



SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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SOCIETY

- Society, as defined by eminent American Sociologists MacIver and Page, is the system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever changing complex system *is a web of social relationships*

CULTURE

***“Culture is the complex whole which includes
knowledge, belief
,arts,morals,laws,customs and other capabilities and habits acquired
by man as a member of society”***

It can be inferred that culture is the unique possession of the mankind whereas societies can be present in ants, bees or hornets. It is because of the fact that *wherever there is life, there is society.*

- Classical evolutionists were preoccupied with the idea of social progress. They delineated the course of evolution of societies from simple to complex form. According to AUGUST COMTE, society change from theological to metaphysical to scientific stage. Similarly HERBERT SPENCER, influenced by the Darwin's theory of evolution and Natural Selection, said that societies change from simple to compound, then from compound to doubly compound and at last to trebly compound.

SOCIAL CHANGE

- Social change is the process of change in aspects of social processes, patterns of social behaviour, practices, institutions and organisation of societies. No society is static. Therefore social change occurs in every society, though the pace of social change varies from society to society. Social change also includes changes in the cultural domain. William Ogburn in his book “SOCIAL CHANGE” explains the phenomenon of “cultural lag” wherein non-material aspects of culture is unable to keep pace with material aspects of culture.
- Various processes like Westernisation, Modernisation, Globalisation etc are responsible for the changes in mostly every society. Moreover, large scale drastic changes can be brought in a society through the Revolution as Karl Marx envisages in his Dialectical materialistic conception. Marx talked about the coming of classless communist society which would be without source of contradictions and conflict.
- In present day societies, Globalisation is a process by which national and regional economies, societies and cultures have become integrated through the global network of trade, communication, immigration and transportation. Due to Globalisation, the whole world has turned into a global



- village. The term “global village” was coined by Marshall McLuhan. Globalisation has led to uniformity of culture across societies which led to the coining of the term “McDonaldization” by a sociologist George Ritzer. Terms like Acculturation, Assimilation, Integration etc can very explain the changes in both societies and cultures alike.
- Changes have their own pitfalls. Anti-development thesis , Dependency theory ,Counter – acculturation movements ,Religious revivalist and fundamentalist movements ,Subaltern movements, Nationalist movements ,etc highlights the uneven process of development and the consequent sources of strain across societies. At the individual level also, there are feelings of stress and trauma which are due to maladjustment ,further leading to the birth of
 - “ marginal men”.Excessive rationalisation of social life leads to a “iron cage of bureaucracy”.
 - According to post-structuralist view,language and its structure produces reality. It is in fact the rules of language and the overall system which control individuals.In this way,individual has lost its relevance in structuralist framework.Further post-structuralism emerged in response to structuralism because of its inherent erroneous assumptions.
- Post-structuralism was also critical of Enlightenment ;therefore it was termed anti- humanist because post-structuralism was against transcendental wholeness.Derrida concept of DECONSTRUCTION exemplifies that language cannot be regarded as a “controlling mechanism” for it can be reduced to writing.Similarly, Michael Facaault underscores the relationship between technology,knowledge and power.
- Furthermore, Post-modernism is the term for an overall approach involving many similar strands.Post-modernism use a variety of theoretical approaches for studying society.Post- modernism thinkers say that grand plans or “metanarratives” for the reconstruction of the society has been rendered implausible and all the modern theories have fallen out of favour.According to these thinkers ,in the present era ,anything goes ,all styles and fashions are permissible so long as none is taken seriously.