

Social Institutions

Social institutions play an important role in the organization and preservation of society. They arise through the fundamental biological and social urges of human beings. They are perpetuated by the same basic forces. They offer formal and conventional sanctions for many aspects of behaviour, which cannot be allowed to operate unchecked and unregulated if the foundations of society are to be maintained.

1) The Familial Institution: It is the system that regulates, stabilizes and standardizes sexual relations and the reproduction of children. Its most wide spread form is the monogamous union of male and female living together with their children in a household.

* * 2). Economic Institutions: The economist studies production and distribution of commodities. Certain economists in the course of writing the history of modern economic institutions have become sociologists and have made important contributions to the theory of institutions in their non-economic as well as their economic aspects.

3) political Institutions: The sociologist has not ordinarily made detailed study of the state, or of other political bodies. This has been the job of the political scientist.

4) Educational Institutions: The educational institution is basically the systematized process of socialization occurring informally in the home and in the general cultural environment and formally in the complex educational arrangements of the society.

5) Religious Institutions: These types of institutions satisfy man's basic social need for a relationship with God. They are expressed in creeds and in forms of worship people perform together. They always include moral and ethical systems indicating the rightness or wrongness of both external and conceptual patterns of behaviour.

6) Recreational Institutions: These types of institutions fulfill the social need for physical and mental relaxation. It includes numerous subsidiary institutions such as games, sports and dancing as well as the aesthetic systems of art, music, painting and drama.

Social Institution:

Social institutions are a system of behavioral and relationship patterns that are densely interwoven ~~and enduring~~ and function across an entire society. They order and structure the behavior of individuals by means of their normative character.

Social Institution is a social structures and social mechanisms of social order and cooperation that govern the behavior of its members.

Social Institution is a group of social positions, connected by social relations, performing a social role.

Any institution in a society that works to socialize the group of people in it.

A social institution is a complex, integrated set of social norms organized around the preservation of a basic societal value. Obviously, the sociologist does not define institutions in the same way as does the person on the street. Lay persons are likely to use the term "institution" very loosely, for churches, hospitals, jails, and many other things as institutions.

Malinowski defines institution as "a group of people united by common interest, endowed by material equipment , following rules of their tradition or agreement (charter) and contributing to the work of culture as a whole"

According to Bertrand "institutions are system of social relationships for meeting various felt human needs."

Another definition given by Maciver and Page they consider institution as " an established forms or the condition of a procedure ."

Another person Merril defines institution as "the interrelated system of norms."

According to another's point of view " It is an interrelated set of norms " or an established machinery to satisfy needs of human beings

The term, "social institution" is somewhat unclear both in ordinary language and in the philosophical literature (see below). However, contemporary sociology is somewhat more consistent in its use of the term. Typically, contemporary sociologists use the term to refer to complex social forms that reproduce themselves such as governments, the family, human languages, universities, hospitals, business corporations, and legal systems. A typical definition is that proffered by Jonathan Turner (Turner 1997: 6): "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment."

Again, Anthony Giddens says (Giddens 1984: 24): "Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life." He (Giddens 1984: 31) goes on to list as

institutional orders, modes of discourse, political institutions, economic institutions and legal institutions. The contemporary philosopher of social science, Rom Harre follows the theoretical sociologists in offering this kind of definition (Harre 1979: 98): "An institution was defined as an interlocking double-structure of persons-as-role-holders or office-bearers and the like, and of social practices involving both expressive and practical aims and outcomes." He gives as examples (Harre 1979: 97) schools, shops, post offices, police forces, asylums and the British monarchy.

Social institutions are important structural components of modern societies that address one or more fundamental activity and/or specific function. Without social institutions, modern societies could not exist. Societies consist of a range of institutions that play myriad specific roles in facilitating human social life, and which themselves are dependent upon one another for the performance of their respective functions. A given institution can also perform different functions at once and/or over time. In this respect they differ from formal organizations, which are hierarchically differentiated via an organizational structure and serve primarily to facilitate rational action (*Zweckhandeln*) and the realization of particular interests. In sociological theory, there are three prevailing interpretations of social institutions: functionalist approaches, Marxist-inspired conflict-oriented explanations, and neo-institutionalist approaches. Functional approaches in the tradition of Durkheim and Parsons emphasize the importance of social institutions for the maintenance of social systems. Social integration is only possible when institutions perform core functions. Three such functions can be distinguished: first, institutions structure human social relationships and serve as a catalyst for the role expectations with which individuals are confronted in their everyday actions. Second, institutions regulate the distribution of gratifications and the allocation of suitable persons to positions of power. Third, by means of symbols, policies and ideologies, certain social institutions represent and stabilize the value canons and contexts of meaning of social systems. In contrast to functionalist approaches, conflict theory (Coser) has as its point of departure the insight that because conflict and inequality are inherent in modern societies, social institutions do not perform equally well for all members of society. From this perspective, institutions are seen as instruments for the realization of power and hegemony, and help stabilize prevailing inequalities. For scholars in this tradition, it is easy to demonstrate that ethnic minorities, women and those in lower social strata benefit less from the functioning of institutions, or are shaped by them in specific ways. Moreover, several members of the Frankfurt School of critical theory (Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse) underscore that institutions can function in manipulative and alienating ways, for they serve first and foremost to legitimate prevailing power relations. They can even have anomic and dysfunctional effects, as is sometimes the case in "total institutions" (Goffman, Foucault) such as psychiatric institutions, prisons or military barracks. Neo-institutionalist theory (Powell, DiMaggio, Williamson)

argues that institutions are important for the enactment of action routines. In ever more complex environments, institutions unburden individuals and make their social environments more predictable. Institutionalized action routines often remain unquestioned, and individuals carry them out as adaptations to the situational and role expectations of their social environment. Institutions can hereby spare individuals costs and resources, and also help them solve problems in their everyday lives. In this line of thinking, an essential element in the functioning of social institutions is the existence of trust and transparency.

Institutions in the realm of education and training provide for the transmission and cultivation of knowledge, abilities and specialized skills, and for the broadening of the individual horizon. They can also be seen as instruments for the secondary socialization of individuals. These institutions can operate in myriad social settings. To oversimplify: one can distinguish between formal schooling and education by adults and family members, and personal experience or experience within friendship networks. Like other social institutions, formal institutions in the realm of education and training have manifest and latent functions.

Following are the Basic Function of Social Institution

1. Replacement of members in society
2. Recruiting and guiding new member
3. Production, disbursement and consumption of goods and services
4. Preservation and
5. Awareness and establishing a sense of purpose

Different types of Social Institution

1. The Family
2. Education
3. Religion
4. Economic Institutions
5. Government as a Social Institution
6. Health Care Institutions
7. Market Institutions

1. The Family

The smallest social institution with the unique function of producing and rearing the young. It is the basic unit of Philippine society and the educational system

where the child begins to learn his ABC. The basic agent of socialization because it is here where the individual develops values, behaviors, and ways of life through interaction with members of the family (Vega, 2004). It has some functions such as: Reproduction of the race and rearing of the young; Cultural transmission or enculturation; Socialization of the child; Providing affection and a sense of security; Providing the environment for personality development and the growth of self-concept in relation to others; Providing social status.

2. Education :

a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research.

3. Religion

Religion is a system of beliefs and rituals that serves to bind people together through shared worship, thereby creating a social group. It is a set of beliefs and practices that pertain to a sacred or supernatural realm that guides human behavior and gives meaning to life among a community of believers.

Characteristics of Religion

- Belief in a deity.
- A doctrine of salvation.
- A code of conduct.
- Religious rituals.

Function of Religion

1. Serves as a means of social control.
2. Exerts a great influence upon personality development.
3. Allays fear of unknown.
4. Explains events or situations which are beyond comprehension of man.
5. Gives man comfort, strength and hope in times of crisis and despair.
6. It preserves and transmit knowledge, skills, spiritual, and cultural values and practices.
7. It serves as an instrument of change.
8. Promotes closeness, love, cooperation, friendliness and helpfulness.
9. Alleviates sufferings from major calamities.
10. It provides hope for a blissful life after death.

4. Economic Institutions

Microeconomics:

- ❖ Concerned with the specific economic units of parts that makes an economic system and the relationship between those parts.
- ❖ Emphasis is placed on understanding the behavior of individual firms, industries, households, and ways in which such entities interact.

(Spencer, 1980; Javier, 2002)

Macroeconomics:

- Concerned with the economy as a whole, or large segments of it.
- It focuses on such problems as the role of unemployment, the changing level of prices, the nation's total output of goods and services, and the ways in which government raises and spends money.

5. Government as a Social Institution

- Is the institution which solves conflicts that are public in nature and involve more than a few people.
- The SC defines government as the institution by which an independent society makes and carries out those rules of action which are necessary to enable men to live in a social state, or which are imposed upon the people for that society by those who possess the power or authority of prescribing them.

6. Recreational Institutions.

7. Health Care Institutions

Social institutions that specialize in monitoring public health, providing health maintenance, and treating illness and injury. (Definition Source: None)

8. Market Institutions

Social organizations dedicated to barter and trade. This includes all corporations and businesses. (Definition Source: None)

9. Political and Non-Governmental Organizations: Social organizations dedicated to influencing the processes of government; political parties. This includes non-governmental organizations and groups of people with common goals, interests, or ideals formally bound together by a common set of rules or by-laws that influence public policy. (Definition Source: None)

10. Non-governmental Organizations