

Block

1

BASIC CONCEPTS OF SOCIETY

UNIT 1

Social Work and Its Relationship to other Disciplines	5
--	----------

UNIT 2

Society and Culture	19
----------------------------	-----------

UNIT 3

Indian Society: Composition, Classification and Stratification	45
---	-----------

UNIT 4

Social Groups, Social Institutions and Social Control	68
--	-----------

UNIT 5

Social Change: Meaning, Characteristics and Factors	84
--	-----------

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. Surendra Singh (Late)
Former Vice-Chancellor
Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi

Prof. Sanjai Bhatt
Delhi University
Delhi

Prof. Anjali Gandhi
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Prof. Thomas Kalam
St. John's Medical College
Bangalore

Dr. Joseph Xavier
Indian Social Institute
Bangalore

Dr. Leena Mehta
M.S. University
Vadodara

Dr. Mukul Srivastava
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar
University, Agra

Dr. Usha John
Loyala College
Trivandrum

Prof. Archana Dassi
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Prof. Jyoti Kakkar
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi

Prof. Ranjana Sehgal
Indore School of Social
Work, Indore

Dr. Beena Antony
Delhi University
Delhi

Prof. Gracious Thomas
IGNOU, New Delhi

EXPERT COMMITTEE (Revision)

Prof. Gracious Thomas
School of Social Work
IGNOU, Delhi

Mr. Joselyn Lobo
Roshni Nilaya
Mangalore

Dr. Rose Nembiakkim
School of Social Work
IGNOU, Delhi

Dr. D.K.Lal Das
R.M College
Hyderabad

Prof. Ranjana Sehgal
Indore School of Social Work
Indore

Dr. Saumya
School of Social Work
IGNOU, Delhi

Prof. P.K.Ghosh
Department of Social Work
Visva Bharti University,
Shantiniketan

Dr. Asiya Nasreen
Department of Social Work
Jamia Millia Islamia University
Delhi

Dr. G.Mahesh
School of Social Work
IGNOU, Delhi

Prof. C.P.Singh
Department of Social Work
Kurukshetra University

Dr. Bishnu Mohan Dash
B.R.Ambedkar College
Delhi University

Dr. N.Ramya
School of Social Work
IGNOU, Delhi

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Unit Writers

Dr. Joseph Varghese

Course Editor & Programme Coordinator

Prof. Gracious Thomas

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM (Revision)

Unit Writers

Dr. Joseph Varghese

Course Editor

Dr. R.R. Patil

Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Programme Coordinator

Dr. Saumya

PRINT PRODUCTION

Mr. Kulwant Singh
Assistant Registrar (Publication)
SOSW, IGNOU

February, 2019 (Revised Edition)

© Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2009

ISBN-978-81-266-3524-9

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writing from the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Further information, about the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110 068.

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University by Director, School of Social Work

Laser Typeset by : Rajshree Computers, V-166A, Bhagwati Vihar, (Near Sec. 2, Dwarka), Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the course on “Social Science concepts for Social Workers”. This course has four blocks namely Social Work and Social Sciences (Block 1), Dynamics of Human Behaviour (Block 2), Family – The Basic Unit of Society (Block 3) and Indian Families in Transition (block 4).

Unit 1 ‘Social work and other disciplines’ deals with evolution of Social Work as an academic discipline and its relation to other disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, Medicine, Psychiatry, History, Public Administration, Law, Philosophy and Economics.

Unit 2 ‘Society and Culture’ will provide you conceptual clarity about society, socialization, culture and social work intervention at individual, group and community level as well in the society.

Unit 3 is on ‘Indian Society: Composition, Classification and Stratification’. This unit introduces you to the people of India and some basic facts about social stratification and social work intervention in a pluralistic society.

Unit 4 “Social groups, social institutions and social control” describes meaning, types, functions of social groups, social institutions, social control and social work intervention.

Unit 5 ‘Social Change: Meaning, characteristics and factors’ familiarize you with the meaning, characteristics, sources, factors and theories of social change and the role of social worker.

These five units will equip you with an understanding of some of the major concepts related to Indian society and its people which are essential for those intending to be involving in social work within the Indian Sub-continent.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The students of social work must have knowledge of the basic concepts pertaining to social sciences because social work is an inter disciplinary subject. The discipline of social work has highly borrowed knowledge and information from disciplines like Sociology, Psychology and other behavioural sciences.

In this course on “Social Science Concepts for Social Workers” there are 4 blocks. **Block 1** deals with the basic concept of society. In this block we also discuss about relationship of social work with other disciplines, Indian society and its cultural composition, social groups, social institutions and the meaning of social agencies. While working with people in the society, one must have good understanding of these concepts.

Block 2 is on Basics of psychology for social workers. Apart from providing introduction to psychology this block also deals with important psychological concepts such as personality development, motivation, social learning as well as defence mechanism. The primary task of a social work professional is to deal with the “person” in the society. Therefore it is essential for him/her to have some basic information about the behaviour pattern of the clients.

Block 3 deals with “Family as a basic unit of the society”. For a social worker family is the basic unit where from she/he starts involvement with individual clients, groups and community of a larger society. In this block we have discussed about the concept of family and marriage in the Indian context as well as various stages of human growth and development including family life cycle.

Block 4 deals with Indian families in transition. Apart from discussing family and marriage in a changing society, this block also covers topics on social work with contemporary family problems in Indian family system, parenting, adolescent and youngsters which are very important areas of concern for a student of social work.

The discussion and deliberation in this course is very important for social work students because we have covered several important topics pertaining to an individual in the context of society as well as his /her behaviour. Although all these topics require much more discussion, due to the limitations prescribed for a course, we have to cut short the length of the course material.

UNIT 1 SOCIAL WORK AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DISCIPLINES

Structure

*Joseph Varghese**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Evolution of Social Work as an Academic Discipline
- 1.3 Social Work and its Relation to other Disciplines
- 1.4 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.5 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

The birth of a number of problems of the industrial society led to develop modern social work in the nineteenth century. It took long time to get recognition that social work is a separate discipline. But it is also true that this discipline is related to many other disciplines. After studying this Unit you would be able to understand:

- the relationship of social work with other disciplines; and
- the major contribution of other disciplines to social work.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Social work has been called a helping profession, a problem solving profession or an enabling profession. To qualify to be a profession, social work should meet several criteria. One of the major criteria is that it should have its own knowledge base (Greenwood, 1957; 44-55). It should be able to produce knowledge and its practice should repeatedly validate. Theories and concepts should be formulated which explain the relationship between various factors that influence human behaviour. Models for interventions should be formulated to solve problems. However social work, as it is a helping profession, has a major limitation in this area. Most social workers are engaged in practice with little time for developing theoretical perspectives. Social work academics are often criticized for producing research (knowledge) which is not of much use to practicing professionals.

Social work in the early period of growth depended to a large extent on knowledge derived from other disciplines like psychology, sociology, economic and political science. However since 1970s social work scholarship has broadened and deepened its scope. The profession's self generated fund of knowledge has expanded substantially (Reamer, 1994:1). But this does not mean that social work engagement with other disciplines has reduced or limited. This Unit will give you an overview about the relationship between social work and other disciplines.

1.2 EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL WORK AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

Modern social work evolved in the nineteenth century to address the problems created by the emergence of the industrial society (Friedlander, 1967:3). While, it is true that all religious traditions had a history of individuals and institutions helping the lesser fortunate, it is only in the modern society that 'helping' became a profession and professional social work emerged. Professionalizing of the helping profession was both a consequence of change and a cause of social change.

The major changes that influenced the emergence of social work in the West were social, political and economic. The industrial society gave birth to a number of problems not seen earlier. Urbanization, and large scale migration of people from rural to urban areas in search of employment were some of the important consequences. Rural communities declined and so did the traditional forms of social control. The people in the city often suffered from moral and material problems. The institutions like the family and churches which were earlier responsible for the welfare could no longer cope with the social problems. The modern social work had its roots when volunteers, mainly middle class white women worked among the poor and the destitute to alleviate their social and financial problems. However there was a growing realization that charity needs to be organized to reduce costs and made more humanitarian (Desai, 2002). The Charity Organization Societies (COS) and settlement house were the pioneering efforts in this direction. The COS was founded in 1869 in UK and in 1877 in the USA. The COS used a number of 'visitors' to investigate the clients who were considered needy by the voluntary agencies. This system introduced some form of order in the then prevalent chaotic situation in dispensing aid to the poor. Secondly, the issue of treatment was introduced as the COS did not simply distribute aid but also provided social and psychological support. Therefore the COS visitors can be called as forerunners of the method –case work. Thirdly the formation of specialized agencies for coordinating and administering welfare services were widely used. The beginning of using a systematic method to deal with the poor can be traced to these movements. The settlement houses were started in 1889 in the USA. The settlement houses were agencies in which university students stayed with the poor to support them and at the same time learn about their life. The methods used by these houses can be termed as three R's-residence, reform and research. The living with those who needed help reduced the distance between the client and the practitioner. The COS's major objective was to reform the poor by counseling and support, while, the settlement house aimed at understanding the poor and trying to address the conditions that caused poverty.

Another major influence was the growing social movements, which took place during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The labour movements, socialistic movements, women's movements and movements for racial justice were some of the most prominent of them. There was growing recognition of the rights for physically and mentally disabled, children, refugees and the homeless. Several social workers gave lead to these movements or were very much influenced by them. For example, Jane Addams who started the settlement houses in Chicago

won a Nobel Prize for her contribution to the peace movements. The Social workers were in the forefront of the efforts to pass legislations to protect the rights of the disabled, minorities and women.

Another important factor in the emergence of professional social work was the growing role of the state in welfare programmes. The Social Security Act 1935 gave the responsibility of providing financial support to the vulnerable sections to the government. The welfare component in the government increased in most of the European countries. Professional social workers planned and implemented the welfare programmes giving the profession greater visibility and legitimacy.

Social's increasing role in the society made it imperative that a formal system of education be created that would train social workers to perform their functions effectively. The first university to introduce formal education was Columbia University, which offered a six-week training programme in 1896 for the volunteers who were working in the welfare sector. Gradually there were number of courses which were offered increased. The duration was also increased as subjects of study increased. Newcomer (1959) cites three developments that took place which facilitated the rise of social work education in USA (i) the development of social sciences as academic disciplines (ii) the establishment of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections and (iii) the establishment of privately sponsored women's colleges and co-educational public universities (Desai, 2002). By the early twentieth century social work courses became part of university system in the USA. However the content and duration of the social work courses were the subject of debate. In 1932 the Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) adopted a minimum one year curriculum that included prescribed courses of subject areas such as medical and psychiatric information research, social legislation and legal aspects of social work (Dnnear, 1984 quoted in Reamer). In 1944 the AASSW identified eight areas which should be taught in social work courses such as, public welfare, social case work, social group work, community organization, medical information, social research, psychiatry and social welfare administration. The Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) was started in 1952 to regulate social work education. In 1962 it formulated the first formal curriculum policy which divided the curriculum into three areas like social welfare policy and services, human behaviour and the social environment and methods of social work practice. The next review in 1982 clarified the important role of liberal arts in the syllabus and identified five important areas: human behaviour and social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research and field practicum. Again in 1992, some new areas of concern were stressed including values and ethics, cultural and ethnic diversity, population at risk, human behaviour and social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research and field practicum. Presently there is a broad consensus in the US on the topics that need to be part of formal training in social work. (Reamer, 1994:1-12).

The International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) World census of Social work education 1998-1999 has given a global picture (not covering India) of the topic of study in social work courses. The four courses namely research, social policy, personal and interpersonal intervention and community intervention were offered by 68.7% of the schools and Social and Public

Administration; Social History and Philosophy; Ethnic and Cultural Focus; Bio\Psycho\Social Theory; and Organizational Theory were offered by 50% to 54% of all schools outside the US. The social work curriculum represents the knowledge that has to be transferred to new entrants to the profession and maintains the standards of services. The existing curriculum can be divided into four components: (1) Human behaviour and social environment which will include the theories that explain social reality. This section of social work knowledge relies more on social science disciplines like sociology, psychology, history and economics, (2) Social policy, social welfare policy and social welfare administration. This section enriches itself from the policy sciences and public administration, (3) Social work practice. This section depends largely on the methods of social work namely case work, group work and community organization. Within these models, social work has evolved many intervention methods like task centered ecology model, (4) Social work research, which centers around evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of the various means of intervention unlike the social sciences research which aims at dispassionate search for truth.

Along with the gradual recognition of social work as a discipline, there has been an increase in the number of books and articles related to its practice. Mary Richmond wrote 'social diagnosis' which described methods to understand and diagnose social reality. It influenced social work practice as it was among the first text to systematically describe the methods for practice. Similarly contributions by Grace Coyle, Mary Follet and others helped the growth of group work knowledge.

1.3 SOCIAL WORK AND ITS RELATION TO OTHER DISCIPLINES

Social work is related to various disciplines. The areas like sociology, psychology and social policy are considered cognate disciplines of social work which has influenced social work. (Dominelli, 1997)

Sociology and Social Work

Sociology (Latin "socius" meaning companion and Greek logos the study) is the scientific study of the human society. It is called the science of society. All social sciences study human behaviour, but the content, approach and the context of sociology are very different from other disciplines. According to Inkeles sociology has three distinctive subject matters. Firstly, sociology is the study of society with society as the unit of analysis. Here it studies the internal differentiations and how they interact with each other and how they influence each other. It studies the allocation of functions to the different structures of the society. Max Weber, for example, studied the relationship between religion and capitalism and how the latter helped capitalism emerge. Sociology also studies the external characteristics of the population and the rate and stage of its progress. The problems of the society are explained using these factors. Secondly sociology as the study of institutions – political, economic, social, legal, stratifications, etc. It studies the features that these institutions share and the features that are different. Their degree of specialization and level of autonomy are also studied. Durkheim, one of the pioneers of sociology, called sociology as the study of social institution. Thirdly sociology is the study of social

relationships. By social relationship we mean the interactions between individuals. Interactions between individuals are mediated by norms and values of the society and are intended to achieve goals. (Inkeles 1999:14-15)

The subject matter for sociology was collective behaviour of human beings. The Society, community, family, religion, nation and groups are concepts that sociology investigates and studies. Its methods are considerably influenced by natural sciences. Even more importantly sociology studied the European society that was polarized and divided on ideological lines. The society was in danger of being disintegrated. The sociologists through their theoretical contributions were responding to this major crisis that they saw around them. They were suggesting the ways and means that societies could adopt to face the problems caused by modernity.

The professional social work and sociology emerged in the European society in the nineteenth century, which was the period of great changes in the society. Both responded to the crises caused by the changes in the modern society. They used the scientific methods to validate their means of work, gain acceptance and popular support. There were hard fought ideological debates within the adherents of each discipline, so as to the best way to solve problems. For example in social work the COS approach and the settlement approach influenced the direction of social work. The COS favoured the person centered approach, which depended on case work to resolve social problem, while the settlement house favoured a structural change to resolve the problem. In different forms the debate continues, so as to find the best way to resolve social problems (Dominelli, 2004:47).

But sociology and social work differ in many aspects. In Sociology the approach to society is theoretical and theory building is its major concern. Social work on the other hand has to be practical and deal with problems. So social workers spend more time in the field with people rather than in the libraries with books. Sociological theory is based on facts drawn from complex social reality. They offer precise cause to explain social phenomena. Often these theories are of little value to the practioner as many other factors come into play which should be taken into account to reach a realistic solution. On the other hand, sociologist find social workers work to be fragmented and oriented only towards the problem at hand than analysing social phenomena. Another important distinction between social work and sociology is that the latter made claims to be a value free discipline. Being objective and free from bias was considered a virtue. Social work on the other hand is a value based profession based on humanitarian principles.(Johnson, 1998; 14)

Sociology has a significant influence on social work. The work of 'Charles Booth' on poverty gave new perspective to the society. Sociological analysis provides theoretical perspectives that can subject policies and the work which practioners do to systematic analysis thereby enhancing our understanding of what is done and why (Dominelli, 1997:5). The following are the areas in which contribution of Sociology is significant.

- 1) The systems theory in sociology has been used in the ecological model of social intervention in which the client systems are seen as being part of the environment and being influenced by it. (Reamer, 1994:103).

- 2) The major three approaches of sociology – structural functionalist, Marxian and interactionist – have influenced social work practice. Marxist theories have helped social worker understand that conflict is part of society and that different sections in society have conflicting interests. These perspectives have helped social workers look critically at its own methods and see whose interests the profession is serving. Further they have enabled social work professionals to influence social policy by advocating for legislations and programs. The interactionist school has contributed to the understanding of sub-cultures and delinquency. Some of the key theorists and their concepts that have been significantly used in social work include Foucault concept of power, Marx's class relationship, and Goffman's closed institutions. (Dominelli, 1997:82).
- 3) Sociological concepts like role, status, authority, power, rights, responsibility, groups, communities and nations are used in case-work, group work and community organization, which has enriched social work practice.
- 4) The study of family, types of families, changing roles of family members, changing functions of family and its members, the problems and means to resolve these problems.
- 5) Problems of elderly and their solutions.

Psychology and Social Work

Psychology (Latin psyche soul and logos study) is the study of mental processes and human behaviour. Psychology can be defined as the science of human and animal behaviour; it includes application of this science to human problems (Morgan, 1993:30). Being a science it uses the tools of observation, measurement and classification to study human behaviour.

Three main approaches dominate the field of psychology (1) Freudian and Neo-Freudian approaches. This approach gives importance to the unconscious part of the mind, which plays an important role in determining the behaviour of the individual. Sigmund Freud is the main proponent of this approach but since then many others like Carl Jung have contributed to giving new direction to this approach. (2) Behavioural approach, which takes behaviour as being learnt. Skinner the proponent of this approach advocated the use of empirical methods to study human behaviour. (3) The third approach is the gestalt approach which takes a holistic approach to the study of human behaviour.

Psychology is further divided into various specializations — clinical psychology, abnormal psychology, industrial psychology, counseling psychology, developmental psychology and sports psychology. While much of psychology is descriptive and analytical in nature. Psychology is also a practice profession. A variety of agencies employ psychologists for work related to recruitment, counseling and training. Clinical psychology provides diagnosis to mental disorders and prescribes therapies for their cure. The area of social worker and the clinical psychologist overlaps even in other areas like child development and there are common areas of concern also. Often social work and psychology expand their respective spheres of influence.

Along with sociology, psychology had a major influence on the social work profession. The emergence of Freud's psychoanalytical approach gave a major

impetus to case work in the earlier part of the twentieth century due to the following reasons (1) the case work in its initial stages was a very general method, which needed only common sense and logical thinking to practice. The psychoanalytical approach gave it an established (medical) base on which it could develop into a specialized method. (2) the need for knowledge to explain difficult phenomena with which practice was involved. (3) the entrance into the general culture of psychoanalytical ideas. (4) the political and economic contexts that, time to time, emphasized individual culpability over social justice and societal responsibility. (Reamer, 1983; Reamer, 1994) The social workers trained in this skill extended the clientele of social work profession from the poor to middle class and the rich classes. The social work profession's total identification with poor, destitute and the disabled was reduced, when clients from other section of the society started using their services. Most of these clients were well off and were part of the mainstream of the society. They mainly suffered from psychological ailments rather than from poverty. Thus, social work came to be seen as a helping profession rather than solely caring for the poor. This new role of the social work was also better paying than those on other positions. Even now the categories of social work professionals who are the highest incomes are who offer individual and privatized care to their clients.

Psychology contributed a number of techniques to social work profession

- 1) Behaviour modification theories, psychoanalysis techniques like dream analysis, etc.
- 2) Child development with emphasis on role expectation at every stage.
- 3) Abnormal psychology and the various classification of mental illness.
- 4) Counselling psychology.

Social worker often used these techniques in their practice to increase their effectiveness. But social work engagement with psychology has its critics. The adoption of psychology methods removed social work from its original mission of helping the poor (Dominelli, 2002; Lymbery, 2005:40). Further this view also influenced the way social work saw the problems of society. Seeing social problems as being created due to the individual's incapacity diminished the part unjust social structures played in perpetuating injustices.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Which three disciplines are considered cognate disciplines of social work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What is the contribution of sociology and psychology to social work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Medicine and Social Work

The social work had a strong presence in the health sector. Consequently knowledge about the various diseases, their causes, diagnosis and cure are necessary for the social worker. Social workers should be aware of the social implication of these illnesses. The impact on the family, the resources available to the client, governmental and non-governmental resources available to support the client are areas of concern for the social worker.

Psychiatry and Social Work

Psychiatry is the diagnosis and treatment of psychological disorders. Psychiatric social workers are specially trained social workers skilled in interviewing, in assembling family histories of their clients and assessing social factors involved in psychological disorders. (Clifford. et al, 1999). Social work and psychiatry have close relation, as one very important area of intervention in social work is the mental health field. Social work gained a significant amount of information from psychiatry — types of mental illness, their classification, causes, effects and treatment methods. They rely on the medical model, sometimes called disease model, which seeks to explain mental illness through organic and biomedical causes. (Golightlry, 2004: 22) Consequently psychiatrists deal with the biological and medical aspects of mental illness. They diagnosis the illness and prescribe the necessary medication for the problem. Though the medical model is frequently used and accepted by the medical fraternity and the public at large its effectiveness has been contested. (ibid)

Social workers on the other hand deal with social aspects of the illness. They mobilize resources within the community to support the patient. It may be a job from the recovered person or getting funds for his livelihood. Social worker will also help his family cope with the difficult situation they find themselves in. Social worker views the mentally as a total person rather than a patient. The cooperation of social work, psychiatrist and other health professionals are needed for the holistic treatment of the patients. In USA the American Psychiatric Association, earlier known as Association of Superintends of American Institutions of the Insane, looks after the curative and rehabilitative needs of the mentally ill. There is no similar body in India as of now.

History and Social Work

In simple terms, history is the record of past events. However history has been

able to discover underlying forces that have influenced those events. History is divided into the following specializations — political history, social history, and economic history, history of ideas and world history. The purpose of history is to know the past, so that the present is better understood. If we want to know who we are we must know from where we came and how we reached here. So history studies the past events, the factors that influenced it and what circumstances brought about the events that happened.

For social work, history is important for the following reasons. First, the history of profession is to be studied, so that the current status of the profession is known. New methods in historiography have enabled us to go beyond the approaches that have been seen earlier. This has allowed new light to be thrown on some of the problems that the profession is facing today. For example the feminist viewpoint of the history of social work, the alleged low status of social work profession lies in its origin itself. The pioneers in the profession were white women who were themselves marginalized by society, which was transferred to their profession. Second, the role of social work especially in the west is linked to the fortunes of the welfare state. The welfare state is today facing unfrequented crises due to the rise of neo-liberalism which advocates a minimal state. To fight this political tendency social work has often used history to explain the growth of the welfare state and present problems, it needs to address.

Public Administration and Social Work

According to Luther Gulick 'public administration is that part of the science of administration, which has to do with the government and thus concerns itself primarily with the executive branch where the government is done'. Public administration is also a discipline that studies the functioning of this part of the government. Public administration has many branches — administrative theory, financial administration, welfare administration, administrative law and personnel administration. Social work is concerned with welfare administration as it deals with the provision of social welfare services and correctional services.

The American Council of Social Work education has defined 'administration as the process of transforming community resources into a programme of community service, in accordance with the goals, policies and standards which have been agreed by those involved in the enterprise. It is creative in the sense that it structures roles and relationships in such a way as to alter and enhance the total product. It involves the problem solving process of study, diagnosis and treatment or action and evaluation of results.'

The scope of social welfare administration is (1) the analysis of social problem and determining the administrative response to the problem (2) the planning and execution of social services (3) organizing social security programmes (4) administering social welfare agencies (5) formulation of social policies.

The discipline of social welfare administration includes the study of organizational and administrative structure at the various levels — local, regional, state, national and international; the role of social welfare administration at different levels; Financial administration; Personnel administration; Public relations; administrative task like vision building, planning, coordinating, control, communication etc; research and evaluation. (Sachedeva, 2003:97).

The role of the social worker in UK, USA and other western countries in the provision of welfare services of the government is significant. The social worker has to have the knowledge of the various services and resources provided by the government. She often has to decide who is eligible to obtain welfare services. In correctional services the social worker is often the probation officer who plays an important role in determining the fitness of the person to be considered for probation and parole. To perform these functions the social worker has to be familiar with the political and administrative context in which he performs the role. Also he needs to know the laws, rules and regulations, procedures which are associated with the process. The humanization of the social services was the major aim of social work of late the role of the social worker in policy formulation is gaining importance (Rogers and Stevenson, 1973.). Social workers are increasingly aware that participation in the formulation of policies is an important means to bring about social change in line with their values. The policy science is itself a multidisciplinary subject, which deals with how policies are made and how policy analysis can be done. The knowledge about both these aspects are important to the social worker. The need for participation in policy formulation has made knowledge about social policy important.

Law and Social Work

Social work and law have an important relationship. (1) In many countries especially in the West social work has been given statutory powers to intervene in selected areas of social life, for example the family to protect children or prevent domestic violence. (2) Due to scandals in the social services regulation through law has increased in these areas. (3) The limitations in law and the legal system has made it difficult for common people to get justice. Social workers have understood this chronic malady afflicting the legal system. Therefore law has an ever increasing importance in social work education as well as professional service.(Cull and Roche, 2001:12). Another important development that has made law important for social work is the emergence of human rights based practice. (Johns, Roberts, 2005:20)

The need for knowledge of law is of paramount importance to the Indian social worker. Indian social legislations are often attempts to bridge the gulf between consensual values and their apparent incongruence with prevailing patterns of behaviour. It creates a legal framework for the new situations and provides opportunities for change in the desired direction. (Encyclopedia of Social Work in India, 1987:72).

Social workers need the knowledge of law, when they perform their roles as counselors. Secondly, social worker as mentioned earlier performs a number of quasi-judicial functions in the correctional field, childcare, adoption and mental health field. Thirdly, in developing countries like in India the social worker need the knowledge of law to protect the poor from the misuse of law by the powerful. PIL is a tool to ensure rights to those whose rights are violated.

Hence the social work has to get a basic understanding and knowledge of the following:

- 1) Constitution with special emphasis on rights and directive principle

- 2) Legal Aid
- 3) Legislations related to marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption and succession
- 4) Special legislations to protect disadvantaged sections like Dowry Prohibition Act, People with disabilities Act, Prevention of atrocities of SC&ST, Juvenile Justice Act
- 5) Public Interest Litigation
- 6) Basic procedures related to arrest, bail, First Information Report, charge sheet etc.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Why should a social worker know about history?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) What basic legal information should the social work have?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Philosophy, Ethics and Social Work

Social work is a value-based profession that deals with the life of human beings. Hence its relationship with philosophy especially moral philosophy is very important. Moral philosophy also called ethics, aims at determining 'what ought to be' in any given situation. In simple words it helps in distinguishing right from wrong. The study of Ethics can be divided into three (i) Metaethics that deals with the ultimate questions of human life. What can be called good? What should be the basis of all decisions? (ii) Normative ethics deals with how Meta ethics can be formed into principles that can govern the social life. (iii) Applied ethics is applying this knowledge to everyday life situation. Social workers work with human beings and with human relationships. Often social workers are confronted with decisions that have to be ethically sound. The end cannot justify the means. Ethics provides the basis for the right action towards the client. Large sections are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and value systems are constantly changing. Different perspectives and often contradicting are available on different issues. For example, on abortion there are number of perspectives and the question arises which is the correct approach.

Ethical problems and dilemmas in professional social worker exist in three forms (i) issues related to individual welfare and rights (ii) issues around public welfare (iii) Issues related to inequality and structural oppression. (Banks, 2001; 11-12).

Social work's professional bodies formulate ethics for its members. It regulates the relationship between the professional and the client, professional and fellow professionals, professional and the society. (NASW Code of Ethics)

Social work will increasingly depend on philosophy and ethics to answer new questions and resolve dilemmas arising in the profession due to new issues like same sex marriage, euthanasia, cloning and stem cell use.

Economics and Social Work

Economic is the study of how the goods and services we want get produced and how they are distributed among the society. Economics has a number of branches— agricultural economics, development economics, financial economics; industrial economics etc. Economic policy is how the system of production and distribution work better. No area of society is free from the influence of economic policy. Many issues related to social work like income, poverty, unemployment, migrations are directly related to the economic situation. Social worker has to understand the situation, has to adopt a through analysis of the situation which often includes the study of economic factors. Often individual and relationship problems have its root in the economic condition that in turn is created by factors beyond the control of people affected by it. For example, unemployment can increase tendency to divorce and depression

Amartya Sen's concept of entitlements and Mahbub ul Haq's Human Development Index (HDI) have given social work a sound basis for the provision of services to individuals. It has clear evidence that these measures are not only the rights of the people but has benefits for the whole society.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Which Indian economist has used the term entitlements extensively?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) What is the original knowledge base of social work?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.4 LET US SUM UP

Social work is a practice profession. The first and foremost aim of the social work is to help the clients. The three factors that determine the quality of the professional service that the social worker provide are knowledge, skill and attitude. Knowledge means the capacity to understand, skill is the capacity to perform and attitude is characteristic response of the individual towards an issue. Knowledge is important as it improves the personal ability to comprehend and analyze, while skill helps in the delivery of services. Other disciplines have contributed to the knowledge and skill of the social worker. The concepts, theories and ideologies have helped the social worker to go beyond the obvious and to establish cause and affect relationship.

As mentioned earlier social work often borrows from different disciplines from the wider society. However, this is inevitable, as social work can not remain indifferent to the increase in the knowledge base of various disciplines and has to respond to these developments. In fact social work knowledge comes from a wider range of sources which includes precedent, experience and common sense. However social work should and does adapt the various theories to its practice. (Younghusband, 1964:124, Payne, 1997:39). Often these theories lose their relation with the larger theoretical framework from which it had evolved which is not of great concern for the social worker. He often uses the most suitable means to achieve his objective. This eclecticism has contributed to the effectiveness of the methods

The major methods of social work are its original tools for practice — case work, group work and community organization. Knowledge creation for the sake of knowledge is not the aim of social work. In any case there is a growing realization that single disciplinary approach is narrow and limiting. Theoretical subjects like sociology and history are adopting the multidisciplinary approach to studying their respective areas of study. It is not uncommon to find historian using the methods of sociology and vice versa. The interaction between political science and sociology has resulted in a growing area of study—political sociology. When the theoretical subjects are moving in this direction, social work need not be apologetic about amount their use of knowledge about other disciplines.

Alex Flexner in 1915 termed social work as not qualifying as a profession as it does not have a knowledge base of its own. But over the years social work has accumulated large amount of knowledge. However is has not been able to theorize these experience. Consequently, no universally accepted theories exist. Social work's borrowing from other disciplines helps reduce this lacuna.

1.5 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Desai, Murli, (2002) Ideologies and Social Work, History and Contemporary Analyses, Rawat Publications, New Delhi

Dominelli, Lena.(2002) Social Work , Polity Press, London

Dominelli, Lena (1997) Sociology for Social Worker, Palgrave, New York.

Friedlander, Walter(1967), Introduction to Social Welfare, Second Edition, Prentice Hall of India (Private) Limited, New Delhi.

Reamer, G. Frederic(ed)(1994), The Foundations of Social Work Knowledge, Columbia University Press, New York.

Johns, Robert(2006), Using the Law in Social Work, learning matters, Exeter.

Lymbery, Mark(2005), Social Work with Older People; Context, Policy and Practice, Sage Publications, London.

Banks, Sarah(2001), Ethics and Values in Social Work, Palgrave, New York.

Younghusband, Eilleen(1964), Social Work and Social Change, George Allen and Unwin Ltd, London.

Payne, Malcolm(1997), Modern Social Work Theory, Palgrave, New York.

Cull Lesley-Anne and Rochs, The Law and Social Work, Palgrave, New York.

Encyclopedia of Social Work (1987), Publications Division, New Delhi.

Morgan, C.T. and others.(1993), Introduction to Psychology, Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi.

Gensler, Harry(1988), Ethics; A Contemporary Introduction, Routledge, London.

Sachdeva, D R(2004)., Social Welfare Administration in India, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad.

World Census of Social Work Education 1998-1999, International Association of Social Work.

UNIT 2 SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Structure

*Joseph Varghese**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Society
- 2.3 Socialization
- 2.4 Culture
- 2.5 Social Work, Society and Culture
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Further Readings and References

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Man can not live alone and needs association of other human beings in society. Culture gives meaning to the social and material world around these human beings. Behaviour of an individual in society is thus influenced by culture. Any way, after reading this Unit you would be able to understand:

- concept, components and types of society;
- meaning, dimensions and characteristics of culture; and
- relevance of the concepts of society and culture for social work practice.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The knowledge about society and culture is very important to the social worker. Social workers practice their professions in specific social and cultural contexts which will definitely influence their mode of practice. (Payne, 1997:2004) They have to take into consideration the values, norms, beliefs, ideologies of the society before they create programs of action to ameliorate social problems and resolve conflicts.

Equally important is the necessity of the social worker to understand himself or herself. Social workers are themselves products of the societies that they live in and are inevitably influenced by it. Knowledge about society and culture is also needed to help the social worker gain self-awareness about him or herself. The personality of the social worker is a major tool used in practice and culture plays a major role in the development of the personality.

Society and culture are basic concepts used by sociologists to understand the social reality around us. Here we will discuss about these concepts from the viewpoint of the social work profession.

2.2 SOCIETY

Man is a social animal. He cannot live alone and needs to associate with other human beings for fulfilling his basic, emotional and esteem needs. He forms network of relationships with other human beings for this purpose. The largest of these groups is the society.

Some definitions of society are given below:

Society is a system of usage's and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many grouping and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever-changing complex, we call society. It is the web of social relationships. and it is always changing. (Mac Iver and Page 1969:5)

Society consists of the following components:

- 1) Roles and status
- 2) Groups
- 3) Community
- 4) Values and norms

Roles and Status

Society comprises of a number of individuals. Individuals have different positions assigned to them. The various positions in society that are allocated to different individuals are called status. Status can be divided into two types based on how they are assigned to the members of the society—*Ascriptive* status and *Achieved* status. Ascriptive statuses are those statuses that the person gets because of his or her birth into a particular family, caste, ethnic group, community or gender. Normally it cannot be changed and the particular status is assigned for life. Achieved statuses are those statuses that are obtained by his or her efforts e.g. a Engineer, a social worker or lawyer. The individual has to pass the requisite exams and tests to obtain these statuses. Achieved statuses can be changed as it depends on the individual's efforts and good fortune. Most traditional societies have more ascriptive statuses than achieved statuses while modern societies have more achieved statuses than ascriptive statuses. One relevant example is the mode of selection of leadership— in traditional societies the leader (king) was usually the son of the king, an ascriptive status, while in modern societies the leader (president or prime minister) is usually elected. In the traditional Indian society entry to prestigious professions depended whether an individual was born into a high caste family or not whereas in modern society entry into prestigious positions is through the merit of the individuals.

Every individual in society has more than one status in the society. For example, you are doing a course from this university and your status is that of a student. But you also have other statuses— you are also son/daughter of your parents; you are an employee if you are working in an organization; you are citizen of India; a member of your community etc. Some of these statuses are important to you as you consider them to be of value to you while others are of lesser or no value to you. The status that the individual considers most important and which substantially influences his / her behaviour is called master status. Other statuses, which he is assigned, are called secondary statuses.

Statuses and roles are directly related. Role can be defined as the set of behaviour, which is attached to a particular status. Every role has task role and maintenance function. The former is related to achieving the goals at hand and the later is related to maintaining bonds between individuals.

Each individual performs many roles attached to it. All roles that are attached to a particular individual is its role set. Robert K. Merton defines role-set as “complement of role relationships which persons have by virtue of occupying a particular social status”.

An illustration will help you clarify these concepts. A boy has a status of a student. As a student he has to attend classes, listen to his teacher’s instructions, and do his assignments. But he also has secondary roles like being a friend, member of sports team etc. All these roles can be the role set the boy. Similarly, a teacher has a status of a woman along with other statuses of a wife, friend, daughter etc.

Roles are societal expectations from a particular status. Society demands that the required behaviour from every individual who occupies the particular position in society. The playing of these roles is relational i.e. role is performed in relation to other roles which are dependent in it. A teacher’s role is performed in relation to the roles of the students. The doctor’s performance of her role is in relation to that of the patient. Consequently the performance of role is mutually dependent and mutually influencing on both the persons who is playing the role and person to whom the role is played. They guide and control each other’s behaviour. Thus the teacher who plays the role of the teacher is obliged to play the role of the teacher and the student is obliged to play the role of the students because the teacher is playing his role. The whole of society can be seen as different individuals playing different roles. It is only when the members of the society perform their roles satisfactorily that the society will survive and prosper. If the large members of the society do not perform the roles allocated to them satisfactorily the society will breakdown and can even disintegrate.

Society has to ensure that the individuals perform the different roles because only that can ensure the continuance of the society, the maintenance of law and order and peaceful existence of its members. The means by which the society tries to control individual behaviour is through sanctions. Sanctions has been defined as ‘ a means of enforcing a rule or law and which can be positive or negative i.e. it may take the form of a reward and punishment’.

The different types of sanctions are as following (i) positive and negative (ii) formal and informal (iii) physical and psychological. Positive sanctions are rewards the person is given when he has performed his role to the expectations or even better than the expectations of the group. A student who gets first rank in the class is given a gold medal, which signifies appreciation, by the college. Negative sanctions are in form of punishments either by inflicting mental/physical injury or by withdrawing certain desired conditions. The police fine the motorist who violates the red-light signal. A thief is put in prison and his right to move freely in society is limited. Both involve unpleasant consequences for actions, which are unlawful according to the law. Formal sanctions are given by formal agencies that are set up under the legal system who implement a set of standardized and codified laws. For example, the police and courts are the formal agencies in India who are statutory empowered to punish the wrongdoers. Informal sanctions are general forms of social control and may include flattery, criticism, ridicule etc. Physical sanctions are those that influence the body while psychological sanctions are those that influence the mind. We will learn about these in the later chapter in the block.

Theoretically, roles in societies seem distinct and clear enough. However in real life there seems to be numerous problems. Let us see how these concepts can give us insight into human relationships and inter relationship problems.

Role Conflict: Role conflict can take place in two ways. (1) An individual has many statuses with different roles, which the individual cannot always harmoniously perform. This may be because in certain situations the individuals may not be able to perform two roles simultaneously. Different roles make irreconcilable demands on the person, which will lead to role conflict. For example, a working mother whose child is ill may not be able to decide whether to take leave and avoid going to office or to neglect the child and go to office. Either way she will be not performing one role of her status as a mother or an employee has given her. (2) Role conflict can also occur when there is a difference in the interpretation of a particular role by different individuals including the role player. For e.g. A doctor gets a call from her hospital for an urgent case after her duty hours are over. She feels that she should leave her house and go and attend her patient whereas her husband may think that her primary duty is towards her family and she should not leave.

Role Strain: Role strain happens when the individual performing the specific role is unable to perform the role to his satisfaction or to the satisfaction of others or both. This can happen due to any of the following reasons (i) the person has not been socialized adequately to perform the role (ii) the roles on which this role is depended does not support the performance of the role (iii) the social situation does not permit the person to perform the role. The reasons thus can be psychological or social.

Role Complementary: When roles are complementary, partners in a relationship identify self and others correctly and accurately assume expected roles, and perform appropriately.

Role Reciprocity: Reciprocity involves the typical and expected pairing of role positions, such as husband/wife, mother/child, worker/client, teacher/student.

Indian society is experiencing a period of cultural change. We see a variety of value systems being adopted by different groups in the society. These values are derived from traditional ideologies to modern and even postmodern ideologies, conflict based on the value system in families, organization etc. Value consensus on important issues has not been achieved in Indian society. For example, many women today work in demanding jobs that hinders their participation in household activities, which was traditionally their domain. So should the woman sacrifice her career for her household responsibilities or should she compromise her household responsibilities by focusing on her career? Many times she is expected to perform both the roles satisfactorily without any support and that leads to role conflicts and strain. Is divorce a matter of individual choice or does it signify social disorder? Another issue is that of the role of religion in public life. Can there be a show of religious symbols and discourses or should there be a complete separation of public life and religion? It is not as if conflicts regarding value systems is not present in other countries, but in India the intensity of the conflict is much higher due to the pluralistic nature of the society and changes the society is experiencing.

Due to these factors the Indian society is increasingly facing role conflicts at different levels including family, work place, political parties. Agencies meant for inculcating new values and resolving conflicts themselves suffer from crises of legitimacy and are unable to perform their roles satisfactorily.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Define Society

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What is a status and a role?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Groups

Groups are important components of any society. It can be said that while men and women live in society, it is in groups that they really spend their lives. Society is abstract while group are tangible and real.

Groups are defined as in the following ways:

A group is a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in more or less definite status and role relationship to one another and which possess a set of values or norms of its own regulating the behaviour and individual members at least in matters of consequence to the group — Sherif and Sherif.

Groups are aggregates of categories of people who have a consciousness of relationship and of interaction— Horton and Hunt

According to the above mentioned definitions we can summarize by saying that groups are characterized by the following:

- Membership of more than two,
- Awareness of others,
- Interaction with each other
- At least some common goals,
- It exists of a certain length of time.

Groups are different from crowds and mobs. Crowds consist of individuals but there is no awareness about each other and no or limited interaction takes place between them. Mob on the other hand, is collection of people emotionally charged about an event. Once the emotion settles down the mob dissolves. There is no continuity in a mob that a group has.

Types of Groups

Groups can be divided into many types based on different criteria

i) Primary and Secondary Groups

Primary groups are those groups which are relatively small in size and whose members engage in regular face-to-face interaction, have shared interests and believe that the membership to this group is of very important to them. Rewards in primary groups is often not based on the contribution of the individual to the group but is based on the value attached to the member by the group. Examples of primary groups are family and friends. Charles Cooley was among the first sociologists to describe the importance of primary groups to the development of the human personality. Primary groups play an important role in providing the individual with opportunities for intimate association and cooperation. It is through these experiences that the individual forms his social self; expresses his needs and desires in a social acceptable manner; obtains cooperation from others and form associations for achieving common goals; settles conflicts and develop social skills.

Secondary groups are larger groups whose size of membership does not allow for the growth of intimate and face-to-face relationship. Relations therefore become impersonal and relatively casual. They are contractual in nature rather than spontaneous as in primary groups. Cooperation between members is to achieve specific objectives. A hierarchy and a body of rules and regulations are often formulated to control the behaviour of individual members. Rewards are based on the contribution of the member to the organization. Examples of secondary groups are modern organizations like schools, political parties and business firms.

The importance of secondary groups is growing in modern societies. Secondary groups have taken over the many functions of the primary groups like child rearing, education and production. This is mainly because of the growing specialized knowledge and skills needed to perform these functions. Secondary groups are also needed in furthering its member's professional and political interests. The Bar association, Medical Council and political parties are secondary groups formed to further the interests of their members.

Secondary groups being large bodies are unable to satisfy the emotional requirements of its members. Hence the members within secondary groups form smaller groups within them and fulfill their emotional needs. Smaller groups formed within the larger group and having only a limited number of members are called subgroups. The growth of these groups have considerable influences in the functioning of the organizations negatively or positively.

ii) **Formal and Informal Groups**

Formal groups are those groups which are formed purposively for achieving specific objectives. Rules and regulations are rational and objective. In many formal organizations most of the members are full time paid staff. There is clear hierarchy and division of work. Members are obliged to follow the official channels of communication when they have to communicate to others inside and outside.

Informal groups on the other hand are formed based on mutual attraction and to fulfill needs. Objectives of the informal groups are diffused. Communication is again based on attraction and need not follow any rules and regulations. Members join in informal groups because they enjoy others company or to further their interests and not because they are paid a salary.

Formal groups and informal groups are mutually dependent. Often an organization begins as an informal organization and evolves into a formal organization when it grows and need to integrate specialists into it. On the other hand, every formal organization has a number of informal organizations. The existence of informal organizations has a significant influence on the working of the formal organizations. So every formal organization has to take into consideration the various informal organizations working inside it while making decisions.

iii) **In-group and Out-group**

W.G. Sumner has given this classification. According to him in-groups are those groups to which a person belongs to, like her family, friends groups and her colleagues. Out-groups are those groups that a person is not a member of. Often an individual is deeply influenced by the ideas, values and norms of her in-group. She sees other groups having different ideas and values as being wrong or as not measuring up to her standards. It creates a feeling of 'we' and 'they' and us and them. While these feelings may create solidarity among the in-group, it may create conflicts between the various groups in society. We will discuss these issues in the subsection titled "culture" in this unit

iv) **Other Classification of Groups**

Vertical groups and horizontal groups—Vertical groups are those groups whose members have members from different status groups, while horizontal groups are groups that have members from similar status groups. Example of vertical group is a class of students along with its teacher whereas the example of horizontal group is a class without its teacher. The former has the teacher whose status is different from those of the students while the later has only students who have the same status.

Reference groups and membership groups—reference groups are those groups which an individual wants to gain membership while membership groups are those groups that an individual is already a member. Reference group often fixes the standards of behaviour for aspiring members which influence them and leads to anticipatory socialization. Example of reference group behaviour is MBA students wearing suit and tie to their classrooms as they are seeking to enter the corporate world in the future and the dress code observed there is suit with tie.

Community

Community is “social group with some degree of we feeling and living in a given area”. (Bogardus)

Community is the total organization of social life within a limited area. (Ogburn and Nimkoff)

A community is that collectivity the members of which share a common territorial area as their base of operation for daily activities— Talcott parsons

Any group to be a community must have the following elements:

- i) A collection of people
- ii) A specific area
- iii) Community Consciousness—the population must have 'We Feelings' or 'Consciousness of Kind'
- iv) Common identity — the members should see themselves as belongings to the same group which is different from other groups
- v) Relatively Common culture.

Community members due to these conditions develop a certain degree of interdependence among themselves. Some communities are very small having less than hundred members. For e.g. Tribal community in Andaman and Nicobar. Other Communities can be very large like nations and cities. In such kind of larger communities members cannot obviously know each other or have face-to-face interaction. But in their imagination they share the feelings of belongingness to the same community. (Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*). For example, Indians spontaneously identify with other Indians without actually knowing them. This feeling of commonness is developed by education, mass media, popular culture that allow shared memories and common sentiments to emerge.

Types of Communities

Urban, Rural and tribal Communities

The differences of urban, rural and tribal communities can be understood using the following criteria:

i) Economic Activities

Urban communities are dependent on secondary and tertiary occupations while rural and tribal communities are dependent on primary occupations. There does exist some tribals communities that are still in hunting and gathering stage but most of them now engage in agricultural activities.

Modern economies are increasingly based on secondary and tertiary sectors. Even in India the contribution of agriculture to the GDP is decreasing while the contribution of the secondary and more so the tertiary sectors are growing. However the population in the agricultural sector is not decreasing and therefore there exists large quantity of underemployment and disguised unemployment.

Moreover large parts of the country are rain fed areas and failure of rains leads to drought. This in turn is pushing rural people to urban areas the result of which is uncontrolled urban growth.

ii) **Family Life**

It is generally believed that joint families are more prevalent in the rural areas and nuclear families are more prevalent in urban areas. The causes for it is identified as the lack of space in urban areas, frequent geographical mobility and the liberalized values prevalent in urban areas. Research shows a more complex picture. It shows that joint families exist in good numbers in urban areas also. Importantly it is not only the area which the family that seem to influence the type of family, it is also influenced by the main occupation of the family, caste and marriage customs. If the occupation of the family is traditionally business then it is more likely that the family will be joint family. Other sociologists have maintained that even when the family is nuclear there is 'jointness' in Indian family structure (should as extended family) than in the west. Important decisions are taken in consultation with the elders in the family even though there exists a physical distance between the members of family. In tribal families both the family and wider kinship are more important than in urban and rural families.

iii) **Type of Social Relations**

Social relations in urban areas are characterized by (i) anonymity (ii) impersonal relations (iii) relatively less importance of the neighbourhood. Urban areas are characterized by large number of people who have different interests, engage in different occupations and are career oriented. They have no time or inclination to develop relations with people around them. Therefore it is observed that people in urban areas live lonely and atomistic lives. Some religious and political leaders have said that life in urban area is artificial.

But its not true that urban people do not have any social life. Many of them have social networks made up of like-minded individuals with whom relations are very close and personal. These individuals may not be neighbours but are as helpful and emotionally close. Hence, while neighbours may be known urbanites they do have satisfying social relationships.

Sociologists also point out that anonymity is not always a negative feature. Anonymity can give the individual freedom and her private space. In India where exists a person of low caste who would be ill treated in the village as everyone will know his caste. But the anonymity of the city can give him freedom from stigma and oppression. He can chose to do any profession that he is competent. There is no restriction on food habits or to access public spaces. These advantages of urban life made Dr. Ambedkar encourage dalits to live in urban areas rather than in rural areas.

Other differences between urban area and rural area are as following: (i) Urban communities are more heterogeneous than rural communities (ii) There is greater tolerance of differences of lifestyles in urban areas than in rural areas (iii) social control in urban areas is more through formal means of control, whereas in rural areas informal means of social control exists. (iv) the pace of change in urban areas is faster compared to in rural areas. The people in rural areas tend to

be more traditional than in urban areas. However these are only ideal types of urban and rural communities. The existing realities are more complex than the typologies seem to suggest. This is true especially in India, where a modern society as in the West has not fully developed. The characteristics of rural culture are often found in the urban areas and vice versa. For example, joint family system and importance given to traditional religious practices are found in metropolitan cities in India also.

Sociologists have often criticized the use of the term ‘community’ as they believe that concept obfuscates many divisions present in the society. These divisions can be based on gender, caste, religion, race, ethnicity etc. It is pointed out by them that the term community assumes that all members of the community share its common goals and will benefit equally from effort to improve it. In reality, it is the elite who control the community resources and benefit from developmental programmes implemented for the community. The inability of women to participate and benefit from developmental programmes has been well documented. *The Myth of Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development* Gujjit and Shah (Ed) This contention is true to a large extent taking our experience of Indian development programmes implemented by government is studied. Land reforms and community development programmes were implemented for the community as a whole but benefited the elite sections of the community.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) What are the different types of groups?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Differentiate between rural community and urban community.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Types of society

According to Anthony Giddens, societies can be divided into the following types:

(I) Pre-modern Society (II) Agrarian Society (III) Modern Society

I) **Pre-modern Societies**

There are three types of pre-modern societies.

i) **Hunting and Gathering Societies**

These are the most primitive types of societies. Members of these societies live by hunting animals and gathering vegetables and fruits. They are remnants of the earliest type of societies that existed. There is almost no organized process of agriculture— no plowing or sowing. Consequently, they can get only foodstuff for minimal existence. There is no significant surplus left. Inequalities are minimal and hierarchy is based on age and gender only.

Most of these societies have disappeared. Only around fifty such societies survive and they are also fast vanishing because their populations are being absorbed by the more advance societies or their birth rate is not enough to sustain their population. In India the jarawa tribe of Andaman Islands belongs to this category. Most of the tribes in India are in the more advanced stage of pastoral and agrarian societies.

ii) **Pastoral Societies**

Pastoral societies are characterized by the presence of a limited form of settled farming and the rearing of domestic animals for milk, meat, wool etc. but these societies still depend on the methods of hunting and gathering to a large extent.

Pastoral societies are found in a small number around the globe. In India certain communities can be classified as pastoral societies— the Gujjar communities in Jammu & Kashmir.

iii) **Non-industrial Cities**

Apart from these pre-modern societies Giddens also notes that there were development of several cities in region around present day India, Egypt and Iran in around 6000 BC or so. These cities shared many characteristics of modern cities. Art and science was developed and there were centers of culture like theater. The commerce and administration were also developed, which were the rationale for the growth of these cities

These cities had high degree of social stratification. The slaves, plebeians, landowners, court officials were some of the important categories of the people living in these societies. The Mayan civilization of South America ancient Greece cities and Indian civilization are examples of these cities.

II) **Agrarian Societies**

The agrarian society is a completely settled society, who has developed enough technology to sow crops and raise and reap them. The complete dependence on nature no longer exists though they are still dependent on rains for their agricultural activities.

Technologically these societies are more advanced compared to the earlier societies. There is widespread use of metal implements like wheel, plough, axe etc. In advanced agrarian society's canals and bunds are built with considerable scientific acumen. They have also obtained the necessary knowledge to identify

those factors that favour or hinder agriculture production. The society's productive forces have increased and considerable surplus food is produced. The surplus distribution in the society causes social stratification— division of society based on income, prestige etc. Feudalism is the one important product of the agrarian society.

Giddens says that presently a number of societies are still agrarian in nature. Ninety percent of the population in Nepal and Rwanda still depend on agriculture and can be classified as agrarian societies. In India several regions are mainly depended on agriculture, as other sectors have not developed fully

III) **Modern Industrial Cities**

The origin of the modern cities lies in the process of industrialization, which began in nineteenth century in Western Europe. This process itself is the consequence of the intellectual movement of Enlightenment, which saw the rise of science and of rational thinking. The application of these principles for use in production processes lead to the growth of productive capacity of society. Consequently, it brought about social changes leading to emergence of the modern industrial society:

Some of the major changes due to the emergence of the industrial system were the following.

i) **Industrialism**

Industrialism was the widespread use of technology to the manufacturing process which lead to mass production. Previously most articles were produced by hand and using simple tools the result was low productivity. The use of modern technology in the productive process made mass production possible. The role of capital and markets increased and transformed. Division of labour and specialization increased.

ii) **Capitalism**

The rise of industrism gave rise to capitalism. The capitalism is characterized by the investing of capital in production process for profit making and wide spread use of wage labour. The increasing need for capital lead to the growth of a new class of entrepreneur called the capitalist.

iii) **Urbanism**

The growth of industries leads to the migration of people from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment. The growth of large amalgamations leads to the growth of urban culture characterized by anonymity, tolerance of individual difference, etc.

iv) **Liberalism**

Liberalism is an ideology which emphasis on individual freedom and liberty. The rise of democracy, equality and rule of law are some of the ideas of liberalism.

Postmodern society

Sociologists have pointed out that the advance western societies have reached

another stage of development that of postmodern societies. As the name suggests it means that the modern society characterized by the above-mentioned factors is rapidly vanishing leading to a new type of society. This society is characterized by the rise of information and communication technologies, domination of the services sector, biotechnology consumerism etc.

Value and norms

Values and norms are important part of the society that forms part of culture. In fact it is not possible to differentiate between society and culture. Values are generalized and desired standards of behaviour. A value is a belief that something is good and desirable (Haralamboss, 1991:6). Norms are more specific in nature and involves a specific guide to action which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in specific situations. They are based on the values prevalent in the society. For example 'human life is sacred' is a value and 'do not kill' is a norm. The function of norms in the society is to (1) protect things that are crucial to the survival of the society like human life, property etc. (2) predict individual response in situations (3) to control deviance and (4) to maintain order in society.

Mores and folkways are two related concepts. Folkways, a term introduced by W.G. Sumner, refers to practices which over a lengthy period of time has become an integral part of the behaviour of the group. A standardized response emerges to a specific situation. For example if a person in the modern society is sick, he is immediately taken to the doctor and in the traditional society he is taken to the witch doctor. When folkways become firmly integrated with the society and its observance is considered crucial to the existence of the society, they are called mores. For example prohibition against taking drugs or committing incest is mores. The violators of mores are punished severely. A number of mores and norms have been converted into laws. Then it becomes a formal instrument of social control. Laws are enforced by the state and the state assumes the authority to force people to follow the law.

2.3 SOCIALIZATION

The statuses and roles are allocated to the members based on the culture of the society. The values of the society determine the criteria on which the statuses and roles are allocated to the members. The process by which the future members learn to become members of the society is called socialization. The young one of the human species is the most helpless of all animals. Young ones of a cow for example can start to walk within a day or two. Infants on the other hand need many years to be able to fend for itself. Apart from the biological reasons one important reason for the delay is the nature of human culture. Human culture is the more advanced and complicated than other animals. Take the example the process of communication. The nearest relative of the human beings is the monkey. Scientists have attempted in course of many experiments to train monkeys to speak. But they could not go beyond training them to make rudimentary sounds to convey basic needs and feelings. No amount of training could make the monkeys go to a higher level. There was limit of the innate potentialities present in the monkey, which prevented it from developing its communication skills. On the other hand, the human baby only a few years old produce meaningful sounds to convey their thoughts, feelings and needs.

The socialization of the infant takes place through imitation and role taking. The infant is also self-centered and is unaware of feelings of others. Gradually it gains awareness and recognition of others around it. It also learns to communicate with others. It begins to interact with the people around it and the personality of the person evolves. Socialization as a process begins at birth and continues till death. Often de-socialization and re-socialization takes place. When a person is placed in a new situation she has to adjust to new demands made on her. She has to then get re-socialized. You may have experienced this situation when you went to a new school. The ways of doing things maybe different there which initially was uncomfortable but after some time you might have learned the new ways and gradually adjusted to your new school.

Socialization and the process of taking roles and playing their roles are closely related. An individual who has been socialized effectively will understand his role well and play it to his satisfaction. On the other hand an individual who has not been satisfactorily socialized will not be able to perform the roles satisfactorily. Many of them will be deviants. Deviants are individuals who are unable to follow the norms and values of the society.

Agencies of socialization

All institutions and organizations socialize individuals. However the main agencies of socializations are given below.

Family

It is a primary agency for socialization. Families in modern society have a major role in the development of the individual's personality. The pre-modern society was the main agent of socialization as the other agents of socialization were not fully developed. But as process of differentiation lead to the growth of specialized agencies like school, mass media, which lead to the family being divested of many of its responsibilities. However the family's role in the emotional and social development of the child remains unchanged and therefore is crucial. Family is the only place where the individual is treated as a whole person and not simply as a worker or a student.

Family's role in the development of the child personality is proved by a number of studies. Some of them have proved that the behavior of the parents influences the child. The children of divorced or separated families have a greater chance of divorcing themselves. The children of alcoholic fathers have greater tendency to get into trouble with authority figures such as teachers, policemen as they never had satisfactory relationships with the authority figures in their families. Similarly broken families have a co-relation within incidence of mental illness, juvenile delinquency and drug abuse.

Peer group

Peer group refers to the same age closed knit group which individual belong to during the periods of adolescent and youth. The peer group often exercises a high influence on its members. It is most influential in the matters on fashion and fads, career choices etc. Often the norms and values of the peer groups conflict with those of the other socialization agencies like the school and college.

Juvenile delinquent behaviour is often caused by the peer pressure to gain acceptance in the peer group or prove to the group that he or she can do risky tasks. The children who are caught by police for stealing or even murder reveal that they were forced to do these acts because their friends forced or persuaded them.

However peer group are important for the growth of the personality of the individual. It is in the peer group that he learns to adjust with others and fulfill his needs. Here unlike the home he is judged by his merits and has to perform to get the acceptance of his peers.

Educational institutions

The schools and later on the colleges are the first agencies where the socialization process begins. The school is different from the family in many ways. (i) it judges the person on her achievement rather than her birth (ii) it gives importance to the development of knowledge, which enables the individual to gain professional expertise (iii) it introduces the individual to various social process competition, conflict, accommodation etc.

There are other agencies of socialization.

The **state** has become an important agency of socialization. The primary institutions of family and educational institutions are now days significantly influenced by the nation-state. Nationalism has become an important role in modern society.

Political party and political processes are the most important agency for the political socialization of the individual. Most countries in the world are democracies or claim to be democracies. The political parties and non political formations increase the awareness about political issues and common problems. The different ideologies attempt to persuade the member regarding the rightness and effectiveness of their solutions. **Mass media** has gained importance as a socializing agent because of its power to reach audiences as fast and in relatively cheap means. Audiences are exposed to lifestyles and value systems which are at a distance from them. The power of advertisement, films and soap operas is significant. Role models from different societies are influencing the audiences. Religious institutions also are a significant agent of socializing in the form of values and principles.

Socialization is a continuous process and continues throughout the individual's life. Adult socialization takes place when adults learn new norms, values and roles in a changed situation. for example when they enter a profession or when they join a new organization. Resocialization is the process by which person sheds the earlier learning and adopts new behaviour patterns.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What are the main agencies of socialization?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Describe the role of family in the socialization process.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.4 CULTURE

Culture comes from the Latin word '*cultura*' stemming from *colere*, meaning "to cultivate" Culture is often used word commonly referring to the level of sophistication a person has. A person who is rude and couth is supposed to have no culture and a person who posses the right behaviour and etiquette is said to have right culture. But sociologists and anthropologists have a distinct and separate meaning for culture. Some definitions are given below:

That part of the total repertoire of human action (and its products), which is socially as opposed to genetically transmitted. — Dictionary of Sociology, D. Mitchell (ed.)

Culture according to prominent anthropologist E. B. Taylor is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and other habits quoted by man as a member of the society".

Mac Iver and Page say that "culture is the realm of styles, of values of emotional attachments, of intellectual adventures."

Dimensions of Culture

Culture has three dimensions (1) Normative dimensions which consist of values, norms, laws, folkways and mores. They give rules for appropriate behaviour like 'do not steal' (2) Material dimension that consists of using material objects like operating a machine and using the computer. (3) Cognitive dimension refers to how individuals process the information they obtain from the environment and interpret it. For example use of language and words.

Structure of Culture

Cultural practices are abstracts that are derived by observing the behaviour of the community. Cultural practices are organized at three levels— traits, patterns and complexes. They together form the totality of the particular culture. Every culture has a set of core values, which is abstract in form, but the practices of the community reveal values. These values form the unified core of the particular culture, which gives its members its philosophy of living.

Cultural Traits: The smallest unit of culture is called a cultural trait. For example, wearing a sindhoor for a Hindu married woman and touching of the feet of elders in North India are traits.

Cultural Complex: A set of traits related to a specific area is called a cultural complex. Marriage in Hindu society involves a number of traits all of which related to how the husband and wife should behave with each other. It can be called a cultural complex. They reflect what Hindu philosophy about marriage is.

Cultural Symbols: Every culture has certain signs and symbols which it endows with respect and honour. In itself these articles and signs may not be valuable but since the society has recognized it as being important all members treat it with respect. For example, the national anthem and national flag of the country.

Cultural Areas: The geographical area where the influence of culture is prevalent is called cultural area.

Sub-Culture: Culture which is found in various groups of the community which sufficiently distinct from the main culture. Sub-cultures are part of the mainstream culture and shares certain common elements with the mainstream culture. However it also contains many important elements that are not part of the mainstream culture.

Counter Culture: Counter culture refers to sub-culture within the culture which advocate elements that are opposite of mainstream culture. For example the hippy culture, which gained followings in the 1960s rejected the materialist culture of the west and opted for a 'simpler life'. Counter culture thus positions itself in opposition to mainstream culture as it is seen as being defective.

Material and Non-material Culture

Many sociologists divide culture into material and non-material culture. Material culture refers to the technology, artifacts, objects, which the society uses in their every day life. These are concrete and tangible. Non-material culture refers to the abstract and non tangible items like values, folkways, norms, beliefs which influence the behaviour of the members of the society. Some sociologists' disagree with the view that material objects can be classified as culture. They argue that one of the characteristics of culture is that it can be learned and there is no learning of an object. Only the use of the object can be learned. Secondly the meanings attached to the same object are different in different cultures. So the material object remains the same whereas the meanings differ (see Johnson, 1996). Other sociologists have tried to resolve the problem by terming the material culture as civilization and non material culture as culture.

Material culture and non-material culture constantly influence each other. Societies through the times are testimony to this relationship. Changes in the values have paved way for changes in the technology used in the society and changes in the technology have lead to changes in the value systems. Europe after the medieval age experienced an era called enlightenment which essential meant the rise of reason and rational thinking and its application in all spheres of human life. The main consequences was the rise of modern science, decline in influence of religion, secularization of the society and so on. The rise of modern science and its application gave rise to modern technology. Starting from the steam engine to more sophisticated uses the application of modern technology improve the productivity of the worker and enabled mass production. Industrialization,

urbanization, class system, colonization are the major consequences of these developments.

We can see the numerous social changes due to inventions. The social consequences of a single invention that of a contraceptive— a device used to control the childbirth. A number of changes in familial and social life are observed due to the use of contraceptive. The contraceptive separated the sexual act from childbirth as couples could prevent childbirth by using it. An increase in premarital sex was possible as couples especially the woman did not have to bear the ignominy of being pregnant without marriage. The number of children in families has decreased and so on. Similarly changes can be traced to virtually every invention. Presently we see a number of changes due to the growth of communication technology. Mobile phones emails, social media whats app, pagers have changed the way we communicate with each other, interact with other and network with each other. New forms of language have emerged due to the need to use shortened form of language for sending and receiving SMS. For example it is now expectable to use the numerical 2 instead of to as in today and tomorrow. Some language purists have expressed horror at these new forms of writing, which brusquely disregards the basic rules of grammar and language itself. However these language purists forget that when the printing press was first introduced in India many scripts went radical changes to facilitate the printing the scripts. The printer could not in many cases print the earliest and the more complicated scripts, which were in use in those times.

That is not to say that all changes in material changes has lead to positive changes. Even some very beneficial objects have lead to negative consequences. For example take the evolution of the Internet. Some of the major advantages of the increased use of the Internet have been to make information accessible easily to all. Internet therefore is being called a democratiser and an equalizer as it enables information to be accessible to everyone regardless of their social backgrounds. It has reduced the power of cliques and information gatekeepers who used to restrict the flow of information to selected few. For example government departments can no longer keep hidden damaging information by citing non-availability. The emergence of e-governance promises a quick and efficient administration. Secondly financial transactions have become easier and quicker. On the other hand the rise of Internet in all these activities has lead to many problems not seen previously. The growth of pornography especially the more reprehensible variety of child pornography is one unhealthy consequence. The production and distribution have grown exponentially because of the facility provided by the Internet. Secondly new types of crime like identity theft and several types of banking frauds has been committed due to the growth of the internet. The government's responses in form of laws and regulations have restricted the growth of the negative consequences but have not been able to eradicate these problems.

Material and non-material culture are mutually influencing each other. But due to the rapid nature of technology here exists a gap between material and non-material culture. The non-material especially technology has advanced but values and beliefs have not changed accordingly. This situation has been called cultural gap. Cultural gap is observed in many parts of world including India. Many Indians use high technology like sending satellites to space at the same time believe in horoscope, evil time, appropriate time and similar superstitions.

Check Your Progress 4

- 1) Differentiate between material culture and non-material culture.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Characteristics of Culture**1) Culture gives meaning to the social and material world around us**

Different cultures attaché different meanings to same things as the collective experiences of the communities are different. For example the fish eating community in northern part of Canada has about 80 words to represent fish – baked fish, smoked fish, small fish, large fish and so on. Fish is an integral part of their lives and is frequently used for religious and ritualistic functions. Often the individual behaviour is compared to that of a particular fish. Like a person who is active is said to be like a very active variety of fish.

Culture gives meanings to the world as its values are integrated into the individual's personality and she sees the world through the framework of her culture. Sometimes the identification of the individual with the culture is total and she is unable to understand the worth of other cultures.

When other cultures are judged by the standards of one's own culture rather than by that cultures own standards, it is called **ethnocentrism**. On the other hand, when alien cultures are judged using its own standards, it called **cultural relativism**. However, it need not mean that one should justify every thing present in other cultures simply because it is different culture. For example, reform is necessary in all cultures and should emerge from within the community.

2) Culture is learned not inherited

Culture is learned, means that the individual interaction with his environment gives him the knowledge about the culture. It is the experience of the person, which make him the member of the society with a particular culture.

Twins raised in different societies with different cultures follow different norms, values, etc. However to be a member of a society he has to be socialized in that particular culture.

If the particular culture or sub culture does not support the realization of the innate abilities of the individual then these abilities remain dormant in the individual. Hence it should be the aim of every society to provide through it socializing agencies the maximum opportunities to its members. In closed societies where there exist limitations on the opportunities available to certain sections of the society then the potentialities of people belonging to these sections will be

limited. In the traditional Indian society caste played a major role in limiting the opportunities to the lower caste. The new values propagated by the Indian constitution not only prohibits discrimination of lower castes, it also gives the government the responsibility and wide powers to ameliorate the situation.

3) Culture is shared and not related to any single individual

Culture is what almost all the members of the society share. Behaviour of individual can be influenced by culture but cannot be the individual culture. It is better to call individual actions as individual behaviour. Hence description, in common parlance that the individual has low culture is wrong. Another consequence of this is that individuals cannot make their own rules regarding their cultures. For example the rules of a particular language is fixed and cannot be changed by an individual. I cannot say that when I say 'yes' I mean 'no' and vice versa.

There are always individuals and groups who may disagree with some of the values, norms, mores of the society and advocate and practice them. They can be called deviants. Merton has elaborated the concept of deviance which we can study here. Criminals are called deviants as they do not agree with the values. Often social reforms also belong to this category. Reformers often are the target of the people because they advocate values and practices contrary to the commonly accepted in the society. It is only when these ideas are finally accepted by society the rightness of the views of the reformers are appreciated. In India reformers like Rajaramohan Roy and Narayana Guru had to face stiff opposition to their efforts to eradication.

4) Culture is never static and always changing sometimes slowly sometimes rapidly

Culture develops from the collective experience of the people and these experiences are always changing from time to time and situation to situation. It is adaptive in nature as it mediates between human beings and their social and physical environment. The sources of change can be endogenous and exogenous; from within the cultures itself and from outside the culture i.e. from influences of cultures outside one own. Endogenous changes are innovations; social reforms while exogenous sources can be cultural interaction with alien cultures, invasions, and exposures through mass media. Globalization has increased the interactions between cultures.

5) Various groups experience changes in culture differently and the consequences are also different

Culture changes affect different groups differently. The factors that influence the capacity of the particular group to adapt to the changing values are its position in the social structure, nature of leadership, its attachment to its traditional values and the strength of its institutions. When the British colonized India it was more than political and economic domination, it was primarily cultural. The British felt that they had a mission of civilizing people of 'lower' civilizations. All changes in technology, institutions, ideology and values, which occurred due to 150 years of British rule, can be called Westernization (Srinivas, 1972).

The influence of Westernization in the early stages was felt mainly in the urban areas and on the upper and middle castes. These were the sections that first took advantage of Westernization and the opportunities. Gradually the impact spread to other sections of society.

6) **Culture is source for integration and for conflict**

Culture integrates people as it allows for communication and expression of ideologies, emotions and feelings. Communication enables the members of the same group to share and express these experiences. This leads to the universalization of experiences. Consequently 'we feeling' develops in the group. Culture becomes an unifying factor.

However culture also divides. It leads to ethnocentrism and cultural chauvinism. While it unites peoples it also at times unites them against others. This leads to division of the population to insiders and outsiders. This division of the population is a major source of conflict in modern societies, where people from different cultural groups cohabit close to each other. In India conflicts regarding language and religion can be seen as conflicts of culture. Some of the means by which Indian government manages these problems are:

- i) Federalism. The division of India into different states many of which are created on linguistic basis. This resolved the demands of linguistic groups in many parts of the country for self-governance.
- ii) The constitution gives equality before law and equality of opportunity to all people regardless of their caste, creed, religion, language, race etc.
- iii) Common criminal code for all citizens but different personal laws for different religions.
- iv) Special rights to minority for preserving their culture, establishing and managing their institutions.
- v) Recognition of 18 regional languages as official languages while having Hindi as official language and English as link language.

Apart from these and other constitutional provision there exists many informal practices to give recognition to different linguistic groups. For example, attempt is made to include in the Union Cabinet at least one member from all states of India.

Indian experience to manage a multicultural society has had number of problems like language agitation, communal riots, nativist movements etc. However it cannot be said that cultural differences are alone responsible for these problems as there are also political, economic, and administrative factors that play an important role in creating and acerbating conflicts. But the Indian experience has been more successful compared to experiences in neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Srilanka.

Cultural conflicts are not restricted to the boundaries of nations, they are happening at a global level. It is predicted that future conflicts will be clash of civilizations which is clash of cultures(Huntington, 1996). According to him the Pre-Soviet era witnessed conflicts between ideologies(capitalism and communism)

and between nation states. The present period will see conflicts between the major civilizations which he labels as Western, Orthodox, Latino, Hindu, African, Sinic (Chinese) and East Asian. These conflicts are based on the differences in value system.

7) Culture is deeply contested arena

Culture is power as it enables the elite to control people's behaviour. Culture which gives meaning to the environment and by controlling culture the population can be controlled. The elite in any group have the power to determine the essential elements of the particular culture. It determines what is right and what is wrong. For example, in Indian traditional society Brahmin values were prevalent which gave the highest ritual status to the Brahmins. They were superior to others and their occupation carried the highest status.

The high position given to the Brahmins was not left unchallenged even in the earlier times. Buddha challenged this system by introducing ideas of equality into the society which was characterized by a permanent hierarchical. Similarly the Bhakti movement was a reform movement that challenged the hierarchical and highly ritualistic Brahmin dominated society.

In the modern society culture has become an even more contested area. The rise in mass media has led to faster spread of messages across the globe. The people are being exposed to other cultures and are willing to adopt their lifestyles, values and technologies. But the power to project one's culture to others is dependent on the technological and financial resources and as these resources are unevenly distributed the more advanced countries have more power to promote their culture. Another important factor is the relationship of culture with market. Lifestyles and values are promoted which will help sell products in the market place. The end result is the growth of a consumerist society promoted by modern culture.

2.5 SOCIAL WORK, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Social work and society

Every society, community group, individual is unique and understanding the uniqueness is an important principle of social work. Social worker uses different methods based on her understanding of the environment in which the problem exists.

Conventional Social Work

The most common methods used by social work are ecological model, person in situation, the problem solving model and life cycle model. These methods are to a large degree influenced by the systems theory of sociology. System theory regards society as a system consisting of interconnected and interrelated parts. The functioning or the dysfunction of every part affects the other parts. All parts must function properly and with a minimum degree of integration if the system has to function as a whole. Value consensus among the members is a prerequisite for the maintenance of the system. Problems arise when this value consensus is disturbed and the different parts do not function adequately. In layman language there is a mismatch between the various parts of the system. The part does not 'fit' within the larger system.

The central part of all social work practice with individual, groups, families or communities is assessment (Reamer 1994; 28) so to reference. The aim of assessment is to identify the problem, gather information relevant to the situation and diagnosis the problem.

Assessment is done after getting information from all levels, which the client system interact and is influenced. The information is obtained at the following levels.

Individual – role – issues related to role conflict, role strain,

Groups and families – issues related to roles conflict and role strain in members and group disorganization including lack of groups norms, leadership for the group as a whole

Community –issues related to lack of resources, oppression

This analysis would lead us to determine where the problems originate. It can be at the level of the role where role expectations of the person playing the role and the person interacting with her are different. The problem can originate in the the community level where large sections of the population do not adhere to the values consensus of the particular society for example many women disagree with the role given to them in the traditional community. In societies experiencing rapid change the chances for such conflicts over values are more.

Intervention strategy is decided after the diagnosis is made. The next step is to formulate an intervention plan that will include environmental change or adjustment by the client system. In most cases, it involves both the methods one leading to another.

Radical Social Work

Radical social work derives its inspiration from Marxism, Feminism, anti colonial and anti racist ideologies. The common features that unify these diverse ideologies are the following. Radical social work rejects the assumptions that underlie the systems theory. They reject that there is value consensus of any kind in the society. In fact the concept of society is myth as society is characterized by deep divisions between rich and poor, capitalist and workers, high caste and low caste and between women and men. The powerful dominates over the other and excludes the other from enjoying the desired things in life. There cannot be any common interests between the two opposing sections as the one thrives by exploiting the other.

Radical social workers especially the feminist social worker, see no difference between the public and the private. Therefore problems are not to divided into personal, family and societal. The division between private and public problems hides the exploitation, which takes place in the so-called private sphere.

Radical social workers scorn at the methods used by the conventional social workers mentioned above. They do not see individual, family and community problem as a result of ‘maladjustment’, but as a result of an exploitative social structure. In fact these measures suggested by the conventional social workers would remove the focus from the real causes of the problem.

The central issue is power and in the capitalistic/ patriarchal structure, power is distributed unevenly between different sections of the society, which the powerful uses to exploit the others. Very often, the social structure functions in such a way that the oppressed sections do not even know that they are being exploited and awareness has to be created about the exploitative nature of the structure. As radical social work views problems as being created due to the exploitative social structure, their solution demands its replacement with a more just and humanitarian structure. Another target of radical social work has been the research and knowledge that social work produces. It is wrongly claimed to be neutral and scientific in nature but is actually based on the experiences of the dominant sections of the society. However its validity and its representations are considered universal. Knowledge is always partial to the interests that produces it and it can be used against the disadvantaged sections.

Radical social work has its adherents in practice and academic field. But there are critics of the radical social worker. (1) Social work is maintenance profession not facilitating changing (Davis, 1981 and Dommenli, 1985). It feared that radical social work intends to produce revolutionaries rather than social workers. Considering that most of the jobs in the West are in the government sector, this move is likely to affect job prospects. (2) The emphasis on ideology will move students from the methods of social work, which will result in disliking of social workers. However the emergence of radical social work has helped in refocusing on issues like poverty, social justice and racism.

Social Work and Culture

Social worker needs to be sensitive about the cultural context in which she is practicing. Though most social workers claim that they are sensitive to the values of the society often errors are committed. This is not unusual as we ourselves are products of our community and much of what we learnt there remains with us. Clyde Kluckhohn has formed a value orientation theory that identifies five universals around which value orientations and values are organized. These include how they value time, activity, man's relationship to man, man's relationship to nature and nature's relationship to man. (Pinderhughes in Reamer, 1994). The American is concerned about the future, while Indians until recently are oriented towards the past. The differences in the perception of the client system can help the social worker understand the situation. For example, Pedersen provides some assumptions of a Western trained counselor. (1) All persons are judged using a normal hypothetical standard (2) Individualism is favoured more than collectivist interpretation (3) Autonomy is preferred over dependency (4) A person support system is not often considered necessary for analysis (5) The individual is expected to fit in the system. These assumptions of the counselor maybe true in the western context but will not work in other cultural context. Culture is a factor in group behaviour also. In some groups it is not right to show one's knowledge in front of others while in American society it is encouraged. Similarly in some traditional communities women do not speak if men are around. These behaviour patterns reveal cultural traits that are useful for the understanding of the social situation.

Marxists describe culture (including religion, education) as tool used by the capitalists to facilitate exploitation of the workers. Cultural values propagated by religion and education mislead the people from the objective condition of the exploitative system. For example religion promising a future heaven convinces the oppressed that the present day worries are transient and not worth to fighting against. Marx called this situation false conscious.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist concept of hegemony meaning the “dominate of one group over other”. He observed that oppressed population inspite of their great suffering do not protest against their oppression and fight against their oppressors. It is not only because they fear the coercive powers the oppressors have (the police, army or hired goons etc) but because (i) they are convinced there is no alternative and the existing system is the best available (ii) it is not the right action to do because it goes against religion or against the country (iii) common sense says that it is better to endure than to resist. Gramsci felt that for any radical action this war of position will have to be won. The people should be convinced to fight the oppressive structure by creating awareness about their history and their role in the society. The awareness about their own history and culture allows the oppressed sections to assert their identity and value system, which has been till then subordinated to that of the dominant section. This principle of 'cultural assertion' has been used in social movement to fight for rights of minorities, races, women and dalits.

Culture of Poverty

Poverty is not simply caused by the lack of access to economic resources. Culture does play an important role in perpetuating poverty. Oscar Lewis, after studying the urban poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico, has developed the term ‘culture of poverty’. According to Lewis poor people have a different lifestyle from that of the rich. Their values and norms are different. This sub culture is learned, shared and transmitted behaviour of the group.

These value systems prevent the poor from escaping their cycle of poverty. At the individual level, it manifest itself in a strong feeling of marginality, helplessness hopelessness, dependency, powerlessness and inferiority. At the family level it is seen in the high incidence of premarital relationship, divorce and separation. At the community level the poor participate inadequately in the major institutions like political parties. The culture of poverty is an adaptive mechanism that the poor develop due to their marginalization in the society.

The culture of poverty breeds poverty, which reinforces the culture and the cycle continues. Thus culture of poverty is an important factor in perpetuating poverty as it reinforces the attitudes that causes poverty. A visit to a slum in any city can validate these observations. We often find youths sitting idle and spending time playing cards or drinking alcohol. They do claim that they have no jobs and their failure to get one leaves them depressed that forces them to spend time destructively.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

The present Unit has divulged the meaning of society, incoming of culture, and relevance of both these concepts for social work practice. In fact, society and culture are part of the environment in which the social worker works. In case of conventional social work, social worker tries to understand the uniqueness of each individual or group or community or society and their culture and thereby uses specific intervention method based on understanding of the environment in which the problem exists. The radical social work, derived from the Marxism, Feminism, anti-colonial and anti-racist ideologies, does not see individual, family and community problem as a result of 'maladjustment'. It views problems as being created due to exploitative social structure and thus radical social work suggests solution through replacement with a more just and humanitarian social structure.

2.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Haralambos, M. and R. M. Heald (1991), *Sociology Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Giddens, Anthony (1993), *Sociology*, 3rd Edition, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Davis, Kingsley (1949), *Human Society*, The Macmillan Company, New York.

Horton, Paul B. and Chesler L. Hunt (1972), *Sociology*, McGraw Hill, New Delhi.

Johnson, Harry M. (1967), *Sociology: A Systematic Introduction*, Allied Publishers, (Indian edition), New Delhi.

UNIT 3 INDIAN SOCIETY : COMPOSITION, CLASSIFICATION AND STRATIFICATION

Structure

*Joseph Varghese**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 People of India—Some Basic Facts
- 3.3 Social Stratification
- 3.4 Doing Social Work in a Pluralistic Society
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Further Readings and References

3.0 OBJECTIVES

There is diversity in India in terms of language, ethnicity, religion, food habit, cultural traits and so on. Indian society is in fact unique for its composition, classification and stratification. After studying this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- the different characteristics of the Indian population;
- the caste and class system in India; and
- the reference of social stratification for social work.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

India as a country is unique in more than one way. It has a long history much of which is recorded and available. The diversity in terms of language, ethnicity, religions, food habits and innumerable cultural traits has confounded many an anthropologist Indians and foreigners.

A social worker in India has to keep in mind these factors while working in India. She has to be sensitive to the values of individual, groups, and communities. Without these sensitivities, she is likely to make mistakes, which will affect the relationship between her/his and the client groups. Many a time social workers with very honest and good intentions have intervened in the community aiming for its development with disastrous consequences for the social worker as well as the community. That happens when social worker is unable to understand the value orientations of the community. The chance for such disasters increases, if the issue is sensitive and considered by people as private. For e.g., the controversial issue of AIDS and sex education for rural people.

One major reason for this misunderstanding is the lack of sensitiveness to the culture. A social worker is often ethnocentric— he thinks that his value orientation is superior to that of the client group. He tries to fit the community into his frame works and labels them as ‘backward’ or primitive if they do not fulfill all

the criteria of being developed or being modern. Then he proceeds to analyze the reasons for this 'backwardness' again using his value framework. Subsequently he plans a strategy for them to rescue them from their backwardness. Not surprisingly, these efforts fail and often the community rejects the social worker. The social worker is often bewildered at this reaction as he feels that he is only trying to help the community.

The experience of the developmental projects in the last fifty years has highlighted the need for understanding communities repeatedly. It is to help you understand the variety of people that inhabit this country that this unit is presented to you.

3.2 PEOPLE OF INDIA—SOME BASIC FACTS

India is the eighth largest country in terms of area and second largest in terms of population. The total area of India is 3,287,240 sq km. It is divided into 29 states and 7 union territories. The states are further divided for administrative purposes into districts and then into blocks and sub-districts. The total number of districts is 640 and that of sub district and CD blocks are 5,924 and 6311 respectively. The number of urban agglomerations/ towns is 5100 and of urban agglomerations is 384. India has 7936 towns and 6,41,000 inhabited villages. (Source <http://censusindia.gov.in>)

- According to the 2011 census the
- Population of India is 1,21,01,93,422
- Number of males is 62,37,24,248
- Number of females is 58,64,69,174

The sex ratio is the number of females per 1000 males in the population. The sex ratio of India is 940 which is marginally higher than the figure given by the 1991 census of 923, is still low. Among the states Haryana has the lowest sex ratio of 830 while Kerala has the highest sex ratio of 1084. Delhi has sex ratio of 868. Low sex ratio shows the discrimination girl child in particular and women face in the society.

The population of India between the age group 0-6 year is 15,87,89,87 persons of which 8,29,52,135 are males and 7,58,37,152 are females. The sex ratio of this group is 914, which is also unfavorable to women. This also reveals that the situation will not improve in the short term.

Population density measures the number of persons per square kilometer. The average population density for the whole country is 382. But there are wide differences in the population density with certain parts like the Gangetic plains, the urban areas being densely and other areas being sparsely populated country. The state with the highest population density is Bihar at 1102 persons per square kilometer and the state with lowest population density is 17. Similarly at the district level North East Delhi district has 37,346 persons per square kilometer and Dibang Valley (Arunachal Pradesh) has only 1 persons per square kilometer.

Population estimates in the future

Table 3.1: Population Projections for India (million)

March 1991	March 2001	March 2011	March 2016
846.3	1012.4	1178.9	1263.5

Urban rural population

It has been long said that India lives in its villages. It is still true but development is bringing about a slow but definite increase in the urban population. The urban population is 37,71,05,760 persons and the rural population is 83,30,87,662, which constitute 31.16 per cent and 68.84 per cent respectively of the total Indian population. The steady growth in the percentage of urban population can be seen from the Table 3.1 given below.

Table 3.2: Proportion of Urban Population & total Population

Year	Per cent
1961	17.97
1971	19.91
1981	23.34
1991	25.71
2001	27.78
2011	31.16*

* based on provisional figures of 2012 census.

(Source: Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007), Planning Commission, New Delhi)
Urban population will certainly grow as economic development increases. Consequently the resources of the urban areas are under severe strain. The growth of slums, water shortage and traffic jams are the major problems in the urban areas. Another major concern is that in India primary cause of urbanization is distress migration from rural areas rather than because of the demand for labour in industries and the service sectors. Hence the majority of the people migrating to cities is unskilled and has to perform low paying jobs and consequently are unable to afford quality housing, schooling for their children etc leading to urban squalor and decay. The percentage of slum population in the ten largest cities is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Percentage of slum population in largest million plus cities

Sl. No.	Name of Million Plus Municipal Corporation	State/Union Territory*	Total Population	Total Slum Population	Percentage of Slum Population to Total Population
1	Greater Mumbai	Maharashtra	11,978,450	6,475,440	54.1
2	Delhi	Delhi	9,879,172	1,851,231	18.7
3	Kolkata	West Bengal	4,572,876	1,485,309	32.5
4	Chennai	Tamil Nadu	4,343,645	819,873	18.9
5	Bangalore	Karnataka	4,301,326	430,501	10.0
6	Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh	3,637,483	626,849	17.2
7	Ahmadabad	Gujarat	3,520,085	473,662	13.5
8	Surat	Gujarat	2,433,835	508,485	20.9
9	Kanpur	Uttar Pradesh	2,551,337	367,980	14.4
10	Pune	Maharashtra	2,538,473	492,179	19.4

Source : Census of India, 2001.

Population According to Age Group

Indian population growth is undergoing a period of transition. It is slowly moving from the stage of “high birth rate — high death rate” to the current intermediate transition stage of “high birth rate — low death rate” which leads to high rates of population growth, before graduating to levels of “low birth rate — low death rate”.

Therefore the percentage of population according to various age groups is not proportional. The population of India according to various age groups is given in Table 3.4

Table 3.4: Indian population according to the age group

Age Groups	Persons	Males	Females
6 years and below Proportion to total population (%)	163,819,614 15.9	84,999,203 16.0	78,820,411 15.9
7 to 14 years Proportion to total population (%)	199,791,198 19.4	104,488,119 19.6	95,303,079 19.2
15 to 59 years Proportion to total population (%)	585,638,723 56.9	303,400,561 57.0	2,882,238,162 56.9
60 years and above Proportion to total population (%)	76,622,321 7.5	37,768,327 7.1	38,853,994 7.8
Age Not Stated Proportion to total population (%)	2,738,472 0.3	1,500,562 0.3	1,237,910 0.3

Source : *Census of India, 2001*

More than 35% of the Indian population is below 14 years, which has implications for the present and the future. Some of the major implications are (1) There is a need for large investment in human resources to increase their capacity mainly by investing in education and health (2) create sufficient employment opportunities in modern economy. (3) Since such a large population will reach the reproductive age there will be no drastic reduction in the Indian population even if the birth rate is successfully controlled at 2.1 (target according to the population policy 2000; current whose needs have to be taken care. On the other hand, 7.5 per cent of the population that is 76,622,321 persons are people above 60 years and with the decline of joint family the responsibility of the government and the voluntary sector is increasing in this sector.

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) What is the population of India and what is the sex ratio?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Which city in India has the highest slum population as percentage of total population?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Literacy rate

Table 3.4: Literacy rates in India

	Persons	Males	Females	
Total	No. of literates Literacy rate	560,687,797 64.8%	336,533,716 75.3%	224,154,081 53.7%
Rural	No. of literates Literacy rate	361,870,817 58.7%	223,551,641 70.7%	138,319,176 46.1%
Urban	No. of literates Literacy rate	198,816,980 79.9%	112,982,075 86.3%	85,834,905 72.9%

Persons (%)		Males (%)	Females (%)
State with Highest Literacy Rate	Kerala (90.9)	Kerala (94.2)	Kerala (87.7)
State with Lowest Literacy Rate	Bihar (47.0)	Bihar (59.7)	Bihar (33.1)

Source : Census of India, 2001

Literacy in India has grown from 16.67 per cent in 1951 to 65.38 per cent in 2001, which is certainly an achievement. But in comparison to developed countries that has achieved near complete literacy there needs much to be done. Areas of concern include the wide disparities in the literacy rates between regions, communities and gender. As the table indicates the total literacy rate is only 47 per cent and among women in Bihar is only 33 per cent compared to Kerala's figures of 90 percent and 87,7 per cent. Similarly, the literacy rate among SC and ST s is much lower than the general population. In 1991, the literacy among these sections were 37.4 per cent and 29.6 per cent respectively while the literacy rate for the general population was 52 per cent. Similarly an urban rural divide exists with 79.9 per cent of the Urban population being literate compared to only 58.8 per cent of the rural population.

Another problem is that 42 million children of the total of 200 million children in the age group of 6-14 in India do not attend schools. In 2001 the Central Government passed the 93rd amendment bill that made education compulsory to

the children in the age group of 6-14, the situation has not improved to a great deal even after making schooling a constitutional right.

Work Participation

Work Participation Rate

Total Workers	Number	Rate (%)
Persons	402,234,724	39.1
Males	275,014,476	51.7
Females	127,220,248	25.
Religion		
Religious Composition	Population *	(%)
Hindus	827,578,868	80.5
Muslims	138,188,240	13.4
Christians	24,080,016	2.3
Sikhs	19,215,730	1.9
Buddhists	7,955,207	0.8
Jains	4,225,053	0.4
Other Religions & Persuasions	6,639,626	0.6
Religion not stated	727,588	0.1
Total *	1,028,610,328	100.0

Source : Census of India, 2001

India is a Hindu majority country with 80.5 per cent of population seeing themselves as Hindus. Except in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab in all other states/ union territories Hindus are in the majority. Muslims are the majority community Lakshadweep and Jammu & Kashmir. Assam (30.9%), West Bengal (25.2%), Kerala (24.7%), Uttar Pradesh (18.5%) and Bihar (16.5%) have significant Muslim population. Christianity is majority religion in the Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya. Manipur has 34 per cent Christian but since these North eastern are low populated, the majority of the Christian population lives in peninsular India with states/UTs of Goa (26.7%), Andaman & Nicobar Islands (21.7%), Kerala (19.0%), and Arunachal Pradesh (18.7%) have considerable percentage of Christian population to the total population of the State/UT.

Sikhism is a majority religion of Punjab with 3/4th of the population being Sikhs. Other states/ UTs like Chandigarh (16.1%), Haryana (5.5%), Delhi (4.0%), Uttaranchal (2.5%) and Jammu & Kashmir (2.0%) have significant Sikh population.

The largest concentration of Buddhism is in Maharashtra, where (73.4%) of the total Buddhists in India reside. Karnataka (3.9 lakh), Uttar Pradesh (3.0 lakh), West Bengal (2.4 lakh) and Madhya Pradesh (2.0 lakh) are other states having large Buddhist population. But in terms of percentage of total population the smaller states of Sikkim (28.1%), Arunachal Pradesh (13.0%) and Mizoram (7.9 %) have maximum percentage of Buddhist population.

Jains live mainly in Maharashtra (1.3%), Rajasthan (1.2%), Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat (1%), Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi (1.1%) where nearly 90 per cent of the total Jain population in the country live.

Religions in India are often seen as homogeneous community with clearly defined boundaries. But as already pointed out members of different religions share a number of cultural traits. At the same time there are considerable differences even within the religious community. Some of the major sources of the differences within the communities are (1) caste— caste system originated in Hinduism, but is found today in every Indian religion. (2) Sects—every religion has sects. (3) Denomination (4) linguistic differences (5) regional differences showed in terms of lifestyles, practices etc.

According to the People of India Project, the Hindu community showed an extraordinary range of heterogeneity, genetically, morphological, linguistic and cultural. Hierarchy was an important value of the traditional Hindu social order. Among the 3539 communities studied, 21.6 per cent communities place themselves at high level, 46.7 per cent at the middle level and 31.1 percent at the low level. (People of India; introduction)

The Muslims community has two major sects – Shias and Sunnis. There are other smaller communities which are not accepted as Muslims. Hierarchy also exists in the groups. The Muslim community also has caste like divisions among it. Broadly these categories are ashrafs and non ashrafs which are largely endogamous. The ashrafs are divided into four groups called Sayyids, Sheikhs, Pathans and Mughals (Imitiaz Ahmad, endogamy and status mobility among Siddique Sheikhs of Allahabad in Gupta, 1996). POI study found that the Muslim community are heterogeneous and differ from on each other biological, linguistically and culturally. One important indicator is that while majority of the Muslims are Urdu speakers, forty seven percent of the Muslim population has returned regional languages as their mother tongue..

Similarly Christians are also heterogeneous and members are drawn from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Christians are divided into mainly three categories — Syrians Christians, Latin Christians and new Christians, which also seems to have caste like characteristics. (Fuller, C.J., Kerala Christians and the Caste System). Many pre-conversion practices continue to exist. Hierarchy exists in Christians also with the Syrian Christians claiming superiority over others due to their high caste origins in the Hindu social order before their conversion to Christianity.

Sikhs are also heterogeneous in nature. Some of the groupings among the Sikhs are Jat Sikhs, Mazhabi Sikhs and the Ramgrihas. Hierarchy between groups is prevalent. Fifty-three communities perceive themselves to be superior, forty five percent communities consider themselves to be in the middle and the rest are considered to be in the low category.

Buddhists are also divided into categories. Neo Buddhists are a category within this community and mostly belong to the schedule caste communities. There is a significant number of adherents who belong to the Schedule tribes found in the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim. The Jains are divided into two major sects— Digambars and Shvetambars.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Write a short note on the diversity in Indian religions

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Which state has the lowest literacy rate?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Schedule casted and Schedule tribed population

The schedule castes are those castes that were considered untouchables and as being outside the caste system (chaturvarna system). Their position was lowest in the social order and they performed the menial tasks of the society. They performed most of the ritually 'unclean' occupations like sweeping, washing and leather making. Secondly, they also consumed ritually unclean food like pork and beef. Their unclean occupations and eating habits made them permanently polluted. Therefore the Hindu social order that was based on the pollution – purity principle considered these communities as the untouchables and unseeables. The higher castes (suvarnas) considered physical contact with them polluting. If there was an accidental contact the high caste member has to undergo a cleansing process to get rid of the pollution.

Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes Population

Scheduled Castes :	166,635,700	16.2%
Scheduled Tribes :	84,326,240	8.2%

Scheduled Castes

State with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes	Punjab (28.9 %)
State with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes	Mizoram (0.03 %)
UT with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes	Chandigarh (17.5%)
UT with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes	D & N Haveli (1.9%)
District with highest proportion of Scheduled Castes	Koch-Bihar (50.1%)
District with lowest proportion of Scheduled Castes Lawngtlai	Mizoram (0.01%)

Scheduled Tribes

State with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes	Mizoram (94.5 %)
State with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes	Goa (0.04 %)
UT with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes	Lakshadweep (94.5 %)
UT with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes	A & N Islands (8.3 %)
District with highest proportion of Scheduled Tribes Sarchhip,	Mizoram (98.1%)
District with lowest proportion of Scheduled Tribes Hathras,	Uttar Pradesh (0.01%)

Number of disabled population and type of disability

Number of disabled population and type of disability

	Population	Percentage (%)
Total population	1,028,610,328	100.0
Total disabled population	21,906,769	2.1
Disability rate (per lakh population)	2,130	—
Type of Disability		
a) In seeing	10,634,881	1.0
b) In speech	1,640,868	0.2
c) In hearing	1,261,722	0.1
d) In movement	6,105,477	0.6
e) Mental	2,263,821	0.2

Source : Census of India 2001.

The number of disabled people in the country is around 2.1 million which amounts to 21 per cent of the population. Among the total disabled in the country, 12.6 million are males and 9.3 million are females. More disabled live in the rural areas.

Language spoken in India

Languages Spoken (Excluding J & K) :		
	Number	Percentage
Hindi	337,272,114	40.22%
Bengali	69,595,738	8.30%
Telugu	66,017,615	7.87%
Marathi	62,481,681	7.45%
Tamil	53,006,368	6.32%
Urdu	43,406,932	5.18%
Gujarati	40,673,814	4.85%
Kannada	32,753,676	3.91%

Malayalam	30,377,176	3.62%
Oriya	28,061,313	3.35%
Punjabi	23,378,744	2.79%
Assamese	13,079,696	1.56%
Sindhi	2,122,848	0.25%
Nepali	2,076,645	0.25%
Konkani	1,760,607	0.21%
Manipuri	1,270,216	0.15%
Kashmiri	56,693	0.01%
Sanskrit	49,736	0.01%
Other Languages	31,142,376	3.71%
Total :	838,583,988	100.00%

Source of census 1991

But these statistics do not give the complete picture of the linguistic situation of India. There are at least 325 languages which belong to the larger 12 different language families many of which had considerable number of speakers and their literature have been well developed. Secondly bilingualism existed in 65.51 percent of the communities. Thus linguistic differences remain a key characteristic of Indian society.

The nature of people of every nation is the result of their experience. The experience depends on the historical, geographical factors, socio-cultural factors. We will discuss some of the more important factors, which have influenced the people of India.

Historical Factors

There is evidence of very earlier human settlements in India. Evidence of the 'upright' man homo erectus is found in the Narmada valley which is being dated at least 200,000-500,000 years ago. Though there are claims about several discoveries of human settlements in different periods the first widely accepted evidence is that of caved paintings of the Upper Paleolithic (10th to 8th millennia BC) found in rock shelters of Bhimbetka. Human remains of the period is found in the Sivaliks and Potawar also Romila Thapar has suggested the following periodization of history of India:

- 1) Hunter gathers, pastrolists and early farmers
- 2) First urbanization, Indus plain and north west India
- 3) Megalithic settlements of the peninsula
- 4) Chief ships and kingship 1200-600 BC
- 5) Second urbanization and state formation in the Ganges Plain 600-400BC
- 6) The Maurayan state c400-200 BC
- 7) The rise of the mercantile community and cross cultural contacts c.200BC-AD 300

- 8) The creation of Sanskritic cultures c. AD 300- 700
- 9) Distributive political economies and regional cultures c. AD 700-1300
- 10) The assertion of regional identities c. AD 1300-1550
- 11) The Mughal state and subsequent regional kingdoms c. AD 1550-1750
- 12) British colonial rule and Indian nationalist response 1750-1947

The long history of India has deeply influenced the formation of the Indian national character. Some of the important characteristics are discussed here.

Indian society is characterized by a high degree of diversity and plurality. Indians have very different value systems that guide their every day life. Invasions, migrations, protest movements, conversions, caste system and the growth of sects within religions have contributed to this diversity. Many of the values and practices are distinctive of a particular community and the adherents often strongly identify with them. At the same time there is also a lot of borrowings/sharing between the communities. Many of these borrowings are conscious and at times they are unconscious. It is clear that there are number of linkages and similarities between different communities. The anthropological survey of India “People of India project” reports that people in different religious categories share a high percentage of traits. Hindu-Muslim (97.7%), Hindu Buddhists (91%), Hindu-Sikhs (88.99%), Hindu-Jain (77.46%), Muslim-Sikh (89.95), Muslim-Buddhist (91.18%) and Jain-Buddhist (81.34%). According to people of India report, some of the most commonly shared traits are monogamy, patrilocal residence, marriage by negotiation, community endogamy, succession by eldest son, participation in fairs and festivals and post delivery pollution.

Indians having lived in a multicultural society know how to deal with members of other community. Most of us are aware about the value system of people we deal with regularly. We know what food items are allowed and which food items are taboo.

3.3 SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Human beings have always dreamt of a equal society where everyone will have equal accesses to resources, treated equally without any discrimination and so on. But this utopian ideal has never been translated into reality. Inequality has always existed between individuals, groups and communities. However in some societies the degree of inequality is more, while in some the degree is less. Industrial societies are characterized by higher degree of inequality as the income of the richest is many times the income of the lowly paid, while pastoral societies the difference is relatively less. Some societies equality is part of the norm while in others inequality is the norm. The apartheid system in South Africa segregated the black and white populations with many privileges reserved for whites only. Some societies provide ample opportunities for its members to change their position in societies and encourage them to do so, while other societies the opportunity for change is limited. Almost every society in the world claims that equality at least in theory is a desired value. Often, leaders deny that there is any form of discrimination prevalent in their societies. Even those societies where equality is denied for one section, it is claimed that it is another form of equality that is prevalent in the society!

While social equality is omnipresent, social stratification is a particular kind of social inequality. The term stratification comes from the word 'strata', which is borrowed from geology. 'Strata' in geology refers to the different layers found in the inner part of the earth. It is observed the inside of the earth consists of layers each consisting of a different material. In the same way societies are divided into different layers according to the wealth, status and power possessed by the members. Thus social stratification can be defined as the presence of the social groups, which are ranked one above the other, usually in terms of the amount of power, prestige and wealth their members possess (Haralamboss,1981). Thus the criteria for the division of society are –

- 1) Class based division. It is based on the level of wealth and is therefore an economic criteria
- 2) Status based division. It is based on the prestige or honour attached to the person or group in the particular society. It is determined according to the value system of the society and therefore is part of culture
- 3) Power is the ability to influence others against their own will and is based on political, social and personal factors.

The stratified societies have a degree of permanency, as members do not move from one stratum to other very easily. Members of these groups share a common way of life, face the same kind of problems, have awareness about their positions, and therefore develop a common identity.

The societies are stratified according to categories. The US society for example, is divided according to the wealth possessed by the members. Thus at least four classes can be observed there— the rich, middle class and the working class and the poor. At the same time, the society is divided on the basis of race— the whites, Hispanics, Asians and the Afro Americans. It is more prestigious to belong to the white community than to the Afro American community and therefore a white man enjoys a higher status than an Afro American. Race and wealth are basis on which the American society is stratified. New forms of stratification which have emerged are ageism and sexism.

The wealth and status are the basis of stratification in Indian society and the class system and the caste system respectively emerge out of it. Let us discuss the caste system and class system in Indian society.

Caste system

The Indian caste system is as a unique social institution. It traces its origins to the Varna system mentioned in the holy texts of the Hindus namely the Rg Vedas and later on the purushasukta. Other sacred works like the Gita also mention about the Varna system. According to the purushukta there exists four orders namely the brahmana, rajanya (Kshatriyas), vaishyas and the shudras who have emerged from the mouth, arms, thighs and the feet of the creator respectively. The first three Varnas are the twice born called suvarnas while the fourth category are the shudras. However M. N. Srinivas points out this text based classification of society was not found even during the ancient period. In fact the Varna model has produced the distorted image of caste and prevented the proper understanding of the caste system as it exists in society.

Features of the Caste System

The caste system is a major institution in Indian society. Its influence has permeated almost all areas of social life. During the period immediately after Independence it was assumed that industrialization, democracy, education and social reform movements would replace caste system with modern values and structures. That has not happened and caste system has itself transformed itself and found for itself new functions in the society. Before we study the changes in the caste system and the society let us get to know about the various features of the caste system.

According to G. S. Ghurye caste system has the following features:

- 1) Hierarchy
- 2) Endogamy
- 3) Association with hereditary occupations
- 4) Restrictions on food and social intercourse
- 5) Distinction in customs, dress and speech
- 6) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges enjoyed by different sections of the society.

The Hindu society is divided into well-defined and recognizable segments, each of which has its own place in the social order. Membership to these castes is based on birth rather than on merit. Since membership is based on birth it cannot be changed. A person who is born to a particular caste cannot change his membership to another.

The various castes are arranged in a hierarchy – one above another from the top to the bottom of the social order. The principle for placing the various castes is the degree of ritual purity and impurity associated with the particular castes. A caste that is ritually the purest is found on the top of the hierarchy while the caste that is the most impure is found in the lowest position in the society. The castes in the higher position anxiously protect themselves from the various sources of impurity. The sources of impurity are human fluids, waste, animal carcass and some animals. Even an accidental contact with these substances will result in the person being polluted. The remedy to remove this pollution is to undergo a purification ceremony. On the other hand, the lower castes come into contact with these impure substances continuously, which causes and reinforces their status as being ritually impure.

The hierarchy in reality is not very clearly defined. Only the ritual status of the Brahmin and the untouchables are relatively defined. The statuses of all other groups are not clear and there is a wide difference in perceptions on the ranking of other castes. Most castes rank themselves higher than what other ranks them, which means that there is no universal agreement on the position of castes in the hierarchy. Even those castes that are ranked among the lowest would trace their origins to higher castes and claim that their lower status is due to treachery or betrayal by others. Hence any attempt to rank castes in a village is bound to fail due to lack of consensus. The 1901 census attempted

to rank the various castes and was flooded with petitions demanding higher caste status for the various castes. The attempt was given up. Hierarchy in the castes is a sensitive issue and social workers should be sensitive about this. Often even refusing to a glass of water (either due to lack of thirst or concerns of hygiene) from the lower caste by the social worker can be seen as non acceptance of the lower caste and subsequently rejection of the social worker.

Endogamy that meant marrying members only of the same caste is another feature of the caste system. Castes are often divided into various sub castes that also seem to practice endogamy. In these cases marriage was restricted to members of the same sub-caste. At times it was allowed that lower caste women would marry a man of the upper caste. The reverse was however strictly disallowed with the threat of severe punishments.

Specific castes are associated with specific occupations. So the members of the particular caste had to do the hereditary occupations. Except for certain exemptions like agriculture, trading, labouring and military service there was restrictions on the choice of occupation. Therefore an individual born in the cobbler community had to be a cobbler and an individual born in the community of temple priests had to become a priest. Certain occupations were considered polluting as the workers had to come in contact with impure objects like animal carcass, for example, the cobbler. Consequently these castes were considered polluting and placed low in the hierarchy.

Presently the relationship between the occupation and caste is further weakened. There are many instances of occupational change (PoI, 2003). Weavers and oil pressers have changed their occupation more than any body else. Many traditional occupations have been abandoned or been pursued as a subsidiary occupation. There is a large— scale diversification of occupation within the castes after the green revolution.

Restriction on food and social intercourse exists, so that the impure castes do not transfer their pollution to the pure castes. There were strict rules governing the interactions between the pure and impure castes and even between the pure castes themselves. For example, in Kerala the Nair who was below him in the hierarchy could not touch the Nambudri who was the highest in the society. He could approach the Nambudri and talk to him. The Tiyan belonging to the lowest rung of the society on the other hand had to keep a distance of 36 steps from the Nambudri. The untouchables were forbidden to enter Pune city during the mornings and evenings, as their shadows would pollute the higher castes.

The village structure reflected the hierarchal positions of the various castes. The upper castes and middle live in the main street and area around it, while the lower caste have their area near the outside of the village. The untouchables often live outside the village and there were strict restrictions on the movement of the lower castes into the village.

Restrictions existed in the way the lower castes may dress, the type of footwear they can wear, the material they can use for their houses and articles they can carry. Often they were forbidden from wearing footwear and gold ornaments. Rules were enforced by severe punishments for the violators usually administered by the caste panchayats:

The caste system has certainly not disappeared from the Indian society but has experienced major changes. Some of the factors that have influenced the caste system are the following:

- 1) Social reform movements of nineteenth and early twentieth century – the colonization of India British and the severe criticism of Indian practices by the British forced many Indian thinkers to look at their social practices and customs critically. The caste system and treatment of women were important areas, where reforms initiated. Reinterpretation of the religious texts, reformulation of doctrines, and the fusing of western and Indian thought were some of the methods by which Indian reformers tried to bring about change in the society.

2) **Radical caste based movements**

Jyotiba Phule's Satya Sodhak Samaj, Periyar's Dravida Kazhagam and Dr. Ambedkar's were examples of radical social movements which instead of trying at reforming the caste system aimed at destroying it. These movements related caste system to Hinduism and its sacred texts and called for radical change including the destruction of religion and rejection of religious texts.

3) **Westernization**

Foreign invaders who came earlier merged with the population after a length of time. The colonial experience under the British was very different. The Western ideologies and technology made profound impact on the Indian society. The democracy, equality, liberty, fraternity, nationalism, and individualism were some of the main ideas that influenced Indian society. These values were contradictory to the values of the caste system. The colonial government passed legislations that promote some of these values to a limited extent.

4) **Introduction of the democratic system**

The introduction of the democratic system with universal franchise and one person – one vote brought about a degree of equality in the society, to a limited degree the lower castes were empowered and the traditional power structure in the rural areas was challenged. The changes are still continuing. In the first decades vertical mobilization took place, which is increasingly being replaced by horizontal mobilization.

5) **Industrialization and urbanization**

Industrialization to a large extent broke the relation between caste and occupation. Industrialization led to the increase in the demand for skilled labour and gave opportunities to all regardless of caste background. The people of different castes worked together and it became difficult to segregate different caste members. Similarly, the anonymity of the urban areas prevented people from knowing the caste of each other and social interaction became free. However as Singer study in Chennai showed urbanization did not totally end the role of caste networks in recruitment of employees.

6) **Government policies and Laws**

The government formulated a number of policies to eradicate the negative elements of the caste system. Reservations, special programmes for SCs and OBCs, laws preventing caste discrimination, implementation of land reforms were some of the important measures, which the government took to weaken caste system and bring about equality among the various groups. But government measures without changes in the public opinion regarding untouchability were not very effective.

7) **Conversion**

The conversion to religions other than Hinduism was an option for the lower castes. A significant section if not the majority of the members of the religions like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Sikhism are converts from the lower castes. At times, the threat of conversion was used by the lower castes to get concessions from the upper castes. The converts expect that conversion will change their primary identity of the untouchables to that of the converted religion. However in reality their primary identity has remained.

8) **Education**

The Firstly modern education is based on the values of equality and fraternity, which influenced the students to adopt these values. Secondly, education also gave an opportunity to the lower castes to get the knowledge and skills to move from their traditional occupation to new professions, which were not polluting.

8) **Mass media**

The newspapers, pamphlets, books and later on radio and television were means by which ideologies like nationalism and regionalism spread. But caste associations also use it to strengthen community feelings.

9) **Politicization of caste**

The introduction of competitive politics and mass participation gave opportunities to political party to use existing social institution to appeal to and mobilize people. It brought changes in the political system but it did cause many changes in the caste system.

10) **Colonial policies and activities**

The British society of during the eighteenth and nineteenth century was experiencing rapid changes with the rise of science and emergence of new disciplines claiming to be superior to traditional forms of knowledge. As a result of these developments and their success in colonizing much of the world, the British believed themselves to be a superior civilization, which had the duty to civilize the uncivilized world. The framework through which the British studied Indian society and since the British had hegemony over the Indian society, their ideologies and knowledge were increasingly internalized by the Indian elite. Consequently Indians started using the same categories and framework to understand their own societies. Census, anthropological works and popular fiction were some of the means by which colonial knowledge was disseminated, which subsequently brought about changes in the society.

Survival of Caste System in Modern India

The survival of the caste system into the twenty first century is a curious phenomenon for many sociologists and anthropologists. The caste system seems to stand as an anti-thesis for everything, which the modern society stands for. The caste system survives because it acquired new functions for itself in the modern society. Major changes have taken place in the caste system (1) shedding the dysfunctional aspects of the caste system which are incompatible with the modern society due to social reform, legislation and sheer inability to practice caste values. The secularization of caste means that the ritual aspects of the caste system based on the purity – impurity principle has declined (POI, Introduction, 2006). The explicit form of untouchability has reduced to a considerable degree. There are however incidents of differential treatment of schedule castes mainly in rural areas, separate tea cups, bar SC panchayat members to take office and restrictions on using common wells are some of the more common forms of discrimination. Serious incidents of caste related violence also take place. In general there is decline in the various disabilities associated with various castes. The social interaction between the various castes is free and without major restrictions. The commensality between castes also exists among most people. However caste retains its importance in the private sphere. Marriage takes place mostly between members of the same caste. But friends and colleagues are not from the same castes and are based on other factors like neighbourhood, professions and common interests. In other situations caste based distinctions are not followed by its members in the cities but is strictly followed when they return to the villages. (2) Caste as tool for mobilization Castes have become social institutions through which political parties have begun to mobilize people. According to Rajni Kothari it is natural that caste is used to mobilize people as politics is a competitive enterprise and its purpose is to obtain power for the realization of certain goals system. So it is natural that caste, an existing social organization in the society, is used for mobilization and articulation of the popular demands, to seek to separate the politics and caste is unrealistic in the Indian society. Another important development is the mushrooming growth of caste associations. Though these associations are based on the primordial ties they often play the role of intermediaries between the state and the people. Thus, caste associations are not ‘backward’ institutions restricting the emergence of modern Indian society. According to Rudolph and Rudolph caste associations contribute to change by providing an adaptive institution in which tradition and modern social features can meet and fuse.

The politization of castes has brought about changes in the caste system. The new caste alliances are being formed by castes, who earlier did not belong to the same caste. Such federations of castes have in many cases enabled these castes to achieve their political goals.

Indian Class System

The social stratification based on the criteria of wealth is the class system. Industrialization made technology based mass production possible. In Europe, the estate system, which prevalent in the medieval period gave way to the class system. However in India the caste system adapted itself to the modern society.

Caste System	Class System
Caste membership is determined by birth	Class membership is determined by one's achievement
Normative; no mobility is possible at all	Normatively mobility is encouraged and appreciated.
Opportunities for mobility if any are less	Opportunities for mobility are more
Individual mobility is not possible in caste system	Individual mobility is possible and encouraged
Religion and ritual play an important role in legitimizing caste system	Class system has no religious and ritual basis and its legitimizing is based on the principle of merit and its openness to accept everyone based on merit

In India, since caste loyalties has been strong and has been the basis for political action, class has had a secondary and less important role. However the existence of trade unions, peasant organizations and professional organizations show that class is an important factor and does influence the behaviour of the people. Upto an extent, class does become a basis for action. Trade unions and peasants organizations often bring affected people from different castes for collective action. The left parties and the extreme left have often attempted to create class-consciousness among the different castes and bring them together. However as the limited growth of the left movement shows these attempts have only been partly successful.

The rural class system described by Daniel Thorner are as follows:

Maliks

The landowners whose income is derived from the property rights of their lands. They either lease it out or hire labour to do the work. Within this category there are various categories.

- a) Big landlords who own large tracts of land, are absentee landlord and rent out their land to tenants. They are not directly involved in the management of the land and have no other interests other than collecting rent.
- b) Rich landowners who also have considerable tracts of land that they often lease out or else cultivate themselves. They do not do fieldwork directly but are interested in improving the land.

Kisans

Kisans are below the maliks and have small to medium landholdings which are either legally owned by them or they have customary rights over them.

- a) Small landowners own holding sufficient to support a family and cultivate the land using family labour. Outside labour is used during sowing and harvesting.
- b) Substantial tenants are tenants hold secure tenancy with landholdings usually above the sufficiency levels.

Mazdoors

Mazdoors are those who earn their livelihoods primarily from selling their labour to the maliks.

- a) Poor tenants having insecure tenancy rights and often face the prospect of eviction. Their returns barely cover their expenses for maintaining their household.
- b) Sharecroppers are tenants at will with no secure tenancy rights who cultivate the land of others for part of the crop. They have at least the implements for working in the field.
- c) Landless labourers are those who do not have land or any arrangements to get land. Often they do not possess any agricultural implements.

Classes that have a presence but not directly linked to the land include the petty bourgeois including the petty shopkeepers, traders and minor contractors whose numbers are increasing due to increased penetration of the market forces into the rural areas. Further governmental activities are also increasing giving rise to the contractors. Another significant class is that of the traditional occupation like weavers, cobblers, barbers and tailors.

This is a general picture of the class system of rural area which does not fully account for the significant regional differences found in different areas. In areas influenced by green revolution agriculture has become a capitalist enterprise which requires large scale investments and giving large returns. Marginal and small landowners are unable to invest large capitals and have no choice but to lease out their lands to the big farmers and working for them. Some economists like K.N. Raj have observed a gradually proletarianization of the small and marginal farmers. On other hand there are areas where the small and marginal farmers lease in the land from the land-owners, cultivate the land and pay a rent to the owners. In many states tenancy is banned while in others it is regulated. However, tenancies to take place legally or illegally.

The class system in the urban areas is different from that of rural areas. But one significant factor in Indian urban areas is that it is not the demand for labour from industries that leads to urbanization but the distress situation in the rural areas. Therefore the migrants are not prepared socially or psychologically to adapt to the urban way of life and retain many of the characteristics of the rural areas. An important characteristic seems to be the caste system which does play significant role in getting jobs and houses and forming networks.

The main classes found in the urban India are (i) the upper class consisting of the big industrialists and traders (ii) middle class (iii) working class. However these classes, far from being homogeneous are highly differentiated.

The upper class consists mostly of the commercial and industrial classes. They own partly or completely the major industrial/ trading houses in the country. They form an important pressure group in the country and attempt to influence government policy in areas of operation. Federation of Indian commerce and Industry and Indian chambers of commerce are organizations that function as pressure groups. After liberalization policy the legitimacy and their support in the

society has gone up. They generally want the government to allow free market forces to determine the direction of the economy. They want the government to enact new labour laws that allow hire and fire policy, improve the infrastructure and maintain a sound law and order system. However many of these older business houses have earlier benefited from the protected economy and grew precisely due to that situation.

A new set of capitalists has emerged in the sunrise sector of the economy-information technology, biotechnology and financial sector. These are knowledge-based industries and needed relatively less capital to start. They have greater legitimacy and visibility as many of the entrepreneurs are from middle class backgrounds and seen as having built up their firms through honesty and hard work. But here too government support in the initial years has played an important role.

Middle Class

The middle class is highly differentiated group. Most people see themselves as being part of the middle class. Some of the categories that are found in the middle class are (i) higher professional, administrative and managerial section. This section forms the managerial elite of the society. while the ownership of the various trading and industrial houses rests with the owners; the management is often with the people belonging to this class which gives them importance and power. It also consists of the top professionals in their respective fields like the doctors, chartered accountants, lawyers, engineers, musicians. Often their incomes are higher than those of even the industrialists but since their income is derived from their professional knowledge rather than their ownership of factories they are placed in this class. (ii) lower professional, administrative and managerial section. The members of this section belong to the higher levels and they occupy middle level positions in the industries and the bureaucracy. Middle-sized traders can also be placed here. (iii) routine white collar and minor supervisory – they form part of the lower levels of the various organizations. Petty traders running their own shops can be said to be part of this section.

The number of persons in the middle class in the country is about 200-250 millions. However many of the working class, especially in the top two sections see themselves as middle class. The middle class in terms of numbers who subjectively identify themselves as middle class becomes a large class.

The role of the middle class in the society is very important as it performs the following functions (1) it acts as buffer between the rich and the poor and prevents the polarization of the society. (2) the middle class is the role model for the poor and the working class in terms of achievements and lifestyle (3) the middle class is huge market which is the basis for the economic growth (4) the middle class supplies the majority of the professional managers, bureaucrats and service personnel who manage most of the modern organizations in the private as well as in the public sector (5) the middle class is the target audience for the producers of cultural items like news, movie, dramas etc. However the Indian middle class has also its limitations(1) the middle class comprises of members from the upper castes and the middle castes. The proportion of the lower castes and the even more the SCs and STs are very less. On the other hand the number of these sections among the agricultural labourers are very

high. (2) the middle class in India is seen as illiberal and inclusive in nature. Unlike the middle class in developed countries who have an interest in the egalitarian society, the Indian middle class have authoritarian tendencies.

Working Class

The working class is also highly differentiated group. It consists of the following categories (i) Skilled manual working class. This section consists of workers who are trained for technical jobs. Electricians, auto mechanics, computer technicians and technical staff of industries belong to this category. They are in large demand in the cities and their income surpass that of the middle class in the lower rungs. (ii) semi skilled manual are skilled in semi technical jobs like masonry, carpentry, cooking and plumbers. (iii) Unskilled manual; they have no specific skills and perform general jobs like head load workers in construction sites, ports, railway stations etc., sweepers and cleaners.

3.4 DOING SOCIAL WORK IN PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Pluralistic society poses a difficult challenge for social workers as they have to deal with people with different cultures and demands for services and programmes are made on the basis of caste membership. The caste and castes have become a great dilemma for the social work. We have seen that caste is not completely a reactionary and backward institution and that it serves important functions in the Indian society. At the same time caste has negative aspects also. People tend to associate with the members of their castes only. Often the social workers and social activists try to mobilize people for common issues like poverty, land reforms, price rise, corruption, or bureaucratic indifference. To their frustration, they find that caste cleavages destroy their attempts to bring people into common platforms and all too often the people are more concerned with maintaining their caste affinities rather than deal with the common problems. The most serious consequence of caste loyalties is caste violence where caste becomes an instrument of legitimatising violence against others. Often the administrative response is coloured by the caste loyalties of the policemen and the bureaucracy, who neglect their duties to support their caste men. It is not uncommon to find allegations that policemen have not acted against the perpetrators of violence as they belong to the same caste.

The caste and class directly influence the development process. The development process is not a neutral process and affects different groups differently. The elite sections benefits from these programmes at the cost of the weaker sections. It is observed that developmental programmes right from the community development projects (1952) have benefited the elite sections— mostly belonging to the upper castes. How can social workers that are part of the development process ensure that the fruits of development are equitably distributed? Promotion of leadership from among the oppressed community, enabling their participation in the selection and implementation of programmes, creating people's organizations and capacity building are some of the means by which social workers make development activity benefit all groups. However, inspite of all these efforts the caste system does complicate the development process.

In such situations, it becomes difficult for the social worker to decide whether to mobilize people based on their caste identities or whether to mobilize whole community? Should the social worker design programmes only for one particular caste or should it be for the whole community? If mobilization is done on the basis of caste will it lead to strengthening of the caste system? Or is he responding to the social reality around him where different castes have different interests? Many activists believe that it is not possible to mobilize the community as a whole and only sections of the oppressed castes mobilized. Social workers are criticized for not taking up issues related to untouchability and casteism and focusing on soft issues like women, children, mentally challenged because of their own caste biases.

However its also alleged that all community based mobilizations whether at the level of nation, region or class has helped only the elite sections of the society. Social workers should approach these problems with lot of tact and understanding. The response of the organization and the social worker will largely depend on the ideology of the social worker, the past experience and the situational analysis of the community.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What are the characteristics of the caste system?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What are the major differences between caste system and class system?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.5 LET US SUM UP

Indian society is one of the most diversified and complex one in the world. Here tradition and modernity not only co exist, but also transform each other and influence both modern institutions and values. There exists section of people and areas where standards of life meet that of the advanced countries while there also exists poverty and depravation which are equal to the sub Saharan Africa. The differences socially economically and culturally which exists in the society, are too great to be bridged easily.

Social work practice here cannot therefore depend on the assumptions, tools and methods of the west. Social work profession in the west emerged due the changes brought about by the emergence of capitalism. Urbanization, destruction of the rural communities, rise of individualism and emergence of the welfare state are some its consequences. The situation in India is different, as we have seen. Therefore social work practices have to be modified and in some cases re-conceptualized. This will need a constant interface between the theory and practice as relevant for the Indian society. The knowledge you have gained in this unit should help you understand the context of social work practice in India.

3.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Anthropological Survey of India (2001) *People of India: An Introduction, revised edition*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Gupta, Dipankar (Ed)(1993). *Social Stratification*. Oxford University Publication, New Delhi.

Ghurye, S.S. *Caste and Race in India*, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai.

<http://www.censusindia.gov.in/>

ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

UNIT 4 SOCIAL GROUPS, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Structure

Joseph Varghese*

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Social Groups
- 4.3 Social Institutions
- 4.4 Social Control
- 4.5 Social Work, Groups, Institutions and Social Control
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Further Readings and References

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Individuals in society meet many psychological and social needs through group activity or group life. They participate in the social life by dint of certain specific ways. In other words, their various roles, networks, laws and social norms make many social institutions. The behaviours of these individuals are also controlled by the society. Any way, after studying this Unit, you would be able to understand:

- the meaning, importance and classification of groups in the society;
- the concept, types and functions of social institutions; and
- the ways of social control and various issues involved in it.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Society consists of numerous individuals who while sharing many things have different motivations and interests. How to balance self-interest of the individuals and the common interests of the society has intrigued many a social thinkers from time immemorial. If individual interests are given primacy over the societal interests then there will be no harmony on how to work and live together. Anarchy will be the result. On the other hand, if society is privileged over the individual then individual liberty is sacrificed which can lead to dehumanization and rigidity in society. Every society has to balance between the interests of the individual and society. Groups, institutions, and agencies of social control are societal devices to achieve this balance.

However, these institutions are also the arena where the elite or the powerful achieve their self-interests at the cost of others. So as social workers while we do work with groups and institutions we should critically see who is benefiting through them and who is losing. Therefore, there are two major issues (1) how do groups, institutions and agencies of social control function and (2) how they influence individual behaviour. It is keeping these points in mind that we present this Unit.

4.2 SOCIAL GROUPS

Man is a social being, which means there are many psychological and social needs of the human being that only groups can satisfy. No man can live as an island and individuals forced to live alone develop problems. Groups are the most natural formations in the society. We live in groups. We work relax and fight through groups and in groups. When we go to a new place one of the foremost concerns is to search for a suitable group to join and become its member. It is not surprising since groups apart from giving material resources also give us a sense of identity and belongingness. Since groups play such an important role in our lives, we should know more about them. Social workers can use their knowledge about groups both in their work with clients and in their work with fellow professionals. Social workers often work with other professionals and her knowledge about groups will improve not only her performance and the group performance. The knowledge about groups is essential for group work, which is a primary method of social work.

Our knowledge about groups is enriched from many disciplines including sociology psychology, social psychology, anthropology, and organizational behavior. Before we move, further we offer a few popular definitions of groups.

A group may be thought of as a number of persons (two or more) who have some common objects of attention that are stimulating to each other who have common loyalty and participate in similar activities. — Bogardus

Groups are aggregates of categories of people, who have a consciousness of membership and of interaction — Horton and Hunt

A group is a number of people in definable and persisting interaction directed towards common goals and using agreed upon means— Bennet and Tumin

Keeping in mind these definitions, we can say that the characteristics of groups are as following –

- 1) A collection of individuals
- 2) Commonly agreed goals and interests
- 3) Commonly agreed upon norms to regulate group and members' behaviour
- 4) Common identity which differentiates the group members from others
- 5) Mutual awareness about each other and identification with other group members
- 6) Group as a unit influences and regulates member behaviour
- 7) Frequent meaningful interaction between group members
- 8) Physical closeness.

The above-mentioned characteristics are those of an ideal group. Existing groups in society may or may not have all characteristics. Even when they share these characteristics the degree to which they possess these characteristics will differ according to nature of groups and the situation that they exist. Some groups may consist of members who closely identify with each other and they support the group's goals. On

other hand there may be groups where members are emotionally distanced from each other and only vaguely acknowledge the groups goals.

The groups are different from other collectives like crowd, mob, community, and nation. A crowd does not have any mutual awareness about its members. For example, a crowd waiting for a bus in the bus stop is largely unaware of each other and is mostly preoccupied with their own thought. Secondly, the crowd exists until an event occurs and after that, it dissolves. Continuing with example, the crowd dissolves after the bus leaves. There is no quality of permanence in a crowd. Mobs are emotionally charged collection of people focused on an event. They are either ecstatic or depressed about the event and often take extreme actions under the influence of these emotions. However, mobs are transient in nature and will dissolve after the event is over. Both crowd and mobs are ephemeral in nature and no long-term engagement between members is possible within them. Hence, while mob and crowd are collection of individuals they are not groups because they lack characteristics of groups like long-term involvement, mutual awareness and a sense of belongingness.

The community and nations share a few characteristics of groups. There are collections of individuals who exist for a lengthy period. They are aware of each other and there are norms to control the behavior of the members. 'We feeling' and 'consciousness of the kind' is found in its members. However, there is a major difference between nations and communities, and groups. Groups consist of small number and there is face-to face relationship with each other. Nations and communities have too many members in them to have face-to-face relationship. These collectives are therefore termed imagined communities and relations are more in the mind rather in real life. However, nation and community are large groups called secondary groups. We will discuss secondary groups in the next section.

Concepts related to groups

Group dynamics is a term used first by Kurt Lewin which refers to all interactions of the members of the group from the initiation of the group to its termination. Group dynamics reveals the nature and potential of the group.

Group development is the various stages the group moves as it progresses from the beginning to the end. Tucker's popular stages of group development is forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning.

Types of group

We can classify groups into a number of types.

1) Formal and informal groups

Formal groups are those groups that are governed by rules and regulations that have been officially articulated and written down. They have clear objectives to achieve. Relations between members are for specific purposes. Membership to these groups requires the fulfillment of fixed criteria. On the other hand, informal groups do not have specific objectives and their goals are diffuse in nature. Membership is based on affective and biological basis. Interactions within the group are informal and personal. For example, your class is a formal group while your friends are an informal group.

2) **Real groups and virtual groups**

The real groups are groups that have face-to-face relationship in the real world. The virtual groups are groups that are found in the cyberspace and members are connected through the internet. Many of them will never see each other face to face but relations develop online. Often close and intimate relations are impossible through on-line interaction. However, virtual groups can never substitute for real relationships, as there are limitations.

3) **Membership groups and reference groups**

The membership groups are those groups that individuals belong to at a given point of time. The reference groups are those groups that individuals aspire to join. For example, your membership group is the class, which you belong to while your reference group, is that of professional social workers.

4) **Open groups and closed groups**

The open groups are those groups for whom membership is open and without very many restrictions for aspiring members to join. The closed groups are those that do not allow new members to join. For example, the Congress party is an open group whereas criminal gangs like the mafia are a closed group.

5) **Primary groups and secondary groups**

C. H. Cooley has given the concept of primary groups and secondary groups. He studied how groups influence personality of the individual. He differentiated groups into two types— primary groups and secondary groups. According to Cooley, primary groups are “...those characterized by intimate face-to face association and cooperation”. The main characteristics of primary groups are (i) face to face interaction (ii) small size restricted to around 20 members’ at the most (iii) frequent interaction between members (iv) continuous existence for a length of time (v) congruent objectives (vi) shared interests

The members meet each other often and interact often which results in development of a group personality, which becomes part of the member’s personality regulating and influencing it. Further, it is through the membership of these groups that the various psychosocial needs are met. Because of the number of functions it performs, primary groups are very important to the individual. Family, peer group, and gang are examples of primary groups.

Secondary groups are larger groups, where the dominant mode of interaction is impersonal and formal. The secondary groups have increasingly become important in the modern age. Virtually all organizations of modern society like schools, industries, trade unions, cooperatives and political parties are secondary groups. The secondary groups are ideal for allocating responsibilities to various units, establishing a chain of command and communication and coordinating. Secondary groups in other words are useful in organizing work in the modern society. Secondly, they are useful for furthering similar but specific interest of the members. For example, the professional body of social workers will help get recognition for its members.

The primary and secondary groups are not completely distinct groups. Many secondary groups started as primary groups of small number of individuals.

Voluntary organizations often start as a small group before the need for division of labor, expertise and coordination transforms them into secondary groups. It is also observed that even within secondary groups, primary groups exist. Usually the highest decision making body in any organization is a smaller group—a governing body, council or a working committees. Therefore, a secondary group consists of many primary groups.

6) In groups and out groups

Sumner differentiated between in-groups and out groups. In-groups are those groups that an individual belongs to and feels his or her loyalty. On the other hand out groups are those groups that the individual does not belong to and therefore feels indifferent or hostile. In-groups helps the individual form his social identity and his perception about himself and the society. In-groups are often based on religious, ethnic, linguistic, regional, or any other ascriptive criteria. In-group is also based ideological or professional interests.

In-groups give the members a sense of identity and belongings. Often in-groups are sources of support for its members for moral and material resources. However, often in-groups also demarcate the boundaries of what the member considers his own and what is not his own. He may develop hostility for members, who do not share his values. Conflicts may arise due to the division of the community based on in-group and out-group.

7) Major groups and marginal groups

Individuals in the society belong to many groups. They do not and cannot give equal importance to all groups. They value the membership of some groups over other groups though they are members of both the groups. The groups whose membership the individual values is called major group and the group that the individual values less and is a nominal member is a marginal group. Individuals become members of any group, when prestige is associated with its membership, his/her interests furthered, and his personal liking for the group members and group as a whole.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What are the essential characteristics of a group?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Mention four types of group.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Function of Groups

Groups are the building blocks of organization, community, and society. We live our social lives through groups. We work through groups. We learn through groups. Groups are inseparable parts of the lives.

Groups and Individual Personality

Individual personality is the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment. The individual's heredity is genetically received from his/her parents and cannot be changed. His/her physical and social environment determines, which traits in personality will be, realized and which will be dormant. Thus the environment is an important factor in the development of an individual's personality. Social groups are important for an individual throughout his/her life. These groups include family and peer group.

C. H. Cooley calls these groups primary groups and describes them as having an irreplaceable role in an individual's life. Face-to-face association and cooperation characterize these groups. It does not mean that these groups are always characterized by love and harmony. Competition and self-assertion coexist with sympathy. But undoubtedly the we-feeling persuades members to sacrifice for the good of the group. For example a mother will do extra chores for the benefit of the family without calculating the costs and returns. The ability of primary groups to persuade members to act beyond narrow self-interests is its greatest strength. Individuals are valued for their intrinsic worth rather than extrinsic benefit they can give. It is only in these groups that individuals are treated wholly and for what they are rather than what they do.

It is these groups that the individual is taught the basic rules of social behaviour. She is rewarded when her behaviour is appropriate and punished when her behaviour is inappropriate. She learns to control her energies and divert it to productive channels. Deviant behaviour is often the result of experiences in groups that encourage deviant behaviour.

Groups and Work Place

Large organizations are characteristic of the modern society. Tens of thousands of employees work in different places around the world for a single organization. However it is also true that while these employees work in large organizations they essentially work as a team i.e. as groups. The Board of directors in any firm, the largest decision-making body in the organization is a group and so are the various departments of the organization. Therefore, it is not surprising that an important element in the study of organizational behaviour is group behaviour and its effect on productivity.

Groups in the formal structure of the organizations are formed based on criteria of specializations, area, and convenience. While formal groups are important for the organization's smooth functioning the existence of informal groups are also significant. The Hawthorne study done by Elton Mayo and his team proved that the informal groups have significant influence on the productivity of the workers. Through group pressure the informal groups regulated the output of the workers and the formal groups and the reward system had limited influence over the

workers. Similarly, the quality of relationships between the workers and the nature of leadership influences the mental well-being of the workers.

Groups and Decision-making

Groups have significant influence on the decision-making of individuals. Groups play a significant role in individual's decision-making process. The studies done by Asch, Sheriff and Jennes showed that groups play a significant role in the individual's perceptions. In all these experiments a significant percentage of the volunteers agreed to the choices made by other group members even though they felt that they were right. The following conclusions can be derived from the following experiments (1) the individual conforms to group pressure.(2) the standards by which the persons views a subject will be informed by the groups and he or she will orient the actions towards other group members(3) the need to demonstrate one's skill to others is intense in most individuals.

Groups and Education

Education and groups have a significant relationship. Education is generally done in groups (class) not only because it saves time and resources but also it is recognized as the most effective way to teach and to learn. If students have assimilated and experienced a deeper level of learning, they have linked the new knowledge with existing knowledge they know and apply them to new situations. This is true of adult learners who already have a significant amount of knowledge and experiences which will surely influence their learning of new knowledge.

Educationists like John Dewey and Kurt Lewin and David Kolb studied the use of groups in education. Their central principle is that the personal experience plays a significant role in testing, validating and modifying of abstract concepts. In a typical learning experience a new concept is learnt and it is used to understand a phenomena and feedback is received by the learner as to whether his application was proper or not. The process continues till the learner internalizes the knowledge and applies it satisfactorily. The quality of feedback in the process becomes crucial in the process. Learning in groups improves the quality of this process as experiences are shared and feedback obtained from diverse sources.

In distance education, learning in groups, becomes a specific problem as considerable distances separate the learners. Technology is used to bridge these distances. Internet is used to create a community of online learners who support and learn from each other. The virtual notice boards are created to communicate with each other. The virtual groups are important component of distance education, which to a large extent makes up for some of the limitations of distance education.

Groups and Self Help Group

Groups have an irreplaceable role in extending aid to others. It is even greater role in promoting self-help and mutual aid. When individuals come together they form a new entity, which is larger than anyone of them. The resources can be shared and emotional support is provided. Identification and universalization happens in groups. When one person has a serious problem he emotionally relieved to find that there are others who face a similar problem and that he is not alone in his sufferings. Further he can also learn how they overcame their

problems and dealt with their grief, which will strengthen him also. These principles of self help are used in self help groups, which are mushrooming all over the world.

4.3 SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Social institutions in general parlance refer to buildings from which important offices function. However, in sociological terms, institutions have a very distinct meaning — recognized ways of doing action. By this we mean, that all members in the society agree that there are certain specific ways in which we participate in the social life. For example, we agree how we choose our representatives to govern the country. It is through elections based on universal adult franchise. The designated office to conduct the elections is the election commission who can decide the dates of the elections, how candidates can file their nomination etc. laws passed by the parliament will govern who are eligible for the election and what should be their qualifications. The judiciary the watchdog of the laws of the land oversees this process. It punishes anybody violating the law. When a person loses the election, he has to vacate his position and the successful candidate will occupy the position and so on. The important issue is that every body involved in the process has a consensus on how to conduct an election. All these roles, networks, laws and norms make an institution.

There is similarity between the concept of role and institutions as both refer to a set of expected behaviour from individuals and groups in specific situations. However institutions are regarded as higher level than roles as institution will have plurality of roles within it. Institutions consist of a network of roles, structures and values.

Mac Iver defines institutions as “established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity”

An institution consists of a concept (idea, notion, doctrine or interest) and a structure— Sumner

An institution is a set or web of interrelated folkways mores and laws that enter in some function or functions—Green.

Every aspect of the social life has institutions governing human behaviour. The five major institutions are the (1) Political institutions are institutions that regulate use of and access to power. Indian the political institutions will include the parliament, state assemblies, state and central governments, political parties, bureaucracy pressure groups and professional bodies etc. (2) Economical institutions serve to produce and distribute goods and services. Industries, markets, banks, brokers, agriculturalists and other are economic institutions. (3) Familial institutions are those that involve in marriage, reproduction and socialization of children. (4) Cultural institutions are concerned with religious, scientific, and artistic activities. (5) Stratification institutions determine the distribution of positions and resources. The caste system and the class system are institutions of Indian society.

The institutions are broadly classified into these types for analytical purposes. However, it is not possible to separate their functioning. Clearly, political institutions

are influenced by the other institutions, and economic institutions by stratification institutions, and so on. The interrelated institutions together constitute the society.

The values and norms of an institution are not merely forced on to unwilling individuals rather the people have internalized these values, norms and laws in their personalities and they would not behave contrary to these values. Thus while there may be penalties attached to behaviour deviating from these social institutions it is not the main reason why people follow these institutions. Individuals are convinced that the behaviour expected of them is the appropriate response and that is best for them.

Take for example, the political institutions— some countries in the world, have elaborate constitutions written. Nevertheless, often there are coups by the army or by rebels who violate these laws. On the other hand, UK does not have any written constitutions, but the well-established conventions exist to which everybody adheres. It is not the elaborative rules and laws that make institutions effective and ineffective but the degree of consensus that exist in society and to what extent these values have been internalized by the people and to what extent they adhere to these values.

The institutions gradually develop due to the common experience of the society. However the elite in the society will play a greater role in the creation and operation of these institutions. Institutions remain do not remain unchanged for long periods of time. Institution changes sometimes slowly and sometimes rapidly. For example in the Western society the institution of marriage has changed over the century. Marriage was considered as a sacrament and a duty with clear roles for husband and wife. Now marriage is secularized, democratized and its main aim is companionship. Divorce is also legitimate and accepted by society. In many cases, institutions simply adapt to the new situation that emerges in society. The caste system as institution is an example on how a traditional social institution having lost its traditional functions adapted to the modern society.

Functions of Social Institutions

- 1) Social institutions regulate individual behaviour. Individuals by nature have unlimited needs which is impossible to fulfill. Therefore society needs to control the needs of the individual, which is done by social institutions.

Social institutions channels human energies and creativity to social productive channels. Individual have lots of energy and creativity if left uncontrolled can lead to destructive tendencies. Religion, political institutions see that these energies are made useful to society.

- 2) Social institutions fulfill human need by Production and Distribution of Goods and Services. Economic institutions fulfill physiological needs and social institutions fulfill social needs and esteem. For example family fulfills the need for sex and parenthood.
- 3) A social institution makes individual behaviour predictable. In society there are innumerable social interactions taking place. Institutions reduce the uncertainty in these interaction and institutions help us predict the behaviour of others in these circumstances. For example, a couple going to marry will know their roles and responsibilities. They will know what to expect from

others. Once behaviour is predictable other can orient their behaviour towards achieving the common goals. If they deviate they will have to suffer negative sanctions and face the consequences.

- 4) Social institution control and regulates deviant behaviour. Once it is recognized that a particular way of doings are to be followed that individuals who break this agreement will be punished, which will restrain him from committing the error again and also be a deterrent to others from committing the same mistake.

Since social institutions perform crucial functions, their malfunctioning can result in breakdown in the society as a whole.

4.4 SOCIAL CONTROL

Social control is the process by which society controls the individual behaviour and prevents deviance. The aim of social control is to maintain social order and social harmony.

Social control is the process by which, through the imposition of sanctions, deviant behaviour is counteracted and social stability maintained. – Talcott Parsons.

Social control is exercised in two ways:

- i) Extrinsic factors like police, courts etc.
- ii) Intrinsic factors like beliefs, ideology, values etc.

Though it may seem that the extrinsic factors are more visible than the intrinsic factors it is the intrinsic factors that are the foundation for effective social control. The individual is convinced that the behaviour expected of him is just and legitimate, and acts accordingly. No amount of social control will be effective if large sections of people believe that the laws and norms are wrong and detrimental to their well being. In such cases severe action would have to be taken by the law-enforcing agency to maintain law an order. The other consequence will be the large gap between ideal culture and real culture.

Means of Social Control

There are informal and formal means of social control.

Formal means of social control are exercise by the state agencies like law enforcement agencies, armed forces, courts and all other agencies, which deal with enforcing the laws of the country. They are formal because these agencies are legitimized through a recognized process to act as an agency of social control. In modern democratic societies the representative institutions (parliament in India) pass the law and since there are popularly elected the laws are considered to be the will of the people. In traditional societies it was the religious ideology and the authority of the regent that legitimized these agencies.

Informal means of social control vary from customs, folkways to gossip, ridicule and disapproval. They are informal means as individuals use them and groups are part of the general public and have no special powers entrusted to them.

In general, informal means of social control are used more in traditional societies and formal means of social control are used more in urban societies. There is greater tolerance of individual deviance in modern societies than in traditional societies. Modern societies also divide deviance into sin and crime. Sin is considered a moral problem and private while crime is considered as violation of norms and a societal problem. The courts punish crimes while sins are left to individual conscience to deal with. For example, sexual relationship before marriage is considered a sin but not a crime. It is upto the individual to decide whether he will engage in such relationship or not. But if the individual steals an article he will be punished. However in traditional societies like Iran adultery is considered a sin and a crime and is punished by the government.

Agencies of Social Control

- 1) State: In modern societies the state is the most powerful agency of social control. It has monopoly over the use of legitimate violence on the citizens. Its numerous organizations monitor, regulate and control the actions of the citizens. Its coercive agencies like the police and the army can use force to maintain law and order. No other organization of the modern society can match the power of the state and hence the state in most societies cannot be challenged directly. The civil society can merely restrict the expanding sphere of the state and perform the role of the watchdog to prevent the misuse of authority by the state functionaries.
- 2) Religion and religious institutions: Religion gives its adherents a set of beliefs, codes of conduct and meanings to everyday life. Religion can appeal to the need for spirituality and after life rewards for good behaviour.
- 3) Family: Family is the primary agent of socialization and hence an important agent of social control. Family structure and values influence individual personality.
- 4) Neighbourhood: Neighbourhood of the individual often represents the subculture in which the individual develops. It presents the standard by which the individual measures his achievement and failure.
- 5) Public opinion: Public opinion is defined as widely held opinion on a particular subject. Public opinion matters as most people would want to be accepted by the society rather than be an object of criticism and hostility.
- 6) Education institutions: Education institutions like school, college and universities are important agents of social control as it is here that the individual learns to be part of the larger community, away from his/her family.
- 7) Media: Media is an important agency of social control and its importance is growing in the modern world.
- 8) Professional bodies: Professional bodies like bar council, medical council regulates the conduct of their professionals.

Social Control — Dysfunctional Aspects

The prerequisite for social control is that there is a standard of acceptable codes of behaviour. It is to prevent deviance from these codes that social control is applied. However there are a number of problems that are associated with what is acceptable to society.

- 1) Do all members agree with the values, norms and laws of the society or are there groups within the society who are not in agreement with the values? Deviance is a relative concept.
- 2) Are there sections in the society who are unable to follow the norms of the society because of the situation in which they are? Some sections that are denied access to resources of the society may use unlawful means to attain their goals.
- 3) Are the means of social control applied to the deviants fair and just? Prisons in most countries are means to punish people rather than reform them.

Firstly norms, rules are not always just and humanitarian in nature. The caste system in India divided the Hindu society into different castes and placed them in hierarchy one above the other. The lowest in the hierarchy was the untouchables who were severely discriminated to the extent of restricting them from being seen in public. They were prohibited from using public facilities and punished, if they read the sacred works or entered temples. In these cases social control methods were used to force people to accept subordinate positions. In spite of these restrictions untouchable communities frequently tried to change their statuses. Another example is the salt Satyagraha of Mahatma Gandhi who consciously broke the salt law that was promulgated by the government of the day. Many laws passed by the colonial government were unjust and to legitimize oppression.

Robert Merton analytically separates two elements of the society — cultural goals and institutionalized means. Cultural goals are socially acknowledged desired goals like money, power, and prestige etc. while institutionalized means are acceptable and legitimate means to achieve these goals. For example, becoming wealthy is desired goal and investing in share market to gain profits is a legitimate means to achieve that goal. However in some societies there may be a stress on the goals and not complete adherence to the institutionalized means, while in other societies there may be stress on the close adherence to institutionally prescribed conduct while goals are neglected. Societies fall in between these extremes as they try to balance goals and institutional means and also maintain stability in society.

Logically there are five responses of individuals to the societal goals and the institutionalized ways to achieve these goals.

- i) The conformist who conforms to the goals set by society and adapts the institutional and legitimate ways to achieve these goals.
- ii) The innovator who has accepted the goals but not the institutionalized means to achieve the goals. Criminals are part of innovators.
- iii) The ritualism which accepts the means and goals but scales down the goals to lower limits and is satisfied with it.
- iv) Retreatism involves the rejection of the goals and means and withdrawing from society to the private world.
- v) Rebellion means rejecting the goals as well as the means to achieve these goals. The rebel wants to change the goals as well as the institutional means to reach the goals.

Merton's contribution points out that social control and deviance are not simply about the violation of codes set by society. In many cases social structures itself produce deviance by producing situations, where a cultural breakdown has taken place. Goals are stressed but the means to reach the goals are not available to all.

Foucault on Punishment and Control

Foucault a postmodern thinker has given new insights to the problem of control of individual behaviour. Foucault's thinking on the subject is quite complex and what is presented here is a simplified version of his views on control. Foucault views individual as a totally free being and any restrictions on it as limiting his freedom. He essentially disagreed that the human history after enlightenment was process of human liberation. Only the methods of controlling had changed but basically the elite through the modern technology has increased its control of the individual behaviour. Techniques of control in modern society differ from the pre-modern society. In the pre-modern society crime was seen as a direct challenge to the king's authority and punishment which included painful tortures aim of which were to assert the king's authority to punish people. Modern society has given up the painful tortures and has adopted more "humane" methods such as imprisonment. But keeping the prisoners under constant observation and making them feel that there are always under observation and they are made to discipline themselves.

Modern society has increasing means to put the entire population into systematic surveillance. The agencies that are involved in the surveillance of the population are not only the police or the secret service but also virtually every organization which is able to gather information about the population. The public health department and education department are just two departments that collect information about population and use it to discipline the population with their specialized knowledge. These agencies do not have the authority to use violence to control the population but they are as effective if not more effective as organizations that use force.

Foucault saw the relation between the power and knowledge. The power to define what is knowledge and what is not knowledge is power. Converting an opinion into Knowledge allows the statements based on it as being truth for others. Modern society has given professions and professionals the power to decide right and wrong. In reality professionals are involved in disciplining people. Knowledge/power allows the elite to control people by claiming scientific validity for its findings. For example a doctor's opinion is adhered to by the patient because it is considered to be expert knowledge and based on scientific knowledge. This allows the doctor to control the patient behaviour.

In social work practice with their clients a binary polarity is established that privileges and rewards certain types of behaviour and punishes others. (Foucault quoted in Dominelli, 2004). Foucault advocated that there were no self-evident truths. It is based on religious knowledge or on scientific knowledge. Truth, ethics and any standard set for individuals were means to control them. These are mere inventions to help discipline the population.

But Foucault radical views have many critics. Some of them have pointed out the following limitations (1) David Couzens Hoy points out that if all structures

and knowledge is oppressive then resistance is not only futile but also is not needed. that deprives people of obtaining points of resistance against oppressive regimes. Thus Foucault's ideas though educative lead to nihilism. (2) Further, Foucault has not given any particular goal or situation which is to be attained which deprives it of the power to initiate any social action (3) Foucault position on the Iranian revolution one of the few times he took a political events turned out to be a major mistake as the Islamic regime became as oppressive as the shah regime it replaced. In spite of these limitations Foucault's contributions have highlighted several issues related to social work profession, practice and knowledge base.

4.5 SOCIAL WORK, GROUPS, INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Knowledge about groups is necessary as group work is a method of social work. You will study about groups in greater detail later.

An individual lives in society, but society is too large and abstract entity to directly influence an individual. Often it is through groups and institutions part of which the individual belongs that the individual behaviour is controlled. Social worker has to understand the role groups and institutions play in the life of their client systems. In many cases the problem is caused because of lack of the effectiveness of the groups and institutions. For example a disorganized family with no role models is likely to have delinquent children. These children experience ineffective socialization leading to inability to respect authority and obey rules. On the other hand, the problems can be caused due to a high degree of social control. Members of delinquent gangs often commit crime to impress gang members and to gain acceptance. Some groups go even further when their members are made to lose their individual identity and merge completely within the group identity. Goffman calls these institutions 'total institutions'. Often these institutions are manipulated by individuals who make use of the weak personality of their members. Members of cults, terrorist groups and even political parties are examples of these types of relationship between individual and groups. Social worker has to analysis this relationship. The cultural context is very important as different societies have different degrees of autonomy for individuals. If the group is negative in the sense that members are influenced to commit deviant act the social worker aims at distancing the member from the group emotionally and physically. This involves counselling, behaviour modification therapies and administrative measures to remove the person from the group. Again if the problem is lack of social control than the social worker works with the client and his social environment and makes changes; for example, he works with the family to resolve its problems and provide adequate care for the children.

In case of social institutions also the approach of the social worker will depend on her understanding of the role of the client in the social institutions. For example in marriage the root of the problem maybe because of the differing perceptions of the partners regarding marriage resulting in burdening each other with over expectations. Social worker uses his methods to allow partners to gain greater awareness about self and other to resolve this problem. On the

other hand if the institution is based on unfair premises than the social work takes action to reform or even eliminate these institutions. In such cases social worker initiates steps for legislative and policy level action to resolve the problem along with micro level efforts. These steps are necessary as often it is the discriminated groups like women and dalits that suffer from negative effective of excessive social control.

The concept of social control gives a starting point for reflection to the social workers. Is social work practice a part of the disciplining process by which the elites control the population? Social workers often collect vital and personal information about the population. They directly engage in the process of disciplining the poor by defining the problem using the professional knowledge. Social workers actively participate in normalizing the deviants of the society (Dominelli, 2004). Thus social workers are part of the process of regulating human behaviour. The research has pointed out that many social workers do feel that care and control is, complementary. So whose interests are social work? Those of the elites or those of the clients whose interests we claim are of paramount importance. Foucauldian analysis will undermine the status of social work profession as it questions the latent function of social work. It reminds social work professionals to continuously challenge the major assumptions and knowledge of social work.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Describe the functions of institutions.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) What is the role of social worker in social control?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4.6 LET US SUM UP

Social groups, social institutions and are part of the society to regulate and influence social life. Without these life would be chaotic and disorderly. Social groups give an identity and belongings to the individuals. More importantly it also provides resources, which are crucial to the individual. At the same time

it demands the loyalty and respect of the individual. If the individual does not meet the group 's expectation the individual can be removed from the groups and denied the privileges of membership. Social institutions are recognized ways of doing things, which comprises of a number of roles, groups and agencies in it. Social institutions are interrelated and together form the society.

As social workers, we often work within the social institutions and by our expertise make these institutions effective. On the other hand, social workers will challenges the values and norms that provide the foundation for the social institutions. Social workers are often part of an effort to reconstruct these institutions. Social workers thus respond to the institutions according to their analysis of the situation. This in turn depends on the ideology of the social worker.

4.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Dominelli, Lena (2004). *Social Work Theory and Practice for a Changing Profession*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Haralambos, M. and R. M. Heald.(1991) *Sociology Themes and Perspectives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

Giddens, Anthony (1993), *Sociology*, 3rd edition, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Maciver R.M. and Page Charles H(1962). *Society, an Introductory Analysis* London.

UNIT 5 SOCIAL CHANGE: MEANING, CHARACTERISTICS AND FACTORS

Structure

*Joseph Varghese**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Social Change: Characteristics and Sources
- 5.3 Major Factors of Social Change
- 5.4 Theories of Social Change
- 5.5 Social Work and Social Change
- 5.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.7 Further Readings and References

5.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- the concept of social change;
- sources of social change; and
- the social worker's role in social change.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Social change is ubiquitous. Every society experiences change some times rapidly and some times slowly. Social change often affects people differently. At times, certain sections of the society benefit while some other sections are hurt by the process of change. The imposition of Zamindari system during the British rule benefited the property owners but pauperized the peasantry. Social change is often caused by factors, which are beyond the control of the members of the society. On the other hand, elite sections initiate social change and they control the factors and agencies of social change. Nevertheless, even when social change is beyond their control and is inevitable it is the elite sections which are better prepared and better equipped to benefit from change. Globalization is an inevitable process – for the elite it has meant the growth of opportunities while for the poor it has meant further deprivation and increased vulnerability.

The dominant sections benefiting from status quo often resist social changes, advantageous to the oppressed sections. Untouchability is banned by the constitution of India and is punishable by law. The aim is to bring up equality and prevent discrimination of the lower castes — an important social change. However, this change is resisted by the dominant castes explicitly or implicitly.

Social worker's role is very crucial in this situation. His/her role is to ensure that change, which is favourable to the oppressed classes, takes place. In order to do this she needs to understand the process of change, factors of change and agencies of change. This Unit will help him to understand these processes.

*Dr. Joseph Varghese, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan

5.2 SOCIAL CHANGE : CHARACTERISTICS AND SOURCES

Let us go through some of the definitions of social change that will introduce us to the concept of social change.

Jones: Social change is a term used to describe variations in, modifications of any aspect of social processes, social patterns and social interactions or social organization

Davis: Social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization, that is, structure and functions of society.

Gillin and Gillin: Social changes are variations from the accepted modes of life; whether due to alteration in geographical conditions, in cultural equipment, composition of the population.

Mazumdar, H.T.: Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old, in the life of people, or in the operations of society.

Merrill and Eldredge: Social change means that large numbers of persons are engaging in activities that differ from those which they or their immediate forefathers engaged in sometime before.

Therefore only those changes at the societal level in the structure and the values in the society can be termed as social change.

Levels of Social Change

There are two levels of social change (1) Macro Level and (2) Micro Level

Macro level changes are changes that occur in the larger human collective at the global level and national level are called macro level changes. On the other hand, changes that occur in the family and village level are micro level changes. These levels of changes are not isolated from each other and influence each other. Social worker programmes and activities produce change at the micro level.

Characteristics of Social Change

According to Moore social change in contemporary societies, have the following characteristics:

For any society or culture rapid change occurs frequently or constantly.

Changes are neither temporally and spatially isolated, that is, changes occur in sequential chains rather than as temporary crisis followed by quiet periods of reconstructions and the consequences tend to reverberate through entire regions or virtually the entire world.

Thus because contemporary change is probable everywhere and its consequences may be significant everywhere it has a dual basis.

The proportion of contemporary change that either is planned or issues from the secondary consequences of deliberate innovations is much higher than in former times.

Accordingly, the range of material technology and social strategies is expanding rapidly and the net effect is additive or cumulative despite the relative obsolescence of some procedures.

The normal occurrence of change affects a wider range of individual experience and functional aspects of societies in the modern world —not because such societies are in all respects more integrated but because virtually no feature of life is exempt from the expectation or normality of change.

Check Your Progress 1

1) Define social change.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) What are the types of social change?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Sources of social change

Sources of change are divided into endogamous and exogamous.. Endogamous sources of change are sources which are found within the society while exogamous sources of change are from outside the society. Examples of endogamous sources of change are innovation, migration, social movements, while exogamous changes are by technology transfers, from foreign countries invasions and interaction between different societies.

Most countries in the world have made significant borrowings in the last four hundred years from the western countries. Enlightenment in Europe brought the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the modern period. This period saw the growth of rationality and science and the decline of religious dogma. The application of rationality in brought about advancement in science and technology. Capitalism and consequently the search for new markets started the colonization process and by the nineteenth century, most areas of the globe

were under the rule of the colonial powers—Britain, US, Germany, France Holland. These colonial powers imposed the modern values and technology on their colonies. The colonial countries got modern values through their colonial powers. Since the process was forced rather than voluntarily, it is a major source of many problems. Problem related to religious, tribal and ethnic issues could be traced to the policies of colonial government policy. The British policy of divide and rule and partition of the India is an example of the problems created by colonization.

However the process of modernization is not accepted uncritically and enthusiastically by traditional societies.

Blumer points out five ways in which a traditional society can respond to the process of modernization.

Five ways of Modernization

1) Rejective response

The traditional society rejects modernization, as modern values are hostile to the indigenous values. The elite of the society also resist modern values if they feel that their power is threatened.

2) Disjunctive response

The disjunctive response allows the co existence of both tradition and modernity with each having its own sphere of influence. Some areas of individual are governed by modern values while other areas are governed by tradition values.

3) Assimilative response

The assimilative response means the absorption of the modern values and institutions by traditional society without disrupting the existing order. It involves a creative and gradual incorporation of the modern institutions into society without harming elite interests and popular sentiments.

4) Supportive response

The supportive response accepts modern values and uses them to augment the authority of the traditional order. Often technology is used by the landed elite to increase their productivity which increases their power and domination over others.

5) Disruptive Response

The disruptive response results in the undermining and even destruction of the existing institutions. This response occurs when adaptation is not possible.

The societal responses to modernization have varied from society to society and from situation to situation. Different groups even within a society have exhibited different response to the modernization process. According to Yogendra Singh the Indian response to modernizations has been adaptation and assimilation rather than through replacement and disruption. The elasticity of Indian tradition

has allowed for it's the gradual assimilation of modern values without causing major disruption in the society.

The social change is a very complex and controversial topic. Very often social change is seen through the prism of the political, social, and personal viewpoints. We would see certain changes as being important and significant while other changes as being insignificant. For example take the wide spread view on westernization in India. Most Indians believe that while westernization has changed many of our values and institutions we have remained Indian. However, this point is highly debatable as there is no consensus on what is Indian and what is not Indian. If we say that religion, spirituality or even more vaguely an Indian way of life is the core of being an Indian we would find it difficult to identify the constituents of these elements. Indian religions and the way of life have experienced profound changes in the last two hundred fifty years. Further, there is so much plurality in the Indian traditions each of which has evolved through the centuries and is accepted by major groups. Therefore, social scientists have long debated whether a common identifiable entity called Indian exists. If we include the experience of other societies in the world then the idea of social change becomes even more complicated. We are so much part of the process of social changes that studying it becomes difficult.

The early sociologists attempted to identify the various stages in the development of the human society. Social change is a constant process. Historically change has taken place from simple societies to complex societies. Simple societies are characterized by organizations based on kinships for governance, basic forms of division of labour, low level of technology used and a subsistence economy. Most of these societies are pastoral or agrarian in nature. The rural life predominate these societies on the other hand, complex societies are characterized by the presence of specialized institutions, advance level of technology, complex forms of division of labour and an advanced economy. The urban life predominate these societies. They are industry or postindustrial societies. There have been definite changes from the earlier times to the present. However, these changes have taken thousands of years. For many hundred years, the traditional societies did not experience significant changes. It is only in the last three hundred years that social change has become rapid and people have begun to prepare for these changes. However, it is not possible that any society stood still for a considerable length of time.

Gerth and Mills have offered a model of social changes. Six questions are asked about the changes:

(1) what is that changes (2) how does it changes (3) what is the direction of change (4) what is the rate of change (5) why did change occur or why was it possible? (6) what are the principal factors in social change?

Social change can take place in social institutions or in the relationship between the institutions— political institutions like the state, political parties, religious institutions, family and economic institutions. The changes can take place in the relationships between institutions like in the political and the religious institutions. For example in the western societies, the last hundred years have seen the distancing between the political institutions and the religious institutions because of secularization. On the other hand, in Islamic societies these institutions are coming closer due to increased Islamization of the society.

There is no unanimity among sociologists on the relative influence of various factors that cause social change. According to the sociologists, whose leading exponent is Max Weber, social change can be in the realm of values—knowledge and ideas, art, religious and moral doctrines etc. Max Weber traces the emergence of capitalism in the doctrines of Protestantism. Protestantism especially the Calvinists propagated the view that man had a direct relationship with god with no intermediaries in between like the church. The frugal lifestyle changes in the values and institutions are interrelated. Very often it is change in the ideas that bring about change in the institutions. The idea of democracy and people participation brought about the evolution of parliamentary system and political parties. They were not needed in a monarchy, as there was no need to allow participation of the people in policymaking. On the other hand, changes in the institutions bring about changes in the values. Economic institutions like market and industries brought about urbanization, which led to replacement of collectivism with individualism and personal relation found in rural community with impersonal relations in urban community.

Any change needs a point of departure a reference point from which you can measure the change. The significant changes include move from joint families to nuclear families, from simple division of labour to complex division of labour, from use of animate sources of power to inanimate source of power, from monarchies to democracies. However not all areas experience change simultaneously.

William Ogburn's concept of cultural lag is a popular explanation of how different parts of the same culture change at different rates. Ogburn divided culture into two-material culture that included technology, material artifacts, and non-material culture which included institutions, values and laws. Technology advances at a faster rate than the institutions required managing and controlling technology. For example, human society has developed nuclear bombs but the existing institutions are inadequate to manage them and prevent a human catastrophe.

Another example of cultural lag is in the role of women at work and family. Women have increasingly begun to work outside the homes after industrialization however, their role in the family have not changed significantly as they are expected to perform their traditional role of mother and wife. Thus technology brought about a change in the work place, whereas there has been insignificant change in the family leading to cultural lag. The resistance to change is due to the force of habit, traditional ways of thinking, fear of the consequences of change and disturbance of the existing power structure.

Morris Ginsberg has summarized the viewpoints of different sociologists to explain change. (i) the conscious desires and decisions of individuals exemplified by the development of the small family system in western countries (ii) individuals acts influenced by changing conditions like the decline of village in England between 1300 and 1500 (iii) structural changes and structural strains (iv) external influence (v) outstanding individuals or groups of individuals (vi) a confluence or collocation of elements from different sources converging at a given point of time as in during the revolution (vii) fortuitous occurrences and (viii) the emergence of a common purpose.

Check Your Progress 2

1) What is cultural lag?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Mention the different responses of traditional society to modernization.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Sources of Change in India

Indian State

The Indian state has been a major source of change. It has attempted to take the country to the values enshrined in the constitution. After India's independence the Indian political leaders had to decide which model of development to adopt to suit Indian national interests and attain its social and economic interests. Economically, two influential models available were the capitalist model followed by the US and west European countries and the centralized socialist planning model of erstwhile USSR. The mixed model was adopted by the government characterized by limited planning, a dominant role for public sector, and control over the private sector and control of imports. The state had a predominant role in the economical sector. The planning commission was set up to formulate five year plans to intervene in the economy with the following aims; ensure equitable growth; full employment; balanced regional development.

In the social sector too the state took upon itself the role of a modernizer. The social legislation related to marriage, family, castes and women were passed. The positive discrimination in the form of reservations in jobs and educational institution for the schedule castes and schedule tribes were established. Several social welfare schemes were formulated for the welfare of the weaker sections. The government took a central role in the social and economic field.

By the 1970s the failure of the government was becoming obvious. Economic reforms were started in 1980s and 1990s transformed the role of the government in the economic sector. A greater role for market and private sector, freeing import restrictions and reducing the role of the public sector limited the role of the government in the economy. Government role became that of facilitator rather than the main actor.

Similar changes were made in the social sector also. In the First Five Year plan the government took the lead role in social reforms and providing social services for the vulnerable sections. The development was also the main aim of the government. The Community Development programmes were started in 1952 with aim of accelerating social development by using community resources and government resources. However the developmental experience of the early decades showed that the government was largely ineffective in implementing development programmes. By the Seventh Plan period, the government started to grant a greater role for the voluntary sector and recognized its contribution. By that time the number and nature of NGOs also started changing.

Changes in Voluntary Sector

Limitations with NGOs

Some of the changes in the voluntary sector were:

- 1) Proliferation of NGOs and spread of NGOs into different geographical areas.
- 2) Voluntary sector moved from being charity and welfare based to development and empowerment based approaches.
- 3) Increase in funding from foreign and domestic agencies increase in the number of professionals and increasing professionalization of NGOs. Social workers, management graduates, engineers and medical professionals are increasing entering the sector for employment and altruistic reasons.
- 4) Increasing recognition of the importance of capacity building and professional management in NGOs
- 5) Entry of NGOs in specialized issues like environment, natural resources management, Dalits, human rights etc.
- 6) Formation of networks of NGOs within country and outside the country leading to considerable increase in their national and international political power.
- 7) Increasing involvement of NGOs in government policy formulation and implementation.
- 8) Increasing exposure to NGOs activity in media and academics.

However, the functioning of NGOs has not been free from criticism

- 1) Lack of accountability and transparency on financial matters
- 2) Ineffective implementation
- 3) Programmes being based on donor priorities rather than the needs of the population
- 4) Foreign fund dependency and misuse
- 5) Corruption and mismanagement
- 6) Low salary and poor employment condition. Ill-treatment of employees

- 7) Project based activity with no follow-up and lack of sustainability
- 8) Small size and lack of expertise
- 9) Decline in volunteerism and emergence of business practices
- 10) Concentration of NGOs in certain areas and duplication of services
- 11) Cooption by government
- 12) Cooption by the local elites
- 13) Believing in incremental changes at the cost of radical changes which is needed and thereby derailing the efforts of radical social movements.

The complete dominance of the state in the process for attaining a modern society is still important but diminished compared to the early decades after Independence. The present model advocates a limited government with largely autonomous civil society and market. Government acts in the economy as a regulator and a protector of the consumers.

Urbanization

The growth of population in urban areas is urbanization. Urbanization is caused due to three factors (i) movement of population from rural areas to urban areas (ii) natural increase due to births in urban areas (iii) declaration of rural areas as urban areas when they meet the criteria like population, density and occupation.

Urbanization is a factor in economic growth and an indicator of development. In the Europe and US urbanization and industrialization proceed simultaneously. However in the developing countries urbanization has been also due to push factors in the rural areas. Migration from rural to urban area is due to distress in rural areas not because there are opportunities in urban areas. This kind of migration has distorted the urbanization pattern in developing countries.

Urbanization is not simply a movement from rural areas to urban areas. It results in major changes in values, structure and behaviour of the community. Urbanization has had a significant effect on the caste system. The anonymity and impersonal relations found in the city has given greater freedom to the oppressed groups like dalits and women. It is difficult to practice untouchability when the caste of other person are not known. The people traveling in buses and trains eating in hotels rarely know the castes of the person sitting near them or serving food to them. Thus urban life contributed to changing the nature of caste system. Women enjoy greater latitude in the city, where as there are several restrictions on them in the rural areas.

Urban areas often provide people with employment opportunities of diverse nature. Unlike in rural areas where there are restrictions on the type of employment an individual can take up in cities there are no such restrictions. Opportunities for upward movement are greater in urban areas as merit and hard work are given greater emphasis than the person, caste or religion. However it is not to be assumed that caste practices completely absent in the city. Milton Singer's study in Madras city shows that caste plays a significant role in the recruitment of workers in the industries.

On the other hand, urbanization has led to decline in community feelings among the people. Crime, riots and communal violence are largely an urban phenomena. Ashis Nandy points out that the feeling of rootlessness and identity in urban areas increases the propensity of urbanites to use violent methods.

Cultural interaction —Sankritization and westernization

Sankritization is an endogenous source of social change. Sankritization is a process by which members of the lower caste or tribal or other group changes its custom, ritual, ideology, and the way of life in the direction of the high and frequently twice born caste (Srinivas, 1972). He cites the example of Harijans in Mysore not accepting cooked food and water from Smiths though the latter are above them and is higher in the hierarchy. Lower castes and tribals adopt these practices to obtain upward mobility within the caste system and in many cases, they are successful. However there is only positional changes within the caste system but there is no structural changes. Sankritization acknowledges the values of the caste system.

Social activists have criticized the Sankritization model for upward mobility by lower castes as it means accepting the main tenet of the caste system that is the castes are basically unequal. Sankritization thus only strengthens the caste system instead of challenging it and bring about real equality. Secondly, Sankritization is not always successful as there is often resistance from the upper castes towards attempts of the lower castes to adopt their customs. Thirdly Sankritization destroys the culture of the lower castes and reinforces their feeling of inferiority. In contrast to Sankritization there have been attempts at revivalism and indigenization among the lower castes and the tribal population. These movements seek to instill a pride in the original culture of the oppressed people. The cultural traits of the oppressed people whether it is food habits, dress, music is revived and is attributed with greater dignity and respect. It is claimed that the culture of the oppressed people gives greater freedom to the people than the narrow and restrictive culture of the upper castes. The treatment of women is an example. While the brahminical culture places a number of restrictions on the women including prescribing sati for widowed women the subaltern cultures allows women to remarry. Similarly, purdah is prescribed to the upper caste women while the shudra women need not follow these rules. Thus, it is brahminical culture that has to learn from the shudra culture and not vice versa.

The process of indigenization is a process of culture assertion that is a step towards liberation. Antonio Gramsci, Fannon and Macolm have seen these as a major steps towards the liberation of the oppressed people. The cultural assertion is the first step towards formation of new identity and rejection of the self-images that has given by the oppressor to the oppressed. The next step would be to organize the oppressed, challenge the structure of the society, and bring about change. Activists of the Afro Americans community in America and the indigenous peoples in South America have adopted this strategy to empower the people. However, the use of these approaches has challenges as mainstream culture is dominated by the culture of the dominant sections of the society. The main organs of cultural reproduction are owned and controlled by the dominant sections.

Westernization

According to M.N Srinivas, westernization is the “changes in technology, institutions, ideology, and values of a non western society as a result of cultural contact with the society for a long time”. Our political system and legal system have been largely borrowed from the west. Religious reform in the last two hundred years has been guided by western humanitarian philosophy. Many of the successful attempts to rationalize religion and get rid of abominable practices have taken place due to western influence.

Secularization

Secularization is defined by Bryan Wilson as the “process whereby religious thinking, practice, and institutions lose social significance”. Secularization means that more and more areas of the individual life are governed by rational and utilitarian principles rather than religious values. Secularization in west has resulted in a secular state. A state that does not have an official religion does not support any religion and treats all religions equally. India is also experiencing secularization process. Our constitution and government are based on humanitarian principles not on any religious ideology. Except for the personal laws, which govern marriage, divorce, adoption, succession, and maintenance. Other laws are common to all and there is no difference in the treatment of individuals of different religions. There is no official religion and no religion is favored over others.

At the level of the individual and community, also the influence of secularization was significant. M.N. Srinivas points out that Hinduism more than any religion was affected by secularization. The principle of purity and pollution, which was central to Hinduism, weakened largely due to secularism. The principle of purity and pollution governed the every day life of the traditional Hindu and to some extent even of members of other religion. Members of lower castes, human fluids, and carcass of animals were polluting objects and contact with them polluted the person. The person had to undergo a ritual ceremony to remove the pollution and become pure again. Industrialization, westernization, urbanization and the increasing influence of rationalist and humanitarian ideologies were influential in the decline of this principle. Secularization is seen in the change of many rituals and ceremonies, which were related to the life cycle of the individual. marriage, name-giving rituals have been secularized.

Education

The gradual expansion of modern education is a major force of change in India. Modern education is different from traditional education in the following ways. (1) It is open to all sections of the society unlike traditional education which was restricted to certain sections of the society (ii) education has become the main transmitter of culture in modern society. Modern culture stresses equality, importance of the individual and science. (iii) The very experience of studying in educational institution with diverse students changes the students' outlook.

However there are limitations in the educational system that tends to limit the efficacy of education as a source of change. The reach of educational system is limited considering that the literacy rate is 64 per cent for the general population and less than seven per cent enter institutions of higher learning. Without an

experience in these institutions it becomes difficult for an individual to enter the fast globalizing job market.

Social Movements

Social movements are collective action by groups of people to create or resist change. Labour movements, religious movements, caste movements, women movements have taken place in India with varying successes. Many of these movements have used violent means to achieve their goals. The succession movements in Punjab and naxalite movement are examples of violent movements.

Successful movements change the way participants look at themselves and at society. Often it also changes how the larger society views them. A new identity is created, which offers hope and opportunity for change for these sections. The government is often forced to address the demands of the movement. Rarely does a movement achieve complete success in its endeavors.

Conflicts

Conflicts can be of many types— conflicts between communities based on religion, caste, language and ethnic origins; conflict between government and communities conflict between workers and capitalists; conflicts between workers and landlords and conflict between generations. Conflicts often result in the creation of new structure and institutions. Trade unions, peasant organizations and caste organizations are the products of conflicts.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) How has education contributed to social change in India?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.3 MAJOR FACTORS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Technological factors

Technological innovations accepted and used in society has been a major factor of social change. Historically many changes in social structure are traced to advancements in the technology. The invention of wheel lead to faster and comfortable travel between larger distances than was possible on the horseback. Two major consequences of this development are greater control of administration over larger areas and increased trade and commerce. The invention of the plough was major factor in changing communities from the stage of hunting and gathering stage to settled agricultural communities. The use of the printing press lead to increased availability of books to the general population and decreased the control of literate elite over the population. The emergence of Protestantism

in Europe was assisted by the increased availability of the printed version of the Bible, which was made available by the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg.

The emergence of the modern period first in Europe and later on in rest of the world was primarily because of the industrial revolution. The invention of the steam engine and subsequently other sources of energy boosted the productivity of the production process. Mass production became possible which lead to search for new markets, the result of which was colonialism.

Other significant examples of change are; the invention of modern medicine. In the present society, technology has played even a greater role in bringing about social change. Communication technology has played an important role in globalization the process by which the world is transforming into a global village. The rise of communication technology and information technology has also given rise to new occupations. For example, IT professionals with large salaries are an important element in the consumer and real estate market. Thus, the rise of new technologies has had important changes in society

Economic Factors

Economic factors are playing an important role in producing social change. Many social thinkers have given economic factors a predominant role in producing social change. Karl Marx, Frederick Engel, and others in the Marxist traditions had stressed that it is the economic factors namely the forces of production and relations to the forces of production that had produced macro level changes. They went on to emphasis that changes in other sphere namely in politics, family or religion reflect the changes in the forces of production. Marx saw the evolution of society in the following stages:

Primitive communist society where the forces of production were low and therefore there was no surplus. Stratification was negligible.

Feudal society — settled agriculture was possible and therefor surplus existed. Stratification was high and the society was divided into estates — property owner's serfs.

Capitalist society— capitalist society was the product of industrialization. There was a large amount of surplus and therefore there was increased degree of stratification— mainly between the capitalist and the workers.

Communist society — Marx believed that capitalism would increase the gap between the capitalists and the workers leading to the impoverishment of the workers. The workers would lead a revolution, which will herald a new society a communist society in which all forces of production are socialized, and there would be no private ownership of factories land etc. stratification would end.

Marx's view of that the economic factors play the predominant role in social change has been contested by others who have emphasized other factors. According to Max Weber cultural factors can also be a factor for social change independent of economic factors. Protestantism brought about capitalism by motivating its adherents to practice certain virtues and rules.

However, there is no doubt that economic factors play an important role in social change. Industrialization leads to increasing urbanization and colonialism.

Cultural Factors

Culture consists of all values, ideologies, norms, mores, folkways, and laws prevalent in the society. Any society to survive should have a degree of commonality and stability in its culture. Without this it would be difficult for members to communicate and cooperate with each other. However, culture cannot remain static for long. Often ideologies are reinterpreted to suit new situations. If the new interpretations gain wide spread acceptance then it can lead to social change. Weber through his study of the relationship between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism points that capitalism emerged due to the values of Protestantism, which emerged after the reformation. His study of the moral codes of other religions like Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism revealed no moral codes, which could have lead to the emergence of capitalism. Robert Merton another sociologist has studied the relationship between scientist and Protestantism and his conclusion was that protestant thinking and modern scientific are related.

Cultural factors causing social change are important area for study in postcolonial societies like India. The colonial powers introduced new cultural values in the societies. Equality, democracy, individualism were some of the values that the British introduced in society. After independence, the Indian government made the constitution based on these values. However there existed a gap between the values espoused by the constitution and those adhered to by the members of the society. Many of the Indian political and social problems can be traced to this dichotomy between the two antagonistic cultural values.

Demographic Factors

Demographic factors or population is an important factor of social change. An increase or decrease in population can influence the society. Indian population has increased from the year 1900 to more than six billion in the 2000. This increase has positive as well as negative consequences. The large population puts the government under pressure to manage and provide basic needs in cities. In rural areas increased population increases land fragmentation leading to unviable land holdings. On the other hand, urban areas are over crowded. The situation becomes crucial if there is wide spread discontentment with the government.

Apart from the total population, the population distribution at different age structure is important. For example if the proportion of the senior citizens is high then the implications are different from those if the proportion of children are high. There are social implications for democratic variables like sex ratio.

While overpopulation is a major problem in India, it is under population that is the major problem in Western Europe. The fecundity rate of the European women is less the replacement level of 2.1. Many women are choosing not to have any children. This has lead to economic and social crises. Some small town and villages are closing down because there is no population left.

Governments fear that the working force will reduce drastically in the coming decades, which will result in loss of production. One way to solve the problem is to allow foreigners to come to large numbers. However, the rise of anti foreigner sentiments in the native communities restricts the use of this method.

Man and environment have a significant relationship. Culture of the region is determined largely by the experience the people have of the social and physical environment. A sudden or even a gradual change in the environment brings about changes in the society. A flood or earthquake would destroy the social fabric of the community. It is suggested that the great ancient civilizations along the Nile river and the Indus river ended due to the cataclysmic changes in the course of the rivers. In the modern times communities disintegrated as they are forced to migrate from their traditional habitats and settle in new places. Displacement of people due to dams or mining projects have destroyed traditional ways of living and forcing people to adapt to different ways of living.

5.4 THEORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE

According to Dube (1992) there are three types of theories that influence our understanding of social change.

1) Apocalyptic Theories

These are theories that viewed society as moving towards a final judgment that would result in a ideal society. The Judeo-Christian thinking saw the world moving towards the coming of the lord resulting in the end of the world. Secular theories of change exist in which the end of the world as we now know is predicted. Condorcet divided entire history into nine periods the last of which began with the French revolution to inaugurate the beginning of perfect age. Comte divided history into three stages Theological (2) Metaphysical legal (3) Positivistic. These periods saw the gradual replacement of the influence of the supernatural with dominance of science. Comte believed that rationality and science would bring about a perfect society. Marx's stages of society — primitive communism—slavery-feudalism-capitalism and communism also reveal his optimism about a final society that would be without classes and exploitation. The factors of change which each of the theorists were different. Marx's saw change happening as result of material changes; changes in area of production while others saw changes emerging out of ideas mainly science and innovations

2) Evolutionary

The evolutionary theories differ from apocalyptic theories as it advocates claim that progress not perfection is achieved when society progress. Spencer, Morgan, Darwin and up to an extent Tonnies are advocates of this view. Spencer saw the society from moving from militant to industrial the first characterized by hierarchy and obedience and the latter characterized by voluntary and contractual nature of relationship. Structures in the former are simple and homogeneous while the latter are characterized by differentiation and complexity. Tonnies also advocated a linear progress— from Gemeinschaft (community) to Gesellschaft (association). Gemeinschaft societies have the following features (1) individual is subordinated to community (2) strong commitment to religion (3) common property is predominant (4) loyalty to the larger group is strong. The Gesellschaft societies have the following features (1) individual will prevail over the collective will (2) secular values predominant (3) contractual relations are prevalent.

3) Cyclical Theories

Cyclical theories see society as moving between different stages endlessly. Spengler's *Decline of the West*, Toynbee's study of history and Sorokin's social and cultural dynamics are prominent contributions. Sorokin's approach has been most influential. He explains change in terms of cultural mentalities. All culture are divided into three broad typologies: (1) Sensate culture emphasizing things which have relation to the senses (2) Ideational culture relates to things available to the spirit and (3) idealistic representing a combination of elements of sensate and ideational cultures. Every society alternates between these typologies. for example the culture can move from ideational to idealistic to sensate and back to idealistic and so on. Toynbee's saw the growth and decline of civilization in different periods of history. The impetus for growth comes from a 'creative minority' that provides energy to the society for growth and when they lose their creativity the society begins to disintegrate.

No single theory has been able to explain social change in the convincing manner. Linear theories popular till recently have been proved false. One example would be sufficient to prove the point— religiosity among the people. Most theorist predicted the end of the influence of religion when modern society evolves and growth of secular values. However apart from Europe and Japan religiosity continues to grow among the populations in different parts of the world.

Check Your Progress 3

1) What are the cultural factors related to social change?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Describe the cyclical theory of social change.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.5 SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL CHANGE

According to Wayne Johnson social work can be conceptualized as helping people to cope with social change.

Professional social work is itself a product of social changes in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Some of the changes that lead to its rise of

professional social work is (1) large scale migration from the rural communities to urban areas due to industrialization which destroyed traditional bonds and values that regulated and controlled individual behaviors (2) the rise of secular knowledge that saw human beings as the product of their circumstances rather than that of god will (3) the inherent limitations of the traditional institutions like family and churches to respond to the crises and the (4) rise of the state to take responsibility for the welfare of the people.

Social workers worked within the modernist paradigm, which saw progress in industrialization and modernization of the economy and spread of liberal attitudes. They mainly dealt with people who could not cope with these changes and were losers in the process. The social worker therefore accepted the main tenets of modernity. The social worker also contributed to the welfare of the disadvantaged sections like children, women, and the physically challenged. They lobbied for legislations, which protected their rights and promoted their welfare. According to Eileen Younghusband social workers main contribution has to 'see' and address the problems of those sections of that are not visible to others. Social work in India was transplanted from the west. It shared most of the tenets and assumptions of the west. However, there have been attempts to indigenize the profession according to Indian situation with limited success.

Professional social work is often confronted with difficult situations. One important area of concern to social workers has been the issue of development. Development model that India had adopted had been uncritically accepted by majority of Indians and social work professionals. Now there are a number of criticisms that are directed towards that model of development. (i) it is environmentally unsustainable as the emphasis on big projects had resulted in the loss of forest cover, inundation of villages and cities, destruction of common property resources and loss of livelihood (ii) it is elite driven and benefits of development have accrued to the mainly to the elite at the cost of the poor (iii) local knowledge and practices have been neglected which was more cost effective and ecological friendly than modern practices (iv) it has increased the nation dependence on foreign funds and institutions thereby reducing the sovereignty of the country.(v) the model has adversely affected the vulnerable sections of the society like women, adivasis and dalits by not involving them in the process of development.

Often political leaders and policy makers seek to convince people that development is inevitable and desirable. They ask for sacrifices from the people or sections of people. More likely than not it, these sections belong to disadvantaged sections of the society. India own development experience in the last sixty years show these characteristics. Indian state took a major role in taking the country to the path of development. The government implemented a number of large multipurpose projects to irrigate agricultural lands, control floods, produce electricity, and promote development. Mines were dug in order to exploit the natural resources like iron, aluminum, uranium etc. These efforts did contribute to the nation's progress. However, there were adverse sequences to the people and nature. Large numbers of people were displaced and acres of forestland destroyed. Walter Fernandez estimated that 100 million people were displaced due to these projects most of who were not adequately rehabilitated. Forest cover reduced from 50 per cent to 23 per cent. The suffering of the

people affected was justified by saying that it was necessary for the greater good of the country and for its development. However, this view has been increasingly contested and the approach has been described as anti people. This development has only benefited the elite sections of the society and the whole society. A quest is on for alternative model of development. If the present model of development is anti people then there should an alternate model of development. Socialist model of the erstwhile Soviet Union, which was based on state ownership and centralized planning has failed and has been rejected as a viable alternate. However, adherents of different ideologies including a variety of Marxists, Gandhians, socialists, and religious philosophers have advocated alternatives none of which as of now has received widespread acceptance. Social workers have often been at the forefront of the struggles against development-induced problems. The attitude of the social work towards the state (government) is also a problem. In the first decades after independence social workers saw themselves as being advocates for a welfare state by expanding services and improving their quality. But now many see the government itself as being part of the exploitative structure. There is a need to rethink the relationship between professional social work and the state.

5.6 LET US SUM UP

Social change is an important concern for social workers. Social work has a role in preparing the people especially the vulnerable sections of the society for change. In cases where changes occur which are inevitable social workers should help in creation of institutions which will support the vulnerable sections to tide over the difficult times. For example if India is adopting the capitalist model of development then social workers would have to participate in struggles to create a fully developed welfare state as it exists in the developed capitalist countries. In order to play the new role demanded by the emerging situation social workers have to relook at their own methods and techniques. Many social work methods were developed in the early and middle of the twentieth century. Newer techniques and strategies will have to be developed and adopted, which is the challenge for the social work profession in the twenty first century.

5.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Singh.Y.(1973), *Modernization of Indian Tradition*, Thompson Press, New Delhi

Srinivas, M. N.(1966) *Social Change in Modern India*, Allied Publishers, Bombay.