

NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

MODULE 3

CHARACTERISTICS

- **8 Essential Characteristics of “Social Change”**

- **1. Universality of Social Change:**

- Social change is universal. It characterises every society. No society is static. It is continuously in flux. This becomes evident from the fact that each modern society is today different from its past form. Under the impact of several internal and external factors, each society experiences changes in its structures, functions, institutions and processes.

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- **2. Social Change is not Uniform:**

- Social Change differs from society to society. Change is the law of nature. Change is the spice of life. However, it can be progressive or regressive, positive or negative, permanent or temporary, planned or unplanned, unidirectional or multi-directional, beneficial or harmful.

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- **3. Social Change involves Community Change:**
- Social Change does not mean the change in the life of an individual or several individuals or some groups of individuals. It is a change involving the life of the entire community. It characterises and influences the life of the whole community. It is a community change and not an individual change.
- **4. Nature and Speed of Social Change in Various Societies is Different:**
- In all societies the nature and speed of social change varies. Each society has its own history and culture. Naturally, it experiences social change which is different in nature and speed from the social change which comes in every other society.
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- **5. Social Change is again Relative to Time:**
- Social Change characterises each society. Its speed, however, always differs from time to time and is not essentially uniform. It keeps on changing from time to time. Before 1947, when our country was living under British imperialism, the speed of change remained slow. However, after independence, the speed of change in Indian society became very fast.
- Rapid industrialisation, development of agriculture and initiation of the process of planned socio-economic development increased the speed of social change. Under the impact of information and communications revolution of contemporary times, the speed of change has become very fast. Thus the speed of change in each society continues to vary from time to time.

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- **6. Social Change shows a Chain-Reaction Sequence:**
- Since social change always comes under the impact of several social, economic, technological and situational factors, it very often shows a Chain-Reaction sequence i.e. change in one part/factor leads to changes in other parts/factors and then a change in the way of life of the community of people takes place. Industrialisation and urbanisation lead to changes in family life and village life. Increased need for labour to run the factories encourages the women to join the work force.
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- **7. Several Interdependent and Interacting Factors of Social Change:**
- Social Change always comes under the influence of several social, economic, cultural, and political and science- technological factors. Even the nature, speed and process of social change in other societies always influence the nature and process of social change in a society.
- The process of social change in western societies always acts has an impact on social change in developing societies of Asia, Africa and Latin American.
- **8. No one can Predict Social Change:**
- It is indeed very difficult to predict the nature of social change that might come in a society. No sociologist can really predict it. There can be some probable or possible prediction but no can present any valid and deterministic prediction about social change in society.
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CONCLUSION

- These eight characteristics are the major essential/natural features of social change. To sum up, we can say that social change refers to modifications or replacements in social structure, social process, social pattern social interaction and social organisation. It is change in the structure and process of entire society.
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