PGSO S1 02

# Sociology: An Introduction

**SEMESTER - I**

# SOCIOLOGY

**PAPER - 02**

**BLOCK - 2**

**KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

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# SOCIOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

## FIRST SEMESTER

## BLOCK - 2

### DETAILED SYLLABUS


| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **UNIT 8:** | **Social Control**<br>Types of Social control, Agencies of Social control: Socialization, Customs, Laws and Education; Importance of Social Control | **Pages :** | **119-133** |
| **UNIT 9:** | **Social Processes**<br>Cooperation, Competition, Conflict and Accommodation | **Pages :** | **134-149** |
| **UNIT 10:** | **Social Mobility**<br>Concept and Types | **Pages :** | **150-161** |
| **UNIT 11:** | **Family, Marriage, Kinship**<br>Meaning, Characteristics, Importance of each as Social Institutions, Changing Trends, | **Pages :** | **162-178** |
| **UNIT 12:** | **Religion**<br>Meaning, Religion as a Social Institution, Its Importance and Role in Society | **Pages :** | **179-204** |
| **UNIT 13:** | **Polity and Economy**<br>Concept, Polity and Economy as Social Institutions, their Role in Society | **Pages :** | **205-221** |

## BLOCK INTRODUCTION:

This is the second block of the course, **Sociology: An Introduction.** The first unit of this block is Unit 8. This unit will discuss the meaning of social control and the mechanisms through which societies exerts controls over the actions of the individual in society.

Unit 8 will discuss the social process, known as social mobility by which individuals and groups change their social and economic standing in society.

Unit 9 describe the meaning of social process. The unit will also discuss about different types of social process like cooperation, competition, conflict, accommodation etc .

Unit 10 will discuss about another important social process known as social mobility. It will discuss the process by which individuals and groups change their social position.

Unit 11 will discuss about three important institutions of our society and they are family, marriage and kinship.

Unit 12 will discuss about religion as a social institution, its origin and some of the theories explaining religion.

Unit 13 will explain the meaning of political institution and the nature of political authority in simple ad complex societies. The unit will also discuss about the nature of economy in simple and complex societies.

While going through this block you will come across some boxes which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will provide the meaning of some words and concepts cited within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions included under Activity and Check Your Progress in every unit. Activities will increase our thinking capacity because questions put in Activity are not directly derived from the text. But answers to the short questions are provided in the section, Answers to Check Your Progress. Besides, there are some text-related questions which are put in Model Questions. These questions will help you in selecting and mastering probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

# UNIT 8: SOCIAL CONTROL

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Social Control

8.4 Agencies of Social Control

- 8.4.1. Socialisation
- 8.4.2. Customs
- 8.4.3. Laws
- 8.4.4. Education

8.5 Types of Social Control

8.6 Importance of Social Control

8.7 Let Us Sum Up

8.8 Further Reading

8.9 Answer to Check Your Progress

8.10 Possible Questions


## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- identify how our life and the activities are regulated.
- know that our own customs, the legal laws, our education are shaping and altering our behaviour
- understand the agents of social control
- understand that social control is needed to ensure social order and also to live a balanced life.

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

People in society do not act in isolation and, hence, there is a need to conform to norms. In society, there is a need for controlling the activities of the people so that each of the social institutions can perform their functions effectively. In fact, there would be no society without social control, because

society cannot function without an agreed upon and enforced social order that makes daily life easier and a complex division of labour possible. Without it, chaos and confusion would reign.

There are different ways in which conformity of people is ensured, mainly through implementation of laws, social pressure and socialisation.

If people do not agree to conform to norms of society, then certain sanctions are imposed like punishments, which can be of many forms. The nature of sanction varies from a simple fine to imprisonment; even death penalty, which is the most extreme form of sanctions. Other forms of sanctions include- confused and disapproving looks, disapreval from family, peers and authority figures, and social ostracization. Hence, those processes, planned or unplanned, which make people conform to collective norms are known as social control.

In this unit we will discuss that apart from the social norms, social control is achieved through a variety of means, such as through rules, laws, and social, economic, institutional structures.

## 8.3 SOCIAL CONTROL

Social control, or processes which ensures conformity, can mainly be divided into two forms depending on the nature of society. Judson R. Landis says that in *simple society* with strong primary ties, rules are often not in written forms; constituting the informal type of social control. He adds that, on the other hand, *complex societies* have a more stringent forms of rules like written laws representing the formal types of social control. Landis further adds that the different forms of sanctions in simple society are gossips and ridicule, public opinion, exclusion from the social group; while in complex society, there are prisons, police to ensure conformity.

William Cole refers to social control as all those means which ensure people's compliance to norms so as to fulfil the expectations set for them. By "means", Cole includes "group or associations which control the behaviour of people to meet the expected role. For example, a family (a group) may guide, convince, or compel its children to conform; a church or a government (an institution) may seek through teaching, through its services

and through law, conformity to expectations; a retail trade organisation (an association) may establish certain regulations regarding credit standards or methods or competing in business."

Social control is also an instrument for regulating behaviour with the use of legitimate norms and values, which maintains solidarity in the society. T. B. Bottomore explains that behaviour can be regulated mainly through the use of force and through the use of norms and values; where the latter constitute social control. This means social control is adhering to norms and values of respective groups, thus preventing tensions, conflicts and maintaining cohesion. He further mentions different types of norms or values which serve as social control, namely, customs and opinion, law, religion, morals, education etc. Also, he mentions the agents of social control- such education system, political system, church, family, other religious bodies and other specialized organisations.

Additionally, social control refers to the methods or "techniques" used to limit deviation in behaviour. M. F. Nimkoff and Paul B. Foreman say that when groups or associations are formed, they have their own norms and values and which might differ from the societal values. Consequently, if these associations deviate, then it becomes a problem for social control.

Social control also includes the punishments, which are a response to deviant behaviour. For Donald Black, if a person deviates from the norms and values, then punishments are meted out to them. These punishments range from "destruction or seizure of property, banishment, humiliation, beating, execution, demand for compensation by victim for misconduct, sorcery, gossip, scolding, or a facial expression of disapproval such as a scowl and stare. Additionally, punishments can also be in the various modes of intervention by third parties, such as mediation, arbitration and adjudication.

In a relatively broader way, social control can also be the means in which the entire social order bind together and operates as a whole, maintaining stability in the society. R. M. MacIver and Charles H. Page says that in order to understand social control, one has to understand the way in which society is patterned and regulates individual behaviour and also how

these patterned behaviours maintain the social organisation. Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt said that social order is maintained by the effective performance of one's respective roles in the society. They further said that in society, there are relationships and customs which needs to operate efficiently. For these relationships to operate efficiently people must know their duties or role expectation towards each other. Performance of these expected roles brings order and equilibrium in the society.

MacIver and Page mentions about four types of codes or rules and their related sanctions. *Associational* codes, *communal* code, *moral* code, and *legal* code. Associational codes refers to the rules of organisations like factory, or hospital. Those who disobeys the rules of the respective organisations may either lose their membership or lose of their livelihood or lose the license. Communal codes include the rule of custom which is sanctioned by some degree of displeasure or ostracism, but this in its extreme form is one of the most powerful sanctions that exists. This communal code is maintained by gossip among people when someone disobeys communal codes. MacIver and Page defines moral codes in two ways- firstly, as mores and secondly, as based on individual conscience. As mores, moral laws can be "simply those customs, the violation of which is regarded in the community as definitely wrong". In another words, the moral code is the "body of rules which the individual conscience upholds as constituting right or good conduct". The last type of social code indentified by MacIver and Pages is the legal code. Legal codes are the codes "which have the ultimate sanction of physical enforcement, of unconditional fine, imprisonment or death. This implies that legal code is the law of the state and it has the power to exercise force over any offender. The family rules, school and college rules have to be in agreement to this legal code of the state." This legal code is mostly found in modern countries.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** According to MacIver and Page, what are the four types of codes?

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_____

**Q.2:** State the "means" of social control, mentioned by Cole?

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***Characteristics of Social Control***

Certain characteristics of social control can be identified. They are mentioned below :

- It is an influence exerted through social suggestions, public opinion, religion and appeal.
- Influence is exercised by social groups through family, union, club etc. and not by a single person or individual.
- Social control is exercised for some specific ends and goals to be achieved by the individual of a collective group.

## 8.4 AGENCIES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

According to T.B. Bottomore, agencies refer to the means of carrying out social control. He mentions various agents of social control like education system, political system, family, religious bodies and other specialized organisations.

Agencies of social control or instruments of social control such as public opinion, suggestion, personal ideal, religion, art, and social valuation draw much of their strength from the primal moral feelings. They take their shape from sentiment rather than utility. They control man and woman in many ways which have little to do with the welfare of society. They are aimed to realise not merely a social order but what one might term as moral order. These are called ethical codes.

On the other hand, law, belief, ceremony, education, need not spring from ethical feelings at all. They are frequently the means deliberately chosen in order to reach certain ends.

However, for the purpose of this study, four agencies of social control are intentionally selected, namely socialisation, customs, laws and education which is discussed in the next section.

### 8.4.1 Socialisation

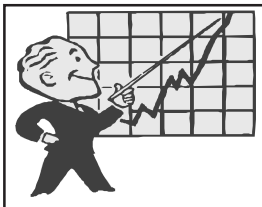
The primary way through which social order is produced is through the ongoing, lifelong process of socialization that each person experiences. Through this process, we are taught from birth the norms, rules, and behavioural and interactional expectations that are common to our family, peer groups, community, and the greater society. Socialization teaches us how to think and behave in accepted ways, and in doing so, effectively controls us in our participation in society. Socialisation is a process through which a child learns what is wrong and what is right. This socialisation process takes place not only in the family but also through peer groups, teachers in the school, church, and the mass media. If these agents of conformity fail to function then certain forms of sanctions are attributed to the corresponding behaviour.

Socialisation refers to the process whereby an individual learn the skills and imbibes the values of society. Anthony Giddens says that socialisation is the process whereby an infant slowly becomes an informed and self-aware person and develops skills specific to the culture into which she or he is born. Through this process, the child does not only receive but also expresses certain demands to the caretaker. Furthermore, this socialisation process is carried out by agencies like the family- where the child gradually imbibe the values of the family; peer groups- which influence the person in all spheres; the school- where children are taught how to maintain discipline along with imparting the formal education; media- which expose people to different cultures and lifestyles. Similarly, Michael

Haralambos says that socialisation is the process whereby individuals learn the culture of their society. This socialisation process, particularly the primary socialisation, takes place during infancy by acting in response to the behavioural patterns of the parents including their language, and how they behave in their agreement and disagreement of things. Apart from family, other socialising agency is the peer group, with whom the child learns to enjoy oneself and learns to conform to societal norms. However, this does not mean that socialisation is limited to childhood only but it takes place throughout one's lifetime. Socialisation is such an important process that without it, people would not know how to operate along the values of the society.

According to Nimkoff and Foreman, socialisation refers to the "internalising through learning, of group norms as right, convenient and expected".

The impact of socialisation is so great that if everyone were socialised in the same culture, then everyone will develop similar habits, wishes and customs. Horton and Hunt says that socialisation process have a deep effect on the life of the individuals as it determines the kind of wish, customs and habits that one has. People from the same culture tend to develop similar habits. They further mentions that people will unintentionally conform to any kinds of expectation in the society if they all had a similar socialisation experience. The learning of what is right or wrong in the society through socialisation regulates the behaviour of individuals to conduct according to the accepted norms of society.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.3:** What are the agents of socialisation?

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### 8.4.2 Customs

Customs are very much a part of our lives so much that we need to reflect on how much intricately they are related to our social life. MacIver and Page states that customs are the most spontaneous of all social rules and often the most compelling ones. Despite their persuasive nature, customs are sanctioned by a wide variety of informal social pressures. Customs include all kinds of action that are performed right from our getting up in the morning. The things that we do till we grow old are all related to customs.

Custom is not upheld by authority but comes about by common practice. MacIver and page says that custom is a group process which emerged gradually, without any authority being exclussively responsible for its maintenance. But, customs are maintained by "common acceptance" of the people. Through chance, trial and error, experience, particular modes of procedure are devised, are followed and imitated, and an unobtrusively accepted as social mores. MacIver and Page have given an example: no special authority prescribes the raising of the hat to ladies or tipping in restaurants; but it is rather done through unexpressed rules which is a part of western **customs**. Bottomore mentions that customs, along with **public** opinion can be regarded as less formal types of social control than laws as in the former, there is "certain vagueness, and sometimes ambiguity, with regard to infractions of the code of behaviour which they prescribe, and in regard to punishments" and the latter has a more "systematic elaboration". As a result, Bottomore adds, "custom has frequently been contrasted with law", and a distinction is made between societies which "enforced" law and those where customs are "accepted".

In the societies characterised by primary relations, the influence of customs and opinions are strong while in modern societies, laws are more effective. Bottomore mentions that in primitive societies custom had a larger influence, on the other hand

laws are more effective in modern industrial societies. MacIver and Page say that in simple societies, there are primary relationships and hence gossips greatly influence the social behaviour.

### 8.4.3 Laws

MacIver and Page define law as "the body of rules which are recognised, interpreted, and applied to particular situations by the courts of the state. It derives from various sources, including custom, but it becomes law when the state, is prepared to enforce it as a rule binding on citizens and residents within its jurisdiction."

Laws have a unique form of sanction as compared to the other social codes. MacIver and Page says that in associations, the sanction involves exclusion and prohibition from membership or barring a member from their certain rights and privileges. However, for legal rules, the sanction is done with coercion.

Also, Bottomore adds that "legal rules are more precise than other rules like moral and legal sanctions. They are more definite and frequently more effective than those of morality." But, moral codes and legal codes are dependent on each other.

The effectiveness of legal laws is dependent on the moral endorsement of the people. Bottomore says that "the maintenance of a legal order depend upon the moral climate of a society. The effectiveness of legal regulation never rests solely upon the threat of physical sanctions, but upon a general attitude of respect for law, and for a particular legal order; and this attitude itself is determined by moral approval of law as embodying social justice." This means law is dependent on the morals of the people whether laws are given respect or not. In a religious country like India, religious laws are given utmost importance. Hence, implementation of any kind of law becomes effective.

Bottomore says that law brings a "degree of certainty in human behaviour". Laws, enacted by the national and legal bodies, encourage and discourage certain actions. Cole says that "laws

may be designed to encourage the performance of a favourable type of behaviour as, for example, safe driving. Other laws are designed to discourage certain type of behaviour, like murder, stealing, and armed robbery or drunken driving." He further mentions that laws vary greatly from community to community as every society is composed of communities who are widely different in their economic and education status.

Other government agencies enforce formal social control as well, like those that regulate which substances or foods can be legally sold, and those that enforce building codes, among others. It is up to formal bodies like the judiciary and the penal system to dole out sanctions when someone fails to comply with the laws that define formal social control.

### 8.4.4 Education

Education is the medium of transmitting knowledge to new generations. Bottomore also says that "education, from infancy to adulthood, is thus a vital means of social control, and its significance has been greatly enhanced in the last two decades by the rapid expansion of education at all levels.Through education new generations learn the social norms and the penalties for infringing them.

Education simply refers to the process of socialisation while school refers to the formal instructions. According to Landis, "education is the more general term and refers to the process of socialisation- learning the knowledge, skills, and appropriate ways of behaving in order to exist in a larger social world. He further says that schooling is the narrower term, and refers to the formal instruction in a classroom setting.

In modern societies, the process of education is aided by the new technologies unlike in the early societies. Bottomore says that "education is concerned with transmitting the way of life, while in modern industrial societies, because of the mass of available

knowledge, the application of science to production, and the elaborate division of labour, formal education not only preponderates in the process of education as a whole, but it is largely devoted to the communication of empirical knowledge". The second difference mentiond by Bottomore is that in early societies a relatively unchanging way of life and knowledge were transmitted but the scientific knowledge communicated by modern education is expected to change and education in general is required to prepare individuals for a changing rather than a static world. Modern science and technology teaches "general rational approach to nature and social life, which has an increasingly important role in establishing and maintaining social co-operation". Furthermore, modern education teaches the individual to have independent values and ideas which play a role in regulating behaviour.

## 8.5 TYPES OF SOCIAL CONTROL

***Informal and Formal Social Control***

Cole divides the types of social control into- *informal* and *formal*. The informal social control includes tradition, the stories, the legends that a specific society have. Cole says that these methods of social control may teach the people how to behave, increase loyalty towards one another, instil patriotic feelings, and offer other kinds of inspiration for the people. Personal example and public opinion are also other methods of informal social control.

Informal social control is enforced by rewards and sanctions. Reward often takes the form of praise or compliments, but also takes other common forms, like high marks on school work, promotions at work, and social popularity. Sanctions are used to enforce informal social control. It can take the form of the ending of a relationship, teasing or ridicule, poor marks in school, or being fired from work, among others.

In the formal social control, Cole includes regimentation, law, propaganda, brainwashing and rewards. Regimentation is when the various phases of life are regulated to achieve a given goal. This is common

especially in times of war through rationing, regulation of the use of materials and equipment with the aim of winning the war. Law may be either to encourage the performance of a favourable type of behaviour like safe driving or to discourage disapproved types of behaviour, like murder, robbery etc. Laws are also dependent on the nature of the community and the enforcement level also differs from one place to another. Propaganda is designed especially to bring favourable results to the propagandists or the causes they represent. It may be directed by placing the propagandists and the interests they represent in a favourable public light. It may be directed by placing a competitor in an unfavourable light, thus serving also the propagandists' interests." Brainwashing is a technique of social control consisting of "alternating periods of harsh treatment and leniency with emphasis upon flogging, starvation, and ample meals". Rewards are often use by parents and schools to approve the good behaviour of the students.

Ian Marsh, along with M. Keating, A. Eyre, R. Campbell and J. McKenzie mentions additional types of formal social control like the police along with customs and excise, private security firms, store detectives and regulatory bodies such as factory inspectorates.

However, the distinction of social control into formal and informal is not fixed. Cole (in reference to the types mentioned above) relates informal methods of social control as more evident in simple societies while the formal methods are strong in complex societies. This distinction of social control into formal and informal is not always true in every situation. Marsh said that the division (mentioned above) between informal and formal social control "is not absolute; although the police are the most visible agent of social control".

In many cases, a simple police presence is enough to create formal social control. In others, police might intervene in a situation that involves unlawful or dangerous behavior in order to stop it—to "arrest" literally means to stop—in order to ensure that social control is maintained.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.4:** Give examples of informal and formal social control.

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## 8.6 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Two important reasons are vital for implementing social control. Firstly, as Horton and Hunt said there is a need to maintain social order in society and hence social control needs to be implemented. Secondly, as Cole also states, social control is necessary for the - control of relations and control of conditions. The control of relations is involved in the interaction of person to person, person to group, and group to group. For example, in individual families, some members lose their temper, they may fight with their parents or their brothers and sisters or otherwise. This may create problems in the relations which needs to be controlled. In some simple societies where a member of one family commits a crime against a member of another family, the offender may be disciplined by members of his own family or by the opposing clan. This punishment could extend to death. This shows how all social institutions develop systems of social control in relations between people.

***Social control and Social Deviation***

Social control and social deviation are also closely related. No society succeeds in getting its entire people to behave as expected all the time. The term, 'social deviation' is given to any failure to conform to the customary norms of the society. Deviation takes many forms. The juvenile delinquent, the hermit, the ascetic - all have deviated from the conventional social norms.

In a simple society where all members accept a single set of norms, deviation is easy to define. In a complex society with many different competing norms, the problem grows more complicated. Furthermore, there may be a number of deviant subcultures, whose norms are condemned by the conventional morality of the society.

There are ideally two types of deviants. The individual deviants, and the group deviants. The former reject the norms which surround them and deviate from their subculture and in case of group deviants the individual is a conforming member of a deviant group.

Deviation can also be divided into cultural and psychological deviants. Cultural deviants simply deviate from the expected behaviour norms. Psychological deviants are deviants from the norm in their personality integration.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.5:** What is the difference between "control of relations" and "control of conditions"?

_____

_____



## 8.7 LET US SUM UP

- Social Control is necessary to regulate the behaviour of the people for the society to function
- Social control is the means through which people are made to conform to norms. This includes family, church, associations, etc.
- There are various forms of social control- formal and informal
- Informal type of social control are found in simple societies and are enforced through rewards compliments and social pressure
- Formal type of social control is mostly found in complex societies. This type of social control are enforced mainly through law, regimentation
- These forms of social control are implemented by certain agencies like socialisation, government education, customs, beliefs.
- Despite the various agencies used for making people to conform to norms and rules of society, not everyone conforms to it. Such groups of people are then exposed to punishments, or social isolation

- However not everyone conforms to the social norms. The people who fail to conform to norms are known as social deviants. Example- juvenile delinquent, the hermit, the ascetic



## 8.8 FURTHER READING

Bottomore, T.B. 1978. Sociology : A Guide to problems and Literature India : Blackie and Son Ltd.

Marsh, Ian, M. Keating, A Eyre, R. Campbell and J. Mc kenzie. 1996. Making sense of society : In Introduction to Sociology.

## 8.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Associational, communal, moral and legal code.

**Ans to Q2:** By "means", Cole refers to group or associations.

**Ans to Q3:** Family, peer groups, school.

**Ans to Q4:** Informal social control are tradition, the story, legends and tales of the people group. Formal social control are regimentation, law, propaganda, brainwashing and rewards.

**Ans to Q5:** The control of relations involves interaction between people. And the control of conditions refer to the habitats in which one live.



## 8.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**A) Write short notes** (Answer within 150 words)

**Q1:** According to Cole, what is social control?

**B) Long answer question** (Answer within 300-500 words)

**Q1:** What are the four agencies of social control highlighted here? Write in detail about each of the agencies.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 9: SOCIAL PROCESSES

## UNIT STRUCTURE


9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Meaning and Definition

9.4 Co-operation

- 9.4.1 Meaning and Definition
- 9.4.2 Characteristics
- 9.4.3 Types
- 9.4.4 Role in Society

9.5 Competition

- 9.5.1 Meaning and Definition
- 9.5.2 Characteristics
- 9.5.3 Types
- 9.5.4 Role in Society

9.6 Conflict

- 9.6.1 Meaning and Definition
- 9.6.2 Characteristics
- 9.6.3 Types
- 9.6.4 Role in Society

9.7 Accommodation

- 9.7.1 Meaning and Definition
- 9.7.2 Characteristics
- 9.7.3 Types
- 9.7.4 Role in Society

9.8 Let Us Sum Up

9.9 Further Readings

9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.11 Possible Questions

## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- describe the meaning of social process,
- identify the various ways of social interaction,
- discuss the different types of social process,
- explain the importance of these processes in society.

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

We have learnt about the various aspects of society. We have also learnt that it is social relation, among other things, that makes a society. Social relationship gets organized into economic, family, religion, political institutions, etc. It is social relation again, based on which man forms a wide variety of social groups. Social relationship involves social interaction. Social interaction assumes several forms or modes. Accordingly, these could be classified into co-operation, competition, conflict and accommodation. In this Unit we will learn of these fundamental ways or modes which are termed social process.

## 9.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION

As we have learnt earlier, the members of society play their roles. In this process of role playing they interact among themselves. This is social interaction. It is dyadic in the sense that, for social interaction to occur there should at least be two persons involved. Social interaction is the basis of social relation. In the various kinds of social relationships as among friends, siblings, between doctor-patient, employer-employee, police-criminal, among the different political parties, etc. we find, that, there is social interaction. When we analyse social interaction, we find that these can be classified into certain fundamental modes or kinds as co-operation, accommodation, conflict, competition, integration, assimilation, etc. Here we have followed the catagories of social processes as given by American sociologist Robert park (1864-1944). These are called social processes.

These fundamental modes of interaction among individuals and among groups in society are termed social processes. The following are two important definitions of social processes given by two distinguished sociologists.

A.W. Green defines, *"social processes are merely the characteristic ways in which interaction occurs."*

According to Ginsberg, *"social processes mean the various modes of interaction between individuals or groups including cooperation, conflict, social differentiation and integration, development, arrest and decay."*

These fundamental modes of interaction are called social process because interaction involves a process. We find that individuals and groups interact. It may be in response to some other action. It may also be to get some response from some individual or group. For example, when the teacher teaches, the students listen. The students may seek further clarifications from the teacher. Here, the action of the student is in response to the action of the teacher. The action of the teacher, at the same time, is to bring some response from the students. When the students seek clarifications, the teacher again responds. Thus, in this example of social interaction we find a chain of responses, with each one linked to the other. This makes social interaction a process. Social interaction takes a basic pattern or a basic mode. So, each mode of social interaction is a process. These modes of social interaction have been termed social process. In the above example, it has taken a pattern of cooperation. With the common goal of dissemination and acquisition of knowledge, both teacher and students are cooperating. The process of social interaction may take other modes or patterns. Let us now discuss some of the other modes of social interaction, namely, cooperation, accommodation, competition and conflict.

## 9.4 COOPERATION

### 9.4.1 Meaning and Definition

Cooperation means working together. It, thus, means the existence of some common goal or shared goals. The individuals

and groups work together to fulfill their goal or goals. Through their interaction the common or shared goals are fulfilled. For example, the family is a social group. All its members share some common goals. For the fulfillment of these goals the members perform a wide variety of activities and interact among themselves. Thus, their interaction and relationship is one of cooperation.

Fairchild defines cooperation as such: *"Cooperation is the process by which the individuals or groups combine their effort, in a more or less organised way for the fulfillment of common objective."*

### 9.4.2 Characteristics

Following are the characteristics of cooperation.

- Cooperation is universal.
- It involves the existence of mutual goals.
- It involves combined effort.
- It develops interdependence between members of a society.

### 9.4.3 Types

**Direct cooperation**

Sometimes, the performance of identical functions leads to the fulfillment of common goals. It is called as direct cooperation. Some examples of direct cooperation are tilling the fields together, praying together, and carrying some load.

**Indirect cooperation**

It is indirect cooperation when the fulfillment of the shared goal is made possible with people doing different tasks. In our society, for the fulfillment of the common goal of distribution of food products, there is the involvement of a chain of people, i.e. the farmer and food processor, the wholesaler and the retailer. Among all of them there is indirect cooperation. In all kinds of societies we find indirect cooperation. Complex societies with secondary groups are however, characterised by indirect cooperation. In such societies there is specialisation and division of labour. It means that persons or groups

are specialised in a particular kind of work. As for example, the doctor is specialised in medicine. Specialisation of labour leads to division of labour**:** different people doing different kinds of work. To accomplish some goals all these specialised labour need to be put together. There needs to be cooperation among them to fulfill certain goals.



**LET US KNOW**

Apart from common goals, in a society each individual/ group has some specific individual/group goals as well. Our individual/group goals are so linked with one other that one can fulfill one's goal also by fulfilling that of the others. We know how a farmer tills the soil, grows crops and sells it in the market. The wholesaler buys the crops and sells it to many retailers. The retailer sells it to the customers. Each of the persons in this chain is fulfilling two goals. One is the fulfilling of the common need for food that we all share and the other is fulfilling the individual need to earn money for one's livelihood. Also, each member in the chain is helping the others in fulfilling their individual needs as well. There may be other individual needs also. In this way the members of a society are interdependent upon one another and thus cooperate. And through cooperation we make social life possible. This show how important is cooperation in society.

## 94.4 Role in Society

Society has some fundamental common goals. The continuity of the society is one fundamental common goal. For the continuity of social life people cooperate with one another and seek to fulfill the many common goals. Another example of the several common goals is food. To fulfill our common need for food, the society performs in cooperation a variety of activities, like food production, food processing, distribution, quality management and marketing, which finally lead to the fulfillment of our need for food. Without it,

there will be chaos and disorder in society.

Within these common goals the members of the society have diverse individual and immediate goals or purposes. In the example of the farmer, wholesaler and retailer we have seen that the fulfillment of the individual goals is such that it enables the achievement of common goals. Individual goals are fulfilled in a way that common goals are fulfilled. In this process there is cooperation in society and the social life is maintained. Thus, we all work in such a way that our goals are fulfilled.

Through cooperation

- The common goals are fulfilled and the many diverse individual goals also are fulfilled.
- It leads to social order and harmony.
- Cooperation maintains social and group identity.
- In this process the society perpetuates.

## 9.5 COMPETITION

### 9.5.1 Meaning and Definition

Human beings have several needs. But there is limited supply of commodities and resources. As such, these resources cannot be shared by all. Consequently, every one cannot fulfill all their needs. This leads to competition among people, for the various resources that may include commodities, power, knowledge, status, and for all those that are valued by the society.

Horton and Hunt define thus: "*Competition is the struggle for possession of rewards which are limited in supply, goods, status, power, love – anything."*

According to Biesanz and Biesanz, *"Competition is the striving of two or more persons for the same goal which is limited so that all cannot share it".*

### 9.5.2 Characteristics

Thus, competition has the following characteristics.

- Competition is for scare resources.
- Competition may be personal or impersonal. By personal competition is meant competition that is among persons known to one other and impersonal competition is among them who are not personally known to one another.
- Competition is universal. In both simple and complex societies competition is present in one form or the other.
- It can be found in a wide variety of social relations as among students, job aspirants, political parties, etc.

### 9.5.3 Types

Three types of competition have been given by Bernard. These are as follows.

- **Economic competition**

This type includes competition for economic benefits as jobs, salaries, promotion and competition in the market as among the producers, among the sellers, etc.

- **Political competition**

This is competition for political power between individuals and groups. In democratic societies also we find the prevalence of this type of competition. The political parties compete among themselves to form the government.

- **Social competition**

Competition to improve ones' social position is social competition. It can be achieved through economic, political, religious and other means. Possessing of formal degrees in various spheres of education, or having a well paid job and economic benefits may raise a person's social status in society. Competition to improve one's social status could be a motivating factor for the other kinds of competition.



**ACTIVITY 1**

Observe the relation you have with your friends. Find out in which areas there is cooperation and competition

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You must have noticed cooperation and competition in regard to your relation with your friends and among your family members. How do you all manage both these modes of social interaction?.....

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### 9.5.4 Role in Society

Competition plays important role in society.

- It serves in allocating scare resources among the competitors.
- It assigns status to the individuals. Through competition a person can achieve a new status. For example, competition for a job may enable a person to secure the job. This gives the person a new status.
- It facilitates social mobility.
- It motivates one to excel and increase efficiency. Competition is an effort to secure scarce resources by surpassing others. It provides motivation to put one's best effort and increase efficiency.

Both cooperation and competition are present in human societies.

## 9.6 CONFLICT

### 9.6.1 Meaning and Definition

Along with cooperation and competition, social relationship and interactions in a society may take the nature of conflict. We have seen in the unit on social change as to how conflict exits in society and becomes a source of change.

Conflict has been defined by A. W. Green, as "*the deliberate attempt to oppose, resist, or coerce the will of another or others."*

Horton and Hunt state, "*Conflict may be defined as a process of seeking to monopolise rewards by eliminating or weakening the competitors".*

Thus, this shows that conflict arises when there is opposition of some goal(s) between individuals and/or groups. Attempts are made to achieve the goal(s) by means of opposing, resisting or imposing one's will on others. In the process, efforts are made to weaken or eliminate the other. This is social conflict.

### 9.6.2 Characteristics

Thus, conflict has the following characteristics.

- Conflict is conscious. It involves deliberate and intentional efforts.
- It is personal in the sense that the opposing parties are personally aware of each other. In case of nations in war, both the nations are particularly aware of each others characteristics. In this sense, it is different from competition because in the latter the members may not know each other personally.
- It is universal. It exists because of the variety of interests and goals of individuals and groups in a society. In this sense conflict is inherent in a society.
- Society develops mechanisms for resolving conflicts because long and severe conflicts may disrupt social life and create problems.

### 9.6.3 Types

**Group conflict**

It exists between groups, which may be groups within a society or country or between societies and countries. Group identity is a strong force in society. It depends upon the sustaining of group interests. However, on the other hand, it may lead to conflict among different groups. Ethnic conflict and war between nations are examples of this. Conflict may take the forms of class conflict, caste conflict, international conflict, etc.

**Individual conflict**

It is conflict that exists among individuals. It may take the form of litigation, which is a judicial struggle between individuals (in case of group conflict litigation involves groups).

### 9.6.4 Role in Society

Conflict plays both a positive and negative role.

**Positive role**

- As society seeks to resolve conflict, new mechanisms of conflict resolution develop.
- Efforts to resolve conflict may lead to a new situation, the old conflict may no longer exist and a new situation develops.
- The new situation may bring around new norms and institutions. Thus conflict can bring social change.
- The conflict theorists also state that conflict can result in improving the situation of the oppressed.
- Group conflict develops solidarity and unity within the group.
- Group conflict may lead to alliance with other groups.

**Negative role**

- Conflict within a group weakens group solidarity. This threatens the existence of the group.
- Conflict within and even among groups can disrupt order and cooperation and lead to chaos. When there is war between nations both the opposing nation faces problems.

Thus, conflict, in some ways is disruptive for an ordered life, yet in societies conflict exists. Some conflicts are contained and controlled, some repressed, some resolved while some changes into another form of conflict. In such ways society manages conflicts. In this process, the society continuously keeps changing.



**ACTIVITY 2**

Did you observe any conflict in your neighbourhood or your district in the last 3 years?

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Make a note of the ways by which the conflict(s) has/have been managed?

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## 9.7 ACCOMMODATION

### 9.7.1 Meaning and Definition

Generally speaking it is a social process of adjusting with the external environment. It involves making changes in the behaviour of the individual or the group so as to adjust with the differences of the others.

A situation of conflict cannot continue for long. Several forces come to operate to resolve or contain the conflict. Accommodation serves as a means of conflict management.

J. M. Baldwin states that "*accommodation denotes acquired changes in the behaviour of individuals which help them to adjust to*

*their environment."*

According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, *"accommodation is a term used by sociologists to describe the adjustment of hostile individuals or groups."*

## 9.7.2 Characteristics

- It is a form of adjustment. The differences between the individuals and groups exist, but these differences are accepted.
- Thus, conflict may exist in a latent manner. At an overt level it is contained.
- Accommodation is also a built-in mechanism of a society. There are many different patterns of behaviour and subcultures in the society. Culture trains its members to accommodate and continue without much friction. An example is the family where the various members carry on with the family life despite the many differences in the individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of the members. Accommodation, thus, can be subconscious.
- It may also be a deliberate exercise as in arbitration, mediation, and conciliation of which we will learn while discussing the various types.
- It is a universal and a continuous process.

## 9.7.3 Types

**Yielding to coercion**

When the parties are of unequal strength, the weaker party submits to the demands and interests of the stronger party. This happens when the weaker party is not in any position to resist the stronger party. This is coercive accommodation.

**Compromise**

It is giving up of part of the demands by the conflicting parties. In the process, each party can accommodate the demands of the other party. Usually, this happens when both the parties are almost of equal strength.

**Third party intervention**

Third party intervention may take the forms of arbitration, mediation and conciliation. While in arbitration the decision of the arbitrator, i.e. the third party, is binding, in mediation the decision of the third party is not binding upon the contending parties. In conciliation, the third party seeks to create conditions where the contending parties themselves can arrive at an agreement.

**Toleration**

This is a form of coexistence with differences. The conflicting parties accept each other's differences. This is also a kind of avoidance, where the conflicting grounds are avoided. Settlement of differences and arriving at a resolution are yet to take place. Sometimes, differences may become too complex to resolve by agreement and compromise. In such situations individuals and groups might simply avoid the conflicting aspects. This is toleration.

**Conversion**

In this type, one of the conflicting parties adopts the views of the other. In such a situation the conflict is resolved.

### 9.7.4 Role in Society

- **Keeps conflict from becoming overt**

  Accommodation is an integral social process. There is the existence of various kinds of status and role, the different types of social relationships, different interests, values and goals in society. All these together comprise social life. Conflict is latent (hidden) in a society. At the same time, the process of socialisation trains the individuals and groups to play the various roles and interact mutually. Thus, the individuals and groups are trained to mutually orient one's behaviour to that of others. This means recognising and accepting the differences, i.e. accommodation. In the example of the family given above we have already seen that people accommodate with each other. This keeps potential conflict from becoming overt (open). Accommodation

makes possible social relations and, thus, social life.

- **Contains overt conflict**

  These different varieties may at times lead to a situation of overt conflict. A society cannot continue for long with overt conflict, so various processes come to operate to contain overt conflict. Accommodation is one such process. In such situations accommodation comes to occur after conflict occurs. It contains overt conflict in a manner that the opponent is not destroyed.

- **Makes possible social life**

  By keeping conflict from becoming overt and containing conflict after it becomes overt, accommodation makes possible group life, continuity of society and enables cooperation and also competition in a manner that social life becomes possible.



**ACTIVITY 3**

For the continuity of the neighbourhood life the members of your neighbourhood are making accommodations in different areas of social life. Make a note of three such areas.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**1. Match the following.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) | Cooperation | (a) | opposition of goals |
| (ii) | Accommodation | (b) | Working together towards a common goal |
| (iii) | Conflict | (c) | Scarcity of resources and surpassing the other |
| (iv) | Competition | (d) | adjusting with differences |

**2. Say true or false.**

(i) Accommodation helps to contain conflict.

(ii) Conflict creates group solidarity.

(iii) Conflict creates divisions in society.

(iv) Indirect cooperation is doing identical things.

(v) Competition can lead to social mobility.



## 9.8 LET US SUM UP

By now, from above the discussion we have come to know that

- Social process means the various modes of social interaction.
- Some of the fundamental ways or modes of social interaction are cooperation, competition, conflict and accommodation.
- Each of these ways occurs universally in societies.
- Each of these social processes is related to the other.
- These processes contribute to the continuity of social life.



## 9.9 FURTHER READINGS

Rawat, H.K. 2007. Sociology: Basic Concepts. Jaipur: Rawat Publication.

Park, Robert, et. al. 1921. Introduction to the Science of Sociology, Chicago University press.

## 9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q.No.1:** i - b, ii – d, iii – a, iv – c

**Ans. to Q.No.2:** (i) True (ii) True (iii) True (iv) False (v) True



## 9.11 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**Q.1**: Define social process. Discuss the various types of social processes.

**Q.2**: What is cooperation? What are its characteristics and various types?

**Q.3**: What do you mean by accommodation? What are its various types? Mention some of its characteristics.

**Q.4**: Define conflict? What role does it play in society?

**Q.5**: What are the characteristics of conflict? Discuss it types.

**Q.6**: What do you mean by competition as a social process? What are it characteristics.

**Q.7**: What are the roles each social process plays in society?

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# UNIT 10: SOCIAL MOBILITY

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Definitions

10.4 Features of Social Mobility

10.5 Types/Forms of Social Mobility

10.6 Factors Responsible for Social Mobility

10.7 Factors Hindering Social Mobility

10.8 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Reading

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

10.10 Possible Questions


## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- have a the comprehensive understanding of social mobility.
- know the definitions and features of social mobility.
- learn about the types of social mobility.

## 10.2 INTRODUCTION

Mobility means movement. By social mobility sociologists mean movement of persons and groups from one social position to another. It means a change in socio-economic position. A person's social position is determined by various factors. Some positions are acquired by birth and some others are achieved by individual's ability and hard work. In every society some kind of social mobility is visible. In this unit we will learn about various aspects of social mobility.

## 10.3 DEFINITIONS

According to **Dictionary of Sociology** social mobility means , 'the movement-usually of individuals but sometimes of whole groups-between different positions within the system of social stratification in any society'.

**Young** and Mack define social mobility as a change in the status of an individual, a group or a category. By social mobility, then, we mean movement within the social structure. Young and Mack proposes a simple definition of social mobility where they argue that changes of position along with status of a group or individual is known as social mobility.

Thus, we may say that social mobility denotes the movement of people from one place to another where his or her social status and respect may or may not be changed. Mobility occurs within the framework of inequality

## 10.4 FEATURES OF SOCIAL MOBILITY

The following are some of the features of social mobility:

- **Universality**: The basic and fundamental feature of social mobility that is it universal in nature. It is found in all types human of society. But it is worthwhile to mention here that some societies had revealed closed type of social mobility such as the caste-based society in India or the feudal society in medieval Europe
- **Vary in Movement**: One more feature of mobility is that societies vary in the tempo of the movement. Industrial society has high degree of mobility in comparison to tribal society or agrarian society.
- **Reverse process:** Mobility is not a one way process. It is recognized as two-way process. People may attain a higher position and at the same time there is a likelihood of falling down to the bottom level. That is why it is known as reverse process also.
- **Change of status**: Mobility in position is associated with change in status of individuals in society. For example after attaining higher education an individual not only becomes economically well-off but is also given higher status in society. However many a times it is also found that status and dignity are not changed though a person goes from one position to another. This often seen in societies where caste system is rigidly followed. For example in some place even educated dalits are not given a higher status in society.

- **Based on quality of efficiency**: Mobility seeks personal quality and efficiency of the individual. One changes one's position on the ground of his/her own educational qualification, capacity and experiences. Modern societies has put interest on achieved status rather than ascribed status.
- **Various Types**: One more feature of social mobility is that it is classified into various types such as horizontal, vertical, upward, downward etc. There are in total eight types of social mobility which are commonly and frequently used in the domain of sociological literature. Every type of them has some unique feature which is varied from one another.



**LET US KNOW**

Achieved status: Those status which an individual earns through his/her hard work is known as achieved status. A scientist has high status in society. This status is earned by him or her.Ascribed status: The status which an individual attain by birth through his/her family is called ascribed status. In many parts of India higher caste people are giving higher status. This status is inherited by them.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** a) Mention two types of status.

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b) Mention four features of social mobility.

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## 10.5 TYPES/ FORMS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY:

Social mobility is classified in to eight types. These are illustrated below.

- ***Horizontal social mobility*:** It means the movement of an individual from one social group to another situated on the same level. Here, the position of an individual is changed but the social status and ranks remain same. Thus, we may say that change of position without change in status is known as horizontal social mobility. For instance, if a person quits his job as a clerk in office A and joins as clerk in office B then it is referred to as horizontal social mobility because he changes only his position not the rank, pay etc.
- ***Vertical social Mobility***: Vertical social mobility means movement from one social stratum to another where social status and dignity is changed along with his position. One may either go up or go down. Personal qualification, efficiency, ability along with rational outlook, capability plays a significant role.
- ***Upward social mobility*:** Upward social mobility refers to that mobility where a person changes his or her position and rank to a higher position. Promotion in work place such as assistant manager of a firm becoming general manager or an MLA becoming an important Minister etc are the example of upward social mobility. Upward social mobility brings more power, authority as well as responsibility and role in that particular frame work of organization. Most of the member in a society is oriented towords upward social mobility. Class is a form of stratification that may witness upward social mobility.
- ***Downward social mobility***: Downward social mobility means that mobility where people go down from the position and status held at a lower stratum. Personal incapability inefficiency, inability to perform work properly etc is regarded as the basic cause for downward social mobility. It is the reverse process of upward social mobility. When a person is demoted from his/her earlier social rank and responsibility as well as dignity and respect from the society.
- ***Open social mobility***: Open social mobility is somewhat similar to vertical social mobility. Here, people can change their position and status on the basis of their quality and efficiency. In modern industrial

societies one may get equal opportunity to change his or her designation along with his or her economic condition. That is why the achieved status is regarded as important and significant in open society. Social mobility in open society provides one ample opportunities to develop one's skill and potentiality in society

- ***Close social mobility***: Another form of social mobility is closed social mobility where a person never gets the chance to change his/her position and status though he/she has the potentiality to do so. Indian caste system, the feudal and slavery system of ancient Europe are the examples of closed social mobility. It is regarded as closed social stratification also .Movement is totally restricted in closed social mobility from lower stratum to upper stratum and vice versa. Birth and social position of the family are considered as the vital aspect for social honor and respect.
- ***Inter-generational social mobility***: Inter-generational mobility means that type of mobility when a person moves to a social position which is different (higher or lower) from the social position held by his or her parents. Here one changes his or her rank in comparison to his family's social position. For instance, we may take the example of a person who might be a son or daughter of a vegetable vendor might achieve a position of bureaucrat, this can be said as intergenerational mobility.
- ***Intra generational social mobility***: One more aspect of mobility is intra generational mobility. It refers to that movement where an individual achieves a high position and dignity in comparison to his or her own earlier position.

## 10.6 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY

The following factors facilitate Social Mobility-

- **Motivation:** Each individual has a desire not only to have a better way of living but also to improve upon his or her social standing. In open system it is possible to achieve any status. This openness motivates people to

work hard and improve upon the skills so that one can attain higher social status. Without such motivation and efforts on the part of the individual social mobility is impossible.

- **Achievements and Failures:** Achievement here refers to extra ordinary, usually unexpected performance, which attracts the attention of a wider public to the abilities of a person. Not all achievements will result in social mobility. Achievements affect status only if they are remarkable. For example, a poor man who has acquired wealth or an unknown writer who has won a literary prize will improve his/her status.

Failures and misdeeds have a similar effect and it may lead to downward mobility. Fraudulent bankruptcy will remove a member of the upper class from blue books; he/she may receive no dinner invitations from his/her peers and he/she will become ineligible as a marriage partner. If he/she is already married, his/her wife may divorce him. He/she will have to resign from his/her clubs and all positions he holds. But he/she will not become a member of the lowest stratum, although it will be difficult for him/her to find new association.

- **Education:** Education not only helps an individual to acquire knowledge but is also a passport for occupational position for higher prestige. To become a doctor one has to have education in science subjects. Similarly, to appear in a competitive examination of I.A.S., one has to be at least graduate.

It is only after acquiring minimum formal education that individual can aspire to occupy higher positions. It is through education that in modern India the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes have not only being able to change their traditional occupation but have also started occupying jobs of higher prestige. In the modern industrial society in which statuses can be achieved and education is basic requirement.

- **Skills and Training:** Each society makes provision to impart skill and training to the younger generation. To acquire skill and training one has to spend a lot of time as well as money. Why these persons spend money and time? The reason being that society gives incentives to such persons. When they complete their training, they are entitled to high positions, which

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

Society not only assigns higher social status but also gives higher economic rewards and other privileges to those persons who have these training. Keeping in view these incentives people undergo training with a hope to move up in the social ladder. In other words, skills and training facilitate in improvement of the position, this leads to social mobility.

- **Migration:** Migration also facilitates social mobility. People migrate from one place to another either due to pull or push factors. A particular place may not have opportunities and facilities to improve upon. Hence, people are forced to migrate to other places to earn their livelihood. At new places, where they migrate, may have different openings and opportunities.

The persons who avail the opportunities can improve their social position. We can take the example of people belonging to the Scheduled Castes of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, who migrate to the States of Punjab and Haryana to earn their livelihood. Here they become farm labourers.

After acqiring 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 State of America. The pull factors attract the people because they do not have those 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.

People migrate from villages to cities because urban centers have institutions of higher status as well as opportunities for jobs. People come to urban areas to acquire education and skills and occupy higher positions than their parents and brothers who continue to live in villages. In this way we find that both push and pull factors lead to migration which subsequently facilitates social mobility.

- **Industrialization:** Industrial Revolution ushered in a new social system in which people are given status according to their ability and training. No importance was given to their caste, race, religion and ethnicity. Industrialization resulted in mass production at cheaper rate. This forced the artisans out of their work. In search of jobs they migrated to industrial towns.They acquired new vocational training and got jobs in industries. With experience and training they moved up in the social ladder. In the industrial society, the statuses are achieved, whereas in the traditional society like India, the statuses are ascribed according to birth. Hence industrialization facilitates greater social mobility.
- **Urbanization:** In the cities there are more people and they have more formal relations. People do not know each other intimately. Urban centers are marked by anonymity. People are close to their friends and relatives only. Urban settlements provide secrecy to individual's caste and background. Individual's position is largely dependent upon his/her education, occupation and income rather than his/her background. 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. Urbanization facilitates social mobility by removing those factors which hinder social mobility.
- **Legislation:** The enactment of new laws can also facilitate social mobility. When Zamindari Abolition Act was passed, most of the tenant cultivators became owner cultivators which indicate improvement in their status that is, from tenants to owner cultivators. Similarly, the legal provision for reservation of jobs and promotion for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has also helped in ensuring social mobility.

Reservation with regard to admission in professional colleges, reservation in jobs and promotions have allowed a large number of individuals from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to improve upon their status. When V.R Singh Government accepted the Mandal Commission report it provided reservation in job for the other Backward Classes (OBCs) also.

Similarly, the judicial system by passing certain judgments may also facilitate social mobility. Hindu Marriage Act in different ways has enhanced the status

of women. Similarly, Hindu Succession Act has given equal rights to the daughters in the family property. Racial Anti-Discrimination Act of America has facilitated social mobility to the persons of Black race. In this way we find that legal provisions also facilitate social mobility.

- **Politicization:** With education and greater exposure to mass media of communication as well as greater contacts have made people aware about their rights. The political parties also educate the people about their rights. To achieve their rights people unite and force the authority in power to accept their demands. These persons may use agitations, strikes etc. as methods of attaining the desired goals. The political party in order to get votes provides a number of concessions. With the help of these new concessions and provisions, people improve upon their social status. A few persons may become political leaders, Ministers, Cabinet Ministers or Chief Minister of a State. Many such examples can be found in the present day Indian polity. This has resulted into upward social mobility for them. Similarly, with greater political awareness with representatives in State assembly and Parliament they can design certain politics to help the lower segments of the society.
- **Modernization:** The process of modernization involves use of scientific knowledge and modern technology. It also refers to rationality and secular way of life. With the improvement in technology people who were engaged in occupations of low prestige like scavengers discard their traditional occupations and take up occupations which are not dirty and have no polluting effects.

In this way, they change their position in upward direction. Similarly, the level of development of a country also facilitates or hinders social mobility. The less developed and traditional societies continue with old system of stratification and with ascribed statuses.

Whereas the developed and modern societies paved the way for greater opportunities and competition, it is only in the developed countries that there is a greater possibility for achieved statuses. In other words, modernization facilitates social mobility.

## 10.7 FACTORS HINDERING MOBILITY

According to H. M Johnson, one of the factors associated with obstructing social mobility is associated with the existence of family. It means that societies where family is a recognized group, there inequality of social opportunity will continue (to some extent) to favor some. For example in the earlier section we have seen that education facilitates social mobility but in societies where 'quality' of education varies on the basis of one's ability to buy it then this can hinder social mobility.Again, social class remains intact through class endogamy. This implies the tendency to arrange marriage alliances within similar class groups. This ensures securing the valued resources and advantages within a particular class from generation to generation. In the famous theory forwarded by C.W Mills, known as the elite theory it was argued that in American society a small minority consist of the power groups. They belong to military, economic and political domain. Though these groups are different from the functions played by one another but their interests and 'social background' is often similar which interconnects them as an unified group, which is termed by Mills as the 'power elite'. Within the three groups there is often exchange of personnel from one field to another. Thus, inequality of opportunity through one's socio-economic position holds a tendency minimize social mobility.



### CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q.2:** a) Mention four factors which facilitate social mobility.

_____

_____

b) Mention the author of the book power elite.

_____

_____



## 10.8 LET US SUM UP

- Social mobility means movement of persons and groups from one social position to another.
- Horizontal social mobility means the movement of an individual from one social group to another situated on the same level.
- Vertical social mobility means movement from one social stratum to another where social status and dignity is changed along with one's position.
- Upward social mobility refers to that mobility where a person changes his or her position and rank to a higher position.
- Downward social mobility means that mobility where people are falling down from the holding position and status to the lower stratum.
- Open social mobility is seen in societies where people can change their position and status on the basis of their quality and efficiency.
- Closed social mobility is seen where a person never gets the chance to change his/her position and status though he/she has the potentiality to change.
- Inter-generational mobility means that type of mobility when a person moves to a social position which is different (higher or lower) fromthe social position held by his or her parents.
- intragenerational mobility refers to that movement where an individual achieves a high position and dignity in comparison to his or her own earlier position.
- Different factors like education, legislation, urbanization, industrialization etc facilitate social mobility.



## 10.9 FURTHER READING

Haralambos, M. & Heald M. R. 1980. *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. Delhi, Oxford University Press.

Johnson, Harry M. 1966. Sociology : A Systematic Introduction, Allied Publisher.

## 10.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q1:** a) Universality, Vary in Movement, Reverse process, Change of status

b) Achieved and ascribed status

**Ans. to Q2:** a) Urbanization, politicization, modernization, industrialization

b) C.W Mills.



## 10.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**(A) SHORT QUESTIONS** (Answer within 150 words)

**Q1:** Define social mobility.

**Q2:** Write about the factors the hinder social mobility.

**(B) LONG QUESTIONS** (Answer within 300-500 words)

**Q1:** Discuss about the features of social mobility.

**Q2:** Briefly discuss about the types of social mobility with examples.

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# UNIT 11: FAMILY, MARRIAGE AND KINSHIP

## UNIT STRUCTURE


11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Meaning and Definition of Family

- 11.3.1 Family- the functionalist perspective
- 11.3.2 The Marxian Perspective of Family
- 11.3.3 Feminist analysis of Family

11.4 Meaning and Definition of Marriage

- 11.4.1 Characteristics of Marriage
- 11.4.2 Forms of Marriage
- 11.4.3 Rules of Marriage
- 11.4.4 Mate Selection Process

11.5 Incest Taboo

11.6 Kinship System

- 11.6.1 Distinction among kin types
- 11.6.2 Descent

11.7 Let Us Sum up

11.8 Further Reading

11.9 Answers to check your progress

11.10 Possible Questions


## 11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the different perspectives of family.
- know the meaning, characteristics, forms and rules of marriage
- know what is incest taboo
- discuss the kinship system

## 11.2 INTRODUCTION

Many sociologists said that family is the basic unit of social organisation. Though some variation exists on the basis of its composition

but family has been one of the universal social phenomena and has been an inevitable part of human society. Individuals are generally born into a family and after a certain age individuals get married. Thus, birth and marriage are two important aspects in an individual's life. They determine and defines one's relation with some 'significant' others. In common day parlance they are known as relatives. The complex system defining the relation between individuals and the significant others related by birth or through marriage is known as the kinship system. In this unit we shall learn about these three aspects of human society that is, family, marriage and the kinship system.

## 11.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF FAMILY

Some important definitons of family as given by Sociologists are as follows -

According to **MacIver and Page,** "Family is a group defined by sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children."

According to **K. Davis,** "Family is a group of persons whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity and who are therefore kin to one another."

**Gerald Leslie** has defined family as, a group of two adults who belong to the opposite sex, live in a socially approved sex relationship. These two adults of opposite sex along with their biological or adopted children comprise a family.

According to **G.P Murdock**, a family is a social group which is characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction.

### 11.3.1 Family- the Functionalist perspective

The functionalist perspective is based on the assumption that every society has certain 'requirements'. These requirements need to be fulfilled by its parts for its survival. Therefore, it views every aspect/part of the society from the function it plays in

maintaining the whole (society). Accordingly the functionalists, while analysing family, concentrate on the function it plays in society. Therefore, while analysing family the functionalist perspective takes the following aspects in to consideration:

- *Functions performed by family in society*: This aspect concentrates on the contributions made by family in fulfilling the requirements of a society.
- *The relationship between family and other aspects of the social system*: The functionalist perspective tries to locate the interdependence of family with other aspects of the social system like the economic or the political system.
- *Function of a family towards the individuals*: This aspects tries to locate how family can stabilize personalties.

Let us discuss how two important functionalist have analysed family.

*George Peter Murdock*: After examining 250 societies **George Peter Murdock** has stated that a family's multi-sided utility makes it inevitable for all societies. According to him, family performs four basic functions in all societies. Therefore, he calls them the universal functions and they are: sexual, reproductive , economic and educational functions. Each function is essential for maintaining order in society. First of all, without sexual and reproductive function there would not be any members in the society. The rules of sexual activity within the family prohibit the adversive effects upon the social order. It serves the interests of the individuals by not only providing sexual gratification but also strengthening emotional bond between individuals. Secondly, a family plays economic function by providing/ procuring and preparing food. In this context he had referred to the division of labour existing within a family whereby a husband takes care of one aspect of the economic activity and the wife looks into the other aspect of economic activity. It also plays the role of socialising or educating the younger generation, which forms the basis of a culture.

**Talcott Parsons**: While analysing family, Parsons had primarily discussed the two basic function of family. One is family as the primary agent in the socialisation of children and the other is the 'stabilisation of the adult personalities of the population of the society'. Family is considered the primary socialising agent because the socialisation during the early years of an individual takes place within his or her family. Socialisation through other agencies like, neighbourhood, school etc. starts a little later after the child has acquired certain basic social traits from the family. Parsons has argued that primary socialisation involves two basic processes and they are:

- internalising society's culture
- structuring the personality of the individuals.

According to Parsons, if the culture of a society is not internalised by the individuals then that society will cease to exist. This is because without shared values and norms which are the components of a culture cooperation among individuals would be difficult and thereby social life would not persist. Thus, culture is an inevitable aspect of a society and it is not only learned but also internalised by the individuals. Once it is internalised by an individual it becomes a part of his or her personality structure. A family moulds the personality (by various dos and don'ts) of the child on the basis of the central values of the culture. Parsons had cited the example of American society to illustrate this fact. In American culture, independence and achievement is highly valued so families try to make their children more independent and achievement oriented. He said that families 'are factories which produce human personality'. Family also provides an environment consisting of warmth, security and mutual support which makes the primary or the basic socialisation process effective.

Secondly, the personality which is shaped is also required to be kept stable. This, according to Parson is yet another important function of a family. Here comes the significance of another institution

which is marriage. A marriage relationship is supposed to provide the emotional security to the individuals. This relationship acts as a counterbalance against the stress and strain experienced in everyday life which otherwise possess the potential to destabilise the individuals. This is particularly true in case of industrial societies where the pace of life is very fast and the families (which often nuclear) are secluded from the broader kin group. Since families are separated from the kin group or the extended family it does not receive the security (physical, financial or emotional) as before. Therefore often the couples are dependent on one another particularly for emotional support. This improves the bond between the couples who in turn help one another to remain stable. Here we can see that one institution is dependent on the other for its survival as claimed by the functionalists.

However the functionalist view of a family has been criticised by many as it portrays a picture of only an 'ideal' family comprising well-adjusted children and understanding spouses caring for each other's needs. Secondly it portrays only the American middle-class family and therefore this analogy cannot be considered 'general'. So let us discuss other perspectives regarding family.

### 11.3.2 THE MAXIAN PESPECTIVE OF FAMILY

Marxian sociologists use Marx's theory of Dialectical Materialism to understand other aspects of society and family is one of them. According to Marx in every society a small section owns the means of production (it is their private property) they are knowns as the haves. The other, who are in majority, donot own the means of production and they are known as the have nots. Since the have nots do not own the means of the production they are forced to work for the haves. Since the have nots are employed by the haves, the have nots are dependent on the haves and this dependence becomes the source of exploitation of the have nots by the haves. This understanding became the basic premise for

the analysis of society and family is one of those aspects. Friedrich Engles, a close associate of Marx had written an important work about the origin and evolution of family in his book, '*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State*'.

According to Engles, during the early stages of human history, the forces of production were communally owned. During that time the concept of a separate family did not exist, the society itself was the family. Accordingly there were no rules regarding sexual relationship. Thus, this stage of human history was characterised by promiscuity. He speculated that from promiscuity, marriage and family had evolved through certain stages. In each successive stage increasing restrictions were imposed on the number of mates obtainable for each individual. Once the concept of private property emerged, the concept of monogamous family too emerged. This form of family had emerged to solve the problem of inheritance of property. In order to ensure that the property owned is transferred to the 'legitimate' heirs, restrictions were laid on the sexuality of woman to avoid the confusion regarding the paternity of the child.

### 11.3.3 FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF FAMILY

Several feminist have employed the Marxian theorising to analyse family in the capitalist world. According to feminists like Margaret Benston, family in the modern capitalist world has become a unit of production which produces 'labour' which is one of the basic commodities of capitalism.This production is done in a much cheap rate as capitalists are not required to pay for the production and upkeep of children (future labour). This is particularly true in case of the women who are considered as 'housewives'. These woman who work at home relentlessly as unpaid labourers to produce and rear children and also take care of the husband inorder to ensure latter's good performance at work. The emotional support provided by the wife acts as an avenue for absorption of the frustrations accumulated by the husband in the process of working

in the exploitative capitalist system.As rightly pointed by Ansley, 'When wives play their traditional role as takers of shit, they often absorb their husband's legitimate anger and frustration at their own powerlessness and oppression. With every worker provided with a sponge to soak up his possibly revolutionary ire, the bosses rest more secure'.

This is profitable for the capitalists as they are not required to pay women for the work they do at home. To pay the women for the amount of work they do at home would require a massive redistribution of wealth. Again, due to the fact that the husband must pay for the production and upkeep of the future labour, he keeps himself disciplined at work despite exploitation and he refrains from any bargain at work.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** a) Who is the author of the book, 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and Society'?

_____

_____

b) Mention two function of family.

_____

_____

## 11.4 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

According to Malinowski, marriage is a "contract for production and maintenance of children"

According to Edward Westermarck marriage is a 'more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring".

### 11.4.1 Characteristics of Marriage

- ***Universal***: One of the major chaacteristics of the institution of marraige is that it is universal. This means that though its form may vary but it exists in all societies from the most primitive ones to the most modern societies.
- ***Marriage involves performing civil or religious ceremonies***: Since marriage is considered a sacred bond between two individuals, some kind of religious rituals and ceremonies are observed during marriages.
- ***Marriage requires social approval***: Marriage is different from cohabitation in the sense that cohabitation only requires the consent of two individuals but marriage requires the consent of society. This consent is expressed through the presence of a large gathering in a ceremony to mark the marriage of two individuals. Nowadays, social approval can be achieved through legal procedures which do not require a gathering of a large number of people.
- ***Marriage defines social obligations***: Marriage between two individuals is different from other sexual relationship on the ground that marriage defines the rights and duties of the individuals towards each other. In this context the social approval becomes crucial because society becomes the 'witness' of the consent given by the individuals to each other. In case of the violation of the obligations, the society imposes sanctions on the individuals.
- ***Marriage forms the basis of family***: In the previous section we have read that family is the basic unit of organisation in every society. But it is the marriage between two individuals which gives rise to a family.

### 11.4.2 FORMS OF MARRIAGE

There are three major forms of marriage which are discussed below::

- ***Monogamy***: It is the most widely practised form of marriage. It is a form of marriage where one man marries one woman. In

some societiesi individuals are permitted to remarry only after the death of one spouse or after divorce. This is known as serial monogamy. However in some societies remarriage is not at all encouraged. This is known as straight monogamy. For example, many women belonging to higher castes in India are not allowed to remarry even after the death of their spouse. However, these restrictions are not imposed on the male members and they can remarry after the dealth of their wives.

- ***Polygamy***: This is that form of marriage where an individual is married to more than one mate. This form of marriage is of *two types* and they are *polygyny* and *polyandry*. Polygyny is that form of marriage where an individual has more than one wife at a time, whereas polyandry is a form of marriage where one woman has several husbands at a time. In some polyandrous societies like among the Khasas of Uttaranchal fraternal polyandry is observed. This implies that all brothers in a family marry one woman. This kind of marriage is generally found in those societies which exist in harsh environmental and thereby difficult economic condition. The harsh economic condition makes it difficult for a single male to support and upkeep a separate and individual family.
- ***Group Marriage***: This implies marriage of two or more women with two or more men. Here each individual is the spouse of the each opposite sex in the group. In other words, husbands are common husbands and wives are common wives. The children born out of this kind of marriage alliance are considered the children of the whole group.This kind of marriage is generally rare and almost in the verge of extinction.

### 11.4.3 Rules of Marriage:

Every society follows certain rules regarding the selection of the mates. Thus, every society has some definite rules regarding who one should marry. Some of those rules are discussed below:

- Endogamy is the rule related to marriage which requires an individual to marry within a particular specified group. That group may be class, caste, tribe, religion, community etc. For example, we often hear that among some communities in India marriage alliances are formed between individuals belonging one caste only.
- Exogamy is a rule related to marriage which requires individuals to marry outside certain specified group. That group can be gotra or clan, pravara, pinda or village. For example, within a tribe there are several clans. Among the Mishing tribe of Assam there are several clans bearing different surnames like Pegu, Doley, Patir etc. Now marriage between two Mishing individuals is preferred (which is the practice of endogamy). But a boy whose surname is Pegu cannot marry a girl whose surname is also Pegu even though they are not blood relatives. This is the practise of exogamy. This is because there is a belief that even though they are not direct blood relatives but may be distant relatives and in that way they are considered as brother and sister. Again, in some villages the boys and the girls residing and growing up together are considered brothers and sisters. Therefore, marital alliance between the individuals residing in the same village is not accepted.

## 11.4.4 MATE SELECTION PROCESS:

We have already come to know that marriage is a social process and it involves the following of certain socially defined rules. In this context selection of mate is an important aspect. On the basis of the process of selecting one spouse or mate we can classify the marriage and they are:

- ***Arranged marriage***: In some societies like among the Hindus it is generally an obligation on the part of the parents of the individuals to select the correct partner, mate or spouse for their son or daughter. In such marraiges individuals do not have much

say about their preference, likes or dislikes regarding their prospective partners. This kind of marriage still exists among many communities in India.

- ***Love Marriage***: In most of the societies as individuals become adults, they are supposed to choose the individuals they would like to marry. Individuals generally spend a time period of courtship to understand each others feelings and temperament. After taking the decision to marry one another, the individuals seek social approval. This form of marriage is popularly known a love marriage in India. However instances of this kind of marriage in India are found in ancient literature as *Gandhava Vivaha.*

Besides these major types there are other mate selecting process which is specially observed among some tribes. Some of those are:

- ***Mate selection through service***: Among some of the tribes a practise is prevalent that a prospective groom must provide service to the bride's family for certain period of time as decided. If the bride's father is satisfied with the service then the consent for marriage is granted.
- ***Marriage by capture***: Among certain communities seeking the social consent for marriage requires capturing a prospective bride by the prospective groom is required. However among most of the tribes this capture is ceremonial or prearranged.
- ***Marriage by trial***: In this form of marriage, an individual before asking a girl's hands for marriage must prove his strength. Among the Bhils during the community festivals, several games are conducted where young man are provided with the avenues to showcase their prowess.
- ***Marriage by intrusion***: In this kind of marriage, a girl desirous of marrying a particular boy thrusts herself in his house. She performs all the household chores and even bears all the abuses and humiliations meted out to her by the boy's family members till the boy gives his consent for marriage.

- ***Marriage by probation***: In his kind of marriage, before marrying two individuals cohabit with one another to check one another's compatibility and then they decide whether they would marry or not.

## 11.5 INCEST TABOO

Every society follows some rules regarding whom one or a family can choose as a prospective bride or groom. In some societies these, rules are rigid and in some societies these rules are flexible. However, one rule is common in most of the societies and that prohibition of marriage or sexual relation among blood relatives. For example, sexual relation between father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister is called incest and it is a taboo in almost all the societies.

## 11.6 KINSHIP SYSTEM

Human societies consist of different social groups and we have already read that family is the basic group in any society. Now, Kinship system is one of the basic organising principles in every human society. This system establishes relationship between an individual and the groups. In other words it refers to the set of rules which define how individuals are related to one another. For example, in a family children are related to parents by blood but a husband and wife in a family are related to one another through marriage alliance. So individuals are either related to one another by the virtue of blood relationship called *consanguinity*, or by the virtue of marriage relationship known as *affinity*. So, we attain some relatives by birth. We cannot choose them but marriage alliances provide some amount choice to select our relatives. So we are related to our consaguinal kin by blood. The kinship system determines who will inherit the family property.

### 11.6.1 Distinction among Kin Types

We all have different types of kin or relatives and in most of the societies there are different terms to refer to the different kins. This

reduces a lot of confusion. According to Harry M Johnson there are six most important disctinctions among the kin types and they are:

- *Sex*: The terms 'brother' or 'sister' indicate the sex of the kin referred to.
- *Generation*: The terms like 'mother' and 'daughter' indicates difference in generation but the term cousin indicates sameness of the generation.
- *Affinity*: In some societies different terms are used to indicate affinal kin and consanguinal kin. For example in most of the northern regions of India maternal grandfather is called *Nana* and paternal grandfather is called *dada.*
- *Collaterality*: An individual's collateral relatives include one's own siblings, all the siblings of one's lineal relations (example of lineal relatives may be grandfather, father, son, grandson etc) and all the descendants of the above mentioned two groups.
- *Bifurcation*: Sometimes the kinship terms fail to indicate the sex of the relative through whom the individual or the ego is related. For example, the word 'niece' does not specify whether one is referring to brother's or sister's daughter. In Assamese, the term 'Aita' does not specify whether one is referring to mother's mother or father's mother.
- *Linkage*: This aspect is important when a term fails to specify whether the affinal kin is linked to the ego through another affinal relative or through a consaguinal relative. For example the term sister-in-law does not specify the 'intervening' relative (brother, wife or husband)



**LET US KNOW**

In anthropology ego refers to the individual from whom the networks of kinship and family relationship is traced.

### 11.6.2 Descent

There is a set of principles by which an individual's (the word ego is used for individual) affiliation and probability to become a successor of the family property is determined. It is known as 'descent'. In certain societies a child is considered a descendant of only the father's family. This system is known as patrilineal descent and in some societies children are considered to be the descendant of the mother's family and, therefore, such societies are known to be following matrilineal descent. This two systems are also known as Unilineal descent system. Again, in the some societies children are considered to be a descendent of both the father's and mother's family. Such societies are known as *bilateral or cognatic*. So, there are three main rules of descent and they are: *patrilineal, matrilineal* and *bilateral*. In patrilineal societies or the societies following patrilineal descent, the father is identified as the sole procreator while the mother is considered just as the carrier of the progeny. In the patrilineal descent system, inheritance of family property is passed from father to son and authority/decision making power is rested on the hands of the senior male members. In such societies, daughters are considered merely guests for a few years in the natal house. The folk culture and the folk songs of those societies often refer to this fact. However, it is seen that even after marriage daughters continue to have strong emotional, material and ritual relationship with the natal group. For example in many societies in India the maternal uncle or the mama plays an important role in several rituals like in the *Annaprasana* where the presence of the maternal uncle is important. On the other hand in societies following matrilineal descent, the family property is passed either from mother to daughter or from mother's brother to sister's son. For example earlier the Nayar community in Kerala was matrilineal and had a matrilocal residence system. The families consisted of the sisters, sister's children and sister's daughter's children. They all resided in one

house known as the *taravad*. The husbands 'visited' the wives in their wives' *taravad*. Again, among the Khasis of Meghalaya, the matrilineal descent system is followed. In Khasi society the youngest daughter inherits the family property. However the decision making power regarding the family property resides on the hands of the maternal uncle. The elder daughters generally move out of the family house and build separate nuclear families along with their husbands. The Garos of Meghalaya also follow the matrilineal descent system. After marriage the husband resides in the wives house but the husband becomes the head of family (after the death of the wifes' father) and the manager of the wifes' family property.



**ACTIVITY 1**

Recall a crises situation in your family and discuss the kind of support (emotional, financial, physical) you and your family has received from your relatives.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.2:** a) Mention the different types of descent system.

_____

_____

b) Name a matrilineal society/tribe.

_____

_____



## 11.7 LET US SUM UP

- Family is the basic unit of a social organisation.
- The functionalists concentrate on the contributions made by family in fulfilling the requirements of a society.

- The functionalist perspective tries to locate the interdependence of family with other aspects of the social system like the economic or the political system.
- Marriage forms the basis of family.
- Marriage is a social institution which involves granting consent to two adult individuals to form a family and procreate.
- Kinship system is one of the basic organising principles in every human society. This system establishes relationship between an individual and the groups.
- Kinship system refers to the set of rules which define how individuals are related to one another.



## 11.8 FURTHER READINGS

M.Franscis Abraham. 2017. Contemporary Sociology: An introduction to concepts and theories.

Johnson, Harvy M. 1966. Sociology : A Systermatic Introduction. New Delhi : Allied Publishers.

## 11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOU PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q.1:** a) Friedrich Engles

b) Reproductive function and economic function

**Ans. to Q.1:** a) Patrilineal descent system and matrilineal descent system

b) Khasi



## 11.10 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**Short Questions** (Answer within 150 words)

**Q1:** a) What is meant by taravad ?

b) What is meant by incest ?

**Long Question** (Answer within 350-500 words)

**Q1:** Discuss the significance of family, marriage and kinship in contemporary society.

**Q2:** Define family. Critically compare the functionalist and Marxist perspective of family.

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# UNIT 12: RELIGION

## UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives
12.2 Introduction
12.3 Definitions of Religion
12.4 Origin of Religion
12.5 Forms of Religion
12.6 Theories on Religion
12.7 Social Role of Religion
12.8 Religion and Globalization
12.9 Let Us Sum Up
12.10 Further Reading
12.11 Answers to check your progress
12.12 Possible Questions

## 12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understanding the meaning and definitions of religion.
- learn about the origin and forms of religion.
- know about the theories of religion.
- understanding the social role of religion.
- discuss the relationship between religion and globalization.

## 12.2 INTRODUCTION

Religion is an important aspect of every society. The word 'religion' is derived from the Latin word 'religare', which means 'to bind together' or from the word 'religere', which meant 'to rehearse, to execute painstakingly' suggesting both group identity and ritual (Yinger, 1957:13). Religion refers to a deep faith in a super natural power and parhaps it may be the chief reason to recognize religion as a prime agent of social control. India is a diversified country, diversified in the sense of multidimensional social

aspects. Religion is one such an aspect where diversification is visible. As we know, Constitution declares as India a secular republic country. It simply means that India does not promote any particular religion as a national religion unlike many other countries in the world. India makes equal treatment to all the religion practised within its geographical boundary.

Man is a social animal and religion is man's vital concern. Man has biological, economic and social needs, but also has what is known as a religious need. Religion, as a component of human behavior, had interested, fascinated, confused and confounded the scientists from an early period.

Religious experience is associated with emotions, especially with the emotions of fear, awe, or reverence. It is closely associated with morality and has elaborate rules of conduct. Some of the major world religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In this unit we will learn about religion in detail.

## 12.3 DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION

Different scholars explain their views regarding religion. The different definitions of religion are mentioned below.

**Durkheim**, in his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious life* he, defines religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden."

**James** G. Frazer, in his work, *Golden Bough* considered religion to be a belief in "powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life."

**Edward** Sapir, an American anthropologist, says that "the essence of religion consists in man's never-ceasing attempt to discover a road to spiritual serenity across the perplexities and dangers of daily life."

**Maciver** and Page have said, "Religion as we understand the term implies a relationship not merely between man and man but also between man and some higher power."

According to Ogburn, "Religion is an attitude towards superhuman powers."

**Max Muller** defines religion as "a mental faculty or disposition which enables man to apprehend the infinite".

**Thomas F. O'Dea**, a functional theorist, defines religion as "the manipulation of non-empirical or supra-empirical means for non-empirical or super-empirical ends". He further adds, "Religion offers what is felt to be a way of entering into a relationship with the supra-empirical aspects of reality, be they conceived as God, gods, or otherwise".

## 12.4 ORIGIN OF RELIGION

Sociologists and anthropologists believe that the primitive man's imagination was born out of fear and that insecurity, mode of worship, beliefs and liturgy are instrumental in the development of modern organized religion. In the hunting and food-gathering stages, primitive man's life was full of uncertainties. Will he get the hunt? Will he be able to collect food? He also had to face the cruelty of nature in the form of rain, floods, thunder and storms. Dreams, illness and death were mysterious for him. He did not understand the causes of these natural phenomena. Therefore, in order to cope with the unknown, the primitive man developed certain beliefs about good and bad men as well as the benevolent and harmful aspects of Nature.

At this stage, man's life has two dimensions. The first dimension was of feeling and seeing. Therefore, primitive man tried to define human nature and animal behavior by means of his capacity to see, hear and understand. For him, death, epidemics, rain, storms and floods etc., were the disasters he was exposed to and the helplessness, uncertainty and defenselessness gave rise to human speculations, beliefs and practices. These in turn gradually generated the development of modern organized religion.

The mental, social and geographical horizon of the primitive man was limited. His/her life was limited to the basic needs. It was in the effort to fulfill these needs that the primitive man/woman very partially developed his/her system of beliefs and religious practices.

Tylor and Spencer held that religion originated in the life of the primitive man/woman because of the concept of spirit. They believe that the primitive man/woman came to believe in the existence of soul through

his/her speculation about death and dreams. According to Tylor, the primitive man believed that soul resides in the human body and it goes out when man/woman sleeps. When he/she wakes up it returns to the body. When the soul does not return to the body, it is the lifeless state or death. The primitive man/woman kept the dead body of his dear ones in the hope that soul would come back and enter the body.

During the stages of hunting and food collection, primitive man/woman made certain achievements but he/she also faced lot of disappointments. He/she believed that his/her happiness depended on the happiness and satisfaction of the soul of his/her dead relatives and ancestors. If some of their ancestor do not rest in peace their life will be miserable. Thus, concept of the soul of the dead generated faith in the life of primitive man/woman and the efforts made to satisfy souls of the ancestors created liturgy and rituals.

Spencer believes that the origin of belief in the life of the primitive man/woman was due to dreams. The primitive man/woman associated dreams with the souls of ancestors and ghosts, which gave rise to belief in supernatural power. Spencer on the basis of this logic discusses the growth of religion in various societies. The idea of the origin of religion propounded by Spencer and Tylor is called theory of 'animism' or 'ancestor worship'.

Frazer holds that the primitive man/woman was in a state of continuous struggle with Nature. Sometimes he/she succeeded in controlling Nature and sometimes Nature defeated him/her. The changing practices developed by the primitive man/woman to control. Nature is called 'magic'. When defeated by Nature primitive man/woman worshipped Nature to propitiate or please it. Religion originated from the worship of Nature. Frazer's these ideas have been called the theory of 'Naturalism'.

Durkheim criticizes these theories of the origin as religion. According to Durkheim these theories project primitive man/woman as philosophers whereas Durkheim felt that their ideas and social life were too simple. Secondly these theories stress on psychological aspects but for Durkheim religious beliefs are totally social. He criticized the earlier sociologist and anthropologists on the grounds that their explanation for religion is

psychological, and that they made religion an illusion whereas nothing so universal and important in human society could be illusory. Durkheim argues that in all societies a distinction is made between 'sacred' and 'profane' objects. Religion is related to sacred objects. Individuals performing at religious rituals and festival strengthen their solidarity and their solidarity fills them with a social spirit.

Later anthropologists particularly Malinowski and Radcliff Brown have conducted studies to know how religion used to functions in primitive societies. According to them, religion maintains social harmony and controls individual's behavior.

- **Animism**

According to animism, the idea of the soul (anima) is central to religion. Hence, the name is animism. According to E.B. Tylor, primitive man/woman hit upon the idea of soul because of an error. In his/her dreams, he/she walked about various places engaged in various types of activities and met his dead ancestors even while his/her body remained in one place. He/she deduced from this experience that each individual has a double or another self, which has the power of leaving the body and traveling to distant place. This double is distinguished from the person in several respects. "It is more malleable and plastic; for it to leave the body, it must pass out by its apertures especially the mouth and nose. It is represented as made of matter, but of a matter much more subtle and ethereal than any which we know empirically. This double is the soul."

Thus they questioned, how did the soul attain the status of a disembodied spirit? An answer to this question is provided by another error supposed to have been made by primitive men/women. They thought of death as a prolonged sleep as a result of which the body disintegrated and ceased walking. The soul consequently became disembodied and free and roamed around those who were living. Gradually, the population of spirit souls grew. It was thought that these spirits had the needs, passions, and interests of living men/women and were inclined either to aid or to injure their erstwhile living companions. Being ethereal and fluid, these spirits could enter into the bodies of living beings and cause either all sorts of

disorder or increase the strength and vitality of the bodies. It was assumed that an evil spirit caused the disorders but benign spirit increased the strength and vitality of the body and brought about other wholesome changes. Primitive men thus found an explanation for all kinds of happenings that varied from the ordinary in terms of the activities of spirits. Illness or some such misfortune was ascribed to the work of evil spirits while good things of life were attributed to the work of benign spirits. The next step was, therefore, an attempt to conciliate and appease the spirits in order to ensure that they did not harm the living beings. The modus of appeasement took the form of prayers, offerings, sacrifices and other practices. Thus deity was created from a simple conception of a 'double' in a human body. Since death brought about this apotheosis, "It was to the dead, to the souls of the ancestors that the first cult known to humanity was addressed. Thus, the first rites were funeral rites; the first sacrifices were food offering destined to satisfy the needs of the departed; the first altars were tombs".

Tylor explained animism by formulating the theory that early men could not distinguish the animate from inanimate objects. He endowed all things, even the inanimate objects, with human characteristics and, hence, with souls. It was held that the souls governed the affairs of men. Likewise, it was also held that the soul of other things, including those of trees and animals, governed the external world – "the flow of rivers, the movement of stars, the germination of plants, the reproduction of animals etc." Early men were more attracted by these cosmic spirits than by those of his/her ancestors because the external things inhabited by spirits were more real to them than the ancestors who existed only in their imagination. They, therefore, implored the assistance of these spirits with offerings and prayers. Thus came into being a completely animistic view of the world. The ancestor cult was supplemented by a nature worshipping cult.

- **Naturism**

The theory of naturism is associated with the name of Max Muller. He accepted Taylor's theory of the origin of the conception of soul with exception that he placed greater emphasis on death as the source rather than on dreams. This development was, however, considered by Max Muller

as secondary in importance. The source of religious inspiration was to be sought, according to him, in the deep influence exercised by nature in all its varied aspects upon the mind of early man/woman. He actually defined nature. In the words of Max Muller, "At first sight, nothing seemed less natural than nature. Nature was the greatest surprise, a terror, a marvel, a standing miracle, and was only on account of their permanence, constancy and regular recurrence that certain features of that standing miracle were called natural in the sense of foreseen, common, intelligible… It was that vast domain of surprise, of terror, of marvel, of miracle, the unknown, as distinguished from the known, or as I like to express it, the infinite, as distinct from the finite, which supplied from the earliest times the impulse to religions thought and language." Max Muller maintained that an attitude of awe of love and reverence towards objects of nature was born as a result of a 'diseased' mind which invested lifeless things with life and all the power that is associated with life. This was brought about by early man's/woman's stupidity again – this time his/her linguistic confusion. Such linguistic errors as the sun rises and sets, or thunder sends rain or that trees bears flowers and fruits, gave rise to belief in some power inherent in the sun, thunder and the trees, etc. "Hence a spirit had to be attributed to the objects in order to account for the acts which were confounded with them in their names. Language thus superimposed upon the material world as revealed to be the senses; a new world composed of spiritual beings created out of nothing and felt to be the causes of physical events. Once invented the vocabulary representing this spirit world was capable of indefinite expansion, so that a pantheon, a hierarchy of deities would be created. The idea of man's own soul was a secondary growth and the religion of ancestor worship was a reflection of the more important nature worship."

- **Manaism**

The assumption that the people have a conception of the soul has been criticized by some anthropologists. According to them, the entire religious life of the primitive people was born out of their belief in the existence of a certain supernatural power or spirit in an object animate and inanimate.

They did not distinguish between the animate and objects inanimate because in their view such distinctions were a later development. It is therefore, wrong to assume that the primitive people became aware, in the first instance, of a soul in man and subsequently conceived of the soul in lower animals and inanimate objects. Marett characterized such idea of spirit or supernatural power among primitive people as 'non-personalized' concept of spirit', and he called such a set of beliefs animatism or manaism after 'mana' used by Melanesians to designate force. Some North American tribes called this power orenda or maniton.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q.1:** Name a thinker who is associated with Naturism.

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**Q.2:** Who authoured the book, 'Goldern Bough'?

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## 12.5 FORMS OF RELIGION

Religion seeks to interpret and control man's relations to the forces of his physical and social environment. These forces are thought to be under the control of some supernatural power. The attempt to inter prêt man's relations to these forces led to several forms of religion like superstition, animism, totemism, magic, ceremonialism, and fetishism. A brief explanation of these forms is necessary in order to clarify the concept of religion.

- **Superstition:** Superstition is the conviction that something shall happen owing to the causes utterly disproportionate to the event. For example, the belief that there would be some trouble in the journey if a cat has crossed the path, or that there will come some calamity because a star has fallen

from the sky, or that Saturday is not a good day for sending a women to her husband's house. The Hindu religion is full of such superstitions.

- **Animism:** Animism propounds the existence of some supra physical being within the body of every living being. This supra physical being is believed to survive the death of the physical body in which it is contained. After the death of a person the supra physical being is freed from the physical limitations and can wander irrespective of time and space. Thus animism is a belief in the spirits of the dead. It is a name given to the theory of spirits which are supposed to be dwelling in certain places or things so that they can communicate with men. Very commonly the view is held that spirit visits a man in sleep. Sometimes a man is said to have heard the spirit speak from a corner of the house. To feed the ancestors, a fifteen day ritual called 'shradh' is observed among Hindus. According to Tylor animism lies at the basis of all religion.
- **Magic**: Magic is a system of manipulation by which an effect is sought through the action of unseen powers. The magician attempts to control the powers by magical practices not validated by scientific knowledge, such as rubbing a stone on the diseased part of the body to make it get well, walking on fire without being burnt, eating glass pieces without shedding any blood, turning a piece of charcoal into a rupee, making a body disappear, getting a purse out of the pocket of a man without going near or about him.

➢ **Two kinds of magic**: Frazer in his book *Golden Bough* distinguished between two kinds of magic, imitative and contagious. In imitative magic an individual imitates what he wishes to happen. Thus an Austan who wants rain to fall, fills his mouth with water and squirts it out in different directions. Again many children are made to put on a mascot to save themselve from an evil spirit.

➢ **Difference between Magic and religion**: Some authors believe that magic is a form of religion but others choose not to characterize magic as religion. According to Malinowski, magic practices are distinguished from the religious ones by the fact that magic always has a definite end in view, which is intermediate, practical and usually private. They are intended to produce a definite effect. Religion on the other hand, has no definite end. It

is always an end in itself. In the case of religion, the attitude is humble, the worshipper seeks to obtain something from God through prayer. Magic, on the other hand seeks to attain the thing directly by the use of disproportionate means. The intellectual content of magic is narrowed by its highly utilitarian purpose. A magic seeks to get things by threatening or intimidating gods while a worshipper seeks them by praying and petitioning to gods. A magical behavior is a commercial transaction in which trickery and deceit become possible. Religion establishes a bond between man and God but in magic such a bond is absent. Magic diverges most from religion when it is used to accomplish aims not sanctioned by the group. It may be employed to achieve vengeance, to acquire property illegally, to steal another man's wife or a woman's husband etc. Selby says, "Magic is now, and for a long time has been regarded with some moral reprobation. If it comes under the head of religion at all it is religion of an illicit and degrading kind".

- **Totemism:** Totemism is a form of religion where a tribe is supposed to be related to an object mainly animal or plant towards which they behave in a reverent manner by adopting its name and offering sacrifices or adoring it. A totem is generally an animal, rarely a plant or any object to which a clan is assosiated. The relation of the clan and that particular animal/plant/object is explained by bonds of descent. The people of the clan do not kill or eat or harm that animal/plant/object with whose name they are linked to. They attach to it super empirical meaning. In Ruanda, for example the Buffalo people will not eat buffalo.
- **Ceremonialism**: Ceremonialism is a collective practice usually associated with religion. Thus, praying, feasting, dancing, singing, kneeling are examples of ceremonialism or ritualism. All religions provide frequent ritual contact with other communicants which is a form of group intra-simulation. In this sense ritual ceremonial may be called the external side of religion. Like the belief itself sacredness is attached to it.

Some thinkers have believed ritual to be more important than religious belief itself in maintaining religious attitudes. Ritual helps to remind individual of holy realm, to revive and strengthen his/her faith in this realm. The survival of Judaism has been attributed to the insistence of the

Pharisees that almost every act should be ritualized. Similar is the case with Hinduism which lays great stress on rituals. At the time of birth, marriage and death in a Hindu family many ritual ceremonies are observed. In a church congregation one observes several rituals. On cue one rises, bows, kneels, and comes forward, and so on. Many ceremonies sometimes seem incredibly intricate. However some of these ceremonies must have been invented by the primitive people with a purpose in mind which has now lost that purpose due to the advancement of scientific knowledge. Behind ceremonies there is definitely logic, if no other logic than the logic of emotional satisfaction might be there. For social cohesion satisfaction of emotional feelings is necessary and if a ceremony serves that purpose then it a sufficient ground for its observance.

We may here note the distinction between belief and ritual. Belief is an attitude towards sacred things. It is based upon faith rather than upon evidence. It is the cognitive aspect of religion. Some consider a cow as a sacred thing. This attitude is based upon faith. There is nothing to distinguish a sacred cow from any other cow, except the faith or belief of those who regard it is as sacred.

Ritual, as we have already noted, is a religious practices. It is a behavior with reference to sacred objects. The sacredness of behavior comes from the attitude taken towards the sacred objects.

- **Fetishism**: Fetishism is probably the most elementary from of religion. It is the adoration of material things because of their mysterious power. The word 'fetishes' come from the Portuguese explorers, who first applied it to wooden images of the west African Negroes. But the essential thing is not that they are artificial. A leaf or stone of unusual shape may be adored in the same way as a carved figure. The essence of a fetish is that it has attributed to it a mysterious power for good or evil which some preliterate people call 'mana'. The fetish is adored or insulted according to whether it fulfils or does not fulfill its processor's wishes.

From the above description it may be concluded that in primitive times the world was thought to be populated with spirits and ghosts of helpful or harmful nature. To propitiate these hosts various methods were

employed which gave birth to animism, totemism, ceremonialism and fetishism.

## 12.6 THEORIES ON RELIGION

Malinowaski and Radcliffe Brown have given functional explanations of primitive religion. Malinowski points out, with reference to the Trobriand islanders, that religion is intimately connected with various emotional states, which are states of tension. For example, quite a few of their magical and religious practices centre round the fishing expeditions. These are the outcome of the state of fear which a possible disaster on the seas gives rise. Similarly, hate, greed, anger, love etc, may arise due to various situations in a man's/woman's life. These situations create stress and strain and, if permitted to exist over a long period of time can, frustrate one's action. A human being has to be an acting individual; and normal action is not possible in an emotionally upset state of existence. Religion serves its purpose in such a situation as a tool of adaptation; its purpose is to purge the human mind of its stress and strain, i.e., it is cathartic in it action. In other words, religion has the function of bringing about a readjustment between man and the supernatural in upset states of existence. It is a device to secure mental and psychical stability in an individual's life.

Radcliffe-Brown takes a different stand. The function of religion, he says, is not to purge fear and other emotional strains from the human mind, but to instill a sense of dependence in it. He says that, ultimately, the survival of the group is more important than throat of the individual; and if the latter has to make some sacrifices it is in his own interest to do so, because without social survival individual survival is not possible. However, the individual does not seek to realize this always, and he/she seeks to chart out an individual course of action. If each individual were to do this there would be utter confusion and chaos and no organized activity would be possible. Adherence to a norm of behaviour is essential in terms of social survival; and it is the fear of supernatural control and punishment, as also the anticipation of support in the case of socially approved conduct, that brings this adherence. Therefore, the function of religion is to create a twofold

feeling of dependence on society and thereby obtain the individual's concurrence with the social norms because the ultimate aim of being social is to perpetuate society.

Here again, we may say, that the truth lies in a conjunction of the views of Malinowski and Radcliffe- Brown. Their view points might appear opposed, but they are not; they have to be taken as complementary. The individual is as important to society just as society is to the individual.

Radcliffe-Brown's and Malinowaski's sociological explanations are derived, in part from Durkheim's theory of religion which we will discuss in the next section.

- **Emile Drukheim on religion**

Emile Durkheim developed the sociological theory of religion, which was published in his book *'The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*'. In this book Durkheim presented what is probably the most influential interpretation of religion from a functionalist perspective. Durkheim argues that all societies divide the world into two categories; 'the sacred' and 'the profane'. More simply this means the distinction between the sacred and the non-sacred. Religion, according to him, is based on this distinction. It is 'a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden''. He insists that 'sacred things' do not simply mean those personal things which are called gods or spirits. Anything can be 'sacred' such as a pebble, a piece of wood, a rock etc. This is not the particular quality of the pebble or the wood which makes it sacred. Sacred things are considered to be sacred simply because they are symbols of something. Durkheim, therefore, says that to understand the role of religion in society, the relationship between these symbols and that which they represent must be established. He argues that if one can study the most rudimentary forms of social existence and the thought forms which accompany them, then perhaps one can understand the relationship or connection between the symbol (i.e. collective existence) and that which the symbol represents (i.e. collective representations). It is for this reason that the various primitive groups of Australia and North America form the basis of his study.

Durkheim considers the religion of Australian aborigines, which he calls totemism, as the simplest and most basic of religions. The totemic object among these people is connected not only with religion but also with clan membership. Aboriginal society is divided into several clans. A clan is like a large extended family with its members sharing certain duties and obligations. Each clan has a totem, usually an animal or a plant. The totem is a symbol. It is the emblem of the clan. ''It is its flag; it is the sign by which each clan distinguishes itself from all others''. The totem is, however, more than this. It is a sacred symbol. The totem is the outward expression of the totemic principle or god.

Totem thus being a religious or sacred object, inspires respect and awe. It is especially true when the otherwise scattered parts of the clan come together periodically on a ceremonial occasion. It is then that an excitement is bred which lifts the individual out of himself. It is minor case of creative synthesis. The totem is only an object; yet it is symbolic of a reality unseen. The 'images of the totemic beings are more sacred than the beings themselves.' This fact makes it evident that the totem has a special symbolic significance. Because it symbolizes the moral unity of the clan as a whole, it is sacred and eventually transforms itself into a divinity. Durkheim argues that if the totem 'is at once the symbol of the god and of the society, is that not because the god and the society are only one'? Thus, he suggests that in worshipping god, men are in fact worshipping society. Society is the real object of religious veneration.

How does man come to worship society? Durkheim argues; 'primitive man comes to view society as something sacred because he is utterly dependent on it'. Society is more important and powerful than the individual. But why does man/woman not simply worship society itself? Why does he/she invent a sacred symbol like a totem? By way of explanation, Durkheim argues; 'it is easier for him to visualize and direct his feelings of awe toward a symbol than towards so complex a thing as a clan'. He sees this as a situation in which religion 'ceases to be an inexplicable hallucination and takers a good hold in reality'. In fact, we can say that the believer is not deceived when he/she believes in the existence of a moral power upon

which he/she depends and from which he/she receives all that is best in himself/herself.

Among the Australian tribes studied by Durkheim, the totem is represented in various ways. Each totem has its emblem or blazon. In almost all clans. There are objects such as pieces of wood, stones, etc. which bear a figurative representation of the totem. Ordinary objects which are referred to as churning are transfigured once they bear the emblem of the totem. They share the sacred quality that is associated with the totem, a phenomenon which we can easily understand by observing ourselves. In modern societies, the flag may be regarded as the equivalent to the churinga of Australian aborigines. The flag of a collectivity shares the sacred quality which we attribute to the native land. Totemic objects bearing the emblem of the totem give rise to behaviour typically of the religious order, i.e., either proscriptive or prescriptive practices. The members of the clan must abstain from eating or touching the totem or the objects which share the sacred quality of totem. Or, they must display with regard to the totem some explicit form of respect. In this way, the tribes in Australian societies are division into two fundamental categories of the whole of reality; the sacred and the profane.

For Durkheim, the 'sacred and the profane have always and everywhere been conceived by the human mind as two distinct classes, as two worlds between which there is nothing in common'. There is a logical chasm between the two domains and it is precisely the totality of sacred beliefs and practices which constitutes a religion. Religion is a group phenomenon, for it is a group which gives a religion its specific character and unity. Moreover, religion unifies the group, literally, it binds people together. In this way, Durkheim emphasizes his general thesis that religious ideas sare derived from society and serve to bind the members of a society together. This essential and positive function of religion- viz. solidifying a society- explains why it is a ubiquitous and permanent institution.

- **Karl Marx on religion**

Kari Marx viewed religions as an illusion which is necessary for the alleviation of sufferings of the people in a capitalist society. In the words of Marx; 'Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature; the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people'. He believed, religion would completely disappear in a communist society where there would no more be division of people into classes, the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited. In other words, communism would usher in a situation in which the social conditions would make to religion to disappear.

According to Marx the ways in which religion can mitigate the pain of oppression may be briefly noted. First, it promises a life of eternal bliss in the afterlife, i.e., life after death. Accordingly, pain becomes bearable when people have something better to look forward to. Second, there are religions which extol the virtues of poverty and ever of suffering produced by oppression. The well-known biblical quotation brings this out dramatically; 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven'. The implication is clear. Those who would bear the deprivations of life with dignity and humility will be rewarded for their virtue. Third, religious teachings persuade men to hope for supernatural intervention to solve the problems on earth. Fourth, religion often teach man to bear with injustice and accept the social order, however iniquitous it may be. In Hinduism and in many other religions, the social order is represented as a handiwork of the creator and, as such, social stratification is an inevitable concomitant. Thus, it is interpreted that, the social order is immutable and unchangeable. The people have therefore, no other alternative but to accept their position in the social order.

From a Marxian point of view, religion not only serves to create a series of myths which justify and rationalize the social order based on injustifice and exploitation, but it also serves as an instrument of oppression. Historically, all organized religions have received patronage from the ruling class and in exchange these religious leaders have diverted the attention of their followers from the real source of their oppression and thereby have helped the ruling class to remain in positions of powers.

There is ample evidence to establish many of the changes levelled by the Marxists against organized religion. But will religion completely disappear in situation where there would be no exploitation of one class by another? There are many aspects of life which are unpredictable and uncertain. Death, for example, creates void which no amount of logic can diminish. In such situations, people naturally raise questions about the meaning of life. Religion gives them the required emotional support and security. During the Second World War, Russian men and women in thousands thronged in and around the churches to say prayers for the well-being of the near and dear ones who were in the thick of the battle. It has, therefore, been very aptly said that ''these examples suggest that there is more to religion than a set of beliefs and practices which develop in societies based on the private ownership of the forces of production.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the dysfunctional aspects of religion relate to institutionalized religion. Instead of strengthening social solidarity, organized religions have served throughout historical period as divisive forces, encouraging directly and indirectly religious feuds of varying dimensions.

The functions and dysfunctions of religion with respect both to society and to individuals may be examined with reference to the most outstanding social and cultural development of the last several centuries; namely, the secularization of culture. In primitive and traditional societies, religion was all pervasive in the sense that religion ordained everything from birth to cremation or burial, including ever mundane matters, such as occupational groupings. In short, religion determined the world-view of the believers. These characteristics are applicable to religious people in modern societies also. But a subtle difference has crept in. With regards to theology, people are gradually moving away from mythical interpretation to a more rational one. The 'rationalization of thinking in general'. Secularization of culture involved not simply an increase in rationality in the thinking of men/women, but also 'a diminution of the sacred' which is often characterized as ''desacralisation'' (some sociologists term it as ''desacrilisation'' of the attitude toward persons and things). Desacralisation (or desacrilisation) actually means ''the

withdrawal of the kind of emotional involvement which is to be found in the religious response, in the response to the sacred''. Thus, ''the secularization of culture, combining both desacralisation and rationalization, means that a religious world-view is no longer the basic reference for thought. Another view of the world as being no longer sacred and composed of things to be manipulated has come into existence.

- **Max Weber's view on Religion**

Max Weber's interpretation of industrial society provides one of the earliest statements of the desacralisation theme. According to him, the industrial society is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world". The world is no longer charged with mystery and magic; the supernatural has been banished from society. The meanings and motives which direct action are now rational. A number of sociologists have accepted Weber's interpretation of the basis of action in industrial society. In his book *Religion in a Secular Society*. Bryan Wilson observes; "Religious thinking is perhaps the area which evidences most conspicuous change. Men act less and less in response to religious motivation; they assess the world in empirical and ration terms." Wilson identifies the following factors which were mainly responsible for the development of rational thinking and a rational world-view. First, 'worldly asceticism' of Protestantism 'created an ethic which was pragmatic, rational, controlled and anti-emotional'. Second, in an industrial society people are involved in organizations which are based on rational behaviour upon them. Third, modern knowledge is based on reason rather than on faith. "Science", say Wilson, "not only explained many facets of life and the material environment in a way more satisfactory – (then religion), but it also provided confirmation of its explanation in practical results". Fourth, the development of ideologies such as communism and organizations such as trade unions offer practical solutions to problems. By comparison, religious solutions, such as the promise of justice and reward in the afterlife, do not produce practical and observable results.

## 12.7 SOCIAL ROLE OF RELIGION

Organized religion has a significant place in the life of an individual. It fulfills the spiritual, social and psychological needs of individual. As a systems of thought religion gives a comprehensive philosophy of 'creation-destruction', 'life-death', 'social-individual ideals' and 'this-worldly and other worldly' purposes.

Parsons has considered the role of religion in the processes of socialization and social control. He holds that the 'value-patterns' of religion help in social control. Religious assumptions enable one to distinguish between desirable and undesirable actions, and controls what is undesirable. Religion gives rise to spirit of brotherhood and unity. The role of religion has been quite significant in organizing, planning and directing social life. Religion also regulates the material aspect through marriage and rules of family. Durkheim argues that religion strengthens social solidarity.

One of the important contributions of organized religion is that it preserves social order and strengthens social control. In traditional as well as in modern times religion controls the attitudes and behavior of the individual as well as group. It uses scriptures, teaching of priests, meetings and conventions to achieve these goals. Conventions and practices as components of religion play significant role in social control also. Religion helps the process of social control through following ways:

Firstly, it nationalizes and makes individual suffering bearable in the known world.

Secondly, it enhances self – importance;

Thirdly, it helps to knit the social values of a society into a cohesive whole. Let us discuss them in detail.

- ***Religion explains individual suffering***: Man/woman does not live by knowledge alone. He is an emotional creature as well. Religion serves to soothe the emotions of man/woman in times of his/her suffering and disappointments and contributes to the integration of his personality. In this world man/woman often suffers disappointment

and frustration even in the midst of all hopes and achievements. The things for which he/she strives are in some measure always denied to him/her. When human hopes are blighted, when all that was planned and striven for has been swept away, man/woman naturally seeks something to console. With the fortitude and equanimity provided by religion people are known to endure the most colossal misfortune and suffering. This constitutes one of the principal exhibits of the power of religious beliefs and practices. When a son dies a man/woman seeks to assuage his/her grief in ritualistic exchanges of condolence. On God he/she puts faith and entertains the belief that some unseen power moves in mysterious ways to make even his/her loss meaningful. Faith in God compensates him/her and sustains his/her interest in life and makes it bearable. In this way religion gives release from sorrow and fear. It helps man/woman to bear his/her frustration and integrate his/her personality.

- ***Enhances self-importance***: Religion expands one's self to infinite proportions. Man/woman unites himself/herself with the infinite and feels ennobled. Through unity with the infinite the self is made majestic and triumphant. Society also gains from the self-flattery provided by religious beliefs. Religious assurance drains of much discontent and members are encouraged to continue to play their part in society.
- ***A source of social cohesion***: Religion is the ultimate source of cohesion. The primary requirement of society is the common possession of social values by which an individual controls the actions of self and others and through which society is perpetuated. These social values are never scientifically demonstrated but they emanate from religious faith. Religion is the foundation upon which these values rest. Science and technology cannot create these values. As a matter of fact, these values are more effective if they are not examined. Children should obey their parents, should not tell a lie or cheat, people should be honest and virtuous are some of the social values which maintain social cohesion. It is religion that asks man/woman to renounce unsocial activities and requires him/her to accept limitations

upon his wants and desires. Love and service are two great teachings of religion. All religions have preached them. Religion has always generated a sense of belonging in society. Blackmar and Gillin have strongly defended religion emphasizing its great socializing value and its value as a means of control in society, primitive as well as civilized. Perhaps the most important function of religion was disciplinary. It was religion alone which was responsible for subordinating barbaric anarchy and for teaching reverence and obedience.

Besides this, religion shapes domestic, economic and political institutions. Religious rites are performed on many occasions as "birth, initiation, marriage, sickness, death, hunting, animal husbandry and so on; and they are intimately concerned with family and kinship interest and with political institutions." Religion is the central element in the life of civilization. "The impulse that makes civilization is a king of spiritual restlessness seeking to design the structure of life that will satisfy the craving".

- ***Social welfare***: Religion has also performed some other services to humanity among which Summer and Keller included the provision of work, the accumulation of capital and the creation of a leisure class. The priesthood often associated to art and culture. Many priests laid the foundations of medicine. The priests also fulfilled the functions of scholars and scientists. Magic supplies the roots of observation and experimentation from which science developed. Religion has served humanity through the spreading of education. The scriptures are great literary works and storehouse of knowledge. It has also emphasized benevolence and forbearance. It also created the habit of charity among the people and many charitable institutions like hospitals, rest-houses, temples etc have been opened to help the needy and the poor.
- ***Agency of social control***: Religions emphasize, in one form or another, the consequences resulting from behavior. Rewards or punishments follow approved or disapproved actions. Religions support the folkways and customs by placing the powerful sanctions of the supernatural behind them. Religion considers certain acts as

offences not only against society but also against God. In its positive form religion provides a model for living. ; It upholds certain ideals and values. The believer imbibes these ideals and values in his life. Religion can help our youth to become moral, disciplined and socialized citizens of society.

- ***Religion controls and effects economic life also***: Max Weber was of the view that religion also influences the economic system of the believers. Thus, according to him, capitalism grew in the protestant nations like U.S.A., and Holland. It did not grow in Italy and Spain where the people are Catholics. Since the Hindus lay great be stress on spiritual progress than on material progress. Hence materialism could not grow in India.
- ***Promotion of literature****:* Besides, religion has also contributed to the growth of literature, art and music. The desire to laud and please gods has led people to extol them in song, sculpture, painting and architecture. Some of the world's most beautiful monuments are buildings erected for the glory of the gods. The temples, mosques, cathedrals and artistic images express man's desire to portray his conceptions of the supernatural in aesthetic and inspiring ways. The sacred writings stimulate an appreciation for beautiful prose and poetry. Religious themes are the inspiration for some of man's finest paintings and the desire to sing praises has led to the creation of some of the world's fine it music.
- ***Friendship Function***: Religion also provides a good opportunity for relationship. The religious congregations serve as a place for men to find their mates and for friendly association. This friendship function of religion is a vital service to adults and youth as well.
- ***Dysfunctions of religion***. Religion is the supremely integrating and unifying force in human society. But at the same time it has also proved to be a catastrophic force. Marx called religion "the opium of the masses" which has kept them in degrading subjection. The masses are taught to submit to their poor lot in life and remain in that station of

life in which God wanted them to be. The history of religion is mostly the history of persecution. Wars have been fought in its name. Often progress has been stopped in the name of religion. It has degenerated in dogmatism and bigotism denying freedom of thought. It has favored war and poverty, exploitation and fatalism, prostitution and idleness and advocated such practices as cannibalism, suicide, slavery, untouchability and incest. There is hardly a vice which religion has not at one time or another actively supported. Blackmar and Gillin wrote that "religion, ever conservative and dogmatic, has tried time and again to crush the spirit of earnest men seeking to discover the truth and to prevent them from revealing newly discovered facts. It retarded the advance of science; it interfered with the free inquiry of scholars; it suppressed the democratic aspirations of the common people." In India the country was partitioned in the name of religion and even today religion in the garb of communalism stands to threaten the national solidarity. The Ayodhya issue has revived the memories of 1947. The Mandir-masjid dispute has once again engulfed the nation into communal riots. The political parties are exploiting the religious card to create vote-banks. The sane leaders have surrendered to religious militancy. Genuine religion has disappeared. It has been commercialized and politicized. Sectarian organizations have come up which flourish by preaching hatred for 'others'. Religious leaders also have entered the play-field of politics.

## 12.8 RELIGION AND GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a complex phenomenon, shaping the economic, cultural and religious environment of India and its huge population. Globalization is not a remote experience or removed from the life of the average person living in India. According to C. T. Kurian, "Globalization is a concept used as a short form to convey a wide variety of processes, possibilities, and positions. It is, therefore, capable of different kinds of interpretations. Hence to say anything meaningful about globalization, including how to respond to it, there is a need to know as clearly as possible

what it is all about." In Kurian's judgment, how one respond to the effects of globalization cannot be articulated until the concept is defined.

The response to globalization in India has been both positive and negative. For those whom "the way things used to be" or "preserving India's heritage" is a central concern, globalization poses a threat. Those who hold a negative view of globalization in India are fuelled by such effects of globalization as the decentralized and diminished power of government, the growing percentage of unemployed, overstressed urban areas, the increasing rates of crime, the increasing influence of the West, the destruction of the environment and the escalation of religious violence. On the other hand. On the other hand certain effects of globalization has been positive for India. Liberalization of India's economy is encouraging its interaction with the world and increasing economic prosperity. The traditional family structure has changed so that mobility is possible and women have begun to occupy non-traditional roles. Increased availability of technology has given India's population access to more information. Between these positive and negative perceptions, globalization as a major force in India is inevitable, controversial and multifaceted.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**QB1:** Who is the author of the book, 'The Elementary forms of Religious life'?

_____

_____

**QB2:** Who said, 'Religion is the opium of the mosses'?

_____

_____



## 12.9 LET US SUM UP

- From this unit we have learned about the basic meaning and definitions of religion.
- We learn about the theories of culture.
- Understand the origin of religion.
- From this unit we have learned about the role of religion in society.



## 12.10 FURTHER READING

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## 12.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Answr to QA 1:** Max Muller.

**Answr to QA 2:** James G Frazer.

**Answr to QB 1:** Emile Durkheim.

**Answr to QB 2:** Karl Marx.



## 12.12 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**(A) SHORT QUESTIONS** (Answer each question in about 150 words)

**Q1:** Write the meaning and definitions of religion.

**Q2:** Briefly discussed the forms of religion.

**(B) LONG QUESTIONS** (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

**Q1:** Discussed the origin of religion.

**Q2:** Discussed the theories of religion.

**Q3:** Explain the social role of religion.

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# UNIT 13: POLITY AND ECONOMY

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Polity or Political Institution

- 13.3.1 Meaning and Definition
- 13.3.2 Meaning and Characteristics of State
- 13.3.3 Functions of State
- 13.3.4 Meaning of Government
- 13.3.5 Forms of Government

13.4 Economy as a Social Institution

- 13.4.1 Economy in Simple societies
- 13.4.2 Economy in Complex societies

13.5 Let Us Sum Up

13.6 Further Reading

13.7 Answers to check your progress

13.8 Possible Questions


## 13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- understand the meaning of Political Institution
- know about the nature of political Authority in Simple and Complex Societies
- explain the meaning and Function of State
- understand the meaning and forms of government
- discuss the nature of economy in Simple societies
- understand the nature of economy in Complex Societies.

## 13.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous two units we have learned why social institutions like family, marriage, kinship and religion are significant in society and how

certain important functions of the society are fulfilled by these institutions. Each of these institutions comprises certain sets of norms and values that guide the behaviour of the people. The institutions are also interrelated and interdependent. In this unit we will learn about the meaning and nature of two other very important Institutions of Society, namely, Polity and Economic. We will also try to understand how the nature of these two institutions differ in simple and complex societies.

## 13.3 POLITY OR POLITICAL INSTITUTION

### 13.3.1 Meaning and Definition

No study of social institution will be complete without studying the political institutions. According John Beattie, the term '**political'** implies:

- the maintenance of **ordered relations** between different categories and groups of people,
- It covers a **social field much wider** than that which is implied by each component categories separately. This wider social field is society or a social aggregate. Thus, the term political encompasses all the various aspects of society as family, marriage, economy, health, and even religion in many societies.
- In includes **relations between separate societies**, whether tribal groups, nations or states.
- It has a **political authority**. It implies that certain statuses, as category or categories of persons, are given the right by the society to exercise power in the society in order to maintain social order by making decisions, issuing orders and applying sanctions in matters of direct or indirect concern to the maintaining of social order.

In some **simple societies**, as the Nuer of Southern Sudan and the tribes of Andaman Islands, there are hardly any specialized or organized political authorities. Political authority in such simple societies is widely diffused. It may be located among the heads of

lineages, or families, etc. It may be backed by religious or magical sanctions rather than by physical force. There may hardly be anything visibly political. The other institutions in their integrated functioning in society perform the function of maintaining social order. Thus, these societies have political functions.

The difference among societies lies in the fact that different means are adopted to achieve the goal of internal order and external relations.

In **complex societies**, with differentiation and specialization, existence of many secondary groups, it becomes necessary for a definite and formal political authority, a territorial demarcation, norms and values to maintain social order within the territorially defined society. In such societies, the maintenance of social order cuts across all the institutions, norms and groups in ways as recognized by the people. It also requires the maintenance of relation with other societies as well. Such societies take a special form which is called State and may comprise multitudes of societies and cultures bound together by some formal means and collective affiliation. As for example, the state of India is a result of collective recognition by the Indians in India and given definite shape by the *Constitution* of India. The other States in the world also have recognized this social arrangement. The functions of the State are run by the Government. The Government changes but the State is more or less permanent.



***Constitution*** is a formal body of principles according to which a state or organization is governed.

**State** and **government** are the political institutions in complex human society. In today's world, government is an important element in our lives from birth to death.

## 13.3.2 Meaning and Characteristics of State

The State has generally been defined as a politically organized association. According to W. Wilson, *the state is a people organized for law within a given territory.* According to Harold Laski, it is a "*territorial society divided into government and subjects, claiming within its allotted physical area a supremacy over all other social*

*institutions"* Ogburn says "*the state is an organization which rules by means of supreme government over a definite territory".*

The State is a political institution. It is an arrangement that consists of people who exercise an effective monopoly in the use of physical coercion within a given territory. Sociologically speaking, the state is a form of human association based on the allocation of power of control, usually in accordance with a system of shared beliefs, ideas, tradition. In modern societies such ideals are embodied in constitutions and bills of rights. It must be remembered that the state is not same as community or society. The state is created by the society with some specific, limited functions and purposes.



***Sovereignty*** is supremacy of the State in all matters recognized, both internal and external.

State has four basic components:

- Territory
- People
- Government
- *Sovereignty*

### 13.3.3 Functions of State

The scope or the field which the State should cover depends on the functions which the State is more suited to undertake. MacIver has classified the various functions of the state in the following way:

- **Functions peculiar to the State**: These are the functions which the State alone can perform. These include an effective order in society on the Principle of Justice.
- **Functions for which the State is well-adapted**: This includes the conservation of national resources, laying down units of measurements, currency among others.
- **Functions for which the state is ill-adapted**: To this category belong the broader cultural interests including the religions. The State is not much adapted to sponsor the more intimate and personal interests.

- **Functions which the State is incapable of performing**: The State cannot completely control public opinions .Similarly, the State cannot set moral standards.

According to the Functionalists the four primary functions of the State are:

**FOUR PRIMARY FUCTIONS OF STATE :**

- **Planning and direction:** As contemporary society gets complex, the informal modes become insufficient to provide guidelines to the people. Formal norms as laws become necessary. Again, a co-ordination of the various aspects of complex life also becomes necessary. The State comes to play this role in co-coordinating, planning and giving direction to the people of the State.
- **Enforcement of norms:** To enforce formal laws and norms, formal means are necessary. The State ensures law and order by enforcing legal norms.
- **Arbitration of conflicting interests:** A complex society necessitates the formal mechanism of arbitration of conflicting interests. This function is performed by the State.
- **Protection against other societies:** To perpetuate the entity of the society under the State it becomes imperative to provide external security from the interests of and aggression from other such societies and States.

**The Welfare State:** The Welfare State may be defined as a State which takes upon itself to provide social services for the nation, to bring under public ownership of some important industries or enterprises, placing certain controls on private enterprise and to organize democratic planning on national scale.

## 13.3.4 Meaning of Government

*Government is the organized system of functions through which the authority of the State is applied to given situations.* In this

sense, the government is not a form of association but it is more of an arrangement of function in relation to the purpose of the State.

Government functions in social organization by providing a structure within which and through which numerous activities of a society can be carried on. The components of the structure of Government are **laws** (enacted by legislature), *means of law enforcement* (the executive), and **protective** devices (the judiciary). **Legislature**, **Executive** and the **Judiciary** are the three organs of the Government. The machinery of the Government is becoming more and more complex with the increasing complexity of society.

### 13.3.5 Forms of Government

Forms of Government have been classified by different scholars in different ways. But very simply we can classify actually existing Governments as below.

- In the first places there are the despotic type (i.e. under one man's absolute rule) and
- Democratic type (Governments in which people are sovereign). Democratic type Governments are further classified into Republican on the one hand and limited Monarchy on the other. In Republican form the Head of the State is elected by the citizens, while in limited Monarchy, the post of the head of the State is hereditary, but the monarch is a titular head and runs the office as per the Constitution of the State. Both the systems may be either of *unitary* type or *Federal* type which may be further be either *Parliamentary* or Non-Parliamentary.

The specific type and organization of Government may vary from time to time within a State. For example, the government in Germany before World War II was dictatorial i.e. autocratic. After the War it became democratic.

Thus, we can sum up that the State is a political institution. It is one of the associations of society and is not co-extensive with the society. It is established to perform certain functions through



*In **Parliamentary*** form of government the executive is part of the legislature and also accountable to it as in India.

In ***Federal*** system power is shared between the central and regional government as in U.S.A

It is ***Unitary*** form of government when all powers of administration is concentrated in the central government as in U.K.

which the authority of the State is applied. The forms of Government may vary from time to time within the same State and from State to State.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** What are the three organs of the Government?

_____

_____

**Q2:** What are the four basic components of State?

_____

_____

## 13.4 ECONOMY AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

Economic activities are central to human existence and are fundamental to the history of mankind. For our survival, even in the modern technological age, we spend most of our time in economic pursuit. The economy is responsible for managing how a society produces and distributes its goods, services and resources. Conceptualizing and explaining the relationship between economy and human behaviour has been one of the fundamental themes of major theorists in sociological tradition. Economy being a major determinant of our life and it being closely related to other aspects of social life, it arouses the inquisitiveness in sociologists to understand and analyse economic institution. Since it is an integral part of the social system, no study of the society and social institutions would be complete without referring to the economic institution. Therefore the study of the economic institution is very vital in Sociology. Sociologists makes attempt to understand and analyse the intercoonesctions between the economy, political system, social structures, ideological system and culture. In the following paragraphs we shall learn about the various classifications of economic systems as outlined by various thinkers.

- Gross has given an evolutionary scheme of development of the economy.He has elaborately explained the evolution of society from the Collective stage followed by Cultural Nomadic,Settled Village,Town, and Metropolitan stage.
- Hildebrand classified economic systems of the basis of barter, money and credit.
- Adam Smith talked of hunters, pastoralists, agriculturalists, handicrafts and industrialists.
- Herskovits gives five-fold division of economic systems- Collection, Hunting, Fishing, Cultivation and Stock-raising

The classical sociologists Marx, Durkheim, and Weber were the first to explore the relationship between the economy and society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are each developed differing viewpoints based on their respective theoretical positions

Marx identified five stages of human history on the basis of modes of production: primitive communism, ancient slave production, feudalism, and capitalism and to the final culmination in the classless society of socialism, the fifth and final stage in human history. In Marx's view, economy is the infrastrucure of every society based on which superstructure comprising legal and political and other institutions are built. In other words he advovated that Economy determines all other aspects of society. In his view, Man in every society, irrespective of his will, must work to fulfil his/her basic needs and enter into social relations which impose themselves on the individuals independent of their preferences. The relations are shaped and determined by the economy i.e – he economy structures social relations between classes, producing corresponding forms of social consciousness. Thus the class structure and institutional arrangements as well as cultural values, beliefs, religious dogmas and other ideal systems are ultimately a reflection of the economic base of a society.

**Weber** in contradiction to Marx' provided a completely different perdpective on economy. He, unlike Marx, saw economy as being a product of religious practices. He, in his work *Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism* explained how religious ideology can influence the economic structure and

how religious practices contributed to the growth of Capitalism. Thus, according to him, religion forms the base or the infrastructure and the economy is the superstructure.

Unlike Marx, **Durkheim** considers economy to be one of many contributing factors that make up a society. The economy has no privileged position in relation to the social superstructure, but it is one social fact among others. Dukheim pointed out the social functions of division of labour particularly referring to social integration. He discussed systems based on simple division of labour resulting into *mechanical solidarity* (features of simple society) and complex division of labour resulting into *organic solidarity* (features of complex society or economic systems). He argued that Simple societies characterised by little division of labour are bound together by resemblance in sentiments and ideas of its members. While Complex societies characterised by extensive division of labour are connected together by the unavoidable interdepence among the members which he called Organic Solidarity.Thus, in a nutshell we can say that he made an attempt to understand the relationship between economy and community life and how economy shapes the relationship among the members of a community.

### 13.4.1 Economy in Simple Societies

Simple societies are those having no specialized economic organization, less productive skills and low division of labour. Economy in simple society can be classified into the following types:

- **Hunting and Gathering:** In these types of society, men secure of their food by gathering vegetation, by hunting wild animals. Their nature of economy compel them to move from one place to another in search of animals, fruits,and other etable vegetations. Some of the food gatherer tribes in India are: Kadars, Jarwas, Birhore, Maria Gonds, etc.
- **Pastoral Domestication**: Pastoral Domestication of animals is the main feature of pastoral communities. Their way of life is surrounded by domestication of animals. They domesticate animals

for their food supply. Along with domestication of animals, some of them also depend on agriculture. They too move from one pace to another in search of water and pastoral ground for their animals. In India, the important pastoral communities include- the Todas (the buffalo herders of Nilgiri Hills), the Gujars (Cattle and buffalo herders) and the Bakerwals (Sheep and goat herders of Jammu and Kashmir)

- **Shifting Cultivation:** Also widely known as Jhum cultivation, Shifting cultivation is a system of agriculture where a ground is cleared for cultivation and then after some years of cultivation, that plot of land is abandoned for its natural regrowrth. People following this practice also moves from one place to another in search of new grounds for cultivation**.** Baiga, Saora, Konwas, and many tribes of Arunachal Pradesh practise shifting cultivation.
- **Settled Cultivation:** Settled cultivation implies cultivating in the same plot of land every year. This a stable method of cultivation practiced by majority of people in simple societies even though their technology and method of cultivation is not modern. Settled cultivation makes way for permanent village settlement.
- **Types of Exchange:** There are multiple ways in which economic goods are exchanged in simple societies. However not all exchanges are purely economic in nature. Sometimes it confers prestige to the donor as well as the reciever of goods. While in some other cases, occaisions of gift giving are also ceremonial in nature to institutionalise relationship among people. Exchages of goods and gifts also takes place to develop amicable relationship and prevent conflicts. Let us now discuss some of the different kinds of exchange that takes place in simple societies.
  - **Barter:** It is a direct form of exchange in absence of money. Money is not the medium of exchange here, rather goods are exchanged for goods or services.
  - **Silent Traders:** In this interesting system of exchange where the parties involved are strangers, who are not known to each other personally. The goods of exchange were placed at a specific place

and the other party picked it up. In return then other party also has to place some goods of equal value.

❍ **Jajmani System:** Oscar Lewis has defined jajmani system as that under which each caste group within a village is expected to give certain standardized services to the families of other castes. In simple words, Jajmani system is a mutual give and take form of relationship in which one family is hereditarily entitled to supply goods and render services to the other in exchange of the same. It is system of economic and social relationship existing among various castes in villages. The service castes are paid not in cash but in kind. Sometimes they are also given some other facilities like free food, clothing, free house etc. Jajamani system operates in the form of patron client relationship where the patron is known as jajman and the service castes are known as kamin.

❍ **Ceremonial Exchange:** Ceremonial exchange implies an exchange system where gifts are given to friends and relatives on various occaissions. The main idea is to establish cordial relations among the various social groups. In this type of exchange goods are given to relatives and friend on festive occasions, the value of goods is not very important and immediately reciprocity is not expected. This was mainly to established closeness, as it stimulated social relations. Two most important examples of ceremonial exchange are **Kula** and **Potlatch**.

**a. KULA:**

Malinowski describes Kula as '*not a surreptitious and precarious form of exchange. It is, quite on the contrary, rooted in myth, backed by traditional law, and surrounded with magical rites. All its main transactions are public and ceremonial, and carried out according to definite rules. It is not done on the spur of the moment, but happens periodically, at dates settled in advance and it is carried on along definite trade routes, which must lead to fixed trysting places.* From the description of Kula given by Malinowski, we can simply say that Kula is a ceremonial exchange participated in by the inhabitants of

a closed circle of Trobriand Island. Objects given and taken in Kula are never subjected to any bargaining.

Ceremonial exchange of the two articles is the main and the fundamental aspect of the Kula. The system of exchange is regulated in a kind of ring with two directional movements. In clock -wise direction, the red shell necklaces (called saulave) circulation and in anti clock-wise circulation the white shells (known as Mwali) circulate among the members of the Kula ring. We can also find a great number of secondary activities and features which take place alsongside the Kula. Thus, side by side with the ritual exchange of arm-shells and necklaces, the natives carry on ordinary trade, bartering from one island to another a great number of utilities, often unprocurable in the district to which they are imported, and which are indispensable there.

**b. POTLATCH-**

The potlach ceremony among the North West Coast American Indian is also a form of ceremonial exchange. It is meant as a public distribution of goods made to establish certain claims of the giver and the recipients. The Kwakiutl organise large scale feast on such occasions, not only are enormous qualities of food consumed and gift given to guest. But many articles (considered valuable bye them) are also destroyed. These conspicuous consumption and deliberate destruction of expensive items among Kwakiutl are meant to reflect their claims to a higher social status. It is based on the principle of reciprocity. Through this system the host declares his status to others.

## 13.4.2 ECONOMY IN COMPLEX SOCIETIES

Economy in Complex Society is characterised by Industrialisation, Capitalism, Division of Labour, Private property, Market so on and So forth. Let us now discuss some of the important features of the nature of economy in Complex Societies:

**Division Of Labour:** An important aspect of Modern Industrial Economy is Division of Labour and Specialisation. It denotes any stable organization, co-ordinating individuals, or groups carrying out different but integrated activities. Modern industrial economy being profit oriented, strongly emphasises on division of labour in order to accelerate production. According to Adam Smith, division of labour greatly increases the wealth-creating capacity of a society.

Durkeim and Marx gave a detailed elaboration on division of labour and its consequences. According to Durkheim division of labour is an important feature of modern industrial societies.. For him it implied the occupational structure which also includes Organic Solidarity, a new form of solidarity, that integrates the members of industrial societies in contrast to Mechanical solidarity of traditional society. However, Durkheim saw organic solidarity as weaker and more fragile than the mechanical solidarity of traditional societies. According to him division of labour would inevitably lead to the growth of individualism and the result is anomie- a state of normlessness in both the society and the individual. Further he described how forced division of labour of modern society would eventually lead to Class formations and inequalities in society.

According to Marx, division of labour is an important feature of capitalist economy and it causes alienation of labour. He argued that division of labour produces class ineqquality, exploitation, private property and alienation. Capitalist System, according to Marx, destroys all the interesting and creative aspects of work, leaving only boring and repetitive operations.

**Market:** Complex Societies are characterised by Market economy. Here the law of supply and demand governs the market. The most important feature of market is that goods and services are being sold at money price which are determined by impersonal forces of supply and demand. Both the production and distribution is determined by the market forces to ensure competition and

efficiency. Expansion of markets has increased the volume of trade and commerce facilitating the integration of the country.

**Rise of Capitalism:** Capitalism, also referred to as Free Market economy, has been predominant in the Western world since the decline of serfdom or feudalism. Its emergence was spearheaded by the growth of the English cloth industry during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Thus capitalism as an institution was the product of Industrial Revolution. It implies an economic system of production which is characterized by Private ownership of means of production, free market, higly profit oriented, and absence of government intrusion. This has brought major classes in social structure of society, the notion of private property, classes and economic stratification has come into picture.

**Non Economic Determinants of Economic Behaviour:**

Economic behaviour of man is also guided by several non economic determinants. Let us briefly discuss some of them.

- **Religious Values:** In the famous work of Weber "*Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*", clear illustration of the influence of religion on economic activity has been depicted. He has shown how 'this worldly asceticism' of Protestanism (especially Calvinism) and religious practices led to the development of Cpitalism in the West. Thus we have instances where religious values and practices develops in man a rational attitude and shape their even their economic behaviour.
- **Ideology:** Another important factor which affects economic behaviour is ideology. Ideology refers to a set of asserted beliefs about the nature of persons and society the beliefs that also carry implications for how people ought to behave and how society ought to be organized. Ideology can give legitimacy or can oppose a specific kind of economic behaviour and environment.
- **Political Variables**: Political variables also influence economic behaviour to a considerable extent. Governmental policies and programmes govern economic behaviour of man to a great extent.

- **Caste System**: Caste system also shapes economic behaviour of man to a great extent, particularly in Indian Society. Castes traditionally being occupational groups determined the choice of of occupation of different caste groups. However in the modern day context such practice or influence of caste has diminished to a great extent especially in urban areas.Apart from castes, family, education, techonology etc too shape and govern economic behaviour of man.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** State the meaning of Shifting Cultivation.

_____

_____

**Q2:** Who participates in the Kula Exchange?

_____

_____



## 13.5 LET US SUM UP

- Political institution maintains social order and provides for distribution of power.
- In some simple societies, as the Nuer of Southern Sudan and the tribes of Andaman Islands, there are hardly any specialized or organized political authorities.
- State and Government are the political institutions in complex human society.
- The state is a form of human association based on the allocation of power of control, usually in accordance with a system of shared beliefs, ideas, tradition
- Government is the organized system of functions through which the authority of the State is applied to given situations

- The forms of Government may vary from time to time within the same State and from State to State.
- The economy is responsible for managing how a society produces and distributes its goods, services and resources.
- In Marx view, economy is the infrastrucure of any society based on which superstructure comprising legal and political and other institutions are built. In other words he advovated that Economy determines all other aspects of society.
- Durkheim considers economy to be one of many contributing factors that make up a society. The economy has no privileged position in relation to the social superstructure, but is one social fact among others
- Simple societies have no specialized economic organization. Their economy is characterised by less productive skills, low level technology and low division of labour.
- Exchanges in simple societies are also not purely economic in nature.
- Economy in Complex societies are characterised by Industrialisation, Capitalism, Division of Labour, and Predominance of Markets.
- Excahnges are monetary in nature in complex societies.



## 13.6 FURTHER READING

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## 13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Answer to Q1:** Territory, people, government, sovereignty.

**Answer to Q2:** Legislature, executive, judiciary are the three organs of the State.

**Answer to Q3:** Shifting cultivation is a system of agriculture where a ground is cleared for cultivation and then after some years of cultivation, that plot of land is abandoned for its natural regrowrth.

**Answer to Q4:** Inhabitants of Trobriand Islands participates in the Kula Exchange.



## 13.8 POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

**A)Short Questions** (Answer within 150 words)

**Q1:** What do you mean by political institution?

**Q2:** How is the nature of political authority in simple society different from complex societies?

**Q3:** What is Government? What are its various forms?

**Q4:** How is Shifting cultivation different from Settled cultivation?.

**B) Long Questions** (Answer within 350-500 words)

**Q1:** What is State? Describe the functions of State?

**Q2:** Discuss the nature of economy in Simple societies.

**Q3:** Discuss the nature of economy in Complex societies.

*** ***** ***



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