UNIT 8: SOCIAL STRUCTURE, SOCIAL SYSTEM AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

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8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand Social Structure and its elements
- understand Social System and its features
- understand Social Organisation, its features, types and characteristics

8.2 INTRODUCTION

In one of the previous unit (unit 4), we tried to understand the concept of role and status, which is accorded to individuals once they become a part of a social structure, a social system or a social organization. In this

unit we will try to understand the concepts called Social Structure, Social System and Social Organization. In broader sense, these concepts are closely associated with one another.

When one talks about structure it generally means the shape or the pattern. For example when we talk about the structure of Taj Mahal, we generally indicate its shape, design, different parts etc. Similarly, every society has a structure which is also called as social structure. One of the important subject matters of sociology has been social structure. Different sociologists have tried to understand this social structure and have forwarded many theories in its support. Some sociologists like *Emile Durkheim*, and *Levis Strauss* stressed that sociologists should study the whole/structure. Therefore, they are also called the *Structuralists*. Some of them, particularly the structural functionalists, have compared society to a biological organism. For example, the body of a human being comprises of different parts like brain, heart, hands, legs etc. Similarly, a society has different parts like the economy, polity, family, religion etc and each part works in unity with one another for the effective functioning of the whole(here society).

8.3 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In simple words, social structure is that social reality which influences us every day. Most importantly, we are an integral part of that reality. Our everyday life is governed by many implicit or explicit rules and regulations. For example : the traffic rules, the rules of buying and selling etc which are explicit. Again there are some implicit rules, like the dress code for different occasions. All these rules form an important aspect of our social structure. Thus, in other words social structure refers to an arrangement, which in some way or the other, restricts or directs the human behavior. Individuals are bound to follow the rules and regulations of the structure despite his/her wish. According to the structuralists, the social structure is more powerful than the individuals and imposes constraints on them.

8.3.1 Meaning and Definition of Social Structure

Talcott Parsons pointed out that "Social Structure is the term applied to the particular arrangement of the inter-related institutions, agencies and social patterns as well as status and roles which each person assumes in a group. Again, according to Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) structure is a body which has eliminated randomness and its constituting parts are organized and arranged under some tangible criteria and patterns. For example, government is an important aspect of a particular society. It can function effectively only when it is ordered in particular pattern. If randomly a government starts working without a proper organization and agenda then there will be a lot of confusion and problem in the whole social structure/society.

Anthony Giddens has put forth a different understanding of the structure. According to him, social structure is no longer constraining but it is enabling. He compared social structure to a language. For example, Assamese language has definite written structure but while talking the speech varies slightly in different regions of Assam. Similarly, every social structure has a definite pattern, but many a times individuals (he used the term agency) enjoy a degree of flexibility while performing the roles. These deviations gradually introduce change, which is inevitable. Thus, Anthony Giddens pointed that, "By the term 'structure' I do not refer, as is conventional in functionalism, to the descriptive analysis of the relations of interaction which compose organizations or collectivities, but to systems of generative rules and resources".

8.3.2 Elements of Social Structure Society

The elements that constitute a social structure are grouped under the following categories:

- Normative system: The normative system provides a society with the ideals and the values. Every institution and association functions on the basis of some accepted norms. The co-ordination

of the different parts of society is based on conformity to the social norms. Individuals are voluntarily or involuntarily members of different institutions and associations. Therefore, they are bound to perform their roles in accordance with those accepted norms of society.

- Position system: This system assigns different roles to individuals on the basis of their capability and sometimes on the basis of their birth (for example in some societies young adults are given different roles and older adults are assigned different roles). In accordance with their roles, individuals achieve different status.
- Sanction system: In order to effectively implement the norms, every society has provision of rewarding and punishing.Those who do not conform to the norms of society are punished. According to the functionalists, this system ensures stability. However according to the non-functionalists, non-conformity is an essential aspect of society, otherwise there would be no change.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What do you understand by 'social structure'?

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Q2: Which of the following is an element of social structure?

a) Status

b) Norms

c) Association

d) All of the above

8.4 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF SOCIAL SYSTEM

A related concept to social structure is social system. Before understanding the concept of social system, let us have a look at the concept of 'system'. Generally by system, we mean any structured or patterned

relationship between a number of elements in order to form a whole. Initially, the term 'system' was used to refer to the study of organic realities such as the human digestive system, circulatory system, nervous system, etc. It was then used to study inorganic realities such as the political system, economic system, industrial system etc.

A few points that can help us in understanding system are:

- A system indicates an orderly arrangement of parts. It has parts which are interrelated. Each part is assigned specific functions.
- A system may have its own boundaries.
- Each system can be an element of or subsystem of another system.
- The concept of system is applicable to the study of both organic and inorganic realities.

According to Oxford Dictionary, the term 'system' represents "a group of things and parts working together in regular relation".This concept was widely used by Talcott Parsons. According to him, every social system consists of plurality of actors, interacting with each other in a situation which is constrained by environmental conditions.

8.4.1 Talcott Parsons' Analysis of Social System

If we look carefully, we can see that every individual action carries some meaning. Their actions are guided by some motive to achieve something (goal). Again, how he or she will act to achieve his/her goal is guided by some values held by them. For example if a person wants to attend University, this is his/her goal; Now the motive, as to why he or she wants to attend University, can be many- for some the motive to attain higher education can be a means to attain better job prospect, while for some higher education can be a means to attain higher status in society. Now the means to attain higher education will be guided by the value (value is the idea regarding what is good or bad) one holds. For example : some may feel attaining higher education in a foreign country is better, on the other hand, some may feel attaining education in one's own country is better. Along with values, one's actions/decisions

are determined by the situational conditions. For example, some working person may at the same time want to pursue higher education. But due to time constraint, he or she is not able to get enrolled in a regular university and thereby opts for an open university. Thus, we have seen here that individuals do not act randomly. Every action carries a meaning. According to Talcott Parsons, individuals (he used the term actor) are oriented to situations by motives. Along with this, they are also guided by some values. On the basis of one's motives and values, a person acts. He used the term 'unit act' to explain the individual action.

But in a society, there are number of people who have different, and many a times conflicting, motives and goals. It was realized that in order to achieve our goals me must interact and cooperate with one another. For example : in an economic sphere both the buyer and the seller have to interact with one another. Both the buyer and seller, at the same time, wants to attain optimum benefit. Without any rules and regulation, there is a tendency that one might cheat the other. Therefore, to ensure that everyone is able to achieve their goals effectively certain institutions, rules, norms came into being. Over time differently motivated actors develop agreements regarding patterns of interaction. These patterns gradually become regularized and the interaction between the individuals became institutionalized. According to Talcott Parson, this institutionalized pattern of interaction is nothing but *Social System.*

8.4.2 Features of a Social System

- A Social System consists of a plurality of individuals interacting with one another.
- The interactions must carry meaning.
- A Social System is an integrated unit comprising of various parts like rules and regulations, customs, traditions etc.
- Every part in a social system is integrated with one another and works towards the functioning of the whole system. Every part is dependent on the other parts for proper functioning. For example:

if we consider a society as a social system, then its economic system cannot function effectively if the political system does not ensure stability. In the similar way, the political system can function effectively only if the economic system provides assistance to the political system.

For effective functioning, Social system is dependent on the effective functioning of its parts but is dependent on other systems like the cultural system and the personality system. For example : our attitude, behavior, beliefs is based on the way we have internalized the various aspects of our culture.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.3: What do you understand by unit act?

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Q2: What are the two systems on which a social system is dependent?

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8.5 SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In our everyday life, we keep using the term organization. If we carefully look around us we see several organizations that are working for different sectors. The concept of social structure encompasses the concept called social organization because every social structure consists of different organizations for its effective functioning. A social organization is a unit of people constructed and administered to pursue some collective goals. For Example University, Bank etc.

According to Elliott and Merrill “Social Organisation is a state of being, a condition in which the various institutions in a society are functioning in accordance with their recognized or implied purposes”.

Ogburn and Nimkoff have pointed out that " An organization is an articulation of different parts which perform various functions, it is an active group device for getting something done."

8.5.1 Features of a Social Organisation

- **Specific Purpose :** Every social organization has some specific purposes for which it is established. When people have a similar goal to achieve, they come together and form an organization. For example, Bank is an organization formed to serve the function of facilitating financial transaction. Similarly, educational institutes are formed to encourage education among people.
- **Mutual understanding among members :** For smooth functioning of any organization, mutual understanding and cooperation among the members is essential. For example : an University can function effectively only when there is mutual cooperation and understanding between the administration and the faculty members, between the faculty members and the students and also between the students and the administration.
- **Synchronization between the status and roles:** An organization is a place which brings different people together under one roof. Accordingly, every individual is accorded different status and roles on the basis of different aspects such as birth, sex, age, achievements, physical and mental abilities, skills, intelligence etc. For example : in a family status and roles are accorded on the basis of age and sex. It is seen that the older members are accorded higher status in comparison to the younger members. Again, the roles of the different members vary according to age and sex. But in formal organizations like in an industry, status and roles are accorded on the basis of an individual's skills and intelligence. For effective functioning of an organization, every member is supposed to perform their roles effectively.
- **Control of the organization on the behavior of the individuals:** Every organization exercises some control over its

members and regulates their activities. It makes use of different formal and informal mechanisms to control the behavior of its members. If an organization fails to exercise some degree of control over the actions of its members, it might fail to function effectively.

8.5.2 Types Of Social Organisation

In order to meet different needs of society and to promote different interest of men, a number of organizations have come into existence. Broadly social organizations can be divided into:

i) Formal Social Organisation

ii) Informal Social Organisation

- **Formal Social Organisation:** These are those organizations that are characterized by explicit set of rules, division of labour, a hierarchy of authority etc. Here, people join voluntarily. Once they join, they are bound to follow the rules of that organization. Modern industrialized and urban societies are characterized by complex requirements. In order to meet those requirements, different social organizations came up. These social organizations can be found in the economic, political, educational and other fields.
- **Informal Social Organisation:** Informal Social Organisations are the first organisation in any society. It plays a pivotal role in the sustenance of a society. Informal Social Organisations are generally smaller groups where the members share an intimate bond with one another. Here, one can share his/her hopes, aspirations, fears, joys. An example of an informal social organisation can be that of friend groups or peer groups.

8.5.3 Characteristics of Formal Social Organisation

Some of the characteristics of a formal social organization are as follows:

- A specific function: Every formal social organization has some specific role to perform. For example : the main task of a Bank is financial transaction but the main task of an educational institute is to promote education.
- Bureaucracy: It is an important aspect which differentiates formal organisation from informal organisation. Bureaucracy refers to the administrative aspect of an organisation designed to carry out and coordinate the day-to-day activities. It consists of a hierarchy of officials who are assigned different responsibilities and are also accorded different status. Every responsibility has to be performed according to prescribed guidelines. Thus, they have the power to remove persons who are found to be performing unsatisfactorily.
- Formal interaction: In formal social organisations, interaction between the individuals are generally goal-oriented and takes place formally. Towards this end, the bureaucracy plays an important role. For example : if an University wants to communicate about the dates of examination then the administration will forward a formal notice rather than informally notifying every individual. This is because of the large size of the formal social organization which makes informal interaction impossible and inefficient to pass on the messages effectively.
- Rationality: Every formal institution is based on the principle of rationality.This Rationality emanates from the predominance of rules that have been developed to achieve proper results.
- Name and symbol: Every formal social organisation has a name and symbol which differentiates it from others. The absence of a particular name and symbol can lead to a lot of confusion. For example : there are many universities in our country. If someone

says, "I study in the University"; it does not communicate a clear message regarding which University he or she is indicating. But when one mentions its name, the message becomes clear. Further, every organisation claims to be of different nature in comparison to others and this difference is reflected in the symbol of a formal organisation.

8.5.4 Characteristics of Informal Social Organisation:

- In informal social organisation, the members share a personal relation with one another. For example : one can share very intimate things with one's close friend but this is not true in case of formal groups.
- In informal organizations though the members may perform different roles, they enjoy same status unlike, the formal organizations.
- The informal social groups also have some norms to follow. But they are subtle in nature and do not have a written form.
- Due to absence of a bureaucratic mechanism, the interaction between the members is direct and more intimate.
- The informal social organisations are flexible. Norms can be changed with the change in attitude of the members. Changing of norms is relatively easier here because it is smaller in size and its structure is not much complex.

ACTIVITY 8.1



Do you agree that violation of rules and regulation can create problems in society?

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Discuss what roles you have played in your every day life.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.5: Define social organization.

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Q.6: In which type of social organization, bureaucracy can be found?

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8.6 LETS SUM UP

- Structure is nothing but an arrangement of different parts to make a whole.
- Social Structure is one of the basic concepts of inquiry in sociology.
- Social structure refers to an arrangement, which in some way or the other, restricts or directs the human behavior.
- Individuals are bound to follow the rules and regulations of the social structure despite his/her wish.
- Norms, rules, regulations, status comprise a social structure.
- Social Structures exercise control over individual behavior for their effective functioning.
- Social system and social structure are related concepts.
- System refers to an orderly arrangement of different parts having a definite boundary.
- Social System means the institutionalized pattern of interaction.
- Social System is based on the personality system and the cultural system.
- Social organization is a unit of people constructed and administered to pursue some collective goals.
- Every social organization requires mutual understanding for its sustenance.

- Formal social organizations are those organizations that are characterized by explicit set of rules, divison of labour, a hierarchy of authority etc.
- Formal Social organization is also characterized by explicit demarcation of roles and status.
- Formal social organizations are more or less permanent in nature due to implementation of some accepted norms.
- Bureaucracy is one important aspect of a formal social organisation.
- Informal Social Organizations emerge out of intimacy among a small group of people.
- Informal social organizations are less permanent in nature.



8.7 FURTHER READING

1) T.B. Bottomore. *Sociology: A guide to Problems and Literature.* Mumbai: Blackie and Son (India) Ltd.

2) Turner, Jonathan. *The Structure of Sociological theory*



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: Social Structure is the term applied to the particular arrangement of the inter-related institutions, agencies and social patterns as well as status and roles which each person assumes in a group.

Ans to Q No 2: All of the above.

Ans to Q No 3: According to Talcott Parsons, individuals (he used the term actor) are oriented to situations by motives. Along with this, they are also guided by some values. On the basis of one's motives and values, a person acts. He used the term 'unit act' to explain the individual action.

Ans to Q No 4: Social System is dependent on personality system and the cultural system.

Ans to Q No 5: According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, "An organization is an articulation of different parts which perform various functions,

it is an active group device for getting something done."

Ans to Q No 6: Formal social organization.



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer in about150 words)

Q.1: What do you understand by Social System?

Q.2: What is the difference between formal social organization and informal social organization?

B) Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500 word)

Q.1: What do you understand by Social Structure? Explain the various elements of a social structure.

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UNIT 9 SOCIALISATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objects
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Socialisation : Meaning and Definitions
9.4 Aim and Objectives of Socialisation
9.5 Forms of Socialisation : Primary and Secondary
9.6 Process of Socialisation (Stages of Development)
9.7 Importance of Socialisation
9.8 Agencies of Socialisation
9.9 Let Us Sum Up
9.10 Further Reading
9.11 Answers to Check Your Progress
9.12 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the concept of Socialisation
- discuss the Importance of Socialisation in Society
- identify the agents of Socialisation
- explain the different stages of Socialisation.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have learnt about the concepts of Social Structure, Social System and Social Organisation. In this unit, we shall learn about the concept of Socialisation; its meaning and definitions; its importance; the agents of socialisation and the different stages of socialisation.

9.3 SOCIALISATION: MEANING AND DEFINITION

By now, we know that for the maintenance of social life, it is important that people know about the rules and regulations. Living in a society, we see how other people behaving in various circumstances and hear from them

as to how to behave in different circumstances. Also, when we behave we are told and reminded of how to behave. In this way, we are trained about the rules, regulations, and practices of the society. The rules, norms, values, practices etc. of the society become internalised in the members of the society. This process is called socialisation. Socialisation is, thus, a process whereby the individuals learn to conform to the norms of the group. It is a continuous process of social learning.

W.F. Ogburn defines socialisation as "the process by which individual learns to conform to the norms of the group."

Horton and Hunt state that, "Socialisation is a process, whereby, one internalises the norms of groups so that a distinct 'self' emerges, unique to this individual."

Every individual is born and brought up in different situations and have their individual history. We, therefore, find that each individual has passed through different combinations of the socialisation process even within the same society. In a family, we find that the siblings are different in certain ways in their social personality. They may have been to different schools and educational institutions, had different friends and met different people who influenced them in the formation of their social nature or personality. But, despite these individual differences, the members generally learn the basic common norms, values and practices which enable them to behave with each other in ways that make possible the functioning of the society. Socialisation is a kind of learning that contributes to one's ability to perform social roles. It is desirable and desired learning. It is a continuous process that begins with birth and ends with death. In this process, we acquire new roles and drop old ones.

9.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SOCIALISATION

The main objective of Socialisation is the development of self and the formation of personality. The concept of 'self' refers to the individual as subject (as the source of the action and self-reflection), whereas the term 'personality' refers to the individual as object (the object of external evaluation). Thus, Socialisation is the process through which an individual is socialised and turned into an effective member of the society or a social being. The

following are the main objectives of socialisation:

- It inculcates basic disciplines ranging from toilet habits to the method of science.
- It helps an individual in developing the expertise and capacities needed to be a member of the society.
- It trains one social role (responsibilities) and their supporting attitudes.
- It aspires individuals and satisfies their needs.
- It helps in the transmission of culture from generation to generation.
- It develops a sense of identity and the capacity for independent thought and action, for example learning of language.
- It develops conscience, which is one important characteristic product of this process.

9.5 FORMS OF SOCIALISATION: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY

Talcott Parsons, while dealing with family identified two forms of socialisation-primary and secondary. Originally, this distinction was made by Charles Cooley (1909). He defined these two forms of socialisation partly in terms of the particular groups or 'agencies' in which they occur. *Primary socialisation* refers to socialisation during the early years of childhood, which takes place within the family, peer groups of close friends and closely-knit groups. In it, two basic processes are involved-internalisation of society's culture and the structuring of the personality. Culture is not simply learned, it is "internalised as a part of personality structure". In this connection, Parsons remarked that families "are factories which produce human personalities". Additionally, 'stabilisation of adult personalities' (marriage relations and emotional security) is also done in the family. *Secondary socialisation* occurs during the last years. It involves learning how to organise and conduct oneself in formal contexts and how to behave towards people who have different degrees of status and authority. The school is an important example of an agency of secondary socialisation, but all formal organisations (trade unions and professional associations etc.) that influence their members to some degree can be included in this category.

The distinction between primary and secondary socialisation parallels that between informal and formal socialisation. Informal socialisation usually

takes place as part of everyday activity. It affects us unconscionably and must be distinguished from the formal acquisition of specific skills such as reading and writing.

9.6 PROCESS OF SOCIALISATION

Socialisation is a lifelong process and is not confined to childhood alone. It begins at childhood and continues throughout life. At every phase of life, an individual is subjected to different transitions and face various crises which he/she has to overcome. Some earlier scholars like S. Freud and Jean Piaget have analysed and talked about the development process only upto childhood or adolescence. Freud has discussed a series of five stages of development of a child. These are *oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital.* Again, Piaget's classifications of the stages of cognitive development are *sensorimotor stage* (birth to 2 years), *pre-operational stage* (2 to 7 years), *concrete operational stage* (7 to 11 years) and *formal operation stage* (11 to 15 years). According to Piaget, the first three stages of development are universal but not all adults reach the three stages of operational stage. Following Freud, renowned sociologist, Talcott Parsons has also discussed about four stages- from the period of infancy (oral, anal and latency) to adolescence period. As said above, the process of socialisation does not stop at adolescence or at a certain age, but it continues till death.

According to Sociologists, different stages of human development are not biologically determined, even though it may appear to be so. Sociologists study the social construction of age. For them, age is a social category. Thus, they examine or analyse age and age-stages not as biological or chronological categories but as social categories. The studies of feral and isolated children are a testimony to the fact that that children do not develop from stage to stage (as contended by development theorists Freud and Piaget) at all if they do not interact. Interaction is a must for the development of a child. A child develops a consciousness of himself as being different from others through the association with other human beings. Hence, we can say that interactions help in making a child social. But biology is also important and cannot be completely ruled out. The stages of human 'life-course' are social as well as biological. They are influenced by culture and also material environment of people in which they live. Man's biological nature makes socialisation both possible and necessary. Socialisation cannot occur

if man did not have the inborn capacity to learn and use language.

Earlier, psychological (psychoanalytic) view of socialisation stressed that internal stimuli, drives instincts (innate development process), while the sociological view focused on the way an individual learns to fulfil the requirements of the various social roles he/she is called upon to play. A person becomes human by internalising the norms and expectations about behaviour of the people with whom he interacts. Sociologists have placed the main emphasis on the childhood and adolescence years rather than infancy period. In modern societies, the expectations at different stages of socialisation are changing for both men and women.

Erik Erikson (*Childhood and Society,* 1963) has attempted to integrate biological, psychological and sociological perspectives about 'conception of the life cycle'. He charts eight stages of psycho-social development of the individual as under:

Sl. No.	***Stages***	***Psycho-Social Crises***	***Significant Social Relations***
1.	First year of life	Trust v/s mistrust	Mother or mother substitute
2.	Second year	Autonomy v/s doubt	Parents
3.	Third through fifth years	Initiative v/s guilt	Basic family
4.	Sixth year to puberty	Industry v/s inferiority	Neighbourhood, school
5.	Adolescence	Identity v/s confusion	Peer groups and out-groups: models of leadership
6.	Early adulthood	Intimacy v/s isolation	Partners in friendship; sex competition, co-operation
7.	Middle adulthood	Generativityv/s self-absorption	Divided labour and shared household
8.	The ageing years	Integrity v/s despair	'Mankind', 'my kind'

Now, we shall describe briefly four important stages of socialisation from infancy to old age.

- ***Infancy and childhood (oral, anal and latency)***

This stage of life starts from birth to the beginning of adolescence, i.e., a period from 0 to 13-14 years of age. Earlier, 'childhood' as a separate phase of development did not exist, especially in traditional and preliterate societies. The young child moved directly from a lengthy infancy into working roles within the community. However, in modern societies, long period of childhood has been recognised. Both parenting and childhood have become clearly distinct from other stages that were true of traditional societies.

The child in his first year communicates with the outside world, including his/her mother is through the mouth and lips. The mother is the first socialising agent of the child. It is the mother who begins the process of socialisation. It is from her that the earliest social stimuli to which a child is subjected come. He/She responds to these stimuli by imitating them. At this stage, the child makes no distinction between persons and things-the mother's breast and the nipple of the bottle are equally and solely the means of organic satisfaction. His/Her social activities are merely confined to Crying, smiling and eye movement in response to others. The roles of the mother and the infant are merged at this stage of development.

In the second year, toilet and other training are initiated in many societies. During this phase, the child learns how to eat his/her food; talk and behave appropriately. The child begins to develop a sense of control over himself/herself and his/her environment, although he/she is still dependent on his/her parents. He starts recognising the family relations. During this stage, the child internalises two roles-his/her own and that of his/her mother-now clearly separate.

Rapid physical development takes place from the 3rd to the 5th (phallic stage) year of life. During this period, the child becomes aware of genital sensations and in most cases, develops a sense of Freudian *Oedipus* complex, in which the boy's attachment to the mother is combined with jealous hostility towards father. At this stage, the child learns to 'behave

himself/herself' in various contexts of his/her activity, particularly when interacting with adults. Besides, child also internalises all the four roles of the family, viz., husband-father, wife-mother, son-brother and daughter-sister.

Following this stage is the stage of latency, which continues from about 5 years to 12-13 years. By about five, the child no longer remains a dependent baby and becomes independent in the elementary routines of life at home. During this period, the child acquires informal aspects of culture-folkways, customs, fads and crazes, along with secret modes of gratification and forbidden knowledge. Sociologists have termed this stage as the 'gang stage'. During this stage, the child's social world broadens or expands. He develops relationship outside his/her family. Friend's seem to be more important in this stage as the child begins to take more interest in friends rather than family. In this stage, growth of social consciousness takes place and group activities and group loyalty becomes highly important. He/She gradually begins to revolt against adult domination.

- **Adolescence**

The period of adolescence begins with the attainment of Puberty. Puberty leads to several biological changes and it is universal (the point at which a person becomes capable of adult sexual activity and reproduction). This stage, which begins around 14-15 years of a person and continues till he/she attains 20-21 years, is an important stage of socialisation, It is a transition stage from childhood to maturity during which new patterns of behaviour are developed to meet the demands of both the larger and more diversified life of his peers of the adult society. In this stage, the attraction towards the opposite sex develops. Further Movies, Sports, T.V etc captivates his/her attention and interest more than anything else. Psychologist G. Stanly Hall wrote that 'adolescence' is 'naturally' a period of psychological 'storm and stress'. But, sociologists believe that the emotional experience of youth varies greatly between individuals and across cultures.

- **Adulthood**

"A person is considered to be adult or have attained adulthood when

he/she can support himself or herself entirely independent of the paternal family..... Full adulthood implies the ability to form a family of one's own life"(Johnson, 1960). During Adulthood, a person has to go through lot of stress and strain. Further, major decisions of life such as the choice of marriage partners, the choice of occupation, etc. has to be taken at this stage, and therefore, this stage becomes very crucial. Since, an individual starts working for his/her livelihood, gets married in this stage, he/she has to occupy number of positions and therefore he/she is accorded different statuses and entrusted with number of roles. Once an individual gets married, he/she has to face a new series of accommodations in his/her personal conduct. He/She learn and develop new habits, ideals, customs and notions to adjust with the spouse and his/her family. Again when they become parents or when they give birth to their child, they are faced with new situations and the necessities of new adjustments emerge. Further, both the parents will have different child rearing practices as they were brought up by different sets of parents, and hence they will have to adjust and socialise each other to reach agreement about childcare practices. All of this learning is a part of adult socialisation.

Another type of socialisation is occupational training, which teaches the attitudes and values associated with an occupation as well as skills. A doctor has to acquire technical knowledge required to practice medicine. A new employee in an office has to learn how to conform to the expectations of the other workers and to the written and unwritten rules. One has to learn the styles of dress, decor and people's conduct in the company of fellow employees.

Adulthood can be divided into two stages –young adulthood and mature adulthood. Young adulthood is increasingly becoming a specific and important stage in the process of human development. This is a period of excitement and sexual development. In modern societies, young adults in their twenties engage themselves in preparing for their professional education, seeking career and finding some job or occupation. Besides this, they explore the possibilities of their life.

The mature adults (middle aged at about the age of 40) often experience a stress of self-evaluation during this period. At this stage, people realise that they have not achieved basic goals and ambitions and have little time left to do so. It is seen that women experience fear and confusion in their middle years. During this period, adults require the deep internalisation of norms and attitudes that run counter to norms already learned and assimilated.

- **Old Age**

Old age is considered to be the final stage or the final period of transition, which starts mostly between 60-65 years. Since, the concept of Old or old age varies from culture to culture, there is no universally accepted definition of old age. After attaining old age, people start preparing for retirement and restrict their occupational responsibilities. (Norms of retirement differ from place to place). As an individual grows old, his/her body gradually stops supporting and refuses to take stress. However, it varies from individual to individual. Some individual may lead an active and pleasant life even at old age and in their case socialisation continues till the end of life.

In traditional societies like India, older people are normally accorded a great deal of respect. The elders used to have a major, often the final, say in the matters of family and in the community as a whole. They had a great role in socialising the younger children in the family. Individuals used to feel themselves to be a part of a family and a community. But, now, things are swiftly changing. Older people do not receive that much respect, which they used to. They are even despised and are left alone to live at their own. rejected from the economic arena, and no longer living with their children, it is not easy for older people to make the final period of their life rewarding. At the same time, it is no longer widely accepted that older people should simply sit around passively, waiting to die. Instead, there has been as increase in programmes to socialise the elderly for meaningful pursuits and continue happy living.

9.7 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIALISATION IN SOCIETY

- Socialisation trains the individuals regarding the social roles that they need to play and also to choose from the various roles that they can play. In this way, it inducts the individual into the social world.
- It leads to growth of the personality and the self. The individual learns to place oneself in relation to others in society.
- The internalisation of social norms enables one to perform roles accordingly and in this process, socialisation helps social control, and maintains social order.
- Conformity to norms gives group identification and a sense of solidarity.
- In the process of socialisation the individual also socialises others.
- It provides enough opportunities to display individual peculiarities.
- It is a process, which results in transmission of social heritage, eventually helps in the perpetuation and continuity of the society.

9.8 AGENCIES OF SOCIALISATION

In society, we undergo social learning. In the society, there are several groups that orient us and to train us in the social norms and practices. These are regarded as the agencies of socialisation. As discussed earlier, Charles Cooley makes a distinction between primary and secondary socialisation. By primary socialisation, he referrs to the agencies that mould our social personality in the early years of our life and are the constituents of the informal groups. These informal groups are the primary groups such as family, peer groups, neighbourhood, etc. Secondary socialisation occurs in the later part of one's life where one gets involved with the formal and secondary groups such as school, work place, professional groups, etc. Let us now discuss the agencies of socialisation.

➢ Agencies of Primary Socialisation

❍ Family

The family, which usually introduces the child to the culture of the group. The basic cultural values, habits and practices are learnt in the family and

this has a great influence on the personality formation of the child.

❍ **Peer group**

Peer group means age mates and people of same status. When a child starts growing up and mostly in the period of adolescence, the peer group assumes a more influential role in the socialisation process. Peer groups even form their own sub-cultures as school campus culture. The type of peer group one chooses also depends upon earlier and parallel socialisation. For example, a young person coming in contact with a delinquent (law violating) group may start imitating them. But his/her other socialisation at home and school regarding law obedience may check his attraction to such a delinquent group and encourage the involvement in other socially desirable peer groups.

❍ **Neighbourhood**

The social environment of the neighbourhood also influences the social personality of an individual. We are aware of the slums, which we understand as substandard dwelling areas with unhygienic conditions where people live in poverty. People living in these areas cannot afford education for their children and they suffer from problems such as alcoholism, crimes both of adults and youths, prostitution, etc. Children born in such a neighbourhood eventually learn these behaviours.

➢ Agencies of Secondary Socialisation

Some of the important agencies of secondary socialisation are as follows:

❍ **School**

In complex societies, the school comes to play an important role along with the other agencies of socialisation. The school provides formal education, trains children to participate in the wider society, to co-operate and participate in group activities, to compete and to obey rules and be disciplined. Different schools have their own subcultures. In this way, it moulds the personality of an individual.

❍ **Workplace**

Every kind of work in the professional world has some specific roles and responsibilities. Accordingly, there are specific ways of behaving with others in the work place. A workplace culture, thus, develops. The workplace

environment influences the individual. In complex societies, people maintain important links beyond their family, especially related to their work. Although they may work from home, their professional relations and status come to define their social personality.

❍ **Mass media**

Mass media shape the mass culture as we have already learnt. From this, we can understand how the mass media influence peoples' beliefs, values, and their behaviour.

❍ **State**

The State is a powerful agency in the society. It has a profound impact on the life of the individual and all its groups. The values and the goals of the State as enshrined in the Constitution and the various agencies of the State influence and socialise the individual. Being an Indian citizen, we value and understand the importance of democracy. Being a good citizen means adhering to the goals of the Constitution and the State and behaving in acceptable ways.

Thus, we can conclude that:

- Socialisation is the internalisation of norms, values, practices of the society in the individuals of the society.
- It is a continuous process playing a significant role in the perpetuation of society.
- There are both formal and informal groups in the society that serve as agents of socialisation.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS



Q.1: What is Primary Socialisation?

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Q.2: Name any two agencies of Secondary Socialisation.

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9.9 LET US SUM UP

- Socialisation and social control shape and control social behaviour of its members.
- Socialisation is a process whereby the individuals learn to conform to the norms of the group.
- It is a continuous process of social learning.
- Each individual passes through different combinations of the socialisation process even within the same society.
- Socialisation is a kind of learning that contributes to one's ability to perform social roles. It is desirable and desired learning. It is a continuous process that begins with birth and ends with death. In this process, we acquire new roles and drop old ones.
- It leads to the growth of personality and the self. The individual learns to place oneself in relation to others in society.
- It is a process, which results in transmission of social heritage and, thus helps in the perpetuation and continuity of the society.
- In the society, there are several groups that orient us to and train us in the social norms and practices. These are regarded as the agencies of socialisation.
- By primary socialisation, we refer to the agencies that mould our social personality in the early years of our life and are the constituents of the informal groups
- Secondary socialisation occurs in the later part of one's life where one gets involved with the formal and secondary groups such as school, work place, professional groups, etc.



9.10 FURTHER READING

1) Johnson, H.M. Sociology- A Systematic Introduction. New Delhi Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

2) Rawat, H.K (2009) Sociology: Basic Concepts, Rawat Publications, New Delhi

3) R.K.Sharma, Social Change and Social Control, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd. New Delhi.

4) W.E. Ogburn and M.F.Nimkoff, Sociology, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.



9.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Primary Socialisation refers to socialisation during the early years of Childhood, which takes place within the family peer groupes of close friends and closely knit groups.

Answer to Q2: School, Workplace etc. are agencies of Secondary Socialisation.



9.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What do you understand by agencies of socialisation.

Q.2: Distinguish between Primary and Secondary Socialisation.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Define Socialisation. Discuss its importance in Society.

Q.2: Discuss the agencies of Socialistaion

Q.3: "Socialisation is a lifelong process". Discuss

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UNIT 10: SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objecives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Meaning And Concept Of Social Stratification

10.4 Characteristics And Functions Of Social Stratification

10.4.1 Characteristics Social Stratification

10.4.2 Function Of Socail Stratification

10.5 Socail Stratification And Social Inequality

10.6 Hierarchy And Difference

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers To Check Your Progress

10.10 Model Question

10.1 LEARNING OBJECIVES

After going though this unit, you will be able to —

- understand the meaning of Social Stratification and Social Inequality
- differentiate between Social Stratification and Social Inequality
- understand the differences between hierarchy and difference
- explain the ideas on stratification presented by different sociologists.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have learnt about the concept of Socialisation. In this unit, we will discuss the concept of social stratification and its various dimensions. The ideas and theories of various social thinkers will be used to understand these conceptual dimensions. Here, we will highlight the various debates around the concept of social inequality and social stratification. To understand these debates on social stratification, we need to familiarise with the ideas on social inequality, natural inequality, hierarchy,

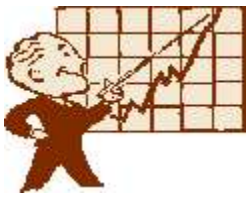
role and status. We will also differentiate between inequality and difference. Let us now understand the meaning of social stratification.

10.3 MEANING AND CONCEPT OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Social stratification refers to the arrangement of groups of people in a given society on the basis of evaluation of their social characteristics such as occupation, status, income etc. Sociologist Dipankar Gupta considers that social stratification deals with the ways in which the human population is socially differentiated, publically and demonstratably. Social stratification implies a hierarchical arrangement of different groups at a high or low position in terms of their relative distribution of the source of stratification. For example : the people with more wealth are located at a higher level and those with less wealth at a lower rank of the hierarchical distribution. Hence the idea of inequality is intrinsic to the idea of social stratification. This idea of social stratification was imagined by sociologists who compared the system of social stratification to that of the earth's crust having multiple layers of soil and rock. Andre Beteille defines social stratification as "stratification spontaneously signifies a multi-layered phenomenon much like the earth's crust." (Beteille, 1977:129) On the other hand, thinkers like Dipankar Gupta argues that the arrangement of social groups can be done both in a vertical and horizontal manner. The differentiation of groups is then done on the basis of their characteristics like role, function or division of labour. Thus, social stratification is based both on difference and inequality. Andre Beteille has illustrated the process through which social stratification emerges in society. He states that nature presents us only with differences. For example : people have different physical abilities, body build up, colour etc. However, these differences are conceived by people in society as natural inequalities by measuring them and by assigning value to them. These natural inequalities are socially recognized, accepted and demonstrated in society and are regarded as social inequalities. When the unequal groups are arranged in a particular manner and are assigned certain positions and

roles in a system, it gives rise to social stratification. A system of social stratification is then transmitted in society from generation to generation through social practice and socialization.

There can be different forms and systems of social stratification which are based on one or more criteria like wealth, power and authority, occupation, ritual purity and pollution, physical strength, education and other qualifications, etc. Caste, Class, Estate etc are the different systems of social stratification that we may find in societies. Through a system of social stratification, we can understand the social status and role of different groups in a given society. Therefore, it is argued by sociologists that all human societies in different periods of history had one or the other form of social stratification. We can understand the nature of division of labour, the complexity of the social structure and the significance of the various groups in society through the appraisal of the systems of social stratification that exist in the particular societies. Hence, it is essential to study the concept of social stratification and the existing systems of social stratification. In order to study social stratification, one must also know about the nature of inequality in a society. Thinkers from the ancient times have presented their ideas and arguments on the nature of social inequality and social stratification. In ancient societies, inequality among men was often considered as natural or divine. Therefore, the systems of social stratification were also considered as devised by divinity. However, the study of social stratification in sociology in the modern era aims at making it more scientific and systematic. Hence, the study of social stratification in social sciences is based on empirical investigation of existing societies and application of scientific tools of investigation.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Define Social Stratification?

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Q.2: Why is it essential to study social stratification?

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Q.3: How is Social Stratification related to social status and role?

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10.4 CHARACTERISTICS AND FUNCTIONS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

From the above discussion on social stratification, it is evident that social stratification has certain characteristics. Since social stratification is not a natural phenomenon, its characteristics will be inherently social in character. These characteristics again throw light on the functions performed by social stratification in different societies. The social significance of social stratification lies in these functions. Let us understand the various characteristics and functions of social stratification in general.

10.4.1 Characteristics Of Social Stratification

Sociologist Melvin M. Tumin had attributed following characteristics to social stratification:

- **Social stratification is social:** It is socially patterned by the consensus of the people of the society. The criteria of inequality, whether it is wealth or ritual purity, are derived from the prevalent beliefs and values of the people of a particular society. The attitude of the people determines the level of rigidity or openness of the

system of stratification. Therefore, social stratification is not a naturally given thing but a socially constructed phenomenon.

- **Social stratification is ancient:** It means that one or the other form of social stratification has always existed in societies in all epochs of history. In primitive societies, people were divided on the basis of their age and sex. They had arrangement of age sets, whereby, people belonging to a particular age were grouped together and allotted with different functions. Thus, since ancient times, social stratification has been a characteristic of all human societies. Social stratification is therefore ubiquitous.
- **It is in diverse forms:** In different societies, there exist different systems of stratification such as caste, class, race and estate. These are based on criteria such as ritual purity, types of occupation, physical features like skin color and ownership of property. Similarly, a system of social stratification can also exist in different societies in different degrees. For example : in one society we may find extreme inequalities between the classes and in others there may be fewer gaps between classes and more cooperation. Thus, in some societies the system of social stratification may be very rigid and in some societies, it may be flexible in nature allowing people to change their social stratus.
- **Social stratification has pervasive social consequences:** Since a person's social status also determines his or her access to resources for survival and development. Social Stratification determines life chances of the individual as well as the members of a particular stratum. Hence factors like longevity, mortality, nutrition, education and others are heavily dependent on the process of social stratification. Similarly, social stratification also denotes the life styles of the members of a particular social group. Food, dress habits, type of residence, quality of education, friendship groups are dependant on the social position of an individual or the group. Again, the behaviour of people are determined by the codes of conduct prescribed to the groups to

which individuals belong. One example of this can be the occupational groups like the army personnel.

Apart from these charecterestics, social stratification also has an impact on the values, attitudes and ideologies of the people living in a society: The rigidity and openness in a system of social stratification determines the attitudes of the people towards the members of the groups having higher or lower status. This again has an impact on the interactions of the members of both the groups. Interaction between the members of one race with another is an example of this. The identification of what is good and what is bad in social behaviour is also to a great extent determined by the sanctions associated with the system of social stratification. For example : the ideas of purity and pollution in the caste system determine the preferred way of life for the caste groups. Finally, system of social stratification and its prescribed practices also have an impact on the ideologies of the future course of action for the members of the social groups in a society.

10.4.2 Functions Of Social Stratification

These characteristics of social stratification allow it to perform certain functions for the society. The study of these functions and their association with the organization of social structure has been a primary concern of the sociologist.

- One of the most important functions of social stratification is that it helps in the arrangement of society. It arranges groups and determines their interrelations and functions in a given society. Thus, social stratification helps in defining the division of labour in the society.
- Socialization is another major function of social stratification. A form of social stratification is transmitted from one generation to the other generation. This process basically occurs through socialization. Along with the form and the inherent principle of social stratification, norms, values, behavioural patterns, knowledge and

different aspects of a lifestyle that are associated with the system are also transmitted over generation.

- Social stratification, therefore, leads to the reproduction of society itself with minor modification in the system itself.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Why is social stratification termed as social?

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Q.5: What are the characteristics of social stratification?

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Q.6: what are the functions of social stratification?

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10.5 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

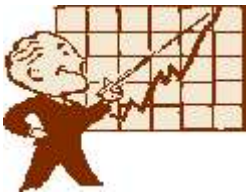
Social stratification and social inequality determine each other. Social inequality refers to the measurement or scaling of the qualities or characteristics possessed by individual or the members of a particular group. A single characteristic like wealth may be accumulated by a group in large proportions and the same may be accumulated in smaller proportion by other groups. These groups are considered as unequal in terms of the wealth possessed by them.

The choice of qualities and characteristics and the scaling has to be recognised and accepted by the members of the society. For example: there are scales such as the poverty line to identify the unequal classes of society in terms of their income and expenditure. People accept this standard

of measurement of income and use it as a reference for determining their class and position in the society.

A system of social stratification is, on the other hand, the institutionalization of the differences and inequalities among individuals and groups. For example : the arrangement of classes itself is a system that highlights the inequality between class and their respective status and function in a society. Social inequality is both a basis for, and a consequence of, social stratification. Inequality is created when people try to hierarchize horizontal differences such as income and physical ability. Social inequality becomes a basis of social stratification when systems of social stratification emerge after a deliberate act on the part of the observer or society to opt for a common criterion of differentiating people and groups and then arranging them into a hierarchy. For example, biological differences between males and females are perceived as the basis of their ability to perform a particular job or not. The defining of roles and statuses to these differences and association of codes of conduct give rise to a system of social stratification based on inequality. Thus, males and females can be considered as unequal in terms of their ability to do rigorous physical labour and emotionally.

On the other hand, social inequality can also be a consequence of social stratification. Social stratification also refers to differential access to resources, power and status among groups. These differences maintain social distance between the groups. Because of the existence of a system of social stratification, people become conscious of their status and role in society. The inequalities existing among them are made visible through modes of socialization and education, both formal and informal. Identification of their status and the inculcation of the roles and behaviours associated with the status leads to the further elaboration of their unequal status. Thus, the persistence of social inequalities is ensured through a system of social stratification.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: Define Social Inequality?

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Q.8: How is social inequality different from social stratification?

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Q.9: How is social inequality determined?

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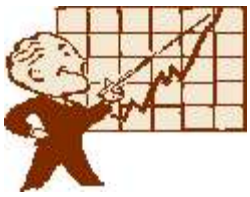
10.6 HIERARCHY AND DIFFERENCE

When unequal social groups are arranged in layers, one on top of the other, the arrangement is hierarchical. This arrangement is also vertical in nature. It represents a ladder like structure where each group is ranked relatively with each other in terms of status. The measurement is done in a continuous scale, meaning that groups which have common characteristics will be part of one hierarchy. For example : in order to be a part of hierarchy based on income, two groups should have a source of income, even though the groups may be involved in different occupations. Dipankar Gupta, therefore, considers that these common characteristics should also be quantifiable or quantitative. That means the income of persons or groups can be measured and classified into various ranges.

On the other hand, difference is in qualitative sense. In the above mentioned example, we have seen that the income of groups is the common feature among them that can be measured and therefore the groups can be arranged in a hierarchy. On the other hand, the occupations in which people are engaged are completely different from each other. They are different in terms of the nature of work and the type of function that they

perform in the society. Therefore, if we have to stratify groups according to their occupations we, cannot place them one above the other unless we identify a common criteria among them like income or prestige. In such a situation, the stratification of the groups will be horizontal in nature. The groups will be placed alongside each other on the basis of their differential nature of work. Other examples of arrangement of social groups on the basis of their qualitative differences are nationalities, languages and religion. Hierarchy and differences both are significant for stratification and organization of societies. Social differentiation of groups separates without implying the inequality of the groups. It is helpful in the understanding of the different roles and functions performed by the groups and persons in a society. Thus, it also helps in the initiation and the understanding of division of labour in society. By appreciating the differences between various groups, social processes like accommodation and cooperation among groups can be initiated. It helps in building up solidarity among the people of a society through interdependence. On the other hand, stratification on the basis of hierarchy can help in the distribution of privileges and sanctions associated with the function of the groups. An understanding of hierarchical arrangement of society can help in the understanding of social processes such as competition and conflict.

Hence, hierarchy and difference are intrinsic to the process of social stratification in society. They are the two major principles on which systems of social stratification emerge in society and function in society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.10: What is Hierarchy?

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Q.11: What is Social Differentiation?

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Q.12: Why is the study of Hierarchy important?

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10.7 LET US SUM UP

- In simple words, social stratification is the arrangement of social groups on the basis of certain characteristics.
- The study of social stratification is a core subject of sociology as a discipline. It helps us to understand the nature of social organization and the distribution of role and status in society.
- There are various characteristics of social stratification. For example, it is socially patterned; it exists in diverse forms; and it is ubiquitous.
- Examples of systems of social stratification are caste, class, estate, etc.
- There can be variance in the degree of rigidity of a system of stratification in different societies. In some societies, the system of social stratification can be rigid and in others, it may be open to rearrangement of individuals and groups within the system.
- Social stratification is related to concepts such as inequality and social differentiation.
- Social inequality refers to the measurement of selected characteristics of social groups in a continuous scale.
- Social groups in a system of social stratification can either have a hierarchical order or a horizontal order.
- Hierarchy refers to the arrangement of groups in a vertical manner depicting their unequal status.
- The arrangement of groups can also be done on the basis of their different characteristics in a horizontal manner.



10.8 FURTHER READING

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2) Giddens, A. (1989). *Sociology.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

3) Gupta, D. (1977). *Social Stratification.* New Delhi: Oxford University Publications.

4) Tumin, M. (1967). *Social Stratification: The Forms and Functions of Inequality.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Social stratification refers to the arrangement of groups of people in a given society on the basis of evaluation of their social characteristics such as occupation, status, income etc.

Answer to Q2: The nature of division of labour, the complexity of the social structure and the significance of the various groups in society can be understood through the appraisal of the system of social stratification that exist in the particular societies.

Answer to Q3: A system of social stratification is a means of determining the social status and role of people and social groups in a given society.

Answer to Q4: Social stratification is termed as social because it is socially patterned by the consensus of the people of the society. The criteria of inequality, whether it is wealth or ritual purity, are derived from the prevalent beliefs and values of the people of a particular society.

Answer to Q5: The various characteristics of social stratification are that it is socially patterned, it exists in diverse forms, it is ubiquitous, it is ancient and it has far reaching social consequences.

Answer to Q6: The most important function of social stratification is that it helps in the arrangement of society, it helps in the process of socialization and therefore, leads to the reproduction of society itself.

Answer to Q7: Social inequality refers to the measurement or scaling of

the qualities or characteristics possessed by individuals or the members of a particular group.

Answer to Q8: Social inequality is the measurement and scaling of the characteristics of groups of people, whereas, social stratification is the arrangement of these groups in a particular order.

Answer to Q9: Social inequality is determined by the measurement of the common characteristics of social groups in a continuous scale.

Answer to Q10: When unequal social groups are arranged in layers, one on top of the other, the arrangement is hierarchical. This arrangement represents a ladder like structure where each group is ranked relatively with each other in terms of status and, thus, is vertical in order.

Answer to Q11: Social Differentiation refers to the identification of groups on the basis of their unique characteristics or qualities.

Answer to Q12: Stratification on the basis of hierarchy can help in the understanding of the distribution of privileges and sanctions associated with the function of the groups. It can also help in understanding of social processes such as competition and conflict.



10.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What are the various characteristics of social stratification?

Q.2: What is social inequality? Illustrate with examples.

Q.3: Distinguish between hierarchy and differnce.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Explain why the study of social stratification is important in the discipline of sociology.

Q.2: Briefly discuss the debates concerning the nature of social stratification.

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UNIT 11: BASES OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objecives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Race

- 11.3.1 Race And Racism
- 11.3.2 Colonialism and Racism
- 11.3.3 Continuty Of Racism

11.4 Caste

- 11.4.1 Varna and Jati
- 11.4.2 Ritul And Secular Dimension Of Caste

11.5 Class

- 11.5.1 Class in Agrarian Society
- 11.5.2 Class In Industrial Society

11.6 Estate

- 11.6.1 Hierarcy In Estate
- 11.6.2 Sociological Interpretation Of Estate

11.7 Gender

- 11.7.1 Feminism, Gender And Stratification
- 11.7.2 Sexism And Work

11.8 Let Us Sum Up

11.9 Further Readings

11.10 Answers To Check Your Progress

11.11 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECIVES

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

- identify the various bases of social stratification
- understand the various systems of social stratification emerging on these bases of social stratification

- discuss the history of the emergence of these systems of social stratification
- explain the structure and the functioning of the various systems of social stratification.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

Social stratification refers to the arrangement of groups of people in a given society on the basis of evaluation of their social characteristics such as occupation, status, income etc. The arrangement of social groups has various functions in a given society like organization of division of labour and the distribution of resources and privileges. One of the characteristics of social stratification is that it can be found in diverse forms in different kinds of societies. The diversity of forms of social stratification depends on the fact that people of different societies may value different material or non-material qualities of people and groups in their respective societies differently. Some societies may give more importance to income while determining the status of a person and in other societies, ritual purity may be considered as more important. These differential criteria for evaluation of status are the bases on which the system of social stratification of that particular society rests. The major forms of social stratification thus constructed are race, caste, class and estate. Each of these systems of stratification vary in terms of their degree of complexity, the causes of their occurrence, the functions that they perform in society and the nature of society in which they are embedded. In the previous unit, we tried to understand the concept of social stratification. In this unit, we will discuss various forms of social stratification.

11.3 RACE

The term ‘race’ refers to the criterion or basis of social stratification as well as the system of stratification in a given society. The term race has been used to denote different characteristics held commonly by a group of

people. It was also used to denote national affiliation. However, a constant element in the categorization of races has been biology. When the people or groups of people are differentiated on the basis of their physical features such as colour of skin and hair, the size of their skull and shape of their body then the difference is termed as racial differentiation. These traits are mostly phenotypical. According to the *Meyers Konversation-Lexikon,* there are three major races among Homo-sapiens- Mongoloid, Caucasoid and Negroid. A further category of Australoid has been added to this classification. There are further sub categories and divisions on the combinations of these major races.

However, sociologists and social anthropologists are of the opinion that the consideration of physical factor alone is not responsible for race to become a basis of social stratification. They argue that it is only when these physical differences are socially marked and measured that they become bases of social stratification. Raymond Firth opines that races are determined by social (or cultural) factors. These factors may include on the one hand the traditional modes of ranking of people belonging to different origins and on the other hand, the constant operation of new social conditions of inequality. Let us now understand how race and racism is related to social stratification.

11.3.1 Race And Racism

Although different races are believed to exist in all historical epochs, the ideology of racism as a base for social inequality has latter origins. The practice of differentiating social groups on the basis of race and the ideology behind this practice is known as racism. Certain groups of people are believed to be inferior to others on the basis of their physical appearance and build up. This practice of racism is very ancient. Different sociologists and social anthropologists elaborated on the origin of the ideology of racism. In ancient Greece and Rome, the institution of slavery often corresponded to that of racial difference between the masters and the slaves. Many theorists also support the view that the ideology of racism was related to religion. People who belong to races that were defeated in war or had suffered socially and

politically for ages were considered as sinners and unequal to those having political and social power. Therefore, since the 13th and 14th centuries discrimination against the Jews was done on the basis of their religious affiliations. Consideration of religious ideology as a background of racism had existed till the modern times. Besides these bases of discrimination, racism has also been related to the of advent of capitalist economy and colonialism.

11.3.2 Colonialism And Racism

After the establishment of the capitalist economy and the beginning of colonialism, racism became more prominent in defining the social inequalities between the colonizers and the natives of different nations in Africa, Asia and other third world countries. The trans-Atlantic slave trade between Africa, America and Europe led further to the biological and economic differentiation between people. The measurement of biological differences through the cephalic index and other such techniques made the inequalities between the races seem more natural. These measurements were further used to justify the division of labour that led to the employment of the slaves in large scale in plantations of the colonizers. Therefore, Karl Marx considers racism as an institution that sustains capitalism and slavery together.

Inequality among the races was further expanded by the application of institutional and official sanctions on the people of the discriminated races. Inter-marriage between the African and the European people was banned. Further, other kinds of social and political restriction were also imposed on the people. Any offender from the discriminated race was given severe legal and social punishments including lynching.

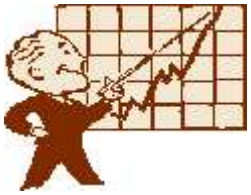
11.3.3 Continuity Of Racism

An extreme form of racism was witnessed in Nazi Germany where the ethnic cleansing of the Jews led to the Holocaust. Such racial discrimination was in support of the extreme form of cultural nationalism

in Germany. The progress of the sciences and the pursuit of scientificity were used as a technique in this process of ethnic cleansing. Thus, the discrimination and inequality among different races was clearly a socio-cultural construct rather than a natural phenomenon during this epoch of history.

The decolonization of the third world countries and the abolition of slavery as an institution in the newly founded sovereign states, provided impetus for affirmative action of the discriminated people against racism and its institutional projections. The war against racism in South America and against the restrictions on voting rights of the blacks in the 20th century helped to narrow down the vast gap of inequalities between the people of different races. Further, the establishment of the United Nations and the declaration of human rights also helped in reducing interracial violence.

The scientific explanations of natural differences between different races have been invalidated by the recent research. Race is no more considered as a natural phenomenon. However, racism as a socio-cultural practice is yet to be completely eradicated in our societies. Assertion of ethnic identity and the unequal distribution of ethnic groups have been able to sustain the differences between the races and the resultant inequality among them.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What are races?

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Q.2: What is racism?

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Q.3: What is slavery?

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11.4 CASTE

The term caste is believed to have originated from the Portuguese word *casta*. It refers to a category of individuals or things that does not have mixed types. The word is akin to that of Latin word *castus* meaning chaste or undiluted and pure. Thus stratification on the basis of caste means division of people on the purity of their intrinsic qualities such as blood. People who have the same blood type and those who practice endogamy within their category will be classified as caste. C. Bougle propounds that the caste system divides the whole society into a large number of hereditary groups distinguished from one another and connected together by three characteristics-separation in matters of marriage and contact, whether direct or indirect; division of labour, each group having, in theory or by tradition, a profession from which their members can depart only within certain limits; and finally, hierarchy, which ranks the groups as relatively superior or inferior to one another.

Although caste as a basis of determination of social inequality and social stratification was found in other societies such as Spanish Society, the caste system found in India is unique and elaborate. The uniqueness of the Indian caste system is due to the existence of various dimension of the origin and definition of the system. Let us now understand these dimensions of the caste system.

11.4.1 Varna And Jati

The origin of the Indian caste system is widely believed to have come from the divisions of people in Hindu society into four Varnas as mentioned in the ancient scriptures such as the *Rig Veda* and the *Purushasukta.* The term Varna means colour. Therefore, people were originally stratified into the *Aryas* and the *Dasas,* based on their skin color or their physical appearance. However, in the later *Purushasukta*, people were divided into four groups on the basis of the mythical origins. According to this narration, the four Varnas i.e. the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas and the Shudras originated from four different body parts of the Hindu God Brahma who created the world. Because

of their differential origins, each of these *Varna*s possessed different kinds of skills. These differential skills became the basis for an elaborate division of labour on which an entire system of roles, functions, rewards and punishments are established. The four *Varnas* are then arranged in a hierarchy on the basis of division of labour. Thus, the four *Varnas* or the *Chaturvarna* scheme was considered to have been the original idea behind the caste system in India.

On the other hand, the field view of the caste system is very different from the *Varna* Scheme prescribed in the scriptures. Sociologists who have studied the caste system in India have found that in practice, there are a minimum of 200 caste groups in each linguistic region, which can again be divided into 3000 smaller sub units. Unlike the irrevocable *Varna* scheme, there is the possibility of change and mobility among the caste groups of different societies. Therefore, the caste groups appear to be more ambiguous than the *Varnas*. Hence, many sociologists distinguish between Varna and *Jati*. Varna denoting the book view of the caste system and *Jati* denoting the practice of the caste system in different parts of India.

Therefore on the basis of all the above mentioned characteristics, G. S Ghurye has defined the caste system through the following characteristics-

- It is a segmental division of society
- it is also a hierarchical division of society
- it imposes certain restrictions on feeding and social intercourse
- caste groups have certain civil and religious disabilities
- there is lack of choice of occupation for the members of a particular caste
- caste groups follow endogamy of caste

11.4.2 Ritual And Secular Dmension Of Caste

The function of caste as a base of social stratification can also be explained through its ritual and secular dimensions as discussed by M. N. Srinivas (in the context of dominant caste) and, later on, by other

sociologists. While determining the social status of a caste group, two sets of characteristics can be taken into account: first, the maintenance of ritual purity of the caste by following endogamy and hereditary occupations and second, by the numerical strength of a particular caste group, the political power that it holds and also the economic prosperity of the group. Thus, all these criteria are considered as basis for the determination of the status of a particular caste group.

The existence of the secular criteria such as numerical strength, political and economic power provides space for mobility in the caste system. Even though a caste group is ranked lower in the social hierarchy because of its ritual status, it may occupy a dominant position in the society due to these secular criteria. Again, a caste group can also change its status on the basis of the ritual criteria by imitating the practices of caste groups that are ranked higher on the basis of their ritual purity. M.N. Srinivas terms this process as Sanskritization.

Therefore, there are various dimensions of caste as a system of social stratification and a basis of social stratification. The meaning and definition of caste has changed since its description in the Vedas. The inclusion of caste as an identification marker of groups of people in India in the census, since its introduction during the colonial times, has also added new significance to caste as a basis of social stratification. On the other hand, the provision of equality of legal status to all citizens of India contradicts the principles of inequality and hierarchy inherent in the caste system. Thus, the nature of the caste system as well as is rigidity and function in society has also changed over time.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: From where did the term 'caste' originate?

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Q.5: What is Varna?

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Q.6: What is Jati?

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11.5 CLASS

Class is another prominent base of social stratification. It is widely seen since the nineteenth century. Class denotes a social position on the basis of wealth and income earned by a person. However, there is no single definition of class available in sociology. Karl Marx defines class on the basis of the position held by a person in the production process of the economy of a particular society. The people who own the means of production are called by Marx as the 'Haves' and the people who do not own the means of production are called as 'Have Not's. According to Karl Marx, these two broad classes have existed in all periods of history. However, his analysis of class is more elaborate with reference to the capitalist society; where there exist two classes namely the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. The Bourgeoisie class are the owners of capital, whereas, the Proletariat do not own any means of production and sell their labour power in the production process. Besides the ownership and non ownership of means of production, Karl Marx also discusses about the significance of subjective criteria in the definition of a class. Therefore on the basis of the possession or lack of class consciousness about the interests and class situation, a particular class can be considered as class in for itself and class in itself respectively. For Marx, the significance of class as a basis of determining and continuance of social inequality is so profound that he considers the struggle between the two unequal classes as the basis of social change. Therefore, class conflict is responsible for revolutionary change of the social structure in society.

In contrast to Marxian definition of class, Max Weber defines class on the basis of the position that people or groups hold in a market economy and life chances. Therefore, he distinguishes between those owners of

production who earn their income and profit from the market and those owners of production who use land or capital only for subsistence. Therefore, the members of the class that earns its income from the market will have better life chances than those who do not invest in the market. Therefore, Max Weber defines a class on objective criteria such as wealth and income

Besides these definitions, there are other definitions on class as given by sociologists such as W. L. Warner and Anthony Giddens. Class as a system of social stratification also exists in different forms and degrees.

11.5.1 Class In Agrarian Societies

Since determination of class mostly depend on income and wealth, the variance in the arrangement of classes and class hierarchy depends on the sources of income. Therefore, we can find different forms of classes in the agrarian and industrial societies. In agrarian societies, classes are determined by the ownership and use of land, specifically agricultural land. Based on the differential relations with land, economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo have found the following classes in agrarian society:

- **Owners or cultivators:** this class consists of the big land owners and proprietors who have complete rights over the use and sale of land. Therefore, they possess more economic power than that of the other classes in agrarian societies.
- **Tenants**: They are the cultivator of rented land of the owners. They may have partial access to the products of the land but they do not have the authority to make decisions regarding it.
- **The Labourers:** They are the landless workers who get wages for their labour in agricultural production. They may move from one farm to another and do not have a stable source of income because of which they occupy the lowest position in the class hierarchy of an agrarian society.

Based on this classification, Daniel Thorner has classified the classes in Agrarian societies in India into the following:

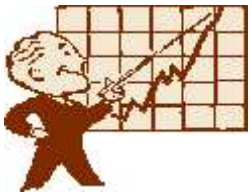
- **Malik :** the big land owners
- **Kisan :** tenants and small land owners
- **Mazdor:** labourers

11.5.2 Class In Industrial Societies

Classes in industrial societies are on the other hand based on the ownership of means of production, the nature of occupation and the related income of the occupants. Therefore sociologists including W.W. Wesolowski, Ralf Dahrendrof and Raymon Aron have found that classes in industrial societies may be divided into White collar workers who engage in managerial and executive jobs and Blue collar workers who engage in manual jobs. These can be further divided into the following:

- White collar intelligentsia
- Skilled manual workers
- Lower white collar workers
- Unskilled manual workers

The distinction between these classes has also been recognized by Max Weber. Further, the type of classes may also vary depending on the type of economic institutions and policies of a particular society. Nevertheless, class positions determine the life chances and life styles of groups in society.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.7: What is class?

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Q.8: What is the basis for determining one's class in society?

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Q.9: How does Marx define class?

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11.6 ESTATE

The emergence of Estate as a basis of social stratification was an important historical change. It signified the growth of a society based on the use of agricultural land and warfare as complementary forces in strengthening of socio-political basis of society. Although, estate system has been visible in different parts of the world including Asia and others, the Estate system of medieval Europe provides a detailed explanation of it as a basis of social stratification. Warfare led to the conquest of land and building up of empires. These empires and the military that maintained it were financed by the revenue collected from large scale agriculture. The agricultural economy was run by peasants or farmers. These often consisted of the people who were conquered in wars or who had surrendered their political sovereignty to the victor. Such a process of empire building gave rise to an elaborate social hierarchy.

11.6.1 Hierarcy In Estate

The order in the Estate can be broadly divided into the following groups:

- Ruling class, which is again divided into the governmental bureaucracy and the Priestly or scholarly group
- Militarist and Warriors
- Artisans
- Peasants and Serfs

The highest order in the social hierarchy in an Estate was that of the monarch. The king was the ultimate owner of the land and also the army. Below the royalty was the nobility or the lords of the provinces and fifes. The landlord was responsible for the collection of land revenue and was also the governmental bureaucracy. Similar power was also held by the priestly or the scholarly group. The political decisions and the change in authority were done with their consultation. They were the people responsible for offering legitimacy to the authority of the king. The military and the warriors were responsible for warfare and defence of the empire. At the same time, they were also responsible

for the expansion and the strengthening of the empire. The next position in the hierarchy was given to the peasants and the artisans. The peasants were the cultivators and were referred to as the commoners. On the other hand, the artisans were skilled craftsmen who were responsible for the small scale industries and the market. The labourers employed in the farms were known as the serfs. They were landless and were ranked lowest in the hierarchy.

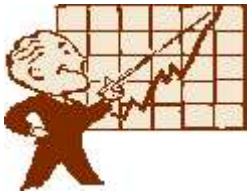
This hierarchy illustrates the entire feudal society through the arrangement of the Estate.

11.6.2 Sociological Interpretation Of Estate

From the above description of the order of Estates, different sociological themes can be derived. The hierarchy clearly depicts that the estate system is based on elaborate division of labour. The specialization of each group in their respective political and economic functions is the result of the social stratification that emerged out of the division, ownership and the use of land. According to Karl Marx, such a complex social stratification and organization was responsible for the emergence of the capitalist society of the later period. The artisans in estate laid the foundation of a market economy and elevated the significance of non agricultural occupation. The profit generated both form this household economy and agriculture led to the accumulation of the capital necessary for the emergence of the industrial revolution and modern industries. This again led to the emergence of stratification of the society into two groups the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Thus, estate as a basis of social stratification was complex in its economic and social functions.

Max Weber, on the other hand, highlighted the political dimension of estate. According to him, Estate is an ideal form of authority structure. It illustrates the centralization of authority through kingship and at the same time shows the decentralization and distribution of functions. The rigidity of the hierarchy and the groups has caste type characteristics because of the hereditary occupations followed by the people. Marc Bloch

again defines the estate as a network of social ties. These ties are complex in character than the earlier forms of social organizations in human society. Thus, estate was the basis for a new form of social stratification that emerged in the medieval times.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.10: What do you mean by estate?

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Q.11: what are the different groups that are found in the estate system?

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Q.12: What is the primary basis of determination of social status in estate?

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11.7 GENDER

Gender refers to the behavioural differences between different sexes that are culturally determined and socially learned. Such behaviour is constructed, imbibed and performed. It is also performative as, every individual adds on, deducts, and reconstructs the meaning of gender while performing the expected roles associated to a particular sex. Gender as a basis of social stratification is, therefore, very different from other bases of social stratification that are dependant on certain objective criteria such as land, capital, wealth, ritual practices, occupation, etc. Nevertheless, social inequality on the basis of gender and the resultant system of social stratification has an influence on all the aspects of social life and all social classes. It affects the unequal access to power, prestige and property on the basis of the sex of a person.

11.7.1 Feminism, Gender And Stratification

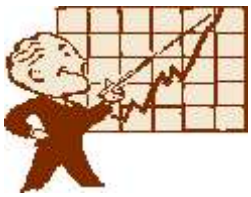
The understanding of the relationship between gender and stratification stems from the discourse of feminism. Feminism holds the belief that social inequality should exist between the sexes. However, social inequality cannot be granted to people of all sexes by a formal uniform law. Because of the centuries old domination of men in society, other sexes have differential and limited access to social resources. Simone de Beauvoir highlights this through her analysis on the different roles that are expected from women as a second sex. A woman, therefore, becomes a woman by the adherence of these roles. The existence of patriarchy or a system of domination that is in favour of men formulates the rules, norms and codes of conduct that are unequal for the different sexes. Therefore, granting equal constitutional status or the equal distribution of resources is not a solution for the equality among sexes. Such provisions fail to address problems which are gender sensitive. In order to address these issues, the nature of gender inequality had to be understood and highlighted. The reinterpretation of equality and inequality should be gender sensitive.

11.7.2 Sexism And Work

One of the primary causes of gender inequality is sexism. It refers to the subordination of one sex, usually female on the basis of the assumed superiority of the other. For example : men are considered to be physically and emotionally strong, therefore, they may be considered as more suitable for jobs that require rigorous hard work. A seemingly invisible barrier in occupational mobility to the decision making positions may also occur among male and female colleagues. Therefore, women may not reach up to the top positions in their respective jobs. Similarly, there is earning discrimination among the sexes. Female workers may be paid less than their male counterparts. Household work done by females is not considered as significant since it is not paid. People belonging to different sexes have differential access to resources.

Female children may not have access to nutrition at par with their male counterparts. Gender inequality is also seen within the family whereby, there are gender based division of labour and restrictions on females in decision making activities of the family as well as in relationships.

Such forms of inequality are carried on from generation to generation through gender socialization. Since birth, children are informed about the norms and behaviour associated with the sex. Any failure in the adherence to these normative behavioural patterns is met with ridicule and the child has to go through a process of resocialization. There are elaborate rites and rituals that make children to internalize the expected behaviour related to their sex. Thus, gender as a basis of social stratification is an all pervasive phenomenon and different from the other bases. It has the combination of both social and ontological elements in the determination of inequality.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.13: What is gender?

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Q.14: What is sexism?

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Q.15: When is gender stratification?

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11.8 LET US SUM UP

- In this unit, we have learned about the various bases of social stratification beginning with Race, Caste, Class, Estate and Gender.
- Each of these bases of stratification are characterised by different criteria for the evaluation of social inequality.

- Race is based more on perceived biological differences between human groups, whereas, caste is based on ritual purity and maintenance of blood ties.
- Class is based on income and wealth, whereas, estate was based on the ownership of land and warfare.
- Gender is a very different base of social stratification as it is based on both subjective and objective criteria of evaluation of the personality and behaviour of people.
- Each of these bases of social stratification has different degrees of complexity and diversity of forms.
- These bases of social stratification are not exclusive of each other. All of them can co-exist together in any given society.
- These bases of social stratification have pervasive effects on the social organization of a particular society.



11.9 FURTHER READING

1) Bottero, Wendy. *(2005) Social Stratification: Social Division and Inequality.* Oxon: Routledge.
2) Ghurye, G.S. *(1932) Caste and Race in India.* London: Kegan paul.
3) Grusky, David B.(2000) *Social Stratification: Class, Race and Gender.* Westview Press.



11.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The term race has been used to denote different characteristics held commonly by a group of people such as the speakers of a common language, for example Aryan. It is also used to denote national affiliation. However a constant, element in the categorization of races has been biology. When the people or groups of people are differentiated on the basis of their physical features such as colour of skin and hair, the size of

their skull and shape of their body than the difference is termed as racial differentiation

Answer to Q2: The practice of differentiating social groups on the basis of race and the ideology behind this practice is known as racism

Answer to Q3: The Social condition of communally recognized right by some individuals to posses, buy, sell, discipline, transport, liberate or otherwise dispose of the bodies and behaviour of other individuals.

Answer to Q4: The term caste is believed to have been originated from the Portuguese word *casta*. It refers to a category of individuals or things that does not have mixed types. The word is akin to that of Latin word *castus* meaning chaste or undiluted and pure

Answer to Q5: The term Varna means colour. The origin of the Indian caste system is believed to have come from the divisions of people in Hindu society into four Varnas as mentioned in the ancient scriptures such as the *Rig Veda* and the *Purushasukta.*

Answer to Q6: *Jati* denotes the field view of the caste system i.e. the practiced form of caste in Indian society. Sociologists who have studied on the caste system in India have found that in practice there are a minimum of 200 caste groups in each linguistic region, which can again be divided into 3000 smaller sub units

Answer to Q7: Class denotes a social position on the basis of wealth and income earned by a person. It is a prominent base of social stratification in societies of the modern era.

Answer to Q8: The basis for determination of class is income or wealth possessed by a person or a group.

Answer to Q9: Karl Marx defines class on the basis of the position held by a person in the production process of the economy of a particular society. The people who own the means of production are called by Marx as the 'Haves' and the people who do not own the means of production are called as 'Have Nots'.

Answer to Q10: Estate is a form of social stratification that was based on the ownership of land and distribution of political power in feudal societies.

Answer to Q11: The order in the Estate can be broadly divided into Ruling class, which is again divided into the governmental bureaucracy and the Priestly or scholarly group, Militarist and Warriors, Artisans, Peasants and Serfs

Answer to Q12: The primary basis of determination of social status in estate system is the distribution and ownership of land.

Answer to Q13: Gender refers to the behavioural differences between different sexes that are culturally determined and socially learned.

Answer to Q14: Sexism refers to the subordination of one sex, usually female on the basis of the assumed superiority of the other.

Answer to Q15: Gender stratification is a process by which males and females are informed about the norms and behaviour associated with their sex.



11.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: How is Racism related to Slavery?

Q.2: What is the difference between the field view and the book view of the caste system?

Q.3: What is the significance of class in determining the social position of people in the modern society?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Illustrate with examples, how race is a socio-cultural construct rather than a form of natural inequality.

Q.2: Discuss the significance of 'gender' as a unique but all encompassing basis of social stratification.

** *** **

UNIT 12: SOCIAL CHANGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Concept of Social Change

- 12.3.1 Characteristics
- 12.3.2 Process and Nature
- 12.3.3 Types

12.4 Forms of Social Change

- 12.4.1 Evolution
- 12.4.2 Progress
- 12.4.3 Development

12.5 Factors of Social Change

12.6 Let Us Sum Up

12.7 Further Reading

12.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.9 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- identify the meaning and characteristics of social change
- explain the various types of social change based on the attributes of social change
- discuss evolution, progress and development as special types of social change
- analyse the factors of social change.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

We find that the world around us keeps changing. The weather, plants, etc. change; organisms take birth, grow and decay. You have also been a witness to several changes in your family, your locality, state and even your

country. Change is a reality. The society too is a changing reality. In the previous unit, we have discussed about the different forms of social stratification. In this unit, we will learn about the concept of social change, its meaning, types and the factors that bring social change.

12.3 CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

The alteration of the "underlying structure of an object or situation over time" has been defined as social change by Anthony Giddens. Sociologists have treated the concept of social change in various ways. They have tried to point out as to what kind of changes in a society should be considered as change. Different theories have tried to explain social change. Evolutionism, Functionalism, Conflict theories are some of the sociological theories that have tried to analyse social change. These theories differ in their treatment of the specific aspects of social change. Most of the functionalists and others differentiate between the changes *within* the social system and changes *of* the social system. Change *of* the system is considered as structural change which alters the structure of the society. This means changes of the institutions, norms, status and roles, and values of the society that define the broad structure of the society. This kind of change is considered by the functionalists as social change. While changes *within* the system are considered as adjustments within the parts of the structure in order to retain the broad structure.

But there is much disagreement as to what types of change should be considered as 'significant' and what as 'minor'. However, some sociologists would give credence also to changes within the system for changes as these in turn, can change the broad social structure. This is a point forwarded by the conflict theorists. They hold that conflict, in some form or other, is present in all social life. These also form the basis of social change. However, there is difference among conflict theorists too as to which changes are significant enough to be qualified as social change.

Given this variety of treatment of the concept of social change, let us now read some of the definitions: Kingsley Davis states that, *"By Social*

change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization that is structure and functions of society." According to M.E. Jones, *"Social change is a term used to describe variations in, or modifications of, any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interaction or social organization."*

12.3.1 Characteristics of Social Change

However, the sociologists view the concept of social change differently, they agree on the following -

- Change is in reference to time. It means that the social situation before a point of time is different from the social situation after that point of time.
- Every society and social situation undergoes change over time. Social change is a reality.
- Since the various components of a society are interrelated, change in any one component brings about change in other components.
- Change is often a result of many factors; this is because the components of the society are interrelated.

12.3.2 Process and Nature of Social Change

We have already come across some theories that deal with the process and nature of social change. Let us now know a little more about what some of these theories tell us about the process and nature of social change.

- The **Conflict theorists** hold that conflict is present in all societies. There are various interests in societies, among groups of people and among individuals which lead to competition, conflict and strains; as for example, conflict between the employers and trade unions, between political parties, etc. Societies also allow scope for some degree of regulated conflict within its systems, like parliamentary debates, boycotts, etc. These phenomena lead to a change of the situation. It may lead to a resolution of conflict, of

the strain or even to a newer conflict and strain. The social institutions, norms, etc. may change in the process.

- Even the **Neo functional theorists** hold that there are strains and tensions within a system and this can lead to change.
- The **Functionalists** hold that change in any part of the social system leads to change in other parts.
- **Others** hold that every society has scope for creativity as evident in inventions and innovations.

All these phenomena can lead to changes within a society. A society can, thus, change by internal forces. Hence, change is inherent in a society.

Also, **social and cultural contact** with other societies can change the various institutions within a recipient society. Introduction of new elements from outside the system can lead to some strains; adjustment within the various institutions and beliefs become necessary. For example, the introduction of western education in India brought to India's cultural ideological sphere the ideas of democracy, equality, liberty and the improvement of women's social condition. These were in contrast to the then prevailing norms and practices of caste stratification, restriction on inter-castes marriages, restriction on the movement of lower castes, purdah system and on women's status in society. The introduction of these new socio-cultural elements led to strains with the prevalent patterns just mentioned above. This led to the various social reform movements spearheaded by the Brahmo Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, etc., in the 18^{th}-19^{th} century India; and also led to India's nationalist movement. There can also be strains and conflict between two different societies which can bring changes in either one or both the societies. Social change is, thus, a reality.

12.3.4 Types of Social Change

Social change may take various forms, as evolution, progress, development, which we will discuss a little later in this unit. In whatever forms social change may occur, they have certain attributes. Based

upon different attributes such as magnitude, time span, direction, rate of change, social change can be classified into the following types:

- **Based on magnitude:** Large scale changes are those where all major structural relations, basic institutions and prevailing value systems have been transformed. The functionalists hold such change as social change. Small scale changes are those that scarcely change the basic social structure, and roles. They lead to inner adjustments within the system.
- **Based on time span:** Change is a continuous process. Social occurrences may produce short term and long term effects. Over a short period of time, it may produce certain effects. The immediate effects usually last for a shorter period of time. Such changes can be termed as short term changes. These short term immediate changes may go on to produce effects that may be long lasting. These are the long term effects. Usually, long term changes are also large scale changes. For example : the Family Welfare Programme of the Government of India, launched in1951 and revised in each Five Year Plan has produced immediate results in each Five Year Plan period. A certain decrease in the birth rate in the Five Year Plan period has been registered. This is short term change. But this change is generating a chain of other related changes which we can term as long term effects. As for example, a considerable reduction in the growth rate of the population of the country since 1951, better economic situation of the country, better health facilities and social welfare services are taking place. These changes have long lasting effects.
- **Based on direction:** When changes are planned, it is termed as planned changes and when changes are not planned, it is unplanned changes. In India, we have the Five Year Plans and several governmental policies which aim to develop India in a planned manner, economically and socially, through democratic means. With these aims and goals laid down, it becomes possible to measure the changes and also the direction of change. Change

may, thus, be either progressive or regressive and may be linear, cyclical, etc.

- **Based on rate of change:** The rate or speed at which change occurs may be slow or rapid and even gradual or abrupt. Changes in the ideas and values usually are gradual and slow, while changes brought around by technology are comparatively rapid and may even be abrupt.
- **Based on location of causes:** Change is exogenous (source is external) in nature when it is introduced from outside the social system, as for example the introduction of western education in India by the British rulers. Change is endogenous (source is internal) in nature when it is introduced from within the social system, for example, the non-violent means of struggle in India's nationalist movement.

12.4 FORMS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Evolution, Progress, Development, etc. are the various forms of social change.

12.4.1 Evolution

We have learnt that change may occur by internal or external forces. Often, both operate together in bringing social change. Certain social thinkers termed one such process of internal social change as social evolution*. The concept of evolution is borrowed from the biological sciences. Evolution implies a situation where changes matter not merely because of its size but also for its effect on structure of the society.*

The basic and common characteristics of 'Social Evolution' are as follows -

- It is a process of **gradual and slow social change**. As internal forces operate, the process is slow, continuous and gradual.
- It indicates a process of **change from within the society**. The

evolutionists stated that certain forces operate within the society that brings in change.

According to Julian Steward, a 20th century evolutionist, society changes as a result of adaptation to the environment. Emile Durkheim forwarded the thesis that when population grows new demands are created in the society and new institutions come up which changes the society. Later on, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who also developed a theory of socio-cultural evolution, held that in every society there is internal contradiction that leads to changes. Leslie White, a 20th Century evolutionist pointed out that as societies gained more capacity to extract more energy from the environment they evolve.

The evolutionists perceived social change as occurring from one stage to another. The 19th century evolutionists believed that all society and every institution has a definite model of change, i.e., one single line (unilineal) of change. They were, therefore, known as **Unilinear Evolutionists**. They claimed that societies start out in a primitive state and gradually become more civilized over time. For example, the 19th century evolutionist L.H. Morgan held that every human society evolves along three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilization. The later stage is more developed than the earlier stage(s).The modern European society is the most evolved and civilized society. Every society will evolve to that of the modern European society in due course of time.

However, the 20th century evolutionists, who are also known as Neo-evolutionists, attacked the unilinear model of development of the 19th century. Julian Steward stated that every society does not necessarily pass through the same stages of evolution, but rather, each has its particular history of change. It is a matter of chance and free will as to which of the many probable lines of change a society happens to take while adapting with the environment.

The early evolutionists considered evolution as growth, progress and development. Some explained that human beings have natural social tendencies for growth and development. It was held by the unilineal evolutionist that the modern industrial western society is the

most developed society. But, later evolutionists attacked this line of thought and pointed out that evolution does not always lead to progress and a better state of being. They also argued that evolution should not be viewed in reference to 'primitive' and 'civilised' stage. Anthony Giddens has pointed out that social change may create problems rather than progress.

Society or its institutions change from simpler to complex patterns, from homogeneity to heterogeneity, from undifferentiation to differentiation. However different may be the positions of the evolutionists in regard to the stages and factors of evolution, they all agreed that there is a tendency of societies to move towards differentiation.

The evolutionary theorists tried to unfold the internal tendency of societies to change into becoming differentiated and complex. The role of cultural borrowing like diffusion of cultural elements from outside the social system was hardly dealt with. Neo evolutionists like Marshall Sahlins divided the evolution of societies into 'general' and 'specific'. General evolution is the tendency of cultural and social systems to increase in complexity, organization and adaptiveness to environment. However, as the various cultures are not isolated, there is interaction among the various societies and cultures as a result of which there occurs a diffusion of their qualities (like technological inventions, dress patterns, etc.). For instance, the cultural element of wearing trousers diffused from China to Europe and then from Europe to the rest of the world. Again, the thought systems of India reached into China and later contributed into the awakening civilizations of the West. Diffusion leads cultures to develop in different ways (specific evolution), as various elements are introduced to them in different combinations and on different stages of evolution. MacIver and Page also stated that diffusion plays a role in differentiation of societies. Seen in this perspective, evolution is a reality.



LET US KNOW

Traditionally, the functions of child birth, child rearing, providing education to children, food production, providing health care and entertainment to its members were performed mainly by the institution of family. But now, we find the emergence of various institutions performing a wide variety of specialised activities. Now-a-days, many of the traditional functions of the family are performed by various other institutions. We have medical heath care institution which takes care of the health needs of the people and deals with child birth; the various organisations and companies, i.e. the wide variety of economic institutions that are involved in food production and distribution; schools and colleges that provide education; the development of the entertainment industry to meet the need for entertainment of the members of the society and the *crèche* to look after the rearing of children. This is an example of **social differentiation.**

12.4.2 Progress

Social progress is defined as the changing of the society towards the ideal. The ideal is usually seen as a better condition and as something desirable. Social progress, thus, points out,

- Firstly, to the goal or ideal; and
- Secondly, to the direction of change i.e. movement towards the ideal.

Societies at different points of time had their own ideas of the ideal and of progress. Various social thinkers also held their ideas of the ideal. For the 18th century Enlightenment, progress meant freedom from the bonds of tradition and for the late 19th century America, progress was the glorious expansion of society and the exploitation of the resources of the Earth. The 19th century social evolutionists like Spencer and August Comte believed that society is continually progressing. For Spencer, the entire human society, progressed from a stage characterized by primitive religious belief, through more

sophisticated abstract religions to the present stage characterized by science and rationality. Hegel, a German thinker of the early 19th century believed in the continual development of humanity towards ever-greater freedom, continually extending the limits of freedom. The Conservatists honour the traditional way of life and consider society is moving away from the traditional ways, as such society is regressing.

MacIver and Page in dealing with the concept of social progress stated that it is difficult to develop a scientific notion of the ideal. The ideal is a value and differs from individual to individual and group to group. The role of Sociology is to include the values of the people of the society in studying human society.

12.4.3 Development

The word development is looked upon as a positive term and as a desirable state of being. The term development has been interpreted differently by the various disciplines and activists. While the economist emphasises economic growth, the ecologists' emphasis is on sustainability of development and the sociologists include the social institutions and culture, the social implications of economic growth over all the sections of the society, implications of poverty, inequality, etc. in the concept of development. As such, the concept of development has been treated differently by the different concerns and over time several dimensions have been added to it. Thus, at one time, development meant 'economic growth', which dealt basically with quantitative growth of economy. Thereafter, the term 'economic development' came into usage, which in its simplest form meant the creation of economic wealth for all citizens within the diverse layers of society so that all people have access to potential increased quality of life. One of the later dimensions has been 'sustainable development'. It is "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*". The United Nations Development Programme brought into the

ambit of the term development a wide range of parameters to include the various aspects of human condition. They use the concept 'Human Development' which is interpreted as 'enlarging of people's choices' so that people can lead the lives they value. These choices can be infinite and change over time. The concept of development has been highly debated and we find various interpretations of it.

12.5 FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

We have learnt that there is some amount of integration among the various parts and aspects of the society. The functional and neo-functional theorists have highlighted the functional relationship between the various parts of culture and society. Functional relation means that the functions of every part of the culture and society are interrelated. This implies that:

- When there is a change in any part of the culture and society, the other parts of the culture and society also tend to change.
- As such, there occurs a multiplicity of factors in the changing of any particular social relationship. The change in any particular social relation can be related to a number of factors that influence it.

Now, let us discuss the factors that bring about social changes -

- **Geographical factor:** We know that men live in a geographic environment and interact with it. The geographic environment is also dynamic, but major changes occur gradually. One major change in the geographical condition that is occurring now is the gradual global warming of our planet. This has brought about major changes in the efforts of the various countries of the world to check this problem. Various laws have been enacted, standards are being laid down which have to be followed by the industries, factories, manufacturers and groups to check global warming and many regulatory agencies have been set up to monitor the adherence to these standards.

Even when the geographical condition does not change, yet other socio-cultural factors operate that change the impact of the geographical phenomena. This in the process leads to changes in many social areas.

For example, flood has been a problem in Assam. Such conditions as the growing population size, the habitation of a large number of people in flood prone areas, their growing needs, etc. have made the impact of flood a major problem now. To cope with this, changes have taken place in many other areas of the society. New measures and programmes are being taken up by the government such as providing help to flood victims, introducing early warning system, setting up of various new agencies to look after these measures, etc.

- **Demographic factor:** Demographic characteristics as population size, age-sex distribution of the population, characteristics of fertility, mortality, birth, age at marriage of the population, migration, etc. are linked to many other features of the society. Any one of the processes of demography influences the size of the population. Due to high fertility rate, the size of the population increases. This can lead to unemployment, poverty, beggary, social deviances and such other problems. These in turn tend to change the social institutions, social structures and functions which ultimately cause social change. Now, considering how demographic features influence changes in other areas of society let us take the age distribution of population as an example. In countries of Europe mainly the UK, the lower birth rates and lower mortality rates have led to a situation where the population beyond the age of 60 is much more than the young population. With a growing economy, the country needs a huge young working population. Many qualified professionals are allowed to work inside the UK. This is related to the diverse and huge immigrant communities we find there. Their presence has created a different social situation in that country from what it had been several years ago.
- **Education:** Education serves as a vehicle of transmitting values, ideas and skills to the members of the society. Education is a process of socialisation. Education is, therefore, considered a potent means of social change. The introduction of western education in India brought with it the ideas of liberty, democracy and equality. This played an important role in the growth of many social reform movements in 19thcentury India like the Brahmo Samaj, Theosophical society, etc. It is because of this role of

education in society that the Government of India framed the National Policy of Education in 1986 which was modified in 1992. By this, it seeks to develop a national character among the people of India through education, developing the values of democracy and secularism and create a literate society.

- **Political factor:** Political factors include the political ideologies of the government and of the various political parties, the activities of the government and state, the political behaviour, etc. The State is the most powerful organization that controls the social relations within it. It frames policies, laws and rules in this regard. For example, the policies of the successive governments towards health development in India have brought about considerable development of health in rural and urban areas. Also, the National Population Policy of the Government of India seeks, among many other aims, to control the growth of population. These efforts have led to the decreasing growth rate of India's population. The government also frames the economic policies and plans for the economic development of the country and takes up many social welfare programmes, etc. In these ways, it regulates the social course of the country.
- **Technological factor:** Technology means the methods used by man to make material things as well as how these material things are used to meet our various needs. The various inventions and innovations in technology in the 18^{th}–19^{th} century England ushered in the growth of industries. With the spread of these in other parts of the world, industries developed in many places. Industries brought about massive changes in the economic life of the people. People started to work in factories and industries and earned money in cash. They were no longer directly dependent on land as were the peasants and farmers. Mass scale production became possible with this new technology and many jobs also became available. These led to migration towards the places with industries. Eventually, cities developed and with them developed urbanization i.e. an urban pattern of life. We are now witnessing another great technological development. New technological developments as the growth and use of mobile phone technologies, internet technologies, etc. are changing our social relations, our attitudes and activities.

- **Economic factor:** We have just learnt how changes in technology can lead to changes in the economic life and also in the many other aspects of social life. With the growth of industries, these places have become economic centers. There developed the secondary sector i.e. industrialized manufacturing and the tertiary sector i.e. the service sector, for example: transport, hotel industry, etc. To these economic centers and also to the state capitals and regional headquarters, people started migrating in large numbers. With too many people, the demand for various services as market, education, hotel, etc. grew. The service sector, thus, started growing and a different mode of economic life developed. In these places, there emerged various kinds of occupations. Migrations to these centers also led to the growth of a huge population from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. These places developed into urban centers i.e. towns and cities. In urban areas, there is the growth of impersonal relations, the importance of secondary groups and non-kin relations, formal rules, growing number of nuclear families, participation of women in the job market, etc. Here, we have seen how a new mode of economic life has changed the social relations. Different studies have also shown different fertility rates of women in different occupational groups.
- **Ideational:** We have already discussed that culture includes everything that man does as a member of the society. Therefore, in the above factors we have just discussed what would come within the purview of culture. In each of these aspects of culture, we have a mental sphere, a social sphere and also a material sphere. Ideational culture would include the ideologies, beliefs, values, etc. The ideals and values of secularism, democracy, liberty and fraternity are enshrined in the Constitution of India. These are the values that we as citizens of India have agreed upon. To achieve these values, many laws and rules i.e. norms, have been framed that guide and control our behaviour. One example of this is the non-discrimination of Indians on the grounds of race, religion, place of birth, language, sex and caste. We are supposed to act in accordance to these principles and in case of violation of these values as given in the laws, a citizen can seek redressal under the prevailing laws.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: State whether the following statements are (true or false).

a) Every society and social situation undergoes change over time.

b) The Neo-functional theorists hold that there are strains and tensions within a system and this can lead to change.

c) Changes in the ideas and values in a society are very rapid.

Q.2: Fill in the blanks.

a) ..... evolutionists believed that all society and every institution has a definite model of change, i.e., one single line of change.

b) Society or its institutions change from ..... to complex patterns, from homogeneity to ....., from undifferentiation to .....

c) The ideal is a ..... that differs from individual to individual and group to group.



12.6 LET US SUM UP

- Social change has been treated differently by the various sociological theorists.
- Many consider social change as change of the system or social structure.
- Social structure includes the status, role, values and social institutions.
- Social change has attributes like magnitude, time span, direction, rate of change, location of causes, etc.
- Evolution is the gradual change from the undifferentiated to the differentiated.
- Progress is the movement towards a pre-determined ideal.
- Development is a positive term and it is a desirable state of being from backwardness to progress.
- Some of the factors of social change are geographic, demographic, economic, political, technological and ideational.



12.7 FURTHER READING

1) B. Kuppuswamy. *Social Change in India* (5th Edtn). Konark Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

2) MacIver, R.M. and C.H. Page. *Society: An Introductory Analysis*. New Delhi : Macmillan.

3) Rawat, H.K. (2007). *Sociology: Basic Concepts*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.



12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: (a) True (b) True (c) False

Ans to Q No 2: (a) Unilinear

(b) simpler, heterogeneity, differentiation

(c) value.



12.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Define social change and discuss its characteristics.

Q.2: Classify social change based on its various attributes.

Q.3: Write a note on progress as type of social change.

Q.4: Differentiate between social change and social evolution.

Q.5: What is the basic characteristic of development? How has the concept of development been treated by the different concerns.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: What is evolution? What are its basic characteristics? Can diffusion play a role in evolution of institutions?

Q.2: Explain how social evolution and social progress influence social change.

Q.3: What are the main factors of social change? Discuss with examples.

** *** **

UNIT 13: SOCIAL CONTROL

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Social Control: Meaning and Definition

- 13.3.1 Norms
- 13.3.2 Values
- 13.3.2 Sanctions
- 13.3.4 Mechanisms

13.4 Let Us Sum Up

13.5 Further Reading

13.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.7 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the meaning of Social Control
- identify the various mechanisms of Social Control
- discuss the importance of social control in society.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

In the earlier Units, we have already learnt about the concept of society. Like the term society there is another term, culture, which is often used in our day do day discussions. Both society and culture are interrelated concepts. They are like the two sides of the same coin. Every society has its culture. Culture includes all the rules, ideas, norms, social behaviour and the material objects made and used by members of the society. For the continuation of society and culture, it is important that the members learn about the norms of the society and behave accordingly. This process of learning is termed as **socialisation**. There is also a process by which members are made to follow social norms. This is the process of **social**

control. These are two important aspects of social life. In this unit, we will learn about social control and its meaning. Further, we shall discuss the different mechanisms of Social Control and also try to understand the importance of Social Control in Society.

13.3 SOCIAL CONTROL: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Social order is important for the perpetuation of the society. Both socialisation and social control contribute to it. Although the process of socialisation trains individuals to behave as per the norms of the society, yet members may violate norms. Socialisation is never perfect. The society, therefore, has such mechanisms and processes of control that put pressure upon the members of society to make them adhere to the norms and practices of the society. These constitute social control. Both the processes are interdependent. Generally speaking, to satisfy the basic human drives, i.e., sex, shelter and hunger, some kind of regulation is needed. Thus, for the mutual welfare and well-being, some kind of control is a prime necessity. E.A. Ross, an American sociologist, dealt with social control in his book, *Social Control* published in 1901.

E.A. Ross defines social control "*as the system of devices whereby society brings its members into conformity with the accepted standards of behaviour*." The Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994) defines social control thus: "*Social control refers to the social processes by which the behaviour of individuals or groups is regulated*." According to Bottomore*, "the term social control refers to the social regulation of human behaviour".*

Social control is often seen as including any phenomenon leading to conformity with norms. In that sense, even socialisation which internalises the norms of the society in the individual can be considered as resulting in social control. Others view social control as the regulated mechanisms placed upon society's members. It means that it is concerned with deviant behaviour and violations of the law and the external pressure to control behaviour. Thus, social control mechanisms control and define behaviour.

13.3.1 Norms

According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994), "*a norm is a shared expectation of behaviour that connotes what is considered culturally desirable and appropriate"*. In simpler terms, norms are social rules that direct our behaviour in particular situation. These rules tell us how people should and should not behave in various situations. For example, which hand to extend in greeting or which dress to wear on particular occasions – at funeral, at dinner party and so on.

Social norms are customary rules of behaviour that coordinate our interactions with others. Once a particular way of doing things becomes established as a rule, it continues in force because we prefer to confirm to the rule given the expectation that others are going to confirm (Lewis, 1969). In different societies, there can be different norms for some particular behaviour. Norms are not static, but thus, change from time to time and society to society.

Social norms can be classified as **mores**, **folkways** and **customs**. Some writers have included law in the category of norms. Let us discuss them in more detail.

- **Mores:** People attach a good deal of importance to some norms, called mores. Mores are the strongest of the social norms which tell us to do certain things, such as pay proper respect to parents and teachers, or not to do certain things, such as not to kill human beings, not to indulge in adultery. Mores are seen as vital to a society's well-being. People attach moral significance to mores, and they define people who violate them as sinful and evil. Consequently, the punishment for the violators of a society's mores is severe; these may involve their expulsion from the group, imprisonment, physical punishment or in some cases, even death. Among Hindus, marriage within one's caste is a rule. It has become a kind of mores for the people living in a traditional society in India. In a conventional social set up, any person violating this rule may be either expelled from the caste or fined heavily. These mores

may, however, sometimes change slowly and their violation is accepted due to the process of modernization.

- **Folkways:** William G. Sumner, an American Sociologist, identified two types of norms in his book *Folkways* (1906), which he identified as folkways and mores. According to Reuter and Hart (1933), "*The folkways are simple habits of action common to the members of the group; they are the ways of the folks that are somewhat standardised and have some degree of traditional sanction for their persistence*". In simpler terms, folkways are the customary, normal and habitual ways of the group to meet certain needs for solving day-to-day problems. Any routine activity, say, the manner of speech and dress, the manner of taking meals, itself is a habit of the individual person but when habits are socially approved and followed by a number of persons in a society, they become folkways. Gossip and ridicule are important mechanisms for enforcing folkways.
- **Customs:** In common parlance, custom is used as synonymous with habit, but there are vital differences between them. Habit is more or less automatically acquired behaviour pattern, while, custom is established patterns of behaviour. They are those folkways and mores which have persisted for a very long time and have passed down from generation to generation. For instance, in traditional Indian society it is the custom for youngsters to touch the feet of their parents, teachers and elders. Among preliterate societies, customs were a powerful means of social control but in modern times, their force has been minimised.

13.3.2 Values

Generally, value means moral ideas, general conceptions towards the world or sometimes simply interests, attitudes, preferences, sentiments and dispositions. But sociologists define it more precisely to mean that values are collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable and proper, or bad, undesirable and improper in a culture. According to M. Haralambos, "*a value is a belief that something*

is good and desirable". A value is a shared idea about how something is ranked in terms of desirability, worth or good. Wealth, loyalty, justice, equality and friendliness are the examples of values. Value systems can be different from culture to culture. One may value aggressiveness and deplores passivity, another may not. One society like the U.S.A. may value individual achievement, while Indian society may emphasise family unity and kin support. Most of our basic values are learnt early in life from family, friends, neighbourhood and school.

Sociologists are concerned only with social values. A social value differs from individual value. An individual value is enjoyed by the individual itself, while a social value contains a concern for others' welfare. The process of socialization aims to include these values in his personality. The fundamental characteristics or the ethos of any culture are a reflection of its basic values. Thus, if American culture is dominated by a belief in material progress, the Indian culture is marked by spiritualism. The differences in social values result in divergent social structures and patterns of expected behaviour.

13.3.3 Sanction

According to Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, any means by which conformity to socially approved standards is enforced is called social sanctions. Any system of social control depends on sanctions. The sanctions which enforce norms are a major part of the mechanism of social control. Sanctions may be either **positive** or **negative**. The term positive sanction refers to an expression of approval given for following a norm, while a negative sanction is disapproval for breaking a norm. Not all norms carry the same sanctions because not all norms are of equal importance in a culture. Positive sanctions can be material, such as a money reward, a prize or a trophy, but in everyday life they usually consist of hugs, smiles, etc. Negative sanctions can also be material - for example, a fine – but they also consist of gestures, such as frowns, harsh words, etc. Negative sanctions sometimes may vary

in severity from death or violence against the person, imprisonment, social disapproval like avoidance.

Social sanctions are used by society to motivate people to act in ways considered right. C. W. Mills said, "*the mere anticipation of probable sanctions, ranging from embarrassment to imprisonment, is often sufficient to restrain the behaviour in question*".

13.3.4 Mechanisms

Based upon the types of groups and types of social relations that exert control on our behaviour in society, mechanisms can be classified into *two types*: **informal means of control** and **formal means of control.**

➢ **Informal control mechanisms**

The informal means are based on informal relations. In primary groups such as family, friends and neighbourhood, relations are mainly informal and, hence, we find that primary groups exert informal control upon our behaviour. Even in secondary groups where relations are very formal, there also are informal relations as well. The informal means are not specific. They do not have specific punishments or rewards against behaviour. The following are the informal means of control.

- **Gossip, ridicule, slander:** Within the informal relations gossip, slander, ridicule are not coercive. Yet these indicate a person being pointed out by many as being on the wrong side of the society. This also leads to a stress in the smooth relations. Thus, these means have a subtle force on the people and control their behaviour.
- **Commands and suggestions:** Within a family, neighbourhood and among friends the command, instruction and suggestion of the elders and of the people who are respected or feared are complied with by others. We also find impersonal instructions as in the rear part of the trucks and lorries as "keep distance", "horn please" etc. Even if we do not behave accordingly, we will not be punished, yet we often follow these informal instructions.

- **Public Opinion:** It is the opinion held by the public at a certain time. Public opinion plays an important role in controlling and guiding our behaviour. In democratic countries, public opinion plays an important role in controlling the behaviour of those in seats of power and in decision making positions. Public opinion is often shaped by mass media.
- **Customs, folkways, mores, religion, morality:** Customs are the socially accepted ways of the society that have been in prevalence for long. Folkways are the ways of the folks. Mores are the folkways having moral tones. Most of our behaviour is the result of what we learnt throughout our life from our customs, folkways, mores, religion and morality. We follow these unconsciously as well as for the fear of supernatural punishments. Based on these, other people also exert external control upon our behaviour through ridicule, suggestions, gossip etc. as we do on others.

➢ **Formal control mechanisms :** Formal social control mechanisms generally refer to the units of the Governing authority of a country. Formal mechanisms are structured. The rules are formal and specific and so are the ways of control. The violators are punished as laid down in rules. In many secondary groups as in associations like professional groups, educational institutions, the State, the relations are formal and formal means of control prevail. The means of formal control are as follows:

- **Law, Police, Judiciary:** The law is politically recognized and executed. These are formulated by formal bodies as the Indian Parliament or individuals who are formally recognized to make laws as monarchs. Any kind of agreement between parties made within the purview of law receives the backing of law. It requires formal apparatus as the police, law courts, administrative and judicial agencies, etc. to implement laws. The State is authorised to apply force on people to conform to laws.
- **Education:** Education in complex societies is formal. A formal apparatus is put in place to educate people. Society seeks to

provide education according to social needs. Education enables an individual to control and guide his behaviour by himself. Education also enables people to control others' behaviour by informal mechanisms as suggestions, ridicule, etc. In the process, the society at large can control itself by the nature of education it provides to its members.

Both formal and informal mechanisms of control are complementary to each other. The formal means addresses the macro aspect i.e. the wider concerns of the society e.g. the Special Marriage Act 1954, while informal means addresses the micro aspects, as the situation specific local concerns as within a family.



ACTIVITY 13.1

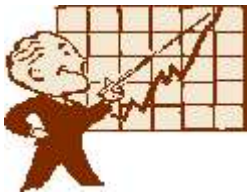
What important role does social control play in the society?

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.....

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

(a) _____ refers to the social regulation of human behaviour.

(b) Norms are not _____, but it changes from time to time and society to society.

(c) When habits are socially approved and followed by a number of persons in a society, they become _____.

(d) Loyalty and justice are the examples of _____.

(e) _____ may be either positive or negative.



13.5 LET US SUM UP

- Society and culture are like two sides of the same coin. Society is the social relations of the groups and individuals. Culture is the total way of life of man in society and social groups.
- Culture comprises the mental, social and material aspects.
- Culture shapes individual and group personality, yet it provides scope for individual variations and creativity.
- Socialisation and social control shape and control social behaviour of its members.
- Both these processes of socialisation and social control are interrelated and lead to the maintenance and perpetuation of society and culture.
- Social control is an influence which the society exerts upon its members for the purpose of providing the welfare of the society.
- Social norms are customary rules of behaviour that coordinate our interactions with others. Social norms can be classified as mores, folkways and customs.
- Mores are seen as vital to a society's well-being.
- Folkways are the customary, normal and habitual ways of the group to meet certain needs of solving day-to-day problems.
- Values are collective conceptions of what is considered good, desirable and proper, or bad, undesirable and improper in a culture.
- The sanctions which enforce norms constitute a major part of the mechanism of social control. Sanctions may be either positive or negative.



13.6 FURTHER READING

1) H.K Rawat.(2009). *Sociology: Basic Concepts*. Jaipur:Rawat Publications.
2) R.K.Sharma. *Social Change and Social Control*. New Delhi:Atlantic Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd.
3) W.E. Ogburn and M.F.Nimkoff. *Sociology*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
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13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: (a) Social control (b) Static
(c) Folkways (d) Values
(e) Sanctions



13.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: What do you mean by Social Control?

Q.2: What are Customs?

Q.3: Distingush between Positive and Negative Sanctions?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1: Discuss the various mechanisums of Social Control?

Q.2: Explain how Normes help in Social Control?

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UNIT 14: SOCIAL MOBILITY

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Social Mobility: Meaning and Definition

14.3.1 Types of Social Mobility

14.3.2 Open and Closed Systems of Mobility

14.3.3 Difference between Open and Closed System

14.3.4 Factors affecting Mobility

14.4 Let Us Sum Up

14.5 Further Reading

14.6 Answers to Check your Progress

14.7 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the concept of Social Mobility
- explain the characteristics of Social Mobility
- discuss the Open and Closed Mobility and their differences.

14.2 INTRODUCTION

By now we have learned that our society is stratified and not all persons are accorded the same position or rank in society. Every individual occupies a particular position or status and they are known in society through the statuses they occupy and the roles they enact. But we have also learnt that society keeps on changing and so do individuals and their positions. Every individual continuously keeps on trying to improve his/her position and elevate his/her status in society. Individuals constantly strive to move from lower position to higher position, secure superior job from an inferior one etc. The people of the higher status and position may also be compelled to come down to a lower status for different reasons. Thus, people in society

continue to move up and down the status scale. This movement is called social mobility. In the previous unit, we have discussed about the concept of Social Control. In this unit, we shall try to understand the concept of Social Mobility and its different types. We would understand the Open and Closed Systems with examples and also discuss the factors affecting mobility.

14.3 SOCIAL MOBILITY: MEANING AND DEFINITION

The term Mobility as many of us may be familiar indicates movement. Social mobility denotes the movement of individuals or groups from one position or rank to another in the Social strata of the society over a period of time. As we know, every society is stratified and we are all born into a particular rank or position. For example: a particular caste group, a class so on and so forth. If we are able to change our position as individuals or as groups during our lifetime then our movement from one particular social position to another would be termed as Social Mobility. This change in position may be upwards or even downwards. An individual may achieve a higher position and thereby, climb up the Social ladder whereas, another individual may even fall from his position to a lower position. Thus Mobility can be both upward as well as downward. A clear example of Upward Mobility is our present Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was earlier a tea seller by profession but has been able to achieve the position of the P.M today. Moving up the Social ladder and achieving higher position brings in or is accompanied by greater prestige; power; financial gain etc... Similarly, moving downward in the social ladder or losing a higher position brings disrepute; disrespect; financial loss so on and so forth. Losing a job, is an example of downward social mobility.

Lipset and Bendix defined Social Mobility “as a process by which individuals move from one position to another between such hierarchical arrangements that are to be found in each society”

According to Giddens “Social Mobility refers to the movement of individuals and groups between different socio-economic positions”

According to Wallace and Wallace, social mobility is the movement of a person or persons from one social status to another.

From the above description, we have learnt that any change in the status or position of individuals or groups in society either upwards or downwards in the Social Hierarchy over a period of time is called Social Mobility. It can take place both in upward as well as downward directions. When a person born into a poor family achieves a higher position, changes his class position by acquiring wealth, his status or position changes in society. This is upward Mobility. Whereas if a rich person becomes poor, loses his earlier position, it is a case of downward mobility.

The study of social mobility is an important aspect of social stratification. In fact, it is an inseparable aspect of social stratification system because the nature, form, range and degree of social mobility depends on the very nature of stratification system. The amount of social mobility is often used as an indicator of the degree of openness and fluidity of a society. Stratification systems, which provide little opportunity for social mobility, are termed as closed systems, whereas, that with a relatively high rate of social mobility as 'open' system.

14.3.1 Types of Social Mobility

Social Mobility is Multidimensional. It can take place in different directions, time and place. In case of direction, it can be Vertical Mobility (either upward mobility or downward mobility) or Horizontal mobility. From the perspective of time, it can be inter-generational or intra-generational. Let us now try to understand these types in details.

- **Horizontal mobility:** It refers to change of occupational position or role of an individual or a group without involving any change in its position in the social hierarchy. Here, the individual moves form one social position to another of same rank. In this context, an individual may change his or her occupation but the overall social standing or status remains unchanged. It is a movement from one status to its equivalent. For example : a teacher may change his/her school but if his/her position does not change, it is a case

of Horizontal Mobility. Again, when a rural labourer comes to the city and becomes an industrial worker, there are no significant changes in his position in the hierarchy. The individual in this case does not undergo any change in the system of social stratification and since the movement takes place at the same level it is called Horizontal Mobility.

Thus, horizontal mobility indicates a shift of an individual from one social group to another situated on the same level. Here, movement of individuals take place but their position and prestige remains the same. It is, therefore, a change in position without a change in status. It indicates a change in position within the range of the same status.

- **Vertical Mobility:** It refers to the changes in the position of an individual or a group along the social hierarchy. Here, the position and status of the individual changes unlike horizontal mobility. In the case of Vertical social mobility, an individual either moves up or down the Social ladder or hierarchy. APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India who rose to such a prestigious position from a lower class status, is an example of Upward Vertical Mobility. If a daily wage labourer becomes a rich businessman one day, it would denote upward mobility. Upward Mobility is more frequent that downward mobility which takes place only in rare cases or is not very common. According to Inkles “movement from one stratum to another up or down anyone of the possible stratification hierarchies is called Vertical Mobility”.

Thus the movement of an individual or people or groups from one status to another is called Vertical Mobility. It involves change within the lifetime of an individual to a higher or lower status than what the person had to begin with.

- **Forms of Vertical Social Mobility:** From the above discussion, we have learned that vertical mobility can take place in two ways - individuals and groups may improve their position in the hierarchy by moving upwards or their position might worsen and they may fall down the hierarchy. When individuals get into seats of political

position; acquire money and exert influence over others because of their new status, they are said to have achieved individual mobility. Like individuals, even groups also attain high social mobility. When a dalit from a village becomes an important official, it is a case of upward mobility. On the other hand, an aristocrat or a member of an upper class may be dispossessed of his wealth and he is forced to enter a manual occupation. This is an example of downward mobility.

- Vertical Mobility can take three forms:

- **Inter-generational Mobility:** Time factor is an important element in social mobility. On the basis of the time factor involved in social mobility, one type of mobility is inter-generational mobility. When changes occur from one generation to another, it is known as inter-generational mobility. This type of mobility involves changes in the social position of children relative to their parents. Thus, a doctor whose father was a farmer is an example of upward inter-generational mobility and a driver whose father was a lawyer is an example of downward inter-generational mobility. Inter-generational mobility, therefore, implies changing status or position of one generation in contrast to the earlier generation; a change in the status of family members from one generation to the next. In case of societies where stratification system is very rigid and closed, people have very less chance to change his/her position. When there is very little inter-generational mobility, it is clear that inequality is deeply rooted in the society and it is solely 'birth' which determines the position and status of the individuals. When there is mobility people are clearly able to achieve new statuses through their own efforts, regardless of the circumstances of their birth.
- **Intra-generational Mobility:** When mobility occurs within one generation it is called intra-generational mobility. It implies change in an individual's position or social status during his/her lifetime itself. Here, the change in the position is not compared to the earlier generation as in the case of inter-generational mobility but

comparison is done between what the individual's position was earlier and what he has become now. The change in status may again be either upwards or downwards. When a person begins his career as a clerk and becomes an officer later on, it is an example of upward intra-generational mobility. In this case, the change or upliftment in the position of the person brings him more status, wealth and power. In contrast to this, when a person loses his job or is removed from a position, it implies downward intra-generational mobility.

- **Structural Mobility:** It refers to the vertical mobility of a specific group or class relative to others in the stratification system. It is a type of forced mobility for it takes place because of the structural changes and not because of individual attempts. For example: historical circumstances or labor market changes may lead to the rise or decline of an occupational group within the social hierarchy. An influx of immigrants may also alter class alignments -especially if the new arrivals are disproportionately highly skilled or unskilled.

14.3.2 Open and Closed Systems of Mobility

Depending on the degree of openness or closeness of the stratification system of any particular society, we have either open or closed systems of mobility. Let us now try to understand this in details.

- **OPEN SYSTEM OF MOBILITY:**

Open system allows individuals to change his position and status. An open system of mobility is generally a characteristic of those societies having occupational diversity, a flexible hierarchy, differentiated social structure and rapidity of change. The stratification system is flexible and encourages competition so that individuals compete and elevate their status according to their capability. Birth is not the sole determining factor of a person's status in this context. Here, individuals are accorded different positions on the basis of his/her merit, skills, competence, capability or achievement. Thus, a

person's position or status in this system is not hereditary. The dominant values in such a system emphasize on equality and freedom of the individual and on change and innovation.

- **CLOSED SYSTEM OF MOBILITY:**

A person's birth is the key determining factor of his/her position in the society which has a closed system of mobility. Here, the society is strictly or rigidly stratified and allows very little scope to individuals to change their positions. An individual in this kind of societies becomes member of the group or category that his/her parents belong to. He acquires the position and status of his parents and continues with it throughout his life. It is very difficult to change one's status in a closed system of mobility.

Thus, the closed system emphasizes the associative character of the hierarchy. It justifies the inequality in the distribution of means of production status symbols and power positions and discourages any attempt to change them. Any attempt to bring about changes in such a system or to promote mobility is permanently suppressed. In such a system, individuals are assigned to their place in the social structure on the basis of ascriptive criteria like age, birth, sex etc. Considerations of functional suitability or ideological notions of equality of opportunity are irrelevant in deciding the positions of individuals to different statuses. However, no system in reality is perfectly closed. Even in the most rigid systems of stratification, limited degree of mobility exists. Traditional caste system in India is an example of closed system.

14.3.3 Difference between Closed and Open Systems of Mobility

- In an Open Mobility system, an individual's position or status is based on merit and achievement, whereas, status based on heredity is a characteristic feature of Closed Mobility system.
- Open Mobility system is a characteristic of societies with relatively open; flexible stratification system, whereas, Mobility is closed in societies which have rigid hierarchical structures.

- Societies with Closed System of Mobility do not allow individuals to change their position in contrast to societies with Open Mobility system.
- In Societies where mobility is closed, a person's status is more or less fixed. But this is not the case in societies where mobility is open.
- Caste based societies is an example of Closed Mobility where a person born into a particular caste cannot change his caste status and continues with it till death, whereas, Class based societies is an example of Open Mobility whereby people get the opportunity to change their class status with their hard work.

14.3.4 Factors Affecting Mobility

- **Education:**

Education not only imparts knowledge but also enables an individual to get job, earn prestige so on and so forth. To secure any position, an individual must have the necessary degrees. The higher his/her qualification, higher will be his/her position. For an individual to become an IAS officer; Doctor or Engineer etc. requires extensive knowledge. So education paves the way towards a successful career. It is only through education that one can secure a good position and hence, we can say that education facilitates mobility. An individual must, therefore, acquire minimum formal education in order to occupy higher positions. A person from a poor background can become rich if he/she has higher qualifications and a good academic career. Thus, education is the one of the prime requirements for achieving higher position.

- **Skills and Training:**

In Every society, emphasis is given on skill development and providing training to the young population so that they can stand on their own. Though one has to spend a lot of time and money to acquire skill and training; they do so because they are given incentives by the society. When they complete their training, they are entitled to higher

positions, which are far better than those positions which they might have taken without such training.

A person who acquires the necessary skills through training is assigned higher social status in society. He/she is given higher economic rewards and other privileges. Therefore, people undergo the training and skill development process in order to attain better position and better incentives and with a hope to move up in the social ladder. In other words, skills and training facilitate in improvement of the position, thereby leading to social mobility.

- **Achievements and Failures:**

Achievement usually means extraordinary and amazing performance, which can catch the attention of a wider public to the abilities of a person. However, only those achievements change a person's status which are significant, outstanding or noteworthy. Thus, not all achievements result in social mobility. Only remarkable achievements facilitate social mobility. For example, an unknown writer who has won a literary prize or an unknown singer who has won a prestigious award will improve his status.

Just as Achievements bring upward mobility, similarly Failures or unlawful activities would result in downward mobility. In case of failures, misconduct or when he/she is caught for illegal behaviour, a person would lose his position in society and all the privileges that come along with it. Fraudulent bankruptcy will remove a member of the upper classes from blue books; he will receive no dinner invitations from his peers and he will become ineligible as a marriage partner. If he is already married, his wife may divorce him. He will have to resign from his club and all positions he holds. But he will not become a member of the lowest stratum, although it will be difficult for him to find new association.

- **Migration:**

Migration also helps in social mobility. A particular place may not have the requisite facilities for improving the socio-economic condition of people. It may not be able to provide opportunities and avenues to improve one's status. Thus, people are compelled to migrate to other

places, having different opportunities and possibilities, in search of livelihood and improvement of life conditions. They avail the opportunities in the new place and improve upon their social position. Here, we can cite the example of people belonging to the Scheduled Castes of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, who migrate to the States of Punjab and Haryana and become farm labourers to earn their livelihood. After acquiring or accumulating money they go back to their villages and buy land. They till their own land and become owner cultivators. Hence, from traditional work of Chamars or scavengers, they improve their status and become owner cultivators. Similar is the situation with regard to Asians who migrate to various European countries and the United States of America. We can also cite the example of people from Assam migrating to cities like Bangalore, Delhi etc in search of jobs and livelihood opportunities.

Hence, there are several pull factors which lure people to certain places because they do not have the necessary facilities at their place of residence and the new place attracts them by providing these facilities, so that after acquiring new skills and knowledge they could occupy better positions.

Since the cities and the urban centres provide ample opportunities for higher education and jobs, therefore they attract large number of people from the villages. People migrate from villages to cities to attain education, training and skills and thereby, improve his/her social position. They strive to occupy higher positions than their parents and brothers who continue to live in villages. Thus, we see that both push and pull factors lead to migration which subsequently facilitates social mobility.

- **Industrialization:**

Industrial Revolution led to the development of a new social system in which people were given status according to their ability and training. Discrimination based caste, race, religion and ethnicity gradually diminished with the coming of industrial revolution. Further, Industrialization resulted in machine made production where output increased with decreasing price i.e. mass production at cheaper rate.

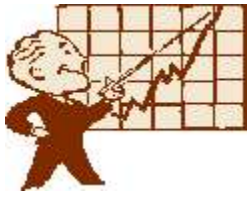
This compelled the artisans to leave their manual production and migrate to industrial town in search of jobs and livelihood. They acquired new skills and training necessary for industrial jobs and got jobs in industries. With time, experience and training they kept on improving their position and thereby, moved up the social ladder.

Industrial societies are characterised by Open system of mobility and the statuses are achieved unlike the traditional society like India where the statuses are ascribed according to birth. Hence, industrialization facilitates greater social mobility.

- **Urbanization:**

Urbanization also helps in social mobility. The urban centres, as mentioned before, are hubs of educational institutions, industries, so on and so forth. They provide the necessary facilities for improving the socio-economic position of the people, thereby, giving them an opportunity to move up the social ladder. If an individual has higher education, income and is engaged in occupation of higher prestige, he/she occupies high social status irrespective of his/her caste. Thus, Urbanization facilitates social mobility by removing those factors which hinder social mobility.

Further, as cities have huge population, they are characterised by formal relations. There is not much intimate relation among the people. They share a close relationship only with their friends and relatives. Thus, urban centres are marked by anonymity. Urban settlements also provide secrecy to individual's caste and background. Therefore, Individual's position is largely dependent upon his/her education, occupation and income rather than his/her background.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: What is Structural Mobility?

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Q2: What are the different types of Mobility on the basis of direction?

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Q3: What are the different forms of Vertical Mobility?

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.....

Q4: What is Intra-generational Mobility?

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.....

Q5: Give an example of closed system of Mobility.

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14.4 LET US SUM UP

- Our society is stratified and not all persons are accorded the same position or rank in society.
- Society keeps on changing and so do individuals and their positions.
- Every individual continuously keeps on trying to improve his/her position and elevate his/her status in society. Individuals constantly strive to move from lower position to higher position.
- Social mobility denotes the movement of individuals or groups from one position or rank to another in the Social strata of the society over a period of time.
- If we are able to change our position as individuals or as groups during our lifetime, then our movement from one particular social position to another would be termed as Social Mobility.
- This change in position may be upwards or even downwards
- The amount of social mobility is often used as an indicator of the degree of openness and fluidity of a society.
- Horizontal mobility refers to change of occupational position or role of an individual or a group without involving any change in its position in the social hierarchy. Here, the individual moves form one social position to another of same rank.

- Vertical Mobility refers to the changes in the position of an individual or a group along the social hierarchy. Here, the position and status of the individual changes unlike horizontal mobility.
- When changes occur from one generation to another, it is known as inter-generational mobility. This type of mobility involves changes in the social position of children relative to their parents.
- When mobility occurs within one generation it is called intra-generational mobility. It implies change in an individual's position or social status during his/her lifetime itself.
- Structural Mobility refers to the vertical mobility of a specific group or class relative to others in the stratification system.
- Open system of Mobility allows individual to change his position and status. Here, individuals are accorded different positions on the basis of his/her merit; skills; competence; capability or achievement.
- An individual in societies with Closed systems of Mobility become member of the group or category that his/her parents belong to. He acquires the position and status of his parents and continues with it throughout his life. It is very difficult to change one's status in a closed system of mobility.
- Education, Skills, Training, Industrialisation, Urbanisation etc are different factors affecting social Mobility.



14.5 FURTHER READING

1) Rawat. H.K, (2009) "Sociology Basic Concepts"; Rawat Publishcations, New Delhi



14.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: It is a type of forced mobility which takes place because of the structural changes and not because of individual attempts.

Ans to Q2: On the basis of direction Mobility can be Vertical Mobility (either upward mobility or downward mobility) or Horizontal mobility.

Ans to Q3: When mobility occurs within one generation, it is called intra-generational mobility. It implies change in an individual's position or social status during his/her lifetime itself.

Ans to Q4: The different forms of Vertical Mobility are: Inter-generational Mobility; Intra-generational Mobility; Structural Mobility.

Ans to Q5: Caste system is an example of Closed Mobility System.



14.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q.1: Distinguish between Upward and Downward Mobility.

Q.2: What are the differences between Open and Closed Systems of Mobility?

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q1: What do you understand by Social Mobility? Discuss its types.

Q2: Discuss the factors affecting Social Mobility.



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অসমীয়া গ্ৰন্থ ঃ

1] শইকীয়া, জ্যোতি প্ৰসাদ। (2012) সমাজতত্ব পৰিচয় । যোৰহাট ঃ বিদ্যা ভৱন।

2] নাথ, গুণমণি। স্নাতক মহলাৰ সমাজশাস্ত্ৰৰ চমু পৰিচয়। গুৱাহাটী ঃ জ্যোতি প্ৰকাশন।