

solidarity weakens in urban communities.

SOCIETY

Definition

Group of people which have defined territory and common culture.

According to **Linton**, a society is "any group of people who have lived and worked together long enough to get themselves organized and to think of themselves as a social unit with well-defined limits." A gathering of people in a kabaddi match, volleyball contest, or in public meeting is an aggregate and not a society.

Bertrand considers society, "that group within which men share a total common life".

✓ **Maciver and Page** conceive society as "a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of contests, of human

behavior, and of liberties".

Generally, a society is an aggregate of people living in a limited geographical boundary having a common way of living.

Society is the product of social relationship among the individuals. For a relation to be social, 'awareness' among the individuals is the necessary condition. With the performance of social behavior, they relate themselves and the psychic condition of mutual or recognition is developed.

SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUAL

Sociology is one of the social sciences like economics, political science, anthropology, history, psychology and others. Sociology studies group behavior in human society. How social groups are formed? Why this variety grows in groups? How various groups develop into institutions, functions of group life, and ultimately the study of problems grown out of all these social processes. What happens when a man meets man? Which type of group products you anticipate and what you actually observe. How the groups act and react toward one another and with what results; are all the questions in the subject-matter of sociology.

Furthermore, groups in interrelation develop society. In a society not one or two types of groups are joined together but huge network of various groups is interwoven. In this way one may assume that a society is an aggregate of individuals. May be right but with an essential conceptual addition of "interdependence among the individuals". To be more clear, society is building, if bricks are its individuals. This interdependence of man is a web of social relationship and this is the real subject-matter of sociology which none of the sciences takes for its central study. The method of joining together into social group depends upon culture of that society. Hence culture is backbone of society and its individuals.

Here remains the individual out of sociological study. But he is a part of social groups and hence a part of society. His nature of behavior, habits and attitudes are directly related with society. Group life is the source from which he derives all his behaviors by being interrelated with the people. Therefore, the study of individual lies in the domain of sociology to the extent that his behavior is affected by group life of the society. Sociology does not, on the other hand, study the individual separately as an entity. It focuses its attention on the study of society as an entity. In the language of chemistry, if society is a compound, then group is a molecule, the individual is like an atom, keeping away the views of electron and proton in atomic structure. It is evident that without atoms the molecules cannot exist, and without molecules compound cannot be formed. Similarly, 'social groups' cannot develop without mutual interrelationship of individuals, and 'society' again, is a product of these very social groups joined together.

SOCIAL LIFE OF HUMAN

Aristotle said "Man is social animal"
Human behavior is widespread along a continuum of various needs. Variety of human need extends variety in human behavior. Economic, political, religious, educational, familial, marital and so many other basic and derivative needs are fulfilled through social relationship i.e., group participation. All such behaviors co-operative and conflicting in which people participate with mutual recognition are termed as 'social'. As Sociologist, we study both the conditions that

unite and those that separate human being.

Besides human societies there are others among the animals of the same species as lions, jackals, dogs and other insects, of various kinds like bees, ants, wasps and others. Social organization is there within the same species because they have a life which means heredity and the social contact, if it exists, of lowest degree.

Within a society there are patterns and groupings on the basis of likeness and differences. 'Likeness' creates chain of relations among the individuals having similarity in one or more conditions like same profession, same residence, same caste, family and kinship, college age, sex and so on. 'Consciousness of kind' is developed and the people of similar interest are joined together resulting in the formation of various groups and categories.

Differences in the conditions, nature and extent of the things, individuals and situations, produce reciprocity in human behavior. Without difference in cultural conditions of a society the human life would have been monotonous and probably limited to the bees and ants, life in which little change is predictable. The system of give and take relationship creates reciprocal roles in human life. Due to these differences there is variety in human behavior and hence a social 'division of labor' is developed.

Human is dependent upon society for food, protection, education, comfort, and various other services which the society provides. Man satisfies his aspirations, sentiments, thoughts and maladies while living in society. All forms of basic needs are satisfied while he is a member of society. Hence man is a social animal.

✓ NATURE & CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIETY

A human society has the following characteristics:

- ✓ i. **Largest social group of people:** It is the largest social group of people living together for a long period.
- ✓ ii. **Composed of social groups:** It is composed of social groups of various types. All the groups perform their respective purpose and have their own structure. These groups can be classified on the basis of profession, caste, age, sex, literacy, residence, mobility, stratification, race and religion.
- ✓ iii. **Social institutions are the main organs:** Social institutions are the main organs of human society. The interrelationship among institutions create structure for the society. At least five basic institutions—family, education, economy, politics and religion, are found in all the societies of the world.
- iv. **Society changes with the rate depending upon the culture:** The society changes with the rate depending upon the culture. If the culture is more technological and industrial the rate of social change is fast. If the institutions of education, technology and industry are of preliterate period, this change will be unconceivable.
- ✓ v. **Dynamism:** No society is static how so preliterate it may be. All societies change though the rate of change is slow. This is called the dynamic state of society. A society not changing at all means dead society. But there is no dead society today in this changing world.

- Under developed
- developing

- ✓ vi. **Rural-Urban composition:** Human societies have at least two aspects rural and urban. Rural society is sparsely residing group of people with simple culture. The urban group lives in cluster with complex culture.
- ✓ vii. **Presence of culture:** All human societies have their own culture. It is the way of life of people. Culture consists upon values, sentiments, attitudes, beliefs, customs, rituals, fashions, religion, law and all habits of man acquired as member of society. Culture provides direction to the people in their social actions.
- ✓ viii. **Fulfillment of human needs:** Society fulfils human needs through social relationship among the members. This opens a network of relationship among the people which is economic, educational, religious, familial and political in nature. By this way the people are bound together in mutual relationship giving rise to social groups.
- ix. **Consciousness of kind:** Consciousness of kind is another quality of human society. The people of one interest unite themselves around it and form a group. The people of one profession have loyalties for themselves and join together to form an association or informal group. Similarly, the society is divided into various groups of people having their respective interests.
- x. **Organized in nature:** A society is organized by the process of interdependence among the groups and the institutions. This need binds them all together into an organized unit.
- xi. **Limited geographical boundary:** A society is spread in a limited geographical boundary. Because the human societies have political Governments in which territorial boundary is an essential condition.
- xii. **Presence of social system:** A society has social systems in which the people participate within their roles according to status. Role performance of people in different groups creates social systems. These systems bind the individuals in various activities and thus regulate human behavior.
- ✓ xiii. **Mechanism of social norms and social sanctions:** Human societies have social norms and social sanctions so that human behavior may be controlled.
- ✓ xiv. **Socialization of individuals:** The socialization process circulates throughout life in society. By this process an individual is made a useful member of society. He learns the norms of social life in various social groups.
- ✓ xv. **Permanent social group:** A society is a permanent social group which lived and continues to live for an indefinite period.

✓ ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY

The following are the elements of human society:

- (i) a big aggregate of people,
- (ii) living together since very long,
- (iii) having a sense of belonging to one another,
- (iv) more or less a permanent association, and
- (v) having a common culture.