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CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL STRUCTURE, STRATIFICATION AND SOCIAL PROCESSES IN SOCIETY

2Marks Questions:

1. Explain the concept of class stratification.

Answer:

A social class is any position of the community marked off from the rest of social status. These classes are arranged on the basis of economic conditions but social classes are more than economic groups. They show a common pattern of behaviour and develop in group bias. It may be defined as broad category of people who share similar economic conditions.

2.Explain the concept of gender stratification.

Answer:

Gender stratification refers to socially unequal division into femininity and masculinity. It is not only related to the difference between males and females and to individual identity and personality but also at symbolic level, to cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity at the structural level, to the sexual division of labour in institutions and organisations.

3.What do you mean by Ethnicity?

Answer:

The term 'Ethnicity' refers to the individuals who consider themselves to share common characteristics that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society and from which they develop their distinctive cultural behaviour, form an ethnic group.

One race hates the other race due to the sense of superiority. It is not inborn.

4.What is Accommodation?

Answer:

Accommodation is a form of social process in which two or more persons or groups interact in order to prevent, reduce or eliminate conflict.

It is a process whereby the subordinate groups simply conform to the expectations of the dominant group.

5.What is Assimilation?**Answer:**

Assimilation implies that the subordinate groups actually come to accept and internalise the values and culture of the dominant group.

It is a social process through which, persons or groups accept the behaviour of others.

6.What do you mean by social structure?**Answer:**

Structure refers to some sort of ordered arrangement of parts or components.The term ‘social structure’ refers to any recurring pattern of social behaviour or the ordered relationship between the different elements of a social system.

Main elements of social structure are status, role, norms and values..

7.What do you understand by social processes?**Answer:**

The repetitive forms of social interaction are called social processes.It is the continuous change in a situation which happens in a particular way because of the activities of its inherent forces.

4Marks Questions:

1.Imagine a society where there is no competition. Is it possible? If not, why not?

Answer:

No, we cannot imagine a society where there is no competition. People interact among themselves in different contexts. Behaviours in most social situations are characterised by either cooperation or competition. When groups work together to achieve the shared goals, we refer to it as cooperation. When members try to maximise their own benefits and work for the realisation of self interest, competition is likely to result. But all social interactions include cooperation and competition.

2. Define social structure and provide an example.

Answer:

Social structure refers to the patterned relationships and arrangements that form the foundation of society. It encompasses various elements such as institutions, organizations, roles, and norms. An example of social structure is the education system, where institutions like schools, roles of teachers and students, and established norms create a structured framework for learning and socialization.

3. Explain the concept of social stratification and its impact on society.

Answer:

Social stratification involves the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups in a society based on various factors like wealth, power, and prestige. This system influences access to resources and opportunities. Social stratification can lead to inequalities, affecting individuals' life chances and perpetuating social divisions. It plays a crucial role in shaping social mobility and determining the distribution of privileges and disadvantages within a community.

4. How do social processes contribute to the functioning of society? Provide examples.

Answer:

Social processes are dynamic interactions and activities that occur within a society, contributing to its functioning and development. Examples include socialization, where individuals learn societal norms and values, and cooperation, where people collaborate for common goals. These processes also include conflict, a natural part of social life that can lead to change and adaptation, and competition, which can drive innovation and progress.

5. Discuss the role of institutions in maintaining social order.

Answer:

Institutions are organized structures within society that fulfill essential functions, contributing to the maintenance of social order. For instance, legal institutions enforce laws to regulate behavior, while educational institutions socialize individuals and impart necessary skills. Economic institutions provide the framework for production and distribution of goods and services, contributing to overall stability and order in a society.

6. Explore the concept of social mobility and its implications for individuals and society.

Answer:

Social mobility refers to the ability of individuals or groups to move within the social hierarchy. It can be upward (improvement in status) or downward (decline in status). Social mobility has significant implications, as upward mobility allows for greater opportunities and access to resources, while lack of mobility may lead to social inequalities and discontent. Societies with higher social mobility often experience greater social cohesion and a sense of fairness.

7Marks Questions:

1.Can you find illustrative examples of conflict drawn from Indian society? Discuss the causes that led to conflict in each instance.

Answer:

Conflict includes all those processes in which individual acts against the wishes of others to achieve his purpose. It is a conscious process to attain one's gains.

Conflict is a dissociative social process in which either an individual or a group perceives that others have opposing interests and both try to contract each other. Conflicts between groups give impetus to a series of social and cognitive processes. These processes harden the stand of each side leading to in-group polarisation. This may result in coalition formation of like minded parties thereby increasing the apprehensions of both parties. These are related to caste, class, religion, region, language just to name a few of them.

Explanation of such conflicts can be at the structural, group and individual levels. In Indian society, structural conditions include high rates of poverty, economic and social stratification, inequality, limited political and social opportunities etc.

At the individual level, beliefs, biased attitudes and personality are important determinants.

In India in recent days conflicts on land issue, identity issues, communal issues, class issues and language issues are becoming very common.

2. Write an essay based on examples to show how conflicts get resolved.

Answer:

Conflicts are inevitable in any society. It is a dissociative social process. Since the focus is on system sustenances, competition and conflict is looked at with the understanding that in most cases they tend to get resolved without too much distress.

Conflicts can be resolved if we know about their causes. A number of social processes operate to resolve conflicts like accommodation, assimilation and enforced cooperation. The conflicts can be resolved through certain strategies also. Few of them are as follows:

Negotiations: Conflicts can be resolved through negotiations and third party interventions.

Warring groups can resolve conflicts by trying to fluid mutually acceptable solutions. This requires understanding and trust.

Negotiation refers to reciprocal communications so as to reach to an agreement in situations in which there is a conflict.

Sometimes it is difficult to dissipate conflict through negotiations; at that time mediation and arbitrations by a third party is needed.

Mediators help both parties to focus their discussions on the relevant issues and reach a voluntary agreement.

In arbitration, the third party has the authority to give a decision after hearing both the parties.

3. Explain the concept of social stratification and its impact on society.

Answer:

Social stratification is the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups in a society based on various factors such as wealth, power, education, and social status. This division creates distinct social classes, with individuals in each class experiencing different levels of privilege, opportunities, and access to resources. The impact of social stratification on society is profound, influencing various aspects of people's lives.

Firstly, social stratification determines economic opportunities and outcomes. Those in higher social classes often have better access to education and job opportunities, leading to greater wealth accumulation and financial stability. Conversely, individuals in lower social classes may face limited educational resources and job prospects, resulting in economic challenges.

Secondly, social stratification affects social mobility. While some societies promote social mobility, allowing individuals to move between social classes based on their achievements, others have rigid structures that make upward mobility difficult.

This dynamic can either encourage or hinder individual aspirations and efforts to improve their social standing.

4. Explain the concept of social stratification and its impact on society.

Answer:

Social stratification refers to the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups in a society based on various factors such as wealth, power, education, and social prestige. It involves the categorization of people into different social strata, creating a social hierarchy. This system influences access to resources, opportunities, and privileges.

Social stratification has significant impacts on society. Firstly, it determines an individual's life chances and opportunities. Those in higher strata often have better access to education, healthcare, and employment, contributing to the perpetuation of social advantages across generations. Secondly, social stratification affects social mobility, with individuals from lower strata facing barriers to upward mobility and the consolidation of privileges within the higher strata.

The impact of social stratification is not only economic but also affects social interactions and relationships. It can lead to the development of social classes and the formation of distinct social groups with varying degrees of influence. Social stratification also plays a role in shaping perceptions of social justice and fairness, influencing attitudes towards inequality and efforts to address it.

5. Discuss the role of social processes in shaping and maintaining social structure.

Answer:

Social processes are dynamic interactions and activities that occur within a society, influencing its structure and functioning. Several key social processes contribute to the establishment and maintenance of social structure:

Socialization: The process of socialization is crucial in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviors, aligning them with societal norms. Through family, education, and other institutions, individuals internalize the cultural values that contribute to the stability of social structures.

Social Institutions: Institutions such as family, education, religion, and government play a vital role in maintaining social order. They provide the framework for organizing social life, defining roles, and regulating behavior. For example, the institution of marriage contributes to the structuring of family units and kinship ties.

Social Interaction: Ongoing social interactions among individuals contribute to the development and reinforcement of social structures. Communication, cooperation, and conflict shape social relationships and contribute to the formation of social groups and networks.

Social Change: While social structures provide stability, social change processes continually reshape them. Technological advancements, cultural shifts, and political movements can lead to changes in social structures by challenging existing norms and introducing new ways of organizing society.

Stratification Processes: Social processes are integral to the creation and maintenance of social stratification. Economic processes, political decisions, and educational opportunities contribute to the formation of social classes and the perpetuation of inequalities.

Understanding the interplay between these social processes is essential for comprehending the dynamics of social structure. It highlights the interconnectedness of various elements within a society and how they collectively contribute to the establishment, maintenance, and transformation of social structures over time.

Fill in the Blanks:

1. Social _____ refers to the patterned relationships between people that persist over time.
2. _____ is a system by which society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.
3. The process by which individuals or groups move from one social class to another is known as social _____.
4. _____ is the term used to describe the division of society into different groups based on social characteristics such as race, gender, or socioeconomic status.
5. Theoretical perspective that focuses on how individuals and groups make decisions to maximize their interests is known as _____ theory.
6. The process through which individuals learn and internalize the values, beliefs, and norms of their culture is called _____.
7. _____ is a form of social interaction where individuals or groups mutually influence and adapt to each other.
8. The concept that individuals in a society are connected to each other through a web of social relationships is known as _____.
9. The term used to describe a temporary gathering of people who share a common interest and are in close physical proximity is _____.
10. The process by which norms, values, and customs of a society are transmitted from one generation to the next is called _____.

Answer:

1. Social structure.
2. Social stratification.
3. Mobility.
4. Social categorization
5. Rational choice.
6. Socialization
7. Social exchange.
8. Social network.
9. Social group.
10. Cultural transmission.

Multiple Choice Questions:

1. What is social stratification?

- a. The process of forming social structures
- b. The division of society into distinct layers or classes
- c. The promotion of social equality
- d. The study of social interactions

2. Which factor is NOT typically associated with social stratification?

- a. Wealth
- b. Education
- c. Physical appearance
- d. Personality

3. What is the role of social institutions in shaping social structure?

- a. They have no impact on social structure
- b. They reinforce existing social hierarchies
- c. They promote social equality
- d. They only affect individuals, not society as a whole

4. In a caste system, social status is primarily determined by:

- a. Wealth
- b. Birth and family background
- c. Educational achievements
- d. Occupational choices

5. What is the main concept behind social mobility?

- a. The movement of individuals or groups between social classes
- b. The stability of social hierarchies
- c. The formation of social institutions
- d. The role of culture in society

6. What is a social process?

- a. A fixed and unchanging aspect of society
- b. A dynamic and ongoing series of actions and interactions
- c. A form of social stratification
- d. A social institution

7. How does deviance contribute to social processes?

- a. It hinders social progress
- b. It reinforces social norms
- c. It has no impact on society
- d. It only affects individuals, not society as a whole

8. Which term is used to describe the process by which individuals learn and internalize the values and norms of their society?

- a. Social stratification
- b. Socialization
- c. Social mobility
- d. Social contract

9. What is a primary agent of socialization in most societies?

- a. Peers
- b. Media
- c. Family
- d. Educational institutions

10. How does globalization impact social structures?

- a. It leads to increased isolationism
- b. It has no effect on social structures
- c. It promotes cultural diversity and interconnectedness
- d. It only benefits economically developed countries

Answer:

- 1. B
- 2. D
- 3. B
- 4. B
- 5. A
- 6. B
- 7. B
- 8. B
- 9. C
- 10.C

Summary:

Social Structure:

Social structure refers to the organized patterns of relationships and social institutions within a society.

It includes elements such as family, education, government, economy, and religion, which together form the framework of societal organization.

Social structure provides a stable foundation for individuals, shaping their roles and expectations within the community.

Stratification:

Social stratification involves the hierarchical arrangement of individuals or groups based on various factors like wealth, power, and prestige.

Societies often exhibit stratification, creating distinct social classes or categories with unequal access to resources and opportunities.

This stratification can be based on socioeconomic status, race, gender, or other criteria, leading to different levels of privilege and disadvantage.

Social Processes:

Social processes encompass the ways in which individuals interact, communicate, and influence each other within a society.

These processes include cooperation, conflict, competition, and accommodation, among others.

Social change is also a part of social processes, reflecting the dynamic nature of societies as they evolve over time.