# UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY

## UNIT STRUCTURE

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## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the components of a society
- define the demographic variables and identify their importance
- explain the Malthusian Theory of Population Growth
- describe the complexity of Indian Society

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

The relation between individual and society is very close. Essentially, "society" is the regularities, customs and ground rules of antihuman behavior. These practices are tremendously important to know how humans act and interact with each other. Society does not exist independently without individual. The individual lives and acts within society but society is nothing, in spite of the combination of individuals for cooperative effort. On the other hand, society exists to serve individuals, not the other way around. Human life and society almost go together. Man is biologically and psychologically equipped to live in groups, in society. Society has become an essential condition for human life to arise and to continue. The relationship between individual and society is ultimately one of the profound of all the problems of social philosophy. It is more philosophical rather than sociological because it involves the question of values. Man depends on society. It is in the society that an individual is surrounded and encompassed by culture, as a societal force. It is in the society again that he has to conform to the norms, occupy statuses and become members of groups. The question of the relationship between the individual and the society is the starting point of many discussions. It is closely connected with the question of the relationship of man and society. The relation between the two depends upon one fact that the individual and the society are mutually dependent, one grows with the help of the other.

## 1.3 INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY

Man is a social animal. He has a natural urge to live an associated life with others. Man needs society for his existence or survival. Thus, an 'individual' is the basic unit of society. The human child depends on his parents and others for its survival and growth. The inherent capacities of the child can develop only in society. The ultimate goal of society is to promote good and happy life for its individuals. It creates conditions and opportunities for the all round development of individual personality. Society ensures

harmony and cooperation among individuals in spite of their occasional conflicts and tensions. If society helps the individuals in numerous ways, great men also contribute to society by their wisdom and experience. Thus, society and individuals are bound by an intimate and harmonious bond and the conflicts between the two are apparent and momentary. In a well-ordered society, there would be lasting harmony between the two. While we have discussed about the concept of society, we also need to look at some of the *characteristics* of society. These are:

- Society consists of people.
- Society is based on social relations between different individuals. In a society, every individual and every group is linked and related to every other part of the society.
- Social interaction is also an important characteristic of society.
- Society would also have mutual awareness among its members. The individual needs to be aware that there are other persons besides him/her and that his/her actions affect others.
- Society fulfills social needs. A person cannot exist in isolation, we are all dependent on each other.
- Society is characterised by cooperation among individuals and groups. There is also disagreement and conflict in society. Conflict is normal in a society.
- Social differentiation is also present amongst the members of the society. In a society, we have different roles and responsibilities to perform.
- Society is also characterised by social control. There is always a control mechanism in society. For example, customs, traditions, values, etc. Police also acts as the platform for correcting or to check wrong behaviour.
- Society is dynamic. Society is not a static entity. Society is ever changing.

## 1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demography is the branch of social sciences concerned with the study of human populations, their structure and change (through births, deaths, and migration), and their relationship with the natural environment and with social and economic change. Demographic indicators could include population size, population growth rate, crude birth rate, crude death rate, total fertility rate, life expectancy and infant mortality . As well, it would include estimated and projected gender and age distributions according to medium, high, low and constant fertility variants. In short, demographic changes affect all areas of human activity: economic, social, cultural and political. Those who follow this field of social science believe demographics can play a crucial role in understanding past trends and in preparing for future developments and policies. Furthermore, they believe that understanding demographic developments can provide important explanations of observed economic and social trends. Consequently, demography becomes an important ingredient in public policy analysis and development.

### 1.4.1 POPULATION SIZE

Population size is the actual number of individuals in a population. Population density is a measurement of population size per unit area, i.e., population size divided by total land area. India is the second most populous country in the world, with over 1.2 billion people (July 2015), more than a sixth of the world's population. Already containing 17.5% of the world's population, India is projected to be the world's most populous country by 2022, surpassing China, its population reaching 1.6 billion by 2050. Its population growth rate is 1.2%, ranking 94th in the world in 2013. The Indian population had reached the billion mark by 1998.

India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is expected that, in 2020, the average age of an Indian will be 29 years, compared to 37 for China and 48 for Japan; and, by 2030, India's dependency ratio should be just over 0.4.

India has more than two thousand ethnic groups, and every major religion is represented, as are four major families of languages (Indo-European, Dravidian, Austroasiatic and Sino-Tibetan languages) as well as two language isolates (the Nihali language spoken in parts of Maharashtra and the Burushaski language spoken in parts of Jammu and Kashmir).

Further complexity is lent by the great variation that occurs across this population on social parameters such as income and education. Only the continent of Africa exceeds the linguistic, genetic and cultural diversity of the nation of India.

### 1.4.2 GENDER

Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between and from masculinity and femininity. Gender identity is one's personal experience of one's own gender. All societies have a set of gender categories that can serve as the basis of the formation of a person's social identity in relation to other members of society. In most societies, there is a basic division between gender attributes assigned to males and females, a gender binary to which most people adhere and which enforces conformance to ideals of masculinity and femininity in all aspects of sex and gender: biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression. In all societies, some individuals do not identify with some (or all) of the aspects of gender that are assigned to their biological sex; some of those individuals are transgender or gender queer. Some societies have third gender categories.

Core gender identity is usually formed by age three. After age three, it is extremely difficult to change, and attempts to reassign it can result in gender dysphoria. Both biological and social factors have been suggested to influence its formation.

### 1.4.3 AGE STRUCTURE

The age structure of a population is the distribution of people among various ages. It is a useful tool for social scientists, public health and health care experts, policy analysts, and policy-makers, because it illustrates

population trends like rates of births and deaths. These are important to understand because they have a host of social and economic implications in society, like understanding the resources that must be allocated for childcare, schooling, and healthcare, and the familial and greater social implications of whether there are more children or elderly in society. In graphic form, age structure is portrayed as an age pyramid that shows the youngest age cohort at the bottom, with each additional layer showing the next oldest cohort. Typically males are indicated on the left and females on the right, like that pictured above.

Both age structure and age pyramids can take a variety of forms, depending on the birth and death trends within the population, as well as a host of other social factors.

They can be stable, meaning that patterns of birth and death are unchanging over time; stationary, which signals both low birth and death rates (they slope gently inward and have a rounded top); expansive, which slope dramatically inward and upward from the base, indicate that a population has both high birth and death rates; or constrictive, which signal low birth and death rates, and expand outward from the base before sloping inward to achieve a rounded peak at the top.

### 1.4.4 ETHNICITY

An ethnic group or ethnicity is a category of people who identify with each other based on common language, ancestral, social, cultural, or national experiences. Unlike most other social groups, ethnicity is primarily an inherited status. Membership of an ethnic group tends to be defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, origin myth, history, homeland, language and/or dialect, symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, art, and physical appearance.

Ethnic groups, derived from the same historical founder population, often continue to speak related languages and share a similargene pool. By way of language shift, acculturation, adoption and religious conversion, it is possible for some individuals or groups to leave one ethnic group and

become part of another (except for ethnic groups emphasizing racial purity as a key membership criterion).

Ethnicity is often used synonymously with ambiguous terms such as nation, people, and minority and migrant groups

### 1.4.5 EDUCATION

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves. Education can take place in formal or informal settings and any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy.

Education commonly is divided formally into such stages as preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and then college, university, or apprenticeship.

A right to education has been recognized by some governments, including at the global level: Article 13 of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes a universal right to education. In most regions education is compulsory up to a certain age.

### 1.4.6 FERTILITY AND FECUNDITY

A population's size is first affected by fertility, which refers to the number of children that an average woman bears during her reproductive years-from puberty to menopause. People sometimes confuse the term fertility with fecundity, which refers to the number of children an average woman is capable of bearing. Such factors as health, finances, and personal decision sharply affect fecundity.



***FECUNDITY :***
Refers to the number of children an average woman is capable of bearing.

To determine a country's fertility rate, demographers use governmental records to figure the crude birth rate (the number of live births for every thousand people in a population). They calculate this rate by dividing the

number of live births in a year by the total population, and then multiplying the result by 1,000. As one might expect, the governmental records used in this type of research may not be completely accurate, especially in third? world countries where such records may not even exist.

While the world's average fertility rate is about 3 children per woman, its fecundity rate is about 20 per woman. The highest fertility rate (nearly 6 children per woman) in the world occurs in Africa, whereas the lowest occurs in Europe (about 1.5). The fertility rate for women in the United States is about 2.

### 1.4.7 MORTALITY

Mortality, or the number of deaths in a society's population, also influences population size. Similar to the crude birth rate, demographers calculate the crude death rate, or the number of deaths annually per 1,000 people in the population. Demographers calculate this figure by dividing the number of deaths in a year by the total population, and then multiplying the result by 1,000. The crude death rate in the United States normally stays around 8 or 9.

Infant mortality rate, which is the number of deaths among infants under age one for each 1,000 live births in a year, provides demographers with another measure. Compared to other countries, North American infant mortality rates tend to be low. Still, the figures can vary considerably within a society. For example, African Americans have an infant mortality rate of about 19 compared to those of whites who have a rate of about 8.

### 1.4.8 LIFE EXPECTANCY

Life expectancy is a statistical measure of the average time an organism is expected to live, based on the year of their birth, their current age and other demographic factors including sex. Mathematically, life expectancy is the mean number of years of life remaining at a given age, assuming age-specific mortality rates remain at their most recently measured levels. It is denoted by , which means the average number of subsequent years of life for someone now aged , according to a particular mortality experience.

Longevity, maximum lifespan, and life expectancy are not synonyms. Life expectancy is defined statistically as the average number of years remaining for an individual or a group of people at a given age. Longevity refers to the characteristics of the relatively long life span of some members of a population. Maximum lifespan is the age at death for the most long-lived individual of a species. Moreover, because life expectancy is an average, a particular person may die many years before or many years after their "expected" survival. The term "maximum life span" has a quite different meaning and is more related to longevity.

Life expectancy is also used in plant or animal ecology; life tables (also known as actuarial tables). The term life expectancy may also be used in the context of manufactured objects, although the related term shelf life is used for consumer products and the terms "mean time to breakdown" (MTTB) and "mean time between failures" (MTBF) are used in engineering.

### 1.4.9 INCOME

Income is money that an individual or business receives in exchange for providing a good or service or through investing capital. Income is consumed to fuel day-to-day expenditures. Most people age 65 and under receive the majority of their income from a salary or wages earned from a job. Investments, pensions and Social Security are primary sources of income for retirees. In businesses, income can refer to a company's remaining revenues after all expenses and taxes have been paid. In this case, it is also known as "earnings". Most forms of income are subject to taxation.

### 1.4.10 MIGRATION

Migration (the movement of people from one place to another) affects population size. While some migration is involuntary, such as when slaves where brought to America, other migration is voluntary, such as when families move from cities into suburbs.

Migration into an area, called immigration, is measured as the immigration rate, which is the number of people entering a region per each

1,000 people in the population. Migration out of an area, or emigration, is measured as the emigration rate, which is the number leaving per each 1,000 people in the population. Internal migration is the movement from one area to another within a country's borders.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** How is individual connected to the society?

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**Q 2:** Explain gender and mortality as important demographic variables

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## 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Several demographic variables play central roles in the study of human populations, especially fertility and fecundity, mortality and life expectancy, and migration.

Fertility, mortality and migration all influence the size of a society's population. Poorer countries tend to grow almost completely from internal causes (for example, high birth rates due to the absence of reliable contraception), while richer countries tend to grow from both internal causes and migration. Demographers determine a population's natural growth rate by subtracting the crude death rate from the crude birth rate. The world's low?growth nations tend to be more industrialized, such as the United States and Europe. The high?growth countries tend to be less industrialized, such as Africa and Latin America.

**Population Compositions**

Demographers also take an interest in the composition of a society's population. For example, they study the gender ratio (or sex ratio), which is the number of males per 100 females in a population. The sex ratio in the United States is about 93 males for every 100 females. In most areas of the world, the gender ratio is less than 100 because females normally outlive men. Yet in some cultures that practice female infanticide, such as among the Yanomamo, the ratio can reach well above 100.

## 1.6 MALTHUSIAN THEORY OF POPULATION

Thomas Robert Malthus was the first economist to propose a systematic theory of population. He articulated his views regarding population in his famous book, Essay on the Principle of Population (1798), for which he collected empirical data to support his thesis. Malthus had the second edition of his book published in 1803, in which he modified some of his views from the first edition, but essentially his original thesis did not change.

In Essay on the Principle of Population, Malthus proposes the principle that human populations grow exponentially (i.e., doubling with each cycle) while food production grows at an arithmetic rate (i.e. by the repeated addition of a uniform increment in each uniform interval of time). Thus, while food output was likely to increase in a series of twenty-five year intervals in the arithmetic progression 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and so on, population was capable of increasing in the geometric progression 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and so forth. This scenario of arithmetic food growth with simultaneous geometric human population growth predicted a future when humans would have no resources to survive on. To avoid such a catastrophe, Malthus urged controls on population growth.

On the basis of a hypothetical world population of one billion in the early nineteenth century and an adequate means of subsistence at that time, Malthus suggested that there was a potential for a population increase to 256 billion within 200 years but that the means of subsistence were only

capable of being increased enough for nine billion to be fed at the level prevailing at the beginning of the period. He, therefore, considered that the population increase should be kept down to the level at which it could be supported by the operation of various checks on population growth, which he categorized as "preventive" and "positive" checks.

The chief preventive check envisaged by Malthus was that of "moral restraint", which was seen as a deliberate decision by men to refrain "from pursuing the dictate of nature in an early attachment to one woman", i.e. to marry later in life than had been usual and only at a stage when fully capable of supporting a family. This, it was anticipated, would give rise to smaller families and probably to fewer families, but Malthus was strongly opposed to birth control within marriage and did not suggest that parents should try to restrict the number of children born to them after their marriage. Malthus was clearly aware that problems might arise from the postponement of marriage to a later date, such as an increase in the number of illegitimate births, but considered that these problems were likely to be less serious than those caused by a continuation of rapid population increase.

He saw positive checks to population growth as being any causes that contributed to the shortening of human lifespans. He included in this category poor living and working conditions which might give rise to low resistance to disease, as well as more obvious factors such as disease itself, war, and famine. Some of the conclusions that can be drawn from Malthus's ideas thus have obvious political connotations and this partly accounts for the interest in his writings and possibly also the misrepresentation of some of his ideas by authors such as Cobbett, the famous early English radical. Some later writers modified his ideas, suggesting, for example, strong government action to ensure later marriages. Others did not accept the view that birth control should be forbidden after marriage, and one group in particular, called the Malthusian League, strongly argued the case for birth control, though this was contrary to the principles of conduct which Malthus himself advocated.

## 1.7 COMPLEXITY OF INDIAN SOCIETY

### CASTE

Caste is a system of social stratification, which lies at the very root of social structure of most social groups in India. By social structure, we mean the persistent pattern of social interaction existing within and among social groups. These patterns of interaction are guided by the normative system of the society. Caste structure is thus a pattern of social behaviour in which groups and individuals are guided by prescribed set of norms, values and sanctions. The groups and individuals occupy specific statuses within and in relation to other groups. In this system individuals are born into a certain caste and thereby acquire the role and status associated with that caste identity.

Sociologists have defined caste or (as locally referred to) *'jati'* as a "hereditary, endogamous, group which is usually localised. It has a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed, among other things by the concepts of pollution and purity, and generally maximum commensality i.e. interdining occurs within the caste" (Srinivas 1962), This definition describes the ideal form of caste system. However in real life there are innumerable variations and permutations in terms of structure and functioning of caste system.

### CLASS

Social class has been defined as a kind of social group, which is neither legally defined nor religiously sanctioned. It is generally defined as a stratum of people occupying similar social positions. Wealth, income, education, occupation are some of the basic determinants of class. It is relatively open, i.e. any one who satisfies the basic criteria can become its member. There are several classes in a society. These classes are hierarchically ranked primarily in terms of wealth and income. The differences of wealth and income are expressed in different life styles and consumption patterns. Social classes are the characteristic features of industrial societies

(Bottomore 1962: 188). To give you an example, in a capitalist society we generally find the class of capitalists and the working classes besides several others.

Social classes in India, as we see them today, had their genesis during the British rule. This is not to say that the class phenomenon was absent in the pre-British Indian society. The class dimension of Indian society was only less pronounced than it turned out to be during the British period. The so-called self-sufficiency of the village community appears to have been one of the reasons behind it. That is, village community generally produced only what was required for the consumption needs of the village. There was hence little surplus and therefore less marked differentiation among the village population. Even when there was a marked class dimension; it was overshadowed by the caste component. In fact, the only sphere where class dimension showed itself rather more sharply was in the nature of interaction between the rulers and the ruled. The king and his courtiers represented a class quite different from the subjects over whom they ruled. The courtiers comprised the Zamindars, Jagirdars and several others. They along with the king lived on the revenue collected from the village community under their jurisdiction.

Besides these classes there were also classes of administrative officers of various ranks, of merchants, artisans and specialists of various kinds. The colonial rule in India proved to be one of the turning points in Indian history. It introduced new elements, which led to some radical changes in Indian society. Now let us see what the impact of the British rule was on the class formation in India.

## THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

Scattered throughout India are approximately 500,000 villages. The Census of India regards most settlements of fewer than 5,000 as a village. These settlements range from tiny hamlets of thatched huts to larger settlements of tile-roofed stone and brick houses (see Structure and Dynamics, ch. 2). Most villages are small; nearly 80 percent have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, according to the 1991 census. Most are nucleated

settlements, while others are more dispersed. It is in villages that India's most basic business--agriculture--takes place. Here, in the face of vicissitudes of all kinds, farmers follow time-tested as well as innovative methods of growing wheat, rice, lentils, vegetables, fruits, and many other crops in order to accomplish the challenging task of feeding themselves and the nation. Here, too, flourish many of India's most valued cultural forms.

Viewed from a distance, an Indian village may appear deceptively simple. A cluster of mud-plastered walls shaded by a few trees, set among a stretch of green or dun-colored fields, with a few people slowly coming or going, oxcarts creaking, cattle lowing, and birds singing--all present an image of harmonious simplicity. Indian city dwellers often refer nostalgically to "simple village life." City artists portray colorfully garbed village women gracefully carrying water pots on their heads and writers describe isolated rural settlements unsullied by the complexities of modern urban civilization. Social scientists of the past wrote of Indian villages as virtually self-sufficient communities with few ties to the outside world.

In actuality, Indian village life is far from simple. Each village is connected through a variety of crucial horizontal linkages with other villages and with urban areas both near and far. Most villages are characterized by a multiplicity of economic, caste, kinship, occupational, and even religious groups linked vertically within each settlement. Factionalism is a typical feature of village politics. In one of the first of the modern anthropological studies of Indian village life, anthropologist Oscar Lewis called this complexity "rural cosmopolitanism."

Throughout most of India, village dwellings are built very close to one another in a nucleated settlement, with small lanes for passage of people and sometimes carts. Village fields surround the settlement and are generally within easy walking distance. In hilly tracts of central, eastern, and far northern India, dwellings are more spread out, reflecting the nature of the topography. In the wet states of West Bengal and Kerala, houses are more dispersed; in some parts of Kerala, they are constructed in continuous lines, with divisions between villages not obvious to visitors.

In northern and central India, neighborhood boundaries can be vague. The houses of Dalits are generally located in separate neighborhoods or on the outskirts of the nucleated settlement, but there are seldom distinct Dalit hamlets. By contrast, in the south, where socioeconomic contrasts and caste pollution observances tend to be stronger than in the north, Brahman homes may be set apart from those of non-Brahmans, and Dalit hamlets are set at a little distance from the homes of other castes.

The number of castes resident in a single village can vary widely, from one to more than forty. Typically, a village is dominated by one or a very few castes that essentially control the village land and on whose patronage members of weaker groups must rely. In the village of about 1,100 population near Delhi studied by Lewis in the 1950s, the *Jat* caste (the largest cultivating caste in northwestern India) comprised 60 percent of the residents and owned all of the village land, including the house sites. In Nimkhera, Madhya Pradesh, Hindu Thakurs and Brahmans, and Muslim Pathans own substantial land, while lower-ranking Weaver (Koli) and Barber (Khawas) caste members and others own smaller farms. In many areas of the south, Brahmans are major landowners, along with some other relatively high-ranking castes. Generally, land, prosperity, and power go together.

In some regions, landowners refrain from using plows themselves but hire tenant farmers and laborers to do this work. In other regions, landowners till the soil with the aid of laborers, usually resident in the same village. Fellow villagers typically include representatives of various service and artisan castes to supply the needs of the villagers--priests, carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, weavers, potters, oilpressers, leatherworkers, sweepers, waterbearers, toddy-tappers, and so on. Artisanry in pottery, wood, cloth, metal, and leather, although diminishing, continues in many contemporary Indian villages as it did in centuries past. Village religious observances and weddings are occasions for members of various castes to provide customary ritual goods and services in order for the events to proceed according to proper tradition.

Aside from caste-associated occupations, villages often include people who practice nontraditional occupations. For example, Brahmans or Thakurs

may be shopkeepers, teachers, truckers, or clerks, in addition to their caste-associated occupations of priest and farmer. In villages near urban areas, an increasing number of people commute to the cities to take up jobs, and many migrate. Some migrants leave their families in the village and go to the cities to work for months at a time. Many people from Kerala, as well as other regions, have temporarily migrated to the Persian Gulf states for employment and send remittances back to their village families, to which they will eventually return.

At slack seasons, village life can appear to be sleepy, but usually villages are humming with activity. The work ethic is strong, with little time out for relaxation, except for numerous divinely sanctioned festivals and rite-of-passage celebrations. Residents are quick to judge each other, and improper work or social habits receive strong criticism. Villagers feel a sense of village pride and honor, and the reputation of a village depends upon the behavior of all of its residents.

**URBAN AREAS**

Accelerating urbanization is powerfully affecting the transformation of Indian society. Slightly more than 26 percent of the country's population is urban, and in 1991 more than half of urban dwellers lived in 299 urban agglomerates or cities of more than 100,000 people. By 1991 India had twenty-four cities with populations of at least 1 million. By that year, among cities of the world, Bombay (or Mumbai, in Marathi), in Maharashtra, ranked seventh in the world at 12.6 million, and Calcutta, in West Bengal, ranked eighth at almost 11 million. In the 1990s, India's larger cities have been growing at twice the rate of smaller towns and villages. Between the 1960s and 1991, the population of the Union Territory of Delhi quadrupled, to 8.4 million, and Madras, in Tamil Nadu, grew to 5.4 million. Bangalore, in Karnataka; Hyderabad, in Andhra Pradesh; and many other cities are expanding rapidly. About half of these increases are the result of rural-urban migration, as villagers seek better lives for themselves in the cities.

Most Indian cities are very densely populated. New Delhi, for example, had 6,352 people per square kilometer in 1991. Congestion, noise, traffic

jams, air pollution, and major shortages of key necessities characterize urban life. Every major city of India faces the same proliferating problems of grossly inadequate housing, transportation, sewerage, electric power, water supplies, schools, and hospitals. Slums and jumbles of pavement dwellers' lean-tos constantly multiply. An increasing number of trucks, buses, cars, three-wheel autorickshaws, motorcy-cles, and motorscooters, all spewing uncontrolled fumes, surge in sometimes haphazard patterns over city streets jammed with jaywalking pedestrians, cattle, and goats. Accident rates are high (India's fatality rate from road accidents, the most common cause of accidental death, is said to be twenty times higher than United States rates), and it is a daily occurrence for a city dweller to witness a crash or the running down of a pedestrian. In 1984 the citizens of Bhopal suffered the nightmare of India's largest industrial accident, when poisonous gas leaking from a Union Carbide plant killed and injured thousands of city dwellers. Less spectacularly, on a daily basis, uncontrolled pollutants from factories all over India damage the urban environments in which millions live.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Discuss the Malthusian Theory of Demography

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**Q 4:** How does class and caste form a component of society in India?

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## 1.8 LET US SUM UP

- Man depends on society. It is in the society that an individual is surrounded and encompassed by culture, as a societal

force. It is in the society again that he has to conform to the norms, occupy statuses and become members of groups.

- Thomas Robert Malthus was the first economist to propose a systematic theory of population. He articulated his views regarding population in his famous book, Essay on the Principle of Population (1798)
- Demographic indicators could include population size, population growth rate, crude birth rate, crude death rate, total fertility rate, life expectancy and infant mortality.
- Caste is a system of social stratification, which lies at the very root of social structure of most social groups in India. By social structure, we mean the persistent pattern of social interaction existing within and among social groups.
- The number of castes resident in a single village can vary widely, from one to more than forty. Typically, a village is dominated by one or a very few castes that essentially control the village land and on whose patronage members of weaker groups must rely.



## 1.9 FURTHER READING


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## 1.10 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The relation between individual and society is very close. Essentially, "society" is the regularities, customs and ground rules of antihuman behavior. These practices are tremendously important to know how humans act and interact with each other. Society does not exist independently without individual. The individual lives and acts within society but society is nothing, in spite of the combination of individuals for cooperative effort.
2. In most societies, there is a basic division between gender attributes assigned to males and females, a gender binary to which most people adhere and which enforces conformance to ideals of masculinity and femininity in all aspects of sex and gender: biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression. In all societies, some individuals do not identify with some (or all) of the aspects of gender that are assigned to their biological sex; some of those individuals are transgender or gender queer. Some societies have third gender categories.
3. In Essay on the Principle of Population, Malthus proposes the principle that human populations grow exponentially (i.e., doubling with each cycle) while food production grows at an arithmetic rate (i.e. by the repeated addition of a uniform increment in each uniform interval of time). Thus, while food output was likely to increase in a series of twenty-five year intervals in the arithmetic progression 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and so on, population was capable of increasing in the geometric progression 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and so forth.
4. Caste structure is a pattern of social behaviour in which groups and individuals are guided by prescribed set of norms, values and sanctions. The groups and individuals occupy specific statuses within and in relation to other groups. In this system individuals are born into a certain caste and thereby acquire the role and

status associated with that caste identity. Social classes in India, as we see them today, had their genesis during the British rule. This is not to say that the class phenomenon was absent in the pre-British Indian society.

5. The class dimension of Indian society was only less pronounced than it turned out to be during the British period. The so-called self-sufficiency of the village community appears to have been one of the reasons behind it. That is, village community generally produced only what was required for the consumption needs of the village. There was hence little surplus and therefore less marked differentiation among the village population. Even when there was a marked class dimension; it was overshadowed by the caste component.



## 1.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q.1:** What are the demographic variables that affect the composition of a society?

**Q.2:** Why is Indian society considered to be a complex one?

**Q.3:** Discuss the differences between rural and urban settings of Indian society?

**Q.4:** What is the relation between education and infant and maternal mortality rate?