

## Chapter 2

### TERMS, CONCEPTS AND THEIR USE IN SOCIOLOGY SOCIAL GROUPS AND SOCIETY

- Sociology is the study of human social life.
- A defining feature of human life is that
  - humans interact,
  - communicate and
  - construct social collectivities.
- every society whether ancient or feudal or modern, Asian or European or African human **groups and collectivities exist**.
- Types of groups and **collectivities are different** in different societies.
- Any gathering of people does not necessarily constitute a social group.
- Aggregates are simply collections of people who are in the same place at the same time, but share no definite connection with one another.
- Such aggregates are often termed as **quasi groups**.

#### **Quasi Group**

- A quasi group is an aggregate or combination,
- which lacks structure or organisation
- whose members may be unaware, or less aware, of the existence of groupings.
  - Example: Social classes, status groups, age and gender groups, crowds

#### **Characteristics of GROUP**

- persistent interaction to provide continuity;
- a stable pattern of these interactions;
- a sense of belonging to identify with other members,
  - i.e. each individual is conscious of the group itself and its own set of rules, rituals and symbols;
- shared interest;
- acceptance of common norms and values;
- a definable structure.

#### **TYPES OF GROUPS**

- **Primary and Secondary Social Groups**
- **Community and Society or Association**
- **In-Groups and Out-Groups**
- **Peer Groups**
- **Reference Group**

## **PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOCIAL GROUPS**

### **Primary Groups**

- small group of people
- connected by intimate
- face-to-face association
- co-operation.
- The members of primary groups have a sense of belonging.
  - Example: Family, village and groups of friends

### **Secondary groups**

- Secondary groups are relatively large in size,
- Limited responsibility
- Maintain formal and impersonal relationships.
- The primary groups are person-oriented, whereas the secondary groups are goal oriented.
  - Example:- Schools, government offices, hospitals, students association etc.

### **Community and Society or Association**

- Community is the living population within a limited geographical area carrying on a common interest.
- The term 'community' refers to human relationships that are
  - highly personal,
  - intimate and
  - enduring,
    - Example: family, with real friends or a close-knit group.
- 'Society' or 'association' refers to everything opposite of 'community',
  - Impersonal,
  - Superficial and
  - transitory relationships of modern urban life.
- You may draw a parallel between the community with the primary group and the association with the secondary group.

**In-groups and Out-groups**

• In-groups	• Out-Groups
• We feeling exists (we)	• Lack of We feeling (their)
• Face to face relationship	• Far relationship
• Feeling sacrifice and cooperation among members	• Lack of Feeling sacrifice and cooperation among members
• Domestic and Perfect relationship	• Working relationship and imperfection of relationship • Ex: Migrants

**Reference Group**

- The groups whose life styles are imitated are known as reference groups.  
Example:-
  - a person copies the life style of any film actor or artist.
  - In colonial period, many middle class Indians tried to imitate English man.
- Reference groups are important sources of information about culture, life style, aspiration and goal attainments.

**Peer Groups**

- A kind of primary group,
- Usually formed between individuals
- It is a group of people of the same age, status, interests, etc.
  - Example: classmates, school mates etc.
- Often peer group influence on children is grater than parental influence.

**SOCIAL STRATIFICATION**

- Social stratification refers to structural inequalities between different groupings of people.
- Society can be seen as consisting of 'strata' in a hierarchy,
  - more favoured at the top and
  - less privileged near the bottom.
- Stratification plays a crucial role in the organization of the society
- Every individual and every household in society are affected by stratification.
- Four basic systems of stratification in the society.
  - Slavery
  - Caste

- Estate and
- Class
- Slavery
- Slavery is an extreme form of inequality in which some individuals are literally owned by others.
  - Example:-
    - Ancient Greece and Rome
    - Southern States of the USA in the 18th and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Caste

- individual's position totally depends on the status attributes ascribed by birth rather than achieved.
- The traditional system is generally conceptualized in terms of the four fold varna or 'jathi' of
  - Brahmins
  - Kshathriyas
  - Vaishas and
  - Sudras
- 4 *Jatis* or *Varnas* in India
- Each position in the caste structure was defined in terms of its purity or pollution relative to others.
- the *Brahmin* priestly castes, are superior to all others and the *Panchamas*, sometimes called the 'outcastes' are inferior to all other castes.

### Class

- Class is a typical social stratification found in Industrialized society.
- Social Class is a stratum of people of similar social position with regard to
  - income,
  - occupation,
  - education and
  - wealth.
- In a class, a person's social status is based on his/her achievements.
- Stratification on the basis of class is not dependent on birth, but it depends on
  - profession,
  - ability,
  - skill,
  - education,

- science etc.
- Class is an open institution.
- An individual can change his/her class and acquire high status in social stratification.
- Kind of class: Higher class, Middle class, lower class, Agricultural class.

Caste	Class
➤ It depends on Birth	➤ Depends on social circumstances
➤ Closed group	➤ Open system
➤ Rigid rules in marriage, eating- habits etc.	➤ No rigidity
➤ Permanent/ Stable organisation.	➤ Less stable than caste system
➤ Inherited Membership	➤ Never inherited

- Class system allow social mobility.
  - One may go to higher to better class or go down to a lower class.
- According to Karl Marx, capitalist society consists of two classes.
  - The Bourgeois
  - The Proletariat
- According to Max Weber, society consists of more than two classes. The reasons behind the inequality are economic relations, prestige and political power among the members of the society

### Status and Role

- Position of an individual is his status. His behavior and responsibly towards the society is his role.
- **Status set**
- **Status sequence**
- **Types of status**
  - Ascribed status
  - Achieved status

### Status and prestige

- Status and prestige are inter connected.
- Every status is accorded certain rights and values. Values are attached to social position.

- Ex: Doctor (high value), shopkeeper
- The value attached to the status is called prestige.
- People can rank status in terms of their high and low prestige.
  
- **Role conflict**
  - It occurs when status and role do not agree
  
- **Role stereotyping**
  - It is a process of fixing a particular role for a particular person- man and women.
- Role and status are not fixed. People fight against discrimination based on cast and gender.
  
- **SOCIETY AND SOCIAL CONTROL**
- Formal and informal social control
- Formal Social Control
  - It means official, codified and systematic means of social control. it includes control by state, law, police, bureaucracy, army, political power, educate etc.
  
- Informal Social Control
  - Personal, unofficial and un codified.

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