

2. Fundamental Concepts-I

Society, Community, Group, Status and Role

Society

Society is an important concept in Sociology. As all of us know that Sociology is defined as the 'Science of Society', so understanding this Science in the right spirit requires that we understand correctly the exact meaning of Society.

Meaning and Definition of Society :

In common parlance, the word society is used for a group of people. Else, any Organized or Unorganized group is also casually referred to as 'Society' eg. Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Hindu Samaj etc. Various Social Scientists have tried to explain in their own ways the meaning of the word Society. For example, the Economists call it as a group of people engaged in Economic Activity. The Political Scientists view it as a group of people, and Anthropologists view it as primitive communities.

MacIver and Page have defined Society as a web of social relationships. Society is a complex system of ever changing relationships.

Social relations is the central subject matter of Sociology. When the complex network of Social relations turns into a system; through a complex system of usages, procedures and social values; it is called a society. Let us consider some definitions of Society :

According to **Parsons**, "A Social System can be defined in terms of the total complexity of human relationships, which emerge as a result of means—ends relationships, whether real or symbolic." In this definition of Parsons, special emphasis is laid on action and actions undertaken as a means for the fulfillment of goals. Relationships resulting from such actions are called social relations; and Society is the result of the totality of human relations

Giddings says, "Society itself is in union, an organization, a sum total of formal relations, in which all the co-operating individuals are connected or related to each other." Here, emphasis is on the cooperative relationships, which connect individuals

to each other.

According to Reuter, Society is an abstract concept which demonstrates the complexity (wholeness) of mutual relationships among its members. According to this definition, the total organization of relations flourishing among individuals is called society, which is abstract.

The Concept of society According to MacIver

According to MacIver and Page, "Society is a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behavior and of liberties. This ever—changing, complex system, we call society. It is the web of social relationships and it is always changing." Besides calling society as a web of social relationships, they also mention the basis and important elements transforms which social relations in the form of a complex system, and establish a social institution. On the basis of this definition, MacIver and Page throw light on the following important elements and basis of Society :

1. Usages : Usages are an important type of social standard. These serve as a basis of creation of society. They play an important role in the maintenance of social order. There are many usages related to various aspects of social life like food, life style, fashion, marriage, religion, caste, education, etc. These usages inspire a person to behave in a particular way. A person has to face criticism, if he or she behaves in a different way. Sometimes one might be punished for not behaving in accordance with these usages. These are passed on from one generation to another during the process of socialization.

2. Procedures : Procedures are also an important basis of Society. MacIver and Page opine that institutions are procedures of working in a social group. It is through these only, that members of a particular society fulfill their needs and goals. Generally, all the actions of people in a society are according to these procedures. These are controlled

by them. Every Society has its own procedures, which are different from the procedures of other societies. For Example, the procedures of Hindu Marriage are different from the procedures of Muslim or Christian Marriages.

3. Authority : This is also known as power or domination. This is an important basis of society. One may not find any such society, in which relationships are not defined in terms of authority and subordination. In Society, there are many organizations, groups, associations etc. which control the behavior of their members, in order to ensure their proper functioning. For this, it is important that some people should have authority or dominance. It is not possible to maintain peace and order without this. In family, this power or authority lies with the head of the family; in the caste, with the headman, and in the village, it lies with the Sarpanch. One can see this is concentrated in someone's hand in schools, colleges, economic organizations, religious organizations etc. In present day complex societies, power or authority is concentrated in Executive and Judiciary, which play an important role in maintaining law and order in the society.

4. Mutual Aid : This is an important basis of Society. One cannot imagine Society unless and until a few people do not co-operate with each other with the aim of fulfilling their aims and necessities. For a society to exist, co-operative relationships is an ultimate necessity. In the absence of co-operation, even a small social group like a family cannot sustain itself. The higher the co-operation in a society, the more that society would be predisposed to progress. Present day societies have become quite extensive because the arena of co-operation have widened.

5. Groups and Departments : Society is made up of many departments, or sub—groups. In other words, in every society, we can find many groups, associations, and organizations etc, which help an individual to fulfill their various needs. Family, play-group, neighborhood, caste, village, town, city, community, economic, political and religious organization, colleges etc. are various groups and departments only, which constitute the society and contribute in the fulfillment of needs of the people. Many divisions can be seen in the society on the

basis of age, gender, caste, species, class etc. All these groups and Department are interrelated. The more organized these groups are in a society, the more advanced a society would be

6. Controls of Human Behavior : Society is a complex of social relations. To regulate the order of society, it is necessary that human behavior is put under control. The needs of Human beings are unlimited, like desires for money, prosperity, respect, power etc. If the desires of individuals are not regulated and the individuals are allowed to fulfill them according to their own sweet will, it would not be possible to maintain order in the society. In such a circumstance, individual will start behaving according to his own free will and normlessness will prevail in the society. In such a situation, the society will begin disintegrating. Thus, in order to control human behaviour, it is important to adopt the formal and informal means of social control. It is not possible to imagine society without making use of these means. laws, judicial system, Police, Administration, etc. are the formal means of Social control and folk traditions, customs, institutions, religion and ethics etc. are the informal means of control. All these means are used to organize the social relations and control the behavior of individuals.

7. Liberties : Liberties occupy an important place as an important constituent of Society. Liberty does not mean working, behaving or acting according to one's own free will. This means that all the people should get suitable environment for one's own development. Where on the one hand, the behaviours of individuals are controlled through formal and informal means, on the other hand, it is equally important to provide freedom. It is only in a liberated environment that a person can develop his or her own personality and can contribute to the progress of society. Too much control creates obstacles in the development of a person, and cripples his discretion and thought process. One should also remember that while liberty gives an individual the opportunity to work according to his or her will, one should also provide opportunities to others to work freely and should not create obstacles in their work.

In this way, MacIver and Page have given the

above mentioned seven important bases of Society. They have defined Society in terms of a complex network of social relationships and these social relationships are interconnected with each other. This network of Social relationships is constantly changing and constantly taking new forms.

The above mentioned definition of MacIver and Page makes it clear that society is a complex network of Social relationships and it has seven basic elements. There are, however, three more basic requirements of Society. These are—(1) Plurality of Individuals—society constitutes of social relations found between various individuals. Although Society is not a group of people, it is also true that in the absence of individuals one cannot imagine social relationships. Therefore, the first requirement of society is a group of people, so that social relationships can be established. (2) Social relationships—it is the organized form of social relationships existing among the interacting individuals, which is named as Society. Social relationships are the basis of Society. In the absence of these relationships a crowd of people or a herd of people cannot be called a society. (3) Social Interactions—Only by virtue of presence of people or by virtue of social relationships among people, society cannot be formed. It is also important that there are Social interactions among these people. This means that they should not just know about the existence of each other but also be aware of each other's presence, and at the same time they should be influencing each other through their interactions.

We must remember that society may be defined as a group of people who may lead a normal course of life or it may be defined in the form of a web of Social relationships. There is a “normal way of life” of every society, which is termed as its culture. Chinoy has pointed out that of society can be redefined in terms of its various institutions such as family, religion, economy, education etc. In Sociological Analysis, one should analyze society in both ways—Structure of its institutions and Structure of its Social Relationships.

Main Characteristics of Society

In order to understand the Society and its

nature, we will focus on some of its major characteristics, which are as follows—

1. Mutual Awareness—In the absence of mutual awareness or mutual recognition, neither social relationships, nor society can be formed. Until people are consciously or unconsciously aware of each other's existence, they cannot be mutually aware and no interaction among them can be possible. In the absence of this awareness, neither would they get influenced by each other, nor would they can influence each other. In other words, there would be no interaction among them. Thus, it is clear that in order to make social relationships possible, mutual awareness is a prerequisite and society is the complex organization of social relationships built on the basis of this mutual awareness.

2. Society is abstract—Society is not a group of people. It is, on the contrary, a network of social relationships which emerges out it. Social Relationships are abstract. These can neither be seen, nor can they be touched. These can only be experienced. According to Right, society is not a group of people. It is the organization of relationships among members of a group. Reuters writes that just as life is not an object, it is a process of being alive; similarly society is not an object, it is a process of establishing of social relationships. Thus, it is clear that society is an abstract concept.

3. Similarity and Difference in Society—One can see both likeness and difference in Society. Both are essential elements of society. Both have an importance of their own and are complementary to each other. One cannot imagine a society in which there is complete similarity or complete difference. In every society, both these elements are essentially woven together. We will separately think about each of these separately :

(i) Similarity in Society—The question of living together or being related to each other does not arise, until and unless there is feeling of likeness among people. In such a circumstance, formation of society is not possible. Society can only be found among those people, who are like each other in terms of mental or physical characteristics to some extent and live in proximity to each other. Giddings has talked about the awareness of likeness or

homogeneity as the basis of society. In the Primitive or aboriginal or small or simple communities, the basis of likeness was kinship or blood relationships. Now the basis is vast and extended. Now nationality is the prime basis of likeness.

(ii) Difference in Society—In Society, difference is found along with likeness. According to MacIver and Page, if everyone was like each other, their relationships would be limited like ants or honeybees. In such a circumstance, the division of labor or mutual reciprocity among them would be very limited. They would have been able to give very little support to each other. Gender discrimination is an example of inequality. Fertility reproduction had been possible out of it. It is only due to inequality in the society that everyone is able to exchange from each other. This is also true for family, friends circle, group, association and community etc. In all types of social relationships, inequality plays an important role. In society, inequality takes many forms like differences relating to gender, physique, attitude, interest, capability or capacity. Presently, specialization has played a significant role in increasing differences in the society.

(iii) Difference subordinate to Likeness in Society—The basis of division of labour in society is cooperation, and then the conflict. This means that for the fulfillment of similar aims, people cooperate with each other. However, in order to achieve the goals effectively, they divide the works among themselves. It is only because of similar needs that people cooperate with each other. For example, some businessmen perform business together, and get into business partnerships with the aim of earning profit. These partners perform various works according to their ability & competence for the success of business. This can also be seen in the case of family. The universal need for love and home forms the basis of establishment of family. However, we must remember that although likeness and difference both are important in the society, likeness has primacy over difference.

4. Cooperation and Conflict in Society : One can observe two types of forces in Society : First are those which unite human beings and second, which separate human beings. Co-operation comes

under the purview of the first and conflict comes under the purview of the second. Both these elements or qualities are most essential for the Society. In every society, cooperation and conflict are found as universal processes. In other words, from simple primitive societies to modern complex societies, all have witness the twin processes of cooperation and conflict. Human beings and groups have to cooperate with each other in order to accomplish their needs and desires. However, wherever they are not able to cooperate, they also resort to conflict.

(i) Cooperation—Cooperation is the basic principle for every action or goal. In every field like family, polity, economy, religion etc., one can see cooperation. In the absence of cooperation, neither any family nor any political party can achieve its desired goal. During elections, many a times the reason behind their defeat is lack of cooperation among its workers. In any activity, success depends upon cooperation only. In simple, small and primitive societies, one can see direct co-operation; and in modern, complex and large societies, indirect cooperation can be found.

(ii) Conflict—In a society, one can see cooperation along with conflict. The main reasons behind conflict may be some physical and personal differences, cultural differences, conflicting interests, self interest and rapid social change. There are differences among individuals on the basis of tastes, nature, character, personality or lifestyle. Similarly, people are associated with different faiths and beliefs. There is cultural differences between the societies to fulfill various works. Likewise, people or groups have interests opposite to each other or conflicting with each other. Many a times, due to the rapid pace social change, individuals or groups are not able to adjust and conform to the new circumstances. These various kinds of differences, selfishness and social change are mainly responsible for conflict. Thus in context of human society, cooperation, alongwith conflict is also visible everywhere.

In every society, conflict is universal. One can say that wherever there is a human society, there are conflicts too. Many a times, conflict helps to end injustice, atrocities and exploitation. However, instead of conflict, cooperation is more important.

History reveals us that men have spent more time in cooperation and peace than rather in conflict. One can say that conflict is subject to cooperation. Among various people and groups, usually cooperation is more prevalent than conflict. However, both of these are always present in society. That is why it is often said that society is a collusive collaboration. The more the cooperation, the better organized is the society.

5. Society is based upon Interdependence—

Interdependence is an important feature of society. In other words, interdependence is the basic element in the origin and development of society. In real service it is an important basis of human life, culture, civilization and development. Society is a complex system of social relations and various forms of social relationships depend on each other. Human beings need to depend on others, and establish a social relationship with others so that their bodily, biological, economic, political and cultural needs are fulfilled. This is true even for the most primitive, smallest and simplest societies. Where they depend on others for sexual satisfaction, hunting and survival. In modern complex societies, interdependence among various parts of society and human beings have increased due to division of labour. In the family, which is the preliminary form of society, too one can clearly see traditional interdependence among its members, for the fulfillment of needs. In contemporary societies, one can see interdependence in all aspects of life. The main reason being the lack of incompleteness of men and the limit to their capabilities. Men cannot fulfill all their needs while the remain confined to their own. Therefore, one can say that society is based on interdependence.

6. Society is ever changing and complex system—Another quality of society is its ever changing tendency. Social Change is an universal process. Because of various factors social relationships undergo changes. The statuses and roles of people change, the mutual expectations change with time. As a result, society and social structure undergo change. No society is exactly like what it was earlier, or what it would be a thousand years later. The Vedic society of India was quite different from the present day complex industrialized society of India. Thus, it is

clear that society is ever changing.

Society is a complex system made up of various types of social relationships. The same person is either directly or indirectly related to hundreds of people. On the basis of these relationships, their statuses and roles are decided. A person also behaves keeping in mind other person's behavior. When a person is engaged in various types of relationships, and behaves in a definite manner, keeping in mind the relations and expectation of others undoubtedly, then the organized system which emerges out of the social relations of millions of people, will be complex.

7. Society is not confined to human beings only—Society is not just limited upto human beings. It is also found among animals. MacIver and Page have stated correctly that wherever there is life, there is society. This means that all living beings have a society of their own. Ants and Honey Bees also have a society. These societies demonstrate various characteristics of their own social life. In the lowest forms of life, however, the awareness of social life is very little and the duration of contact is very less. Where the awareness about society or about mutual awareness is very low, society cannot be imagined. The higher-level animals, like elephants, cows and monkeys have clearly visible societies. Elements of mutuality and cooperation can be seen in their lives. Society evolves and develops as a result of the nature of animals and human beings to protect their lives, and to save their species, generation after generation. In Sociology we study human societies, instead of animal societies. The reason being that human beings are at a higher level of evolution as compared to animals, and on the basis of their capabilities, qualities and physical characteristics, they are the creator of culture. They have made an unprecedented progress in the fields of knowledge, science and art. Men have their own society, social organization and social order. Thus, we keep ourselves limited to the study of human societies only.

Distinction between 'The Society' and 'A Society'

In Sociology, the term 'The Society' and the term 'A Society' are coined differently. In other Social Sciences, the term 'The Society' is used to

mean a group of people, while in Sociology; it is used to mean a network of social relationships or complex sustain of social relationships. Where other social sciences term a group of people as 'Society'. In Sociology a group of people as is known 'A Society'.

'A Society' means a group of people who participate in normal life. For Example, 'Indian Society, Christian Society, Muslim Society, Western Society etc. At some places, the term 'A Society' is also used for associations such as the Vaishya Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj etc. The word 'A Society' also signifies a shared lifestyle or a similar culture. Those who come under 'A Society' in the form of a group of people, they definitely reside in definite geographical area and have a specific culture of their own, as distinct from the culture of other group of people classified as another 'A Society'. The feeling of similarity and equality is clearly visible among the members of 'A Society'. Some people think 'A Society' as another form of community.

Reuter explains 'A Society is an organization, distinct from 'The Society', in which people spend their normal lives. According to Manger "A Society" can be understood as a group of people whose members participate in normal activities and actions consciously. According to Morris Ginsberg, "A Society is that group or collection of individuals that is organized by any kind of relationship or behavior, which separates them from others, which are not tied by those relations or which are different in behavior from them". According to Green, "A Society is that largest group, of which any individual is a member. 'A Society' consists of population composition, time, place, and interests".

From the definitions given above, it is clear that the following are the characteristics of 'A Society' : (1) it is a group of people (2) its members consciously participate in normal activities; and (3) it is different from those groups which are classified as 'A Society' in terms of their social relations, behaviours, life—style or culture. It is clear that where 'The Society' is an abstract concept, 'A Society' is a tangible concept. 'The Society' is a complex system of social relations, whereas 'A

Society' is a group of people participating consciously in normal life.

The following are the differences between 'The Society' and 'A Society'

1. 'The Society' is a complex system of social relations, whereas 'A Society' is a group of individuals.

2. 'The Society' is abstract because of the abstractness of social relationships constituting them. 'A Society' is tangible as a group of people which can be seen.

3. 'The Society' is a complex system, whereas 'A Society' is relatively a simple organization.

4. 'The Society' does not have its own geographical area, whereas 'A Society' generally has a definite geographical area.

5. In 'The Society' the liability of a person is unlimited, whereas in 'A Society', one's liability is limited.

6. There is considerable variation in the behavior and attitude of different people in 'The Society', whereas there is a lot of similarity in 'A Society'.

7. The size of 'A Society' is quite small, while the size of 'The Society' is vast.

Types of Society

Sociology studies society and one can properly understand society by having a glance of its various types. Here, we shall dwell upon few types of society.

Traditional and Open Society

Traditional Society—Usually, traditions and practices hold a special place in traditional societies. In the traditional society, religion influences various aspects of life. The beliefs, attitudes and behavior of individuals, the influence of religious or spiritual elements is present. Science is not given any importance in such a society. The statuses and roles of individuals are determined mostly on the basis of traditions and birth. Religion, ethics, customs, traditions, customs and public opinion play an important role in controlling people's behavior and maintaining social control. Such a society is technologically less developed. There also exists comparatively lower level of division of labor or specialization. There is considerable influence of

destiny and conservatism in such a society. As a result, the status of women is low. In short, we can say that the traditional society is a society, which is organized along religion, ethics, customs, traditions, popular opinion, birth, belief in destiny and conservatism, and consequently in the pace of social mobility and social change is relatively slow.

Open Society—Open society means ‘free society’. Generally, in such a society, attributes other than those of the traditional society can be seen. However, this does not mean that in such a society the importance of religion, ethics, customs, traditions, etc. do not exist at all. In the open society, all of these values are significantly of less importance as compared to that of traditional society. The free society is not a conservative society, but progressive and comparatively change-oriented society. In such a society, social stratification is not based on birth, customs, tradition, etc. rather on individuals merit or quality. Here, class system gets importance over caste system. In such a society, the social status and role of a person is not determined on the basis of birth, caste, species, etc., it is rather determined on the basis of education, wealth, qualities, qualifications, occupation etc. In such a society, the formal means of social control like law, police, administration, court etc. are found to be of much importance in comparison to the informal means of social control, such as customs, opinions, religion and ethics.

In the open society, the vast effect of science can be found. The social system of the open society gives special importance to wealth, education, personal qualities or abilities, and on these bases the social status of the person is determined. It is a progressive and change oriented society in which social mobility is higher and the speed of social change is comparatively faster.

Primitive Societies and Civilized Societies—Considering the level of civilization, human society can be divided mainly into two types of societies. These are : (1) Primitive society, and (2) Civilized society. Evans Pritchard, while explaining the meaning of primitive society, has written that anthropologists use the term ‘primitive society’ for those societies which are smaller in terms of

population, territory, and range of social relations and which in comparison to progressive societies are simpler in terms of technology, economy, division of labor and specialization. Robert Redfield has added some other characteristics in the definition of primitive society, such as lack of developed literature, systematic art, science, and spiritual education.

Primarily, those tribal communities come under primitive society, which live in hilly, plateau or dense forest areas and which have been backward in terms of modern civilization. Such societies are also called simple societies. In India, there are many examples of primitive societies like Toda, Kamar, etc.

Civilized societies are those societies which are quite large in terms of population, region and social contacts, and whose technology and economy are quite developed and there is considerable specialization of social roles. In such societies literature, art and science have special significance. In these societies, one can see widespread education and a well—developed political organization. Here, a predominance of secondary relations and Social groups are clearly visible. In such a society, the importance of family, kinship, religion, tradition and custom, is relatively less. Social discrimination is highly developed. Such a society is also called a complex society. The contemporary India and the Western societies are examples of civilized society.

Simple and Complex Societies

Simple and complex are relative terms. A society may be simple in comparison to other society and at the same time another society may be complex if compared to a third society. In spite of this, there are some fundamental differences in these two types of societies which must be clearly understood. Simple society is that society whose structure and function is comparatively simple. In contrast, complex society is a society whose structure and function is complex or complicated. The meaning of simplicity and complexity can be clearly understood on the basis of the magnitude of differentiation. Differentiation refers to diversity or difference; the lesser the differentiation in the structure and the function of the society, the simpler the society. In contrast, the societies whose structure and functions are highly differentiated are called as complex societies. The primitive tribal

societies are simple societies while modern civilized societies are complex societies.

Classification by Karl Marx—Considering the economy as a basic institution, Karl Marx presented his famous classification. He wrote, “we can widely consider Asian, ancient, feudal and modern modes of production as many stages (eras) in the progress of socio—economic development.” In other places, Marx and Engels have named primitive communism, Ancient society, feudal society and capitalist Society as major eras of human history. Bottomore contends that if we combine these two schemes, then we get five main types of society viz. Primitive, Asiatic, Ancient, Feudal and Capitalist.

1. Primitive Society—It is also called primitive communist society. In such a society, the entire community has equal rights on the means of production instead of individual or some persons. Production system is of primitive type. People arrange a little bit of production and livestock with the help of some tools, arrows and stones, and fulfill their needs. People distribute equally whatever is produced on the basis of collective labor. Neither class—distinction nor exploitation is found in such a society.

2. Asiatic Society—Marx has considered India as an example of Asian society. He defined Asiatic society as a society whose agrarian economy is based on small units of production. They have a centralized state and bureaucracy whose power depends on the supply and regulation of water. In such societies, agricultural production is done by small units and the state and bureaucracy perform the functions related to public needs.

3. Ancient Society—The key feature of such a society is the special domination of traditions. The behaviour of individuals is determined only by traditions. In such societies, the system of production is not well developed. Tools of animal husbandry and farming are also less developed. Although there is a perception of private property, its distribution is uneven. As a result, classes are formed on economic basis. Sometimes, exploitation of one class by another and sometimes class struggle is also seen.

4. Feudal Society—European and Japanese societies, from the eleventh century to the nineteenth

century, come under various sub types of feudal societies. In such societies, the land and other means of production are not owned by ordinary farmers. They are under the control of feudal lords. They get the farming and production work done from serfs. It is due to a developed perception of private property, that there is an uneven distribution of property in the society. Farmers were exploited by feudals, and class distinctions and class—struggle existed. Political power was limited in a few hands too.

5. Capitalist Society—The innovation of machines and the establishment of big Industries and business, has a big role in the establishment of capitalist societies. With the help of machines, the goods were produced on a large scale. The control over the means of production was concentrated in the hands of a few capitalists. Production was done with the help and technical knowledge of salaried workers. The profit margin of the capitalists increased and they became richer. On the other hand, the workers sold their labor and could hardly earn enough to meet their essential needs. Employees were exploited by capitalists. As a result, class—distinctions and class—struggles began to grow.

In addition to the above five types, Karl Marx has described another type of society as socialist society. Russia and China present examples of such society. Marx recognizes that the seeds of socialism are hidden in the capitalist economy. As the gap between the rich and the poor will increase, clear cut class—consciousness will arise, which will result in class—struggle and the capitalist class will be destroyed and a classless society will be established. There will be no place for personal private property in such a society. The means of production would not be owned by particular individuals, they would rather be owned by the entire society. In such a society, production will not be used for profit but for consumption. All shall work according to their capabilities and receive according to their needs. There would be no place for religion, spiritual power or God in such society.

Classification by Tonnies : Tonnies has divided societies into two categories based on the nature of social relations—

1. Gemeinschaft

2. Gesellschaft

In the first category, Tonnies has included pre—industrial societies and in the second category he has included the industrialized societies. According to Tonnies, in *Gemeinschaft* (Community) high degree of social unity and high degree of commitment towards community and society is found. Members have full consensus about the values and standards of their society. Also, social relations exist naturally. They are not established voluntarily or thoughtfully. On the other hand, social relations are established in the *Gesellschaft* (Society) in a constructively organized manner. People are encouraged by a sense of mutual benefit and the spirit of exchange, which keeps them tied to each other. In this classification however, all the demerits of dual classifications are found. At first, it is very simplistic and secondly, many characteristics of industrial societies are found in pre—industrial societies and that of pre—industrial societies are found in industrial societies.

Community

Community is a primary concept in sociological literature. In colloquial language, the word community is used for a particular caste, a particular religion or a specific society. However in sociology, the word community is used in specific context. In sociology, the term community is used in the context of any village, town, city, state, or country. The community is accepted as a regional concept.

Meaning and Definition of community

English if we consider the term community, we find that the word community is composed of two Latin words—*Com* and *Munis*. The word *Com* means together and *Munis* meaning ‘to serve’. On the basis of these words, the community implies “serving together.” In other words, the word community means a group of individuals who live together, and come together for common interests. Their entire lives are usually spent there.

While defining community Prof. Davis writes that “Community is the smallest regional group which covers all aspects of social life. Davis writes, “In this definition three elements of community there are—1. Group of individuals; 2.Fixed geographical area; 3. Inclusiveness of all aspects of Social Life.

According to Bogardus, “a community is a

social group with some degree of ‘We feeling’ and living in a given area”.

Lundberg and others have defined the community, “A human population that inhabits a certain geographical area and that carry—on a common inter—dependent life.”

MacIver and the page define “Wherever the members of any group—small or large—live together in such a way that they share, not this or that particular interest, but the basic conditions of life, we call that group a community.” At other place, they have defined it as “a strongly knit group occupying a single geographical area and living a common life”. Thus it is clear that community is a geographical group which lives a normal social life.

According to Ogburn and Nimkoff, “Community is the total organization of social life within a limited area”.

The above definitions explain that the community is a group of people participating in general social life who inhabit a certain geographical area and have a community spirit.

Essential Elements of Community

For any group to be called “Community”, the presence of three elements is the most essential : first, group of Individuals; second, fixed geographical area; third, community spirit.

1. Group of Individuals—For any community a group of individuals is the first requirement. Without individuals, neither a normal social life nor a community spirit can be imagined. So the first major element for the creation of a community is a group of people.

2. Definite geographical area—Every community is required to have a certain geographical area. Until and unless a group resides in a certain geographical area, it cannot be called a community. Therefore, any village, city or nation is called a community because each has its own fixed geographical area. By living together in a particular area over a long period of time, and by participating in day to day activities, the feeling of oneness develops. They start thinking of this particular group as their own group. As a result of living in proximity with each other in a particular geographical area, they start interacting with each other and this is necessary for establishing social relationships.

3. Community sentiments—This is also called “We feeling”. For the creation of a community, this “We feeling” is more important than a group of individuals and a certain geographical area. The community spirit implies ‘we are all one’, ‘This community is ours’, ‘it’s different from other communities’, ‘we are all equal partners in happiness, ‘ we are all strongly bound to each other’. Generally, each community serves as an organized unit in the context of other communities. People who reside in a certain geographical area, cannot be called a community, until they have a community spirit among themselves. When some people live together, work together, participate in happiness and sorrows, are conscious of collective interests, and are willing to sacrifice their personal interests, since a long period of time, the “We feeling” or community spirit is likely to develop.

Three things constitute the community spirit.

1. Expression of ‘We Feeling’—The “We feeling” encourages individuals to cooperate and work together in happiness and sorrows. People have a special relationship with the place or geographical area they live in. They have a sense of belongingness to the people of their community. They have brotherly relations with each other. Strong feelings like we are all one, our interests are identical and we are all connected to each other, keep them together.

2. Contribution or sentiments of role playing—Another element of community spirit is the sense of involvement and participation among the members of the community. There are a number of collective tasks related to the community that cannot be completed without the support of the community. Therefore, various members playing their roles according to their own status, feel obliged to participate in the activities and help each other.

3. Feeling of dependency—The sense of dependency is a necessary element for the development of community spirit. Individuals think themselves as dependent on each other and on the entire community. For fulfilling various needs, they need to depend on each other. The feeling of mutual inter—dependence gives rise to community spirit.

At the present time industrialization, division of

labour, specialization, urbanization, means of transport and communication, reduction in geographical distance, one—world view, sharp growth of population and diversity in population, rise of self-interests and primacy of secondary relations, etc. are factors responsible for the decrease in the importance of community feeling in the urban settings.

Some Characteristics of Community

Other than the three above mentioned, some of the key features or characteristics of the community are listed below too :

1. Spontaneous growth—Community is not established deliberately or by planned effort. It evolves spontaneously with time. When some people start living in a particular geographical area, then gradually “We feeling” develops among them and they start thinking of the group as their own group. With the development of this sentiment, the group takes the form of a community.

2. Permanency—Each community remains permanently in a certain geographical area. Temporary groups such as crowd, audience groups or nomadic herds are not considered communities because they do not live permanently in a fixed geographic area. The community remains permanently at one place unless they are completely destroyed by earthquakes, hurricanes, floods or wars. We clearly know which community lives in which geographic area. The reason being the element of permanence associated with the community.

3. Specific name—Each community has its own unique name, which contributes to feeling of unity among its members. Each community has a distinctive history which offers uniqueness. For example, Delhi is a specific community that has a long history which provides it distinction and makes it unique.

4. Concreteness—The community is a tangible group. The reason being that we can see it as a group settled in a particular area. Although various rules relating to the community cannot be seen, it can be experienced as human beings.

5. Extensive Goals—The development of the community does not happen for any one or for specific purposes. This is a center of activities of

people's life. It consists of a number of groups, associations and institutions, which contribute to the attainment of broader goals of the community. The community's objective is broad, and it does not work for a specific individual, group or class. It works for the fulfillment of goals of all the individuals and groups belonging to the community.

6. Common life—Each community has some common customs, traditions, faith, festivities and festivals and rites, etc. which provide uniformity to the life of people in that community. The community fulfills the economic, social, political, religious, cultural needs of a person. This is where his whole life is spent. In this sense, a community possesses a range of similarities where an individual lives not to fulfill one particular need but to spend his whole life. Thus, normally the entire life of the members is spent in the community.

7. Generalized System of Rules—Ginsberg has considered the general mechanism of rules as an important feature of the community. Through general rules, the behavior of members is guided, and they are kept under control. Since they are directed by general rules, lot of similarities in the behavior of members of a community can be seen. The impact of general rules of a community is found especially in small communities like village communities or tribal communities. Informal codes of behaviour or unwritten rules direct and control the behavior of individuals.

8. Self dependency—The community is a self—reliant group which caters to all its requirements itself. This means that it does not need to be dependent on any other community. This feature of the community can be found in primitive communities, tribal communities or small communities. Today, even small communities like villages have to depend on other rural or urban communities. At some point of time self—reliance was an important feature of the community, but now, its importance has diminished. Now, for the fulfillment of needs, each community more or less has to depend on other communities. In materialistic terms, the communities are not self—reliant today, but in social terms, they are self—reliant, since all the important aspects of social life are found in the community.

9. Compulsory membership—Every person necessarily is a member of a community. He is close to other people in an area or another and interacts with them. He has to live in a community for the fulfillment of its various needs. This leads to the development of a sense of attachment towards their community. Today, with the rise of geographical and social mobility, people move from one region to another, leaving one community for another community. However, every person continues to be the member of one community or another.

Types of Communities

Various sociologists have mentioned different types of community. Kingsley Davis has explained that in order to classify communities four interrelated elements are significant—1. Population size, 2. Expansion of the State, property and population around the community, 3. Specialized function of the community in the whole society, and 4. Type of community organization. These elements empower us to distinguish between various types of primitive communities; primitive and civilized communities; and rural and urban communities.

Davis has distinguished between primitive tribes and villages. He has highlighted the rural and urban communities too. Most humans spend their lives in these two types of communities. MacIver and page have mentioned the rural, urban and regional communities. Bogardus has enumerated four types of Communities : Rural community, urban community, regional community (province, state, etc.) and the national community (nation). Robert Redfield has mentioned the little community that some people have called the small peasant community.

We will mention some key types of Community—

1. Rural community—The rural community is a form of human habitat, having major features such as small size, less population, dependency of its people on nature, agriculture as core means of sustenance, closeness and intimacy of relations, close association with nature, socio—cultural uniformity among residents, simple lifestyle, lack of social mobility, greater influence of religion, customs and conservativeness, greater importance to family life, joint family system, community spirit, etc. All the

villages of India are prime examples of Rural Community.

2. Urban community—Urban communities in contrast to Rural Communities are the large in size, densely populated, diverse, having multiplicity and diversity of professions, dominance of commerce over agriculture, diminished importance of Family, predominance of nuclear families, primacy of secondary relationships, artificiality, greater importance to individualism, mobility and abundance of socio—economic problems. India's big cities are prime examples of Urban Communities.

3. Little community—Robert Redfield has given the concept of Little Community. He estimates that about three fourths of humanity lives in Little Communities. These communities represent the initial appearance of settled life. Redfield has mentioned four characteristics of Little Community—

1. Little communities are small in size,

2. Small communities express specific lifestyles on whose basis; one can distinguish one small community as different from another.

3. One can see uniformity in the life and culture of Little Communities, and 4. Little Communities are self—reliant and fulfill all the requirements from birth till death.

4. Tribal community—Tribal community usually includes indigenous primitive castes or tribal people. People living in a tribal community generally speak the same language have a distinctive culture that separates their group from the other group and has economic and political autonomy. It is a kind of closed society that has social equality; gives importance to kinship, religion, magic, and family; lacks mobility and has more stability. There are many villages in southern Rajasthan where one, two or three tribes live in a community. These tribal communities represent unique characteristics of tribal community.

5. Region—Scholars have described region on the basis of its nature. In one area there is similarity of characteristics and a person is distinguished from other regions on the basis of these characteristics. The region or state does not only have uniform physical features, it also has similarity of cultural traits and economic professions. In summary,

in a region, 1. The similarity of the geographical elements is found, 2. It has a unique position 3. It has similar characteristics, 4. There is commonality of views and beliefs. 5. These are constantly changing and 6. Their interpretation and classification can be done on some principles. Linguistic, geographical, economic and cultural area are examples of various regions.

MacIver has also mentioned communities which carry partial characteristics of the community. These were later called Partial communities by later theorists. These will be discussed separately.

Some examples of Marginal communities

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that village, tribal group (settled in a specific area), town, city, nation etc. are examples of community. These groups have a variety of characteristics based on their community. There are some groups or organizations regarding which there is a doubt whether they are a community or not? This is because they sometimes exhibit certain characteristics of the community and sometimes do not. Marginal communities are those groups which show some characteristics of a community but there is some doubt about their status as a community. MacIver and Page have mentioned some partial communities. The marginal communities are those communities in which some characteristics are that of the community, but they demonstrate the characteristics of institution, group, or association. They do not represent completely the characteristics of a community. They do not have some features of the community, such as common lifestyle and freedom of membership to all, and hence are called marginal communities. Caste, prison, neighborhood, family, etc. are some of its examples. Let us discuss some common examples of marginal community :

1. Is caste a community?—Caste has some characteristics of a community. For example, caste is also a group of individuals. It also demonstrates “We feeling” or “community feeling” among its members. Each Caste has a specific name. Caste does not work with a specific aim, it rather operates keeping in mind the general well-being of its members. In addition, each caste has general principles through which the behavior of its members is kept under

check. Based on these characteristics, some people consider caste to be a community. However, a major base of the community—specific geographical area—is completely lacking in caste. A specific geographic area is an important characteristic of a community; while it is not an essential characteristic of a caste. People of the same caste may be spread in different geographical areas. Moreover, a caste might be divided in many sub-castes and in such circumstances; the community feeling is divided into sub-castes. Due to these reasons caste cannot be treated as a community. Famous Sociologist MacIver opines also that caste cannot be treated as a community.

2. Is Prison a Community?—Prison is a group of individuals as well as a certain geographical area, in which its inmates also have a sense of community. On this ground, MacIver and Page have treated prison as a community. They have also considered prison to be a community because it has a work area of its own, though limited as compared to other communities. The size and scale of work area depend on the nature of a specific community.

Some Sociologists do not fully agree with the proposition of MacIver and Page that prison is a community. When the prison is lacking in many significant features of the community, how can it be considered as a community? It is not considered as a community due to the following reasons :

1. The inmates lack the “We Feeling”; feeling of attachment, intimacy or altruism towards the inmates.

2. In prison, all the inmates are not participating in normal life; their life—circumstances are not the same. By keeping in mind the nature of guilt and the perpetrator’s situation, one is placed in a special category in prison as an inmate, and each category has a set of facilities different from other categories of inmates. In such a situation, the question of treating jail as a normal life situation does not arise.

3. All the aspects of an individual’s life cannot be expressed in the jail. There cannot be any family life possible; one cannot stay in jail with his family members; one cannot achieve the general aims of life in jail.

4. The prison does not evolve on its own. It is deliberately developed keeping in mind a very

specific purpose—punishing or reforming the criminals.

5. Unlike a community, there is no stability in a Jail. It can be terminated by one order of the government, or shifted from one place to another. Thus, we can only say that jail is not a community, rather it is a small section of a community, it is an association which has been formed with a particular aim.

3. Is Neighborhood a Community?—In Primitive Societies, neighborhood ideally contained all the features of a community. In some villages, neighborhood demonstrates all the important features of the community, but the number of such communities is negligible in contemporary society. The first neighborhood was a group of families and households in a certain area living generations after generations that had a feeling, but today, the neighborhood in modern complex urbanized societies cannot be considered as a community for the following reasons—

1. Neighborhood is not an area of generalizations. In this, all the needs of individuals cannot be met. Similarly, there is a lot of disparity in terms of living standards of the people. The standard of living all the people is also not similar.

2. People in the urban areas do not know their neighborhood. People living in the same building are at times unfamiliar with each other. In such a case, how can the “We Feeling” a major characteristic of a community develop?

3. These days, unlike in the olden days, neighborhood does not evolve naturally. Nowadays, new Colonies namely employees’ Colony, Labor townships, etc. are developed in a planned way, in which people choose their neighbors according to their will.

4. There is no general mechanism of rules, which would govern the behavior of individuals and unite them. For all these reasons, neighbourhood in urban communities and rural communities with a few exceptions cannot be deemed as a community.

A political party, an economic organization, a religious association, a student group, a staff union, a club, a family, etc. cannot be considered a community because they lack the necessary characteristics.

Besides the examples mentioned above, a student can classify whether a group is a community or not, keeping in mind the basic characteristics of community.

Distinction between Community and Society

Community	Society
1. Community is a group of individuals.	Society is a net of social relations.
2. Being a group of individuals community is concrete.	Being a net of social relations society is abstract.
3. Definite geographical area or a piece of land is needed for a community.	There is no need of definite area for society. Members of a particular society may be scattered in different areas.
4. Community feeling is necessary for a community and emphasis is laid on interactive social relations.	Community feeling is not required for society. Associative as well as dissociative, both types of relations are found in a society.
5. There is a particular name of community.	A society does not have any particular name of its own.
6. Community is a part of society. There can not be more than one society in a community.	Society is wider. There may be many communities in one society.
7. Nature of community can be local or regional. There are many groups, associations, federations, in it. Community may be divided in many parts for study.	The nature of society is cohesive and complete or whole. It cannot be understood by dividing it in different parts.

Social Group

In the history of human society, group has played a significant role. Man is a social being, so human development can be achieved only by living in a society. Many psychologists believe that the desire to live in the group, is a basic human nature and is found in every human being. That is why the concept of group is a very significant in sociology. Its

importance can be felt from the fact that sociologists like Bogardus and Johnson, have called Sociology as a study of Social Groups.

In human history, there is no such human society which has been devoid of groups. In fact, every need of a human being is fulfilled within the Society. Human existence is not possible without a Society or a Group. Thus every minute, in one way or another, we think of ourselves as connected to the group. A child has the ability to develop intellectual skills and learning, but his development is only possible through the process of group socialization.

Meaning and definition of social groups

Explaining the sociological concept of group, Ogburn and Nimkoff have said that “Whenever two or more individuals come together and influence one another, they may be considered to constitute a Social Group.”

MacIver and Page wrote that “What we imply from a group is that it is any collection of human beings who are brought into social relationships with one another.”

These scholars have considered social relationships among individuals to be significant for building groups, but have not mentioned the limit or number of relations, which is extremely necessary. It seems from these definitions that whenever two or more unfamiliar people meet together, then a group is formed, but this approach can be misleading collection.

It is true that social groups are a compilation of individuals where social relations are found. Merton says that transient social relations do not lead to the formation of social groups. In fact, for the formation of Social Groups, the continuity and stability of interaction and sustainability between the members of the group is essential. Apart from this, Merton has also discussed two important aspects of the group : 1. Subjective Aspect and 2. Objective Aspect. These are related to the membership of the Group. The subjective aspect means that members of the group themselves should be aware that they are members of the group. Objective Aspect means that other people or even distant onlookers should also agree that a particular person is a member of a particular group. Accordingly, the main elements of social group are as follows :

1. The presence of two or more individuals.
2. Upto some level permanent and frequent social interactions.

3. Members of the group should consider themselves a member of the group, and outsiders should also consider them to be a member of that group.

Definitions of Social Group

Scholars have given the definition of social group in the following manner :

1. According to Bottommore—“A social group is an aggregate of individuals in which (i) definite relations exist between the individuals comprising it, and (ii) each individual is conscious of the group itself and its symbols” In other words a Social Group constitutes at least developed structures and organization (including rules and socializations) and a psychological basis of consciousness.

2. According to MacIver and Page—“We mean any collection of human beings who are brought into human relationships with one another”

3. According to Bogardus—“A social group may be thought of as a number of persons two or more, who have some common objects of attention, who are stimulating to each other, who have common loyalty and participate in similar activities”.

On the basis of aforesaid definitions of Social Group, it can be said that social group is not merely a group of individuals. It is essential to have interaction among individuals and social relations among two or more persons must exist. In fact, there are three elements in a group—1. Collection of two or more individuals, 2. Having direct or indirect relationships among them, and 3. Common interest or purpose as the basis of their actions.

It is evident from the above definitions that Social Group is not just a collection of people. It is imperative for these individuals to have mutual relationships. Hence it can be said that at a time when two or more persons establish mutual relationships for fulfilling common aims or interests, and influence each other by their behavior, then only it can be called a social group. In fact, this is a set of people who interact with each other and therefore think of themselves to be bounded with each other.

General characteristics of social groups

The general characteristics of the social group are :

1. The group is a collection of individuals—

The presence of individuals is absolutely necessary for the existence of a group. It is not necessary that there should be physical proximity of group members, but it is also necessary that they have interaction among them. Social relationships are a result of interactions.

2. The group has its own social structure –

Each group has a social structure. According to Fitcher, each group has its own social structure, in which the status of individuals is determined. Social stratification is found in each group on the basis of age, gender, caste, occupation etc. Each member has to play a specific role related to his position in the group.

3. There is a functional division of work in the group—

Each member performs a variety of functions in order to maintain organization in the group. For instance, in an educational institution, each teacher teaches a different subject and fulfills the goal of imparting knowledge. The principal has his own separate role and members of the clerical staff execute the assigned tasks.

4. There is a sense of general interest in the group –

A human Being becomes a member of a group because his interests are fulfilled through it. The interests or stakes of all members in a group are equal. Thus, their emotions are also the same. If the interests of the members were unequal, it would be difficult to build an enduring relationship and organization in the group.

5. Membership of a particular group is voluntary—

Membership of all groups except in Family, is optional. Which group a person will join, depends upon the person's individual interests and the nature of his goals. Thus, man comes in contact with many groups during his lifetime.

6. Group has its own entity—

The basis of the group is collective behavior. In the absence of collective behavior, the existence of a group is not possible. Individuals consider their existence secondary to that of the group. They have full faith and reverence for the group. Therefore, they are

afraid to break the rules of the group. This feeling fortifies the existence of the group. This provides stability and strength to the group.

7. Social norms play an important role in group—A group establishes certain criteria or norms for its existence. Through these, it controls the behavior of its members. Due to these norms, there is uniformity in the behavior of its members. It is not necessary that all groups should have uniform norms and they are equally applicable on all its members.

8. Group is a concrete organization—A Social Group is a collection of people with similar objectives and goals. Since it is a collection of individuals, therefore it is concrete.

Classification of Social Groups

Sociologists have classified Social Groups on different grounds. Major sociologists have classified Groups in the following manner :

Classification of MacIver and Page

MacIver and Page have divided all social groups into three types. These three classes are as follows :

1. Territorial group—These are groups which reside in a certain geographical area. For example, nation, neighborhood, village, town, country, tribe etc. are regional group.

2. Interests Conscious Group without a definite organization—These groups are conscious about their interests, but lack a definite organization. There is similarity of interests among the members in this group. A desire to form or join one group in place of the other and gain importance and status and its associated prestige is also found. Examples of such group are class, refugee group, crowd having similar or dissimilar interest.

3. Interest Conscious Group with a definite organization—The members of this group are conscious about their interests and are also organized. The membership of this group is restricted but their responsibility is unlimited. For example family, neighborhood, club etc. This category also includes such groups which have a large number of members but their organization is formal : for example—state, church, labor union etc.

Classification of Sumner

Sumner has classified all groups on the basis of

intimacy and social distance among group members as the following two types :

1. In-Group—The groups with which an individual establishes complete association or identification are termed as In-Group. The spirit of intimacy is the characteristic of In-Group. Members consider their happiness and misery to be the same as that of other members of the Group. Members of the group believe that the existence of the group as their own existence. In other words, “We feeling” is found in the group. Each member is bonded with each other emotionally. The spirit of love, affection, sacrifice and sympathy are clearly visible among its members. For most people, family is the most common example of an In-Group. Other examples of In-Group are village, caste, religious community, nation etc. Nation of each person is his In-Group. A person begins praising his/her country with its progress. As opposed to this, the downfall or bad repute of his country hurts him. Similarly, the neighborhood or the educational institution of which a person is a member is their In-Group. One maintains special attachment and affection with that group (In-Group). The person works according to the desire of the Group. Therefore, the In-Group is in the eyes of its members is their own group. The members establish a sense of identity with the group. What is In-Group for a set of people, would be Out-Group for members of the other group. In-Groups can be primary or secondary; they can also be permanent or temporary.

2. Out-Group—Some people describe the Out-Group in the context of their In-Group. For Out-Groups, words like ‘They’ or ‘Other’ are used. The Characteristics of Out-Group are opposite to the ones in In-Group. They are sometimes treated as the other people’s group by an individual. For this reason there is a complete lack of support, sympathy, affection, etc. On the contrary, there is a feeling of distance or alienation, dejection, hatred, competition, and favoritism among the members of the Out-Group. This feeling can also take the form of hostility or animosity. For example—we are members of this neighborhood but the ‘other’ neighborhood is very corrupt and dirty. Their inmates are worse than animals. In this sense, the

‘Other’ group is an ‘Out—group’. Main examples of out-group are enemy’s army, foreign groups, competing groups etc.

Classification by Cooley

Charles Cooley has distinguished between the Primary Group and the Secondary Group. According to Cooley, “By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual.”

Charles Cooley has given three major examples of Primary group : 1. Family, 2. Play Group and 3. Neighborhood. As opposed to the Primary Group is the concept of Secondary Group. These Groups lack intimacy. They lack the distinguishing characteristics of Primary Group. For instance, the corporation, the audience, the club, the nation, church, the professional association, etc. are of Secondary Groups.

Classification by Gillin and Gillin

Gillin and Gillin have presented the classification of groups as follows—

1. Blood group (e.g. family, caste etc.)
2. Groups based on physical characteristics (e.g. group based on same gender, age or species)
3. Regional Groups (i.e., tribe, state, nation etc.)
4. Unstable groups (e.g. crowds, audience groups etc.)
5. Permanent groups (e.g. nomadic groups, rural neighborhoods, towns, cities and urban areas, etc.)
6. Cultural groups (e.g. economic, religious, political, recreational, and educational groups)

Other classifications of Social groups

Many other classifications have also been done for social groups. For example, **Elwood** has divided groups into Voluntary and Involuntary groups; Institutional and Non-institutional groups; and Permanent and Temporary groups. **Giddings** has classified groups into Genetic groups and Congregate groups. The genetic group is the family in which a man is born. Congregate Group is the Voluntary Group into which an individual moves or in which he joins voluntarily. **Ward** has given two types of

groups—Voluntary Groups and Mandatory Groups. **Sorokin** has mentioned Elementary – Unibonded Group or Cumulative – Multibonded Group. Nunage has given four types of groups—structured group, structured semi-group, casual semi group and artificial group. **Merton** has divided groups into Membership groups and Non-membership groups. **Leopold** has divided groups into three categories—Crowds, Groups and Abstract Collection. **Park and Burgess** divided the groups into Regional and Non-Regional groups. **George Hasen** has divided groups into Unsocial Group, Pseudo—social Group, Anti-social Group and Pro-social Groups. **Bierstedt** has divided groups into four categories—Statistical group, Community Groups, Social Groups and Associated Groups. He has also mentioned several other groups, which include Large groups and Small groups; Majority groups and Minority groups; Long term groups and Short-term groups; Open groups and Closed groups; Independent groups and Dependent groups; Organized groups and Unorganized groups etc.

Classification of social groups by Cooley is considered as the most important classification. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the concepts of Primary and Secondary group proposed by Cooley.

The meaning of Primary Group

In the year 1909, Charles Cooley used the concept of Primary Group in his work ‘Social Organization’. He mentioned Secondary Group in his second work ‘Introductory Sociology’. The concept of the Primary Group of Cooley is very close to the concept of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, proposed by Tonnies.

In Human life, expressions like love, affection, empathy hold an important place. The Primary Group plays an important role in the development of these feelings. These qualities provide stability to a Social Organization. When humans are born, they are purely biological entities. Then, first of all, they come in contact with the family, which makes them into a Social entity. Since the family is first or primary in human life, it is called a Primary Group. Thus, Primary group implies those groups in which direct, informal, intimate and primary relationships are found.

Definition of Primary Group

In the words of Charles Cooley, “By primary groups I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several ways, but chiefly they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of an individual. Psychologically, the result of intimate relations is the identification of individuals with the common whole, so that for the fulfillment of various goals, one person’s thoughts and aims become the lifestyle and aim of the whole group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a “we”; it involves a sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which “we” is the natural expression. One lives in the feeling of the whole and finds the chief aims of his will in that feeling.”

Definition by Charles Cooley gives the impression of the main features of a primary group. He has considered the Primary Group as a group, which has face-to-face relationships among its members. Due to these face-to-face relationships, its members are intimately connected. These groups are also primary in shaping the universal social nature of human beings and in building human ideals. For example, the family, which Cooley has considered to be the first Primary Group. There is a face-to-face relationship among family members. Due to this all the members are intimately connected with each other. They also help or cooperate with each other. Family is the first group to socialize. From this, one learns the language, table-manners, behavior and conduct. In other words, the primary group shapes the social nature of human beings.

Due to intimacy in primary relationships, the personality of the members converges with the personality of the group. This gives birth to the “We Feeling” which is an expression of loyalty, affection and sympathy among the members of the group. Therefore, the pleasures and sorrows of this group become their own pleasures and sorrows.

Cooley has mentioned three important primary groups—family, group of players, play group, and neighborhood. The reason for considering them as primary is that these are found in every era and in all the societies. These groups provide basic and primary contribution in the development of human

personality. These groups are also primary in the sense that they socialize the individual (which is a biological entity).

Kingsley Davis has reviewed the definition of the primary group of Cooley, and has drawn our attention towards two things—firstly, Cooley has called the real groups (such as family, play-group, neighborhood etc.) as Primary Group and secondly, while on the one hand Cooley uses the phrase “face-to-face association”, on the other hand, he emphasizes specific qualities like sympathy and mutual intimacy. According to Davis, some misconceptions arise from these two about the primary group. These two things are found to some extent in every group. Not only this, indirect relationships (such as writing letters in friendship) and friendly and intimate relationship (eg. felicitation of soldiers) can also be of formal and impersonal nature.

Characteristics of Primary Groups

According to Davis, the nature of primary groups can be explained in terms of three aspects. These are the following :

A. External or Physical Characteristics of Primary group

Kingsley Davis has considered three major physical conditions mandatory for a primary group—

1. Physical proximity—It is necessary for primary groups to have physical proximity. Kingsley Davis uses the term “physical proximity” for what Cooley has termed as face-to-face relationships. For mutual intimacy it is necessary that members know each other directly. Knowing each other mutually gives an opportunity to get acquainted with each other’s ideas. This gives rise to “We Feeling” and a deeper understanding of each other’s feelings.

2. Limited size—Primary Group is smaller in size. Due to limited number of members, there is intimacy among its members. Kingsley Davis has said that the primary group should be small in size, because it is impossible to establish intelligent relationships with many individuals at the same time. Fairchild’s idea is that in a primary group three to four to fifty—sixty people can be found.

3. Longer duration of relations—The intimacy of relations depends on the duration of contact. The longer the duration, the more intimate

that relationship is. Stability is found in the primary group. There are two main reasons—first, all members know each other very well, so that the relationships remain close. Due to this intimacy, there is stability in the group and common, that the goals of the primary group are general. Moreover, due to the continuity (long duration) in the relationships, the unity and affinity between its members, the primary group is more stable as compared to any other group.

B. The internal characteristics of primary groups : Nature of relationship

For the Primary Group, in addition to the internal characteristics, the external characteristics and mental characteristics are also important. Internal Characteristics include relations among members. Davis has highlighted five key features of the primary relationships. These are the following :

1. Identity of ends—Intimate relationships are found among the members of Primary Group. The prime basis of this intimacy is equality in the aims and objectives of its members. Each member tries that in order to fulfill his aims and objectives; he does not infringe or violate on the interests of any other person.

2. Relationship is an end in itself—The relationships which are established in the primary group; do not have a sense of achieving any particular aim or purpose, the relationship itself is the ultimate goal.

3. Relationship is personal—Members of society understand each other directly in primary groups. For this reason, these relations do not have any hypocrisy; nor can they be transferred. Relationships are not impersonal and formal, but are personal and intimate.

4. Relationship is inclusive—In the primary group, each member participates with whole heart and desire. Each member recognizes and knows each other directly. Therefore, every member is aware about the other member. All members together try to achieve goals. That is why the relations found in primary groups are universal. In other words, each person knows full conditions of life of the other person.

5. Relationship is spontaneous—In the

primary groups, relationships develop automatically. The basis of the relation between members is of their own will. These relationships are not established by any kind of pressure, temptation or motive condition. The person is ready to sacrifice everything willingly for the group.

Why primary groups are regarded as Primary?

Charles Cooley has given three major examples of primary groups : 1. Family, 2. Neighborhood and 3. Play Group. Why did Cooley call these groups primary? This is a question whose answer can be given by putting forward many views. Primary groups are called primary for the following reasons—

1. In Terms of Time—primary groups have been called primary in terms of time. First of all, a child comes in contact with these groups. For example—First of all, a child comes in contact with the family, play group and neighbors. He comes in contact with other groups later on.

2. In Terms of Importance—Since the Primary Group has a special role in the development of personality, they have been called primary. These are ideal models for social life.

3. It represents fundamental human associations—Primary Groups are Primary because they are representative of human associations. According to **Kimball Young**, Primary Groups are probably as ancient as human life. They simply form a primary community, which is historically an important unit of fulfillment of primary needs of a person.

4. In terms of Socialization—Primary groups play an important role in socializing are individual. Family, neighborhood and play group play a special role in making children a social being. From these, a person receives knowledge about the traditions, beliefs and culture of his group. In fact, our customs and traditions are also formed in this group.

5. In terms of the Nature of relationships—Primary Relations are found in Primary Group. Goals which are common and self-realized and relationships which are self-generated, personal and all-round are the key attributes of primary relationships. These characteristics can be clearly seen in primary groups such as family, play group and neighborhood.

Primary Groups have also been called primary, because they teach basic behavior of tolerance, compassion, love and generosity towards other members.

6. In terms of self-control—The primary groups produce a sense of self-control in a person. In fact, these are the informal means of social control. Due to the feeling of empathy and sacrifice, a person does not break the rules conventions and traditions of a Primary Group. Cooley says that humanization of animalistic motivations is the major and actual service being rendered by the Primary Group.

Meaning of Secondary Group

Today, along with the progress of civilization, the number of secondary groups are increasing. The nature of the secondary group is opposite to the nature of the primary group. **Kingsley Davis** states that, “Basically, secondary groups can be defined by saying things opposite to those which have been said about the Primary Group.” The secondary groups are spread in such a wide area that the members do not have to stay in proximity to each other. All the members do not know each other personally. They contain such relationships that are not an aim in itself, neither personally nor jointly.

Therefore, the groups with the opposite of primary group’s characteristics are called the Secondary Group. This is a form of group which is different from the primary groups in terms of intimacy of social contact and formal organization.

Definitions of Secondary Group

Prominent scholars have given definitions of Secondary Group as follows :

1. According to Ogburn and Nimkoff—Groups which provide experience devoid of intimacy are called Secondary Groups.

2. According to Fairchild—A group form distinguished from a primary or face to face group by its type of social contact and degree of formal organization, is called a Secondary Group.

3. According to Lundberg—Secondary Groups are those in which the relationships of two or more persons are based on impersonal, self interest and individual qualifications.

4. According to Cooley “There are groups wholly lacking in intimacy of association and usually

most of the other primary and quasi-primary characteristics”

From the above definitions, it is obvious that in the secondary groups, characteristics opposite to those of primary groups are found. They are large in size and they lack intimacy.

Characteristics of Secondary Groups

1. Large size—In the secondary group the number of members is high, and therefore the size of the secondary group is larger. There is no limit to the membership in a Secondary Group.

2. Specialization of Interests—Secondary Groups are created for fulfillment of a particular purpose. No secondary group is purposeless nor can any one conceive of an aimless secondary group. That is why Kimball Young called these ‘special interest groups’.

3. Indirect contact—Direct contact is possible in the secondary group, however, often indirect contact is more frequent. The main reason for this is the large size of the group. Due to indirect contact intimacy is not found to the extent it is in a primary group.

4. Lack of personal and intimate relations—In the secondary group, intimacy is lacking. Since the size of the secondary group is large, each member cannot interact with others mutually and with intimacy.

5. Different Objectives—Everybody in the secondary group thinks about fulfilling their interests or goals. When all the members are trying to achieve their own interests, then there will be a difference or multiplicity of objectives. Due to variation of objectives in the secondary groups, personal interests and competitiveness is encouraged.

6. Formal relations—The mutual relations among the members of Secondary Group are controlled in accordance with certain rules and regulations. If these rules were not there, disorder would spread. Due to these rules and regulations, the relationships among its members remain formal.

7. Deliberately established—Since these are special interest groups, their establishment is deliberate. When the members have to achieve any particular goal or objective then, people establish secondary groups so that their demands can be fulfilled.

Difference between Primary and Secondary groups

Characteristics of primary and secondary groups are completely opposite to each other. The difference between the two of the following major groups can be explained in terms of the following—

1. Size—The primary group is small in size. For example, the family, neighborhood and friends circle is limited. According to Fairchild, it can range from three to four persons to fifty to sixty persons and according to Cooley, it can have members upto sixty persons. The size of the Secondary Group is large. Its membership can be unlimited. Nation is also a secondary group, whose number is unlimited.

2. Relationship—Face-to-face, personal and intimate relationships are found among the members of the primary group. Due to personal relationships, there is no formality. Rather they are characteristic of the intrinsic qualities like love, cooperation and goodwill. Primary groups have a strong “We feeling”. While in the Secondary Group, indirect and impersonal relations are found. There is a lack of cooperation, affection, intimacy and the “I Feeling” is stronger than the “We Feeling”.

3. Interest—There is no particular interest in the primary group. In all conditions, each member whole heartedly participates. They are ready to sacrifice as much as possible for the group. In the secondary group, which are also known as special interest groups, every member tries to achieve only his goal wholeheartedly. Even if he has to ignore the interests of other members for his own interest, he is ready to do so without compunction.

4. Formation of relations—In Primary Group relations are born automatically. Thus there is no condition or pressure of any kind in the establishment of relations. While in the Secondary Group, support of artificiality is taken for the establishment of relations. In contrast, to the primary relationships (which is a face-to-face relationship), secondary relationships are indirect or through telecommunications.

5. Liability—There is no limit to liability in primary groups. It cannot be counted that how many responsibilities will a mother have towards her son. The liabilities of the members in the secondary groups are limited and bound by certain terms and conditions.

6. Rules—There are no written rules in the Primary Group. These groups are informal. They do not make any law or lay any conditions on their members. The nature of a secondary group is formal. There are various types of rules, laws and procedures imposed on the members and formal punishment is handed out on violation of these rules.

7. Control—The nature of control in primary groups is informal. Members’ behavior is controlled by condemnation and reprimand. The nature of secondary groups control is formal. Secondary Group controls its members with the help of secondary institutions like law, police etc.

8. Area—Primary groups are found in every society across all eras in time. In other words, they are universal. These groups are spread over very small areas. Secondary groups on the other hand are not universal. Their geographical area is widespread. Some secondary groups could be spread throughout the country.

9. Influence—Primary groups shape the mentality and thought process of individuals, so their influence is universal. Secondary groups are specialized groups and their impact is limited to certain areas.

10. Personality—The entire personality of a person comes in contact with the primary group. That’s why the primary group members are fully acquainted with each other. In the secondary group, only some part of the personality of the group comes in contact.

11. Work—The primary group creates a person’s personality or socializes him/her. According to Cooley, “it is the building site of human nature.” In contrast to this, secondary groups create specialization in the personality of an individual.

12. Membership—Membership of primary group is mandatory. For this reason man has to live in his family, play-group and neighborhood. Secondary group membership is not mandatory. When a person feels that he has to achieve something for his interest, then he becomes a member of the secondary group.

13. Work Area—The work area of a primary group is limited and less. The working area of the secondary group is wider.

14. ‘We Feeling’—We have a sense of belongingness, a “We Feeling” in the primary group and the relations of persons are primary. In the secondary group we do not have any kind of “We feeling” and relations are secondary.

15. Personal Interests and Collective Interests—The primary groups are collective. For this reason individual interests of the members are merged with the collective interest. Secondary groups are individualistic. In it personal interests are given more importance than collective interests.

16. Antiquity—The primary groups are very ancient, perhaps as ancient as the human society itself. Secondary groups are relatively new groups in a comparative sense. In modern societies, there has been an increase in the number of Secondary groups due to an increase in population, industrial revolution, social mobility etc.

Concept of Reference Group

The concept of reference groups is considered a major and important concept in sociology. This concept was first used in psychology by Hyman in 1942. His well-known book ‘Psychology of Status’ popularized the concept of Reference Group in Sociology. In Sociology, the credit of systematically developing this concept goes to the renowned American sociologist Robert K. Merton who borrowed material from the book “The American Soldier” and tried to explain his theoretical concept pragmatically. According to Merton, the concept of Reference Group is a useful concept as it is not only helpful in interpreting the behavior, but it is also helpful in the study of ‘self’ evaluation. He interpreted this concept on the basis of ‘Relative Deprivation’. The Concept of In-Group and Out-Group by Sumner, the concept of “social self” by James, Cooley and Mead, and the recent systematic study done by Hyman, Sheriff and Newcombe on Reference Group behavior, has contributed greatly to the development of the concept of Reference Group.

All of us live in groups and evaluate ourselves as compared to the other people or groups (those who have a social status similar to ours or have a social status higher than us). When we do not comply with our group norms and accept any other group’s criteria and want to establish identity with that, then

we call that group as a reference group. Thus, the group of individuals which we believe to be ideal and want to mould ourselves according to its beliefs is called a Reference Group. Sometimes a particular person can become part of a Reference Group, whom he or she tries to emulate. That is why the word Reference Group has been used not only for groups but for individuals or social categories.

According to **Sheriff**, ‘Reference Groups are those groups to which a person psychologically relates to himself or aspires to relate. In other words, it can be said that the reference group is the group which is deemed ideal by an individual and the person evaluates himself and attempts to be like the group members. Similarly, according to Newcomb, Turner and Convers, “Reference Group is a group that a person uses as a criterion for comparison, which means that he receives his values from there.”

In this way, reference groups are groups whose values we want to receive and we want to be like their members, whom we consider to be ideal. If we define a Reference Group in more comprehensive sense then it is a comparative group which also includes those groups towards which an individual harbors hatred or which he does not deem to be good. Newcombe in fact divided the Reference Group into two categories—positive reference groups and negative reference groups—in this sense. Positive reference groups are those groups which the person considers to be good and attempts to change himself according to them, while the negative reference groups are groups which the person does not consider to be good and opposes the prevailing beliefs in that group.

Status and Role

In the sociological literature, the term status is taken as social position. In each society and group a person has a fixed place at a particular time. Through which the person is identified. Such a position is recognized by the society or the group. In this way, the person’s position in a society or group is called Status in Sociological Jargon. As a consequence of taking on the position, society expects certain kind of activities from the person, and the person acts according to this status. This is called its ‘role’. The

building of structure and organization of a society is a result of systematic combination of social statuses and roles assumed by different individuals. That's why Bierstedt writes that 'Society is a network of social Statuses.' Many statuses systematically connect to form the whole society together. Statuses are associated with respect and strength depending upon their importance and usefulness in society. The person holding Social Status behaves exactly in a way which is expected and valid by the criteria related to that Status. How will a father, husband, player, politician, professor, doctor, engineer, shopkeeper, student etc. play their role in society, is pre-decided by social rules and norms. The dispensation of Roles according to Status is called 'the balance of Status and Role'. This balance is the main basis of the social organization. In its absence, the social order begins to disintegrate. According to their Social Status, people interact with each other and build social relations.

The study of status and role in sociology has been used by Sociologists as a tool for studying the concepts like group, social organization and social norms. Among those who have made important contributions to the concept of social status and role are Lynton, Merton, Parsons and Davis. We will consider the different aspects of status and role here.

Meaning and Definition of Status

To understand the concept of status, we will mention some definitions presented by various scholars here—

According to **Elliott and Merrill**, "the status is the position of a person which he receives due to sex, age, family, class, business, marriage or efforts etc. in any group. According to **Ogburn and Nimkoff**, the simplest definition of 'status' is that it represents the person's position in the group.

Lapierre says, "Social status is generally understood as a position that a person occupies in society."

MacIver and Page defines, 'Status is a social position that determines the degree of respect, prestige and effectiveness of a person which is different from his personal qualities and social services.

Martindale and Monchesi wrote, "Social status means the position of the person in social

collective, which is recognized by the symbols of respect and norms of actions."

According to **Kimball Young**, "A person has to accomplish some tasks, with some degree of strength and prestige attached to it in society and group. The use of extent of strength and prestige is called status."

Linton opines, "Position occupied by the person at a particular time in the social system is called the social status of that person. "According to **John Levy**, 'The totality of institutional positions of a person or a group in the social structure is known as status.

Bierstedt has said, "Generally the status is a position in the society or a group."

According to Davis, "The status is the indicator of a position in a general institutional setup which is accepted by the society and is created on its own and is related to customs and traditions. "

It is evident from the above definitions that status is an indicator of the position of a person in the group or in society. This Status can automatically be given to a person by the Society or can be achieved on the basis of personal qualities and capabilities. The status of a person is always understood in comparison to other people's statuses. There is no status of an individual in isolation. When we say that a person is a teacher, then it means that he/she also has some students. How can a person be a teacher without a student? Similarly, when we say that a person is a leader then it means that there are persons who are followers because without the followers, we cannot imagine the leader. In this way, one status can only be viewed in the context of another status. The word status on one side reveals the idea of class, and on the other hand, it also explains the behavior of another person. Status is also an indicator of the rights and duties held by a person in comparison with the other person. Social rules, norms and values are also associated with each Status and each person is expected that he/she should follow the same. One is criticized for not following this. A person occupies multiple statuses simultaneously in the society, but he is known in the society by his most prominent status. For example, a person holds various Statuses like, a professor,

father, husband, maternal uncle, brother and son etc. but in the group and community he is known only by the dominant Status.

Essential elements of status and role

In order to understand the Status and role clearly, we will mention its essential elements here—

1. In every Society, the Status and Roles associated with it is determined by its cultural values. Culture only determines which Status will be given to someone and what role will he play.
2. The concept of position and role can only be understood in the context of other person. The Status and Role of a person is related to the Status and Role of other persons which are influenced by them. For example, the Status and Role of the Principal can be understood only in the context of the Status and Role of professors and students.
3. The same Status and Role are maintained by different individuals differently. In the position of Prime Minister, roles were not performed equally by Pandit Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri or Morarji Desai.
4. Each Status and role is only a part of the entire social positions. The individual receives multiple statuses simultaneously in the society and plays his Role accordingly. For example, the same person holds different positions like that of a doctor, father, husband and son, and plays a role according to these statuses when the opportunity arises.
5. On the basis of Status and Role, the entire society is divided into different Status Groups. On the basis of these status groups, we can know the characteristics of a society. Each status group has its own problems, characteristics, interests etc. Sometimes organization is found in the same Status group for the protection of interests. For example, different organizations are found in bourgeois and proletariat status groups.
6. With each status, a special value and reputation is associated which is determined by culture.
7. One person holds many Statuses at the same time but he cannot fulfill all of them with the

same ability. A person can be a good player but he can also be a failed businessman and a carefree husband. A person enjoys respect in the society proportionate to the appropriateness with which he/she plays various roles keeping in view the expectations of the Society.

8. Due to high and low statuses in the society, social Stratification and differentiation arises which can be in vertical or horizontal order.
9. Some situations are given in the society, which the Society confers upon an individual and on the other hand, some situations the person earns through his qualifications and efforts.

The organization of statuses

There is no lone status in the society, instead it is related and influenced by other statuses. Assessment of the person in the society is done on the basis of the various statuses held by him/her and roles played by him/her. To understand the organization of the statuses, Kingsley Davis has mentioned some concepts related to status. These are Office, Status—Complex and Strata. We will clarify these here :

Status, Office, Status Complex and Strata

Office—Davis is of the opinion that social status is related to customs and traditions. These are general and everyone is aware of them. On the other hand some statuses are related to specific Social Institutions, Associations and Organizations whose scope is limited and only a few people know about them. The term ‘office’ has been used for such statuses. The office is an achieved status and not ascribed status. The Manager of the State Bank of India, the President of India, the Vice Chancellor of Rajasthan University, Administrator of Tata Steel and Iron Industry etc. All the posts are offices. Thus, the office is a deliberately created designation in a formal organization, on which there is a control of limited and specific rules and rights and which is not normally ascribed rather achieved through organized effort of the individual. The office is an indicator of a specific status, whereas status is an indicator of normal situation in the entire social structure. Being in an office, a person gets a status too, but every status does not provide office to a person. The same

position can be both status and office, like the position of sociology professor in the Rajasthan University is both office and position.

Status Complex—Davis explains that a person does not accept a single status or office in society but receives many positions and offices. The status of these different statuses and offices received by the person is called the Status Complex. Thus, the Status Complex is a bunch of different statuses and offices on which a person has a right and it has public consent. The status Complex to some extent is the sum total of stabilizing conditions.

Stratum—The relationship of Stratum is with various people achieving the Status Complex. Level or stratum is a group of people with same Status Complex or same set of Statuses and Positions. In other words, all the people holding the same Status Complex form a stratum. For example, all clerks, teachers, bourgeoisie and workers etc. create different Statuses. Strata is the main basis of any social structure and reveals the characteristics of the group. It gives birth to stratification in society. People of the same stratum have similar self-interest, problems and world-view and they appear to be more or less fixed. People of one Status Group make rules and organizations for protecting themselves from the people of another status group. There is unity in them, which is called strength or status-group strength.

Prestige, Esteem and Rank

The terms Prestige, Esteem and Rank are sometimes used interchangeably with status, but there is a clear difference in all of them.

Prestige—There is a reputation of every status in the society; a value attached to it. Some statuses are given more importance and some less; some are thought of as good, and some as bad; some are progressive and some are considered exploited. Thus, in society, there is a different amount of respect and reverence for each status, and it is called the prestige of that status. For example, the prestige of a doctor, engineer, professor and industrialist in society is more than an inefficient worker and peon. On holding a position, the person receives associated status as well. Prestige is not related to the person but to the Status. Society evaluates a status and

confers prestige upon it.

Esteem—All persons who hold the same position do not dispense their duties, obligations and roles in the same way, so even if they have the same prestige, they do not enjoy the same esteem. For example, the esteem of a skilled and kind doctor is more than that of an ordinary doctor. Thus esteem relates to the success-failure, efficiency-inefficiency and ability to work of a person working on a post. That is why a person can be less esteemed even if he is on a high post and another person can be highly esteemed even if he is working on a lower post if he is duty-abiding and also skilled in his work. Thus, relation of prestige is with status and esteem is related to the efficiency, dexterity, specialization, capability, sense of duty and success of the person holding any position.

Rank—Rank is the totality of similar statuses found in the Society. Rank decides the nature of stratification in the society and outlines as to what extent a person is free to change his Status and Role.

Status is also related to power. The meaning of 'Power' is the ability of a person to control the behavior of others in order to fulfill goals. Power is related to a person, and not to a status or office. When the power gets institutional approval, that is when power is legalized, then it is called Authority. The power that an income tax officer has, to recover tax, is his Authority, because this power is given to him by a specific institution and law. Post, Office and Roles are the sources of power and Authority enjoyed by a person. Any status in the society is evaluated on the basis of how much power or authority it enjoys.

Status Symbol—sometimes some situations can be identified on the basis of their symbols. These symbols can be costumes, badges, make-up tools or any physical or cultural elements etc. The differentiation on the basis of female-male, age difference, species, caste and business is marked on the basis of various symbols. For example, the dress of man and woman is different. The status of a soldier and a police employee by their costume and badge, the students on the basis of their dress and bags, the doctor by their bag and stethoscope, the agent by the bag, officer and peon, and customer and shopkeeper

by the place of sitting, and finally the married and unmarried woman can be identified on the basis of vermilion on their forehead.

Key Status—The concept of key status is given by E.T. Hiller, a Sociologist. The person holds many positions in his life. But only one of these is important. Bierstedt says that the key status is the one which is more important and more prominent when compared to other statuses. In modern industrial societies, business itself determines the key status of a person. When we meet a person, we see whether he is a businessman, clerk, doctor, teacher, engineer, worker etc. On the basis of key status, the class status of a person is also known. In some societies the basis of key status is Kinship, Politics, Religion and Caste etc. In primitive societies, age, gender, and kinship determine the key status. In India, caste of a person determines the political situation and his/her key status. A Person's personality is evaluated only on the basis of the key status.

Status Relations—Bierstedt has written with reference to some status relations that many statuses are in pairs, such as parents-children, husband-wife, shopkeeper-client, teacher-student, doctor-patient, Tenant-homeowner, brother-sister etc. From this it is clear that in the complex meetings the mutual relationships are dependent on the status and not on the individual and some norms are associated with each status relation.

Status conflict and reversals—When a person is holding two types of statuses whose norms are different from each other and by following the norms of one, the norms of the other are violated, then this is called Status Conflict. For example, a state employee in India cannot participate in election activities of any political party, but on the other hand he has the right to do so as a citizen of the country. Similarly, sometimes discord is found in the privileges and duties related to a status. For example, the President is in the highest political position in the country and he gives orders for central employees, but sometimes he himself has to obey the orders of the intelligence department in terms of his personal security. Many a time a person is holding various statuses and due to that he/she has to maintain opposite relations.

Status set and Status Sequence—At one time a person holds many statuses. Merton has called it Status Set. A person, doctor, father-son, brother and mother's brother etc. are statuses that a person holds at the same time, they together make up the status set. A person achieves a number of statuses in his lifetime one after another, this is called Status Sequence. For example, if a student becomes a clerk, officer and then manager, then all these posts he holds one after the other. These together make the person's status sequence.

Types of Social Status

In 1936, Ralph Linton divided the status in the society mainly into two parts—Ascribed and Achieved. We will mention both of these here.

Ascribed Status

There are some statuses in society that are automatically received without paying attention to the qualities of the person. These statuses are given to the person on the basis of birth in a particular family and tradition etc. These are ascribed to the child at a time when the society does not know anything about his personality. Ascribed statuses are already present in the society and are provided to the newly born child. The statuses also determine the extent and form of the statuses achieved in future by the child. Ascribed statuses are found in societies all over the World. A person does not have any control over ascribed status, such as being a man or a woman, being young or child, beautiful or ugly and tall or short. Gender discrimination, age, kinship, race, caste, and number of children in the family, adoption, death of parents and separation in marriage, regardless of the wishes of the person, provide him a status. The statuses obtained on these bases are ascribed. In Comparison to modern societies, Ascribed statuses are more common in primitive and traditional societies.

Bases of determination of Ascribed status

The status of any person is determined on many grounds. Some of the key bases are given below :

1. Sex Discrimination—Gender is a definite, objective and lasting physical trait, in almost all cultures. There is a difference in the statuses and roles of men and women. Men's status is generally

considered to be higher than of women. Generally women are considered to be weak, tender, passionate, easily believing and religious. On the other hand, men have been regarded as a symbol of courage, valor, rationality and bravery. This is the reason why women have been given small homely tasks such as sewing, making utensils, cooking and looking after children whereas men take up tasks like animal husbandry, fishing, hunting and warfare which requires physical strength and courage. In many primitive societies women could not participate in religious and magical rituals. The women of Toda tribe of Nilgiris are forbidden to indulge in rearing of buffaloes. The Division of Labor between women and men is not the same in every culture. In one society, one type of work is assigned to men, and the same task is given to women in another society. The basis of division of work between women and men is probably the belief that their natures are different due to heredity. Their social behavior is also thus get differentiated. Differentiation of anatomy in men and women also creates differences in their actions. The woman has to reproduce, so she has been given tasks that are complementary to her task of reproduction. That is why she has been entrusted with the responsibility of child care and domestic work as against war, hunting and power related activities so that they do not have any adverse effect on the womb and they stay close to home. In this way we see that many Ascribed and Achieved statuses are based on sex differentiation.

There is a difference in the status of women and men due to cultural reasons also. Women are not always given secondary status in comparison to men. In the Garo, Khasi and Nayar matriarchal families in India, the status of a woman is higher than the men and this is the preference of the family. In Property and Religious Rituals also women are dominant. Lineage and inheritance are also carried down along the female line. In present day society also, except in a few circumstances, both men and women are given equal pay for equal work and equal opportunities in jobs. Even then, it seems doubtful that division of labor and recruitment can ever be freed from gender discrimination.

2. Age discrimination—Just like Gender Discrimination, age based discrimination is also a definite and clearly visible physical feature, although age is a dynamic fact. In all cultures of the world, there is a differentiation of status based on age. Age can be divided into infant, child, youth, adult and aged etc. Different statuses are provided to people of different age groups in society and it is also necessary to have a certain age for a particular status. The difference between elder brother and younger brother is based on age. Often, older people are more respected in society than children. The reason for this is that more than seniority of age, they have more experience of life and that they are considered as the guardians of tradition and culture. It is necessary for the President of India to be at least 35 years old. Similarly, it is necessary to attain a certain age even for voting, getting candidature for elections and for entering a government job. The head of the Hindu joint family is an elderly man. In India, the basic premise of division of life into *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha*, *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyas ashram* is also age. The purest form of age based status is seen when there is no hand of other elements for achieving that position.

But age is not always important for determining status. Gender, personal qualities, kinship, capacity, education, property and cultural bases are also influential. This is the reason why despite the fact that people are of the same age, they are given differential statuses. In societies where basic sustenance is difficult to achieve, youngsters are considered to be more important. Eskimos consider it to be a moral obligation to kill old people. It is clear that despite having age as a significant factor in determining the status of a person, it cannot be considered as the only basis.

3. Kinship—A person also occupies many statuses on the basis of kinship. A person is related to his parents and blood relatives; he acquires many statuses due to his being related to them. Kinship related statuses are ascribed because we do not choose our parents and siblings. Kinship is a mixed form of biological and cultural facts. In society, we receive many positions from parents only. The king's son accepts the throne. We inherit the caste, religion

and sometimes occupation of our parents as well. Caste is based only on birth in India. Mother, father, brother, sister, uncle, maternal uncle, brother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, mother-in-law and father-in-law etc. all the statuses that are decided on the basis of kinship. There is also some rights and duties associated with kinship. The status of child is evaluated on the basis of the social status of parents in the society and according to their high and low status the child also receives a social status. The reason for this is that biologically, the characteristics of the child are considered similar to the characteristics of the parents and they play a significant role in the socialization of a child.

4. Birth—The status is also determined on the basis of birth in particular family, caste or race. The social status of the people born in the Royal family and upper caste has been higher than that of the lower level families.

5. Physical abilities—Many statuses are given to the individual on the basis of their physical characteristics. The beautiful in comparison to black and ugly, powerful in comparison to the weak and the healthy and capable person in comparison to the sick or the lame and handicapped are higher in terms of status.

6. Caste and Race—The caste in India is the main basis for determining the status of a person.

Achieved status

On the other hand, there are certain statuses in the Society which a person achieves on the basis of his qualities, capabilities and capacity. These are called the Achieved statuses. According to Horton and Hunt, achieved status is 'a social position which a person attains through his own efforts, individual choice and competition'. In the society, competition is necessary for achieved status and the competent and capable people achieve these conditions. Education, business, property accumulation, marriage, division of labor, etc. are related to the achieved statuses. On the basis of success and failure of a person also, one achieves social status. Generally, the compassionate, intelligent, capable, talented, courageous and powerful person gets all the importance. Davis says that such people are always in the society who are clever, talented, powerful,

capable and ambitious enough to win over many obstacles and become the leader of the society. The history of each country and every society keeps on shining with their names. They make history, they are capable of controlling other people and making changes in society. So they achieve a significant position in the society. In this context, it is clear from the examples of many leaders, who despite being a normal person, could attain high socio-political status due to their efforts. The conditions which require unusual talent or qualification are kept free to be acquired by everyone. In modern society, where the qualities of a person are given preference over birth, the achieved statuses are more common.

Bases of determination of achieved status

The main bases of the attainment of the achieved status are as follows :

1. Wealth—Wealth is an important factor in determining a person's position. The person has a higher or lower status depending on the ownership of property. Often the social status of the wealthy is higher than that of the poor. In the modern age, those who have more material comforts are considered elite. A person's status is not determined only by property alone, but it is also seen how the property has been acquired. The position of the upright wealthy person is higher than that of the person who has earned money through foul means, smuggling and unethical behavior. But many times the person who renounces property is also seen with respect.

2. Profession—Profession also determines a person's social status. The rank of IAS, Doctor, Engineer etc. is considered to be higher than peon, mill worker, farmer and shoemaker.

3. Education—Educated as compared to uneducated and B.A, M.A., diploma and trained persons as compared to less educated persons, have a higher status.

4. Political Authority—On the basis of political power, the ruler and ruled are distinguished. In comparison to the common man, the status of a person having authority and political power is higher. In democracy, the social status of the leaders of the ruling party and the opposition leaders is high.

5. Marriage—Marriage also provides many statuses to a person. Only after getting married one

can enjoy statuses like, husband-wife, parents, Brother-in-law, Son-in-law, Daughter-in-law, sister-in-law etc. Different social statuses are also provided on the basis of widow or widower, inter-caste marriage and arranged marriage, monogamous marriage and polygamous marriage etc.

6. Achievements—The achievements of an individual through hard work, also determine his social status. These achievements could be in the field of religion, social, political, educational, economic and sports etc. That is why the social status of good players, scientists, inventors, great writers, musicians, artists and poets etc. is high.

7. The above mentioned bases of Achieved status are of great importance. However, in a particular society, what would be the defining characteristics of Achieved status would depend on the socio-cultural system of the society to a great extent. In some societies money, in other societies spiritual progress and in some other societies valor, courage and acts of bravery are given special importance. The factor which is emphasized more, plays an important role in the determination of achieved status.

Thus we see that there are many factors in the process of determining the status of a person in society. The gender-differentiation, age discrimination, kinship, birth, physical characteristics, caste and race are responsible for the Ascribed status. In determining Achieved status, wealth, profession, education, political authority, marriage and achievements hold prime significance.

Difference between Ascribed and Achieved Status

The differences between the two types of statuses will bring more clarity on the understanding of Ascribed and Achieved Status—

1. Ascribed status is given to an individual by the Society automatically whereas Achieved status is obtained on the basis of qualification, skill, effort and competitiveness.
2. The sources of the ascribed status are customs, traditions and culture of society, whereas the sources of the achieved status are the person himself and his qualities.
3. Ascribed status is based on birth, gender, age,

caste, race, kinship, family etc. On the other hand, the bases of the Achieved status are education, income, property, business, personal qualifications, skills, political rights, artistic qualities, capability to invent etc.

4. The bases of the Ascribed status are relatively stable, they change very little. Therefore, the status received by them is also stable. However, the bases of Achieved status variable, due to which the Achieved statuses are also changing.
5. Ascribed statuses are uncertain and their jurisdiction is not very clear. For example, the limits of father's rights are not prescribed, the beauty of the skin cannot be measured in degrees, the rights obtained from the kinsmen are not quite clear. On the other hand, Achieved statuses are more definite and clear. The authority of a judge, principal and president, have been clearly outlined by law and constitution.
6. Ascribed status is of higher importance in the primitive and traditional societies because in these societies, customs and traditions are important. In contrast, Achieved status is of higher importance in modern societies because the evaluation of person is done by virtue of his qualities.
7. Fitcher says that reconciliation between Ascribed status and its related roles is not necessary whereas in most of the Achieved status situations, there is a co-ordination between the two. For example, it is possible that a father is not able to give proper attention to the upbringing of his children, but it is not possible that a trained doctor cannot give treatment or an engineer cannot build a road or bridge.

Relation between ascribed and achieved statuses

Theoretically Ascribed and Achieved statuses seem to be opposed to each other but functionally these two are complementary to each other. That is why in every society, both types of statuses are found. Ascribed status holds the first place in life because (1) through these cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation. (2) These determine the general goals of a person along which

the person is trained. (3) They determine which individuals will work on which post. (4) On the basis of ascribed status, after assessing a person's gender, age-relations, class, religion, region, community and parents' community, we can know what type of socialization and quality of life one will be leading. (5) The ascribed status give a sense of security to a person, while achieved status cannot do. Achieved statuses give birth to competition and all sides of life cannot be made a matter of competition. Labourers, businessmen and office bearers try to minimize competition. The society itself tries to avoid many such occasions. However, the importance of achieved status in society is not less either. Due to achieved statuses (1) the appropriate person can reach the appropriate post. (2) The person gets inspiration to work. (3) Achieved status gives rise to competition, which curbs the tendency of inaction and monopoly. (4) There are fewer opportunities for development of personality in the society dominated by ascribed status whereas there are many opportunities available for individual development in the societies giving primacy to achieved status. The person can obtain a post suitable to his qualifications by hard work. It maintains the social system and organization as the person is aware of his duties and responsibilities. Achieved status has a special contribution in keeping the system alive.

It is clear that the Ascribed and Achieved status in society have equal importance and some qualities are required for both. For example, a king governs the people with hereditary rights but should know how to behave like a king. Similarly, in order to enjoy achieved status, one should have some qualities of achieved status. For example, the President of the United States is an achieved status and any person can become president by winning elections. Yet the constitution has made some restrictions, such as the presidential candidate of the United States, should be a citizen of the United States and should not be less than 35 years of age. Similarly there are some customary limitations also. In almost all societies there are some limitations for achieved status. In this way, each status in the society is partially ascribed and partially achieved.

Ogburn and Nimkoff believe that, "Society is

less interested in the individual than in the position that he occupies." The importance of any person can be evaluated on the basis of its status in society. Society is interested in a person due to the status he/she holds and once it gets separated from the person, his/her position changes. A person plays his role only according to his status and he gets the right and power accordingly. Status is an indicator of a person's capabilities. Status only reveals the position of a person in the social structure. The social structure is formed only through the aggregation of various statuses. A person is evaluated on the basis of his status only.

Role

The role is the dynamic or practical aspect of status. Statuses are held while Roles are played. The manner, in which a person fulfills the responsibilities related to a status and uses the accompanying rights and privileges, is called the role. By holding a position the work that a person does is called the Role of that person. For example, the position of the President is a status, and the obligations and duties related to this status will come under the President's Role. The person who plays the Role of the President also receives certain facilities and privileges.

Meaning and Definition of Role

According to Fairchild, "Role is the expected work or behavior of a person in any group of individuals which has been defined by group or culture."

Davis says, "The role is the method in which the person fulfills his status needs."

According to Elliott and Merrill, "Role is the work that a person fulfills in conformity with each status."

According to **Linton**, "the term role is used to designate the sum total of the cultural patterns associated with a particular status. It, thus, includes attitude, values and behavior bestowed upon the person or group of persons occupying a status."

Horton and Hunt write, "Role is the behavior which is expected from an individual who occupies a certain status."

According to **Broom and Selznik**, "Role is the behavior of a person resulting from a Specific Social status."

According to **Ogburn and Nimkoff**, “The role is a set of socially expected and approved behavior patterns consisting of both duties and privileges associated with a particular position in a group.

It is clear from these definitions that due to holding a status, the work that society expects from the person is called Role. The Role is the behavioral and dynamic aspect of status. How a person will fulfill the role related to his status, depends on many things, like how much he is aware of his duties, how hard he works to fulfill his obligations, how dutiful is he, how aware he is about the norms of the society and how many roles is he playing simultaneously. A person with more ability and experience fulfills his role better. Genetics also affect a person’s ability to fulfill his Role. How long will a person remain on any post will depend on how much work he performs in his role.

Role does not exist in isolation in the society. The significance of each role is only with reference to other status and Roles. For example, a teacher plays his role in the context of his student, a doctor plays a role in the context of patients, and a king plays his role only in reference to his subjects. A person holds many statuses in his life span, according to which he plays different roles. On assuming a particular status, what type of a role will a person play will depend on the culture and social values of that society. Society and culture decide the responsibilities and rights related to any role. A person works differently at different times because one is in many social statuses. Persons playing the same role in various statuses are seen failing in life. There is a specific role related to each status. If Roles are not played properly, imbalance and disintegration arises in the society. Therefore it is necessary to have a balance and integration between status and role fulfillment.

Characteristics of role

To understand the role more clearly we will mention its characteristics here :

1. Role is related to the completeness of those behaviors which are expected to be held by a group or society because of a specific status.
2. Role is determined on the basis of culture and social norms.
3. Role in the society is not played in isolation or unilaterally, but it is always played in context of

other status or roles.

4. Role is associated with status. Since status can be Ascribed and Achieved. Similarly roles are also of two types, Ascribed or Achieved.
5. Role is dynamic and changing. The same role is played by different people in different ways and is played differently in different times and cultures.
6. Every person fulfills his role on the basis of his/her capability, capacity, interest, attitude etc.
7. Person plays many roles in the society but the role for which he/she is known in the society, is called its ‘key role’. Less significant roles are called ‘normal roles’.
8. Different types of roles are fulfilled through different behaviors. All roles are not fulfilled by the same type of behavior.
9. Some rights and privileges are associated with each role.

Few concepts related to role

1. Role Playing—When a person plays his role in conformity with the ideals set by the society, then it is called ‘Role Playing’. In the society, we see the priests, pastors, fathers, sons, teachers, etc. all playing their own roles.

2. Role Taking—During this process, the person learns to play specific roles. For example, on recruitment in the army, one learns to play the role of a soldier.

3. Playing a Role—In this process, the person plays the role of another character. For example, if a person performs the role of Ram, Ravana, Krishna or Kansa in RamLila or Krishna Lila, then it is called playing a role.

4. Role Dispossession—When a person leaves one status and takes up another status, then he has to discontinue the role related in his previous status. This is called Role Dispossession. The intermediate state when one Role is given up in order to take up another Role is called role transition.

5. Role Failure—When a person fails to play a role according to one’s status, it is called ‘Role Failure’. In stable and organized societies, where the Ascribed roles are more, roles are fulfilled successfully, but in the changing and unorganized societies where Achieved roles are high, the failure to

fulfill the role is common. For the fulfillment of each Role, specific qualities are required.

6. Role Expectation—After assuming a status, the kind of role the society expects the individual to play, is called the Role Expectation. If there is a difference between the actual role played by the individual and the role-expectation, it gives rise to disorder in the society.

7. Role Conflict—Many times a person has to play the role of two different statuses together and if there is a contradiction, then it is called role—conflict. For example, when the son is brought to the court in front of a Judge who is his father, then he is confused that he should punish him like a father or as a Judge. It is difficult to keep these two roles together; this is the state of Role Conflict. Cultural values in the society are also responsible for role-conflict. In the modern and transitional societies, role-conflict is more frequent because new and the old values are found together. Role-struggle creates mental stress. Lundberg says that in the case of role-conflict, the person chooses the influential role and leaves a weak role and if the person is not able to do so, then his personality begins to disintegrate. In the event of a role-conflict, which role will a person choose and which he/she will leave shall be decided by a preset list of priorities existing in the society. Accordingly, a person does more important work as compared to less important work.

Robert Merton has given three concepts related to status and role—Role Set, Status Pattern and Status Sequence. These are summarized here :

8. Role Set—Any role in the society is not unilateral or isolated, but it is only in reference to others. The range of roles played by a person in relation to the statuses which are related to his particular status is called role-set. For example, a doctor, being a doctor, plays different roles with other doctors, nurses, patients and medical officers, which is called Role Set. We can also clarify this by another example. Suppose there is a minister and being a minister he behaves differently with the Chief Minister, other ministers, public and the administrative officials, and with all of them, this is called role set.

9. Status Pattern—A person holds many statuses during his lifetime and also plays different

roles according to him. This entirety of different statuses is called status pattern. For example, a person wears many roles together like those of father, husband, brother, lawyer, customer, landlord etc. All of these statuses together will be called the status pattern of that person.

10. Status Sequence—A person does not hold many statuses at the same time, but also holds different statuses at different times. The ascending order of statuses creates a sequence, which we call as status sequence. For example, a person is a student today, tomorrow he might become a Sarpanch of any Panchayat, then MLA, then Member of Parliament and President. This sequence of statuses called status sequence. We can represent the role of a doctor role model, the positioning of a professor and the status—of a president through the following figures :

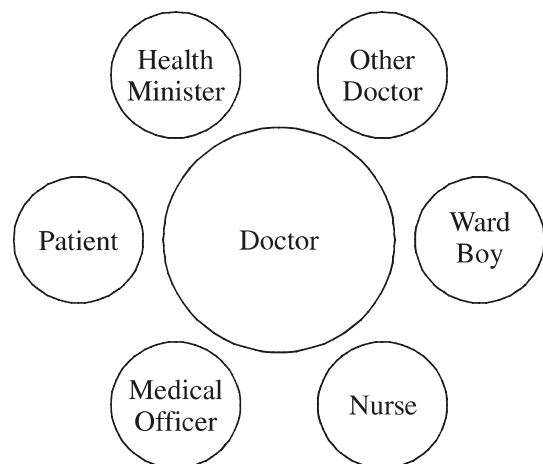


Figure 1. Role Pattern of Doctor

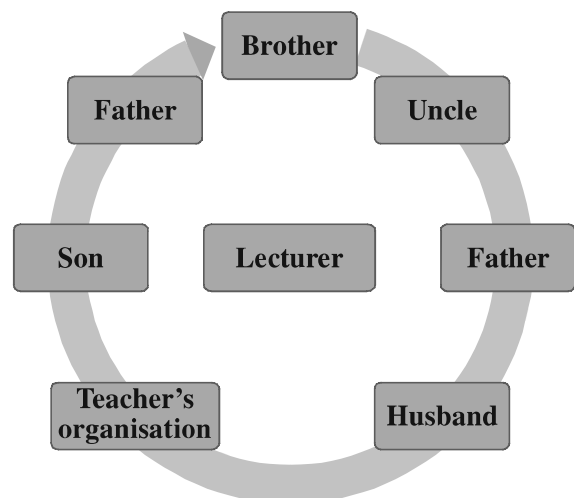


Figure 2. Status Pattern of a Lecturer

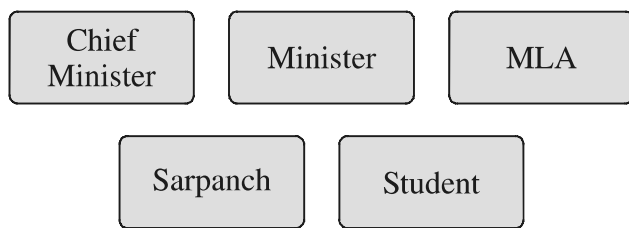


Figure 3. A series of President

Relation between status and Role

The status and the role are always distinct. The status is a sociological concept; it is a socio-cultural fact, whereas the role is the topic and event of social psychology. Various types of roles are performed in different ways by different persons. The reason for this is the existence of differences in personality, ability and behavior of individuals. This is the reason that the role of President or Principal, cannot be played identically by all people. The role of each person is different from the other. One reason for this is that there is a change in the activities and responsibilities of their officials along with the development of the Group and the Organization. It is therefore said that role is the dynamic aspect of status.

Relationships of status and roles are not stable, rather they are constantly changing with new ideas, new values and new assumptions, thus the relationship between status and role also changes. The relationships between the Laborer and owner in the Industrial era are not the same as in the Middle Ages. Relationship between husband and wife, parents and children, relation between the ruler and the public, the relationship between the guru and the disciple were not same in the Vedic period, as they are today. Many statuses have undergone changes in terms of prestige and roles.

There is a close relationship between Status and Role. Both are called two sides of the same coin. Some people say, 'There is no role without status and there is no status without role'. For example, if the post of principal is not there in an institution, then how can a person be the principal to play the role of principal? But Bierstedt does not agree with this opinion. He says that both can also be separate. For example, till the appointment of the new Vice Chancellor after the resignation of the University Vice Chancellor, the administration distributes his work. In

this situation, the person who takes up the work of Vice Chancellor, neither can be called Vice Chancellor nor can he receive all the facilities received by the actual Vice Chancellor.

Similarly, without holding one status, one person can play a role related to that position. For example, if the Principal goes away, other professor can play his role. Still, he cannot be called Principal. That's why Bierstedt says that 'status is an institutional role.' Nevertheless the status and role are complementary and mutually related.

Sociological importance of status and role

The importance of status and role with respect to both the individual and the society are the following :

1. Status and roles together build the social system and in order to run the social organization properly, it is necessary to have a balance and coordination.
2. Status and roles facilitate work in society by division of labor.
3. They contribute in maintaining social control in society because in every status, there are norms and rules, related to each role and a person is expected to behave accordingly.
4. These also contribute in socialization because before the birth of a person they are there in the society and the person learns the codes of behaviour accordingly.
5. Status and role guide the actions of a person and tell him about which role he will have to play in which status.
6. We can predict the behavior of any person by roles. For example, if a person becomes the Prime Minister, then we can predict his actions, because constitution and social practices have determined the actions.
7. The functional needs of the Society are fulfilled by playing roles, through which the continuity and stability in the Society is maintained.
8. A status and related roles give birth to a particular mentality. Status and role play a major role in shaping the mentalities of traders, teachers, students, soldiers.
9. The status creates a sense of awareness and responsibility in the person.

10. There are higher and lower statuses in the society. These inspire the person to try for higher status and it leads him or her to prosper.

At present, social order is changing rapidly. It has created an imbalance in the status and role of interpersonal communication. Today there are lot of gaps between Role playing and role expectation. Due to this, the situation of personal and social disorganization is increasing. For example, students, teachers, politicians, judges, administrators, etc. are not performing their roles in the same manner as they are expected to. That is why the tendencies of dissent, crime and dissatisfaction have been increasing in the society, and the amount of personal and family disintegration is increasing. In order to run the social order smoothly, people need to keep dispensing their role according to the social—cultural system with right balance between status and role.

Important Points

- Society is an abstract concept. The organization built on the basis of social relations between individuals is called a society.
- The concept of society is broad. Many Associations, Groups, Communities are included in the concept of society.
- Community is a collection of people who reside in a certain geographical area and among whose members the “We Feeling” is found.
- Community is a tangible concept. Community is self generated and its goals are general.
- Group is a collection of individuals in which certain types of social relations are found among individuals, and each member of the group is conscious of the group and its symbols.
- Members have direct, face-to-face personal and close social relations in Primary groups.
- Secondary groups are those where members have indirect, impersonal and formal relations.
- Sumner has mentioned In-Group and Out-Group on the basis of membership.
- The status represents the person’s position in the group.
- Roles are duties of an individual related to status.
- Role is the dynamic aspect of status.
- Social status is of two types : Ascribed status and

Achieved status.

- Ascribed status is a status that a person enjoys on the basis of birth.
- The Achieved status is a status that one person enjoys on the basis of merit.

Questions for Practice

Multiple Choice Questions :

1. Who is the author of a book titled ‘Society’?
(A) Parsons (B) Marx
(C) Bottomore (D) MacIver and Page
2. What do we call the network of social relations?
(A) Community (B) Organization
(C) Society (D) Association
3. What do we call the group of individuals who live on a specific geographical area?
(A) Group (B) Community
(C) Committee (D) Institution
4. Who among the following can be accepted as a community?
(A) Student Union (B) Tribes
(C) Family (D) Crowd
5. Which sociologist has divided the group into Primary and Secondary Group
(A) Charles Cooley
(B) Sumner
(C) Charles Winick
(D) Gillin and Gillin
6. What type of relationships do we have in Primary Group—
(A) Formal (B) Informal
(C) Negative (D) Positive
7. According to Cooley, which of the following is an example of Primary Group?
(A) Family (B) Neighborhood
(C) Play Group (D) All above
8. “Status is institutional Role” Who gave this statement?
(A) Sutherland (B) Fitcher
(C) Bierstedt (D) William Goode
9. “Role is the dynamic aspect of Status” Which scholar stated it?
(A) Merton (B) Bierstedt
(C) Jonson (D) Linton

10. How does the plurality of Ascribed Statuses represent society?
(A) Secondary society
(B) Free society
(C) Closed society
(D) Large society
11. Achieved Status is related to
(A) Merit (B) Birth
(C) Power (D) Caste
12. What is the Status that a person gets on the basis of birth and does not have to work hard to acquire
(A) Ascribed status
(B) Achieved status
(C) Charismatic Status
(D) Psychological Status
13. What is the status obtained on the basis of personal merit and qualification?
(A) Provided status
(B) Earned status
(C) Rare status
(D) Psychological condition
14. Which of the following is not Ascribed Status?
(A) Race (B) Caste
(C) Class (D) Gender
15. To which scholar is the concept of Status and Role related with?
(A) MacIver and Page
(B) Kingsley Davis
(C) Ralph Linton
(D) Wilbert Moore
16. Who gave the concept Key Status?
(A) Merton (B) Durkheim
(C) Linton (D) Hiller

Very Short Answer Type Questions :

1. What is Society?
2. Define Community.
3. Define Group.
4. Who has given the concept of Primary Group?
5. What does the Secondary Group mean?

6. What is Reference Group?
7. Define Status.
8. What is meant by Ascribed Status.
9. What is meant by Achieved Status.
10. Define Role.
11. What is Status Complex?
12. What does Role Set mean?
13. What are Membership Groups called?
14. What does Primitive Society mean?
15. Explain the meaning of Negative Group.

Short Answer Type Questions :

1. Explain the concept of the Society.
2. Explain the definition of Society by MacIver and Page.
3. Mention the essential elements of Community.
4. Explain the difference between Society and Community.
5. Mention the characteristics of Group.
6. Explain the concept of Reference Group.
7. Explain the characteristics of Primary Group.
8. State the relationship between Status and Role.
9. Explain the bases of Ascribed Status.
10. Explain the bases of the Acquired Status.

Essay Type Questions :

1. Define Society. Explain in detail the different features of Society.
2. What do you understand by Community? Discuss in detail various characteristics of community.
3. Define Group. Discuss various types of groups.
4. What is Group? Explain the difference between Primary and Secondary group.
5. Define Status. Discuss various types of Status.

Answer Key :

1. (D) 2. (C) 3. (B) 4. (B) 5. (A) 6. (B) 7. (D)
8. (C) 9. (D) 10. (C) 11. (A) 12. (A) 13. (B) 14. (C)
15. (C) 16. (D)