow the norms and values of the society, there will be no cause for conflict. But evidence shows that even though human beings may accept the rules and norms, conflicts arise out of competition to achieve one's interests. This could be to succeed to a position of power or to acquire something socially and economically valuable, etc.

The third accusation against functionalism is that it gives too much importance to the harmonious nature of social systems. This is true and it has been stated by Robert K. Merton in his book *Social Theories and Social Structure* (1957). Merton says that religion has a unifying role in a small community, but it can be a cause of great conflict in a complex, multi-religious society. The functional thesis which holds that all social and cultural items have positive function, is therefore not correct. They could have a disturbing effect on social process, thus being dysfunctional.

The fourth substantive criticism of functionalism is that it cannot explain social change. It states that all social and cultural items fulfil positive role and that they exist because they contribute to the functioning of the total social system. The theory of functionalism, therefore, assumes that all aspects of society are already perfect and, therefore, there is no need for change. In fact, since the functionalists emphasise persistence and stability of the society to such an extent that change for them becomes abnormal. Thus, we can see that the critics of functionalism are justified in criticising them for overlooking the aspect of social change.

Some of the ideological criticisms of functionalism are that it upholds the status quo in society. The way that the functionalists describe stratification in society, the aspect of exploitation of the masses by the selected few is totally ignored by them. In fact, domination of the masses by a handful of elites is justified by them. They have been accused of encouraging and reflecting the conservative bias in their theories.

The strongest criticism of functionalism has come from the conflict school, which views the social order as evolving out of conflict and dissension, and not consensus as held by the functional school.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the four functional prerequisites for any social system, according to Talcott Parsons? Use about eight lines for your answer.

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2) What are the manifest and latent functions according to Merton? Use about three lines for your answer.

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28.10 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed in this unit about social function, its definition and various uses.

We have seen that the use of function and functionalism consequently varies in the ideas of Durkheim, Radcliffe-Brown, Parsons and Merton. Thus Durkheim's analysis shows how crime is normal if it does not exceed a certain limit. It may in fact strengthen society. We have also discussed the relation of function and collective conscience developed by him. Malinowski indicates how magic provides a route for the native to affect the outcome of uncertain ventures. Next, we have discussed the system perspective developed by Talcott Parsons. Further, we show that Merton's latent and manifest functions add a new dimension to functionalism. Finally, our discussion of the uses and limitations of functional analysis, indicates that there is still room for further development of sociological theory in order to understand human social life.

28.11 KEY WORDS

Diachronic : The diachronic approach takes into consideration the present as well as the past of a given society, the assumption being that the present cannot be adequately understood without reference to the past.

Diffusionism : An anthropological approach, advocated during the 19th century by W.J. Perry, Elliot Smith and others, which sought to reconstruct the history of mankind by tracing the spread of cultural patterns from a few primordial centres of civilisation.

Dysfunction : Those consequences of social behaviour which adversely affect the maintenance and stability of the social system.

Function : The process whereby the inter-related parts of a given system contribute to its maintenance and stability.

Latent Functions : The unintended and unrecognised consequences of social action.

Manifest Functions : The intended and recognised consequences of social action.

Synchronic : The view that the present structure of a given society can be studied as it is, without any references to its past.

Teleology : A view which mistakenly regards an effect as a cause or function as purpose. Functionalism is charged by its critics for being teleological in orientation.

28.12 FURTHER READINGS

Inkeles, Alex, 1964. *What is Sociology?* Prentice-Hall : New Delhi, Chapter 3, pp. 28-40.

Cohen, Percy, 1968. *Modern Social Theory*. Heineman Educational Books Ltd. : London. Chapter 3; pp. 34-68.

Levy, Marion K., 1968. *Functional Analysis.* In David L. Sills (ed.) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*. Macmillan and Free Press : New York. Vol. 6, pp. 21-42.

Merton, Robert K., 1957. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. The Free Press : Glencoe Chapter 1.

Radcliffe-Brown, A.R., 1952. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. The Free Press : Glencoe. Chapter IX, pp. 178-187.

28.13 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The term function is used in five major ways. First as a public gathering e.g., Republic Day Function. Second, it is used for occupation. Third, it is used to describe a person's job e.g., function of a bureaucrat. Fourth, in a technical mathematical sense. Finally, in sociology it is used to describe social procedures or processes which help in the maintenance of a society.

2) According to Durkheim crime is not pathological but normal. According to him a certain amount of crime normally reinforces a society. A criminal act violates commonly held norms and thereby arouses collective sentiments against that activity.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Yes

2) By synchronic perspective Radcliffe-Brown means that a society can be studied as it is. There is no need to refer to the history of a society to study its functioning, its norms and mores.

Check Your Progress 3

1) According to Talcott Parsons, any social system has the following functional prerequisites:

   i) Economy fulfils the function of *adaptation* with environment.

ii) Polity fulfils the function of setting goals for directing the activities of a society's members.

iii) The judicial system fulfils the function of integration of different parts of the society.

iv) Finally, the family, religion and educational system fulfil the function of *maintaining the basic pattern of values and norms* of a society.

2) Manifest functions are those effects of action which are deliberate or 'intended', or anticipated, and recognised. On the other hand latent functions are those which are not intended or recognised.

UNIT 29 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Structure

29.0 Objectives

29.1 Introduction

29.2 What is Social Stratification?

29.2.1 **Dimensions or Bases of Social Stratification**

29.3 Types of Social Stratification

29.3.1 **Age-set System**

29.3.2 **Slave System**

29.3.3 **Estate System**

29.3.4 **Caste System**

29.3.5 **Class System**

29.3.G **Race and Ethnicity**

29.4 Theoretical Approachesto the Study of Social Stratification

29.4.1 **Functional Approach**

29.4.2 **Conflict Perspective**

29.5 Let Us Sum Up

29.6 Key Words

29.7 Further Readings

29.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

29.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you should be able to:

define the concept of social stratification;

- discuss its three dimensions;
- describe six types of social stratification; and
- give an account of the functionalist and conflict thaories of social stratification.

29.1 INTRODUCTION

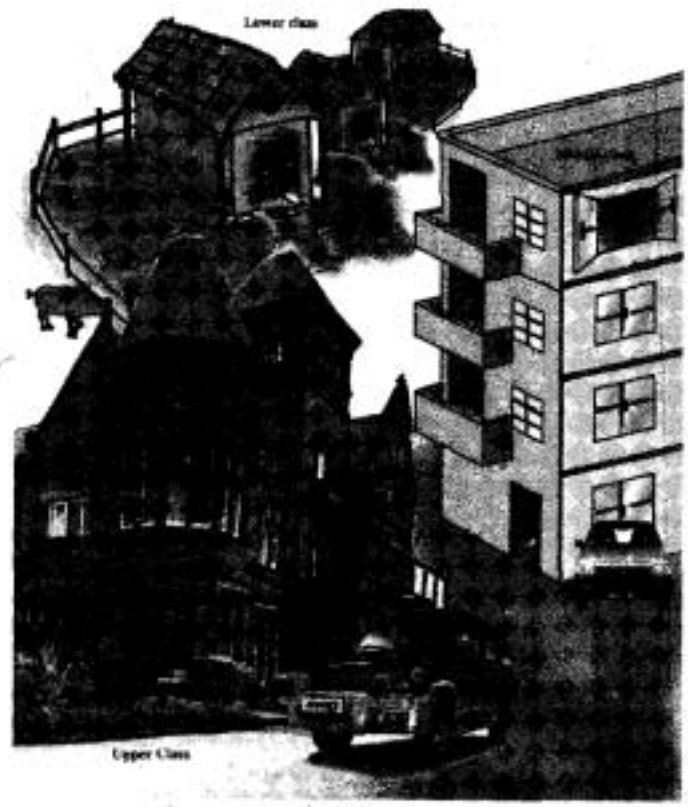
Social stratification is an aspect of the wider issue of social inequality. The existence of socially created inequalities is a feature of all known human societies, and, therefore, it is an important subject for sociologists to discuss. Social stratification is the last of the major concepts in sociology, discussed in this book. It is related to the study of social change, which is the focus of our next block in this course. This unit is also the link unit between these two blocks.

This unit explains what social stratification is, and then discusses its general principles in terms of the bases or dimensions of social stratification. An account of basic

types of social stratification, is followed by a discussion of the current sociological theories on social stratification.

29.2 WHAT IS SOCIAL STRATIFICATION?'

stratification is a system of social ranking, involving relations of superiority and inferiority. These relations between the units of rank are governed by a set of norms. Analytically, stratification is conceived of as an evaluative ranking of social units. Concretely, it refers to the empirical distribution of advantages and benefits in society. It can be seen as a process, which is regulated by some principles. These principles determine the bases of the distribution of social advantages in society.



29.2.1 Dimensions or Bases of Social Stratification

The bases or dimensions of social stratification refer to the different levels of differentiation which are made to allocate people in a given society. These can be listed as follows:

i) **Class :** It refers to differentiation at the level of wealth. In this sense it can be termed as economic differentiation.

ii) **Power :** It refers to differential access to power in society. It includes political, social and other types of power.

iii) **Status :** It refers to distribution of prestige or social honour.

In most cases, the three dimensions complement each other. However, Max Weber (1947) draws a distinction between class, power and status. According to Weber, class is an economic category, a product of the market situation. The status group, on the other hand, constitutes the social order based on prestige or honour. Status is determined by the social prestige one enjoys. Social prestige is expressed through different styles of life. Analytically, class and status groups can be independent

Each of these systems offers clearly argued theories, to explain and justify its respective system of stratification. In some cases, there is flexibility regarding social mobility fiom one stratum to another. In other cases, there is little or no chance of mobility out of a stratum. The following discussion of the different types of social stratification, will make clear what the distinct features of stratification in human societies are.

29.3.1 Age-set System

Societies, which have been described as stateless type of Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (1940), lack centralised government. They have no office of chief, or if thqr have such an office, it holds more ritual than secular power. Still, such societies are found to be stratified on the basis of age. This type of stratification, is a characteristic of certain east African societies. The principle of age is most prominent among the Masai and Nandi in East Africa, where ranking on the basis of age, is put together with the exercise of authority, on the basis of seniority. The ranks determined on the basis of age are called age-sets. All the persons (basically men) born, within a range or number of years, belong to one set. The first age-set may comprise as short as six or seven years or as long as fifteen.

In most cases, usually around adolescence, the membership; of the first age-set closes and recruitment to the next set takes place. At this stage, entry to the new age-set generally involves an initiation rite, such as circumcision or other body-marks. Thus, after going through the ritual, each member comes out of childhood, and takes of full membership of his tribe. Each person, thus, belongs to an age-set, to which he remains attached throughout his life. Along with other members, he moves to the next age-set. The age-sets in these societies, determine their social organisation, because membership of these sets covers all areas of life. It directs a person to decide whom he may marry, what land he can own, and in which ceremonies he can take part etc. Thus, membership of each stratum tells a person about his ranking in society.

In most cases, where age-sets operate, a member of an age-set also belong:; to a particular age-grade. These grades are clearly marked out fiom one another, so that a person belongs to only one grade at a time. Generally, a person after childhood would move from junior warriorhood to senior warriorhood. Then he would graduate fiom junior elderhood to senior elderhood. The warriors fight and defend their tribe from attack, while the elders take decisions and settle disputes. They also communicate with the ancestral spirits. Thus, the age-sets go through the different grades in complete units. In other words, all the members of one particular age-set move into one grade all at once. Thus, their social status also changes all at once. In the kinds of societies we belong to, each person usually makes his or her own natural transition fiom childhood to adulthood and finally to old age. But in age-set societies, these transitions are made on a corporate basis as members of large age-sets.

In terms of a system of social stratification, the age-set system provides for an open society, in which no one is allocated a particular position for life. Everybody in his time does become old, and therefore gets a chance to hold decisive authority. Thus, this is a system in which personnel change within the system, without changing; the pattern of stratification itself

29.3.2 Slave System

The slave system of stratification does not exist any more. Slavery was abolished in 1833 by Britain and 1865 by USA. This was characterised by a high degree of institutionalisation, i.e. there was a solid legal framework to the system. The main emphasis in this system was on economic inequality, which rendered certain groups

phenomena, but in reality the two overlap with each other. The notion of power is the keynote of Weber's theory of social stratification. Both the propertied and the propertyless can belong to the same status groups. Thus, economically determined power is not always identical with the social or legal power.

It has been said that Weber's theory of stratification, is a reaction to Marx's theory of class. We can say that Weber is the founding father of stratification analysis, which developed best in the U.S.A. Marx, on; the other hand, was not a stratification theorist. For him the oppositions and contradictions found in modes of production, were of central importance. In answer to Marx's ideas on class, Weber developed his ideas on stratification. He emphasised the distinction of the economic, social and political bases of stratification. Thus, he provided a multi-dimensional approach to the study of social stratification. In ESO-14, you will get an opportunity to learn in detail, about various approaches to, and aspects of the study of social stratification. Here, we discuss different types of social stratification, found in human societies.

Activity 1

Take a round of your colony/village and note down the pattern of housing, such as, where the richest and most powerful people live, where the market is situated, where the poorest people live. Write a one page assay on "Social Stratification in my Community" Discuss your paper with other students and your Academic Counsellor at your Study Centre.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the three bases of social stratification? Use one line for your answer.

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2) Distinguish between class and status group. Use three lines for your answer.

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29.3 TYPES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Broadly speaking, the following types of social stratification have been known to exist:

i) the age-set system

ii) slave system,

iii) estate system,

iv) caste system,

v) class system, and

vi) race/ethnic system.

The typical characteristics of the caste system are – i) the membership is hereditary and fixed for life, ii) each caste is an endogamous group, iii) social distance is encouraged by the restrictions of contracts and commensality with members of other castes, iv) caste consciousness is stressed by caste names as well as by conformity to the particular customs of the particular caste, and v) occupational specialisation.

The system is rationalised by religious belief.

Caste operates at two levels. Firstly in terms of an abstract classification into four types of 'varna' : brahmin (priests), Kshatriya (lungs), vaishya (merchants) arid shudra (workers). Secondly at the operational village level, there is a division of local communities into groupings called jati. The rigidity of this system is unchangeable. Marginal upward social mobility, is possible by a process called sanskritisation. In this process, members of a lower caste adopt the manners and customs of a higher caste, and sever their ties with their original caste. (For a descriptive elaboration of this concept, you are advised to read block V in ESO-12 and blocks of ESO-14).

Individual features of the caste system can be observed in other societies, which follows strict segregation of particular groups. But caste system in its entirety is of course, found in India, and outside India among Hindus settled abroad and within India among non-Hindu groups. The stronghold of caste and the trends towards change in its nature and functioning, have affected the pattern of social stratification in India. You will learn about this process in ESO-14.

29.3.5 Class System

The class system is very different from the systems of stratification, we have so far discussed. Social classes are neither legally defined nor religiously sanctioned groups. Rather, these are relatively open groups which have been considered to be the by products of the process of industrialisation and urbanisation throughout the world, in all modern industrial societies.

The class system of social stratification basically implies, a social hierarchy based primarily upon differences in wealth and income. These differences are expressed in different life styles and hence different consumption patterns. In some case:; we also find different manners in terms of speech and dress. As a general type, class-systems are characterised by social mobility – upward and downward, both inter-generational and intra-generational.

In studying the concept of class, we face two questions. Firstly, what criteria should be used to identify classes? Secondly, there is the subjective element, i.e., do people with identical tangible material assets form a class, even if they are not perceived by others and themselves as a conscious class? For the first problem of criteria, according to Max Weber, the dimensions of wealth, power and lifestyle are crucial in determining the class. Most sociologists generally use several criteria simultaneously in determining the class. For the second 'subjective' problem, it is generally agreed that the issue of class-consciousness should not be introduced as a definition of the class itself. This is a matter for individual empirical investigation in each case.

Generally, most sociologists agree that in all industrial societies we find the existence of the upper, middle and working classes. Similarly, in agrarian societies a noted sociologist, Daniel Thorner has identified three classes in the rural countryside in India. These he called the class of 'malik', 'kisan' and 'mazdur' i.e., the proprietors who owned land, the working peasants who owned small amount of land and the labour class or mazdurs who did not own any land but worked on other peoples'

of people without rights. The article "slavery' in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences(1968)* makes a distinction between primitive, ancient, medieval and modem slavery. Here we mention only two main types of slavery-ancient slavery and New World slavery. Ancient slavery was prevalent in ancient Rome and Greece. Here slaves were usually foreign prisoners of war. In New World slavery, the basis of development of slavery were colonial expansion and racist ideology. In this system, the slave was designated as the master's property. The slave had no political and social rights. He or she was compelled to work. Living upon slave labour, the masters formed an aristocracy. It is said that the decline of slavery was primarily brought about, by the inefficiency of slave labour. Some other scholars hold that slavery declined, because of continued opposition to the slave system by educated and enlightened public in general, and the anti-slavery struggles organised by the slaves themselves in different parts of the world at different times. The ancient slavery was somewhat reformed, by limiting the owner's right of punishment and giving personal rights to the slave. The Christian Church in the Roman Empire also supported the provision of manumission to the slave.

29.3.3 Estate System

This type of social stratification, was characteristic of feudal societies of medieval Europe. In this system we find hierarchy of social strata, which are distinguished and rigidly set off from one another by law and custom. The defining feature of the estate system, was that the position held in the society, depended entirely in terms of ownership of land. Though this system was less rigid than the caste system, it was also characterised by hereditary transmission of social position. Each estate had a clearly defined set of rights by law. At the top of the system existed a royal family, and a hereditary military aristocracy, who were the landholders. Ranking on par with this group were the priesthood or clergy, who were allied with the nobility. Below this were the merchants and craftsmen, who 'were a small proportion of the population initially, but later formed the nucleus for the emergence of the middle class. At the bottom were the free peasants and the Serfs. Defined by a legal set of rights and duties, each estate had a status. The differences between estates were reflected in differences in punishments given for identical offences. Comparative feudal systems and their connections with modem capitalist systems can be traced, for example, in Japan.

As the nobility was supposed to protect everybody, the clergy to pray for everybody, and the commoner to produce food for everybody, the estates may be referred to as a system of division of labour. Lastly, the estates also represented political groups. In this way, one can say that in classical feudalism, there were only two estates, the nobility and the clergy. It was only after the 12th century that European feudalism had a third estate of the burghers, who first remaiqed as a distinct group and later changed the system itself. If we view the feudal estates as political groups, the serfs, who did not possess any political power, cannot be considered as part of an estate.

This system of social stratification is best explained in terms of the nature of and relationship between property and political authority in medieval Europe.

29.3.4 Caste System

The caste system in India can be compared with other types of social stratification but it is unique in some senses to the Indian society. It is uniquely associated with Indian agrarian society as well as, the urban communities like, the Aggarwals, Jains, etc. It consists of essentially closed social groups arranged in a fixed hierarchical order of superiority and inferiority. It represents the most rigid type of social stratification in tenns of ascribed as well as socially accepted stratification.

point out that disappearance of ethnic identities through the process of assimilation is often hampered when the doininant groups do not allow the flow of social benefits to certain groups, deemed to be powerless ethnic minorities. This situation gives rise to ethnic conflicts. All such situations of conflict make the study of social stratification very important, and relevant for sociologists. That is why it is necessary to also look briefly, at the various theories of social stratification. Here, we discuss two major theories, namely, the functionalist theory and the conflict theory.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the term given to ranks determined on the basis of age? Use one line for your answer.

.....

2) Name two main types of slave system. Use one line for your answer.

.....

3) Which form of social stratification is defined in terms of relationship to ownership of land? Use one line for your answer.

.....

4) Name the two levels at which the caste system in India operates. Use four lines for your answer.

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5) Which of the six types of social stratification, is commonly found in industrialised societies? Use one line for your answer.

.....

6) Give the sociological definition of race. Use three lines for your answer.

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29.4 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

At least four social processes are associated with stratification. These processes are discussed below:

i) Differentiation refers to allocation of roles, rights and responsibilities. Through differentiation of statuses tasks are clearly defined and distinguished. Motivation and rewards are provided for fulfilment of expected roles and responsibilities.

land. (Thomer, D. in Gupta (ed.) 1992; pp. 265). On the questions of the role of classes in society and their intra and inter linkages, sociologists have adopted different approaches and developed different theories of social stratification. About these approaches and theories we will tell you briefly at the ehd of this unit. You can get more details on these issues in ESO-04 & ESO-14.

In industrial societies, we find that social classes coexist with status groups. This observation led Max Weber to distinguish between the two, and to look at their linkages with each other. Max Weber argued that social classes are ranked according to their relation to the ways of producing and acquiring goods. Status groups however are ranked according to the ways of consuming goods. This way of understanding the difference between classes and status groups is an over simplification. Since Weber's formulation of this distinction. many sociologists have made studies of the notions of class and status. At this stage it will suffice to say that analysing social stratification in industrial societies is a very difficult task. In the context of developing societies, it is an even more difficult task, because in these societies social class is only one coinponent and the elements of status groups, castes or caste-like groups, racial and ethnic groups exist side by side.

29.3.6 Race and Ethnicity

The remaining type of social stratification is the one based on race and ethnicity. Race, as a biological concept, refers to a large category of people who share certain inherited physical characteristics – colour of skin, type of hail; facial feahires, size of head etc. Anthropologists initially tried to arrive at a classification of races, but ran into problems, because more advanced studies of racial types showed the near absence of pure races. Thus, the latest thinking is that all humans belong to a common group. Recent genetic research indicate that 95 per cent of DNA (gene-rating) molecules are the same for all humans. The remaining 5 per cent are responsible for differences in appearance. Outward differences are also seen as varying within a race rather than across the races. Thus, the classification of races floundered at the scientific level.

For sociologists, a race is a group of people who are perceived by a given society, as biologically different from the others. Thus, people are assigned to one race or another, by public opinion which is moulded by that society's doininant group, rather than on any scientific basis. In racist societies, for example South Africa, physical characteristics are believed to be intrinsically related to moral, intellectual and other non-physical attributes and abilities.

At the theoretical level, sociologists talk about race relations as forms of stratification. These are characterised by unequal access to wealth and power, on the basis of physical characteristics. We find in this situation the presence of racial ideologies in one form or the other,

Looking at ethnicity, it can be said that whereas race is based on popularly perceived physical traits, ethnicity is based on cultural traits. Ethnic group is thus defined as a common group of peoples with a common cultural heritage (learned, not inherited). This group may share a common language, history, national origin, or lifestyle.

The factor of migration on a massive scale in the last century, provided sociologists an opportunity to examine the fate of ethnic identities. For example, the Chicago School of Sociologists found that over several generations, ethnic identities were lost and later revised. Gellner (1964 : 163) aptly describes the situation thus : the grandson tries to remember what the son tried to forget. However, sociologists also

Activity 2

Think about your local community and the kind of social inequality found in it. Now read carefully the section 29.4 of this unit and write an essay on which approach you think is more suitable, the functionalist or the conflict approach towards the understanding of your community. Discuss your answer with the students and Academic Counsellor of your Study Centre.

29.4.2 Conflict Perspective

According to the conflict perspective, stratification occurs not because it is functional, but because groups compete for scarce resources. Thus, rather than performing a function, stratification reflects an unjust allocation of resources and power in society. ,Those having power exploit the rest in the competition for resources and power in society. Those having power exploit the rest in the competition for resources. The unequal distribution of rewards reflects the interest of the powerful groups rather than the societal needs. Conflict theorists also say that the use of ideology by dominant groups justifies their dominance. Further if a system is to survive and reproduce itself, the subordinate group must also follow the system. It would otherwise lead to instability of the society.

The conflict perspective is understood easily when one looks at the history of stratification systems. Tuniin (1969) looked at the functional theory from a conflict perspective. He felt that far from being functional, stratification systems are dysfunctional. Firstly, stratification limits the opportunities of the under-privileged or subordinate groups in society. This limitation of opportunities represents a loss of talent to the wider society. Secondly, stratification helps to maintain the status quo even when the status quo has become dysfunctional. This is because the privileged class is able to impose upon society the idea that tlie existing inequalities are natural, logical and morally right. Thirdly, because stratification systems distribute rewards unjustly, they encourage the less privileged to become hostile, suspicious and distrustful. This results in social unrest and chaos.

Although, Marx was not a stratification theorist, much of conflict theory came up in response to his approach to classes and class conflict. According to Marx, development of material production forms the basis of progress. In order to achieve production, classes come into being. A class, due to historical factors, gains control of the productive forces (the means of production) in a society. The others then become subservient to this class, and this leads to antagonistic relations among classes. In Marxist theory, social classes have a decisive role in the process of social change. Those attitudes make sure that widespread ideology in society is that which suits them most. This situation gives rise to conflict between classes. Within the conflict theory, Marx's ideas were criticised by many sociologists. Social Stratification (ESO-04 and ESO-14) deals in detail with various aspects of the conflict theory.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Name the four social processes associated with stratification. Use two lines for your answer.

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ii) ***Ranking*** of statuses is based on personal characteristics, trained skills and consequences of tasks performed.

iii) ***Evaluation*** of ranks depends upon values cherished by a society. Evaluation is also based on prestige and preferability attached with a given status.

iv) ***Reward and punishment*** depend upon performance as well as society's evaluative considerations.

A number of theoretical approaches have been put forward for studying these processes, involved in stratification. Of these, functiqnal and conflict approaches occupy a place of prominence.

29.4.1 Functional Approach

Differentiation based on division of work is considered an inevitable state of affairs in all human societies. One person obviously cannot perform all or most of the functions in a society. One has to depend upon other persons for some tasks, which one does not or cannot perform. Similarly, others depend upon him or her for those tasks which he or she performs. Thus, for different functions, persons of different intent and ability are required. These persons by sheer differential intent, ability and performance become different from each other. Their functions are valued differently. They are rewarded according to the values attached to their functions. It is this differential reward pattern which gives rise to stratification and hierarchy.

Functional theorists of stratification, such as Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore stress the necessity of stratification in the functional sense. They observe that it is a universal phenomenon, and go on to argue that it must serve a useful positive function, and be necessary for societal survival. For them, it is the mechanism by which society ensures, that the most perfect positions are carefully filled, by the most qualified and able persons in society. They observe that since these top positions require a substantial period of training and deferral of gratification, they also receive higher rewards, in terms of prestige and monetary rewards. These act as motivational factors to perform efficiently in the job. Thus, according to this theory, the unequal possession of talents is handled by the system of stratification. This theory provides us an understanding of the present system of stratification. With the help of this theory, the parts of a society can be related to the whole of it.

However, sociologists, such as Tumin (1969) and Dahrendorf (1959), have challenged the basic assumptions of this theory. For example, Davis and Moore (1945) have been criticised for confusing social stratification with the existence of specialised roles or division of labour. In fact, stratification refers to a system of unequally privileged groups and individuals, rather than the differentiation based on division of labour.

The Davis-Moore approach is too general to explain the specific nature and causes of social inequality. It ignores the possible negative Consequences of stratification and differential opportunities for mobility.

Ralph Dahrendorf (1959) observes that stratification originates from the "closely related trinity of norm, sanction and power". A society has an authority structure to sustain its system of norms and sanctions. It has a system of "institutionalised power". It is the possession of this power in terms of "coercion" and "coerced" that explains social stratification. According to Dahrendorf the functional theory does not specifically explain the distribution of power, authority and privilege as the basis of social stratification.

process of attempting to change one's rank by giving up attributes, that define a caste as low and adopting attributes that are indicative of higher status, has been called Sanskritisation.

Serf : A person, belonging to a servile feudal class, bound to the soil and the master,

Slave : A person held in submission as the chattel of a master.

Social Mobility : A change in status within the ranked social levels of a society.

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29.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The three bases of social stratification are:

i) class, ii) status, iii) power.

2) Class is an economic category, based on one's income while status group is determined by the social prestige one enjoys.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Ranks determined on the basis of age are called age-sets.

2. The two main types of slavery are – Ancient slavery and New World slavery.

3) Estate – system of social stratification is determined on the basis of one's relationship to ownership of land.

4) Caste operates at two levels. Firstly, at an All-India level, caste is understood in terms of a four-fold classification of *varna–Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.* Secondly, it operates at the village level in terms of "jati".

5) Class system is the most commonly found system of social stratification in industrial societies.

6) In sociological terms, race can be defined as a group of people who are considered by a given society as biologically different from the others.

Check Your Progress 3

1) The four processes involved in social stratification are :

i) differentiation, ii) ranking, iii) evaluation and iv) rewarding

3) The functionalist theory helps one to understand the existing system of social stratification in society. Secondly, it helps in relating the parts of society to the whole and one part to another.

4) According to conflict theory, social stratification occurs in society because groups compete for scarce resources.

2) Give two ways in which the functionalist approach to the study of social stratification helps a sociologist. Use three lines for your answer.

.....

3) Give, in one line, the main reason why, according to the conflict theory, stratification occurs in society.

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29.5 LET US SUM UP

After defining social stratification as a system of social ranking involving relations of superiority and inferiority, we have discussed its three dimensions, namely, class, status and power. Then we described the six types of social stratification; namely,

i) the age set system,

ii) slave system,

iii) estate system,

iv) caste system,

v) class system, and

vi) race/ethnic system;

existing in human societies. This unit outlined theoretical approaches for studying various processes involved in social stratification. We concluded the discussion with an account of the functionalist and conflict approaches to the study of social stratification.

29.6 KEY WORDS

Aristocracy : An upper class, comprising an hereditary nobility.

Burghers : Inhabitants of borough or a town.

Commensality : The relationship involving those who habitually eat together.

Commoner : One of the ordinary people, without a noble rank.

Estate : The extent of one's interest in land or a person's property in land and tenements or a landed property.

Evaluative Ranking : Determining a rank on the basis of its high or low value.

Feudal : The relation of lord to vassal (a person under the protection).

Manumission : Fonnal release from slavery,

New World : The western hemisphere, especially the continents of north and south *America.*

Sanskritisation : At some time or the other, most castes try to raise their rank in the local caste hierarchy, by giving up their attributes and trying to adopt those of castes above them. The

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UNIT 30 SOCIAL CONTROL

Structure

30.0 Objectives

30.1 Introduction

30.2 Meaning and Nature

- 30.2.1 Definitions
- 30.2.2 Related Concepts

30.3 Goals of Social Control

30.4 Methods of Social Control

- 30.4.1 Informal Social Control
- 30.4.2 Formal Social Control

30.5 Mechanisms, Means and Consequences of Social Control

- 30.5.1 Types of Mechanisms
- 30.5.2 Means of Social Control
- 30.5.3 Consequences of Social Control

30.6 Limits on Social Control

30.7 Let Us Sum Up

30.8 Key Words

30.9 Further Readings

30.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

30.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define social control and describe its nature along with some concepts related to it;
- list the goals of social control;
- identify and illustrate the consequences of social control as it affects the individuals as well as the society; and
- describe the important factors that set a limit to the effectiveness of social control.

30.1 INTRODUCTION

In sociology, the study of social control occupies a place of central importance. The existence and persistence of organised social life is not possible without some minimum degree of control over its members. Social control is needed for maintaining social order. What do we mean by "social order"? A social order refers to a system of people, relationships and customs, all these together operating smoothly to accomplish

the work of a society (Horton and Hunt 1981). No society can function effectively unless behaviour can be predicted. Orderliness depends on a network of roles. The network of reciprocal rights and duties is kept in force through social control.

In this unit we shall first focus on the meaning and nature of social control with the help of some definitions, including an examination of a few concepts which are closely related to social control. The discussion will be followed by a look at the goals and methods of social control. Then, we will describe the various types of mechanisms, means and consequences of social control. Finally, we will also discuss the factors which limit the effectiveness of social control.

30.2 MEANING AND NATURE

The terms 'social control' is broadly concerned with the maintenance of order and stability in society. It may be used in the limited sense of denoting the various specialised means employed to maintain order such as codes, courts, and constables. It is also used to categorise social institutions and their inter-relations insofar as they contribute specifically to social stability e.g. legal, religious, political institutions etc. Social control is one of the most fundamental subjects of sociological discussion. It arises in all discussions about the nature and causes of both stability and change.

30.2.1 Definitions

Let us look at certain definitions of social control in order to know what is contained in the concept.

Some definitions focus on the "order" aspect of social control. For instance Maclver and Page (1985) define social control as the way in which the whole social order becomes consistently interlinked and maintains itself. Some others look at social control as the means by which society establishes and maintains order.

Another set of definition emphasises the aspect of conformity to norms and expectations of the group as the most important element in social control. The emphasis is on all those means and processes whereby a group or a society secures conformity of its member to its expectations. In other words, social control refers to those ways used by a society to bring its way ward members back into line. When we use the term social control we are essentially referring to the processes and means which limit deviations from social norms (Horton and Hunt 1981; Berger 1963; Ogburn and Nimcoff 1978).

The main points that emerge from all these definitions about the meaning of social controls are :

i) The term refers essentially to means and processes whereby certain goals are to be achieved.

ii) The two most important goals sought to be achieved by social control are :

a) Conformity to norms and expectations of the group;

b) Maintenance of order in society.

iii) There is an element of influence, persuasion or compulsion in control. The individual or a group is directed to act in a particular way. Conformity is expected or imposed irrespective of whether one likes it or not.

iv) The scope of social control is vast. It may operate at different levels. One group may seek to control another group; a group may control its own members or an individual may seek to control another individual. The scope of control ranges from the management of deviants to social planning.

30.2.2 Related Concepts

Here we discuss some concepts which are closely related to social control.

i) **The concept of self-control**

Self-control implies that imposition of external control, is not required to compel the individual to do the right thing in a given situation. In this sense, self-control supplements the mechanisms of social control in producing conformity. But, it should also be remembered that self-control itself, originates in social control. For it is the processes of social control which instil a sense of inner control in the individual. The relation between self-control and social control can be understood in the following manner: the group applies some sanctions (punishment etc.) on an individual for indulging in deviant behaviour. But many persons are capable of visualising the consequences of their action in advance, and restrain themselves. In this sense, self-control is also a form of social control. From this point of view we can also maintain that both self-control and social control are closely related to yet another process–socialisation, to which we now turn.

ii) **Socialisation**

Socialisation is the process by which an individual, from childhood, learns and acquires the cultural characteristics of one's group. He is thus able to participate as a member of the group of society. In childhood, one's parents, for instance, enforce their expectations on the child by a system of reward, punishment and discipline. One also acquires many traits by observing the behaviour of others, and by anticipating the consequences of and reaction to, one's own conduct in different situations. In this way, one develops self-control, a sense of right and wrong. Through the learning process we begin largely to conform to group expectation, very often without any conscious attempt being made on our part to do so. You can cite several examples from your daily life in which you perform many minor and major activities which you are 'supposed' to do, without even being aware of why you are doing so. Thus, socialisation contributes significantly to bringing about effective social control in society. It is only when the process of socialisation fails that the individual may begin to act against the expectations of the group. In that case, imposition of sanctions become necessary.

Social control also helps in the process of socialisation. Insofar as socialisation involves learning process, a system of reward and punishment is required in accomplishing it. Thus, social control and socialisation are mutually related, supplementing each other towards the ultimate objective of ensuring conformity to group norms, and maintenance of social order.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the important goals sought to be achieved by social control? Use about three lines for your answer.

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2) What are the major elements of social control? Use about two lines.

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30.3 GOALS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

From many of the definitions of social control, which we have reviewed earlier, it becomes clear that social control is supposed to achieve several important goals. Some of these goals are:

i) **Conformity**

One of the aims of social control is to bring about conformity in society. Social control mechanisms are employed to control, check or prevent deviant behaviour. As we shall see in Unit 31, deviant behaviour is dysfunctional to society in several ways. The objective of social control, is to safeguard the group against such dysfunctional consequences of deviant behaviour.

ii) **Uniformity**

A related objective of social control is to produce uniformity of behaviour. This does not mean that all the members have to behave alike. It only implies that there should be some co-ordinations, among the several interrelated activities performed by different people. For example, movement of traffic on a road will be impossible if some traffic rules (keeping to the left etc.) are not followed by all road users. A game cannot be played if uniform rules are not followed by all teams and its members. In every sphere of social life some uniformity of behaviour is not only expected, but is also essential.

iii) **Solidarity**

This is a very important objective of social control. As Maclver and Page (1985) have noted, social control ensures order and solidarity in society. Society is constituted of several parts and units. These different parts have to maintain an equilibrium with each other, and with the whole to ensure social solidarity and stability. The mechanisms of social control are directed at maintaining this equilibrium among the parts, and between the parts and the whole.

iv) **Continuity**

Social control is also necessary to maintain and preserve the accumulated culture of the group. By compelling or inducing individuals to conform to the prevailing norms and values, continuity of these cultural characteristics is ensured. For example, when parents insist on their children following family customs or practices, their continuity over generations is sought to be assured.

v) **Social Change**

Social control is employed not only to conserve the existing patterns, but also sometimes to induce desired social changes. In our country, many methods of persuasion, inducement, and compulsion are used to bring about desired changes in some social customs, attitudes and behaviour. Prescribing the age of marriage.

'Two child' family norm, removal of untouchability, dowry etc. are some of the examples of attempts to bring about social change through various means of social control.

30.4 METHODS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Methods of social control can be broken into two types: (i) informal, and (ii) formal. The informal type of control is casual, unwritten. It lacks regulation, scheduling and organisation. The informal types consists of casual praise, ridicule, gossip and ostracism. The formal type is codified, scheduled organised, or regulated in some way, as in promotion, demotion, satire, monetary payment, mass-media etc. (see Horton and Hunt 1981). We now discuss each method in detail.

30.4.1 Informal Social Control

This is also known as primary social control, as it is more effective in what sociologists call primary groups. The primary groups are relatively more homogeneous, small, compact and intimate groups. Members are tied to each other, and to the group by feelings of personal loyalty. A family, playgroups, neighbourhood, rural community, and a simple primitive society are some examples of such compact social groupings. In such societies every individual, is constantly surrounded by very potent and subtle mechanisms of social control. Within a family the individual is under the control of his or her parents and other family members. Family, in turn, is under the control of neighbourhood or kinship groups, and these, in turn, are under the watchful control of the whole society. Thus, no individual or group can be free from social control.

We may say that in such social settings, social control exists like a set of concentric circles surrounding individuals and groups. The important characteristics of this type of control are that it is informal, spontaneous, and unplanned. Usually the group shows its disapproval to the deviating member by ridicule gossip, opprobrium, criticism, ostracism and sometimes application of physical force and coercion. Since the group is compact, ties are strong, members are personally known and the individual has little choice of an alternative groups membership. He cannot afford to ignore the disapproval of his groups and so he has to conform to his group's expectations. Such methods of control are effective not only in primitive societies in which primary groups and relations abound, but are also effective in modern complex societies such as ours, particularly within secondary groups (such as voluntary associations, clubs and trade unions etc.) where such informal controls are effective to achieve the goals of the organisation.

Activity 1

Have you ever experienced social ostracism in your own or in the life of someone whom you know. Write an essay on the event(s) and relate in to the notion of "social control in my society" in about two pages. Share your essay with those of other students at your study centre.

30.4.2 Formal Social Control

This is also known as secondary social control as it is usually found in larger, secondary social groups. Modern complex societies such as ours, are good examples of such social groupings. In such societies we find a large number of groups, which are characterised by impersonal relations, and are oriented to certain specific objectives. A political party, trade union, factory, office, students association, may be some examples. In these secondary groupings, relations among members are more formal

and less intimate. Their relationships mean that informal controls such as ridicule, criticism or 'gossip' do not operate here. It is a well known fact in sociology, that informal groups do develop within such formal organisations. In a university or a college, certain cliques informal controls are more effective. The point is that such informal groups which develop within formal organisations, may either inhibit or facilitate formal secondary controls and affect the performance of the organisation.

Generally speaking, in secondary groupings informal controls take their place. Both positive sanctions in the form of reward, honour, and negative sanctions by way of punishments, expulsion etc. are used in this form of control. In the larger society, such controls are exemplified by law, police, courts, prisons and other agencies of law enforcement. Apart from these more visible forms, formal control mechanisms also include well organised propaganda through mass media, to 'engineer' social control in society. In large secondary groupings informal controls are weakened due to growing anonymity, mobility, and conflicting norms and values. Intimacy declines and members do not have personal or emotional feelings towards each other. They frequently move from one place to another, or from one group to another. Thus, they can easily escape from the controls of some particular group. Moreover, in a complex society, there is always a conflict of norms and values of different groups. One group may approve a conduct which may be disapproved by some other group. Under such circumstances, recourse is ultimately taken to the formal agencies of social control.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) List the five major objectives of social control. Use one line for your answer.

.....

2) Describe the informal objectives of social control. Use one line for your answer.

.....

3) Promotion and demotion in the bureaucracy are the example of informal social control. Tick the correct box. Yes No

30.5 MECHANISMS, MEANS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Every society has devised various mechanisms to exercise control. Social control mechanisms are viewed by sociologists as all those social arrangements that (i) prevent such strains as may develop from the individual's place in the social structure and (ii) prevent the strains from leading to deviance (see Brearley 1947:65). Every society has certain means to exercise social control, and there are clear consequences of exercising social control for promoting stability and conformity in societies.

30.5.1 Types of Mechanisms

Mechanisms of social control can be classified into the following four categories:

i) **Preventive mechanisms :** These mechanisms are designed to prevent such situations from developing, that might lead to deviance Socialisation, social pressures, establishment of role priorities, force are some of the mechanisms

through which conformity is promoted or the occurrence of deviance is prevented.

ii) **Mechanisms to manage tensions :** Institutionalised safety valves like humour, games and sports, leisure, religious rituals are regarded as outlets for the tensions generated by social restraints, and cultural inconsistencies within a society.

iii) **Mechanisms to check or change deviant behaviour :** Sanctions are used by every society to bring about conformity, and check or change deviant behaviour. Sanctions have been classified into :

a) **Psychological sanctions :** Negative sanctions are reproof, ridicule non-acceptance, ostracism etc. Positive sanctions include acceptance in the group, praise, invitation to inner circle events, verbal or physical pat on the back gifts etc.

b) **Physical sanctions :** These are mostly negative. The most important forms of physical sanctions are expulsion, physical punishment and extermination.

Village Ex-Communicates one of their member

EX-COMMUNICATION : A MECHANISM OF SOCIAL CONTROL

c) **Economic sanctions :** These include positive rewards like promotion of a loyal sincere worker, grant of tenders to civic minded businessmen etc., or negative sanctions like threat of loss or reduction in one's income

(e.g. threat of discharge by employer may prevent the employee from continuing his strike), economic boycott etc.

iv) **Propaganda Mechanisms :** Another important mechanism that can bring about change in the desired direction, is propaganda or moulding public opinion. Propaganda is a deliberate attempt to control the behaviour and interrelationships of members in order to change the feelings, attitudes and values. For example, the efforts of the government to control population growth through family planning propaganda (see Horton and Hunt 1981).

30.5.2 Means of Social Control

As mentioned earlier in this unit (sub-section 30.2.1), social control may denote the various specialised means employed by a society, to maintain order. It may also be used to categorise institutions insofar as they contribute specifically to order and stability. Let us examine some of these in detail.

i) **Custom**

Social codes found in every society provide standardised ways of doing things. These ways, known as customs, have come to be accepted in the group or society. Some degree of pressure is always exerted on the individual to make one conform to customs. In case, they are violated the group applies some sanctions or penalties of varying degrees of severity. The severity would depend on the importance attached to the particular customary regulation.

Custom is sustained by common acceptance. Informal social pressures are brought to bear, in the case of violation of customs. Violation of mores, on the other hand, inspire intense reaction and the punishment may involve expulsion from the group, harsh ridicule, imprisonment or in some cases even death. To function effectively in a culture it is imperative that one learns the appropriate folkways (customs and conventions) and mores of that culture. Let us now see the role of law as a means of social control.

ii) **Law**

Certain norms become laws when a society feels strongly, about them, Laws are formal standardised expressions of norms, enacted by legislative bodies to regulate certain types of behaviour. Laws not merely state what behaviours are permitted and not permitted, but they also state the punishment for violating the law.

As we shift from simple societies to the modern ones, the role of law as a mechanism of social control assumes greater significance. In modern, complex societies the more informal types of social control are weakened. Though law may itself be based on custom, it has three distinct characteristics which separate it from custom: first, **it has politicality** as it is upheld by the political authority of the state. Second, **it has uniformity**, as it is applicable throughout the jurisdiction of the state on all groups or parts of society. Third, **it has penal sanction**, as each law is enforced on the strength of penalty imposed by the State (Courts) in case of violation. There are distinct agencies such as police, courts, prisons etc. to enforce the law. However, when a law does not reflect folkways and mores, its enforcement is likely to be ignored or given low priority. For example, even though the minimum age at marriage for girls and boys in India is fixed by law, many communities ignore these prescriptions. When there is a conflict between custom and law, it becomes difficult to impose the law. We will now turn to the role of religion.

Activity 2

Scan the newspapers of a week for any news item which describes how the customs of a community clash with the legal edict such as, practice of dowry, or sati. Write a page on the event and its sociological implications. Compare your note with those of other students at your study centre.

iii) **Religion**

Sociologists are interested in studying how religion is organised, and what impact it has on the members of a society in terms of controlling their behaviour. They are also interested in the kinds of belief system developed by people, in different situations and circumstances, and how religious beliefs change over time as external situations and circumstances change. All religions are seen to have the following elements: (a) things considered sacred (b) a set of believers (c) a set of rituals and ceremonies (d) a system of beliefs such as a creed, doctrine or a holy book (e) a certain form of organisation.

Religion contributes to stability and order in society in that it reinforces social norms. providing sanctions for violation of norms and reinforcing basic values. Today, with the explosion of scientific knowledge, some customs, religious and moral interpretations of behaviour are no longer considered binding or accepted. The sacred books of most of religions include rules for ordering social relationships. It is especially explicit about matters pertaining to the family, marriage, divorce and inheritance. Though laws are challenging some of the practices upheld by religious teachings, beliefs and experiences associated with religion are still seen to be essential for both personal identity, and social cohesion. Education too is an important means of social control. Let us see how this is so.

iv) **Education**

The institution of education helps to control human behaviour through socialisation of the young and adult members of society. The different levels of formal education transmit the culture of society, to individuals within the society. In discharging their socialisation function, schools and colleges transmit many of the society's values. The individuals learn to conform to rules, be honest, be diligent and to co-operate with others etc. Another value of education is that it prepares students for their adult occupational roles. Education is further valued for the understanding it imparts, about the social and physical environment. However, the fact that education tries to impart such values, is no indication that everyone who goes to school and college learns and accepts these values. Were the educational system and educators and other socialisers always successful, there would be no deviance and no social conflict. This brings us to the topic of family.

v) **Family**

Across the world, the institution of family performs certain important functions. These include socialisation, imparting of affection and emotional support, regulation of sex and reproduction. Family is not only an important agency of socialisation but of social control as well. It is in the family that an individual normally has his most intimate, and important social relation. Some of human beings' most basic needs, both physical and psychological are fulfilled within the family. Though the more formal and more coercive measures of social control are generally absent in the family, other informal means such as ridicule, criticism, disapproval, loss of prestige, withdrawal of rewards etc. are very potent means of control. In fact, an individual

always seeks emotional support of his or her near and dear ones in the family in timers of stress and tension. The mere threat of withdrawal of this support, is sufficient to bring the recalcitrant member back into line. Every family has its own set of moral values and customs. These are enforced upon its members, particularly the younger ones through disciplinary measures and a system if rewards and punishments. We now turn to leadership.

vi) **Leadership**

It can play a very important role in social control. It develops out of the process of interaction itself. Leaders have guided the destinies of groups, communities, and nations. If the leader enjoys group support, his or her suggestions and directions lead the members towards some common values and goals, and may help to promote order and stability in society. In this process mass media can play a very important role.

vii) **Mass Media**

In traditional smaller societies face to face contact was the only means of communication. In modern technological societies the media of mass communication, such as newspapers, radio and television, are a means of not only communication but also of social control. Much of the public opinion and propaganda, for example, (and other social and cultural groups) make use of these means to mould public opinion, and to change or control attitudes and behaviour of the vast mass of population. New values and life styles, fashions, wants, ideas etc. are thrust upon the public with a view to redirect and control their behaviour in a particular way. We will now consider the role of force in social control.

viii) **Force**

Though some sociologists have neglected or under emphasised the element of force or physical coercion in social relationships, the role of force in social control cannot be underestimated. In some types of societies, such as the totalitarian states and colonial regimes, physical force and violence are used as significant instruments of control. In fact, it can be asserted that physical violence is the oldest and ultimate means of social control. Even modern, liberal democratic societies maintain police and armed forces. This signifies the fact that the resort to force and violence is the ultimate answer to many issues, when other means have failed. On the other hand, communal and caste violence, are examples of how force is used by interested groups to control and coerce each other though it is not legally sanctioned.

30.5.3 Consequences of Social Control

Though social control is seen as necessary for promoting continuing stability and conformity in societies, it can become dysfunctional at times. The following are some of the dysfunctional aspects of social control.

i) **Exploitation**

Social control may sometimes become a subtle means of exploitation. Some of the dominant groups or individuals may simply use it to fulfil their own vested interests. These interests may be political, economic or social. In such cases, the real motivations are hidden under the cover of some laudable objectives. A ruling party may try to perpetuate its rule, or a business firm may try to sell its substandard goods by means of utilising the techniques of social control.

ii) **Inhibiting Reform and Change**

Social control may have limiting consequences in that it may sometimes inhibit creativity, and obstruct attempts at constructive reforms and social changes.

iii) **Psychological Pressures**

Social control may also exert enormous amount of emotional and psychological pressures on some individuals. The best example is that of the institutions such as the prisons and mental hospitals. The strict regime and oppressive atmosphere sometimes create mental tensions and even illnesses among them. Similarly, where parents have very strict standards of discipline, their children's personalities do not develop in a normal way. In repressive police-states, many individuals, likewise, suffer from stress and tension. Thus, the individual has to pay a price for social control in psychological terms.

iv) **Social Tensions**

Social control may also lead to social tensions, particularly in a large, complex society. Here, there may be different groups with their distinctive interests, norms, and values which may conflict with each other. When attempts are made by one or more groups to impose their own standards on others, conflict and struggle become inevitable.

30.6 LIMITS ON SOCIAL CONTROL

Effectiveness of social control is limited due to the following factors :

i) Each group is organised around norms and values. Social control is intended to check deviation from these standards. Yet, it is not possible to contain deviation completely. some deviation from prescribed norms will always be there. Each group or society has to determine the limit of tolerance of deviant conduct and thus set a realistic limit on social control.

ii) The effectiveness of social control is also limited by the degree of consistency in the cultural directives. If the cultural prescriptions are uncertain and inconsistent, then social control cannot operate successfully. This is why in a rapidly changing society, in which normative standards become inconsistent, mechanisms of social control are generally weak. Individuals may not know what is expected of them in a particular situation.

iii) In a complex society, it is not generally possible to impose social control uniformly on all groups which are divided on the basis of class, caste, religion, race etc. Sometimes the uniform application of law also encounters numerous difficulties. In our country, despite the constitutional directive to have a uniform civil code, it has not been possible to evolve one so far.

iv) Social control implies huge economic costs to the society. The control of deviance requires a disproportionate share of societal attention and resources. Huge expenditure has to be incurred on the establishment of social control agencies such as the police, prisons, mental hospitals, etc. There is a limit beyond which a poor country such as ours cannot afford to deploy such resources at the cost of other development programmes.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the four major mechanisms to check deviant behaviour? Use two lines for your answer.

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2) Name five major means of social control. Use one line for your answer.

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3) In traditional society, mass media is the only source of social control. Tick the correct box.

Yes No

4) Mention three dysfunctional aspects of social control. Use three lines for your answer.

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30.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have focused on the nature, approaches, mechanisms and consequences of social control. We discussed that social control is a pervasive feature of social life. Social control means that every society has some rules which have to be obeyed, and some standards of conduct which have to be followed. This is so because no society can exist without social control. The twin goals of social control are:

i) to establish and maintain order in society; and

ii) to check deviant tendencies and behaviour.

You also learnt that different societies have different methods to exercise control. The two types discussed here are the formal and informal. Some of the important mechanisms discussed in this unit are custom, law, religion, education, family, leadership, mass media, force etc. Then, we also looked at some of the consequences of social control from the point of view of both the society and the individual. Finally, we pointed out some of the factors that limit the effectiveness of social control.

30.8 KEY WORDS

Dysfunctional consequences : Certain results which are not recognised by the social norms.

Social category : Analytical tool used to categorise people having some characteristics in common viz., occupation class, middle class etc.

Social restraints : Collective opposition against non-conformity to social norms and institutions.

Social sanction : Punishment given for the non-conformity to social norms.

30.9 FURTHER READINGS

Brearely, H.C. 1965. *"The Nature of S`ocial Control"*, In Joesph S. Roucek et. al. (Ed) *Social Control*, Affiliated East West Press: New Delhi.

Ogburn, William F. and M. Nimcoff, 1979. *A Handbook of Sociology*, Eurasia Publishing House: New Delhi (Chapter VIII).

30.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1) There are two important goals sought to be achieved by social control. These are (i) conformity to norms and expectations of the group; (ii) maintenance of order in society.

2) The major elements of social control are influence, persuasion and compulsion.

Check Your Progress 2

1) a) conformity,

   b) uniformity.

   c) solidarity,

   d) continuity, and

   e) social change.

2) The informal type of social control is casual, unwritten and it lacks regulation, scheduling and organisation. The informal type consists of casual praise, ridicule, gossip and ostracism.

3) No.

Check Your Progress 3

1) a) psychological sanctions,

   c) physical sanctions,

   d) economic sanctions, and

   e) propaganda or moulding public opinion.

2) a) customs,

   b) law,

   c) religion,

   d) education, and

   e) family

3) No.

4) a) It may lead to exploitation of the weaker section by the dominant one.

   b) It may cause psychological pressure.

   c) It may cause social tension.

UNIT 31 SOCIAL DEVIANCE

Structure

31.0 Objectives

31.1 Introduction

31.2 Meaning and Nature of Deviance

- 31.2.1 Difficulty in Defining Deviance
- 31.2.2 Variations in the Deviants

31.3 Basic Types of Deviance and Deviants

- 31.3.1 Three Types of Deviance
- 31.3.2 Five Types of Deviants

31.4 Explanations of Deviation

- 31.4.1 Biological Explanations
- 31.4.2 Psychological Explanations
- 31.4.3 Sociological Explanations

31.5 Let Us Sum Up

31.6 Key Words

31.7 Further Readings

31.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

31.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define deviance and describe its nature;
- classify and distinguish the types of social deviance;
- critically examine the biological, psychological and sociological explanations of deviance.

31.1 INTRODUCTION

Deviance and control are the key concepts linked to the central conceptual framework of sociology. In the earlier unit of this block, we discussed the concept of social control. In this unit we shall discuss nature and meaning of deviance, and introduce you to its types. This unit then focuses on the biological, psychological and sociological explanations of deviance.

31.2 MEANING AND NATURE OF DEVIANCE

The study of deviance cannot be undertaken without reference to norms. Norms are prescribed standards which guide and regulate behaviour. They are accepted by the group and shared by group members. For this reason, it is only with reference to norms that we can speak of, or define deviance. Human society permits certain

variations in the behaviour demanded by the norms. Essentially these variations are well defined by the cultural norms of the society concerned. When we speak of deviance we are essentially referring to norms violations, or to that behaviour which departs from some norms or standard of behaviour.

31.2.1 Difficulty in Defining Deviance

Norms are not the same everywhere. They vary from group to group, within a group, and over a period of time. It is not easy to identify those behaviours that are universally defined as departures from some norm or norms. For example, prostitution may be viewed as well as defined by law as deviant behaviour in India and USA. Yet in certain European countries prostitutes can operate openly in specific areas. Here we are taking a "relativistic view" of deviation. Behaviours, notions and products of human interaction can be understood or evaluated only within the context of the culture and society of which they are a part. A relativistic view of deviance, implies that deviance can be interpreted only in the socio-cultural context in which it occurs. Deviance is not absolute but relative to the social expectations, norms and rules of a particular society.

Also, if an act is defined as deviant in one situation does not mean it is deviant in every other situation. One of the most commonly accepted norms in many societies of the world is "Thou shall not kill". It is a crime or legal offence to take another person's life because that norm is a law. But in a situation like war, a soldier is permitted to kill an enemy soldier. This kind of behaviour is normative for soldiers in the war. Therefore, we can expect definitions of deviance to **vary with circumstances or situations.**

31.2.2 Variations in the Definition of Deviance

Let us now consider some other important variations, that affect the definitions of deviance, and contribute to the problem of defining deviance in terms of some universal factors.

i) **Variation by Time**

An act considered deviant in one time period may be considered non-deviant in another time period in a society. For example, in India women pursuing collegiate education were defined as "deviants" in the 19th century. But today, women pursuing higher education are not considered deviants.

ii) **Variation by Culture**

Behaviour viewed as deviant in one location, or culture may be considered non-deviant in another. In some cultures having more than one wife is permitted. It may signify the high financial and social status of man. In some other societies monogamy is strictly prescribed, and being married to more than one woman is a socially and legally punishable offence.

There are also variations in the definition of deviance within a culture, or between sub-cultures of particular society. Free interaction between the sexes may not be considered deviant in a big cosmopolitan city. But it may be so in a village or a small town. Similarly, teenage smoking may invite different kinds of reactions from different sections of the population. One sub-culture may often have norms, that are viewed as deviant by other sub-cultures in the same society.

iii) **Variation by Social Position**

Deviance can also vary with social status (the position in society that one occupies). Certain behaviours are given greater approval for men than women. It is acceptable

for men to go topless in an informal occasion, but if women do so, they are considered deviants. There is much diversity in behaviour, convictions and sanctions in different societies. There are also variations in the meanings and definitions attributed to behaviour and sanctions.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What do you mean by deviance? Use about three lines for your answer.

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2) Point out at least three main difficulties that arise in defining deviance. Use about four lines

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31.3 BASIC TYPES OF DEVIANCE AND DEVIANTS

Both deviance and deviants need to be discussed in terms of their types. This exercise will clarify the nature of deviance.

31.3.1 Three Types of Deviance

Sociologists have classified deviance in a variety of ways. Whatever be the basis of judging or defining deviance, we may say that it is behaviour that is considered to be different from the central behaviour expectations in a certain group. It is possible to list the following three types of deviance (see Horton and Hunt 1981).

i) **Cultural and Psychological Deviation**

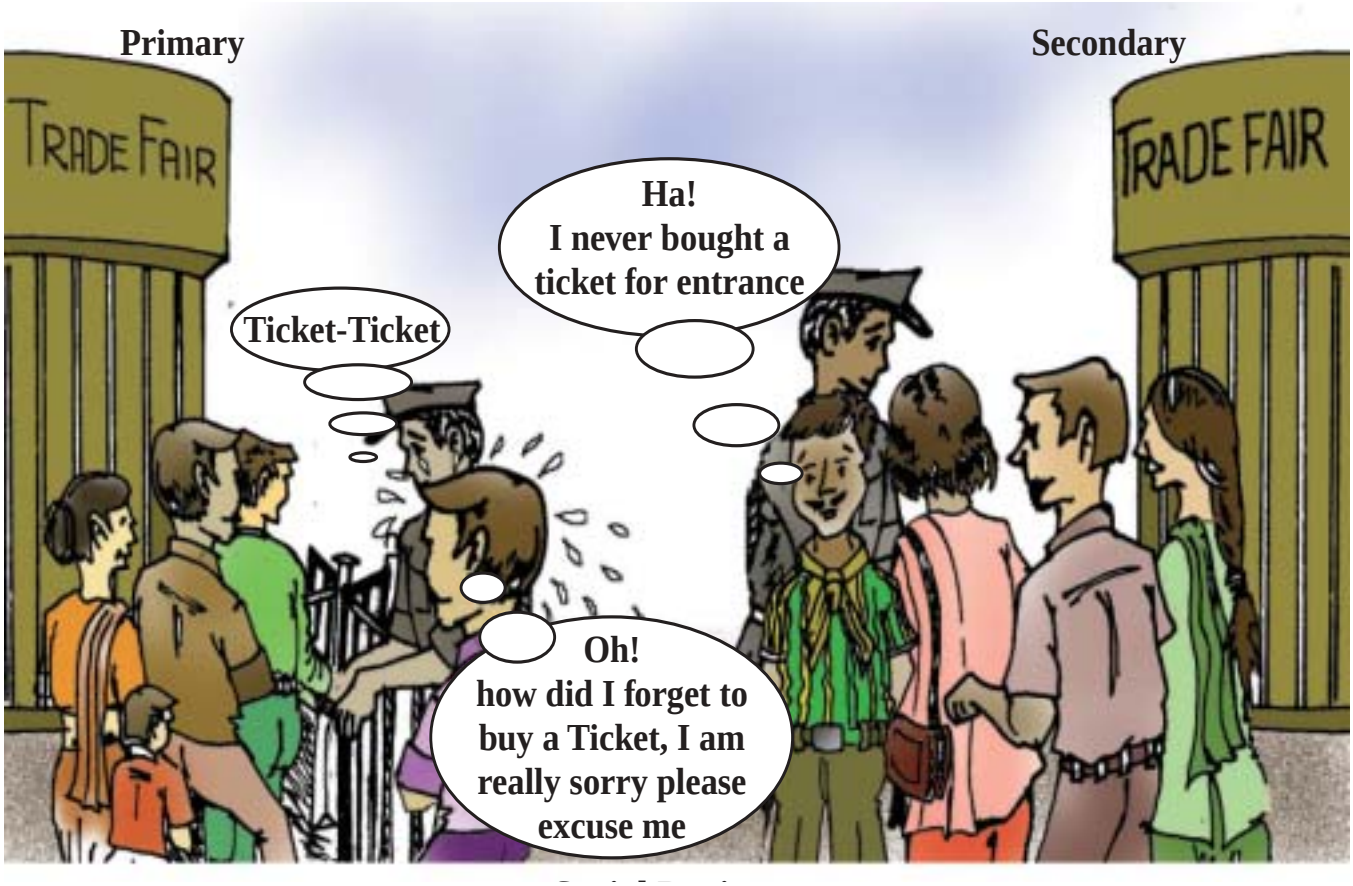
In cultural deviation one departs from the norms of a culture, while the psychological deviant deviates from the norms in personality organisation, for example, the psychotic and neurotic. Both categories may be found in the same person.

ii) **Individual and Group Deviation**

In individual deviation, the person deviates from the norms of a sub-culture. For example, a boy belonging to an educated and respected family takes to drugs and becomes a school dropout. In group deviation, the deviant sub-culture has norms which are condemned by the conventional morality of the society, for example, a street-corner gang of unemployed youth indulging in all sorts of unlawful activities. The gang will be a well-knit group having a private language (known as argot) and a set of stereotyped behaviours, i.e., they develop a distinctive sub-culture. The behaviour of the group members and their activities are condemned by others in society.

iii) **Primary and Secondary Deviation**

Primary deviance refers to the violation of social norms committed by a person who is not labelled as a deviant, and who is basically a conformist in his or her life. The deviant act is trivial or tolerated or concealed so that one is not identified as a deviant. For instance, travelling ticket less once in a while, slipping an extra apple into the shopping bag without paying for it etc. Secondary deviation is that which follows from one's public identification as a deviant. One is labelled as a deviant. The labelling process is often the point of no return in the development of deviance. It leads to isolations, possible dismissal, ostracism and sometimes even imprisonment. The deviant may join the association of other deviants. Even if he or she had the choice to discontinue his behaviour, he or she cannot help but continue.



Social Deviance

31.3.2 Five Types of Deviants

Let us now took at the five types of deviants and thus explain the nature of deviance.

i) **Freak**

The definition of deviants as 'freak' focuses not so much on behavioural patterns, as on physical attributes. Here, deviance merely means variation from the average norms, in a statistical sense. The 'freaks' are those who stand at the extreme ends of the normal curve. The inadequacy of this definition is, that attitudinal and behavioural attributes are not distributed in the population in the same way as physical attributes. Secondly, even those who are placed at the extremes are not necessarily viewed as 'undesirables'. That is, the mentally retarded may not be equated with a genius (though both stand at extreme ends).

ii) **Sinful**

The deviant as 'sinful' is adjudged as such on the basis of religious ideological codes, commandments, texts and doctrines. The terminology applied to such deviants include sinner, heretic, and apostate. The sinner violates certain norms and doctrines which

he/she accepts. The heretic rejects the doctrines or prescriptions; and the apostate not only rejects the faith or dogma, but accepts some other alternative norms and traditions. This amounts to 'ideological treason' from the group's view point.

iii) **Criminal**

The 'criminal' deviant is defined according to the legal codes, particularly the criminal law. Laws are ostensibly enacted to prevent acts, injurious to society and group welfare. Those who violate these laws are labelled as deviants and invite punishment. But not all laws are so detrimental to society. There are four types of legal enactment's designating four types of deviant action, not all equally injurious to society. First, laws prohibit acts which are definitely a threat to the society and cannot be tolerated. For example, murder, theft, treason, incest etc. There is generally a social consensus about the necessity of such laws.

Activity 1

During wars soldiers kill many human beings of the enemy side, but during peaceful situation if the same soldier kills even a single person, he will be declared a murderer and a criminal. How will you explain this? Write an essay of one pages on "Social Aspects of Crime" keeping in mined the above situation. Discuss your essay with other learners at your study centre, as well as your Academic Counsellor.

Second, some acts which are not necessarily immoral or abnormal, but they interfere with public order or public good, and so are made illegal, violation of traffic rules are examples. Third, some criminal laws define certain acts as crimes, but without any victims; these acts do not cause harm or injury to others, and are not malicious as other criminal offences are. The drug addict, the homosexual, and the drunk are examples of such deviants whose behaviour is stigmatised as crime, mainly to enforce certain moral conceptions. Fourth, there are laws which prohibit acts which are 'crimes with willing victims'. Illegal gambling and prostitution are some examples, in which the 'victim' actively seeks criminal services. What all this implies is that some laws prohibiting certain acts, may be based on a general consensus and receive ready acceptance in the larger society. But many laws which proscribe certain acts, particularly those on the border-line of vice and morality, raise critical questions and issues about their justification. The legal definition of deviance (crime) may not always be based on consensual norms of morality. In many situations, it may just be the result of arbitrary processes of legislation, and specific pressures of various interest groups in society.

iv) **Sick**

The conception of deviant as 'sick' is based on a disease model and defined in the pathological framework. Seen from this view-point, the elements of wilfulness and responsibility on the part of the deviant are removed. When defined as 'sick' or abnormal, the reaction of the society towards the deviants changes from punitive to a treatment orientation. There is now a growing tendency to think of such behaviour which was earlier regarded as vicious, criminal or depraved, as manifestation or symptom of an illness. The drug addict, heavy drinker, and homosexual, for example, are now regarded more as 'victims' of some illness rather than criminals. Yet they are more likely to be seen as deviants insofar as such behaviour is perceived as socially (undesirable). The identification of deviance is based on certain internal or intrapsychic symptoms. These may include, apart from intrinsically psychotic conditions, such persistent psychic state as hostility, guilt, shame, escapism,

withdrawal etc. It is obvious that the definition of these conditions as 'normal' and 'abnormal' varies cross-culturally. It also depends on the socio-economic status of the 'sick' persons. Thus this definition of deviant as 'sick' involves several difficulties.

v) **Alienated**

The definition of deviant as 'alienated' persons, focuses on certain categories of social dropouts such as hippies. In the modern industrial society, many people feel estranged and isolated from the values and norms of the society. They are confronted with a sense of powerlessness and meaninglessness. They feel impotent either to control their environment or to determine their own fate. They rarely find an opportunity to express themselves as real or 'whole' persons. There is a complete loss of individual meaning in the face of a vast, segmented impersonal, and uncontrollable social order. They are estranged from the normative order of the larger society in a way that, 'they are in the society but not of the society'. As alienation increases in the modern industrial societies, the number of such alienated deviants also increases, ranging from suicides to addicts.

Such is the variety and complexity of social deviance, that there cannot be any universally applicable classificatory system of this phenomenon. Let us conclude this section, by saying that in defining deviance we should specify the group whose viewpoint we are taking, as also the nature of the normative order (religious, legal) as reference point.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the three types of deviance? Use three lines for your answer.

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2) List out five types of deviants. Use two lines for your answer.

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31.4 EXPLANATIONS OF DEVIATION

Given the wide variations in deviance how can this phenomenon be explained?

Scientists have offered a variety of theories to explain deviance. Biological theories tend to focus on hereditary, anatomical or physiological factors. Psychological explanations tend to discuss personality, movies, aggression, frustration, and other subjective factors. Sociologists usually emphasise socio-cultural factors. Some of these explanations have more empirical support than others. But it goes without saying that all the explanations can increase our understanding of the complexities of

human behaviour, whether deviant or non-deviant. Given below are the three types of explanations of social deviance-biological, psychological and sociological.

31.4.1 Biological Explanations

Biological theories of deviance are generally traced back to the Italian physician-psychiatrist Lombroso (1835-1909). Lombroso was interested in the scientific study of crime. He said that attention should be shifted from the criminal act to the criminal specifically to the physical characteristics of the criminal. He was convinced that there was a "born criminal type". His conclusions were based on a comparison of 400 prison inmates, with a group of Italian soldiers. Lombroso found that the inmates displayed certain physical abnormalities such as deviations in head size and shape, eye defects, receding chins, and excessively long arms. This led him to the belief that criminal tendencies are inherited, and that the potential criminals could be identified by certain physical characteristic or body types. However, his findings were disproved by later researchers who concluded that there is no such thing as a physical type.

Lombroso was not the only scientist to hold the view that physical traits and deviant behaviour are inter-linked. In the 1940s the American psychologist-physician Sheldon attempted to link body type to behaviour. He classified people in terms of three types of physique. The *endomorph* who is soft, round and usually fat; the *mesomorph* who is muscular, stocky and athletic and the *ectomorh* who is skinny and fragile. He associated these body types with certain temperamental and behavioural tendencies. A disproportionately high percentage of criminals were found to be of one body type i.e., *mesomorphs*–the stocky, muscular body type. Like other biological explanations, this theory was also found to be inadequate. For instance, physically fit boys maybe recruited to delinquency more often than skinny boys, Judges may see muscular boys as more of a threat than skinny or obese boys. More recently it has been proposed that a specific genetic condition may be associated with crimes of physical violence. Some violent criminals have been found to have an extra chromosome, they have XYY chromosomes rather than the usual XY. Other findings, however, indicate that XYY factor is not a cause of deviation (Eshleman and Cashion 1983:159-160).

Biological explanations of deviance have been rejected, mainly because they fail to explain why others having similar biological make up, do not exhibit the same forms of behaviour. Biological explanation also do not explain the variation; in deviance as well as its relative nature.

31.4.2 Psychological Explanations

These explanations focus on the person who engages in deviant behaviour. Psychological explanations lay emphasis on the mind of the individual, rather than on body types. These explanations focus on such subjective factors as personality structure, learning, goals, interests, motivations, will power, frustration, ego strength, anxiety, guilt, etc. Social psychologists often consider the social context of behaviour, in addition to these subjective factors.

One group of psychological explanations associates deviance with sickness, arguing that deviance results from a psychological abnormality or a mental illness. For instance, it argues that mentally ill people take to drugs or excessive drinking. Mentally ill people may commit deviant acts. Yet this theory does not account for deviance among people who are not mentally ill nor does it explain why some mentally ill people are not deviant.

Some other psychological explanations suggest that deviance results from frustration. When needs are not fulfilled frustration results which inturn leads to aggression. Frustration over lack of money can lead to aggressive actions–child abuse, robbery, even murder. One difficulty with this explanation is that frustration is defined in such a very broad manner, that it includes almost any behaviour. It does not tell us why there are some people who are frustrated but do not act deviantly.

The psycho-anlaytic theories of deviation are based on the works of Freud (1856-1939). Freudian theorists linked deviance with defects in the super-ego or conscience. People with weak egos were said to be unable to control their impulse, or follow planned rational courses of action. The greatest difficulty with these explanations based on instinct unconscious needs and conscience is that it is difficult if not impossible to test them empirically. Like the biological theories explaining deviance, the psychological theories too cannot account adequately for the relative nature of deviance. The influence of the social context, variations in rates of deviance, and social responses to deviance are also not given consideration.

31.4.3 Sociological Explanations

Sociological theories attempt to explain deviance by looking at the socio-cultural context of deviance. The explanations include both the deviant acts and actors.

The theories we shall consider here are:

i) **Anomie Theory:** It focuses on value conflicts between culturally prescribed goals and socially approved ways of achieving them. ii) **Socio-cultural Learning Theories** are concerned with the way people interact and learn deviance. iii) **Labelling Theory** focuses on the meanings, definitions, and interpretations applied to action. iv) **Conflict Theory** contends that groups in power define the acts of the weaker groups as deviant in order to exploit them.

i) **Anomie**

The concept of anomie has been very important for developing a general theory of deviant behaviour. Anomie literally means normlessness. But this is not its meaning as used in sociology. It does not mean either the absence of norms, or the lack of clarity of norms. In both cases we would be faced with the problem of defining deviant behaviour. Anomie refers to a social and cultural condition in which there is either conflict of norms or ambivalent orientation towards norms. The credit for bringing out the implications of anomie for a general theory of deviant behaviour goes to the American sociologist, Robert K. Merton (1968). He aimed at showing how some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society, to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct. Merton attempted to specify the social and cultural situations which generate varying rates and types of deviant behaviours in different social structures.

To develop his theory of anomie and deviant behaviour, Merton identified two important elements of social and cultural structures. First, let us take the cultural goals, purposes, and interests. These culturally prescribed goals are held out as legitimate objectives, for all the members of the society. The members are supposed to strive for these objectives. Second, actual structures also provide the accepted modes or ways of reaching these goals. That is, there are normatively controlled means to pursue these ends. Then, there is also what Merton calls the opportunity structure in society. That is, the actual distribution of facilities and opportunities to

achieve these goals through socially approved means. As these opportunities are inequitably distributed among various strata of population, there is unequal access to legitimate means to achieve goals.

> **Activity 2**
>
> Visit a slum near your residence. Find out about the children between 5-18 years and their daily like in the slums. Write a report of one page on "Life in the Slums". Discuss your answer with other students and your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

The foregoing propositions imply that the cultural goals are held out equally for all, whereas the institutional means to achieve them are not equally available. This differential access to legitimate means and opportunities to achieve goals results in strain, namely, a sense of frustration and injustice. Deviant behaviour can be seen as a symptom of this strain. When people are unable to realise the culturally prescribed aspirations, through socially structured avenues which are not equally available to them, they may adopt alternative, illegitimate means to achieve them. The theory of anomie seeks to explain the rates and pattern of deviant behaviour in different societies. As Merton has himself noted, many countries much poorer than the United States such as India, have lower rates of crime. The low rate of crime in India, despite its poverty can be attributed to the fact that poverty alone, does not operate in the same manner in each society. It is interdependent on other social and cultural variables. When there is traditionally little possibility of getting ahead, as in a caste society, poverty does not account for high crime rate. Once the constitutional values in our country, such as equal opportunity for all, are held out before citizens, the levels of aspiration rise, and the existing inequitable social structure resentment and frustration-the "socially structured strain" - are likely to occur and lead to a higher rate of crime, vandalism and violence.

Merton's theory has been subject to criticism. (i) Critics argue that it wrongly assumes that a single system of cultural goals is shared by the entire society. The goals are different for different people. Everyone does not aim for the same goals. (ii) The critics point out that it has also failed to explain why some people choose one response, while others choose a different one. (iii) Some have been pointed out that certain types of deviance-rape, the behaviour of hippies in the 1960s-have not been accommodated in his analysis. (iv) Other critics argue that Merton's theory ignores the influence of society's reactions in the development of deviance (Eshleman & Cashion 1983: 1630).

In spite of these criticisms the anomie theory provides a framework for examining a wide range of social behaviour.

ii) **Socio-cultural Learning Theories**

These theories focus on those processes through which deviant acts are learnt, and the conditions under which learning takes place. These theories emphasise presence of groups that people belong to, and how they learn the norms prescribed by those groups. Two of the theories that specifically focus on deviance are:

a) **Sub-Culture or Culture Transmission Theory:** The emphasis in sub-cultural explanations is on the existence and transmission of deviant traditions, attitudes, and behaviour among certain groups or sectors of society. Culture consists of certain values, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and ideas shared by members of a society. But within a society there are many variants of the common culture among certain groups, which are normatively distinguishable from the larger society. They simply mean "a culture within a culture". Thus there are some sub-cultures which perpetuate,

and give support to, deviant beliefs and values. The supposition is that particular individuals commit deviant acts because they have identified themselves with, and are exposed to the normative systems that are centrally in conflict with that of the larger society. In other words, individuals in this case receive group support to their activities, which are stigmatised and penalised by the larger society. The sub-cultures of these groups are directly in opposition with the larger society.

For example, some of the criminals, delinquents, homosexuals, or drug addicts may constitute specific groups of deviants, each of which have some attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour patterns shared by their respective members.

Box 31.01

Even thieves have a code of conduct. Some of the tribes in India, such as, the Sansis, the Pardis, the Nats, etc. were considered to be the criminal tribes since they practised crimes like theft, robbery, murder as part of their customary traditions. It was committed in a ritualistic manner as part of worship of their gods and goddesses. Thus, you may have heard of murders and dacoities in certain areas in Delhi where the wooden leg of cots were used to kill their victims before robbing them.

Several sociologists have paid attention to the notion of sub-culture in the analysis of a wide range of deviant behaviour, particularly crime, delinquency, drug addiction, homosexuality, etc. This notion was already evident in the urban studies of a group of sociologists known as the "Chicago Sociologists'. They pointed out around the 1920s that in several sectors of the city, particularly in the slum areas, there existed well-developed and persistent patterns of values and norms, which were at variance with those of the 'respectable' society. They were reflected in such behaviour as organised forms of crime, delinquency, prostitution, etc. Such patterns were easily transmitted to the younger generations as part of their socialisation process.

b) **The Differential Association Theory:** The differential association theory was devised by Sutherland. He tried to answer the question "Why are some people attracted to deviant behaviours while others are not?" More specifically, he attempted to find out why crime rates vary among different groups of people.

Sutherland (1939) proposed that deviance is learned by association with those who hold these values. Learning a deviant behaviour involves acquiring a set of motives, drives, rationalisations and attitudes and specific techniques for committing the deviant act itself. People are regarded deviant when they acquire more definitions that favour violating norms and laws than oppose such violation. He pointed out that deviant behaviour of individuals in the group may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity, depending on the amount of time they have spent with groups possessing different norms. The variations in group involvement's are known as "differential association".

He did not believe that contact with criminals is a necessary condition for a person to become deviant. Exposure to conditions favouring deviance was enough. The influence and frequency of these exposures vary from person to person. Sutherland's theory was later revised as a social learning theory, around the late 70s in terms of the behavioural theory in psychology. Critics argue that socio-cultural learning theories, do not explain how deviance originated or how certain behaviours came to be defined as deviant. It has also been argued that they do not deal adequately with those who commit deviant acts in isolation rather than as part of a group (Eshleman and Cashion: 1983 : 165).

iii) Labelling Theory

The theories mentioned so far have focused on deviance in terms of people and acts, the process of learning deviance. Labelling theory looks specifically at the consequences of labelling a person "deviant". How does a society construct definitions of deviance? How and by whom are these labels applied to certain people? How does labelling affect a person's behaviour? Attention is focused on the nature of origin of social norms and on the social reaction to labels aimed at those whose behaviour departs from these norms. The main premise of the approach is two-fold. First, it directs attention to the fact that social deviance, as defined by social norms, is relative. What is deviant at one time and in one context may not be deviant at another time or context. Secondly, the role of those involved in labelling a person as deviant, is itself an independent variable in creating or leading to deviance.

The labelling orientation recognises three levels of analysis. First, the society at large, consisting of various interest groups. These define and judge various forms of behaviour as deviant. Second, there are various individuals with whom the person concerned interacts daily and who label him in one way or the other. Thirdly there are the official and organisational agents of control who implement societal reaction, and label or stigmatise the individual, leading him or her to deviant commitment and career. You may understand this perspective by an example. It is common experience that a child who is constantly labelled by his parents or teachers as a 'bad', 'dull' or 'unintelligent' child, gradually begins to accept his negative self-evaluation, and then begins to 'actually' act or behave in similar manner.

The implications of the labelling perspective is that it redirects our attention, to processes of rule making in society, and the interests and activities of those who label the individual as deviant. Labelling analysis is indebted also to the social conflict school. The social definition of deviance and labelling of an individual as deviant, involve aspects of social conflict among several interest groups in society.

The labelling theory too has its critics. They say that it does not explain the causes of deviance. It cannot be used to predict who will be labelled deviant and in what context. Labelling theory is difficult to test empirically. It has also been pointed out by some criminologists that the labelling theory is inadequate. In that it makes all deviance depend on labels, as if, without labels, there would be no deviance (Eshleman and Cashion: 1983 : 169)

iv) The Conflict Theory

Conflict theory argues that most societies have many groups which have different, often conflicting values. The strongest groups in a society have the power and authority to define the values of weaker and subordinate groups as deviant. Quinney (1979) for instance, describes crime as that human conduct which is desired by authorised agents in a politically organised society. These agents often define as criminal any behaviour that conflicts with their interests. By publicising these definitions of crime through the media, powerful people impose their own interest on others. Thus laws about theft, robbery, have been intended to help to protect the interests of powerful capitalists rather than the powerless workers. Many conflict theorists perceive that their findings will stimulate political action. They believe it will help to raise a revolutionary consciousness, and the oppression of the powerless by the powerful.

Like other theories, conflict theory has its own critics. Some of the criticisms have been :

a) it does not search for causes

b) it does not explain the crimes and deviance's that are basically non-political

c) it assumes that in the Utopian Communist Society (which will materialise after the overthrow of the capitalist regime) murder, robbery, rape and other crimes will disappear after the "power" to criminalise them is abolished (Eshleman & Cashion 1983 : 164).

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What are the major types of explanations generally given for deviance? Use about two lines.

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2) What is the major focus of biological theorists? Use only one line.

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3) Sociological theories attempt to explain deviance by looking at the psychological context. Tick the correct box.

Yes ☐ No ☐

4) List out the major sociological explanations of deviance.

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31.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit you have been exposed to the meaning and nature of deviance. Deviance is a relative concept inasmuch as its definition varies from group to group and from time to time. It is difficult to define deviance universally as different societies differ in their norms and values. A departure from this is called deviant behaviour.

We also talked about the various ways in which deviance has been classified, and then raised the question about what causes deviance. We have outlined the various explanations of deviance from the various explanations of deviance from the perspective of biology, psychology and sociology. In sociology deviant behaviour is seen as a consequence of certain features in the cultural and social structures of society.

31.6 KEY WORDS

Alienation : A psychological condition where an individual feels that he/she is isolated from the rest of the world.

Anomie : A social situation in which values are conflicting, weak and absent.

Instinct : A complex behaviour pattern that is biologically inherited and common to all members of a given species.

Social Status : Positions individuals occupy in the society, e.g. father, mother, occupational positions like Teacher, Student, etc.

31.7 FURTHER READINGS

Horton. P.B. and Hunt, C.L., 1981. *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill: London.

Johnson, H. 1966. Sociology: *A Systematic Introduction*, Allied Publishers: New Delhi.

31.8 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Deviance refers to norm violations or to that behaviour which departs from some norms or standard behaviour.

2) The three main difficulties in defining deviance are:

   a) Variation by time.

   b) Variation by culture.

   c) Variation by social position.

Check Your Progress 2

1) a) Cultural and psychological deviance,

   b) individual and group deviance, and

   c) primary and secondary deviance.

2) Freak, Sinful, Criminal, Sick and Alienated.

Check Your Progress 3

1) There are three types of explanations:

   Biological, Psychological and Sociological

2) Biological theorists tend to focus on heredity or anatomical or physiological factors.

3) No

4) Anomie Theory

   Socio-cultural Learning Theories

   Labelling Theory

   Conflict Theory

UNIT 32 SOCIAL CONFLICT

Structure

32.0 Objectives

32.1 Introduction

32.2 Sociological Concept of Social Conflict

- 32.2.1 Perspective of Economic Determinism
- 32.2.2 Perspective of Max Weber

32.3 Elements of Social Conflict

32.4 Functions of Social Conflict

- 32.4.1 Positive Consequences of Conflict
- 32.4.2 Dysfunctions of Conflict

32.5 Types of Social Conflict

- 32.5.1 Class Conflicts
- 32.5.2 Political Conflict
- 32.5.3 Communal/Ethnic Conflicts
- 32.5.4 Factional Conflicts

32.6 Conflict as a Condition of Social Change

32.7 Let Us Sum Up

32.8 Key words

32.9 Further Readings

32.10 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

32.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you must be able to:

- define social conflict and describe its nature;
- explain the integrative and disintegrative aspects of social conflicts;
- list and describe the four types of social conflict, commonly seen to occur in human societies; and
- describe conflict as a condition of social change.

32.1 INTRODUCTION

Social conflict is an important area of sociological study. In this unit, we discuss the basic concept of social conflict, and describe the contributions of Karl Marx and Max Weber on the nature of social conflict. Then, the unit deals with the various functions of conflict in society. Finally, we discuss the types of conflicts found in almost all societies, and conflict in relation to change.

32.2 SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

If one were to look at the major concerns in sociology, we find primarily two: The first one tends to focus on the nature of social order, social stability, and consensus. The second one deals with change, disorder, instability and social conflict. Sociological perspectives fall broadly in the categories of function i.e., consensus-based, and conflict which is primarily oriented, to explaining the elements of instability and change.

Under the influence of the evolutionary perspective in the natural sciences, many early sociologists have also dealt with the phenomenon of social conflict. However, the discussions centred on the unintended (more or less autonomous) interaction, in the tradition of the Darwinian concept of "struggle for survival". This phase was followed by an examination of the problems of order or the problems of social solidarity. These gave rise to the functionalist school in sociology and social anthropology. Karl Marx was an important social thinker who systematically analysed the phenomenon of social conflicts. Yet the major discussions in academic sociology centred on the explanations of social structure and social organisation. This phase continued almost until the first half of the present century. It was after the 1950s, that a focused and systematic examination of the phenomenon of social conflict was undertaken. Let us look at some of the perspectives on social conflict in order to understand its nature.

Today conflict theorists insist that conflict is a perennial feature of social life, and that as a result societies are in a state of constant change. They see conflicts involving a broad range of interests and groups. The interests are economic, political, legal, religious, social and moral. The groups involved are young against old, male against female, one ethnic group against another, one caste against another, one religious group against another, workers against employers and so on. Why do conflicts emerge and continue to persist in social life? The broad answer appears to be that things like power, prestige, wealth and other resources are not equally available to everyone–they are scarce commodities. Those who have them or who have control over these scarce commodities, will always try to defend and protect their interests at the expense of others. As a result, conflict emerges between the groups of opposing interests.

32.2.1 Perspective of Economic Determinism

Karl Marx's (1818-1883) contribution to the area of social conflict is of immense importance. Social conflict, he believed, was the source of all social change. He saw conflict **as a social relationship between two classes having opposing economic interests**. These two classes in capitalist society are the bourgeoisie, (or owners or the "haves" who own the means of production). The economic power of the "haves", gives them power in other spheres too like political and social. The acquisition of power by one class is according to Marx, always at the cost of the other class. The unequal distribution of power is sought to be resisted by the class of the have-nots. These organise themselves to overthrow the rule of the "haves" through revolutionary action. The resulting new social order (where there would be no classes) is an improvement on the old one. In this sense, social conflict can be seen as a vehicle of social progress. Thus, Marx looked at social conflicts essentially within the sphere of economic life. His analysis concentrated primarily on the analysis of class conflicts in the capitalist society.

Opposing Economic Interest of the Bourgeoisie & the Proletariat; Marxist View of Social Conflict

32.2.2 Perspective of Max Weber

Max Weber (1864-1920) too insisted that social conflict cannot be excluded from social life. He pointed out that conflict is a social relationship which has its own characteristics. The important characteristics are:

i) The action within the relationship is oriented intentionally, to carry out the will of the actors or groups against another actor or group.

ii) the effort to carry out one's will against the other, stimulates a resistance from the other against this imposition. So Weber insists that for a relationship to be called a "conflict relationship", there must be the following elements:

   a) Power, and exercise of the power intentionally.

   b) Resistance from the group or individual facing this imposition.

Weber did not see conflict as being confined to the economic sphere alone. He held that conflict arises over the scarcity of such resources, like prestige and power, as well as property and other forms of material wealth. He observed that conflict can emerge in organisations and bureaucracies too. He pointed out that leaders who manage the resources of large scale industrial, government, religious organisations have a great deal of power. They can assert and have asserted their will, against the will of other groups in society and even outside the society (e.g. multinational corporations).

From what has been said so far about the nature of social conflict, the following aspects of conflict relationship emerge:

i) conflict is a struggle over values. It may occur as a struggle over claims to status, power and other scarce resources.

ii) at least two parties are involved in the conflict relationships, to gain these desired values or things.

iii) the conflicting parties often aim to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals.

iv) conflicts can occur within a groups or between groups.

v) conflicts have persisted through time, and they are a perennial feature of social life.

Activity 1

You must have read the story of "Mahabharata" or seen the television, serial based on it. Recall the main elements of conflict between the "Pandavas" and the "Kauravas". Write an essay on the analysis of this conflict in about two pages. Discuss your essay with the students and your Academic Counsellor at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) According to Marx the basic cause of conflict is unequal distribution of political power and authority. Tick the correct box Yes No

2) To Weber, the basic cause of conflict is confined to the economic sphere alone. Tick the correct box Yes No

3) The two conflicting classes of the capitalist society, according to Marx, are:

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32.3 ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

From all these accounts of social conflict, we can gather something about the essential elements of social conflict as given below:

i) In social conflict, the focus is essentially on the opposition between two or more social **categories**. It may be a social group such as a trade union, political party, professional organisation, family etc. It could also be a **class** such as the working class, capitalist class, lower class, upper class, and middle class. What is implied in all these examples is that there is a socially defined expectation, of what that category is supposed to do in relation to another. For social conflict to emerge, there must be at least two social categories which are not only related to one another, but also opposing one another.

ii) All situations of conflict involve the element of power. We cannot have a social conflict relationship, where there is no effort at the imposition of one's will on the other. A conflict relationship is based on the distribution of power in a group.

The imposition of will by one actor or group on another, creates a condition whereby the other actor or the group negates this claim.

iii) Conflict may involve hostile sentiments and attitudes.

iv) It is important to differentiate between objective bases of conflict, and its subjective bases. As we have said before, conflicts can break out over distribution of a variety of scarce material and non-material things such as wealth, income, power, prestige, domination over territory, etc. Such occasions for conflict need to be separated from subjective elements like hostile aggressive attitudes, feelings of resentment, hatred, etc. which may also figure in the conflict relationship.

v) The **interests** that we focus upon in conflict could be of several kinds. they may be **economic** i.e., involving control over the resources and benefits available in society. They can be social involving prestige or polities i.e., who will lay a claim to legitimate authority. They may be **religious** i.e., whose interpretation regarding the supraempirical world is to be accepted as valid. Whichever be the interest or interests, conflict is present when two or more parties have opposing interests.

vi) The conflict relationship often involves two positions – for and against the powerful and the powerless; the exploiter and the exploited; the one who (which) has authority to control and the one who (which) has not. Of course there may also be a number of groups competing for power, and that power need not be concentrated in the hands of a particular social group.

vii) Conflicts may be confined to small groups, or it can encompass the whole world (as exemplified by the World Wars. Conflicts may vary in intensity according to the importance of the issue involved. The scope of the issues involved in a conflict may range from minor positional differences, to radical transformation of the whole society.

viii) Conflicts may occur between societies (e.g. wars between nations) or it may occur within a society between groups. Even within a group, there may be factions, conflicting over an issue or several issues. for example, within the Congress party there may be division of interests and ideologies.

ix) The conflict interaction might take myriad courses. It is possible that it may be nipped in the bud by the powerful group, or that it may extend over a long period of time. It may involve varying degrees of violence. Violent conflicts between groups often involve the use of force.

Activity 2

Visit your local library or your Study Centre library. Open an Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences or Britannica and read carefully about "Cold War" between the different nations of the world before the break up of Russia. Write a note of one page on "Cold War and its Implications" and compare your note with those of others at your study centre. You may also discuss this topic with your Academic Counsellor.

32.4 FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

From the above discussion of elements of social conflict one is prompted to ask "Are conflicts dysfunctional to society?" Conflict need not be regarded as only a

destructive process, that leads to disorder and breakdown of social order. Theorists like Dahrendorf and Coser have focused on the integrative nature of social conflicts.

32.4.1 Positive Consequences of Conflict

Based on Simmel's pioneering and insightful work, Coser (1956) has shown that conflict may have some positive consequences. First, by conflicting with another group, the social solidarity of a given group is increased within. There is a better co-ordination, and a better structural arrangement inside the group. We are all quite conversant with this situation. Whenever our country has faced external aggression, the whole nation has stood together as one, after eliminating all internal dissension. The example of conflict between India and Pakistan is known to all of us which leads to internal cohesion within the country. Sometimes wily politicians in power may deliberately raise the bogey of external dangers, to divert attention from their internal problems. Secondly, conflict may bring together two hitherto unrelated groups in coalition, thereby increasing the scope of co-operative interaction. Thirdly, conflict may give rise to some unchartered areas of co-operation between parties, for example the emergence of the Red Cross during World War-I. Fourthly, conflict interaction might clarify the issues which might have been clouded earlier, thereby improving the understanding of the opponent, and creating new avenues of interaction.

32.4.2 Dysfunctions of conflict

There are, of course, numerous dysfunction's of social conflict such as increasing differences in a group resulting, in extreme cases, in the break-up of the group. Civil war may result in the emergence of one of the parts as an independent state. Apart from this, the cost of conflict, in terms of loss of human life and property are well-known. It is also possible that the conflicting groups may develop deep-seated suspicions and animosities within the respective groups, which may prolong over time, resulting in continued instability of the group. It is only in extreme cases of complete annihilation of one group by the other that the seeds of conflict once sown may not sprout again.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Which of the following is not an element of social conflict:

a) Opposite Economic interest.

b) Presence of two or more groups.

c) Like-mindedness between the two group members.

2) Does conflict with another group increase the social solidarity of that group? Tick the correct box. Yes No

3) Give an example of dysfunction of social conflict. Use two lines for your answer.

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32.5 TYPES OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Although a number or criteria can be used for generating a typology of conflicts, such as, conflicts based on interests, based on whether gradual change or immediate radical change is desired, or conflict in terms of time span, or in terms of the scope of conflicts. Here we shall talk of four major kinds of conflicts. These are conflicts which are seen to occur in almost all societies. We shall discuss briefly the following:

i) Class conflicts which are based on the system of stratification existing in a society.

ii) Political conflicts which are based on the acquisition of, and competition for political power.

iii) Communal/ethnic conflicts, which are mainly based on considerations of maintenance of the group.

iv) Factional conflicts–which occur among small group, claming position of power within small communities.

Before proceeding to look at these types of conflict individually, it should be mentioned here, that there is yet another type of conflict, which has been assigned historical importance over the ages. Only a few modern sociologists have undertaken a systematic study of this type of conflict, referred to as "War". Early sociologists like Comte and Spencer had recognised the importance of wars, and conquests in bringing about social change. Recently there is a growing realisation, that sociologists cannot afford to ignore the problem of war in the nuclear age. The recent studies on war and peace have focused on the conditions and factors that may provoke a war and on the issue of avoiding a war. These studies have helped in clarifying ideas about the complex phenomenon of violent conflicts, specially conflicts that involve the use of force. Violent conflicts like wars, conquests, revolutions, have contributed to the emergence of large social units. New forms of stratification, and new kind of relationships between groups within a society and between societies, may also result from conflicts.

32.5.1 Class Conflicts

All complex societies are characterised by the phenomenon of social stratification, which arranges all the members of the society into categories in a hierarchical manner, with differing amounts of prestige, power and rewards. It is this unequal distribution of benefits, that a society makes available to the various strata, that in turn becomes the basis of a struggle between various classes. Marx insisted that conflict between classes was the only source of radical change.

Class conflict according to him, was based on economic interests. He visualised human societies as passing through various stages of development, depending on the manner in which economic activities are carried out. He distinguished between the class of the **haves** and the class of the **have-nots**. He pointed out that in every kind of society these two groups have persisted. In the slave society there were the masters and the slaves. In the feudal society, there were the lords and the serfs. In the capitalist society, there are the capitalists and the workers.

The strength of Marx's class concept lies in the fact that he sees the two classes, as being linked with each other in terms of an exploitative relationship. The **haves** have power over the **have-nots** by virtue of its ownership of the means of production. When the **have-nots** become aware of their exploited condition, they form a **class-**

for-itself. Otherwise, earlier they were a **class-in-itself**. They begin to fight for their interests in a revolutionary struggle. Their victory transforms the very basis of society namely, the ownership of production. The resulting mode of production is more progressive than the preceding one.

In Marx's analysis of class conflict the major factor of class conflict is the institution of private ownership of the means of production. The recognition by the working class in a capitalist society, that it is the private ownership that is the major cause of exploitation in all societies, inspires them to a revolutionary struggle aimed at the abolition of private property itself.

32.5.2 Political Conflicts

As mentioned earlier, power is an important element. Social relationships can be organised around the acquisition, and distribution of political power. These spheres of human activity which constitute the political domain of a society. The major function of a political institution is the authoritative allocation of resources, and benefits that are available in the society as a whole. It is for this reason, that power may be sought after, but since the resources and benefits are scarce, there can be competition for acquiring the monopoly over these resources and benefits. The group which at the moment has control over the resources and benefits, will try to use them for its partisan interests, thereby denying it to the others. Political conflicts then can be seen as a demand made by diverse groups in a society to control the resources and benefits.

The struggle for political power takes place among social groupings, which have specific interests in a society. Political sociologists point out that the way one votes, depends upon the interests that are furthered by a political party. There are diverse interests in a society which, together make a claim on the political system for their furtherance. These interests are mainly economic, but can also be of other kinds such as religious, professional, etc. The political struggle then is a struggle between diverse interests.

In political conflict, the sociologists have identified three main grouping–the political party, the interest groups and pressure groups. The political party is an organisation whose aim is to acquire power in order to govern. Interest groups articulate the interests of a particular section of a society. The pressure groups are interest groups which not only articulate the interests of its members, but also tend to pressurise the government to act in such a manner as to further their specific interests. The trade unions, professional associations of teachers, doctors, lawyers, are examples of pressure groups. Interest groups and pressure groups act in the political arena, but they themselves do not want to govern. The major actors in the political domain who want to govern are the political parties. The political parties may be organised on different ideologies with different styles of functioning. They are usually organised around the furtherance of specific interests. In India, we have the Communist Party which champions the interests of the working class. The Lok Dal, is primarily concerned with peasantry, while the Muslim League tries to safeguard the interests of the Muslims. Political parties try to broaden their basis by incorporating as many interest groups as possible. For example the Congress Party although talks of establishing a socialist society, accommodates the interests of the capitalists, the rich trading class along with other sections of society. When a party comes to power in order to govern, it must acquire legitimacy, and the more the groups whose interests it furthers, the greater is the legitimacy that the ruling party is able to acquire. Political conflicts can also take place within systems of parties, especially in those societies where two or more parties have as much strength as the ruling party.

32.5.3 Communal/Ethnic Conflicts

These days, whenever, we open a newspaper, we find references to violent clashes between religious groups, between castes, between races, or between linguistic communities. We hear of conflicts between Muslims and the Hindus. Between high castes and the scheduled castes. There are conflicts between blacks and whites in South Africa, Great Britain and USA. Conflict exists between Sinhala speaking and Tamil speaking people in Sri Lanka and between Hindi speaking and non-Hindi speaking people in India.

Before we describe the main aspects of this type of conflict we must clarify the meaning of the terms "communal" and "ethnic". A communal relationship is one in which the interests of the interacting members are identical. The concept draws our attention to, the binding force of a commonality of interests beliefs and sentiment. Ethnic is now commonly defined as relating to racially or culturally distinct categories of people. Ethnic groups refer to certain types of group membership which are based on national origin, religion, language or region, i.e., people who perceive themselves or are perceived by others, as sharing common origins or significant parts of a common culture. An ethnic group that faces prejudice and discrimination at the hands of the dominant group is often called a minority. For instance, the blacks are a minority in North America, and whites in South Africa.

Generally when we speak of communal or ethnic conflicts, we talk about the conflicts between two or more groups, where the membership depends upon some characteristic based on birth. This could be religion, colour, language or region. It must be pointed out here that in India when we refer to the communal dimensions, we refer generally to the religious identity of a community. In India we have had not only a long history of conflicts based on religion, but also on language or territorial origins.

While analysing communal or ethnic conflicts, social scientists have identified a variety of subjective as well as objective factors that are seen to affect the emergence, course and resolution of conflicts. Some believe that psychological factors like needs, satisfaction of needs, ethnocentric feelings, prejudicial attitudes feelings of frustration, hostility, aggression are very important in explaining this type of conflict. Sociologists believe that communal conflicts are one instance of the general phenomenon of a conflict relationship, and as such one has to look into the opposing interests of the two communities. In a society where resources are scarce, and where the democratic polity finds itself torn between the diversity of demands put on it by various sections of the society, conflicts are likely to emerge. In those societies where the distribution of resources is on the basis of individual activities, the opposition of interests usually takes the form of class conflict. In a society where the distribution of resources takes place in terms of groups based on ascribed status, the opposition of interests is likely to take a communal form. We often observe conflicts between landless labour, who belong to the category of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Castes, and the land owners who more often than not, belong to the category of non-scheduled castes etc. In America and in South Africa, skin colour has been largely the basis upon which blacks have been assigned inferior status. Blacks in South Africa had been dispossessed of their resources and were victims of unfavourable discrimination, unequal treatment, violence and segregation. Both objective interests and subjective elements are strongly involved in communal and ethnic conflicts.

32.5.4 Factional Conflicts

Sociologists generally talk of factional conflicts in terms of the struggles that take place, in small communities like the village communities. A faction is an informal but

a clearly differentiated group of persons in a village, which encompasses members from different sections within it. It may be engaged in a conflict relationship with another such organised group. In the Indian context, the village communities are differentiated not only horizontally in terms of castes, but also fragmented vertically across caste in the struggle for domination. In India, we can find, that the faction has usually one person as a leader around whom the other members are mobilised. He usually belongs to one of the wealthy families of the village, owning a large amount of land. The other members of the faction are usually his kinsmen and those belonging to his own caste. However, members of other and lower castes are also associated with him in factional conflicts and they are, in many cases, persons who are economically dependent on him, such as the landless workers.

Desire for power, domination (economic and political) and prestige may be the goals of a faction. The emergence of factional conflict, is usually traceable to a specific episode in which one of the powerful persons of the community, feels slighted by another powerful member, and the feud continues over generations. Conflict is not centred on one issue; it may be found operating in many areas, Factional conflicts often take the form of violent physical conflicts. The feuds between eminent and powerful castes or families in Indian village continue over generations. With the coming up of the village self-government institutions in India, the factional conflicts are now usually channelised through these institutions. But it cannot be said that with the establishment of "Panchayat Raj" (self-government institutions) factional conflicts have been greatly reduced in Indian villages than before.

32.6 CONFLICT AS A CONDITION OF SOCIAL CHANGE

From the foregoing discussions, it is clear that conflict is an important element of social life, and can be seen as a condition in social change. In a society social order is necessary and order is the outcome of a complex interaction between force of inter-dependence, cooperation, conflict alliance, and cleavages between people. Some people and groups have more power than other people and groups in acquiring control over resources. Sources of power are not available to everyone equally. Social conflict can be seen as the outcome of this uneven distribution of power. People with the greatest power are able to realise their will and interests at the cost of those who have less power. Also in modern societies, people often have interests that are irreconcilable. This often leads to social conflict.

This does not mean that conflict can be looked only as a dividing factor in social life. Sociologists point out that conflict can be integrative. On the other hand cooperation and harmony may increase within a group which faces external threat. Issues get clarified, and settlement of disputes may satisfy everyone involved in the conflict, so that they may come together as friends.

Conflict as a condition in social change can be looked at from so many angles. Conflicts may lead to consolidation of units. They may also lead to new forms of social stratification or reinforce existing patterns of stratification in new ways. Inventories may be introduced as a result of conflict. For instance conflict between workers and owners/controllers of production, led to the social invention of trade union. Wars between societies led to the development of new techniques of warfare. It was the same phenomenon of war that led to the social invention regarding peace keeping institutions, namely United Nations.

The phenomenon of social conflict is closely interlinked with the phenomenon of social change, social order and social control. The conflict theorists insist that society can be best understood and analysed in terms of struggles and strife that occur over the control and acquisition of power, authority, wealth, prestige and other scarce and desirable resources in society.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answer.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) According to Marx, the two classes of the haves and the have-nots are linked in terms of an exploitative relationship. Tick the correct box. Yes No

2) What do you mean by factional conflict? Use about three lines for your answer.

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3) What are the three major grouping involved in political conflicts? Use about three lines for your answers.

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4) What is a communal relationship? Use four lines for your answer.

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32.7 LET US SUM UP

Let us outline the important points we have discussed in this unit. We defined social conflict–at the simplest level it means opposition between two social categories. We outlined the nature of conflict from some important sociological contributions. We then examined in detail what Marx had to say about social conflict. He stressed on conflict in the economic sphere. We also outlined Weber's views on conflict. We pointed out the functional and dysfunctional aspects of conflict. In the typology of conflicts we talked about class conflicts, political conflicts, communal/ethnic conflicts and factional conflicts. Lastly, we discussed the process of conflict as a condition of social change.

32.8 KEY WORDS

Ethnic : It relates to racially or culturally distinct categories of people.

Social conflict : A social relationship based on opposing interests.

Social stratification : A system of hierarchical relationships. It refers to the inequality in society as a result of unequal possession of material goods, wealth, power etc., by different groups of people.

32.9 FURTHER READINGS

Bottomore, T.B., 1987. *Sociology : A Guide to Problems and Literature,* Allen and Unwin: London.

Johnson, H. 1986. *Sociology : Systematic Introduction,* Allied Publishers: Bombay. (11th reprint).

32.10 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) No

2) Yes

3) The capitalist and the proletariat.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Like-mindedness between two group members.

2) Yes

3) Conflicting groups develop the feelings of animosity and suspicion towards each other. For example, the communal groups in India harbour such feelings.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Yes

2) Factional conflicts are the conflicts which take place within the village between small groups of persons. Basis of these conflicts may be social, economic or political.

3) The three major groupings are political parties, interest groups and pressure groups.

4) A communal relationship is based on the identity and interests of a community, whether based on religion, region, language or ethnic identity.

UNIT 33 SOCIAL CHANGE

Structure

33.0 Objectives

33.1 Introduction

33.2 Meaning and Nature of Social Change

- 33.2.1 Three Aspects of Social Change
- 33.2.2 Some Allied Concepts

33.3 Theories on Social Change

- 33.3.1 The Evolutionary Perspective
- 33.3.2 Cyclical Theories
- 33.3.3 Structural Functionalist Perspective
- 33.3.4 Conflict Perspective

33.4 Factors in Social Change

- 33.4.1 Three Basic Sources of Social Change
- 33.4.2 Exogenous and Endogenous Origin of Change
- 33.4.3 Acceptance of and Resistance to Social Change
- 33.4.4 Some Factors that Affect Direction and Rate of Change

33.5 Relevance of Analysing Social Change

33.6 Let Us Sum Up

33.7 Key words

33.8 Further Readings

33.9 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

33.0 OBJECTIVES

On going through this unit, you should be able to:

- Define and describe the nature of social change;
- Differentiate the important theoretical approaches to social change;
- Discuss the factors that play an important role in bringing about social change; and
- State the importance of analysing social change.

33.1 INTRODUCTION

So far, in this block you have studied the concepts of social control, deviance and conflict. All these concepts help us to understand the universal process of change in society. From its inception, sociology has been closely linked with the study of the rapid changes in societies. This unit is basically concerned with nature, direction and rate of changes in societies.

In this unit we will discuss the meaning and nature of social change; and how terms like 'evolution' and 'progress' are different from the concept of 'social change'.

Then we will describe some theoretical approaches to social change, and the important factors in social change. Finally, we will see how the theory of social change is used in sociological inquiry.

33.2 MEANING AND NATURE OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Change is a very broad concept. Though change is all around us, we do not refer to all of it as social change. Thus, physical growth from year to year, or change of seasons do not fall under the concept of social change. In sociology, we look at social change as alterations that occur in the social structure and social relationship.

The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Science (IESS 1972) looks at change as the important alterations that occur in the social structure, or in the pattern of action and interaction in societies. Alterations may occur in norms, values, cultural products and symbols in a society. Other definitions of change also point out that change implies, above all other things, alteration in the structure and function of a social system. Institutions, patterns of interaction, work, leisure activities, roles, norms and other aspects of society can be altered over time as a result of the process of social change.

33.2.1 Three Aspects of Social Change

From these and other definitions of social change, we can see that:

i) Social change is essentially a process of alteration with no reference to the quality of change.

ii) Changes is society are related/linked to changes in culture, so that it would be sometimes useful to talk about 'socio-cultural change.

Some sociologists, however, differentiate between social change and cultural change. Social change is defined as alterations in the social structure, (including the changes in the size of society) or in particular social institutions, or in the relationship between institutions. They feel that social change refers mainly to actual human behaviour. Cultural change, on the other hand, refers to variation in cultural phenomena such as knowledge and ideas, art, religion moral doctrines, values, beliefs, symbol systems and so on. This distinction is abstract, because in many situations it is difficult, or nearly impossible to decide which type of change is occurring. For instance, growth of modern technology as part of the culture, has been closely associated with alterations in the economic structures, on important part of the society.

iii) Social change can vary in its scope and in speed. We can talk of small scale or large scale changes. Changes can take a cyclical pattern, e.g. when there is the recurrence of centralisation and decentralisation in administrative organisations. It can also be revolutionary. Revolutionary change can be seen when there is an overthrow of government in a particular nation. Change can also include short term changes (e.g. in migration rates) as well as long term changes in economic structures. We can include in social change, both growth and decline in membership and size of social institutions. Change may include continuous processes like specialisation, and also include discontinuous processes such as a particular technical or social invention which appears at some point of time.

Change also varies in scope, in that it may influence many aspects of a society and disrupt the whole social system. The process of industrialisation which affected many aspects of society. In contrast, the substitution of matches for rubbing sticks to start a fire had a relatively limited scope.

Some changes occur rapidly but others take a long time. Many of the Western nations took many decades to become industrialised, but developing nations are trying to do it more quickly. They do this by borrowing or adapting from those nations which have already achieved it.

Today most sociologists assume that change is a natural, inevitable, ever present part of life in every society. When we are looking at social change, we are focusing not on changes in the experiences of an individual, but on variations in social structures, institutions and social relationship.

33.2.2 Some Allied Concepts

Social change is seen to be a neutral concept. The two other terms that have often been allied with this concept are 'evolution' and 'progress'.

i) Evolution expresses continuity and direction of change. It means more than growth. 'Growth' implies a direction of change but essentially in size or quality. Evolution involves something more intrinsic, a change not only in size but also of structure.

ii) Progress implies change in direction towards some final desired goal. It involves a values judgement.

All changes are not evolutionary and all changes are not progressive. Discussion of the direction of change need not involve any value judgements. The diminishing size of the family, and the increasing size of economic units, are matters of historical fact. 'Social change' is a value-neutral term, in the sense that the sociologists do not study social change in terms of "good or bad", desirable or undesirable. One must admit, however, that it is a difficult task indeed to make a value-free critical analysis of changes, taking place in the structure of a society.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Define social change in two lines.

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2) What are the main characteristics of social change? Use four lines for your answer.

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3) Differentiate between the following terms:

Change, Evolution and Progress. Use six lines for your answer.

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33.3 THEORIES ON SOCIAL CHANGE

The major sociological theories of change can be classified in various ways. One can, for instance make a distinction between evolutionary, (linear) and cyclical theories of social change. Among the former, the most significant are those of Comte, Spencer, Hobhouse and Marx. Among the latter, the most prominent ones are those of Spengler, Pareto, and Sorokin. In this unit, we shall briefly examine the following perspectives on change:

i) the evolutionary perspective,

ii) the cyclical perspective,

iii) the structural-functional perspective, and

iv) the conflict perspective.

33.3.1 The Evolutionary Perspective

The notion of social evolution was taken from the theories of biological evolution. Spencer propounded an analogy between social and organic growth and between society and an organisation. The theories of social evolution are composed of one or more of the following principles–change, order, direction, progress and perfectibility. The principle of **change** states that the present system is the outcome, of more or less continuous modification from its original state. Some evolutionists add to the principles of change the notion that change must have an **order**.

Other evolutionists combine the principles of change and order with the principle of direction, thereby suggesting that there is a natural linear order of change in a social system. The evolutionary process of change implies, that every society goes through distinctive and successive states of existence and orientation. Comte, for instance, proposed a directional theory of society. He suggested that a society evolves from a theological orientation, to a metaphysical orientation to a positivistic orientation. Durkheim classified societies into simple societies united by similarity of their members, (what he called mechanical solidarity) and complex societies based on specialisation and functional interdependence of members (what he called organic solidarity). This also suggests a directional evolutionary pattern.

It has been pointed out that it is sometimes difficult in evolutionary theory, to differentiate simple direction from progress. The common theme in much of the evolutionary literature is that societies progress over time, to a point where they industrialise and develop in the path and manner of western nations. Extreme expressions of this position are contained in the notion of perfectibility. Societies

continue to move toward some ideal advanced state of industrialisation. However, the neo-evolutionary theories that have emerged in recent years, are more tentative than the evolutionary theories of the 19th century and early 20th century. These neo-evolutionary theorists do not assert that change proceeds along the same path. They suggest that there is a general trend towards a more elaborate division of labour. They take on a relativistic view, in that they recognise that different cultures have different ideas of what constitutes progress. One of the greatest problems of older theories of evolution was that they too often contained untestable, sometimes ethnocentric propositions.

33.3.2 Cyclical Theories

The basic premise of the cyclical theories is: cultures and civilisations pass through stages of change, starting and often ending with the same stage. This passing through stages is called a cycle. The cycle when completed, repeats itself over and over again. The ancient civilisations in Greece, China and India for instance, can be explained by the principle of cycles.

Some cyclical theorists are pessimistic in that they think that decay is inevitable. Oswald Spengler (1945) believed that every society is born, matures, decays and eventually dies. The Roman Empire rose to power and then gradually collapsed. The British empire grew strong, and then deteriorated. Spengler believed that social change may take the form of progress or of decay, but that no society lives for ever. Pareto (1916) presented in his theory of the circulation of elites, an interpretation of history according to which social change is brought about, by the struggle between groups for political power. His theory was inadequate in that it was based on a limited instance of the circulation of elites in ancient Rome. His conception of political change ignored the growth of democratic government in modern times.

More recently Sorokin (1975) has presented theories which have some features of the cyclical perspective. Sorokin's theory is based on the principle of immanent socio-cultural change. This implies that any socio-cultural system (i.e. society and civilisation) alters by virtue of its own forces and properties. This principle is interlinked to another principle, namely, the principle of limited possibilities of change. There is a limit to the number of alterations that can develop in a system. For example, there is a limit to the new forms of change, and to new patterns of behaviour, that can emerge in a society. The system simply runs out of combinations in due time. If it does not die, it eventually starts running through the changes again. Thus, there is "recurrence" or "rhythm" in the histories of socio-cultural systems.]

Sorokin also makes a distinction between three broad types of culture-ideational, idealist and sensate-which he conceives as succeeding each other in cycles, in the history of societies. Ideational culture is spiritualistic, mystical and indeterminate. Sensate culture is the realm of science and of direct sensory experiences. Idealistic culture has certain characteristic of both the ideational and sensate cultures. These three types of cultures are looked upon as three views of reality that change according to the two principles mentioned above.

Activity 1

Keeping in mind Sorokin's distinction between three kinds of cultures, ideational, idealist and sensate; where will you place society in India? Write an essay on "Indian Society and Culture in the Context of Social Change" in about two pages share your essay with other students and Academic Counsellor at the study centre.

Sorokin's work is specially noteworthy not only because it contains a mass of historical analogies and comments on particular social transformations, but also because it saw societies as 'changing' rather than necessarily progressing or decaying.

33.3.3 Structural Functionalist Perspective

Structural functional, as you have read in Unit 25 and 28 has its roots in the work of the early sociologists especially Durkheim and Weber. Among contemporary scholars it is most closely associated with the work of Parsons and Merton.

Structural functionalists believe that society, like the human body, is a balanced system. Each institution serves a function in maintaining society. When events outside or inside the society, disrupt the social order, social institutions make adjustments to restore stability.

They also argue that change generally occurs in a gradual, adjustive fashion and not in a sudden violent, radical fashion. Even changes which appear to be drastic, have not been able to make a great or lasting impact on the core elements, of the social and cultural systems. Change according to them comes from basically three sources:

i) Adjustment of the system to exogenous change (e.g. war, conquests),

ii) Growth through structural and functional differentiation (e.g. changes in the size of population through births and deaths),

iii) Innovations by members of groups within society (e.g. inventions and discovery in a society).

The most important and basic factor making for social integration and stability, according to this school of thought, is value consensus.

The term 'cultural lag' is often used to describe the state of disequilibrium between material and non-material aspects of a culture. Ogburn (1886-1959) who coined this word, explained that 'cultural lag' occurs when parts of a culture that were once in adjustment with each other change at different rates, and become incompatible with each other. Ogburn (1922) pointed out how the non-material culture (values, beliefs, norms, family, religion) often lags behind material culture (technology, means of production output of the economic system). For example, family planning technologies (i.e. material culture) have advanced, but people take their time to accept them. Some sections of the population may reject the very idea of 'family planning' and believe in having a large family. Again, when an event such as increase in population or a depletion in natural resources cause a strain in society, it takes some time for the society to understand and absorb the strain and alter its values and institutions to adapt to the change. But in order to function smoothly, societies adjust to maintain and restore themselves.

Critics have pointed out that the amount and kind of changes that can be explained, with the help of the structural functionalist perspective is limited. This view neglects revolutionary changes which are profound and sudden. It also overlooks the possibility of a society going through long periods of malintegration, as during times of economic recession (Eshleman and Cashion: 1983 : 533)

33.3.4 Conflict Perspective

The conflict theory takes the principle of dialectic (opposites) as central to social life. Conflict theory also has its origins in early sociology, especially in the works of Marx. Conflict theorists do not assume that societies smoothly evolve to higher or complex levels. According to this school every pattern of action, belief and interaction

tends to generate an opposing reaction. Modern life is full of examples. The legalisation of abortion has provoked the anti-abortion movement. The feminist movement has stimulated a reaction from men and women. The liberalisation of sexual mores has led to open denunciation. The basic premise is that one of the outcomes of conflict among groups is social change. The greatest limitation of this approach is that it lays too much emphasis on conflict, as the most important factor of change.

In more recent sociological writing, there is yet another perspective of social change called the 'development perspective'. The development perspective grew from three main sources:

i) From the study of economic growth. Economists and to a great extent other social scientists, view quantitative growth in the economic sphere of life, as an important indicator of a country's progress. For example, they point out that a country's prosperity can be measured in terms of GNP (Gross National Product) or per capita income.

ii) From the categorisation of all societies into technologically advanced, and less technologically advanced. Sometimes, the emphasis is on industrialisation and consequently societies that are highly industrialised, are seen to be more developed than societies which are basically agricultural.

iii) From the comparison of the capitalist countries with the socialist or communist countries.

Many social scientists have compared the socialist economy and social organisation with Western capitalist economy and organisation. At this juncture we will not elaborate on this perspective, as you are going to look at it in the next unit. The development approach to social change, brought into sharp focus, the need for formulating a broad comparative perspective, which would take into account the complex and diverse relationships between developing countries, between technologically advanced countries, and between technologically advanced countries and developing nations. It can be said from the above discussion of the various perspective, that no single theory can account for the complexity of social change.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Name, in two lines, the five principles on which theories of social evolution are based.

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2) How does the structural-functional theory look at social change? Use three lines for your answer.

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3) What is the main argument of the conflict perspective? Use two lines for your answer.

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33.4 FACTORS IN SOCIAL CHANGE

The problems of why change occurs and why it has been made possible, and what affects the rate of change, is closely linked with the general problem of the factors in social change. It is more common to speak of the factors that affect social change, rather than the causes of change. Why? A cause implies that a phenomenon or event, is both necessary and sufficient to produce a predictable effect. The word 'necessary' suggests that we can never have the effect without the preceding cause. The word 'sufficient' implies that the cause alone produces the effect. It is very difficult to establish 'necessity and sufficiency' in the social sciences. We prefer to speak of "factors of change" rather than "causes" of social change (Horton and Hunt: 1981).

33.4.1 Three Basic Sources of Social Change

Some sociologists propose that social change takes place basically in one or more of the following three ways:

i) **Discovery**

A shared human perception of an aspect of reality which already exists e.g. discovery of blood circulation in biology. It is an addition to the world's store of verified knowledge. However, it becomes a factor in social change only when it is put to use, not when it is merely known.

ii) **Inventions**

A new combination or a new use of existing knowledge e.g. the assembling of the automobile from an already existing idea. The idea of combining them was new. Inventions can be material (technology) and social (alphabet, trade union). Each invention may be new in form (i.e. in shape or action) in function (what it does) or in meaning (its long range consequences) or in principle (the theory or law on which it is based).

iii) **Diffusion**

Diffusion refers to the spread of cultural traits from one group to another. It operates both within and between societies. It takes place whenever societies come into contact with each other. Diffusion is a two way process. The British gave us their language and made tea an important ritual for us Indians; but they adopted several terms in English from us, for example, Pacca Sahib, Chchota haziri, Jaggernaut, etc. Diffusion is also a selective process. Majority of the Indians may adopt the English language, but not their beef-eating habits. Diffusion generally involves some modification of the borrowed elements of culture either in form, function or meaning

33.4.2 Exogenous and Endogenous Origin of Change

It is very difficult to determine where and how change originates. Some sociologists have offered a distinction between endogenous change (change originating from within) and exogenous change (change entering from outside). In practice, the origin

of change, can only rarely be assigned wholly to one or the other category. It can be argued that wars and conquest (exogenous origin) have played an active part in bringing about major social changes in societies across the world. Again it could be said that in the modern world, the changes taking place in the developing countries have been stimulated to a large extent, by Western technology which was introduced in most cases following colonial rule. But in all societies, including those in which the initial impetus has come from outside, social change has depended to a great extent upon the activities of various social groups within the society. A major part of sociological analysis consists in identifying the spheres and groups, that are principally affected, and the ways in which innovations are diffused from one sphere to another (Bottomore: 1987: 288)

33.4.3 Acceptance of and Resistance to Social Change

This leads us on to another in social change, namely acceptance of and resistance to social change. Innovations (inventions and discovery are together termed as innovations) are rarely accepted totally. The specific attitudes and values of the society in question, the manifest usefulness of the innovations, the compatibility of the innovations with the existing culture, vested interests, and the role of change agents are some of the important factors that affect the degree of acceptance of and resistance to social change.

33.4.4 Some Factors that Affect Direction and Rate of Change

Social change has two important aspects: direction and rate. Here, we shall discuss the factors that affect the direction and rate of changes in society.

i) **Geography, Population and Ecology**

These factors are seen to bring about sudden changes or set a limit on social change. Climatic conditions, natural resources, physical location of a country, natural disasters can be important sources of change. A natural disaster like floods may destroy entire population, force people to migrate to another place, or make them rebuild their community all over again. Similarly, increase and decrease in the size of human population through birth, death or migration can pose a serious challenge to economic, and political institutions. Today, many geographic alterations and natural disasters are induced by the activities of the inhabitants or a region. Soil erosion, water and air pollution may become severe enough to trigger off new norms and laws regarding how to use resources and dispose waste products.

ii) **Technology**

Technology is recognised as one of the most crucial factors in social change. You may read Ogburn's concept of 'culture lag' in detail, to understand how technology has been an important factor in social change. The modern factory, means of transportation, medicine, surgery, mass media of communications, space and computers technology etc. have affected the attitudes, values and behaviour of people across societies. To take a simple example, automobiles and other means of modern transportation have spread culture, by increasing interaction among people who live far away from each other. The technological feats in the area of transport and communication have altered leisure activities, helped in maintaining social networks, and stimulated the formation of new social relationships.

iii) **Values and Beliefs**

The role of values in social change has been clearly brought out in Max Weber's book, **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.** Weber proposed that

Technology as an Import Factor in Social Change

some historical situations, doctrines or ideas may independently affect the direction of social change. He tried to show that the rise of modern capitalism was mainly rooted in religious values as contained in ascetic Protestantism.

Conflict over incompatible values and beliefs can be an important source of change. For instance values regarding racial or caste superiority, may clash with the values of equality of opportunity and status. New laws have emerged to ensure that people do not face discrimination on the basis of caste or race. Conflicts between group within a society, have been and are a major source of innovation and change. For instance, the establishment of political democracy in Western Europe can be said to be largely the outcome of class struggles.

iv) **The Great Men and Women : The role of individuals in social change**

It has been pointed out that the contribution by men of genius and leaders to social change is important. The "great men" (which includes several women leaders as well) faced a set of circumstance, and their influence arose in part from their ability

to drawout persuasively the latent aspirations, anxieties and fears of large numbers of people. They were also charismatic leaders. These leaders owed their positions to personal qualities, and left upon events the mark of their own convictions (Bottomore 1987: 283).

There are many more factors that can be discussed while dealing with the questions why, how and at what rate change occurs.

33.5 RELEVANCE OF ANALYSING SOCIAL CHANGE

No single theory or factor can explain the origin, direction, manner or consequences of social change. Change is such a complex process, that it is difficult to explain its causes, limits and consequences in a definitive specific manner. Sociological research studies in recent years have concentrated on specific process of social change, and its effects on society.

Though, sociologists say that they are trying to look at change in an objective manner, the idea of progress is still very much present in modern social thought. According to Bottomore (1987), it is evident in the serious commitment to economic growth in the industrial countries, and subsequently in the countries of the Third World. More recently, he feels, it has provided the impetus for critical evaluation of unlimited and uncontrolled economic growth. The effects of technology on the environment has animated powerful ecology movements, in most of the industrial and industrialising countries. There are debates about the nature of a "good society" in relation to the rapid advance of science and technology and to unrestrained consumerism. According to Bottomore (1987: 290-1), it is not the business of the sociologist as such to define, a "good" society "or a desirable quality of life" but it is his/her responsibility indeed to:

i) be aware of those issues relating to human welfare.

ii) Outline as precisely as possible the alternative courses of change and their implications, and

iii) Indicate what social forces are at work in producing one outcome rather than another.

Activity 2

Discuss about the type of changes in material and non-material culture (such as, values, beliefs, customs etc.) that has taken place in your family, community/society with three persons, one of your Grandfathers generation, one of your father's and one of your own generation. List out the type of changes observed by these three persons and write a note of one page on "Social Change in My Family". Compare your note with these of other students at your study centre.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) List out the three basic ways in which change takes place. Use three lines to

answer.

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2) What are the two sources from which change can originate? Use one line for your answer.

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3) What are the five important factors that are seen to affect the acceptance of, and resistance to social change? Use eight lines for your answer.

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4) List out the four factors that affect the rate and direction of change. Use five lines for your answer.

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33.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we looked at different dimensions of the complex phenomena of social change. We began our examination by defining social change and outlining its nature. We pointed out, how vast the scope of social change could be. We then proceeded to differentiate between social change, and two other allied concepts like 'evolution' and 'progress'. In our discussion on theoretical perspectives regarding change, we focused on the evolutionary, cyclical, functionalist and the conflict perspectives. We were able to gather that no single theory can account for social change. Social change is occasioned by a constellation of factors like geography, technology, values, leaders etc. We said that discovery, inventions and diffusion are the three basic ways in which change can occur, and the origin of change can be endogenous, exogenous or both. The acceptance or resistance to change varies due to the operation of some factors, that were discussed.

33.7 KEY WORDS

Culture lag : The time gap that occurs when changes in material culture come more rapidly than changes in the non-material culture.

Cyclical Change : It refers to a course or series of events, that recur regularly and lead back to the starting point.

Diffusion : The process by which cultural traits spread from one culture to another.

Evolution : A particular process of change, (intrinsic in nature) which expresses continuity and direction of change, involving alterations in size and structure of a system.

Innovation : Discovery and inventions are together considered as innovation.

Linear Change : It refers to the direction of change from point A to B to C in a line.

Progress : Alterations which proceed in the direction of some desired goal.

Social Change : Alterations that occur in the social structure and function of a social system.

33.8 FURTHER READINGS

Bottomore, T., 1987. *Sociology. A guide to Problems and Literature*, (III Edition), Allen and Unwin: London.

Davis, K., 1981. *Human Society*, Subject Pulitcations: New Delhi.

Ogburn W.F. and M. Nimcoff, 1979. *A Handbook of Sociology*, Emasca Publishing House: New Delhi.

33.9 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Social change refers to the alterations that occur in the social structure, and social relationships in a society.

2) Social Change is essentially a process of alteration, with no reference to the quality of change. Changes in culture are related to changes in society. Changes also vary in scope and speed.

3) Evolution expresses continuity and direction of change, implying change not only in size but also of structure. Progress implies change in a desirable direction. Change on the other hand is considered to be a value neutral concept which refers to alterations in both structure and social relationships in a society.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The four principles on which the theories of social evolution are based are change, order, direction, progress and perfectibility.

2) According to this school, change disrupts the social order but the social institutions makes adjustments to restore stability. Change generally occurs in a gradual, adjustive fashion and does not affect the core elements in the socio-cultural system.

3) The basic argument is that every pattern of action, belief, interaction tends to generate an opposing reaction. The outcome of conflict among groups is social change.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Discovery, inventions and diffusion are the three basic ways in which changes takes place.

2) Change can originate from endogenous and exogenous sources.

3) The five important factors are:

   a) Specific attitudes and values of a society in which change has been introduced,

   b) The manifest usefulness of the innovations,

   c) The compatibility of the innovations with the existing culture,

   d) Vested interests, and

   e) Role of change agents.

4) The four factors that affect the rate and direction of change are:

   a) Geography, population, ecology,

   b) Technology,

   c) Values and beliefs, and

   d) Role of Great men and women.

UNIT 34 SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Structure

34.0 Objectives

34.1 Introduction

34.2 The Nature and Meaning of Social Development

34.3 The Prevailing Notions of Social Development

- 34.3.1 The Three Worlds of Development
- 34.3.2 Socio-cultural Dimensions of Development
- 34.3.3 Approaches to Social Development

34.4 Indian Experience of Development after Independence

- 34.4.1 Socialist Path and Mixed Economy
- 34.4.2 Sectoral Development
- 34.4.3 Community Development and Cooperative Movement
- 34.4.4 Target Group Planning

34.5 Let Us Sum Up

34.6 Key words

34.7 Further Readings

34.8 Model Answers to Check Your Progress

34.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- define the concept of social development, and describe its nature;
- describe the prevailing ideas about social development; and
- give an account of the Indian experience of development.

34.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 33, we examined the complex nature of social change. The dynamics of social change has stimulated the formulation of a host of concepts, of which the term 'development' has gained much currency. Today, we use this term to describe the complex modes of social change, especially those which have been desired, planned, directed and stimulated in a society. We now have a 'sociology of development'.

In order to understand the concept of social development, which has been defined and redefined over the year. This unit deals first with the broad nature and meaning of the concept of development. We describe the current views on social development, including a discussion on the 'three worlds of development' and some recent approaches to social development. Finally, we look at the 'mixed' path of development, including that of India.

34.2 THE NATURE AND MEANING OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Development is a broad concept and, though interrelated, it differs from social change. Change is a value-neutral concept whereas development is a value-laden concept. The notion of development is, in other words, the process of desired change. All cases of change do not indicate development. Only planned and desired changes can be described as development. Thus, it is important to keep in mind the distinct character of the concept of development.

Secondly, we also need to distinguish between economic and sociological notions of development. This point becomes clearer as you read this unit. While speaking of social development, we emphasise the sociological understanding of the process of development. As a broad concept, social development refers to the overall transformation of individuals and society, which may enable every person to achieve moral, social physical and material well-being. Egalitarian development is a desired goal, but it remains only an 'ideal'. In spite of development efforts, disparities in various dimensions of development continue to widen between societies, regions and groups. Variations are observed when we compare various regions or countries.

Out of such comparisons have emerged the concepts of underdevelopment mainly in economic terms, such as per capita income, gross national product, level of the standard of living and degree of technological advancement. There are many criteria of 'over' and 'under' development. The simplest one of them is the ratio of industrial capacity to social utility. It means that the countries which are unable to produce, sufficient goods to meet the requirements of their population, may be considered as underdevelopment, and those which produce more than what is required, as overdeveloped. In the overdeveloped category may be placed the countries such as America, and in the underdeveloped category, many Asian and African countries.

It is, however, a controversial point whether underdevelopment and over development can be identified with any particular country. Further the term underdevelopment is not acceptable, to some of the economically less developed countries, such as India. These countries consider themselves quite developed from social and cultural points of view. They prefer to be designated as 'developing' rather than as 'underdeveloped' countries.

An important idea implicit in the classification of countries, into developed and developing, is that the former became a 'model' for the latter. The developing countries may like to imitate or adopt the economic and technological systems of developed countries.

What is more important about this classification, with regard to the conceptual meaning of development, is the fact that the developing countries depended upon the developed ones for technology, skills and monetary aid. The latter tried to exploit the former. This is known as the dependency theory of development. Having realised the exploitative tendencies of the developed countries, the developing countries tried to be self-reliant in economic terms. Thus, substitution of economic dependence by self-reliance, emerged as an important indicator of development. The greater the self-reliance, the higher the levels of development. Endeavours towards self-reliance resulted in import substitution by stopping the purchase of goods from developed countries and producing them in their own country.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Differentiate between change and development. Use four lines for your answer.

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2) What is the dependency theory of development? Use five lines for your answer.

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34.3 THE PREVAILING NOTIONS OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

For a discussion of the contemporary sociological concerns about development, we can begin by outlining some of the views based on historical events, on the socio-cultural dimensions of development. But before we examine these dominant concerns regarding development, it would be useful to undertake a brief description of the "three worlds of development" as it had existed prior to the break-up of the Soviet Union. This had become an important part of the social scientists parlance since the middle of the 20th century. Earlier the world was divided into two i.e. it was a bi-polar world with the capitalist block of United States of America (USA), on the one side and the socialist block of the Soviet Union, on the other. After the break-up of Soviet Union, the 'Cold War ' has ended and the world has become Unipolar, with USA as the most powerful nation of the world.

34.3.1 The Three Worlds of Development

The First World consist of North America, Western and Southern Europe. The countries were seen to be following mainly a capitalist model of development. The Second World had consisted of Soviet Union and the East European group such as, Poland, East Germany, Hungary etc. Many socio-political changes have occurred in these countries now and they do not remain a communist bloc any more. They were associated with the socialist model of development. The Third World was and to certain extent still is generally used to refer to the less developed or developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Most of these countries emerged out of colonial rule to attain political independence only in the middle of the 20th century. The majority of the third world countries are characterised by low per capita income, high rates of illiteracy and infant mortality. These were generally agriculture-based economies where people had short life expectancies, low degree of social mobility and strong attachment to tradition (Estes, R.J., p. 92). The countries, though subject to influence by the erstwhile First and the Second World countries, have devised

their own national strategy and path of development. The First and the Second World's models of development had laid primary emphasis on economic growth.

i) The Capitalist Model of Development of the First World

The main characteristics of the capitalist model of development are:

a) provision for private ownership of property and means of production,

b) promotion of economic activities through private enterprises, and

c) minimum possible state regulation and control on private enterprises. Thus the capitalist model is characterised by a free economy regulated by competition.

ii) The Socialist Model of Development of the Second World

The socialist path of development adopted by the Second World, was seen to be opposite or dichotomous to the capitalist path of development. The former, contrary to the latter, is characterised by state ownership of property and means of production, public enterprises and complete state regulation of economic activities. Thus, the socialist model refers to a regulated economy.

The main allegation against the capitalist model is that, since it permits minimum state regulation, its economic system becomes exploitative in the sense that the working class people (proletariat) do not get their due share. The capitalists enjoy a major share of the nation's resources. Hence it contributes to inequalities so that a few are very rich and the majority is very poor.

The capitalist model is, therefore, alleged to be exploitative and non-egalitarian. On the contrary, the socialist model was ideally considered as non-exploitative and egalitarian. Private ownership and the lack of state regulation, were considered to be important measures of exploitation of the weaker sections and hence the causes of income inequalities. Since, the socialist state did not allow private ownership of property, there was a strong belief that there was no room for exploitation and inequality in it. However, historical events proved this belief to be incorrect as the Soviet Union could not survive for long. The period of "Glasnost" and "perestroika" led by Gorbachev, the erstwhile Russian Prime Minister during the 1980's, dismantled the communist political and economic structure. The Soviet Union broke-up into several small countries and the socialist ideology gave way to capitalist tendencies. However, China still follows a socialistic socio-political order.

The two models had also differed in their conception of development. Whereas the capitalist model lays greater stress on economic growth, than on equal distribution of the fruits of economic growth. The socialist model layed equal stress on both resource generation and equal distribution of income, and tried to change the social system in such a way that greater social justice could be ensured. In reality, socialist model did not give much space to individual initiative and consumeristic desires.

The foregoing discussion implies another difference between these models. The capitalist model does not see any major conflict in the interests of the two classes-workers and capitalists. In its eyes both the classes are complementary to each other, they; are functionally interdependent. The rules of society, particularly about ownership of property and distribution of income, are supposed to be based on consensus.

Hence according to this model, there is no need to change the economic structure.

On the contrary, the socialist model saw inherent conflict in the interests of the workers and the capitalists. According to it, rules are not based on consensus but are imposed on the weaker section by the stronger one. This leads to the exploitation of the weak by the strong, which is likely to result in conflicts, and in revolution by the exploited people who want radical change in the system itself. Thus, the capitalist model is sometimes designated as functionalist or consensual, and the socialist as a conflict, radical or revolutionary model.

In practice, as observed by some researchers, these two models have entered a process of convergence. For instance now, there is an increased state regulation on private economic enterprises in the USA. There has been a relaxation in grants to private enterprises in Russia. One could see income inequalities, and a tendency to resist alterations in political and economic systems in both the Worlds.

Box 34.01

The concept of a "third world" is of European origin. It can be traced back to France in the 1940s as a description of the political parties distinct from both de Gaulle's Rassemblement des Peuple Francais and the Fourth Republic (Saffire 1978). Another author, Clegem (1978) has compared the idea of the 'third world' with the 'Third Estate", the rising but under-represented bourgeoisie during the French Revolution of 1789. Wolf-Phillips (1979) credit the French demographer, Alfred Sawy with coinimg the term in 1962.

However, the credit for "the worlds of development" belongs to sociologist Louis Irwing Horowitz. In his book, Three Worlds of Development: The Theory and Practice of International Stratification (1972), Horowitz used a variety of criteria to distinguish between groups of countries that share more or less similar patterns of socio-economic development.

In recent times there has developed a new concept of "fourth world" of development as identified first by Manuel and Posluns (1974) and Hamalian and Karl (1974 : 13). They used this concept to describe "a community of the powerless, the oppressed and the dispossed". According to them all the other "worlds of development" i.e. the First, the Second and the Third, share the people who belong to the Fourth world of development. In current usage, the countries which belong to the First world are referred to as "developed Market Economies" (DMEs); those belonging to the Second World are referred to as the "Eastern Trading Area (ETAs); and those belonging to the Third World are referred to as the "Developing Countries". The countries of the Fourth World are referred to as "least Developing Countries" (LDCs). (Quoted in Estes, Richard J.'s" World's of Development, www. google.com website).

iii) **Development of the Third World**

It is difficult to specify the model of development, adopted by the majority of the. Third World countries as there are variations among them, dictated mainly by their historical and socio-cultural circumstances. What they seem to share in common is that:

a) They are economically and technologically underdeveloped in comparison to the countries of the so called developed world.

b) Social planning is a key element in their development process. Their plans of development incorporate not only economic concerns, especially removal of poverty, but also concerns regarding nation building, national culture and social transformation.

c) They have been seeking technological and economic aid from the developed countries. The developed countries have given them economic assistance, but they have also been increasingly attempting to extend their political influence in the developing countries. It has been noted that the global military defence strategy is, the major consideration of the developed countries, in extending their economic and political influence to the developing countries.

In fact, the idea of the Third World is associated with the emergence of consciousness among developing countries, of being exploited by the developed countries in the garb of monetary help and expert advice. Some nations had become conscious of exploitation much earlier, but others, understood this fact only after seeing the disastrous role of big powers in the developing countries, e.g., the role of the USA in Vietnam or the USSR in Afghanistan. The social analysts have played a very significant role both in appreciating the help, as well as analysing the "games" of the big powers in the developing countries.

Against this background of information about the First, the Second and the Third Worlds we will now proceed to look at some of the prevailing conceptions about development across the world.

Activity 1

Interview at least five people of your Grandfather's generation and ask them about their memories of the First & the Second World Wars. What were the impact of these wars on Indian people. Write a one page note on the "Impact of First and Second World War on Indian Society". Compare your note with the note of other students at your Study Centre.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Name two countries, which follow the capitalist model of development

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2) Fill in the blanks:

a) The First World was characterised mainly by a …….. model of development.

b) The Second World countries had adopted a …… model of development.

3) List out some countries which were generally identified as the Third World countries. Use three lines for your answer.

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4) What are the three common characteristics that the Third World or the developing countries seem to share? Use eight lines for your answer.

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34.3.2 Socio-cultural Dimensions of Development

The concept of development has encompassed many dimensions over the years. One of the popular notions that economic growth, was a sufficient and a necessary condition to stimulate development of all the sections of a society has been proved incorrect. Economic advancement of a class of people has not, and does not trickle down to the entire population. Similarly, the attainment of high levels of economic growth by some of the developed countries has not helped to solve some of their serious problems. In fact affluence has given rise to new and more social problems. It is, therefore, now realised that if the ultimate aim of development is the improvement of the quality of life of every human being in society, it cannot be achieved as a consequence of economic growth or capital accumulation.

Sociologists now believe that it is necessary to lay stress on socio-cultural dimensions of development. To elaborate, social development includes:

a) Proper satisfaction of basic needs, such as, food, shelter and clothing.

b) Availability of essential amenities such as electricity, transportation, communication and water.

c) Good physical and mental health, measurable in terms of increased life chances, abolition of environmental pollution, nutritious diet, medical care etc.

d) Economic welfare i.e. opportunities for employment in economic activities and high level of living.

e) Development of human beings i.e. enhancement of literacy, vocational education, moral education, creative personality etc.

f) Social integration i.e. involvement and participation of people in social, political and economic processes and establishment and maintenance of effective social institutions.

g) Minimisation of disparities in access to various resources and opportunities - economic, social and political

Some sociologists have laid a special emphasis on the psychological, social and moral dimensions while talking about the "holistic" approach to development. They look at development as an improvement in the overall quality of life including physical, psychological, social and cultural. They emphasise that these dimensions are very closely interlinked. For instance, an improvement in the psychological quality of life, entails the idea of life satisfaction including positive mental health. This requires a proper and effective balance between material and non-material life-goals of people and between instrumental and intrinsic values of society.

This subjective dimension is very closely linked with the social quality of life. The improvement in social quality, means an increase in the strength of family stability, interpersonal bonds and social solidarity. An improvement in the cultural quality of life signifies the upsurge of the moral dimensions. A concern for others is the essence of social morality. They have pointed out that in many developed societies there is more concern 'for self than for others', hence no true development (Sharma 1986: 20).

Thus, the sociological approach to development looks upon the development process as alterations that affect the whole socio-cultural matrix of society. In the modern sense, development refers to the planned, stimulated movement of the entire system in the direction of the overall desirable goals of a given society. Today we have a "Sociology of Development" which is seen to be growing in two directions – towards the analysis of internal structures and of historical linkages. A look at the studies in this field provides us with an idea of the following approaches to social development.

34.3.3 Approaches to Social Development

Approaches to development may be discerned on the basis of two criteria, (i) centralisation versus decentralisation of development schemes and resources, and (ii) unit of development, i.e., the focus of development – individual, group, village etc. The first criterion given rise to two approaches, namely, development from the top and development from the bottom. The second criterion gives rise to the three approaches -–sectoral development, areas development and target group development. Let us now review briefly the five approaches.

i) **Development from the top**

The approach of development from the top envisages the planning and execution, of development schemes by the central or apex bodies of administration. In other words, the central organisations decide the nature and direction of plan, formulate projects and impose them on the people. For instance, the ministers and high officials sitting in the capital, make the development plans for rural people without fully realising their problems.

Implicit in this approach is the assumption that the people who need development are incapable of understanding their needs, of devising development schemes and of executing them on their own. Hence the need for experts and outside agencies. in fact, this assumption is baseless. The elite at the top have a vested interest in making such assumptions. Their major interest is to hold control on resources and mobilise them for their own benefits. The people accept the development schemes, because they have neither sufficient resources of their own, nor any control on the resources of the community. As a result, most of the schemes imposed from the top fail to yield the desired results.

This happens in most of the cases. A large part of the funds of development schemes is eaten up in one way or the other, by the experts and executive personnel deputed or employed by the sponsors of the scheme, be it own government or any foreign agency. The major drawback of this approach is that it fails to involve the beneficiaries, in the development process. Instead, it generates a feeling of alienation among them. For these reasons this approach has been characterised by a higher degree of centralisation and bureaucratisation.

ii) **Development from bottom**

The exponents of second approach of development from the bottom, on the contrary, believe the fairness of intentions and abilities of the people who need development. They are given an opportunity to articulate their problems as well as the ways to solve them. They are trained and made capable, and are prepared for self-help. Utilisations of resources for development schemes is decided, by the concerned people themselves or by their representatives at the local level. Thus, there is a greater decentralisation of plans and higher participation of people.

While the planners realise the importance of development from the bottom, and claim that they adopt this approach, in practice, they often adopt the approach of development from the top. The result is ineffectiveness of the development schemes.

iii) **Sectoral development**

on the basis of 'unit' of development, as mentioned earlier, three approaches are envisaged, viz., sectoral development, area development and target group development. Sectoral development approach refers to formulation and execution of schemes for development, of a particular sector of economy like agriculture or industry. For instance, the Indian planners thought of developing industries just after the Independence. Therefore they made plans to develop technology or borrow it from other countries. Stress was laid on technological education. Many institutes and colleges were established, independently or in collaboration with other countries, such as the United States of America, Russia and England.

On the other side, funds were made available for heavy industries such as textile, steel and cement. Later on, when the country faced a food problem in the early sixties, the planners thought of developing the agricultural sector. As a result, many agricultural universities were set up, which helped in evolving high yielding varieties of crops, insecticides and pesticides, and farm implements, like threshers. Extension services were made available to educate and persuade farmers, to adopt new agricultural technology, and loans were advanced to farmers quite liberally. You have seen the results of these efforts in the form of the green revolution. The country is now almost self-reliant in food.

iv) **Area development**

All regions are not equally developed. Some are more affluent than others. The underdevelopment of regions is due to the lack of infrastructural development-roads, railways, electrification etc. or due to the problems of floods and drought. When schemes are devised for the infrastructural development of an area or region, we call it area development approach. The Command Area Development Scheme, introduced in India in 1974 for the development of irrigation resources in certain regions, illustrates this approach.

v) **Target group development**

Target group approach has its focus on a particular category of people, such as small farmers, women and farm labourers. Schemes, such as Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and reservation of seats in schools and colleges, and in employment for scheduled castes, exemplify the target group approach. There is another approach to development, which has its focus on the overall development of the people residing in a locality – village or town. This is known as a community development approach. This approach lays stress on the development of education, health facilities, economic and social activities, and other infrastructural facilities.

Activity 2

Visit the local Block Development Officers (BDO's) office in your area and interview one or two officers working there regarding the development activities going on in this area. The nature and types of programmes going on and its impact on the different communities in your area. Write a report of one page on "Social Development and the role of Government". Compare your note with other students at your Study Centre and discuss your findings with your Academic Counsellor.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Economic growth is a sufficient and a necessary condition to stimulate development of all the sections of a society. Tick the correct box. Yes No

2) List out the socio-cultural dimensions of development. Use four lines for your answer.

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3) What are the five approaches to social development? Use seven lines for the answer

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34.4 INDIAN EXPERIENCE OF DEVELOPMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE

There have been schemes and plans of development in almost all dimensions of socio economic life, such as health, education, population control, industry, transport, irrigation communication and agriculture. It is neither possible to present here a list of all the development schemes, nor are you expected to know about all of them. Therefore our main objective is to present a synoptic view of the development schemes in India, introduced after Independence with a view to illustrate some of the approaches to development, discussed in the preceding section.

After Independence, India did not follow either the First or the Second World, it adopted neither the capitalist (North American) nor the socialist model of development. It adopted a path of development in-between the two models, which is known as 'mixed economy'. On the one hand, India encouraged private business and industry and gave opportunity to big business houses, such as the Birla's and Tata's, and other medium and small size entrepreneurs. On the other hand it has almost full control, at least in principle, over all the entrepreneurial and business activities.

34.4.1 Socialist Path and Mixed Economy

The state also acts as an entrepreneur in setting up heavy industries, such as the manufacture of steel and generation of electricity. The banks have been nationalised. The state has full control over railways and postal departments. These measures are illustrative of a socialist path of development. On the other hand, certain industries are reserved for private entrepreneurs – both small and large. In some industries, such as textile and cement, both private and state enterprises have been allowed to operate. In many other activities, too, such as education, health and transport both private and state agencies work, either independently or in collaboration.

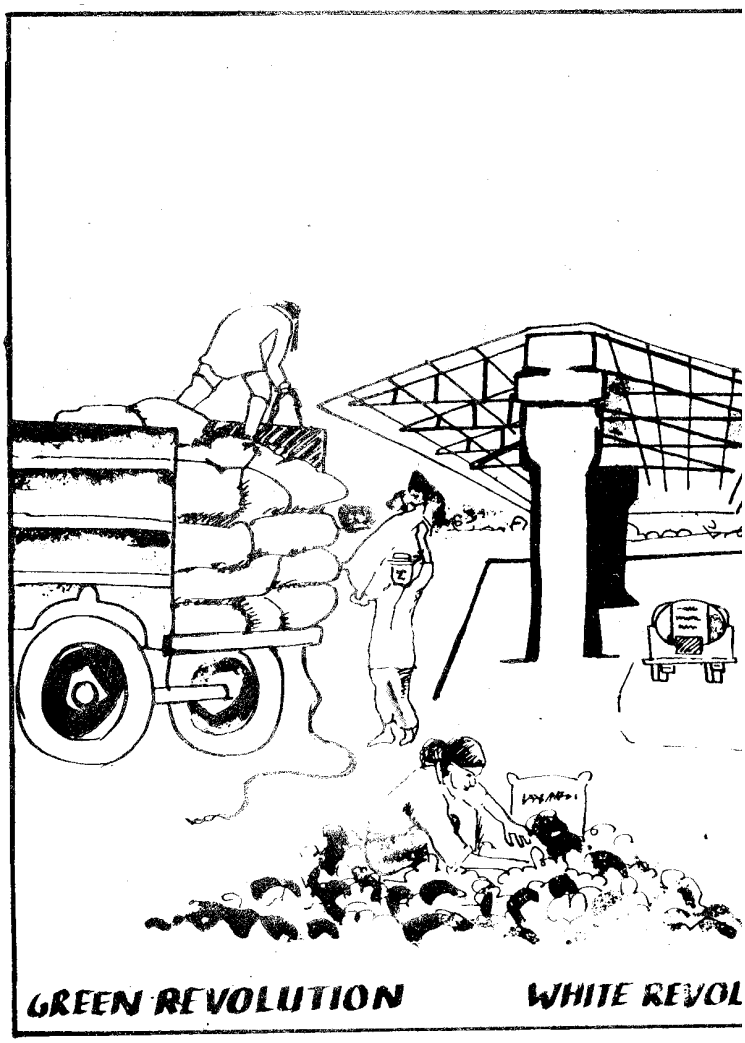
It is true that India adopted a 'mixed' path of development, but scholars differ in their opinion about the real functioning of the economy. One view is that India's path of development is a capitalist one. Entry of state in heavy industries was, in fact, meant to support private enterprise, in the sense that these industries did not yield high profits and required a long gestation period and high capital investment. Hence they did not attract private entrepreneurs, and at the same time industrial development was not possible without basic industries. Similarly, it has been argued that big enterprises still dominate over the small ones, and the industrial sector over the agricultural one. Also there is a concentration of economic power in a few big business houses. The other view is that our bias has been increasing towards a socialist model, as is evident from the facts such as nationalisation of banks. These are controversial arguments which cannot be sorted out here. The fact remains that India pursues a 'mixed' path of development.

34.4.2 Sectoral Development

No doubt India has progressed a lot in industrial and agricultural sectors, but there has been relatively less progress in the latter. Many policies and plans were adopted, which showed results, that were far below the expectations. The major policies for the development of agriculture after Independence were: abolition of landlordism (zamindari), consolidation of land holding, and land ceiling. Whereas the first two policies succeeded, the last one was made ineffective due to several factors including the vested interests of large farmers. However, due to increase in population there has a natural curtailment of farm size, and it has been that further ceiling on farm size, will come in the way of raising the productivity. All these policies reflect a sectoral development approach.

The sectoral approach got further accentuated in the 'green' and 'white' revolutions, i.e., development of cash crops, and dairy products, respectively. Such revolutions have not been widespread. They are confined to a few states, such as Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The important thing is that the farmers, even in these states, do not get remunerative returns from farm produce, because of an absence of check on the rise of prices of farm inputs – machines, fertilisers, insecticides, pesticides etc., which come from industrial sector, and also because of a strict control on the prices of farm outputs, with the rationale that high

rise in the prices of food grains will adversely affect the masses. This indicates discrimination against the farm sector. The majority of people depend upon agriculture even today. Therefore non-remunerative farm return keep the agricultural sections in poverty.



Sectoral Approach to Development

34.4.3 Community Development and Cooperative Movement

Besides this sectoral approach, a community development scheme was initiated in 1952 for overall development of villages. The philosophy of this programme was to educate, encourage and enable the people to develop themselves, with their own efforts and resources. But the programme was not very successful. It was realised that a greater participation of the rural people in the preparation and execution of development schemes was essential. In other words, it required a greater administrative decentralisation. Hence Panchayati Raj System was introduced in 1957. It envisaged a three-tier system, viz., Village Panchayat (viilage level), Panchayat Samities (block level) and Zila Parishad (district level). This system involved the people at local level, in both planning and execution of development schemes. It was an effort towards development from the bottom. But unfortunately the unholy alliance between the rural elite (rich farmers), on the one hand, and the administrative and political elites, on the other, at the block and district levels made the system weak.

The same fate met the cooperative movement. India wanted cooperative cultivation on the Chinese pattern, in which the land is owned by the community (village) and

the farmers have their shares. But this did not work in India due to the country's political system which did not permit abolition of private ownership of land, and because the farmers did not surrender land to the community voluntarily, in spite of the appeal of "Bhoo Dan" (land donation) movement of Vinoba Bhave. However, credit societies which granted short term agricultural credit did become popular. But today many of the credit societies have become defunct, or are not functioning effectively. The member borrowers usually become defaulters. The important point is that there is no spirit of cooperating among the local people, because most of the affairs of these cooperatives are managed by the government or semi-government officials, such as the Registrar, Managing Director, Administrator etc. In many cases the nationalised banks provide funds to cooperatives for advancing loans to their members.

The rural credit cooperative are relatively effective in Maharashtra, particularly among the sugarcane producers, who also have cooperative sugar mills. In other fields, too, there are exceptionally successful cases of cooperative, viz., Milk Producers Cooperative at Anand in Gujarat. Anand Milk Producers' Union Limited (AMUL) emerged out of the farmers' cooperative efforts at the village of Anand which now has an important place among the rural cooperatives in Asia.

34.4.4 Target Group Planning

There are many other rural development programmes for certain target groups, under the 20-point economic programmes. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is one of them which combines both the area development and target group approaches, since it includes the Command Area Development Programme. Drought Prone Area Programme and Small Farmers' Development Agency. As a target group programme, its focus is on the poorest of the poor, and the unit of assistance is the 'family', and not a person. It proposes to cover about 3,000 families in each block over a period of five years. Under IRDP there are special programmes for employment, like Training Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM). Besides there are other programmes such as the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP). Evaluation reports of these programme, however, indicate the failure of the programme in reaching the real beneficiaries and in raising their economic status. The blame is laid on the executive personnel, and the rural elite who consume a large share of the resources, meant for these programmes. In other fields also India has made a good deal of progress. We have big hospital and primary healthcare centres. Life expectancy has increased and many diseases such as malaria, Polio and small pox have been controlled, and infant mortality reduced. Now we have a large network of transport and communication. . But the results of development have reached largely the urban population. Rural people still do not have good schools, proper electrification, clean water and hospitals. There are no good teachers, or proper infrastructure in schools, such as furniture, including blackboards in many schools, and no doctors, nurse or medicines in many primary healthcare centres. Besides this we find increased unemployment, a state of lawlessness, an increase in social and communal tension, and a lack of social and national concern. This shows that the country has achieved more of a quantitative than qualitative development.

However, in terms of social political and economic awareness India and its villages are doing fairly well. Being one of the largest Democratic nations of the world, with an extremely vibrant political and economic structure, some amount of social unrest is inevitable. The policies of the Government are geared towards removing extreme inequalities and bringing about social justice.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: a) Use the space given below for your answers.

h) Compare your answers with those given at the end of this unit.

1) Which path of development has been followed by India after its Independence? Use three lines for your answer.

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2) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is an example of sectoral development. Tick the correct box. Yes No

34.5 LET US SUM UP

This unit has explained that development is a much broader concept than economic growth. It includes social, economic, moral, educational, physical and mental development of people. We discussed the prevailing ideas about social development. Then we reviewed the five approaches to social development. In the end, we described the 'mixed' path of development, i.e. a combination of capitalism and socialism, followed by India today.

34.6 KEY WORDS

Ethnocentric : Belief in the superiority of one's own group.

Gross National Product (GNP) : It is the total flow of goods and services produced by the economy over a specified time period, usually one year. To this net income flows from abroad is added and outflow is subtracted.

Value-laden : Attributing a value, as good or evil, desirable or undesirable, to something.

Value-neutral : Interpreting objectively, without taking sides.

34.7 FURTHER READINGS

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34.8 MODEL ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Change is a value-neutral concept while development is a value-laden concept. All cases of change do not indicate development. Only planned-desired changes can be termed development

2) The developing countries depend upon the developed countries for technological and financial aid. In the process of providing this aid, the developed countries try to exploit the developing countries. This view is called the dependency theory of development.

Check Your Progress 2

1) The United States of America and the United Kingdom.

2) a) capitalist

   b) socialist

3) India, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, Venezuela, Nicaragua – these countries are generally identified as the Third World countries or the developing countries.

4) Common characteristics shared by the Third World countries are:

   a) underdeveloped economy and technology

   b) a wider meaning of development which includes social transformation

   c) The Third World countries were pressurised by the developed countries to follow their dictates.

Check Your Progress 3

1) No

2) Socio-cultural dimensions of development are proper satisfaction of basic needs, availability of necessary amenities, economic welfare, access to educational development, social integration and minimisation of inequalities in society.

3) Basing on the two criteria of the centralisation and decentralisation of development schemes and resources, the five approaches to social development are:

   a) development from the top

   b) development from the bottom

   c) sectoral development

   d) area development

   e) target group development

Check Your Progress 4

1) India has followed a 'mixed' path of development. India encourage private business and industry and also exercises almost full control on the entrepreneurial and business activities. It has recently began to focus on area development and target group development, thus taking care of socio-cultural dimensions of development.

2) No

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