

SOCIETY AND SOCIAL GROUPS

Society

Individual is the basic component of society. The interaction of individuals with each other gives birth to group. The social groups interact with each other and develop relationships with each other, leads to a society. The players in football or other games came together is not a society, but just an aggregate of people. Within the society there are different patterns and groups on the basis of likeness and differences. “Likeness” creates a chain of relations among the individuals having similarity in one or more conditions like same profession, same residence, same caste, family, college, age, sex, etc.

Man is dependent on society for basic needs satisfaction i.e. food, protection, clothing, education, etc. There are societies on local as well as on national levels.

Definition

A society is a collection of individuals united by certain relations and modes of behavior which mark them off others who do not enter into these relations or who differ from them in behavior.

-Ginsberg

A society may be defined as a group of people who have lived together long enough to become organized and to consider themselves and be considered as a unit more or less distinct from other human units.

-John F.Cuber

It is a system of relationships that exists among the individuals of the groups.

-Prof Wright

It is the largest group in which the individual have relationships.

-A.W.Green

It is the web of social relationship, which is always changing.

-Maclever

Characteristics of rural life

Rural people different from those in living in urban areas. The distinctive characteristics of rural life can easily be shown by comparing them with those of urban (city) life. The difference in cultures or sub cultures of these two areas is differences in attitude and behavior and perhaps in dress and dialect (language use in a region or area). The cities are large, impersonal and complex in social structure, while rural communities are small, intimate and simple in organization. Though there are differences, there are also some common attitudes and behaviors that both rural and urban people share as a member of larger culture. Common elements between urban and rural are:

1. Common language, literature, philosophy etc
2. Common institutions like religion, education, family life business and political organizations etc.

Difference between Rural and Urban life

S. No	Parameters	Rural Life	Urban Life
1	Environment	Close/direct contact with nature. Preliminaries influenced by natural elements like rain, heat, drought, frost, snow, over which there is no control.	Greater isolation from nature. Predominance of manmade (artificial environment).
2	Occupation	Agricultural is the fundamental occupation. Majority of population is engaged in agriculture. Neighbors of agriculturist are also agriculturist.	No fundamental occupation. Most of people engaged in principally in manufacturing, mechanical pursuits, trade commerce, professions and other non- agricultural occupations.
3	Size of community	Very small in size.	Large in size.
4	Density of	Density of population is lower	Density of population is

	population		higher.
5	Homogeneity & Heterogeneity	More homogenous in social, racial and psychological traits.(most are agriculturists are directly connected with agriculture)	More heterogeneous than rural. (Different type of population is seen in cities, different places, religions, caste, class race, community, economic and cultural differences, occupations and behavioral pattern also different.
6	Social differentiation	Low degree of differentiation	High degree of differentiation.
7	Social stratification	More rigid in nature	Less rigid in nature
8	Social mobility	Mobility is less intensive. Territorial, occupational and other forms of social mobility of the population are less intensive. They follows same occupation, stay in the same village.	Social mobility is more intensive. People change occupation and even leave places in search of new and better occupation.
9	Social interaction	Less numerous contacts. The area of interaction system is narrower. More professional, simple, face to face. Informal, sincere relations.	More numerous contacts. Area of interactions is wider, the relation are superficial and short lived. The popular are more formal and showy.
10	Social control	Social pressure by community is strong.	Control is more by formal impersonal means of laws, prescribed rules and regulations.

11	Social change	Rural social life is relatively static and stable.	Urban social life is under constant and rapid social change.
12	Culture	Sacred (religious) culture	Secular (non-religious) culture.
13	Leadership pattern	Choice of leadership more on the basis of known personal qualities of individual, due to greater face to face contacts and more intimate knowledge of individual.	Choices of leadership is comparatively less on the basis of know personal qualities of individual.
14	Group	Rural society is simple unit-group society	Urban society is complex multi-group society
15	Standard of living	Home conveniences, public utilities, educational recreational, religious, medical, communication and other facilities for living can be provided if supported by sufficient population base.	In urban areas such conveniences and facilities are provided due to greater density of population.
16	Standard of living	Standard of living is low	Standard of living is high.

Characteristics of Indian Rural Society:

- **Agriculture** is main economic activity of rural people. It is based predominantly on Agriculture. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood. The land is distributed between certain families. The distribution of land is between a big land owner and rest of the community, possession of which (land) has prestige value.
- **Caste** is **dominant** institution of village. It is peculiar type of grouping found in rural India. The village is governed to a very great extent by traditional caste occupations, carpenters, cobblers, smiths, washer men, agricultural laborers etc all belonging to separate castes, caste relations are important characteristics of rural life.

- The **religious** and **caste** composition of village largely determines its **character**. Different castes exist in village due to **social distance**. The habitation of each caste is separated from others. The habitation area has usually a distinct name e.g. Harijanawada.
- Each village is **independent**. All villages have their own organizations, authority and sanctions. Every village has **Panchayat** which is village **self government**.
- Village settlements are governed by certain **traditions**. The layout of the village, construction of houses, the dress etc is allowed according to the prescribed patterns of the culture of the area. In different areas a certain degree of diversity (differences between villages in the above aspects of the village life) in village organizations is **peculiar**.
- The rural society is **self-sufficient**. The unit of production in rural society is the **family**, which tries to produce much of its required goods. **Economic production** is the basic activity of rural aggregates (rural groups).
- As a territorial, social, economic and religious unit, the village is a **separate** and distinct entity.
- It is common to find out a sense of **attachment** towards own settlement site. In rural society people do not have widely diversified tasks in different parts of the community.
- Village is characterized by **isolation**
- The chief characteristic of rural life is **homogeneity**, there are not many differences among people pertaining to income, status etc.
- The other characteristics are less density of population, less social mobility, less education, simplicity, traditionalism, fatalism, believing superstitions etc.

Social Groups

Man life is enormous extent a group life. Human group is the elemental unit for functioning in societies. By group we mean any collection of human beings who are brought in to social relationship with one another. Social relationship is the relationship in which members involved are aware of each others presence. When people cannot achieve any common objective individually they come together

and work towards the common objective with joint efforts. Social groups are vital for human existence. A social group can be defined as two or more persons who came together to achieve common objectives.

A group is a unit of two or more individuals who are in reciprocal communication and interaction with other.

According to Macleiver, “By group we mean any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationship with one another”.

According to Ogburn and Nimkoff “whenever two or more individuals come together and influence one another, they may be said to constitute a social group”.

Characteristics of group

1. Members of the group are related to each other.
2. Group involves sense of unity and feeling of love and sympathy between the members.
3. Members of the group have a sense of we feeling.
4. The interests, ideals, values of the group members are common.
5. Groups exercise a control over the actions of their members and direct them towards common goal or principles.
6. Social groups are dynamic and not static. They change in activity.

They may give up one function and take another. Human nature is not same, it differ from man to man. The different natures naturally lead to privation of different groups. Man form various group to satisfy their needs. Groups have been classified on different basis.

1. According to the Degree of Organization.
2. According to the Nature of membership.
3. According to the Nature of interaction.
4. According to the Size of the Group.
5. According to the Territorial Limitations.
6. According to the Profession or Occupation
7. Classification according to Duration.
8. Classification based on Social class.
9. Classification based on Personal Feeling of Belonging.

10. Classification based on the Type and Quality of relations

Classification of social groups- According to the Degree of Organization

A well-organized group has well defined objectives. The functioning of such groups is governed by number of rules and regulation, which govern the functioning of such groups. According to this criterion a group can be classified into two types.

a) Formal groups

b) Informal groups

a) Formal groups

These groups have more rules and regulations to govern their functioning. The relationship of the members is governed by these rules. These groups are generally large in size and the members have many restrictions e.g. College, Government departments, Army, etc.

b) Informal groups

In those types of groups there are no much formalities, rules and regulations. The degree of organization is less in the sense that the members have not be undergo confinements and strict limitations for behavior and actions. The members have many liberties and very less control as exists in friendship group. Gossip group and family group etc.

Classification of social groups - According to the Nature of membership.

Here nature or type of membership is taken into consideration e.g. whether the membership is optional or voluntary or compulsory. This depends upon the mode of entrance to the members. The members limit themselves to their own interest.

a) Voluntary groups:

In these types of groups, the membership is voluntary and members have no compulsion to participate in the activity of the group. The withdrawal from such groups is also in a voluntary basis. E.g. Gossips groups, friendship groups, youth organization and library.

b) Non- voluntary groups :

In these types of groups membership is compulsory and members have no choice. Social conversions and traditions rather than personal choice determine the relationship as observed in the

family. Every one borne in a family has to function as a member of a family by compulsion E.g. Caste group, National group, Religion group, Sex group, Age groups etc.

Classification of social groups - According to the Nature of the Interaction.

In this classification the nature of the interaction or the relationship between the members of the group is taken into consideration. According to this criteria the groups can be classified into

a) Primary groups

b) Secondary groups

Like family and friendship the relationship is direct and face to face. Generally such groups are small in size. Their relations are always personal. In secondary groups the relationship is indirect and such groups are bigger in size and they are formal in nature e.g. Government departments, Industrial organizations etc...

Difference between Primary Groups and Secondary Groups

S.No	Primary group	Secondary group
1	Mutual relations of the members are direct and more intimate	Mutual relations of the members are indirect and there is task of face to face relations.
2	There is continuity of relationship among members and they know each other from childhood.	There is no continuity or permanence of relationship of the members and the knowledge of the members is limited only to his work.
3	The position of each person is determined on the basis of family.	The position of member is determined by his work or function.
4	Relationship is normal	Relationship is formal
5	The behavior of members is controlled by the inner powers.	The behavior of members is controlled by external.
6	Individual depends upon the group for fulfillment of his needs.	Individual is self reliant from the point of view of fulfillment of his need.
7	The membership is compulsory and	The membership is optional. He can resign from the

	continues for lifelong.	membership at any time.
8	The aims of the members are identical or same. There is love and sympathy.	The aims or interests of the members are not identical or same. Lack of co-operation and sympathy.
9	The size is small	The size is big and relations are impersonal
10	Found mostly in the village	Found mostly in cities.
11	Controls even personal life of its members	Do not exercise any control over the personal of its members.
12	The individual becomes its member since his childhood. it cannot be acquired.	The individual becomes its member later on and its membership is required.

Classification of social groups - According to the size of the group

Here number of number in the group is taken into consideration. According to these criteria groups can be classified as

a) Small groups

b) Big groups

a. Small groups:

Member in this type is considerably less. Each member can identify each other and can establish close or direct relationship. In such groups feeling of co-operation and sympathy can be achieved individually. Size is limited e.g. family, sport club.

b. Big groups:

This type of group is bigger in size. Number of members in a group is considerably large. I.e.61 to 1000. E.g. University, Army etc. In larger group relationship is not direct and involves in to association.

Classification of social groups - According to the Territorial Limitations

Here the limit territory in which the group is functioning is taken into consideration. These groups work in defined territorial limits and they have fixed boundary.

a) Natural territorial Group:

These are the groups where territorial limits have been fixed by nature. Those groups are formulated by their natural similarities and boundaries. Their boundaries and limits are fixed by geographic and climatic situations. Eg. Region.

b) Artificial territorial group :

Here the territory is fixed artificially by man on functional basis. E.g. Village, Taluk, District, State, etc.

c) Non-territorial Groups:

Here the natural and artificial territorial limits do not play any part. This group has a common functioning in all most all parts of the world and they do not take into consideration any limitation of other types. E.g. UNO, FAO, Red Cross, International Trade unions etc.

Classification of social groups - According to the profession or occupation

These groups are formulated on the basis of the professional or the occupations of the members e.g. Religious, Educational Groups, Political Groups, Artisans, Etc.

Classification of social groups - According to duration

The stabilized and relatively unorganized or short duration group can be of two types:

a) Permanent: The members remain together for great length of time and aware of the objective of the group. There are formalities and defined roles to play. The members are tied together by potential ties and formulates. The groups as a whole has permanent existence e.g. Family, Government Department etc.

b) Temporary:

Temporary groups are the mere collections of physical bodies and congregate in casual way on the street or on the stations. The size of such group is indefinite and they are unorganized. They do not remain together for great length of time. It has no division of labour and no system of statutes. The participants are all on one level because their attention is focused on one thing and interaction is uncontrolled. The individual as a member of the group is more aware of himself and his own interests and less aware of the group interests. E.g. Crowd, Audience and Mob.

Classification of social groups – Based on social class

People carry on their group relations with others influenced by class structure. Accordingly groups are classified into two types.

1. Horizontal Groups :

These groups often organize themselves of a personal from the same level of society. The persons are alike in the status or position in the class system of society. Farmers, blacksmith, carpenter would be the members of their respective occupations belong to a horizontal group.

2. Vertical groups:

Vertical groups are those groups that are composed of members from different social strata. Its membership cuts vertically across the horizontal groupings in society. E.g. political parties. The persons of different classes (i.e. lower and upper) work together in close relationship to promote their parties present.

Classification of social groups – Based on personal feeling of belonging

According to this criteria the group has been classified into

- 1. In – group:** In group is a group either primary or secondary towards which persons have a solidarity, loyalty, friendliness and co-operation. Such groups are characterized by the expressions “we belong, we believe, we feel, we act or my family , my neighbourhood, my club, my association. In-group attitude constrains some elements of sympathy and sense of attachment or obligation to the other members of our group.
- 2. Out – group:** An out group is defined by the individual with relation to the in-group usually expressed in the contrast between them and us. Every group is conscious that other groups are those to which we do not belong or not with us. We are democrats. They are communist, we are Hindus, we are Muslims, we are Brahmins, and they are harijans . a person has no sense of loyalty, sympathy, co-operation while they have sense of indifference even antagonism to the members of out-groups.

Classification of social groups – Based on the type and Quality of relationship.

Similar to the concept of primary and secondary groups, the group has been classified into.

1. Gemeinschaft group:

Here is the society which most relationships are traditional or personal or after both e.g. Zamindar System in India. In which landlords have his tenants who were personally known to him and who had obligations for their welfare and to whom tenants fulfilled certain obligations. In such groups written documents or contracts were not present while traditional pattern existed and was accepted by society.

2. Gesellschaft group:

It is a society in which neither personal attachment nor important or traditional rights obligations and duties. Relationships are based on bargaining and clearly defined agreements. This society flourishes in urban areas and business organizations or associations of wholesalers.