Module 1

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Society: Meaning and Concept

- A society is group of people living together for the purpose of safety, security, and reproduction.

- Society is viewed by sociologists as a chain of social relationships

- A relationship is social, when it is determined by mutual awareness, that is, the behavior of one individual influences the behavior of another.

- For example, when a teacher enters the classroom, students stop making noise and stand up as a mark of respect for their teacher.

- This behavior signifies the social relationship between the teacher and the students.

- Thus., social relationships exist only when individuals behave towards one another in ways determined by their recognition of each other.

- This is why society is called a relational concept.

Social Darwinism by Herbert Spencer

- Just like Human Being, Society evolved from simple to complex society.

- Just like various organs of an organism work in harmony, various parts of the society must work in harmony.

- Law of natural selection

- Survival of the fittest.

Types of Society

- Hunters and Gatherers

- Pastoral

- Agrarian

- Industrial

- Post-Industrial

Characteristics of Industrial Society

- Origin in Industrial Revolution in mid-18th century in Europe, also called as age of enlightenment

- Developed around industrial centers such as London, Berlin etc.

- Use of large-scale production and mass-production techniques

- Profit and market oriented.

- Rapid economic growth followed by infrastructure growth

- Division of Labour

- Rapid population growth

Characteristics of post-industrial society

- Also called as 'information society'

- The post-industrial society is largely due to the shift in the kinds of work and the processing of information technology.

- Advent of internet

- Growth in service sector

- Transformation of working class to professional middle class

- Emergence of knowledge elites

- Divide in society

- Control of knowledge and information.

Social Organization and Disorganization

- A social organization is a pattern of relationships between and among individuals and social groups.

- Social organizations within society are constantly changing.

- Smaller scale social organizations in society include groups forming from common interests and conversations.

- Social organizations are created constantly and with time change.

- Ex. Caste, Religion, Marriage, Rural Social Structure accommodating people from various caste-communities during cultural functions, etc.

Social Organization and Disorganization

- Social disorganisation is the process opposed to social organisation.

- When the parts of social structure do not perform their functions efficiently and effectively or perform them badly, there occurs an imbalance in society.

- The social equilibrium is disturbed and society gets out of gear.

- Examples
    - Divorce
    - Nuclear Family System
    - Caste System
    - War
    - Communalism

Tradition vs Modernism

- Political system in ancient period vs political system in modern period.
  - Autocracy vs Democracy
  - Family Lineage, Nepotism vs Merit base
- Traditional values vs Modern values
  - Ex. Joint Family and Nuclear Family
- "Traditional" refers to those societies or elements of societies that are small-scale, are derived from indigenous and often ancient cultural practices.
- "Modern" refers to those practices that relate to the industrial mode of production or the development of large-scale often colonial societies.

Power vs Social Justice

- Power: Ability to make change/ influence the lives of others

- It can be constructive as well as destructive.

- According to Max Weber, Power is 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistances'

- Talcott Parsons define Power as a 'mechanism operating to bring about changes… in the process of social interaction''.

- According to Foucault, 'Power as such does not exist' but power 'needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body'

Power vs Social Justice

Power is composed of three components:

- Authority: The ability to exercise power through decision making, giving orders, or the ability of others to comply with demands

- Legitimacy: When citizens recognise a leader's right to exercise power over them (when citizens recognise state authority)

- Sovereignty: Refers to the highest level of power that cannot be overruled (when a state government/individual has legitimacy and authority)

Power vs Social Justice

- Social Justice: Equality.
  - A thought or view that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities.
  - Division of resources, opportunities and privileges in the ratio of their population.
  - Ex. Reservation system, Tax system.

Challenges to Social Justice

- Climate Change: Maldives and other island countries.

- Refugee Crisis

- Hunger and Food Security

- All forms of Discrimination

- Public Health: E.g. COVID Vaccines

Human Values

- Values are the virtues which influences human behaviour while interacting with other human beings in society.

- Values may be defined as the criteria and moral judgement or certain subjective standards through which individuals distinguish between good or bad, true or false and between ought to be or not to be etc.

- It shapes individual personality, social morality and guides individuals to be a part of or function within distinctive socio-cultural system.

Some Basic Human Values

- Love

- Kindness

- Compassion

- Honesty

- Truthfulness

- Non-violence

- Adaptability

Morals and Ethics

- Generally, the terms *ethics* and *morality* are used interchangeably.

- Both morality and ethics loosely have to do with distinguishing the difference between "good and bad" or "right and wrong."

- Morality as something that's personal and normative, whereas ethics is the standards of "good and bad" distinguished by a certain community or social setting.

- Both, morals and ethics influences the human actions.

Moral Judgement

- Judgments involve our intuitions and/or our capacity to reach decisions through reasoning.

- Moral judgments refer to judgments that have moral content; they are used to evaluate situations, courses of action, persons, behavior, etc.

- Judgements on the basics of morality i.e. ability to distinguish between good and bad, correct and incorrect.

Ethics

- Moral principles that govern a person's behavior and decision making in social sphere.
- Ethics word is derived from the Greek word "ethos" which means customs, habit, character, etc.
- Ethics influences the way people make decisions which impact their lives.
- Ethics are not the same as feelings
- Ethics do not necessarily follow culturally accepted norms
- Ethics do not necessarily follow the law of the land.
- So, ethics refers to well-founded standards of right and wrong.

Human Actions

- The ethical theories of human actions are divided into two types: one is based on human actions itself, called deontological approach to ethics.

- While the other is based on the consequences of human actions, called teleological approaches to ethics.

- Both these theories define ethics in two different ways.

- Therefore, the definition of ethics arises from various theories having their roots in the two basic philosophies of realism and idealism.

Approaches to ethics

- Ethics influences the human actions

- On the basis of human actions, there are two approaches to ethics.

- One is Deontological Approach or Objectivism realism.

- Another is Teleological Approach or Interpretivism or idealism.