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Anthropology

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# ANTHROPOLOGY : AN INTRODUCTION

ANTHROPOLOGY can well be defined as the study, or science of study, of Man in time and space. The definition has two components viz. the time and the space. In time, anthropology deals with the evolution of man while 'in space' refers to the variation at a particular moment of time.

FROM the definition it becomes obvious that anything that refers to, forms, affects or results from man should form the subject matter of anthropology. If so, everything under the sky present, past or future should be covered by the scope of the subject. All human beings, plant and animal life, environments, academic disciplines and everything one can think of are embraced into one term called anthropology. Yet, if a discipline and its scope is unlimited, it may lead to ambiguity. Anthropology, is, therefore, generally limited to five branches, namely.....Physical Anthropology; Social Anthropology; Prehistoric Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropological Linguistics.

## Physical Anthropology

PHYSICAL Anthropology should correctly be termed Biological Anthropology, for it deals not only with physical (morphological) man but also the genetic; the latter is supplementing and gradually replacing the former.

THE branch deals with biological evolution of, and variation in, man or to be more correct man and his relations (i.e. order Primates) to seek the answer to:

- what has been the sequence of events in the course of evolution;
- the factors and mechanism of this course and
- the nature of on going changes in the species. Paleo-anthropology (Palaeo-ancient or old; paleo-anthropology is thus, the study of early man and his relations, with particular reference to fossil evidence) therefore forms an important part of physical anthropology that also includes the study of human physical growth and development, dermatology-phics, population genetics, biochemical and cytogenetics, anatomy (particularly osteology) of man and comparative osteology of man and apes etc. The study of races (or the anxiety for finding out pure race) on basis of morphological criteria has taken a back seat after the revelation that pure races do not exist today came to physical anthropologists.

THE study of primate behaviour and more recently birth of socialbiology have extended the horizons of physical anthropology; greater interest of anthropologists in the role of heredity and environment vis-a-vis disease as also the development of medical genetics and genetic counselling have strengthened the applied part of physical anthropology giving rise to the concept of *New Physical Anthropology*.

COMPLETE knowledge of physical anthropology requires the basic clarity of concepts of some paramedical biological and social sciences including anatomy and physiology, biochemistry, geology, ecology, psychology etc.

## Social Anthropology & Ethnology

SOCIAL anthropology became separate from ethnology almost a century ago. Ethnology, after Radcliffe Brown, is the *Study of Peoples*. People or ethnic groups, differ from and resemble one another in social character, language and in culture. The ethnologist compares and classifies peoples on the bases of these similarities and differences, so that he has to deal with racial, linguistic and cultural classifications. Further, he seeks to discover, by various methods, something about migrations,

interactions and development of the people in the past. An ethnologist should obviously have sound knowledge of physical anthropology, linguistics and social anthropology.

FOR Radcliffe Brown again, social anthropology deals with "the general theoretical study of social institutions, law, religion, political and economic organisation etc.". All these systems are studied by the students of other social sciences too but the latter usually conform themselves to case studies while a social anthropologist strives for the general rules that govern such institutions. In other words "Social anthropology deals with characteristics of all social systems". Social anthropology as a subject is quite close to psychology and shares many common elements with economics, political science, history and law. It is however, closest to sociology, so much so that many anthropologists and sociologists refuse to acknowledge any difference in subject matter of the two, while some others, if they have their say, shall like to call social anthropology by the name of *comparative sociology*. It can not be denied that the two have come extremely close in the recent past and whatever differences between them exist today are of quantitative nature only. Participant observation, an exclusive domain of social anthropological field research is gaining rapport with the sociologists. Study of tribal societies hitherto an exclusive privilege of social anthropologists (who today don't hesitate to involve themselves in the study of modern, civilized peoples), has become a fascinating field of research in sociology.

SOCIAL anthropology in turn, is loosely divided into a number of more specialized subject areas, although the exact number and labels would be a matter of debate among scholars in the field. These are defined partly by subject areas: "Legal Anthropology", "Economic Anthropology", "Political Anthropology" etc. Partly by kinds of theoretical focus: "Psychological Anthropology", "Symbolic Anthropology", "Cognitive Anthropology" etc.

## Prehistoric Archaeology

PREHISTORIC archaeology, one way is the ethnology of early man where the inferences are deduced through the remains of early man and the material left man-made structures and even the faces. For dating his field discoveries, an archaeologist needs the help of geology and geophysics. He should have sound knowledge of biological anthropology, geography, ethnology and cultural anthropology.

PREHISTORY has been quite popular (with professional and amateur alike) in present century for it is during this period that most of the early man's history has been conjunctured through large scale excavations in Africa (courtesy Leakey et. al.) and evidence along with the fossil finds has generated much curiosity and interest in early man and his works.

THE word 'prehistory' was first used by a Frenchman Tournal but it came into practice only in 1865 after the publication of Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*. It also started the use of terms 'Paleolithic' and 'neolithic' in the study of prehistory.

THOUGH the anxiety about the antecedents of man is as old as man himself, the prehistoric archaeology in its true sense started only in 1797 when a farmer John Frere sent some tools (that we know today as Acheulian) found 12 feet below the earth surface, to the Society of Antiquaries in London. The subject, however, found popular favour only in the last decades of 19th century when large scale excavations started in many parts of the world.

TILL about 1960s, the prehistoric archaeologists were mainly

concerned with describing the artifacts, or material remains of prehistoric sites along with the techniques used by them. They also compared their finds, in frequency and quality, with those of the neighbouring sites. In "new archaeology", however, the interest has shifted from traditional aspects to the understanding of social formation and cultural processes as also the 'rate and direction of cultural change'.

THE new generation of archaeologists is different; they refuse to be content to describe and classify the remains of the past and reconstruct detailed regional sequences. They are determined to see past ways of life in environment as 'systems', to theorise about processes of cultural change, to seek to reconstruct social life and even thought worlds, as well as material leavings.

SUCH archeologists begin with severe disadvantages, since the evidence is usually meagre and hard to interpret. Besides, the nature of evidence one has to work with inevitably leads to concentration on the material side, rather than the ideational side. These archaeologists are, therefore, very likely to use deductive strategies to explore non-material facets of a past way of life. For example, given what we know about "primitive" religions or kinship systems, one asks, what kind of clues might such systems in the past have left, and where might a detective, best look for them? In this manner, by using theories to guide the search for evidence, archaeologists can test the theories; and the sites studied become, by their nature, pieces in a wider puzzle.

IN RECENT years, prehistorians have many powerful instruments of frontline technology to aid detective work. Still, compared to the evidence available to the social anthropologists doing fieldwork, archaeological evidence is inevitably limited, partial and one-sided. However, as archaeologists have become theorists concerned with cultural dynamics they too enjoy certain advantages. In contrast to social anthropologists, whose theories have tended to be tuneless to portray small-scale societies as if they have been in stable equilibrium and to focus on structure rather than process, archaeologists can see long range continuities, processes covering a long time period. Due to this advantage of having the evidence of time, archaeologists can more easily answer questions of sequence and process.

LATELY, a new trend that can be seen is that social anthropologists and archaeologists have begun to work together, to gain advantages of both perspectives by exchanging insight.

#### Anthropological Linguistics

ANTHROPOLOGICAL linguistics focuses on the (mainly unwritten) languages of non-western peoples. It puts to test theories of language based mainly on European languages and examines languages in the full range of social and cultural settings.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL linguistics, after the development of the subject of linguistics, has become more associated with the latter. Systematic study of the evolution and variation in language (i.e. anthropological linguistics) is much different from the study of a particular language. The origin of Anthropological Linguistics was the result of the metaphysical writings of 17th-18th century philosophers but the real breakthrough came with Tylor's *Researches into the Early History of Mankind* (1865) whereby the author advocated for an empirical and scientific basis for the study of language. He mainly focussed on the relation of language to thought, the nature of the capacity for language, gesture language of deaf-mutes and its relevance for the origin of language, the probable processes that might have been involved in the evolution of language, invention and development of writing, the relation between symbols and their respective objects, language as an instrument in the development of culture. In a nutshell, he prepared the blueprint for the subject matter of anthropological linguistics and the direction of research to follow.

IN THE late 19th century the common questions (regarding the language) that engulfed the minds of researchers related to the origin of language, historical and comparative linguistics the Indo-Europeans; significance of differences in language, the development of the science of phonetics and the languages of the 'primitive' peoples. Since then, however, many changes in this subdiscipline of Anthropology have taken place with increasing role of biological and cultural factors in the study of language.

OF ALL the branches of anthropology social anthropology (called cultural anthropology in the Continent) has probably grown most systematically. Biological Physical anthropology has only recently advanced beyond the anthropometrics and blood grouping. Archaeological and palaeoanthropological researches owe their progress to chance factor (It took the legendary LBS Leakey more than 17 years to get a meaningful fossil from the Olduvai Gorge in Africa). Social anthropology, through various schools of thought (e.g. diffusionist, evolutionist, structuralist, functionalist etc.), has reached the most advanced stage of development.

SPECIAL interests of anthropologists have today helped in the interdisciplinary approach to various aspects of life. In Anthropology of Sports, for example, they have to work along with medical doctors and nutritionists; Anthropology of Law has brought the fields of anthropology and that of legal and criminal justice closer than ever. Through Medical Anthropology, the interest in healing processes of simple societies has increased. Anthropologists, ethnologists, geneticists, biologists etc. have been brought together by social biology. Cultural Ecology has resulted in interdisciplinary studies by anthropologists, geographers and botanists, etc. etc. In short, anthropology has cut through the narrow boundaries of different disciplines to unite them into a more meaningful network of knowledge for human society.

BECAUSE of the extending horizons of anthropology, an anthropologist has to specialize in any of the branches of the discipline. Yet, "anthropology has remained" united in its interest in human beings as total organisms and in its comparative approach to the understanding of human species.

ANTHROPOLOGY basically is a science that aims at solving or unfolding the curiosity about Man. What is man, where we came from, where are we going, why people differ etc. are some of the questions asked about man. These questions have also been viewed (though differently) differently in various disciplines of sociology, psychology, political science, human biology, history, economics and philosophy and even in literature. Yet Anthropological approaches and perspectives remain totally distinctive. Anthropology has an orientation, a set of research styles and methods, that give it a distinguished position within the social sciences. This anthropological orientation is deeply humanistic, is concerned with meanings rather than measurements, with the texture of everyday life in communities rather than formal abstractions. Anthropology is different and more exhaustive than all others on a number of other accounts also;

FIRSTLY, anthropology is not limited to human beings with some particular characteristics or of some particular area, group, race, religion etc. or of people of the past or only of the present. Human societies, of present and past, and living anywhere in the world form the integral part of anthropological subject matter. Traditionally anthropologists have been concerned more with the simple, pre-literate and pre-industrial societies of the third world. Now, however, the situation has changed and modern, western societies also are being studied (Urban Anthropology). Secondly, the holistic approach in anthropology makes its position unique. It encompasses social, economic, political, ritual, physical and genetic etc. aspects with their interaction. Biological and cultural dimensions of human evolution, for example, can not be studied in isolation because one has definite bearings on the other. For the purpose, therefore, the

services of physical and cultural anthropology, as also of prehistoric archaeology will be required. Today, because of the extending dimensions of the discipline, however, the anthropologists tend to specialize in any one of the branches of anthropology.

BECAUSE of their fascination for the pre-literate, pre-industrial, simple societies, anthropologists are generally branded with being the scientists of the 'primitive' (The term 'primitive' that referred to uncivilized, barbarian societies, in vogue till thirties of present century, has now been replaced by 'simple' societies) who have their own reasons to be preoccupied with such societies. Firstly, it is a common belief that such societies represent some past stage of modern civilized societies so that their study can represent the ready-made progress made by modern societies (which may or may not be true). Secondly, these simple societies represent the wide spectrum of variation present in the human society today. If they are not studied soon they may (because of their increasing contacts with civilized world) lose most of their peculiarities helpful in conjuncturing cultural evolution and variation in human society. One must, however, bear in mind that these simple societies are simple because they lack in script and technological development. Otherwise, their social institutions are by no means simple compared to the modern civilised societies. The recent trends in anthropology to study technologically advanced societies present a happy augury.

PARTICIPANT observation (detailed in the topic of Fieldwork) is the technique evolved by the anthropologists to study their subject matter. The technique, though most accurate compared to other techniques of fieldwork, is highly time-consuming. Simply because a *genuine* anthropologist will never relent short of the truth, he must try to understand the society he is studying the way members of the society do. Acceptance of an outsider (i.e. the anthropologist) as a member of society may take a long time and hence in reaching at the right conclusions.

MOST of the governments in the developing world till recently had never the patience to wait for the observations, analyses and the results derived by anthropologists. They relied more on other less-accurate but quick techniques (e.g. schedules & questionnaires) for designing & implementing development programmes that expectedly met with their fate. Now when participant observation and the results obtained therefrom are gaining grounds, the process of development has somewhat hastened. Despite all this, anthropology is yet to find its place and contribute to its capacity in the multifaceted progress of mankind.

### Why Anthropology

ANTHROPOLOGY is a synthetic science and has strong links with other social and biological sciences. Yet, its contribution in the human sphere is unique. The major issues resolved by anthropology in the short span of its existence are given below

(i) **Understanding Human Differences** - BEFORE the anthropological researches, the simple, pre-industrial societies were considered being comprised of savage, barbarous people who would go all extremes to fulfil their selfish aims. Anthropology has clarified many of such myths regarding the tribals. Similarly, the cultural bias in terms of the 'ethnocentrism' has well been exposed. The study of a large number of varied societies has shown all cultures to be ever evolving and variations present in different cultures of today are the result of various historical processes of each group. The myth of superiority of (western) cultures too has been negated, proving a moral booster for the developing societies.

THE ethnocentrism prevalent among the western cultures culminated into the concept of superior race and 'racism'. The study of various 'races' in terms of their physical and genetic features by anthropologists, that was the major concern of early

physical anthropologists, revealed a number of facts to prove the oneness of human race and the absence of pure races in the human species. It was also revealed that the physical differences between different groups are the consequences of the adaptation of each such group to its environment (For further details please see the topic on Races in Lot II).

(ii) **Understanding Ourselves** : THE knowledge gained through anthropology, that all behaviour is learned and not inherited, can help us understand ourselves and make necessary changes in our cultures. The anthropological perspectives (particularly, cultural relativism), may be utilized for solving intergroup and intergroup problems and can prove to be a panacea for various problems facing the societies today.

(iii) **Applied Anthropology** : APPLIED anthropology can well be defined as the 'organized interaction between professional anthropologists and policy-making bodies public and/or private. In this sense, the administration can well utilize the services of anthropologists and their works for policy making and administration of various regions in a heterogeneous or multinational state by utilizing their knowledge of the cultural variations and felt needs of the people (in terms of anthropology of our cultures). Anthropologists, however can render greater service in terms of action anthropology i.e. by involving themselves in planning, administering the policy of development and advising the administration. The services of anthropology and anthropologists and action anthropology have been detailed in Paper II and warrant no detailed discussion here. We must, however, add that anthropologists in the third-world countries, where their services are required most urgently, are often neglected because an anthropologist has genuine concern for the society while the administration and politician have to achieve their own selfish ends while following the policy of development.

## THE GROWTH OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

ANTHROPOLOGY in India owes its birth to the British colonial policy, and takes us back to 1784 when the Asiatic Society of Bengal was established at Calcutta to take up researches on 'Nature & Man'. Since then British administrators, foreign missionaries, British Judges, travellers, and army men continued to publish material on the tribes and castes. During this period the main concern of anthropologists was to study natives' habitat, social institutions, religious beliefs, economic conditions etc.

THERE is a general agreement that the Formative period of Indian Anthropology (1771-1919) dominated by the British administrators was followed by the Constructive period (1920 - 1947) when both Indian and British anthropologists viz. Rivers, Marrett, Frazer, Malinowski jointly worked in this field. As the interaction with American anthropologists increase after independence, Indian Anthropology entered its Analytical period and made manifold developments.

### Village Studies

A BREAK from this traditional preoccupation with tribes occurred towards the middle of present century, when anthropologists began village studies and urban studies in a big way. This change over can mainly be explained in terms of greater contact on the personal as well as institutional level between Indian and American cultural anthropologists. Another equally important reason was the needed widespread concern with rural development in India. Dube (1955), Srinivas (1955), Majumdar and a few other Indian anthropologists were stimulated to take up analytical study of the rural communities in India, as also the American anthropologists like Oscar Lewis, Morris Opler, David Mandelbaum, Robert Redfield, Milton Singer, McKim Marriott etc.

### Complex Societies

THE concept of Great and Little traditions, proposed by some



of these American anthropologists (Redfield), provided a new and effective perspective to understand Indian civilization. In those days the techniques used to study the village and urban societies were those of interview, questionnaire, and observation. The questionnaire technique, however, had become widespread in social anthropological studies, and in the name of quasi-quantification of data questionnaire are applied even in the study of pre-literate communities as interview-schedules.

### Psychological Studies

UNDER the same American influence the study of culture and personality found a place in the Anthropological Survey of India during early fifties under the guidance of Prof. B.S. Guha. Since then, psychological researches are being conducted in several universities including Ranchi and Utkal.

### Applied and Action Research

THE tribal and rural community development programme of government of India, gave further fillip to anthropologists to study and evaluate the process of change in tribal and rural India. The approaches of Applied Anthropology developed during the colonial rule persisted. The concept of Action Anthropology formulated by Sol Tax in America partly replaced the principles of Applied Anthropology. The influence of action anthropology emphasizing the concept of self-determination and isolation of values is prominently reflected in the works of later Indian anthropologists. With manifold developments in anthropological researches, a challenge has been posed to Indian anthropologists to act as *Social Doctors* to help the administration at various levels of diagnosing social problems in prescribing appropriate remedies and smoothening the course of transformation from traditional to transitional and then perhaps to reorganizational phase of our society. In the democratic set up of our country, this realisation has marked the beginning of a new phase in planning and implementation, where (hopefully) administrators and social scientists are attempting to work together to induce social and economic development among tribal, rural and urban population of India.

### Religion

THE study of religion as practised by the people at different levels of development has been a fascinating theme for research by social anthropologists. An analytical study of "primitive" religion in India was initiated by Majumdar. The study of religion in the context of Indian villages was initiated by M.N. Srinivas (1952). *Social Change in Modern India* developed the concept of Sanskritization to explain the process of change in a Hindu village (*Religion & Society among the Coorgs of South India*).

### Tribal Ethnography

THE initial British tradition of studying tribes and castes by colonial administrators for colonial purposes got a big boost with the entry of Elvin (1939) and Eiser-Haimendorf (1943). These two scholars, wrote a number of monographs on tribes and tribal problems of India, and continued to do so even after independence. However, except for sporadic efforts of Majumdar (1962), Elvin (1958) and Vidyarthi (1963), systematic and scientific tribal studies & stayed in the back seat till the mid-sixties. Even the 1961 Census ignored tribal ethnography. After this period, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies organised several seminars on tribal situation in India. A few scholars viz. F.G. Bailey (1958-60) from U.K., Burling (1963) and Edward Jay (1970) from USA gave further fillip to tribal studies by the use of their sophisticated methodology and interpretation of facts under refined theories.

B.K. ROY Burman Indian Ethnologist, drew our close attention to the negative aspects of tribal ethnographic studies. He complained of the absence of historical vision, arrogance of great traditions, lack of comparative methods, poor instruments of analysis as the limiting factors of our ethnographic research.

He also refers to the colonial hang over in our tribal research and tribal policies which distort our perspective.

THUS, we see that the Indian Anthropology after the second world war due to the influence of American model of anthropology, has switched over from colonial temper of Commonwealth and West European anthropology to the informal trends of American anthropology. A smooth transition could specially be possible because of America's increased resources, discovery of new instruments of research, theoretical models and above all an effective use of numerous media of communication.

WHILE anthropology has retained its basic character to be a field of service mainly based on 'micro-approach' and participation, there has been considerable shift from the study of simpler societies. A change over from the descriptive, ethnographic or functional approach to interdisciplinary, analytic and model building trends is quite remarkable. This has made Anthropology less 'Provincial' and has made interdisciplinary cooperation more feasible.

### APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

APPLIED anthropology is 'the research specifically oriented to administrative and development problem together with some degree of responsible participation in the process of utilizing the result of such research'. The main reasons for the acceptance of anthropology of the applied kind were a greater need for sociological information and the effect of conscious and planned modernization of a traditional way of life which increased the need for social data. It was realized that government officials usually over-looked the basic knowledge of the habits of thought and pattern of behaviour of the people among whom they worked.

BUT anthropologists and administrators do not generally get along well. The administrators demand quick and certain predictions from anthropologists who are generally reluctant to be hastened. Yet anthropologists have double advantage of long residence in an area and concentrated effort to learn and to understand. This qualified them to give concrete recommendations for actions through their understanding of the needs and desires which the people themselves expressed.

IMPORTANCE of anthropology as an applied subject was realized as early as 1807, whereby the British ICS administrators of East India Company were imparted anthropological knowledge about India, at the Haileybury College.

LATER, several administrators (Risley, Thurston, Dalton) prepared handbooks and gazetteers on castes and tribes of India but no suggestions regarding tribal problems were given to British Indian Government. It was only in 1931 when Hutton, the then Census Commissioner, suggested the creation of self-governing tribal areas with the power of self-determination in regard to joining the adjacent provinces or states. In 1919 Verrier Elvin suggested (after studying Baiga) the creation of national parks for the tribes in which they could be given a certain measure of autonomy and in which the access of missionaries and exploiters would be restricted. The point of view was, however, opposed by Ghurye who believed that the only solution to tribal problems in India was assimilation of tribes into Hindu fold. Meanwhile the Eastern Anthropologist at the instance of Dr. D.N. Majumdar brought out a special issue on tribal welfare in which Haimendorf, Dube, Ehrenfels, Naik etc. made specific recommendations on various tribal problems.

INSPIRED by V. Elvin, Nehru (Jawaharlal) enunciated the guidelines for state policy in the form of Panchsheel for Tribal Development viz

- (i) people should be allowed to develop on the lines of their own genius and nothing should be allowed to impose on them
- (ii) tribal rights in land and forest should be respected

- (iii) induction of too many outsiders into tribal area should be avoided
- (iv) there should be no excessive administration of tribal areas and so far as possible work should be done through their own social and cultural institutions and
- (v) the result should be judged, not by the amount of money spent but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

THE birth of Tribal Research Institutes in 1953, at the initiative of Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was meant for helping the government at planning level, supplying the requisite data, training of officers for tribal administration and to evaluate welfare schemes; but in practice, these have seldom been consulted at planning level. Experience reveals that the tribal research institutions have gone down because of the absence of proper directions as also the scant attention paid by the government to their recommendations. Sometimes, the staff of the research institutes (i.e. the government servants) are afraid to make recommendations which may be unpalatable to the government. "Land" as remarked by Elvin, "is spiritual bond between the tribal and his ancestors" and land usages as also the land rights are important considerations in applied anthropology. The ignorance of government officials about the local customs and beliefs regarding land resulted in complaints and general dissatisfaction, resistance to change and at times violence against officials. The changes in land system, therefore, must be made to combine the traditional concepts and modern needs.

THE question of land in tribal India is the question of land alienation. Roy's study of tribal Bihar found that, the tribals consider themselves as the lords of the forests with exclusive right over them. This belief has resulted in several severe clashes between tribals and forest officials. He concludes that in exploitation of forests, tribal interests can not be ignored and social interests should get priority over economic interests.

AN OVERWHELMING majority of tribals is agriculturist with lack of modern scientific techniques. Elvin has shown that shifting cultivation practised by many tribes could be regulated and organized on scientific basis to yield better results. Shrivaraman Committee also suggested the measures through which shifting cultivation could be made profitable. Adopting a very supportive role, Rajendra Agricultural University initiated a programme of research in Agricultural Anthropology dealing with agricultural problems involved in the process of adoption of new agricultural technology by the tribals.

RESETTLEMENT of tribals has also received keen interest of anthropologists. It has been visualized that the planning of rehabilitation colonies may never be fruitful without considerations of cultural, psychological and economic factors involved. Vidyarthi, Sen, Upadhyaya etc. have highlighted the drawbacks in planning in this regard. It has been felt that resettlement is no solution to the problems of nomadism and shifting cultivation; and other solutions in this regard should be sought with an open mind.

THE coming up of heavy industries in tribal areas and the resultant problems have also drawn anthropologists' attention. It has been propounded that the failure to take into account human factors and social cost of industrialization have led to opposition, unrest and tension in many areas.

THE suggestions and comments of anthropologists regarding tribal education have been well received by the government. In 1948 Aiyappan submitted a report to the government suggesting vocationally based education, prizes and literacy programmes for youth etc. Biswas (1966) advocated the setting up of a board of tribal education consisting of experts in tribal affairs. Chattopadhyay (1953) framed a syllabus upto class IV trying to link up agriculture and farming with school teaching in tribal areas etc. etc.

NCERT started a tribal education unit in 1964 which has several anthropologists associated with it. Naik (1969) elucidated the

factors which hamper tribal education (among Bhils). Ambastha's study of tribal Bihar highlights the problems as: difficulties in recruitment of teachers for primary schools, untimely payment of scholarship, lack of adequate hostel facilities etc. He has also drawn attention to the disparity between Christian and non-Christian tribals as also between men and women.

SRIVASTAVA, through his study of Munda and Oraon, concluded that the educated tribals were fast moving towards modernization while the non-educated one are still tradition bound. Sachchidananda feels that "the success of educational endeavour in a particular area can be gauged by the extent of adjustment with changing conditions achieved by the student. If this is absent, dangerous consequences might follow".

ICSSR, with the help of anthropologists, has carried out countrywide study of the problems of tribal education. If and when implemented, its suggestions should be of immense help in tribal development.

THOUGH the attempts to understand customary law of tribals were made as early as 1911, the subject received attention only after country's independence. In Assam, some anthropologists prepared compendia of tribal law so that courts could dispense the justice to the tribals according to their own usages. Sachchidananda and Spencer, in late fifties studied Munda law. Roy Burman's study of law of inheritance of the Toto formed the basis of recognition of *Preganayats* by the W. Bengal government. Naik after studying customary laws of many central Indian tribes recommended to the government that provisions of Hindu code should not be made applicable to the tribes at least for twenty years. In Bihar, Tribal Research Institute was asked to study the forest tenancy and personal laws of tribes and to make recommendations whether the general laws of the country could be applied to them.

BECAUSE of obvious reasons and difficulties in carrying out such studies the fascinating field of crime has not been so popular with the anthropologists. Elvin's *Muria, Murder and Suicide* was a classic in this regard. Sarana, through his Ph.D. Thesis, threw a fresh light on crime in Munda and Oraon. Naik's analysis of tribal law revealed that gangs do not operate the tribes and crimes are committed at the spur of moment. He does not favour the suggestion of taking away of armies, banning festivals etc. for mitigation of crime. He, on the other hand, feels that the outlook of the government as also of the officials towards forests and excise must be reoriented. Legal officials as also the police authorities concerned should be imparted the knowledge of tribal customary laws as also the crimes.

## RELATIONSHIP OF ANTHROPOLOGY WITH OTHER SCIENCES

Anthropology has vast paradigm so much so that no discipline can be compared with Anthropology in its totality. As there are four major aspects of Anthropology, therefore, any other discipline can be compared with any one aspect of Anthropology. Biological sciences can be compared with biological Anthropology. Social sciences can be compared with social cultural Anthropology. Earth sciences can be compared with the prehistoric archeology and fossil evidence of human evolution while behavioural sciences, including psychology can be compared in some aspects of social cultural Anthropology particularly psychological Anthropology.

1. **Anthropology and History** History is the account of the time period of which written evidences are available and their language has been deciphered. Here, account of the time period refers to cultural aspects. About 5-6 decades ago, History was the history of the kings and emperors; their life style, victories and defeats. Then history was only political history. But today's history has many other aspects like social, cultural, economic, and religious. In all these aspects, History has followed the approach of social cultural Anthropology.

In anthropology, to the large extent the emphasis even today is on simple societies who do not have any written records of their past. To an extent, History can help Anthropology to reveal some of their past.

Secondly, we divide History into ancient, medieval and modern whereby we start with the past and continue up to the present. In Anthropology we study the present and try to peep into the past. In other words, History is upside down Anthropology or Anthropology is upside down is history.

This is a continuous process and demarcation into present and past in relative, what ever was present yesterday has become past today and today's presence will become past tomorrow. Therefore, previous Anthropologic writings can help history in reconstructing the past of societies studied by Anthropologists.

History it is said to be based on facts and the same is said about the facts collected in Anthropological field work. If history is based on facts, then why there are controversies. It is not merely a difference of opinion amongst Leftists, Rightists, Nationalists, subaltern etc. historians but choosing the facts suitable to their each respective ideologies. The latest controversy on *Setusamudram* is a point in this regard. Similarly, the quality of an anthropological field work depends on the qualities of the field worker. Therefore, the facts in both the disciplines are subjective and relative. As in Anthropology in History too the personality of an observer plays an important role in identifying the facts and their interpretation.

Till recently there was an important difference between these two disciplines that history relied on secondary sources of fieldwork while anthropology relied on the time tested participant observation. However, in contemporary History writing, historians have been initiated into participant observation and they are taking full advantage of it.

**2. Anthropology and Sociology** In anthropology we study cultures and so is the case with sociology. The two are so close to each other that some Anthropologists prefer to call Anthropology as comparative Sociology. 5-6 decades ago, there were 2 major differences between the two with respect to

- (i) Subject matter
- (ii) Field work techniques

Traditionally, sociologists studied rural and urban communities while anthropologists restricted themselves to tribal communities. The reason was that tribal communities were in large numbers while anthropologists were few. These tribal communities were coming in contact with civilized people and were fast losing the spectrum of cultural variation. Therefore, it was urgent to study their culture before this cultural variation was lost because the study of cultural variation is an integral and important part of Anthropology.

After studying tribal communities, anthropologists have also included rural and urban communities into their fold. Anthropology in recent decades has contributed significantly towards labour relations, understanding social tensions, nation building processes, ethnic conflict, space research, impact of globalization etc.

In recent years again, Sociology has developed keen interest in tribal communities so much so that these days there is no significance difference between sociologists and anthropologists with respect to studies on tribal communities.

In terms of field work, sociologists relied on the secondary techniques of field work like schedules, questionnaires and interviews, while anthropologists relied on the self evolved participant observation; occasionally taking the help of secondary techniques. Realising the advantages of participant observation all other social sciences including Sociology have adopted it.

**3. Anthropology Vs. Psychology** In Psychology, we study psyche while in Anthropology we study cultures. Each culture has collective psyche and therefore the two disciplines should be very close to each other in the study of psyche, but they are not.

In Psychology, the study of psyche is based on a particular quality on a particular age group or gender or a particular condition. For example, the Psychology of infants, the psychology of adolescents, the Psychology of old age, the Psychology of criminal, the Psychology of murderers, i.e., Psychology is individualistic while Anthropology is collective whereby the group is important not the individual. For example, in a legal case involving murder, the questions in a psychologist's mind would be why he committed murder, what is going on in the mind of the judge, what kind of punishment he will get; while an anthropologist will ask: what were the circumstances that compelled the individual to commit murder, what are the social facts, the judge will take into account in deciding punishment.

In recent decades, the two disciplines have come quite close to each other. Traditionally anthropologists have been using behavioural techniques of Psychology in their field work. The culture-personality school of 1940s borrowed a lot from Psychology. Recently, emergence of social biology in Anthropology and in social psychology in psychology have brought these two disciplines close to each other. P.S.: *Students can easily draw relationship of Economics, Political Science and Law through the knowledge of respective topics.*

**4. Anthropology and Earth Sciences** The study and approach of earth sciences is very different from those of Anthropology. It has been a one way flow of knowledge. The knowledge about rocks and their time period are important in Anthropology because the fossils of man and his ancestors are found only in sedimentary rocks or shales. Besides, the knowledge of stratigraphy helps in the relative dating of evidences related to biological and cultural evolution of man. The knowledge of Pleistocene geology has helped a lot in understanding human habitations at that time as also human migration.

**5. Relation of Anthropology with Biological Sciences** Most of the biological sciences have helped physical Anthropology to evolve into biological Anthropology. But we have adopted only the laboratory techniques evolved by various biological sciences while the subject matter has been unique to Anthropology. In recent years however, many of the anthropological studies have been carried out by pure geneticists, molecular biologists and biotechnologists.

In today's world following international inter-disciplinary approach we do not compare various disciplines to find faults or others. On the other hand, we try to bring them on a common platform so that each discipline can benefit from each other.

## THE GEOLOGICAL TIME SCALE & DATING METHODS

BEFORE beginning the discussion of paleontological evidence for evolution, it is necessary to introduce the problem of geological time. Fortunately, there are methods of determining the ages of rock deposits in the earth's crust. The oldest method is applicable only to sedimentary rocks those successive layers or strata of rocks which are formed by slow settling out of sediments from the oceans or other large bodies of water. The use of the method for dating purposes is based upon the assumption that those geological processes which are observable in action now are the same ones which have determined the past history of this earth, and that they have in the past acted at rates comparable to those now observable. As applied to the problem at hand, this simply means that the sedimentary rocks of the past were deposited at rates comparable to those which are now being deposited. In a purely comparative way, dating by this means is fairly satisfactory. The deepest strata are the oldest, while the most superficial strata are quite recent. Thick strata represent long-continued deposition, while thin strata represent short periods of deposition. Thus some relative concepts of geological time are



readily gained from an inspection of the sedimentary rock deposits. But more exact ideas are difficult to obtain because it is clear that sedimentation is now progressing at very different rates in different parts of the world, and there is no reason to doubt that the variation in the rate of sedimentation has been as great over much of the world's history. It may well have been greater at times. Hence calculations of age based upon the thicknesses of stratified rocks lead to such statements as that the Mesozoic Era began somewhere between 190,000,000 and 240,000,000 years ago. But the difference between these figures is more than 25 per cent of the smaller one. In addition to this difficulty, the strata have been changed by such geological processes as folding and erosion, so that often the record is fragmentary and confused. There are a few instances in which stratified rocks appear to have been laid down in definite annual layers, the varves, more or less comparable to the annual growth rings of trees. In such cases, the extent of the periods of sedimentation can be determined with great exactness, if the varves actually do represent annual layers. But this is by no means certain. And even if it were certain, the number of known examples is so small that it could have little importance for the general problem of dating geological history.

ALTHOUGH the study of sedimentary rocks has not led to a satisfactory dating system, it has been possible to determine the sequence in which the various strata of the earth's surface have been laid down, from very ancient rocks right up to those of very recent origin. Particular strata are identifiable not only by their position and their physical characteristics, but also by the fossils which they contain. Thus it has been possible to divide geological time into a series of eras, the sequence of which is undoubted. The first two eras, the Archeozoic and the Proterozoic, are not of great interest for the present discussion because the rocks deposited in these eras contain very few fossils, and those are generally of doubtful character. During the Paleozoic Era, fossils were deposited in great abundance, but only archaic types were present. At first, only invertebrates were represented, but fishes, amphibians, and finally reptiles made their appearance during the Paleozoic Era. The next great era was the Mesozoic, or Age of Reptiles, during which birds and small mammals also arose. Finally, the Cenozoic Era, which is still in progress, has been marked by the rise to dominance of the mammals and man.

THE eras are, however, immensely long expanses of time characterized by progressive differences of flora and fauna and not infrequently of climate and other physical characteristics. The eras are therefore divided into periods of shorter, but still very long, duration. Thus the Paleozoic Era lasted for about 300,000,000 years, but it is subdivided into seven periods, the durations of which vary from 25,000,000 years to 80,000,000 years. Finally, it is sometimes desirable to break up the periods into still smaller divisions, the epochs. The Tertiary Period of the Cenozoic Era, for example, lasted for about 74,000,000 years. This is subdivided into five epochs, the durations of which varied from 11,000,000 years to 19,000,000 years.

WHILE this system of time measurement is not quantitatively accurate, it is, on the whole, quite workable. For, if a fossil is found in strata from the Cretaceous Period, it is possible to state with complete assurance that it followed Jurassic forerunners and preceded Paleocene descendants, if any descendants were left. The geological time scale, together with some of the characteristics of life at each level, is summarized in tabular form.

### The Lead Method

IN 1907, BOLTWOOD introduced a method for dating geological strata based on radioactive elements. The conclusions to which the new method led indicated that the earth was vastly older than had been generally believed, and the method was received with skepticism. But it has since become the standard by which the accuracy of other methods of dating is judged. The method

is based upon the fact that uranium 238 will slowly disintegrate to produce lead with an atomic weight of 206 and helium. The rate at which this occurs is calculable. With any definite amount of uranium, one half of the molecules will break down, forming lead and helium, in the course of 4,510,000,000 years. As this figure is independent of the actual quantity of uranium originally present, it is called the 'half-life' of the element. Now, if a uranium-bearing rock is found, the ratio of uranium to lead 206 can be determined, and from this, utilizing the half-life, the interval since the formation of the rock can be calculated.

RECENTLY, additional geochemical methods have been developed. Potassium 40 yields Calcium 40 and argon 40; Rubidium 87 yields Strontium 87; Thorium 232 yields Lead 208; and Uranium 235 yields Lead 207. Each of these parent elements has its characteristic half-life, ranging from 126,000,000 years to as much as 60,000,000,000 years.

WHILE the "lead" method is now universally accepted, it has serious limitations. Uranium is not a common element, and it is often found in geological formations which are not readily fitted into the geological time scale. The introduction of additional geochemical methods helps to overcome these limitations, and so there are good grounds for hope that an accurately dated scale of geological time may be available in the near future.

For the present, it may be said that the oldest dated rocks are more than 3,000,000,000 years old, and the oldest dated which might have borne life are about 2,000,000,000 years old. Around three quarters of that 2,000,000,000 years during which life might have existed passed before the beginning of the Cambrian Period, with which the useful fossil record begins, for a lead measurement of the age of a late Cambrian Period, with which the useful fossil record begins, for a lead measurement of the age of a late Cambrian deposit gave a figure of 440,000,000 years. The next exact determination is in the early Permian Period, at an age of 230,000,000 years. Thus the entire Paleozoic Era probably lasted about 300,000,000 years, the Mesozoic about 130,000,000 years; and the Cenozoic about 65,000,000 years up to the present. There is an accurately dated deposit from the beginning of the Eocene Epoch which places this at 58,000,000 years ago. The dates are few, but fortunately they are widely scattered in geologic time. But as yet accurate determinations are not available for the extent of any of the periods or epochs.

### Paleomagnetism

PALEOMAGNETIC dating is based on the fact that the earth's magnetic field periodically changes in direction and intensity. The magnetic pole is now oriented in a northerly direction, but this has not always been true. Paleomagnetic dating involves taking samples of sediments that contain magnetically charged particles. Such particles retain the magnetic orientation they had when becoming consolidated into rock.

THE history of polarity changes over the past 4 million years or so has been determined with some precision. Such polarity changes, which can take as little as 5,000 years to occur, can leave natural records in rocks. Geomagnetic polarity epochs have been established that last between 0.5 million and 1.0 million years. Polarity was reversed between 0.5 and 2.5 M.Y.A. and before 3.4 M.Y.A. It is possible to determine the history of polarity changes over the past 4 million years or so with some precision and to construct what is called a "reversal chronology."

### The Radio-Carbon Method

ANOTHER radioactive method has been developed which shows promise for shorter range determinations of age, up to perhaps 40,000 years. It has been found that living organisms utilize a small, but constant proportion of their organic carbon in the radioactive form. The half-life of radioactive carbon is  $5568 \pm 30$  years. Hence, remnants of bone, wood, or other carbon-containing remains of dead organisms can be assayed for their radio-carbon content. The difference between the average amount in fresh tissue and in the fossil may then be



treated as being due to radioactive disintegration, and the age of the fossil calculated from the half-life. This method has proved very useful in the study of late Pleistocene and Recent remains. It has been checked against historical objects of known age, such as wood from Egyptian pyramids, and had been found reliable.

### Fission-Track Dating

FISSION-track dating was originally devised to date manufactured glass, but it can also be applied to dating volcanically derived glasslike substances, such as obsidian. The procedure involves counting the number of tracks caused by the spontaneous fission of uranium<sup>238</sup> ( $U^{238}$ ) during the lifetime of the sample. The date obtained depends on the density of such tracks and the number of uranium atoms, which is determined by the increase in track density produced by neutron irradiation and laboratory-induced fission of  $U^{235}$ . Fission-track dating can be used to verify K-Ar dates. If dates from the two methods agree, then a fairly accurate age determination is ensured. For example, material used to fission-track date Olduvai Gorge Bed I, an important early human site in Tanzania, consisted of specimens from the volcanic deposit used for the K-Ar date. Dates derived from the two methods are in close agreement.

### Fossilization

ANY remnant of living forms from the remote past may be regarded as a fossil. While there are many ways in which fossils may be formed, most of them involve the burial of the dead organism. As more and more sediment is laid down above, the depth of the fossil increases, and hence, in a general way, the oldest fossils may be expected to be found in the deepest layers of the earth's surface, while the more superficially located fossils may be regarded as recent in origin. Thus, ideally, one ought to be able to read the story of life in the correct historical sequence by examining the fossil record in sequence from the deepest to the most superficial strata.

BUT the vast majority of plants and animals are not fossilized after death. Decay and destruction ordinarily await the dying organism. Predators and scavengers may not only eat away the soft parts of the body, but they may also break up skeletal structures beyond all hope of preservation or recognition. It is only the unusual instance in which the organism is rapidly buried or in some other way protected from scavengers and from oxidation that a fossil may be formed. Thus, the fossil record, even if completely known, would have to be very fragmentary because the majority of organisms never take the first step toward fossil formation.

MUCH the most common method of fossilization is burial in the sediments which are continually deposited on the floor of the oceans and of other large bodies of water. When aquatic organisms die, they may fall into deep sedimentary deposits in which the bodies are protected from scavengers and from oxidation. The soft parts of the body gradually decay and are carried away by the seepage of water. Bones and other hard parts may remain as such, or they may be replaced particle by particle by minerals in the water. As this process continues, the layer of sediment which is being deposited grows ever thicker, and its lower portions gradually harden into rock, the sedimentary, stratified rock which is characteristic of the beds of marine or aquatic deposits everywhere, and which is the hallmark of ancient seas in areas which are now dry land. However, this is not the only means by which organisms may be buried. Dust storms can have the same effect, and will be effective in causing fossilization of terrestrial organisms. Again, volcanic ash may also rapidly bury organisms and thus preserve them as fossils. Pompeii, which was buried by volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D., has been extensively investigated in modern times. Whole families, together with their domestic animals, have been preserved as cavities in the ash, from which casts can be made. Desert forms may be

dried out by the hot, dry, desert winds, then buried under the shifting sands.

SOME special methods of burial are also occasionally effective. If a petroleum spring should occur, evaporation of the more volatile oils will produce first a pool of sticky tar then one of viscous asphalt. This has happened during the Pleistocene epoch at Rancho La Brea in southern California. Many Pleistocene and Recent mammals and birds have been trapped in this asphalt, and they are among the best preserved of fossils. It appears to have worked in the following ways. Small mammals, herbivores, and birds try to reach the rain pools which occur on the surface of the asphalt. In so doing, they become stuck in the soft asphalt, and predators are then ensnared while attempting to catch the former. Water birds may alight on the water pools and then become entrapped in the asphalt around the edges. Thus Rancho La Brea is one of the richest sources known for well preserved fossils of recent mammals and birds. Because the city of Los Angeles had grown up around it, it no longer entraps the wild fauna of the region.

ANOTHER unusual method of burial is the entrapment of insects in amber. Such fossils are sometimes preserved almost perfectly, so that even histological details are comparable to those of freshly fixed specimens.

LASTLY, organisms may be petrified, that is, their actual tissues may be replaced, particle by particle, by minerals in solution in the waters of the locality. The principal minerals utilized in this type of fossilization are iron pyrites, silica, calcium carbonate, and other carbonates. The most widely known example of petrification is afforded by the petrified forests of southwestern United States; however, animal remains may also be petrified. Generally, this preserves only the hard parts of the body, but occasionally soft parts are so well preserved that even fine details of cells can be made out in thin sections. Most of the fossils from sedimentary rocks are of this type: the original material has been replaced by minerals from the surroundings medium.

### Incompleteness of the Fossil Record

ONE of the important aspects of the fossil record is its incompleteness. One reason for this has already been pointed out: the majority of organisms never take the first step toward fossilization. They are destroyed by predators or scavengers, or else they lie exposed to the elements and deteriorate. But many other factors also contribute to the incompleteness of the fossil record. Of the several methods of fossilization mentioned above, only one, burial in marine or fresh water sediments, could be expected to occur with great regularity. Because of this, the majority of fossils are found in such sedimentary rocks, and this consequently results in poor representation of terrestrial forms.

THE record is also biased by the fact that generally only the hard parts of the body are fossilized. In some instances, such parts are taxonomically useful while in other instances they are not. Among vertebrates, the skeletons are the most commonly preserved parts, and they are also of immense value taxonomically. Skeletal remains may give quite diversified information about a vertebrate. Obviously, a complete skeleton will indicate the size of the animal; but, in the hands of a competent anatomist, even a single bone, or a mere fragment of a bone, may offer a basis for a reasonable estimate of size. From the scars of muscle attachments on the bones, the sizes and contours of the muscles can be determined. From this it is an easy step to the general appearance of the animal, and its characteristic gait and speed. The skulls give an indication of relative intelligence. The teeth indicate the type of diet eaten. Thus vertebrate skeletons are among the most satisfactory of all fossils. But preservation of hard parts does not always lead to so fortunate a result. Among plants, woody parts are most commonly preserved. But these are of quite secondary importance taxonomically. The flowers, which are of great

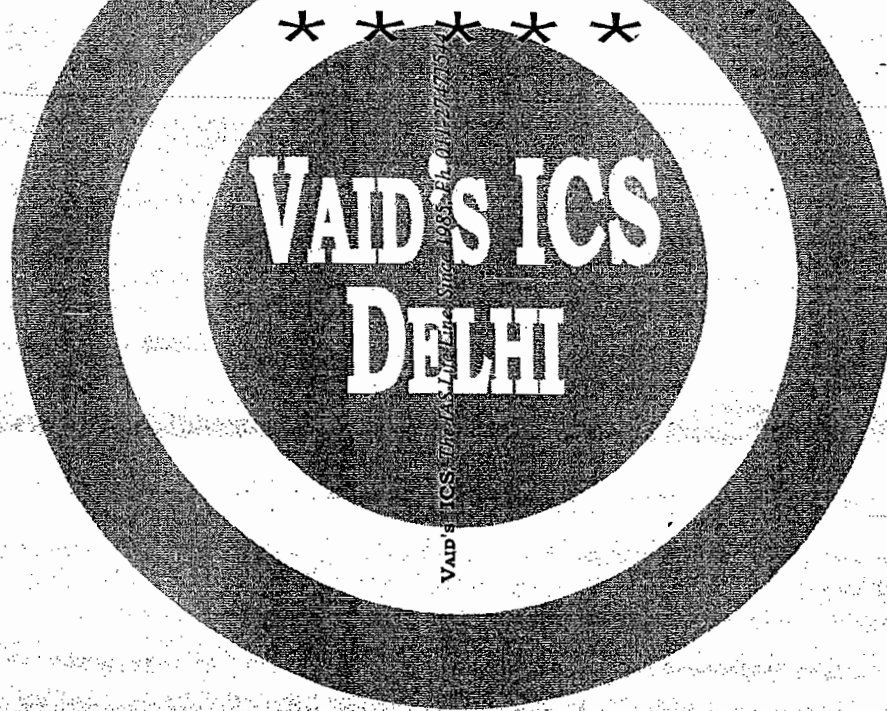
importance for plant taxonomy, are rarely preserved. And for many groups, fossils are very rare because there are no hard parts at all.

NOT all periods in the earth's history have been equally favorable for the formation and preservation of sedimentary rocks. It is well established that the general level of the continents has fluctuated from time to time, with cold ages during which the continental shelves were largely exposed alternating with warm ages, during which the continental shelves and even much of the inland low areas were submerged to form shallow seas. During times of progressive submergence, a newly deposited stratum, together with its included fossils, would be protected by the deposition of additional strata above it. In this way, very thick layers can be formed. But, during periods of elevation, newly formed strata may be quickly raised above the water level, where they become subject to erosion and destruction of fossils by wave action, wind, and rain. The result is that remains from periods of submergence are much richer in fossils than are those from periods of elevation. This is in contrast to the probable relative abundance of species. For elevation of the continents exposes increasing areas and new habitats for colonization. Numbers of species are therefore probably increasing at such times. But during periods of submergence, the habitable world undergoes a shrinkage, with the attendant extinction of many species.

UP TO the present, this discussion has assumed that the strata, once formed, remain undisturbed until struck by a geologist's pick. But this is by no means true. The rocks may be profoundly

altered in many ways, together with their contained fossils. Mountains may be thrust up; rivers may cut deep gorges through many successive strata; the rocks may be cracked by tensions and one portion slipped over another; glaciation may carry away superficial rocks and lay bare the deeper ones; erosion by wind and water may wear away the rocks; and many other normal geological processes may alter or destroy fossil-bearing strata. All of this is useful in that such processes tend to expose for study deep strata which would be unavailable if left exactly as originally deposited; but all of these processes also result in extensive destruction of fossils.

YET, fragmentary though the fossil record is, it is a striking thing that it gives clear testimony to the fact of evolution, and considerable detail can be worked out in many lines of descent. The most ancient fossils include only invertebrates. Then primitive fish-like vertebrates appear, and those gradually blend into true fishes, similar to some species now living. Later, amphibians and reptiles appear in the fossil record, and birds and mammals finally appear quite late. Thus the simplest animals appear in the most remote geological eras, while the most complex appear late in geological history. In most major groups (order, class, and phylum), there is marked change from one geological period to the next, but always a particular fauna resembles that of another period near it in time more closely than it does that of any other period remote from it in time. Finally the fossils of recent organisms blend into our present living flora and fauna, with often the same genera and even the same species being represented.



## BASIC CONCEPTS

### CULTURE

THE anthropological concept of culture has been one of the most important and influential ideas in twentieth century thought. The usage of the term "culture", adopted by nineteenth century anthropologists has spread to other fields of thought with profound impact. Yet, paradoxically, the notion of culture implied, in such usages has proven too broad and too blunt for carrying out the essential elements in human behaviour. The reaction of some scholars has been to abandon the term as a central conceptual tool; the response of others has been to sharpen and narrow the instrument to render it more precise. Besides, anthropologists have not been totally precise, or totally consistent, in their usage of this crucial concept.

CULTURE in the usage of anthropology does not, of course, mean cultivation in the arts and social graces. It refers, rather, to learned, accumulated experience. A culture - say, American culture - refers to those socially transmitted patterns of behaviour characteristic of a particular social group. The most famous and oft quoted definition of culture, given by Tylor, visualizes culture as the non-material aspect of social life. *"Culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society."* Redfield defined culture as *"an organized body of conventional understandings, manifest art and artifact persists through tradition, characterises a society"*. The definition, if made explicit, exposes the real character of culture. Firstly, culture is acquired. It is acquired through the members of the society by one generation to the other, over time. And secondly, as remarked by Kluckhohn, culture or social heritage of any society is always specific. It is the *"distinctive way of life of a group of people, their complete design for living"*. Behaviour in other animals is instinctive, while in the case of man, it is learnt. Culture, for the most part, comprises of what we may call, the learning behaviour or socialization. Other animals lack the capacity to change their environment purposefully, and therefore culture, after Herskovitz, can be seen as *"the artificial environment created by man around himself"*. In somewhat greater details, culture may be considered, after McGee as including *"any piece or pattern of behaviour, any attitude, value or belief, any skill that human beings learn as members of human group, plus the manufacture or use of any material item that is derived from these human abilities"*. Incidentally, while most sociologists and anthropologists have ignored the material object as cultural, others consider material culture as an important aspect of culture. Some sociologists (e.g. Davis) characterise culture as superorganic meaning thereby that culture is independent from organic and inorganic elements. According to this viewpoint we should consider these elements only in relation to social environment. Finding social meaning for these elements automatically puts them in the realm of culture.

#### Characteristics of Culture

ALTHOUGH anthropologists differ in their views about the universal characteristics of culture, yet the attempts have been made in this regard. Some of universal characteristics have been identified by anthropologists and are discussed below :

**Culture is an acquired quality :** Culture is not innate. All those things which are made by man and can be modified by him, are included in culture. Traits learned through socialization, habits and thoughts are what is called culture. Because of his capacity for symbolic communication, a man can acquire cultural behaviour.

**Culture is found only in human society :** There are societies among animals but they do not have culture. In this way, man

is the only cultured being. In other words, culture is found only in human societies.

**Culture is social, not individualistic :** Every individual may take some part in the expansion and communication of culture, but culture is social instead of being individualistic. It includes common expectations of the members of a group. An individual can not create culture by keeping out of the group.

**Culture is idealistic :** Culture embodies the ideas and norms of a group. It is the sum-total of ideal patterns and norms of behaviour of a group.

**Culture is the total social heritage :** Culture is linked with the past. The past endures because it lives in cultures. It is passed from one generation to another through traditions and customs.

**Culture fulfils some needs :** Culture satisfies those moral and social needs of a man which are practicable in themselves. Culture includes collective habits. Habits are formed for only those actions which satisfy some needs. Without the fulfilment of these needs, no culture can exist. The part of culture, which is not helpful in social stratification, becomes extinct.

**Quality of integration in culture is universally noticed :** Culture possesses an order and a system. Its various parts are integrated.

**Culture is communicable :** Culture is communicated through language from one generation to another. This brings about a regular expansion of culture. Because of this communication, a new generation can benefit from the experiences of an old generation. Thus, culture is permanent, and mortality of individual group does not affect it.

**Culture is capable of adjustment :** Culture undergoes a change from homogeneity to heterogeneity and simplicity to sophistication because of its adjustment capacity in new and complex situations.

**Culture is a symbolic, continuous cumulative and progressing process :** Thereby, culture is something, acquired, learnt, idealistic and fulfils many human needs. It has qualities of communication, adjustment and integrity. Its social heritage is the proof of its dignity.

ONE very important question is related to the scope of cultural applicability. The classical anthropologists believed in the **Universality of Applicability of Culture**. They tried to standardize the culture of humanity and evaluated the cultural behaviour of primitive societies through the framework of this *standardized culture*. This view was discarded very soon. Another group of anthropologists emphasized the futility of the former view. They judged alien cultures through the prism of their own cultures. This methodology is known as **Ethnocentrism**. This method was also not without flaws. This method undermined the logic and autonomy of the culture under observation. Some anthropologists stressed on the need of evaluating or understanding particular culture through the logic and meanings of that culture only which is under observation. This method is known as **relative method** and the phenomenon or process is known as **Cultural Relativism**.

#### Nature of Culture

THE definition of Tylor forms the milestone in the scientific study of culture. Recently, the definition given by Kluckhohn and Kelly seeing culture as all *"historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational and non-rational, which may exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men"* has further elaborated upon the content of culture. Another recent definition of culture, given by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), describes culture as *"patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by sym-*



bols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts." All the definitions of culture given above shed some light on the nature of culture. The following details elucidate briefly the nature of culture as agreed upon by various sociologists.

**Culture is a System :** AS ENVISAGED by Tylor, culture is a 'complex whole' consisting of parts well integrated with each other. The configuration of culture, is its characteristic and distinctive form that derives from the relationship of its parts to one another. It preserves "internal integration", which is carried out in accordance with the belief and value system underlying the culture. The integration of these cultural traits is much more important than the inventory of traits. The cultural system comprises of material and non-material elements. Various visible objects are the example of the former while cultural norms may represent the latter. To understand a cultural system, one may follow the analytic approach or synthetic approach. In analytic approach sociologists tend to break down a 'complex whole' into its constituents (called traits) and studying each constituent independent of other such parts. In synthetic approach these traits are studied in relation to other such traits within the cultural framework. Material objects within a culture form what we call material culture while the values, norms and attitudes etc. towards the material objects comprise non-material culture. The non-material elements of culture can be sub-grouped into normative and cognitive. Cognitive culture relates to the broad cultural ideology, provides the frame for viewing, designing and understanding everything that exists on any plane. Beliefs are sometimes distinguished from cognitive elements but as Johnson has put it, "Tested empirical knowledge and untestable beliefs are elements of culture in the sense that they are often mixed together in the same concrete acts; a process of intellectual analysis is necessary to separate the different elements from one another".

**NORMATIVE** cultural elements (the norms) act on the framework set forth by cognitive elements. The norms or the standard of behaviour can not do without the values and the two cannot in fact, be separated. A man lives in a society and most of his actions have repercussions on his fellow-beings. Norms set forth the guidelines for behaviour at different occasions and violation of norms entails sanctions. Sumner (1906) was the first one to categorize norms into mores and folkways; the most important difference between the two is regarding compulsion felt by the people to conform to them. Serious violation of norms in terms of outrageous behaviour considered as an offence of a serious nature brings into play strong (or organized) negative sanctions. The norms, which if violated bring strong reaction from others are called mores. Folkways on the other hand are (similar to custom), the norms outlining the usual ways of doing things. Breach of folkways does not entail any serious penalty to the doer. Folkways are, therefore, only conventional practices accepted as appropriate but other alternatives for the same do exist (though not encouraged). In modern societies folkways have been changing fast and there is no folkways-imposing agency but 'mores' have to be adhered to and the 'law' deals with the violation of mores.

**COGNITIVE** culture includes all human actions and forms the basis of the rules to be framed by the normative culture.

**Culture is Diverse :** THOUGH all human societies have culture, each society has certain cultural elements of its own. These peculiarities of a culture, if looked through the 'complex whole', differentiate one culture from all others. This diversity of cultures has brought into sociological studies a concept of cultural relativity. Bidney has explained that as all cultures differ from each other, it is not possible to have a universal judgement of values. The concept of cultural relativity helps in the understanding of changes in culture over time. The concept in the word of McGee "sees each culture as a unique adjustment to a particular set of circumstances and suggests that to understand the appropriate structure and content of a particular culture, you

must understand its particular circumstances. In simple words each culture owes its particular state to the historical processes and the interpretation of the people (who belong or belonged to that culture) of these historical processes.

IF CULTURAL relativity is one side of the coin, the other is ethnocentrism. An initial difficulty in the study of culture is that we are not in the habit of analysing cultural patterns; we seldom are even aware of them. It is as though we – or the people of any other society – grow up perceiving the world through glasses with distorting lenses. The things, events, and relationships we assume to be "out there", are in fact filtered through this perceptual screen. The first reactions, inevitably, on encountering people who wear a different kind of glasses is to dismiss their behaviour as strange or wrong. This tendency to view other peoples' ways of life in terms of our own cultural glasses is called ethnocentrism. In the words of Broom and Selznick, "Each group considers its way of life the natural and the best way. Strange groups, beliefs or practices are treated with suspicion and hostility simply because they are strange. Intense identification with familiar and the devaluation of the foreign is called ethnocentrism. It is the feeling that one's own culture is the best in all respects and that others are in varying degrees inferior-barbaric heathen or outlandish. Extreme ethnocentrism leads to a needless rejection of the richness and knowledge of other cultures. It impedes the sharing of ideas and skills that might bring a society closer to its own goals". In simple words ethnocentrism may be termed as "judging other peoples, cultures, customs or values from the perspective of one's own". Thus loyalty to one's culture with a strong or mild rejection of others forms the roots of ethnocentrism.

OBVIOUSLY ethnocentrism impedes cultural diffusion and acts as a barrier against cooperation between any two cultures. That way, even the understanding of other cultures (cultural relativity) may ensure cooperation or conflict. Anyway, if a social evil is to be viewed in its true aspects, it should be understood in its own cultural setting ignoring ethnocentric bias.

**Culture is Shared :** CULTURE is often called the social heritage that belongs to society as a whole. If culture is taken as a concept human society as such shares many commonalities. In a narrow sense of the term, culture exhibits large variations in different social groups. The unity of mankind is not in the heterogeneity displayed in cultural content of different social groups but the overwhelming similarities between different cultures. Culture for each social group has evolved through its own historical experience and is an adaptive mechanism towards its environment to increase efficiency and promote the chances of survival of a social group.

**Culture is Learnt :** AS SAID earlier culture is taken to be superorganic. Yet whatever we observe and interpret is conditioned by the ways we have been made to do so. A human baby is born without any distinct advantage compared to the babies of other animals but he has immense capacity to learn. All voluntary actions are learnt and thus are a part of culture. But observations and interpretations of various phenomena and things differ markedly in different cultures; and a human being, as a member of a particular social group learns what his environment conditions him to do. Further, though culture is learned, every member of a culture knows (learns and understands) elements directly concerned with him. Others he takes for granted.

**Culture is based on Symbols :** THOUGH animals do use symbols for communication, a symbol for man is, as remarked by McGee, "something representing or 'standing for' something else by arbitrary human invention and agreement. Symbolizing ability is the capacity freely and arbitrarily to bestow meaning on things". The meaning of symbol may be arbitrary but its understanding is not instinctive; it has to be learnt. Language is probably the best example of the use of symbols and it also makes clear the importance of 'learning' a culture. Gestures, culturally important gestures to be precise, too are learnt and



interpreted according to one's own sense of belonging.

**RECENTLY**, some higher primates (Chimpanzee and Gorilla) have been shown to have the capacity to learn symbols. They can rightly interpret an object but only in its presence. Leslie White, who has defined the ability to symbolize as being able "freely and arbitrarily to originate, determine, and bestow meaning upon things and events in the external world, the ability to comprehend such meanings" does not consider the ape's capacity to understand symbol representing the capacity for culture. Animals lack symbolic interpretation of things and phenomena. They often express themselves in sign language which is much more instinctive than learned.

**Subcultures** : MOST cultures we can think of are, in fact the sum total of the culture of heterogeneous groups lumped together. In this sense culture is a compound of subcultures whereby 'subculture' refers to the culture of homogenous unit within the heterogeneous whole. Large social groups are generally comprised of smaller units each of which has values, norms, attitudes etc. somewhat different from other such units within the bigger group. As put by Broom and Selznick, "Subcultures are distinguishable from one another and from the dominant culture forms by such manifest characteristics as language, clothing, gesture, and etiquette. There are also less public but equally important differences in norms and values. These subcultures may be differentiated because of ethnic, occupational, regional etc. heterogeneity over a large area. The differences between subcultures are more striking in the modern industrial societies where the cultural content is directed by economic progress. Despite such differences at micro-level subcultural units of each culture exhibits enough similarities to put them into one culture.

**Counterculture** : A CONCEPTUAL term coined by Yinger is applicable when a sub-culture has the ideas and patterns of behaviour conflicting with those of the majority culture.

**Cultural Trait** : ANY single item pertaining to one definite activity within a culture may be called a cultural trait. All steps that lead to the production of one cultural object are termed cultural complex. Cultural complex is thus the sum total of cultural traits for a particular process. Core culture is the part of the culture shared by most members of the society. Similarly, cultural traits followed by all members of a society are called cultural universals.

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHANGE

**Diffusion and Acculturation** : TWO societies coming close and sharing cultural traits and cultural complex of each other result in a process of cultural diffusion. The process, in recent times, has hastened due to increased communication between different social groups. If, however, a culture comes in contact with a dominant culture, the former borrows cultural elements and traits of the latter without sharing its own. The one way borrowing of cultural elements by a person or a social group is known as *acculturation*. It is not always that any two cultures coming together experience diffusion or acculturation. At times the people of the two cultures may misunderstand each other's values, attitudes etc. resulting in culture conflict. Here it must be noted that it is the people who are in conflict and not the cultures.

**Cultural Lag** : CHANGES in technology bring changes in the culture. These changes are experienced differentially by different segments of a culture, some of which respond faster than the other. After every change in technology, culture adjusts itself according to the new needs of the people. In the modern industrial work technology has been changing at a much faster rate without giving enough chance to the culture to get adapted. As a result certain maladjustments occur. The period of delay, by which a culture lacks in adjustment, is called cultural lag.

**Marxism and Social changes** : ACCORDING to Marx early man lived in a condition of primitive communism whereby the means of production were controlled by the group as a whole. With

change in technology the means became the monopoly of a few. The latter, thus became dominant and directed the cultural change according to their own needs, with vast majority just following them. Every change in technology brought changes in the power structure so that the concept of dominant group is not a static one. Marx has tried to explain social change in terms of the contradictions found in the infrastructure of a society. According to him "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. This struggle shall continue till all distinctions based on class vanish completely.

**Weber and Social Change** : Weber did see the direct relationship existing between the prevalent ethics of a society and the nature of economic system, but he, unlike Marx, did not opine that the nature of economic system determines the ethics of a society. In his work the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber was concerned with the beliefs of an ethical and religious kind and their bearing on economic values. He mainly studied the belief systems and their impact on the growth of a group and its economy.

ACCORDING to the functional approach to the understanding of social change, social change occurs when (i) human needs change; (ii) existing institutions fail to meet the requirements of human needs, and (iii) better alternatives to fulfil the needs are available.

### Relation between Culture and Civilization

**ANTHROPOLOGISTS** have differential conceptual understanding of civilization. Ogburn and Nimkoff conceived of civilization as the later phase of the superorganic culture. Some based civilization on civil organization as contrasted to clan or kinship organization. Since civil organization was found more commonly in large towns, so people living in these towns were called civilized. Goldenweiser equates the word civilization with culture. Others reserve the word civilization for some selected part of a culture. To Arnold Toynbee, a civilization is essentially a religious and ethical system, holding sway over an area often larger than a state or nation. Such a system is unified by customs, institutions and ideologies. Gillin and Gillin are of the view that civilization is far more complex than culture. MacIver takes Utilitarian and Instrumental view of civilization. According to him the word civilization denotes utilitarian things — the whole mechanism and social organism, techniques and material instruments — which have been devised by man in his endeavour to control the conditions of his life. These things operate as Means to Ends. A.W. Green gives an exhaustive definition : A culture becomes civilization only when it possesses written language, science, philosophy, as specialized division of labour and a complex technology and political system. Some of the universally accepted characteristics of Civilization are given below :

1. Agricultural surplus facilitates the concentration of population in a particular area.
2. The population concentrations become centres of trade, commerce, government, education and religion.
3. Institutions like military, economy etc. are managed by a class of specialists having adequate managerial skills.
4. Increased functional specialization and division of labour.
5. Ruling class controls the means of production.
6. Concentration of wealth and power in fewer hands changes the nature of society from an equalitarian one to one based upon inequality of wealth and social stratification.
7. Civilization is marked by a centralized and hierarchical political system.
8. There takes place gradual separation of religious sphere from the secular one.

### CULTURE V/S CIVILIZATION

FOLLOWING MacIver, the important points of differences between culture and civilization may be described as follows :

- (i) CIVILIZATION has a precise standard of measurement, but

not culture. Civilization is susceptible of being quantitatively measured on the grounds of efficiency. When comparing the products of civilization we can prove which is superior and which is inferior. Their efficiency can be estimated and in fact be measured. A lorry runs faster than a bullock cart, an aeroplane runs faster than a lorry, a powerloom produces more than a handloom. The tractor is superior to the hand plough. The modern currency system is superior to the barter system. None can dispute these facts. On the contrary, there is no measuring rod by which we can assess the cultural objects. Different ages and different groups have their own standards of judgements. No discussion about tastes is possible. Thus the paintings of Picasso may appear to some an abomination while to other they are invaluable models of art. To some Bernard Shaw is a better dramatist than Shakespeare. Some like folk songs others prefer film songs.

(ii) CIVILIZATION is always advancing, but not culture. According to MacIver, "civilization not only marches, it marches always, provided there is no catastrophic break of social continuity in the same direction. It is unilinear and cumulative and tends to advance indefinitely. Ever since man invented automobile, it has continuously improved. Similar is the case with other means of transportation like railway, ship, aeroplane which are constantly growing more swift, more efficient and better designed. They are vastly superior to those employed by our ancestors. Culture, on the other hand, advances slowly and is often subject to retrogression. It does not march assuredly to higher or improved standards. Our paintings are not as good as or better than those of Ajanta Caves. Can we say that our poetry, drama and literature are superior to those of ancient times?

(iii) CIVILIZATION is passed on without effort, but not culture. Culture is transmitted on a different principle from that of civilization. The former can only be assimilated by the likeminded. It can be had only by those who are worth of it. Civilization in general makes no such demand. We can enjoy its products without sharing the capacity which creates them.

(iv) THE works of civilization can be improved by anybody but that is not possible in the case of culture. Lesser minds can improve the work of the great inventors, but lesser artists, instead of improving may rather spoil the poems of Milton or Tagore. The accomplishments of culture can be perfected only by the persons who produced them. Again, the product of the artist is more revelatory of his personality than is that of the technician. Culture being the immediate expression of human spirit, can advance only if that spirit is capable of finer efforts, has itself something more to express.

(v) CIVILIZATION is external and mechanical while culture is internal and organic. Civilization is inclusive of external things, culture is related to internal thoughts, feelings, ideals, values etc. MacIver remarks, "Civilization is what we have; culture is what we are".

(vi) CIVILIZATION is borrowed without change or loss, but not culture. Given adequate means of communication, things of civilization can quickly spread to the whole world. Culture, on the other hand, has an intrinsic quality and can only be imbibed. It will have a limited appeal. In India we have borrowed much western civilization, but not western culture. Though there may be some cultural "borrowings" but they are insignificant compared to the borrowings of civilization. It is only a few aspects of culture which are borrowed and even in this act of borrowing, borrowed culture is largely modified by the personality of the borrowers.

CULTURE and civilization are interdependent. Culture and civilization, different as they are, will hardly exist apart from each other. The two are not only interdependent but also interactive. The articles of civilization called "artifacts" are influenced by culture called "mentifacts" and culture is influenced by articles of civilization. Man does not simply want a thing but he wants a thing which may also be beautiful and appealing to his senses.

Here culture influences civilization. An automobile or radio may be a useful thing, but the models and finish are determined by our culture. Similarly, our philosophies, novels, and all our learning have been much influenced by the printing press.

THE objects of civilization after some time acquire a cultural aspect. The tools of the primitive communities are not merely tools, they are more than that. They are the symbols of culture. The numerous articles like pot, clothings, coins, tools, etc. found in excavations reveal the culture of primitive people. Likewise a constitution or code of laws is not simply a means of government, but it at the same time expresses the spirit of a people and is treasured as the embodiment of culture. In this way the objects that fall mainly in the realm of civilization have generally a cultural aspect.

## SOCIETY

SOCIETY is a basic concept in sociology. In layman terms it is understood as a group of people but in sociological parlance, it is much more than that. Though 'society' forms the basics of most sociological studies, sociologists have yet failed to agree on one acceptable definition. For MacIver, society is "a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of controls of human behaviour and liberties. This ever changing system we call society. It is web of social relationship. And it is always changing." For Cooley too society encompasses somewhat similar elements. According to him "Society is a complex of forms or processes each of which is living and growing by interaction with the others, the whole being so unified that what takes place in one part affects all the rest". Obviously, both MacIver and Cooley have stressed the functional aspects of society while defining it, and the structural elements been almost ignored. Similarly, Parsons has defined society in terms of "the total complex of human relationships in so far as they grow out of action in terms of mean end relationship, intrinsic or symbolic". There is another group of sociologists who follow structural view point. For Giddings, "Society is the union itself, the organization, the sum of formal relations in which associating individuals are bound together". Also for Ginsberg, society is a collection of individuals united by certain relations or modes of behaviour which mark them off from others who do not enter into these relations or who differ from them in behaviour.

A CLOSE look at structural and functional approaches to define Society reveals that in fact, there is no conflict in the two kinds of definitions. The two are just complementary to each other. But McGee has pointed out that a viable definition of society must incorporate

(i) the social organization that regulates interaction between members of the group and

(ii) the size of the group.

ACCORDINGLY, he has defined society as "the largest distinguishable unit of interacting individuals who share a pattern of social organization that regulates interaction between them". In his definition 'size' refers not to the numerical strength but to "the levels of organizational inclusiveness and distinctiveness involved" and therefore "A society is the most inclusive type of social organisation, which dominates all other types of organization, incorporates, and which possesses both functional and cultural economy". Obviously independent existence is a very important feature of a society.

FOR a society to exist, the members must have some common qualities. Likeness is the essential pre-requisite of a society. As pointed out by MacIver, "Comradeship, intimacy, association of any kind or degree would be impossible without some understanding of each by the other, that understanding depends on the likeness which each apprehends in the other". Yet, differences too are a must for the survival of a society, because if all individuals are alike in all respects, there will be no need for any interaction between them. Unlikeness in social, economic, political, ritual etc. spheres results in a division of labour and

greater cooperation among the members of a society. A society is an independent group with members dependent on each other for their survival.

## SOCIETY : A WEB OF SOCIAL RELATIONS

THE dictum given by MacIver is true to the last word. All actions of individual in a society are strongly influenced by his relationships and this influence is mutual for all members of the society towards others. Thus, mutual recognition of each others' status and actions is an important feature of a society. Secondly, as Giddings put it is the "sense of belonging together or a consciousness of the kind" or the 'we' feeling of Cooley. Though there must be different type of wranglings in a society, its members always have a feeling of familiarity to each other.

## SOCIETY-STRUCTURE

THOUGH there are thousands of norms (Rules governing do's and don'ts in a society, all of them do not apply equally to all members of a society. Application and adherence to norms is a function of status (a social position in relation to other such positions). The set of norms assigned to a particular status is called a 'role'. Status and the assigned role form the basics of all social interaction. Status and role, at one period of time, are a static entity and signify the structure of the society. Over time, however, both status and role may change their meaning and connotations; and therefore, the society is not static, it is (at a particular moment of time) in a state of social equilibrium.

**Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft :** Tönnies IN 1887 gave the concept of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. The former (meaning communal society) is a society which a person thinks he belongs to because of the similarities with other members of the society. In this society an individual is born where he has to perform some definite functions which are a natural by-product of his membership in the society. The decline in *Gemeinschaft* means a decline in the sense of kinship. A *Gesellschaft* (associational society), on the other hand, is the one where main social bonds are voluntary and based on the rational pursuit of self-interest. Here the typical relationship is that of contract than of kinship. *Gesellschaft* results in the weakening of traditional bond with individuals loosely bound together. It leads to a mass society (with mass participation) with matters considered important for the society involve decision-making by the majority. Historical trends show that human society has been moving from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*. In the words of Tönnies, "Gemeinschaft is old; Gesellschaft is new as a name as well as a phenomenon. Whenever urban culture blossoms and bears fruits, Gesellschaft appears as its indispensable organ. The rural people know little of it. Yet 'from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft' may not always be the rule. The quest for community life as also the increased centralization (more so in totalitarian society) indicate a counter trend."

## Origin of Society

ORIGIN of society has been a very important question of inquiry for thinkers and philosophers. Numerous theories have been put forward for explaining the origin of society. Some of them are discussed below :

### 1. Theory of Divine Origin

THIS theory carries no scientific and sociological value. It has only its historical significance.

### 2. Familial Theories

IT IS believed by Henry Maine and others that origin of family resulted in formation of society. But some anthropologists believe that even before the existence of family, society was in existence.

### 3. Theory of Social Contract

HOBBS, Locke and Rousseau are proponents of this theory. They maintain that like state, society is also a result of social contract. They differ in views regarding nature of pre-social state and purpose of the contract. Nevertheless, the theory maintains that one or the other problem forced individuals to enter

into a contract which resulted in the formation of society.

### 4. Group Mind Theory

PLATO, Hegel, Bosanquet and McDougall are the main supporters of this theory. The theory believes that individual without society is merely an abstraction. McDougall says that the society has a mental life which is not the mere sum of mental lives of the units, if and in so far as they could be known as isolated units, would not enable to deduce the nature of the life of the whole in the way that is implied in Spencer's analogies. This theory is opposed to organic theory of society. However, the theory has been criticized as group mind cannot be a reality.

### 5. Organic Theory of Society

HERBERT Spencer was of the view that society is like a living organism and that both in the case of individual and social organism, the parts cannot be separated from each other. This theory is also criticized and holds only historical significance.

### 6. Modern View

THE Modern View of origin of society takes society in evolution. Family contributed a lot. The desire to protect family members and other institutions such as religion, food-getting resulted into elementary form of society.

## TYPES OF SOCIETY

ALL human societies of past and present can be grouped into certain basic categories based on a number of criteria. The most common classification of societies based on the technological level and the role of environment as contribution to the culture of the societies, sees them as differentiated into tribal, agrarian and industrial societies. Though the basic difference in these types of society is mainly economic, economy is one of the institutions that has a strong impact on other social institutions (and vice versa). The three typical kinds of societies have their own characteristic features dealt (briefly) below. Much has however been said in the topics dealing with various institutions.

### Tribal Society

TRIBAL societies are pre-literate and pre-industrial societies living through direct exploitation of land and other natural resources on primary production viz. hunting, food gathering and fishing; pastoral herding and, at the most, horticulture. A tribal society is divided into different kinship groups with dominance of ascribed roles; bonds are very strong and direct all the activities of the society. Social organization may be patrilineal, patriarchal, patrilocal or matrilineal, matriarchal, matrilocal with generally an important role for matrilineal kins. Economic activities of a tribal society are very simple to understand. Reciprocity forms the basis of all economic exchanges. Ownership is communal. Economy is a function of social status and vice-versa. Politically the society may have a band organization or tribal organization. Religion finds its expression in animism, totemism etc. without any influence of modern religions. The society is mostly homogeneous in organization without strong differentiation based on economic or ritual purity.

### Agrarian Society

AS THE name implies, agrarian society is the one where the dominant occupation of the people is agriculture. An agrarian society is a relatively heterogeneous society where other occupations like various artisan groups also exist. (In tribal society every individual or at the most a family is expected to be self-sufficient). An agrarian society contrasts with the tribal society in economic pursuits. Land-ownership patterns are varied generally with the characteristic phenomenon of absentee landowners who do not till their land themselves but lend it for share cropping. The society is marked by large variations in economic possessions with big landlord on the one hand and the landless labour on the other. Agrarian societies have enough strength of domesticated animals who serve a number of functions. With abundant and predictable food supply, the life is village based and is sedentary. The mobility in social life is



quite rare and informal means of control still persist. Though a lot can be written about the agrarian society, the student must know that it is an intermediate stage between tribal and industrial societies. Though it is more advanced in economic pursuits compared to the tribal society, it is not much different from the latter in social and political life.

#### Industrial Society

TRIBAL society has received enough attention in our chapters on various institutions, but industrial society has not. Here, therefore, it is being dealt in some details.

BELL has rightly observed that the industrial society "is organized around the axis of production and machinery for fabrication of goods. In its rhythm of life and organization of work, industrial society is the defining feature of social structure i.e. the economy, the occupational system, and the stratification system—of modern western Society". About 5,000 years or so after the use of plough began, came the industrial revolution in Britain during the terminal of eighteenth century and the modern industrial society has its roots in this industrial revolution. At the onset the mantle of industrial revolution fell on handloom cottage industries. Today, however, the industrialization has a strong bearing on the societies swayed by it. An industrial society has been transformed through its traditional value systems to modern ones.

#### Formal Education

FORMAL Education is a typical characteristic of an industrial society (in agrarian societies it is the prerogative of only a few privileged). The education and its curriculum are designed to fulfil the need for labour force requirements. Strong division of labour requires specialized education. Industrialization gives way to urbanization, modern wage system, stock-exchange etc. and above all trade-unions of labour force. The standard of living is raised. The change in economy has strong influence on social institutions.

INDUSTRIALIZATION causes downfall of traditional values in favour of new ones. Family undergoes tremendous change. (Please also refer to stability and change in family). Kinship bonds loosen up with people rarely valuing relations beyond the nuclear family. With technological advancement come the modern mechanized utilities of everyday use that make possible the leisure time. Many economic, educational and protective and other functions of family have been taken over by the government or the private agencies. Religion is no more a family business but a personal affair. Increased economic achievements result in greater aspiration for rising higher. All social, economic, political etc. roles and their connotations change.

#### Post-Industrial Society

THE post-industrial society is a futuristic concept to denote the rapid changes occurring on the industrial scene of America in particular. According to D. Bell who created this concept, the post-industrial society has a special principle of codification of theoretical knowledge that directs the innovations in science. The theoretical knowledge helps in anticipating the future trends forecasting and planning alike. In post-industrial society personal and business services become highly frequent. What is more, services related to health, research, education and government represent the new intelligentsia in different sectors. Professional and technical services become more respected and valued, technological research is always aimed with the view of future trends.

## STATUS AND ROLE

#### STATUS

SOCIOLOGISTS use the term status in two different but related meanings, firstly as to a person's social position without referring to any contrasting higher or lower ones. Secondly, the term is used to designate one's ranking in the social system with

connotations of higher or lower. Every society has a system of status differentiation whereby an individual's position is defined by a social group. Weber defined status as the honour accorded (to a person or group) by the community. This honour can be accorded on several bases viz. family background, ethnicity, education, property, caste etc.

IN INDIA, ancient Rome and China, Medieval Europe etc. a man born in a social group was given the status of that group. Here, is a condition where the status is accorded by birth, the status assigned is called as **ascribed status**. An ascribed status is the one based on birth in a group, sex, age, biological relationship etc. and is accorded to the person without any efforts made on the part of the individual. The limits of mobility in a society where social status is ascribed, are very narrow. A caste society is a stratified society where status is ascribed at birth. Here, a small social group (sub-caste) is assigned one definite social status where all members within the sub-caste are considered equal. Such a group of persons granted a certain level or status on the basis of ascription is called a **status group**.

CONTRARY to the ascribed status, an **achieved status** is the one accorded to a person on account of his personal accomplishments. In open class society, the basis of status assigning are personal achievements and not ascription. Here, there is a complete freedom for the members of different strata to mix up and a person from an ordinary status ranking can reach the top of the ladder of status solely on the basis of efforts made by him and recognized by his social group. The two kinds of societies who have the system of status being ascribed or achieved have their own respective peculiar problems. As rightly remarked by Davis, the societies with absolute prescription of status, rigidity and least mobility, the society may get ossified and face disaster. The other type of societies with achieved status may result in "intense specialization leading to a failure of society's members to understand each other. They run the risk of uncontrolled individualism with consequent loss of social cohesion". Incidentally, there have never been a caste society and the open class society in the absolute sense.

WHEN we talk of social interaction we are not concerned with the persons in interaction but their social status. Therefore, when we talk of social interaction we mean **status interaction** and not the personal interaction.

#### ROLE

SOCIAL positions (or statuses) are always in interaction and their interaction can be understood by the concept of role. A role is a pattern of behaviour associated with a distinctive status. In explanatory terms (after Oslen) a role (or a social role) is an interrelated set of explanations and actions that is associated with a position in a social organization. Roles are thus "patterns of action and interaction that people enact wherever they engage in any collective activity or when alone, when they act as directed by or for such activity". A role, then, is an intersection, or point of convergence, between individual action and some kind of organized or organizational participation". A role can not exist independently, some kind of social organization is a must. The meaning of role can only be found in interaction with such roles. A university-teacher, for example, finds his expression in the presence of his students. Roles are, therefore, always **complementary** or reciprocal and they find a way out for fixing up of responsibility for all jobs that have to be done. A society may thus have numerous roles performed by different persons. MOST roles are much more complex than they appear in the first instance. A university-teacher may be a husband, a father, a friend etc. The sum total of all roles performed by an individual are known cumulatively as **role repertoires**. Persons enacting same kind of role are called **role partners**. Friends, students, workers are three different examples of role partners. A role partner can enact his role even without his mates. A student can study alone and a worker can work without his co-workers.



Different roles in interaction form a **role-set**. Thus teacher-student, superior-subordinate are role sets. A role-set always requires two or more roles in interaction and complementary to each other.

LIKE the ascribed and achieved status, we have the respective concepts of **ascribed roles** and **achieved roles** but in this sense the 'status' and 'role' may, at times, be used interchangeably.

### Role Expectations, Role conflict and Reinforcement of Roles

AS SAID earlier, a person has to perform role repertoire. Performance by a status of a role depends mainly on the process of socialization. As a role has definite connotations, a person enacting a role must have the full understanding of the role or, in other words, he must know what is expected of him. Role expectation is merely a person's understanding of how to enact a given role by him or by others. S. Sargent, a psychologist has identified three kinds of role expectations namely **normative**, **situational** and **personal** role but no role is rigid enough not to allow for creativity. Yet a specific, clearly outlined role requires a definite style of enactment.

IN PERFORMANCE of many roles, a situation may come when the individual is confronted with conflicting pressures because of the conflicting role requirements. A role may, for example, call for friendship or kinship but may also require unbiased judgement. The difficulty felt in fulfilling of roles has been termed **role strain** or **role conflict**. Role strain has been recognized to be of two kinds: **interrole strain** and **intra-role strain**. The situation given above exemplifies the interrole conflict. Intra-role strain refers to role inconsistency or a situation where a person in a particular role fails to reach the known expectations. The role conflict or role strain may result in serious repercussions for the society if the person involved holds a responsible position. Alternatives are therefore, always required to minimize the chances for such conflict. A common example in this regard is that senior military officials are generally not allowed close social relationship lest role conflict may ensue.

JUST opposite of role conflict (if a person enacting two roles fulfills the expectations of both of them) the situation is called **role reinforcement**.

### GROUP-PRIMARY, SECONDARY & REFERENCE GROUPS

TILL the end of nineteenth century, sociologists were mainly concerned with the evolution of society and culture. In those times the concept of 'group' was not fully appreciated. Later it was realized that small groups were of immense importance in the study of society because it is here that one gets socialized with society at large playing almost negligible role. Secondly, it was realized that the changes brought at the temporal level start only at the group level. Studying small groups in totality (than studying the whole society in general) and making broad generalizations regarding society can be of immense value in the understanding of society.

FOR the past several decades sociologists have been studying small groups and yet it has not been possible to devise an acceptable definition of 'group'. Important definitions arrived at by different authorities on the subject are being given below.

**Bennet & Tumin**: A number of people in definable and persisting interaction directed towards common goals and using agreed upon means.

**Bogardus**: 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.

**Ehredge & Merrill**: Two or more persons who are in communication over an appreciable period of time and who act in accordance with a common function or purpose.

**Green**: An aggregate of individual, which persists in time which has one or more interests and activities common, and which is organized.

**Horton & Hunt**: Aggregate of categorize of people who have consciousness of membership and of interaction.

**MacIver**: Any collection of human beings who are brought into

social relationships with one another.

**Oemsted**: A plurality of individuals, who are in contact with each other, who take one another into account and who are aware of some significant commonality.

IN SIMPLEST terms a human group may be defined as a relatively small organization members of which identify and interact with each other in a personal manner. Thus in a society we find hundreds of groups with varying nature and performing varied functions. Different sociologists, for different purposes, and using different criteria have given a number of classifications of groups as follows :

1. Cooley : Primary and Secondary
2. Sumner : Ingroups and Outgroups
3. Tonnies : Communities and Associations
4. Ellwood : Involuntary and Voluntary, Institutional, Non-institutional temporary and permanent.
5. Leopold : Crowds, Groups and Abstract Collectivities.
6. Miller : Horizontal and Vertical
7. Park and Burgess : Territorial and Non-territorial.
8. Simmel : Dyad, Triad, Tetrad etc.

### Primary Group

BEFORE understanding the primary groups, we must know something about the Primary relations. A primary relation is characterized (after Broom & Selznick) as follows :

(i) Response is to whole persons rather than to segments.

The response is unique and non transferable. The wholeness should mean that one responds to many aspect of another's character and background. The response is free and spontaneous permitting to express the feelings fully. In many human relations (e.g. bank officer and customer) the relationship is not primary because it is highly transferable and confined to a limited purpose.

(ii) Personal satisfactions are paramount. One enters into a primary relation because it directly contributes to an individual's security and well being. As primary relations provide satisfaction, they are not the means to an end but an end in themselves.

THE primary groups are the ones characterised by primary relations. In the words of Cooley, who first used the term, "By primary groups I mean those characterised by intimate face to face association and co-operation. They are primary, in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in framing the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association psychologically is a certain fusion of individualities into a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes, at least, is the common life and purposes of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a 'we', it involves the 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 aim of his will in that feeling."

HERE, we must elaborate that the phrase 'face to face association' should be understood in its implied meaning and not in literal one. In primary group, "the degree of intimacy or social distance rather than the physical distance" is to be taken into consideration otherwise many contrasting cases without any essence of the primary group feeling may be termed so. A courtroom scene, for example, may appear like primary group but there are no feelings as such to declare it so. To talk of mutual interest or "we" feeling in this case will be utterly ridiculous. Contrarily, members of a family may not be living together and still they constitute a primary group.

**Individual and Primary Groups** : COOLEY called primary groups as the "nurseries of human nature" simply because of their role in the social and cultural development of an individual. As said earlier major part of the socialization is carried out in small groups only. Thus, primary groups form the link between the individual and the society. Without the primary group not only

that socialisation will not be possible but there shall be chaos everywhere. Individual's need to remain in primary group acts as a major factor in the maintenance of social order. No activity of emotional character can be performed without the primary group feeling. For physically handicapped and the aged life may become miserable without the presence of their primary relations. Without primary group interaction no amount of inspiration can induce one with energy.

IN A primary group the feeling that one is recognized, accepted and wanted creates self confidence. An individual gets his identity and recognition (from other groups) through his primary group relations. *"The primary group protects the individual by reinterpreting and modifying rules and goals, and by adapting them to the capacities of the individual and to his special personal circumstances."*

**Formal Organization and Primary Group :** THE two terms 'formal organization' and 'Primary group' may sound contradictory because in formal organizations, as the name implies, an individual performs formal functions without involving his whole self. Formal organizations use individuals as tools and as their goals are impersonal, an individual has to be subordinated. But members of the formal organization feel the need for a more hospitable treatment at personal level. Studies have shown that the development of primary groups in formal organizations (e.g. factories, clubs etc.) makes the organizations more meaningful and profitable. *"Where members are attached to a large organization through a primary group the capacity of the organization to mobilize and control them is increased"*. Thus, primary group feelings in a formal organization act as a force to bind the individual into a larger social structure to become its integral part.

PRIMARY groups are the soul of a society. It has been argued that many of the problems faced today by the individuals in industrial societies are the result of loosening of primary group bonds. Today, researches have shown that making of personality during infancy and childhood requires a great deal of social psychological support which can only be provided by primary group structures.

### Secondary Group

SECONDARY groups in their nature represent the contrast of primary groups. As a social group becomes larger, relations tend to be un-emotional, impersonal and formal. And unlike the primary groups, membership in the secondary groups is voluntary and guarded by certain set of norms. A factory for example will have prescribed qualifications for its various jobs or a club will admit persons of definite social status or economy or profession etc. And again, as the membership is guarded and voluntary, any member or individual can leave or join such membership.

THE interaction between members of a secondary group is only formal and no close bonds can develop. Further, the intimacy is developed with self-interest as the prime factor. There can be large variations in the size of secondary groups as the numbers at times may cross the countable limits spread over a large geographic territory beyond the limits of a country. Red Cross society or Rotary International, for example, have a membership in lakhs all over the globe. As the social interaction in a secondary group is promoted by self-interest, secondary group relations are only transitory. As and when a member gets more ambitious, he may join a group with wider opportunities to fulfil his ambitions.

IN TODAY'S complex modern social life whereby a number of tasks can be performed only in formal, large-scale organizations with bureaucratic involvement, secondary groups are becoming increasingly important. At a bank-counter or railway reservation ticket counter, for example, the counter-clerk is not expected to know all customers personally. Here, only a formal identification of the interacting persons can serve the purpose. All essential services require only secondary group level interaction. Today, secondary groups are performing many functions

which were previously the prerogative of primary ones.

### Reference Group

THE concept of reference group originally given by Hayman was elaborated by Merton, Turner and Sheriff. At times, in situations not so uncommon, we conform to the norms not of our group but of the one to which we don't belong (but we want to). The group with which we want to be identified or identified to, then becomes a reference group. A reference group is thus a group real or imaginary that is a part of the framework for the assessment (by an individual) of himself or his situations. It is, now a days, common practice among the urban middle class to identify with the economically higher groups. Upper class, in this case becomes a reference group for the middle class. In traditional India, lower castes imitated the higher castes and identified themselves with certain high-caste norms and values. In this process of *Sanskritization*, upper castes become a reference group for the lower castes.

JOHNSON has enlisted the circumstances, in which for members of one group, another group becomes a reference group, as :

- (i) Some or all of the members of the first group aspire to membership in the second group (the reference group).
- (ii) The members of the first group strive to be like the members of the reference group in some respect, or to make their group like the reference group in some respect.
- (iii) The members of the first group derive some satisfaction from being unlike the members of the reference group in some respect and strive to maintain the difference between the groups or between themselves and the members of the reference group.
- (iv) Without necessarily striving to be like or unlike the reference group or its members, the members of the first group appraise their own group or themselves using the reference group or its members as a standard for comparison.

THE discussion on reference groups shall remain inconclusive without the following commentary by Broom and Selznick. "Differences in social background affect perspectives; and therefore opinions, because they make people sensitive to different things, provide experiences that give them feelings of weakness or strength, make them more or less verbal, more or less prone to join organized group. In addition, people tend to see themselves and the world through the framework provided by the groups in which they participate. However, we cannot automatically conclude that a person's 'reference group' is derived from his occupational role or economic position. For example, many low income people identify with and accept the standard of middle-class life. In modern industrial society, with wide open communication channels, people may assume the perspectives of groups they aspire to be in as well as those to which they actually belong. Furthermore, an individual may have many reference groups affecting his opinion on specific subjects. ...Reference groups should be distinguished from social categories, e.g. people in the same income level, and membership groups, such as trade unions. Social categories and membership groups often become reference groups. In studying opinion it is important to know to what extent social categories and membership groups have been transformed into reference groups."

**Voluntary groups** can be distinguished from the *involuntary groups* on the basis of conference of status. Membership for voluntary groups is an achieved status while that of the involuntary groups is ascribed by birth, caste, language or other criteria. On the basis of numerical strength a small group may comprise of two individuals (*dyad*), three individuals (*triad*) and so on. There are groups which are formally organized into a hierarchy and are meant to achieve a certain goal. These are *patterned groups*. Contrarily, informally organized group without set rights and obligations of members towards each other are termed *non-patterned groups*.

## SOCIAL STRATIFICATION : CASTE, CLASS & ESTATE

ALL men are born equal and yet equality is a utopian concept. Most societies of the world have the system of classifying their members into categories which are arranged in hierarchical order of superiority or inferiority. Stratification refers to the ways adopted by a society to rank its members in a hierarchy on the basis of class, status and power (these three criteria refer to class, caste and estate). Though stratification is a common practice in most societies, it is not quite uncommon to find the unstratified groups; small play-groups of children or of the old friends can be seen in all societies. Again, within a stratum we may not find the relationship of superiority or inferiority. Many societies display stratification only on the basis of sex or any personal quality, and there, it is just futile to talk of social stratification in terms of caste, class and estate.

SOCIAL stratification has its roots in social inequality. All members of a society can be differentiated on the basis of life chances (social opportunities, rewards etc.) bestowed on them by the society. These life chances may include all social variables as also the occupation, health, luxuries etc. Ethnicity is also an important variable of social differentiation. As stratification is a matter of classification and evaluation, all the factors, if taken into consideration can result in thousands of ways in which a society can be divided. Some systems of classification (stratification) may allow mobility between different strata in others it may be forbidden altogether. In today's society family background and kinship bonds; income, wealth and occupation; location and duration of residence as also the knowledge and educational status are important criteria for social stratification. All these factors may be highly correlated (called **status consistency**) whereby all criteria are high or low; or uncorrelated (**status inconsistency**) whereby some criteria may be high and others low.

THE status consistent stratification structures may take the form of slavery, caste, class or estate, each of which is being discussed briefly.

### SLAVERY

SLAVERY is one of the oldest institutions in the history of mankind though some sociologists may differ on this statement mainly because of the criteria chosen to explain slavery. Slavery has basically economic basis. Slavery is a common phenomenon where labour is scarce or costly. Decline in slavery in recent times can be attributed to the spread of modern ideas of rationality, equality and humanity.

### CASTE (STATUS GROUPING)

A CASTE system is a normatively closed system with sole reliance on ascription of status. The whole society is organized into hierarchically arranged social groups membership of which is determined by birth. Here it is imperative to add that castes or caste-like systems are even today found besides India, in other parts of the world too. South Africa, in this sense is a classic example with whole society till was recently divided on the basis of ethnicity or colour. Some tribes of East Africa Burakumin (a minority group of Japan) and some European societies too have the system in one form or the other.

### Caste System in India

THE ORIGIN of caste system dates back to the age of the *Rg Veda*, where there is a reference to the word *Varna* (colour). *Arya* is referred to as fair and *dasa* as dark. The *Purusa Sukt* a part of the *Rg Veda*, states that the *Brahmins*, *Rajanyas*, *Vaiśyas*, and *Sudras* sprang from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the *Purusa* (god). However, in those times, these classes were not hereditary but functional. There was interchange of duties and also interclass marriages were not uncommon. There were no commensal taboos and no trace of untouchability.

IT WAS during the later *Vedic* Period that gradually restrictions were imposed on change of duties. Further subdivisions occurred. Birth became the sole criterion of class determination. The idea of pollution by touch found expression. The *Zabala Upanisad* mentions four *Asramas*, namely *Brahmacarya*, *Grahashta*, *Vanaprastha*, and *Samnyasa*. These stages of man's life-cycle were later on closely associated with the caste system. *Dharma*, or a code of duties for the harmonious functioning of various divisions of society became an accepted procedure. *Dharma Sastra* laid down rules for every caste and vocation, for everyone in society. From the time of *Guptas*, the castes and subcastes were rigidly separated. Inter-caste relations were defined in regard to dining, marriage, touch and ritual observances. The category of outcastes had emerged. ACCORDING to some scholars, the main features of castes are (1) a common name, (2) a common descent (3) professing the same hereditary calling and (4) forming a single homogeneous community. Ketkar considers hereditary membership and endogamy as the basis of caste as an organic structure of relations. G.S. Ghurye gives a comprehensive definition of caste. According to him the six main features of the caste system are:

- (1) segmental division of society,
- (2) hierarchy of groups,
- (3) restrictions of feeding and social intercourse,
- (4) religious and allied disabilities and privileges of different sections,
- (5) lack of unrestricted choice of occupation, and
- (6) restrictions of marriage. Endogamy is the stable feature of the caste system.

### Origin of Caste

AS HAS been pointed out earlier, numerous theories have been put forward to explain the origin of caste in India, but none properly explains it. The present discussion on theories of origin of caste is based on Ram Ahuja (1993). He has shortened the list and discussed only the important theories, excluding geographical, evolutionary and such other explanations which are not based on a sufficiently careful and competent evaluation.

(1) *Traditional Theory*—The traditional theory believes that the caste system has been established by divine ordinance or at least with divine approval. It views caste as a normal and natural system. The mythical version regards four *varnas* as four castes and believes that these four castes have emerged from different parts of Brahma's body. It considers caste as a naturally determined organization of social functions and explains the membership of an individual in a particular caste in terms of *Karma* and *Dharma* doctrines.

THE traditional theory of origin of caste has been rejected by the scholars mainly because of two reasons: one, it considers caste as a natural phenomenon, and two, it considers four *varnas* as four castes. If this is accepted, it would mean that *varna* and not caste is the unit of the caste system. And according to Ram Ahuja this is not correct. MN Srinivas (1962) also writes that the idea of caste as a four-fold division of society represents a gross oversimplification of facts. The real unit of caste system is not *varna* but *jati*.

(2) *Brahmanical theory*: Abbe Dubois subscribes to this view. He maintains that the caste system is an ingenious device made by Brahmins for Brahmins. Brahmins imposed restrictions on eating and drinking, marriage, and social relations, etc., with non-Brahmins to preserve their purity necessary for the sacred functions they were to perform. They gave themselves a high status and special privileges. Ghurye (1961) also maintains that various factors that characterize caste society were the result, in the first instance, of the attempts on the part of Brahmins to exclude Sudras from religious and social spheres.

Hulton (1961), however, is critical of this theory.



(3) **Racial Theory**: Herbert Risley is the main exponent of this theory. Other proponents are scholars like Ghurye, Majumdar, Westernmarck and others. The theory is based on the premise that the clash and the contact of races crystallized castes in India. In the history of mankind, whenever one people have subdued another, the conquerors have not only taken women as concubines or wives from the conquered group but have also refused to give their own daughters in marriage to them. IF RISLEY's theory is to be accepted, it would mean that caste system should not be confined to India but should be found in all those societies which have faced the conquests by other groups. Risley himself is of the opinion that caste is not confined to India but it occurs in a pronounced form in South America, Canada, and Mexico, etc.

**Uniqueness/Universality of caste**: Scholars like Leach, Dumont, Pocock, Bougle, Hocart, Hulton, Senart, Srinivas, Gould etc., feel that caste is a phenomenon peculiar to India only. On the other hand Risley, Crook, Berreman etc., believe that caste is a universal phenomenon. Universality of caste as a stratification principle has been championed by Berreman vigorously. However, most of the scholars believe that it is the experience of the people, who live in caste system, that matters. Ethno-experience should be given precedence over abstract theorization. Thus, caste is unique to Indian situation. However, caste like institutions can be observed in many parts of the world.

(4) **Occupational Theory**: This theory is propounded by Nesfield and supported by Denzil Ibbetson. Nesfield maintains that technical skill of the occupation was passed on hereditarily from generation to generation and because of practising the same occupation over a long period of time, occupational guilds came into existence which later on came to be known as castes. The hierarchy in the caste system was the result of the feeling of the superiority and inferiority of occupations.

KETKAR, Senart and Hulton are other sociologists who have made significant contributions on the origin of caste.

#### Perspectives regarding Caste

HAVING discussed theories of origin of caste, it would be logical to examine social scientists' perspectives regarding caste. MOST British ethnographers and sociologists take a functional view of caste. They view caste in terms of its "functionality" to the society and culture of India. They emphasize mutual relations between caste groups, intra-caste harmony and discipline. Risley, Ketkar and Senart view caste as a functional system. The functional view of caste is more explicit in the writings of Fumivall, Hulton and Sherring in particular (Sharma, 1986).

NOT only these early Indologists and administrators considered caste as a "functional" system, even Karl Marx related the "Asiatic mode of production" to the stability of caste as a "functional" system. H.J.S. Maine thought of caste as an example of non-contractual "status society" (Sharma, 1980).

BESIDES, caste has been considered as a rigid and static system of stratification. Sharma (1980) explains the above views regarding caste in terms of British interests. He argues that British ethnographers and administrators, who conducted studies on the caste system for seeking legitimacy and justification of British rule in India, declared that caste was an all-inclusive and encompassing system, and it was functional to Hindu society. The main features of caste, according to functionalists are:

- (1) it is functional to society, thereby desirable; and
- (2) it is rigid and static.

SO FAR as the first characteristic is concerned, it has come under serious attack not only from social revolutionaries but also sociologists. This is taken as a biased conception of caste. Some sociologists criticize caste system for its inhuman organization and exploitation of lower castes and the untouchables.

THE functionalists' view regarding the 'ritual' basis of caste is also criticized by many sociologists. Berreman's (1979) views

are very important on this point. According to him, caste systems are rigid systems of social stratification as well as of socio-cultural pluralism and both these facts may be understood in terms of distinct patterns of social interaction. Caste system, therefore, is made up of birth-ascribed groups which are hierarchically entailed differential evaluation, rewards and associations. He further asserts that differential evaluation in the caste system is essentially accompanied by differential distribution of power and rewards, access to goods, services and other valued things of life. The differential access to power and privileges is commensurate with one's rank in the hierarchy. Rank is expressed and validated in differential interaction between persons. Rank refers to inequality and dominance which are patterned, legitimized and enforced by those who are in power. The caste system is, therefore, based on conformity brought about by power and privilege than consensus. Ambedkar (1946) criticized caste hierarchy vehemently. He denounced the Brahmanic concept of caste and highlighted the inhuman face of caste system in terms of exploitation through the institution of untouchability.

THE rigid and static view regarding caste system has also come under attack. Although caste system has been quite rigid, yet studies by Romila Thapar, K.M. Pannikar, Burton, Stein and Imtiaz Ahmed have shown that Indian society was never static (Sharma, 1986). It is reported by Sharma (1980) that the articles by Harpar, Rowe and Stein refer to patterns of mobility in the caste system. Rowe refers to a caste of Noniyas (a Sudra caste) whose elites—due to their economic power—were able to claim a partial Kshatriya status within the period of half a century.

BURTON Stein mentions about social mobility of the low-ranking Sudras during the fifteenth century (Sharma, 1980). Sanskritization also indicates dynamism of caste system. It refers to positional change only and does not explain structural change. Therefore, caste as system remained in tact. As indicated above, it was based on conformity to the rule brought about by power.

KOTHARI (1970) mentions that politicisation of caste brings about outward looking, upward moving orientations and this further results in the phenomenon of multiple memberships and overlapping identities. Paul Brass and Rudolph and Rudolph argue that dominant castes in UP and elsewhere have created a politics of vertical mobilization, factionalism and personalism. The lower castes have witnessed horizontal mobilization, hence numerically they pose a threat to the upper caste power elites (Sharma, 1980).

ALL this debate boils down to the fact that caste system in India has resulted in more or less a rigid and inequalitarian society. It has been a highly oppressive and inhuman system. Of late, the system has shown some flexibility and the conditions have changed. Given the opportunity, no group is content to live in the lower position of a hierarchy.

**Caste as an ideology**: Contribution of Louis Dumont is worth discussing in this regard. He views caste inequality as a special form of social inequality. For him the idea of pure and impure is basic to caste hierarchy. Hierarchy is a universal organising principle in India. In his classic *Homo hierarchicus*, he established that caste as an ideology in India has remained static. Change has occurred in society; but change of society is absent.

**Structural and cultural aspects of caste**: Sociologists view caste from two different angles. One school of thought takes caste as a cultural system. It emphasizes prominence of ideas of pollution - purity and notions of hierarchy, segregation and corporateness. The structural view, on the other hand, explains that stratification is a universal reality, and caste is an aspect of this reality. The structural aspect of caste is explained by accepting it as general principle of stratification. The culturological view perceives caste as a distinct phenomenon found in Indian society in particular. The structural aspect of caste does not receive due attention when caste is seen as a cultural or ideo-



logical system. Interactional aspects of *Jajman* and *Kamin* are ignored by cultural perspective on caste. The cultural perspective puts emphasis on ideas and values. Domination/subjugation, surplus/exploitation, privileges/deprivations become the points of reference in the structural perspective (Sharma, K.L., 1987).

INDIAN society is viewed as 'caste society' as opposed to class society by Dumont. Andre Beteille has worked on 'caste model' of Indian society. Caste is also found among non-Hindus.

COMMENTING on caste and class relationship, K.L. Sharma maintains that caste and class are real dimensions of India's social formation, and seem to be inseparable from each other. Class is not simply a conceptual abstraction, a construct based on certain attributes or operational indices; it is a concrete reality. Classes of landowners, landless labourers, traders and moneylenders are structural components of Indian society. Caste conflicts are also class conflicts as the upper and the lower castes correspond to the high and low classes, respectively, in terms of their social placements.

CASTE system is no more that rigid as it used to be in the past. In the modern times, caste has undergone numerous changes. Urbanization, industrialization, westernization, modernization and sanskritization are some very important processes that are making caste system to change and to adapt to the new situations and demands. Some of these processes along with other factors have given rise to a substantive social reality, namely, Dominant Caste.

#### Related Concepts

**SOCIAL mobility** is the movement of individuals, families and groups from one social position to another—social position or social status which signifies a certain rank with respect to the possession of goods and values esteemed and desired by most members of society.

**P. SOROKIN** studied social mobility deeply and defined it as "the shifting of people in social space. Studying social mobility in its entirety, Sorokin distinguished it in terms of

(a) **Direction** : i.e. Vertical and Horizontal.

(b) **Time-space** i.e. inter-generational and intra-generational.

(c) **Content** : economic, political and occupational.

**Dominant Caste** : The concept was given by M.N. Srinivas in his Rampur study. He listed four criteria of dominance as economic, numerical, educational and ritual. He held that the dominant caste had an overwhelming influence on the local social structure.

#### CLASS

A **CLASS** system is a system of classification with economic basis. A social class may be defined as a category of individuals sharing common economic status. A class is thus a homogeneous group of individuals sharing a common economic situation, and who have the feeling of inferiority over those above them and of superiority over those below them in class ranking. Status ranking of a class within a society is based on the subjective criteria and the associated values which differ from society to society. A society, for example, may highly value education while in another, technical professions may be considered as highly esteemed. Though a class is an achieved status, racial, ethnic and sexual differences play their part in an individual's ability to achieve. It is thus logical to say that a class system has orientation for achieved status (though in practice there may be certain constraints). Within a class-society, each class has its own peculiarities in mode of behaviour, imitation of which by others of a different class is resented.

#### ESTATE

**ESTATE** system may be taken as synonymous with feudalism whereby the status is determined by birth, land and physical (military) force. A feudal estate consists of three estates namely clergy (**first estate**), aristocracy (**second estate**) and the commoners (**third estate**).

THE estate system arose in medieval Europe because of the disintegration of strong stable governments and decline in urban life. The three medieval estates of nobility, clergy and serfs (peasants) were social groupings with legal groupings that had rights and obligations towards each other. "The nobility were ordained to defend all, the clergy to pray for all, and the commoners to provide food for all". The nobility achieved their status from the amount of land they controlled but more so from the physical force they possessed. The commoners had only the obligations towards other two estates who monopolized all the resources.

THE estate system was a normatively closed system with restricted mobility. Though it has almost disappeared from the world today, it is existent in a somewhat different form and limited territory. Some of the Latin American countries (e.g. Brazil) have the system of big landholdings where debt-burden and dependency of farmers on others keep them working in the fields of big landowners. In other parts of the world however, land reforms have brought an end to the estate system.

#### PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

VARIOUS scholars and authorities in the field of social stratification have explained the subject in different perspectives, important of which are being discussed below.

##### Marx on stratification

MARX has highlighted the economic view-point of social stratification. According to him "the history of (mankind) hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle". For him, class antagonism forms the basis of all conflict and revolution. He classified the classes on the basis of access to resources as **capitalists** controlling the means of production, **landowners**, which he distinguished from the capitalists as the vestige of feudalism, and **workers** who work for others and get the wages. In the footnote to first page of **Communist Manifesto**, Engels differentiated those controlling the means of production of land and the workers as **bourgeoisie** and **proletariat** categories.

By bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour. Proletarians are, on the other hand, "the class of wage earners who having no means of production of their own are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live".

MARX analysed different class situation. In class in itself members of a class do not understand their position, the constraints working on them as also the class interests. In such situations the classes are ridden with intra-class feuds and rivalry. Workers in the class-in-itself cannot rise into a struggle with the oppressors. In the class-for-itself, on the other hand, the situation is just reversed. Here a large number of members identify with the class and are class conscious. According to Marx, it is only the attitudes of the class-for-itself that can result in the emergence of class struggle. (Ginsberg has outlined three prerequisites for class consciousness namely, greater chances of mobility, rivalry and conflict between different classes and the height of community sentiment within the class.) Marx opined that a time would come when the proletarians would become class conscious and will overthrow the monopolistic regimes to pave the way for a **class-less society**. Ironically the conditions which Marx proposed should bring such revolution, and which Marx proposed many industrialized societies of Europe, produced nothing of the like. Contrarily, neither Russia nor China, who witnessed such results fulfilled the criteria of class consciousness as envisaged by Marx.

##### Weber and Stratification

WEBER followed Marx in defining class situations as also his focus on industrialized societies and capitalism for his analysis of social stratification. For Weber however, power did not include economic factors only but social and political factors as well. Thus class and status, according to Weber, are linked closely whereby social class determines the social status

through the life-style. As a number of factors contribute towards power, there could be numerous classes in Weberian sense, with four broad categories of upper class, petty bourgeoisie, white collar workers and the labour class.

#### Veblen and the Leisure Class

VEBLEN propounded his own analysis of class system through the rise of leisure class. He opined that almost always and almost everywhere there have been persons in each society who perform no productive role, what so ever. This class of a few privileged has survived on the labour of others in the society. These people have enough resources and wealth to enjoy themselves. The leisure class does not serve any meaningful purpose of society except for being a reference group for the commoners. But this class can not go beyond a particular limit (in numbers) otherwise it may lead to scarcity of production units in a society.

#### Functionalist Perspective

FUNCTIONALIST theories of social stratification must be understood only in the light of functionalist theories of societies. Functionalists propose that for stratification to prevail, there must be certain functional utilities and prerequisites. A number of sociologists including Durkheim, Parsons, Tumin, Davis and Merton have proposed functionalist viewpoint of social stratification. According to Haralambos, the functionalist theories are "primarily concerned with the function of social stratification with its contribution to the maintenance and well-being of the society". Functionalists opine that without stratification a society may not be able to perform certain vital functions. Besides, there will be no provision for right person at the right job. "The stratification is perceived therefore" according to Lipset, "as a motivation system; it is society's mechanism for encouraging the most able people to perform the most demanding roles in order to have the society operate efficiently". One must however realize that none of the theories about the social stratification in all societies of all times.

#### Stratification in Capitalist Society

THOUGH economy is an important criterion for social stratification in modern capitalist society, but more so it is occupational status; for as argued by Parkin, "the backbone of class structure, and indeed the entire rewards system of modern Western society, is the occupational structure". Again as suggested by functionalists, the jobs that require greater responsibility of the production resources are rated higher than the others. Managerial, administrative and professional occupations are thus counted in higher esteem than the unskilled, semiskilled or even skilled manual jobs. Another viewpoint however is that power is more important than occupation. According to this, as today's economy is based on market, the jobs that land and control of the market are placed in high esteem than others. Further, jobs to be handled with expertise require very high quality of work and specialized knowledge. Persons in such positions may not be replaced easily. Manual workers can be dispensable and therefore they can not put pressure on product structure of the society. Parkin concludes that high occupational prestige is primarily the result of high occupational reward. MIDDLE class is the characteristic feature of a capitalist society. Though Marx had predicted that the middle strata would be forced to become proletarians, in practice exactly opposite is happening. The raise in standard of living of the unskilled, skilled workers and the white collar jobs has rather broadened the limits of middle class. Because of the mechanisation of means of production, the mantle of absorbing people into a work is born by the categories of occupations in white-collar sector. It may however, be noted that the middle class is not a homogeneous stratum of the society but a conglomeration of the multitude of classes ranging from lower middle class of skilled labour or semiskilled workers to the upper middle class comprising of professional experts in managerial or administrative sectors.

#### Stratification in Socialist Society

THE socialist countries have not been able to produce a classless society. Though all production channels in socialistic society are controlled by the state the differences in income of various occupations are startling enough to talk of classes. A general classification of classes in a socialist-society will see them fall into the four categories of white-collar workers and unskilled manual workers. Here too there is strong correlation between income and status ranking. Socialist societies who have been castigating social ranking in capitalist society justify this ranking in their own society on the basis of technological advancements and diversification of occupations.

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

SOCIAL organisation is the outcome of relationship among individuals and their interaction over time so that the relationships get firmly established. Each individual has several different types of relationships and social organization gives meaning to these shared relationships. As social organization encompasses the social entities (the relationships) and the social processes (interaction); its reference in only one of the two, may result in vague understanding of the subject.

THE way in which a person behaves in a particular situation is the function of his perception of the situation which is learnt through culture. We, therefore, have innumerable varieties of social relations and social interaction; and, therefore, it is literally impossible to give the generalized account of typical social organization in the human societies. Social organization has real as well as abstract forms and this further complicates the discussion on the topic.

**Processes of social Organization** ALL social relations and their interaction patterns reveal numerous processes of which four major ones namely social ordering, power exertion, social conflict and social cohesion need mention here.

**Social Ordering** is the result of regular interaction between social relationships so that they result in some expected pattern over time. In social ordering, one chooses for interaction, certain relationships from innumerable ones in the social environment though the process of *boundary creation*. These boundaries may be natural or artificial but they limit the circle of relationship. For social organization to be stable, the relationships have to be stable and this stability is achieved through *pattern stabilization*. Here we must note that stability is achieved through the ongoing development in relationship.

**Power Exertion** is responsible for the creation and continuation of social order. Power, in layman terms, means ability to do something and use of power without social recognition is a crime or a sin. Socially recognized power is called authority. Power (or authority) is the function of resources and also it can be utilized to control other resources. To get the maximum out of the authority (through legitimate power), the best way is to use minimum of coercion by making people act willingly what is desired of them. And this requires ideal role performance. The power in a society can not be achieved by one and all. There are generally strenuous procedures involved and people in power always try to restrict the proliferation of power to others without it.

**REGARDING** conflict, much has already been said in previous chapters under the dings of 'role conflict' and 'conflict as a social process'. Here it is imperative to note that conflict may be direct or mediated; regulated or unregulated; and expressive or instrumental. In *direct conflict*, actors in conflict are involved directly while in *mediated conflict*, there is always a third party involved. In *regulated conflict*, certain established norms are followed which is not the case with *unregulated conflict*. In *expressive conflict*, the conflict may be between two actors, while instrumental conflict involves conflict over certain issues. Conflict is always destructive and all societies have the norms to get rid of it through *rigid* and/or *flexible* organizations. *Social cohesion*, in the words of Mcgeee, is "the process through which

component parts of an organization or organized entity are bound into a whole, almost synonymous with 'social solidarity'. It may be *functional*, resulting from task-specialization, or *normative* resulting from shared values". In most organizations both types of these processes of social cohesion are operative simultaneously. Conflict in the larger society may promote cohesion within its smaller units.

### TYPES OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

SOCIAL organization encompasses all types of groups existing within the structure of the society. For convenience, however, sociologists classify all social organization into *formal* and *informal* dichotomy. Otherwise, groups can be divided on the basis of several criteria, viz. caste, class, age, sex, occupation, religion, language, region etc. A formal organization is characterized by (i) clearly spelt out norms for its members and (ii) when formally registered, they can be interfered by the law. Contrarily, informal groupings come up where the group feeling is very strong. At times, it may become difficult to demarcate the limits between formal and informal organizations as both have the tendency to acquire the characteristics of each other. Following discussion relates to important types of social organisations prevalent in most of the societies.

### Recent Changes in Social Organization

ALL social organizations have been developing and sociologists in different times have tried to cull out the explanations for such changes. Comte, the philosopher sociologist believed that all social organization has passed through the three stages, namely the theological, and the metaphysical and scientific. Tonnies visualized the mobility from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* while Durkheim stressed the role of increasing solidarity of organic structure. Darwin's concept of biological evolution too was applied to social organization. Marx believed in the ultimate transformation from capitalism to socialism. Today's sociologists, however, abstain from making such absolute statements. Some important changes commonly observed are being discussed below.

MODERN societies (and more so the western ones) have witnessed a tremendous growth in the recent past. During the first three quarters of the 20th century, USA has experienced a population growth of about 280 per cent. During the same period energy consumption per head has shown a rise of more than double. GNP has shown a hike of 350 per cent and the number of government employees by 1200 per cent. Besides, other facets of social organization which can not be measured precisely (e.g. size of a business house, number of association etc.) have also experienced substantial growth during the period. The social organizations have grown not only in size but also in complexity. Specialization is now becoming a rule and thus greater interaction between the sub-units of the organization has increased communication. The roles, their meaning as also their interpretations have been changing fast. Increasing complexity has also resulted in tensions and conflicts within and among the groups.

THE changes, enlisted above, have brought into fore the increasing role of bureaucratization, rationalization, centralization etc. All these changes combined together, have increased the importance of formal organization while the role of informal organization has decreased considerably.

### COMMUNITIES

A FAMILY may be self sufficient and independent of any bonds that may restrict its activities but yet we do not think of family as an isolated unit of the society. Depending on shared cultural values and some other factors, several families live together and the gathering becomes a community. According to Broom & Selznick, "A community is an inclusive group with two chief characteristics: (1) within it the individual can have most of the experiences and conduct most of the activities that are important to him; (2) it is bound together by a shared sense of be-

longing and by the feeling among its members that the group defines for them their distinctive identity. Theoretically, the member of a community lives his whole life within it; he feels a sense of kinship with others who belong to it; and he accepts the community as much as he accepts his own name and family membership".

COMMUNITIES are usually based on locality—a village, city, or nation. The geographical area and a sense of place set the boundaries of a common living and provide a basis for solidarity. However, without respect to a geography, one may speak of the "Catholic activities and institutions which, taken together, permit many Catholics to live out much of their lives within boundaries set by religious affiliation. For McGee, however, "a community is a type of social organization that is territorially located and provides the setting for dealing with most of the needs and problems of daily living". Communities are, therefore, area-based but this may not always be so; as at times we may talk of a community in economic terms or religion, spread over a large area and existing, intermingled with other communities.

### Approaches to the Study of Community

A DEEPER analysis of the above mentioned definitions and other such literature reveals that there are three main approaches to study of community. The first approach to community is *geographical*. It refers to a human settlement located within a particular local territory. This approach gives more emphasis on its ecological aspects. Human interaction and human interrelationships are totally ignored. Human settlement is treated just one variable in human-environmental interaction. What transpires within the human grouping is not of any interest to geographers. Thus, there is nothing anthropological in this definition of community.

THE second approach views community as a *social system*—a set of social relationships that take place within a locality. It refers to interrelationships between individuals and groups living within a particular territory. This approach gives more emphasis on social structure and social interrelationships, not on the content of these relationships.

THE last approach is most recent. It does not define community with a territorial reference. It emphasizes on particular type of relation or bond between individuals. It means a sense of identity between individuals based on some shared criterion, or factor, or past experience. Even geographically dispensed individuals may belong to a particular community. This type of community can best be described as *communion* since here the emphasis is on meaningful identity and shared experience. COMMUNITY living is fundamental to human society. Individuals do not live in society; rather they live in smaller groups like family, community etc. Community is given to individuals since birth. We are born in communities. Our choice in selection of community is very limited. Another very important point to understand is that community is contextual. Every individual belongs to many communities at a particular time. Place of birth, residence, caste, religion, language, education, wealth etc., are some of the social facts that become basis of community reference.

### Features

A COMMUNITY has following features:

- Population
- Territory/Locality (However, locality/territory is not applicable to *communion*)
- Common code of conduct.

THESE features of community are also its elements.

ALL the three elements put together constitute the *Community*.

### Characteristics

MAIN characteristics of community are given below:

- Sense of belongingness,
- Distinctive identity,



- Common living
- Interdependence
- Likeness
- Self-sufficiency (However self-sufficiency is not applicable to larger communities such as *urban communities*)

#### Types

THERE are various typologies by different groups of scholars. These different groups of scholars have used diverse criteria for classification of communities as follows :

#### Economic Criterion

1. Peasant Community
2. Little Community
3. Rural Community
4. Urban Community

#### Social Criterion

- Students' Community
- Intellectuals' Community
- Workers' Community etc.

#### Religious Criterion

- Hindu Community
- Muslim Community
- Catholic Community
- Protestant Community etc.

SOCIAL and economic criteria are taken into consideration in modern approach to community. The classical approach is based on economic criterion only.

MODERN approach to community has broadened the meaning of the term *community* resulting into *conceptual contradiction*.

#### Comparison between Society and Community

SOCIETY is a very large human grouping and it is made of such groups like community, family, association etc. Society is very abstract and non-tangible reality, while community is real, experiential and substantive. Community is usually defined with reference to locality, while society is area-less. Community is fundamental for human living and socialisation, while society influences only indirectly. Sentiments, emotions and feeling find expression in community not in society. Community is based on homogeneity while society is full of heterogeneity. A community may not be self-sufficient because of its limitations while society is self-sufficient.

#### RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES

MOST communities of the world today can be placed into the group of rural or urban communities. Man, for most of his existence, has lived in the rural setting and cities are only recent in origin while the spread of urban life occurred as late as the nineteenth century when modern industrialization led to urbanization. One must, however, note that there are different criteria employed in different countries regarding the characterization of a community as rural or urban. In France, communities with a population of above 2000 are characterized as urban while the corresponding figures for United States, Netherlands and Japan are 2,500; 20,000 and 30,000 respectively. The wide contrast in numbers to define an urban community, therefore, renders this criterion of classification as meaningless. There are innumerable situations of rural-urban continuum and geographic location also is not a good indicator of a population being called rural or urban. In India, however, the contrast between rural and urban life in villages and cities is apparent enough (in most cases) and here, an area is defined as urban if its administration is controlled by a Municipality or a Municipal Corporation or it is under a cantonment or under a Notified area committee. Other features of an Indian Urban Community, according to the census of India are: (i) density of population not less than 1,000 numbers per square mile with total population of the locality not less than 5,000; and (ii) of the total employed population, at least 75% should be employed in non-agricultural pursuits.

IN SOCIOLOGICAL parlance, an urban community can be distinguished from a rural one in community-life and attitudes of its members. Farming, for example, is not only an economic activity, it is the way of life of the people who practice it. There is a whole set of cultural values and practices associated with agricultural mode of life. A village community is characterized primarily by the primary-group feeling or at least predominately face-to-face interaction; agriculture is the predominant economic activity and fierce competition is absent resulting in traditional conservative outlook. A rural community, because of limited factors of variability, is more homogeneous than the urban one. IN A rural community, the existence of a person is strongly affected by his association with other members of the community and there are strong socio-psychological bonds binding its members. Contrarily, an urban community is an open community with its members less dependent on others. The feature of face-to-face interaction too is lacking in urban communities, and therefore, formal relationships are quite important. Formal means of social control are a typical feature of an urban community.

THE differences in the rural and urban communities are those at the micro-level. At macro level, equally significant differences can be seen between a town and a region. A town, with its slant towards the urban setting still exhibits many features of a rural community but a region, generally much bigger than a city, may or may not be as heterogeneous as a city. Transformation from a rural to an urban community generally involves the following steps: (a) an increase in occupational specialization, (b) the release of a few individuals from all immediately productive work and their elevation to a priesthood, (c) the transformation of religious activities related to fertility, rainfall, and the streams into the administration of the water supply (the irrigation system) and the management of land and herds, (d) the emergence of political leadership and a management of the labour force, (e) differential rewards for different tasks, (f) assignment of part of work force to ensure the continuity of the food supply and to secure the city against attack, and (g) a market for exchange of goods.

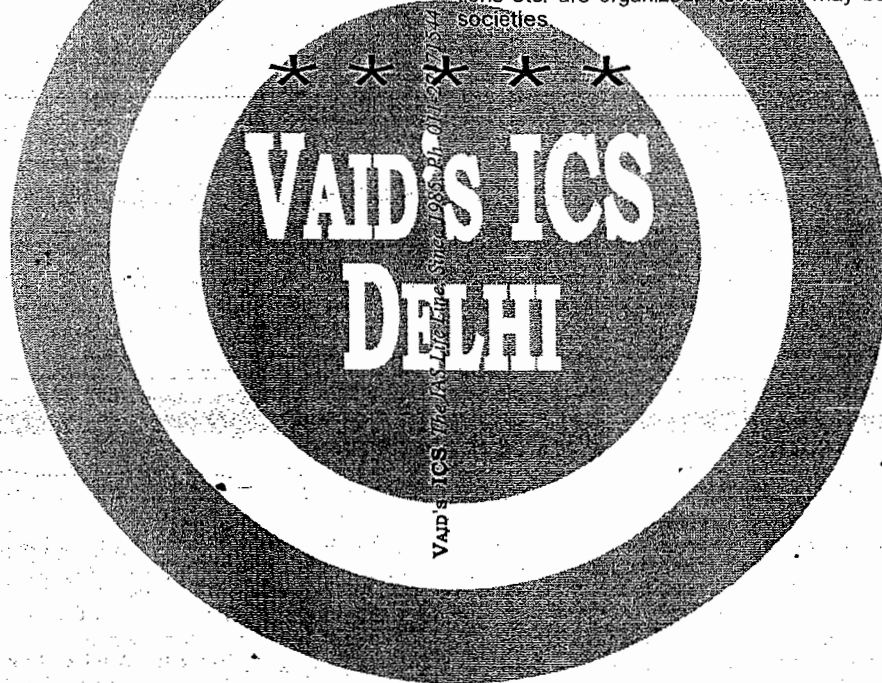
#### ASSOCIATIONS

WHILE communities perform wide ranging functions, associations are formed for specific purposes. These special-purpose organizations (e.g. trade unions, political parties etc.) are the deliberate creations to achieve certain definite goals and are therefore based on limited interests, usually utilitarian. An association can be formed for any specific cause and therefore we find hundreds of associations, most different from others in their aims and objectives. Yet all associations can be grouped into *mutual benefit* associations (e.g. clubs, trade unions), *business* associations (financial institutions, industries), *commonwealth* associations (public libraries, federal government) and *service* associations (school, hospitals). The size of an association can be anybody's guess, ranging from a few persons to hundreds, thousands or even lacs; numerical strength of an association is the function of its purposes and how strongly these affect the people. Mostly the complex associations have many aims. Besides, the aims may be altered with experience and/or resources available. Indian National Congress, for example, was launched to act as a welfare association but later it became the leading fighter for the country's freedom.

ASSOCIATIONS are extremely adaptable. Their size, organization, goals etc. may be changed, whenever the need to do so arises. If the members feel that their association has lost its usefulness, they can easily end their association. It is thanks to this quality of association that we find a plethora of them in most societies, particularly in complex societies.

#### INSTITUTIONS

EVERY social organization, for its survival and efficiency, has to



# MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE is a truly peculiar institution. Although it is widely regarded as a natural state, or at least one ordained by deity, it is actually one of the more ingenious traps set for us by society. Consider its dubious benefits. A woman (or women in plural unions) agrees to place herself in lifelong thralldom to a man (or men) for whom she will cook and clean, giving herself sexually to him on demand, and bearing and raising his children. His side of bargain requires that he restrict his sex urges to his wife (or wives), or at least keep his liaisons secret from her, live with her, and support her children under compulsion of custom or law. Both sides experience a drastic reduction in independence and autonomy and both have had a lien placed against their labours. When children arrive, the burdens on each are multiplied, for they have surely given a hostage to fortune. There is nothing natural about any of this, and the entire business defies common sense. For all mankind, however, marriage has been so much a part of life so routinized that people rarely thought to question the institution, and it is a sign of an age of doubt that we are doing so now.

THIS Long commentary by Murphy should be good enough a beginning to the topic on marriage, an institution which my most of us consider as natural to human beings. Candidates interested in further reading regarding the need for marriage may go through "Economy & Social Relations" by Vaid.

## UNIVERSAL DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

THE problem of a satisfactory definition of marriage has eluded anthropologists for several decades. Over time it has become clear that cohabitation, ritual recognition, definition of sexual rights or stipulation of domestic services each had too limited a distribution to serve as a criterion for all the unions anthropologists intuitively felt compelled to call 'marriage'. For good reasons therefore the following Notes and Queries (1951) definition makes no reference to any of these. *"Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offsprings of both parents"*

THE Notes and Queries definition contains two criteria that marriage is a union between a man and a woman and that it establishes the legitimacy of the children. Nuer woman marriage-to-a-woman as also two kinds of polygamy, i.e. polyandry and polygyny, do not conform to the first criterion. At this point the problem therefore becomes: is a definition of marriage feasible which would insist only on the second criterion, that of legitimizing children?

EDMOND Leach has argued not only against the vagueness of the phrase "legitimate offspring" but also against any use of potential legal paternity as a universal criterion of marriage. He concluded, in fact, that no definition could be found which would apply to all the institutions which ethnographers commonly refer to as marriage. Instead he named ten classes of rights which frequently occur in connection with 'marriage' and added that "one might perhaps considerably extend this list and seemed to conclude that since no single one of these rights is invariably established by marriage in every known society, we ought to feel free to call 'marriage' any institution which fulfills any one or more of the selected criteria.

THERE is surely, a quite simple logical flaw in this argument. For it would mean in effect that every ethnographer might extend at will Leach's list of marital rights, and in short define marriage in any way he pleased. This may be legitimate in describing a single society but for cross-cultural comparison a single parsimonious definition is needed.

PRINCE Peter has objected to Notes and Queries definition and, by implication, to any definition which would make the

legitimization of children through the mother's relationship to another party the distinctive characteristic of marriage. According to him in some societies like the Toda, "marriage" and legitimacy of children can be looked upon as two different and separate concepts, and it may be necessary to go through a ceremony of legitimization of the offspring (Toda *pursutpimi* ceremony) in order to establish who is the legal father because marriage rites are insufficient in themselves to do this. Kathleen Gough (1959), citing the account of the ceremony given by Rivers has however cleared the misunderstanding of Prince Peter and, based on her account of the Nayar marriage, has given a definition that till date is the most satisfactory one.

ACCORDING TO Kathleen Gough "marriage is a relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides a child born to the woman under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, is accorded full birth-status rights common to normal members of his society or social stratum".

VARIOUS phrases used in this definition cover up almost all the known human societies of today. "One or more persons" (in place of a man) takes care of group marriage of Nayar type, woman-to-a-woman marriage of the Nuer as also true fraternal polyandry. "Under circumstances not prohibited by rules of relationship" covers some problematic cases. "Full birth-status rights common to all normal members" is a compressed reference to all the social relationships, property rights etc. which a child acquires at birth by virtue of his legitimacy whether through the father or through the mother. The phrase is broader than any concept of specific rights in a particular father. It therefore takes care of a case like the Nayar in which all rights are acquired through the mother but in which a relationship must be established between the mother and one or more other persons in order for these matrimonial rights to be ratified. Moreover 'full birth status rights' is broader and more precise than 'recognized legitimate offsprings' to the vagueness of which E. Leach objected. The inclusion of 'society or social stratum' makes allowances for class or caste systems in which birth status rights vary between strata.

THE definition of marriage given by Kathleen Gough has stood the test of time. Presently, every known society can well be known to have 'marriage' institution, within the framework of this definition.

## MARRIAGE TYPES

DEPENDING on the criterion chosen, marriage can be classified as follows:

- (i) Number of mates-monogamy, polygamy (polyandry, polygyny, poly-gyandry)
- (ii) Degree of authority-equalitarian, patriarchal, matriarchal.
- (iii) Residence after marriage-patrilocal, matrilocal (avunculocal), neolocal, matri-patrilocal.
- (iv) Choice of mate
  - (a) made by young people, with courtship, elders
  - (b) based on-kinship, caste, class, region, religion.
- (v) Exchange at marriage-bridewealth, dowry, suitor service, gift exchanges.
- (vi) Age at marriage-early, late
- (vii) Strength of bond-temporary, weak, permanent.
- (viii) Possibility of remarriage-nil, mandatory, levirate, sororate.
- (ix) Kinds of mates-marriage, concubinage.

## PREFERENTIAL MARRIAGES

ALL human beings belong to one species and potentially everyone can be a mate of anyone else. At least theoretically a



person from Green Land can marry one from South Africa. In practice however this may not happen because of geographical, linguistic and cultural barriers. Besides, all societies have certain norms whereby one's choice of getting married is restricted further. All societies prohibit marriage with some category of relatives. A group, members of which have to solicit alliance outside its boundaries, is called an exogamous unit. Contrarily, all or most societies direct their members to marry in the specified range of people or relatives. The group, where members are expected to marry within (out beyond the exogamous unit) is called the endogamous unit. A nuclear family is an exogamous unit in all known societies of today. Lineage, clan, gotra etc. are other exogamous units in most known societies of today. Caste or class is the endogamous unit. In India, for example, one has to marry within his caste (endogamy) excluding lineage and gotra (exogamy). According to the conclusion derived by the Peoples of India Project, "Social anthropologists reported the distribution of kinship traits all over India which they divided into four regions: western, southern, central and eastern, with their characteristic features. The POI data have confirmed most of their findings and even gone beyond them. For example, village exogamy is almost non-existent in the south, which is unique for its surname exogamy. Most communities follow exogamy of various types, the dominant type being clan gotra and surname exogamy. There are also instances of endogamy at clan and gotra levels because of the looseness of these structures."

**ENDO GAMY** and Exogamy are not mere preferences, these are rather prescriptions i.e. marry according to the norms of the society or face consequences. In preferential kinds of marriages one has some choice, however limited it may be, in choosing marriage partners. Common types of preferential marriages prevalent in different societies of the world are being discussed below.

### Cousin Marriages

**COUSIN** marriages are of two types, cross-cousin (ego marrying his father's sister's daughter or mother's brother's daughter) and parallel cousin (ego marrying his mother's sister's daughter or father's brother's daughter). Cross-cousin marriages are more common than parallel cousin ones. Cross-cousin marriages, theoretically, are of three kinds: patrilineal (marrying father's sister's daughter) matrilineal (marrying

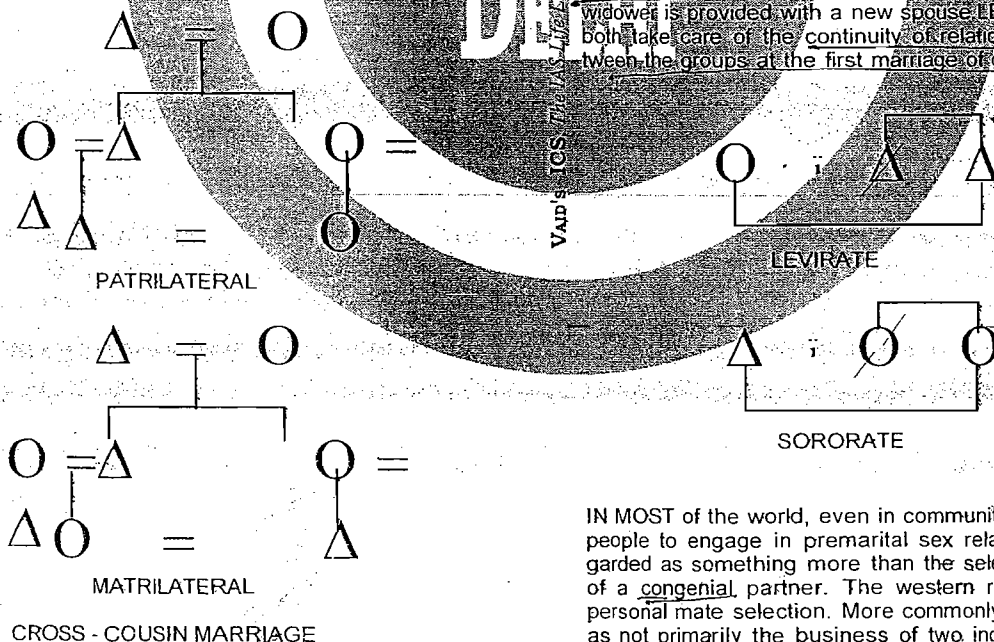
mother's brother's daughter) and **bilateral** (both of the above categories inclusive). Tlingit of Alaska, Chippewa Indians as also the Kareira Australian aborigines have been known to practice cousin marriages. Among the Kachin and Purum of Burma one is supposed to marry one of his matrilineal relations even beyond the cousin category. Thus each lineage has specific lineages where from it can get females and others where it can give.

THERE is a much larger spread of consanguineous marriages (in India) than generally believed. To give an illustration, marriage with mother's brother's daughter exists in 2368 communities while marriage with father's sister's daughter is reported in 2040 communities. Maternal uncle-niece marriages takes place in 336 communities. Three hundred and eighty-three communities practise parallel cousin marriage, including both among brother's children and sister's children. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter occurs in 97 percent of the communities of Tamil Nadu followed by Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Gujarat, Meghalaya, Orissa. It is present on a small scale in Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Mizoram, Delhi, Sikkim, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Chandigarh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Tripura, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana.

### Levirate and Sororate

THESE are only special categories whereby a person, after the death of his/her spouse is married to her sister/his brother. In levirate a man marries his deceased brother's wife, while sororate entails marriage of a man with his deceased wife's sister. The old testament has advocated these kinds of marriages apparently to get legal heir(s) for the deceased. Both of them are found commonly and not as exception.

**LEVIRATE** associated with patrilineal descent and patrilocal residence often coincides with polygyny. It was, till recently, most common a practice in the Middle East. In Siwal of South Pacific as also in Tlingit of Alaska, the practice is till in vogue. Among the Kadara of northern Nigeria a person may marry his deceased brother's wife or the widow of his father's father and not the widow of mother's father. The major considerations are to provide for the widow and that the children born to such unions as also the property may not be claimed by other lineages. Among Arapaho and other Plains Indians groups both levirate and sororate are practiced whereby each widow and widower is provided with a new spouse. **LEVIRATE** and sororate both take care of the continuity of relationship established between the groups at the first marriage of one of the spouses.



IN MOST of the world, even in communities which allow young people to engage in premarital sex relations, marriage is regarded as something more than the selection by an individual of a congenial partner. The western reader is familiar with personal mate selection. More commonly marriage is regarded as not primarily the business of two individuals, but a matter

*congenial - agreeable to oneself*

involving their families and even other kin. When potential mates are allowed to choose one another, a strong power of veto remains with parents or other kin. The alliance to be cemented through marriage is so vital that the arrangements cannot be left to young people alone. In South-West Asia, including Pakistan and parts of India, women are secluded from an early age. Therefore they cannot be proposed to by boys. All arrangements for marriage are made by parents, perhaps with the assistance of marriage brokers. The young people, however, are expected to give their consent. The couple may first see one another through photographs and not have opportunity to meet until the wedding ceremony has been completed. Even in then, however, a distinction is made between a man's primary and secondary marriage. For subsequent unions greater initiative in selecting a spouse is exercised by the husband.

WITH personal mate selection, the individual nowhere has unlimited freedom of choice. In the first place, residential proximity influences the selection of a spouse. A boy and girl must be able to meet before they can marry. Once they meet, cultural variables become important. The couple must have an opportunity to understand each other. This requires that they share a certain number of values and other behaviours. Even in the United States, marriages tend not to be between distant social classes as often as they occur between people of relatively the same rank and culture. Incest rules, which extend out from the nuclear family to include other kin, are another limitation on mate selection.

MARRIAGE often is preferred with certain relatives, especially cousins. But all cousins are not preferred equally. Sometimes certain cousins are rigorously forbidden to marry while others represent ideal partners. Obviously, people who make distinctions of this sort do not classify cousins in the way that English speakers normally do. Unilateral (i.e., asymmetrical) cross-cousin marriage, in which a man is expected to marry either his mother's brother's or his father's sister's daughter, is rare. Often it exists merely as an ideal, because marriageable cross-cousins are not in all instances available. Preferred marriage with a mother's brother's daughter is more common than with a father's sister's daughter. Generally, the formantype of unilateral cross-cousin marriage occurs when the social organization includes nonresidential patrilineal kin groups. The converse form, marriage with the father's sister's daughter, is correlated with matrilineal descent groups. The explanation for these correlations is interesting. With patrilineal kin groups, warmth and intimacy develop between Ego (male) and his mother's brother, and his daughter becomes a spouse. The father's brother possesses authority and power. He must be treated with respect. In matrilineal kin groups, the mother's brother occupies a position of leadership and authority. Warmth and intimacy now link Ego and his father's sister, whose daughter comes to be a preferred marriage partner. Often where the father's sister's daughter is preferred for a man to marry, his paternal aunt is called mother-in-law from the start. That is, in the kinship system of the particular community, both statuses are terminologically equivalent. Cross-cousin marriage is found in all continents except Europe.

A GENERAL explanation for preferred cross-cousin marriage lies, first, in the fact that people who possess simple social organization and are closely attached to kin do not like to see offsprings marry strangers. Strangers are not trusted by small-scale people. Second such preferred marriage, when it occurs in every generation, links two kin groups in an enduring relationship. A man marries his mother's brother's daughter. She moves to her husband's residential kin group but her brother is left behind to marry. The woman's child has a claim on his mother's brother's daughter, and this, ideally speaking, will be paid when that child is old enough to marry. In the meantime the relationship between both intermarrying kin groups is kept alive by periodic exchanges

of gifts or through visits.

PARALLEL COUSINS rarely wed. A conspicuous exception to this generalization is seen among the Arabs and other Muslim peoples of Southwest Asia. Here paternal parallel cousins are preferred mates. Partly such marriage is related to the scarcity of woman which, in turn, may follow from polygyny. With women rare, a man will ordinarily be forced to offer considerable wealth to secure a desirable bride, i.e., one who is a virgin and comes from a family of unblemished reputation. The solidarity linking brothers in the extended family makes these relatives ready to exchange daughters for only a small consideration.

SECONDARY marriages often are governed by the sororate and levirate. In many communities if a man loses his wife through death he possesses a claim on her family. That group must replace the girl with an unmarried sister. This custom is known as the sororate. The levirate involves inheritance of a widow by her deceased husband's brother. The functions of these forms of marriage should not be overlooked. The bond of solidarity linking sisters will probably condition the second woman's affection toward her dead sister's children. She will treat them more warmly than a stranger might. The levirate assures security for the widow and children of a deceased man.

PROHIBITED forms of marriage normally include unions between parents and children or between siblings. In general it can be said that no prohibition on marriage to a person outside the nuclear family is universal. A son's wife or daughter's husband, however, is very widely prohibited as a secondary spouse. Prohibitions of marriage to kin tend to apply with diminished intensity as relatives are further removed from the nuclear family. The intensity with which incest rules are applied beyond the nuclear family is related to the terms by which relatives are designated. Thus, persons addressed as "mother" or "sister", regardless of actual relationship, rarely will be available to a man as potential mates. In India, incidence of junior levirate (non-formal) exist in 1406 communities, junior levirate (formal) in 1201 communities, senior levirate (non-formal) in 195 communities, senior levirate (formal) in 233 communities, junior sororate (non-formal) in 2690 communities, junior sororate (formal) in 2441 communities and senior sororate (non-formal) in 196 communities, senior sororate (formal) in 251 communities." (POI Project)

### Sanctions of Marriage

MARRIAGE may be initiated with no stronger or more obvious sanction than its recognition by a community. That is, people in general are made aware of the fact that a marriage has taken place and a new family established. It may be sufficient for both parties publicly to take up residence together. Such simple marriage formerly was found among Indians of northern Canada, like the Kaska and Attawapiskat Cree. Among the former, however, a period of bride-services further sanctioned the couple's relationship. Ceremonies, usually involving a feast to which relatives are invited, constitute a common means of securing public recognition of a marriage.

THE transfer of property as a sanction of marriage has been mentioned later. Several types of transfer can be distinguished. Bridewealth is property transmitted to a bride's relatives in recognition of her marriage. The rationalizations offered for bridewealth vary. Sometimes it is offered explicitly to compensate his girl's family for the loss of a worker; sometimes it signifies a legal right to her offspring; or it may be simply a sign of respect for the girl and her parents who reared her. The acceptance of bridewealth is not regarded in the same light as payment for a chattel. What sometimes is called "bride purchase" only under the rarest and most aberrant circumstances is construed to be the sale of a woman. In some communities with bridewealth, commercial transactions based on payment are unknown. It cannot be expected that such people would think of a girl being worth so

many cattle or horses or so much salt.

DOWRY is wealth in money or goods settled on a bride by the bride's kin group. Among Muslim a man may also settle wealth to be paid at a future date. This custom is neither bridewealth nor dowry but may be called dower or designated by the Arabic term *meher*. In rare cases a woman may relinquish her right to *meher*, perhaps in consideration for the right to divorce her husband, should she at a future date desire to do so.

ONE function of all transfers of wealth accompanying marriage is to stabilize the union. The investment is not jeopardized readily. The relatives who have given or received wealth will seek means to prevent dissolution of the marriage. Stability is recognized explicitly as a function of *meher* even though the bride may give up her right to this settlement in exchange for the privilege of divorce.

OTHER sanctions of marriage include service, the groom spending a term working for his bride's family; exchange, the husband giving a sister to the wife's kin in exchange for its loss of a woman; and divine sanction, in which the attention of deities is directed to the union. Bride-service and sister exchange would seem to be alternatives for bridewealth, bride-service or exchange, and a woman's appreciable contribution to subsistence. It is as though her family were being recompensed for the loss of her productive services. Dowry tends to occur where women make very small contribution to subsistence.

## INCEST TABOO

PERMISSIVENESS for sex varies in different societies. There is always a set of kin which can not (by rules of the society) involve in sex or marriage within the demarcated limits. One such ideal where sex and marriage are prohibited is the nuclear family or in other words incest is universally taboo within nuclear family.

SEVERAL theories have been put forth to explain the origin and relevance of this taboo. Important amongst them are being reviewed here.

### Psycho-analytic Theory

THE theory put forward by Freud states that incest taboo is a reaction against unconscious desires. According to this theory son is attracted towards the mother and the father towards the daughter. In the course of socialization the child learns to repress his or her desires out of the fear of punishment from the elders. Yet the desire remains there within the unconscious.

FREUD'S theory does explain about the aversion felt towards incest but fails to explain the origin of incest taboo.

### Childhood Familiarity Theory

ACCORDING to this theory put forth by Westermarck the children brought up together develop aversion to sex because of the intimacy of relationship within the family. The theory, opposite in logic from Freud's one, fails on two accounts. Firstly sexual attraction within the conjugal family is not unknown and secondly, if familiarity causes lack of interest in sex, then what is the need for making such rules as putting incest in the tabooed category.

TALMON'S investigations among Kibbutzim and Wolf's study on minor marriages in China however lend support to this theory. It has been seen that familiarity does have an effect, though limited, on incestuous feelings.

### Inbreeding Theory

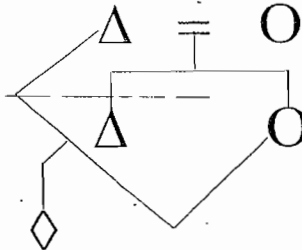
ACCORDING to this theory proposed by David Aberle *et al.* the roots of incest taboo lie in the understanding by human society of the harmful effects of inbreeding in the animals. Inbred individuals have greater probability of suffering from lethal or semilethal recessive traits. The theory proposes that in ancient times, natural selection must have favoured the societies with incest taboo.

FROM the knowledge of inbreeding available today, we know

that inbreeding is not always deleterious and the notion of inbreeding resulting in serious harm to the societies is gradually losing favour. Further, it is really too much to consider early man (from all over the world) to be such a keen observer. Consequences of inbreeding as given by theory are not known even to many intellectuals of present-day societies.

### Family Disruption Theory

MALINOWSKI's explanation follows that if incest is allowed within the family, this will result in a lot of tension and rivalry that could shatter the foundations of the family. Thus, to retain the family intact (and hence the society) incest must have been declared taboo.



FATHER - DAUGHTER INCEST

THE pages of history reveal that incest was allowed, rather prescribed in some societies without resulting in family disruption. Like in ancient Egypt, incest could be made permissible after the children are grown up without causing any danger to the existence of the family.

### Family Co-operation Theory

THE theory given by Tylor and further explained by Leslie White has emphasized the role of incest taboo in promoting cooperation between familial groups and families. According to Tylor the taboo was necessary to break down suspicion and hostility between familial groups and make the cooperation (between them) possible without which most community tasks could not be accomplished.

THE question arises was it (taboo) a must for increased co-operation between different family groups? Even if so, family could have created an alternative whereby some members remained in incestuous relations while others married out.

IN SHORT none of the existing theories satisfactorily explains the origin and causes of incest taboo. All of them combined together give sufficient weightage for the incest to be tabooed. One must not forget that different societies the world over have different perception of incest. In some, sex within the nuclear family is incest, for others all close kin form its part while in some others lineage is the criterion. Sex and marriage between cousins is tabooed in many societies while in some others such marriages are preferred. Even within the family it is only the mother-son incest that is a universal taboo.

OUR understanding of the incest taboo has been expanded by the recent observation that among chimpanzees ties between mother and son and between siblings remain strong through adulthood and that mother-son matings are avoided. The evolutionary and psychobiological roots of mother-son incest taboo and probably Oedipus complex as well begin now to come into view. The early hominid family of mother and dependent young was expanded by two related evolutionary developments; a lengthening of pair bonding, associating a male to the primate nuclear group. We will probably never know whether the symmetrical prohibition of father-daughter mating occurred long before the emergence of language and culture or only when protohumans began to elaborate symbolically on their behaviour patterns. But the model of mother-son incest avoidance (and the probably psychological tensions involved) was there to be drawn upon in prohibiting father-daughter and brother-sister



mating and in investing the whole complex with great symbolic import.

OTHER explanations of the incest taboo turn out not to explain the incest taboo at all, but they do illuminate the evolution of *exogamy*. In a characteristically brilliant early insight, Tylor suggested the social significance of exogamy.

EXOGAMY, enabling a growing tribe to keep itself compact by constant unions between its spreading clans, enables it to overmatch any number of small intermarrying groups, isolated and helpless. Again and again in the world's history, savage tribes must have had plainly before their minds the simple practical alternative between marrying out and being killed out. To sum up, as concluded by Honigman, the nuclear family imposes rules. The importance of these lies in their function of making the nuclear family discontinuous in time and thereby instigating the formation of new nuclear families every generation. If brother-sister marriages were usual, the nuclear family would be permanent. Siblings would not have to look outside their residential group for spouses. The individual would not belong to both a family of orientation, in which he was born, and a family of procreation, established through marriage. Incest rules, therefore, help to give rise to rules of residence, some of which produce extended families. In no community is it customary or permissible for father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister to have sexual intercourse or marry. Occasionally, as in ancient Egypt, in aboriginal Hawaii and among the preconquest Inca of highland South America, aristocrats practiced brother-sister marriage. The custom expressed a prestige so high that no suitable mate equal in rank could be found outside of the family. Azande nobles are permitted to marry their daughters, and elsewhere in Africa ritual intercourse sometimes is allowed between father and daughter. But these are exceptional customs and must not be allowed to obscure the fact that practically universally the nuclear family is governed by incest rules.

IN RESPONSE to question why incest rules occur universally, various answers have been given:

1. Formerly the weight of explanation was put on a biological aversion governing mating between close relatives. The weakness of this argument lies in the fact that no community expects incest rules to operate automatically. Punishments are threatened for incest; hence repugnance for incest cannot be innate. Also damaging to this theory is the fact that incest does occur. In rare cases, as indicated, it is even expected between members of the nuclear family. To postulate a biological mechanism or instinct, which deters people from incest is simply incompatible with the facts known to anthropology.
2. The theory that people universally avoid incest because of the danger that weak offsprings may be produced by parents who are close relatives is likewise undemonstrable. In the first place, if healthy genes are involved in sexual relations between close relatives they will produce healthy offspring. The plant and animal breeder knows this when he deliberately breeds healthy strains from the same parentage to obtain offspring possessing certain desirable qualities. Many communities known to anthropology have for generations of children not only allowed but encouraged the marriage of children of brothers and sisters. The evidence indicates no frequent or obvious damage in the offspring of such matings.
3. The universality of incest rules can best be understood functionally. By making the nuclear family and other exogamous kin groups discontinuous, incest rules in each generation encourage alliance between such groups. These alliances widen the circle of the ingroup and provide an additional number of people who can be relied on for adaptation and other satisfactions. Incest rules also avoid the danger that the nuclear family or other exogamous kin group will be destroyed through aggression gen-

erated from sexual jealousy and frustration.

THE evidence from hunting and gathering societies and from early human sites (such as Torralba, Ambrona, and Terra Amata) suggests that, at least by the time of *Homo erectus*, intermarriage between bands was binding them into wider networks within which regional cultures could evolve, networks that could provide the basis for temporary crystallization of larger groups.

## MARRIAGE PAYMENTS

MARRIAGE is a social institution but in most of the world it has economic aspects too. Before, after and at the time of marriage, certain transactions occur between bride and groom or their respective parents or clans. In a great many tribal societies marriage is a contract between two lineages, or two families or two kindreds, whereby the groom's kin make a substantial payment of valuables to the bride's kin. These characteristically are goods laden with symbolic value—cattle, shell valuables, or ceremonial objects such as brass gongs, ivory tusks, dog's teeth, feathers, or whatever things a people invest with special nonutilitarian value. And the transfer of these symbolically laden valuables is characteristically publicly dramatized. All such transactions are an example of reciprocity and are intrinsically meant to recognize or enhance each other's status. All such exchanges (unilateral or both ways) that occur at the time of marriage, before or after, can well be termed 'marriage payments'. Marriage by exchange (sister exchange) prevalent in some societies of the world (e.g. Tiv of West Africa) minimize such exchanges because everything received in one case has to be returned in the other. Anthropologists have generally recognized four types of marriage payment prevalent in different societies of the world as follows:

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| (i) Bridewealth      | (ii) Dowry          |
| (iii) Suitor Service | (iv) Gift Exchanges |

### Bridewealth

BRIDEWEALTH is the most common marriage transaction among many tribes of Africa. Gift of goods or money by the groom or his kin to the bride's kin is called bridewealth. It is not a payment for the bride purchase but it does compensate for the loss of her services and the children to be borne to her. In patrilineal societies where bride has to move to her in-laws house, payment of bridewealth is a very logical exchange of rights and obligations.

IN MURDOCK'S World Ethnographic Sample, about 60% of the societies have the provision for bridewealth. In about half of them this wealth is quite substantial. Here, higher amount of bridewealth designates higher status in the society. Payments are generally made in cash, cattle or food grains. In Tiv of West Africa, Nyakyusa of Tanzania (cattle), Ifugao of Philippines (pigs), Naviho of Somali (pigs) these payments are made in the form of useful animals whereas Hopi pay in food and Kwakiutl in blankets.

BRIDEWEALTH assures good behaviour on the part of bride and groom's kin to each other. If marriage fails because of no fault of the bride, bridewealth is not payed back. Bride's kin, on the other hand, keep pressuring her to stay at her in-laws' house lest they have to return the bridewealth.

BRIDEWEALTH payments are most characteristic of patrilineal descent systems, where the husband's lineage is acquiring rights over children borne by a woman from another lineage. Here a symbolic element of exchange often is expressed as well, the cattle your brother received when you married a man from another lineage will serve to acquire a wife for him, so that bridewealth cattle become a token and symbol of the reciprocities of exchange. In that sense, they serve as a bridge between the systems such as in the West where marriage is based, more or less on free choice and the system of systematic marital exchange between descent groups.

BRIDEWEALTH is less commonly paid where descent is traced

matrilineally. Here, the husband's lineage does not acquire rights over children. Such payment usually occurs where the husband's lineage compensates the wife's lineage for loss of her work services and hence occurs when wives go to live with their husband's people.

SEEING a young woman led off to her nuptial bed and a life of hard labor in exchange for a herd of smelly cows was more than many missionaries could bear, and such "degrading" customs were suppressed by missions or by colonial regimes in many areas. The term "bride price", with its connotation of a woman sold as chattel, was current.

### Dowry

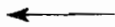
ONLY 4% of the societies in Murdock's sample offer dowry. It was a common practice in medieval Europe but now it has been restricted to Italy, France and some parts of eastern Europe. It is still the most common practice in India.

GROOM'S Gp.

BRIDE'S Gp.

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DOWRY



BRIDEWEALTH



SUITOR SERVICE



GIFT EXCHANGES

MARRIAGE PAYMENTS

UNLIKE the bridewealth where goods and woman move in the opposite directions, in dowry both move in the same direction. Dowry is generally considered as a share of bride in her parental property. In India however, the situation is altogether

different. Ancient Hindu Law-givers conceived dowry as an offering (*Dakshina*) along-with the greatest sacrifice (*Dan*) of a daughter (*Kanyadan*) by her father. Though dowry has been declared illegal, the practice is still prevalent in whole of the country as dowry has become a status symbol. In India, dowry comprises of the cash paid to the groom as also to his kin (in lesser amounts) along with the household utensils of day today use. In case of divorce the bride has the right to take away all the dowry she has brought at the time of marriage.

### Suitor Service

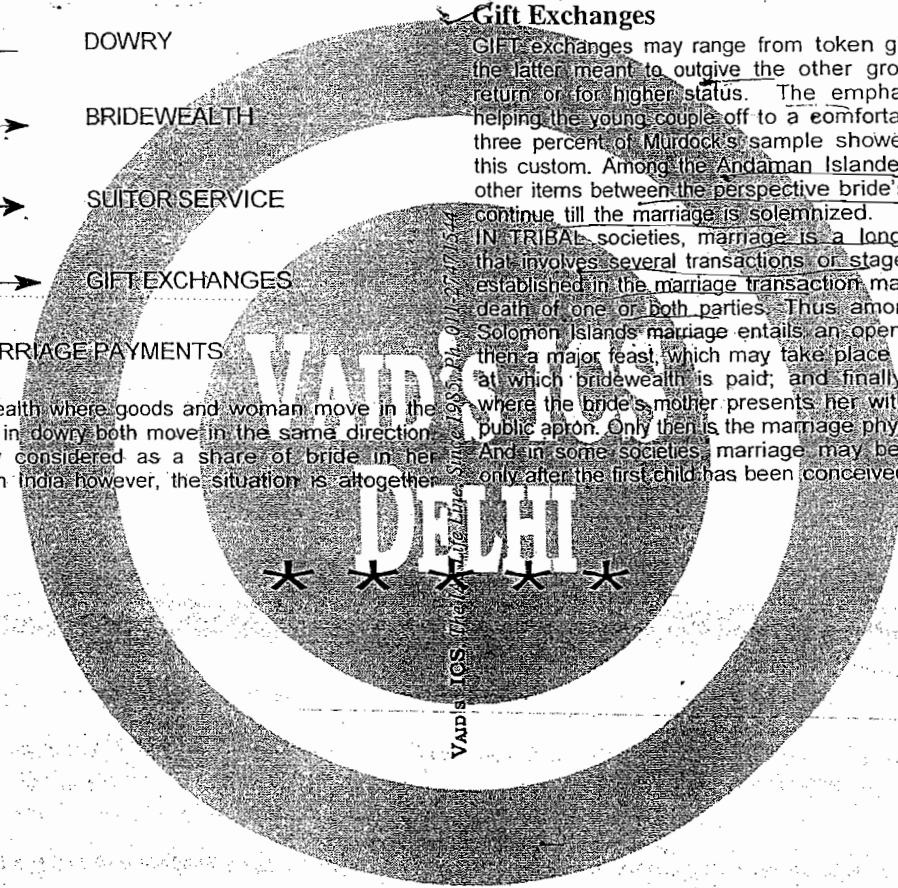
IN SOCIETIES where the custom of suitor service is found, the groom or a close kin or friend has to serve the bride's family for a specified time period before the finalization of marriage. The time period may range from a token service to several years. After the period is over, the couple move to the groom's parental house or have one of their own.

IN ABOUT one-seventh of Murdock's societies the suitor service is prevalent. In some of them suitor service can be replaced by bridewealth. Among Hupa and Yoruk Indians, for example, half the time-period can be adjusted for a specific amount of bridewealth.

### Gift Exchanges

GIFT exchanges may range from token gift to precious ones, the latter meant to outgive the other group either for higher return or for higher status. The emphasis is generally on helping the young couple off to a comfortable beginning. Only three percent of Murdock's sample showed the prevalence of this custom. Among the Andaman Islanders, gifts of food and other items between the prospective bride's and groom's family continue till the marriage is solemnized.

IN TRIBAL societies, marriage is a long drawn-out process that involves several transactions or stages. The relationships established in the marriage transaction may continue long after death of one or both parties. Thus among the Kwaio of the Solomon Islands marriage entails an opening "down payment", then a major feast, which may take place several months later, at which bridewealth is paid; and finally a third transaction where the bride's mother presents her with a married woman's public apron. Only then is the marriage physically consummated. And in some societies, marriage may become legally binding only after the first child has been conceived or born.



# FAMILY

MARRIAGE lays the foundation for family. As marriage is universal so should be the family. The kind of family may differ because of the varying cultural needs of different societies. EVANS Pritchard made a classification of types of family which would be useful for many patrilineal societies. The natural family consists of parents, whether married or not, and their children. If the parents are not married their relationship is one of concubinage. The simple legal family consists of a married couple and their children (and so may be also a natural family). The polygynous family is a complex legal family; it has been described as a number of separate families linked by their relationship to a common father. A ghost family consists of the ghost (the pater), his wife, their children, and the kinsman who became their genitor in virtue of his duty towards the ghost.

## TYPES OF FAMILY

THE family can be classified in a number of ways depending upon the criteria selected for the purpose as given below:

1. **Authority** : ON THE basis of authority a family may be patriarchal or matriarchal. In patriarchal families women (after marriage) leave their parental home to live with their husbands, either with the relatives of the latter or separately; father or the eldest male member has the ultimate say in decision making and in matters of disputes; inheritance is through male line and children can not inherit property through matrilineal or matrilineal relatives. A matriarchal family is the one where the mother (or one of her close kins, generally the eldest brother) is vested with supreme authority; descent is traced through the mother, inheritance of property is through female line and the children are brought up at the bride's place or her relatives. A major feature of matriarchal societies is that the father may not be a permanent member of the family but a casual visitor.
2. **Structure** : ON THE basis of structure family may be nuclear or extended. A nuclear family invariably comprises of a husband, his wife and their children. A nuclear family is an independent unit free from the control of elders. It is only a transit phase family because children when they get married establish their own homes. An extended family is a conglomerate of two or more complete or incomplete nuclear families joined through the bond of kinship. An extended family with well defined and close relations is called a joint family.

A NUCLEAR family comprises of two generations but an extended family, generally has three or more generations living together. In nuclear family authority may be invested with the husband or wife or both but in extended families the eldest member (depending on the cultural rules) is the highest authority. A nuclear family exists maximum upto the members comprising it survive but an extended family is continuous whereby old people keep dying and young ones replacing them. In extended family each nuclear family is only a part without any independent authority of decision.

**Other Criteria** : ON THE basis of residence a family may be neo-local, patrilocal, matrilocal or avunculocal; on the basis of ancestry a family may be matrilineal, patrilineal or bilineal etc. With number of marriages as the criterion family may be monogamous or polygamous, and on the basis of blood relationship a family comprises of consanguineous and affinal relations. On the basis of economy the family comprises of a production unit and a consumption unit.

## NUCLEAR FAMILY

THE nuclear family consists of a married man and woman together with their offsprings. A couple who have not produced

offspring may be called an incomplete nuclear family. The nuclear family, either existing as an independent social group or aggregated into larger, composite, residential kin groups, is practically universal. Attempts to displace it, however are not unknown. The most recent such attempt has occurred in the *kibbutz*, an agricultural collective found in Israel. The main features of the *kibbutz* are communal living, collective ownership of all property, and collective rearing of children. Marriage is primarily entered for the comradeship and intimacy that it promises. The husband and wife do not depend on each other for support nor do the couple fully rear any children they produce. For this purpose the *kibbutz* includes a nursery with trained staff. Here the mother goes to feed the child while it still nurses. Both parents visit the infant upon their return from work each day. After six months the child may be taken to the parents' one-room apartment for brief visits but it continues to sleep in the children's house. Teachers gradually replace nurses as child rears. However, parents do play a role in emotional development of the child. They are its most important objects of identification and provide it with a certain security and love that it receives from no one else. The *kibbutz* leaves the physical care and education of children, duties normally undertaken by the family, to persons other than the parents. It also separates offspring from parents. They alone share the common residence. Also in the *kibbutz* the married couple does not like the family in general, practice economic cooperation. To the degree that these usual characteristics of family life are lacking, the married couple in the *kibbutz* differs from the family as it usually is organised. The attenuated functions of the *kibbutz* family also make it highly vulnerable to dissolution. Apart from companionship, love, and physical charm few bonds hold the couple together indicating the importance of multiple role specialization for social solidarity.

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## NUCLEAR FAMILY

### Functions of the Nuclear Family

THE universality of the nuclear family is related to the functions it serves. These usually include

1. provision of sexual satisfaction for the spouses,
2. technological cooperation based on age and sex specialization
3. the care and education of the young, and
4. provision of mutual companionship and other emotional satisfactions. These ends not only serve individual survival and adjustment but, the first and third particularly, maintain the continuity of the community itself. None of these functions by itself explains the universality of the family. Sexual intercourse springs from a powerful drive. The satisfaction it provides helps to cement the bond between husband and wife; but many of the sample of the world's communities allow sexual relations to occur before marriage or outside of the family as well. The majority of communities do not object strongly to having one of both spouses find sexual satisfaction outside of the family, provided that the partner is a particular relative. Hence, sexual satisfaction by itself cannot be the motivation for founding, or remaining in, a family. We



have seen that a couple marries in an Israeli *kibbutz* despite the fact that men and women do not depend on one another for support. In the trobriand Islands of Melanesia a family receives its main support from the wife's brother, the husband having similar responsibility to provide subsistence for his sister and her family. Important as the sex specialization of subsistence and other technical roles may be, it is not sufficient to explain the family. In the *kibbutz* the third function of the family-rearing children has also been taken over by non-family members without destroying the family itself. Europe and America have seen the family shorn of many former tasks, while compulsory-school laws deprive it of the right to rear fully its own children. Formerly a husband produced food and relied on a wife who kept the home. But even sexual division of labour now has become less sharp. Often both spouses go to work daily. Mass media of communication in the home or outside reduce somewhat the need for companionship. Yet the family has not disappeared. It continues to provide sexual gratification and is an area in which parents and children mutually provide each other with emotional satisfactions. Emotional satisfaction is at least as important as the other functions of the family. It may be one which becomes more important in an impersonal, large-scale society where the other functions are provided by extrafamilial groups.

### THE EXTENDED FAMILY

THE extended family comes into existence when offsprings remain at home after their marriage. Generally, only offsprings of one sex remain with the family of orientation. A rule of marital residence, specifying who shall move, is an important factor determining the type of extended family which will be founded. The custom may be for daughters to remain with the family of orientation, creating matrilocal extended families, or sons may stay at home, creating patrilocal extended families. When either son or daughter or both may remain at home, bilocal extended families are created. These and one another extended family form, created through avunculocal residence, are described here: Extended Family Types in Relation to Rule of Marital Residence as enlisted by Honigman. (Table overleaf)

AN EXTENDED family may include polygamous families or monogamous nuclear families or both. Taking the world as a whole, out of a sample of 250 communities, 92 communities possess extended families. An extended family always includes two or more generations. Whereas in polygamous families a spouse is the link between two or more nuclear families, in the extended family a son or daughter links the nuclear segments of the larger group. The extended family may endure indefinitely while the nuclear and polygamous families are transitory. Table indicates that a rule of residence does not guarantee extended families. The residence expected may be merely temporary. Tuscarora Indians of New York State admit to no preferred rule of residence, yet 53 percent of a sample of 78 marriages in last generation remained matrilocal during the first year or two of marriage, 28 percent were patrilocal during this period, and 19 percent remained neolocal from the outset. Unilocal residence among these people generally gives way to neolocal residence after one or two years.

### Patrilocal Extended Family

THE patrilocal extended family, most common of all extended residential kin groups, may be described as it occurs among the Nupe of Northern Nigeria. The group occupies a compound and includes, normally, one or more brothers, their wives. These persons cooperate in work, the men laboring under the direction of the senior male, either a father or father's elder brother. The leader, who enjoys more leisure than his subordinates, supervises and plans the order of activities. The men organized under him build up the ridges in the field for planting,

weed and crops, and secure raw material for manufacture. If the family head cannot himself work, then leadership devolves on the next senior male. The wealth created in this cooperative fashion is timed over to the family head, who holds sole rights over its disposal. Rules, however, limit his actions. New tools must be purchased when needed and the male labour force, together with their dependents, housed, fed, and clothed. Some money must be reserved for taxes, and a sum is set aside to use in securing brides for the unmarried sons. Any individual in the extended family may, on his own tie, use land or tools to earn an independent income. Should he ever leave the extended family he will be provided with tools, land, and, for the first year, food by the head of the household.

ALL over the world the extended family appears to be undergoing displacement in favour of smaller residential kin units. The same forces are at work among the Nupe; in the decade preceding 1941 many patrilocal extended families disappeared as cooperative work groups. Their land was divided among the individual male members to be worked independently. What forces have been at work? While a certain efficiency attaches to relatively large work units, the efficiency, among the Nupe at least, never entirely compensated for certain inconveniences. As new values appeared in a community, values emphasizing individual responsibility, together with a growing market ready to absorb more of what certain craftsmen and farmers could produce, members preferred to use their own discretion in planning and to receive the total product which their output bought. They also preferred to choose their own profession rather than remain on the farm or in the father's craft. The inability of the extended family head to supply bridewealth for marriageable sons or to meet taxes also has influenced the growth of independent enterprises. Competition from European-produced goods has reduced the market for some products which were manufactured cooperatively in the family. As income fell so did the satisfactions that the group was able to provide. A tradition of individual production had been present among the Nupe, a man working for himself in his spare time. This may have contributed to the speedy dissolution of the extended family system.

IN CHINA too the extended family has begun to disappear. The factors underlying its displacement include the fact that intellectuals who have the responsibility of upholding the traditional model of the family are no longer interested in traditional ways of life. Functions have been taken away from the extended family, especially in cities, through the rise of schools. In the rural areas the family could not retain its land and produce enough goods to supply members with the satisfactions they demanded. Sons and daughters of all but the wealthiest landowners left to secure jobs elsewhere. It is doubtful that extended families ever constituted more than a dimly realized ideal among peasants. Therefore the real breakdown has occurred in the large scale, wealthy strata of the community where new values made their strongest impact.

### Matrilocal Extended Family

A MATRILocal extended family does not refer to a residential kin group in which power lies in the hands of females. In a matrilocal family the inmarrying men stand as relative strangers among women whose solidarity is largely determined by common descent. But many decisions are made, and economic assistance is furnished, by sons and brothers who have moved out of the household. Similarly the husbands of the women continue to bear responsibilities for their sisters. Among the Navaho Indians men often leave sheep and other property at their maternal household and contribute to the ceremonies carried out there. Strain over such divided loyalties is not unusual. The inmarrying husband may resent criticism from the wife's father. A brother-in-law may feel that the husband shirks responsibilities. A father may object to the way in which his children are disciplined by their mother's brother.

**EXTENDED FAMILY TYPES IN RELATION TO RULE OF MARITAL RESIDENCE AS ENLISTED BY HONIGMAN****Rule of Marital Residence and Incidence****Patrilocal Residence.**

Bride regularly leaves her parental home to live with or near the groom's parents; 146 cases.

**Matrilocal Residence.**

Groom regularly leaves his parental home to live with or near bride's parents; 36 cases.

**Bilocal Residence.**

The couple may live with or near the parents of either spouse, depending on circumstances or inclination; 19 cases.

**Avunculocal Residence.**

The couple regularly lives with or near the home of the groom's mother's brother (maternal uncle); 8 cases.

**Neolocal Residence.**

The couple regularly establish their domicile independently of the homes of either set of parents; 17 cases.

**Associated Form of Extended Family and Incidence****Patrilocal Extended Family.**

The binding link is the father-son relationship, the son remaining at home and the daughter moving out after marriage; 52 cases.

**Matrilocal Extended Family.**

The binding link is the mother-daughter relationship, the daughter remaining at home and the son moving after marriage; 23 cases.

**Bilocal Extended Family.**

The binding link may be between father and son or mother and daughter depending on which spouse remains at home; 10 cases.

**Avunculocal Extended Family.**

The binding link is between nephew and maternal uncle; the former will probably inherit wealth or other privileges from his mother's brother; 7 cases.

**Neolocal Extended Family.**

None

**The Avunculate and Avunculocal Extended Family**

THE relationship of a person to his mother's brother is called the avunculate. Much has been written about the conflict expressed by the occupant of the latter status, who must divide his loyalties between his own and his sister's children. The conflict may not be less severe for the youth who, for example, helps his father develop a plantation. The two jointly market the produce. But when the man dies the son will see the land inherited by his father's sister's son. Among the Ivory Coast Agni, the nephew fears lest his mother's brother do the forbidden thing and favour his own son is exactly the way the nephew wants his own father to favour him. The stressful aspects of the avunculate have probably been intensified on the Ivory Coast with the rise of a market economy and greater dependence on money. It is also exaggerated there by the rule of patrilocal residence.

AVUNCULOCAL residence mitigates somewhat the conflicts inherent in the avunculate. Instead of working with his father to develop resources that will be transmitted to the older man's nephew, under avunculocal residence a youth at an early age begins to cooperate with his mother's brother. This means permanent leave taking of his own home. In the new residence he marries and rears his own children until the sons are ready to leave for the home of their mother's brother. Meanwhile he receives his sister's son. If in any generation a man lacks a sister to produce a son, the avunculocal family may cease, just as matrilocal or the patrilocal families may cease without female or male births.

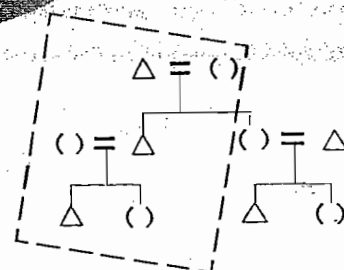
THE avunculocal extended family is illustrated on Losap atoll in the Caroline Islands of Micronesia. Here a census showed 53 couples were living in avunculocal residence, 22 matrilocal, 16 patrilocal, 2 neolocal, and 1 unknown. Close cooperation is maintained between a brother and sister after each marries. Both live in proximity to one another, making it easy for a brother to supply food for the woman and her children. Brother and sister do not, however, form a residence group. As a boy becomes able to work, his mother's brother exercises increasing power over him. Sometime between puberty and marriage he may move to his uncle's house and there brings his bride.

EXTENDED families are cooperative groups serving the general functions of adaptation and adjustment. Naturally, tensions also are generated in such aggregates. Extended families, however,

are not only means to ends. In many parts of the world they possess enormous value and become ends in themselves. An elder is pleased to see his sons and brother's sons living around him with their wives and children. He may strive by sound administrative practice to keep the group intact throughout his lifetime. The theme of preserving the extended family is a popular one in Indian films and novels. As with polygyny, not everybody may find a large extended family equally possible. Only people who possess sufficient wealth for example, in the form of land may realize the ideal and the prestige it brings. Where such an ideal is strong, dissolution of an extended family may promote strong shame.

**Fraternal Joint Family**

THE term joint family is often used when an extended family is indicated. The label is applied more specifically to a relatively rare composite family consisting of two or more brothers with their wives and offspring. This group, which dissolves with the death of the males, is one form of residential kin group formerly found among the Manus of New Guinea. It grew up where an elder brother, rather than a father or uncle, assumed economic responsibility for a younger brother's marriage. Ideally a father would have undertaken this role, but owing to the short life span of a Manus man, a father rarely lived to see his sons married. The husband of the junior family not provided for his wife but also worked to repay the elder brother, who, by providing thousands of dogs teeth and other valuables, had helped him to secure a bride. The junior wife and her elder brother stood in the same relationship as a daughter-in-law and father-in-law.

**PATRILOCAL JOINT FAMILY**

In India, "Nuclear family is the predominant type found in as many as 4122 communities with vertically extended family type reported from 2272 communities, horizontally extended among 536 communities and mixed extended in 1518 communities." (POI)

## FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY

THOUGH family is found almost universally, it is really a tough task to delimit and delineate the functions family can or does perform. Anthropologists, however, tend to agree that it performs some essential functions and some non-essential ones. The four essential functions are:

- (i) Stable gratification of sexual needs
- (ii) Child birth
- (iii) Socialization
- (iv) Economic functions

THESE four functions may be performed beyond the scope of family too but all of them are almost universally performed in most human societies (For further details please go through the discussion under Universality of Family). Non-essential functions of family include formal education, health, civic awareness, recreation, religious functions etc.

THE most important role of a family is in socialization. It is in the family wherein a child is born. A long stay with the parents (mother to be specific) because of his dependency on them, inculcates the emotional bond between the two. Though a child may have many friends in the neighbourhood, he spends much of his time in family. Emotional bond and continuous association results in the 'we' feeling. All his needs are fulfilled in the family. Because of all these factors, the child learns from everyone in the family. Further, authoritarian and equalitarian units of family supply natural elements required for socialization. Thus family plays a very important role in the development of a person. One can not imagine the condition of human beings without family. Because of the critical functions performed by the family it is at times also called the 'corner stone' of human society.

## STABILITY AND CHANGE IN FAMILY

AS DISCUSSED earlier, various types of families exist in different human societies. These types are not mutually exclusive. A patriarchal family is patrilineal and patrilocal too, whereas the matriarchal families have the tendency to be matrilineal and matrilocal or avunculocal. Also, as discussed earlier, the type of family is the function of culture. Culture is never static and the family structure must change accordingly. Instances in the past are not uncommon where matrilineal matriarchal societies got changed into patrilineal and patriarchal ones. The switch-over from joint family to nuclear is a very recent phenomenon. In the following discussion we shall briefly deal with the factors that have been responsible in bringing change in the structure of the family.

### Economic Factors

INDUSTRIAL revolution has been a very significant factor in bringing change in family structure. Modern industries, unlike the small scale cottage industries, require thousands of people to work in factories. Because of modern industries, the era of cottage industries came to an end and people were left with no choice but to join modern industries as workers. Not only the males but females too were employed. This made the women earning members of the family that created a sense of independence in them. Industrialization brought urbanization whereby informal controls in family were replaced by legal ones. Several specialized agencies came up to perform functions which, earlier, were the prerogative of family alone.

### Cultural Factors

ACCEPTANCE of democratic institutions and modern values

has brought significant changes in the structure of the family. Movement for equality of sexes, right to vote and legal rights to women have not only improved the condition of women in many countries but also have resulted in women fighting more and more for their rights. Spread of education and media network have brought changes whereby woman is no more subordinate to man but an equal partner in family life. THE modern family presents a very different look compared to the traditional family. Major features of modern family are : equal rights for men and women, decreased control of marriage contract, small size, economic independence for both sexes, decline in religious control and decrease in the non-essential functions. Modern family has the tendency to be filiocentric whereby the structure and policy of family are determined by the wishes of children. Though modern family is a welcome step in the changing circumstances of the world, it is more vulnerable and less stable than the joint family. Now the control of family over its members had diminished resulting in greater fluidity as also mistrust. Now when many important functions of the family have been taken over by other institutions, the emotional bond as also the socialization, have suffered. Percussions of the changes in the family are seen in increased rate of divorce.

## IS FAMILY UNIVERSAL

THERE is a general conception that the family is universal, though there are not many studies to support this concept. It is a mere assumption that in every society there is a single social unit which is invariably associated with certain functions. It can also be assumed that this unit is structurally same in every society. The universality of the family is claimed through the basic functions ascribed to this social unit.

MURDOCK, on the basis of his sample of 250 societies, concluded that "either as the sole prevailing form or as the basic unit from which more complex familial forms are compounded (i.e. the nuclear family) exists as a distinct and strongly functional group in every society" and that it universally performs "four functions fundamental to human social life; the sexual, the economic, the reproductive and the educational". Most social scientists have accepted Murdock's plea of the universality of the family.

LET US analyse Murdock's conclusion. Let us assume that small kinship-structured units are universal and are indeed structural requisites of any society. Functionally, socialization would appear to be the heart of the matter. Parsons and Bales have argued that socialization requires small units and that completely non-kinship structured small units are unlikely to carry out the function effectively (although human ingenuity may devise alternatives) of the 'universal functions' attributed to the family (by Murdock), reproduction and sexual regulation would appear to be associated with and probably secondary to socialization. Parson's argument seems convincing.

MURDOCK'S remaining 'universal functions', the economic seems to be on a different level. It is not so much that families universally fulfil economic functions vis-a-vis other units and society at large, clearly the degree to which they do so are subject to enormous variation. Yet if families are universal, probably because of their usefulness as socialization devices, then indeed, in every society they have economic functions. Still, socialization seems to be at the root of the requisite nature of families.

BY ASSUMING that kinship-structured units are structural requisite of any society; and assuming they are so because socialization requires it, it does not follow either that (i) there is such a single unit in every society (the family) which carries out every aspect of socialization function and its associated or derivative functions; or still less that (ii) in every society this unit is the nuclear family. Neither Murdock nor Parsons has said anything about the righteousness of above two statements.



REGARDING universality of nuclear family, Murdock argues that even where the nuclear family is 'enveloped' in more extended domestic units, it is always clearly distinguished as a separate subunit and he rather implies that it is always the more fundamental unit vis-a-vis the 'universal functions of family'. It should well be accepted that in most, if not all, societies persons are typically able to distinguish their own parents and siblings from other kinsmen. It however can not be that extended family household always 'consist' of aggregations of nuclear families that in such households always children are socialized as primarily in terms of the nuclear family sub-units. This is essentially the point made by Linton in his distinction between conjugal and consanguinal families. In traditional Chinese family, for example, the children were typically socialized in terms of patrilineal extended family unit and within this unit the nuclear family was by no means the 'strongest' subunit for socialization purpose.

AMONG the Basoga of East Africa, the typical household is occupied by a nuclear family plus odd individual kinsmen. However the solidarity of exogamous patrilineages is strong and nuclear families tend to be split by conflicting loyalties of the spouses. Divorce is consequently very common and children are very often socialized in households where only one of the parents is present. Even where marriage is not threatened by conflicting loyalties, children are primarily oriented to lineage of the two parent, rather than to the nuclear family as a unit. The Hopi would appear to represent an analogous situation on the matrilineal side, while among the famous Nayar the nuclear family apparently disappears altogether in favour of a consanguinal units.

### Israel's oldest kibbutz dumps socialism

A century after it was founded, Israel's first and most famous kibbutz has voted to give up its early socialist ideals and to privatise itself.

THE changes at Degania, which was founded where the Sea of Galilee meets the river Jordan, were agreed by a vote and come after a one-year trial in which residents for the first time received private salaries.

IN the past the 320 members of the kibbutz saw their salaries paid into a communal account and then received free services and an allowance based on need, usually determined by the size of their families. In future they will be paid varied salaries based on ability not need and most importantly, they will be allowed to keep them. In return they will have to pay for services such as electricity and water and they will have to pay a progressive income tax into the kibbutz which will be used to support the least well off.

#### MARKET REPLACES IDEALS

The vote at Degania kibbutz, Israel's oldest and most famous collective farm, was carried with 85% in favour

268	117000	1948
Number of kibbutzim in Israel	Number of kibbutzim in Israel	Number of kibbutzim in Israel

The Hebrew word kibbutz means "collective" or "gathering". A Kibbutz is a collective settlement in which all members own a share of the wealth. After living costs are disbursed and health and welfare provided, any profits are reinvested into the settlement.

Where once they were largely agricultural; increasingly their residents work in industry and business, often employed off-site. Hired labourers, frequently Thai workers, carry out menial tasks.

Degania, the first kibbutz founded in 1910, has become the latest to start paying salaries and charging for services.

ALTHOUGH some have objected to the changes, the vote was carried by 85% and represents a trend throughout Israel's kibbutz movement. Around two-thirds of the country's 230 or so kibbutzim have adopted similar privatisation plans in recent years, an attempt to hold on to their community lifestyle in the face of the influence of the outside world.

FOR the second question regarding the universality of a single, small, kinship structured unit to carry out the function of socialization, Chinese extended family seems to represent a contrary case where young children tend to be socialized exclusively by mothers and grand-mothers. Later the sexes divide, boys associating primarily with adult males and girls with adult females. Thus, at various times and with regard to two sexes, different units emerge as primary for socialization. Among matrilineal Ashanti of Ghana, the child is primarily oriented during one phase of socialization to a consanguinal unit centering upon its mother and her brother, while during another phase, it is associated primarily with a conjugal unit based upon father and mother.

FROM the foregoing discussion, it becomes clear that the term 'family' with its traditional connotations, has failed to explain the validity of functions ascribed to it. It is therefore suggested that all kinship-structured units responsible should be brought into the fold of 'family' to call it a universal unit of all human societies.

### JOINT FAMILY

A JOINT family is an extended family of close kin sprang over two or more generations. The members of a joint family, in ordinary circumstances, stay together under the same roof or adjoining ones, share the common kitchen and hold all property in common. The joint family in patrilineal India generally comprises of the head of family, his wife, their married sons along with their families, as also the unmarried sons and daughters.

IT IS literally impossible to trace the origin of joint family. Ancient Romans had a tradition, whereby the eldest male member was in-charge of the family. Man, a hunter-gatherer stage too must have lived in some kind of extended families. The joint family system today has disappeared from most part of the world but is still widespread in India.

#### Characteristics Of Joint Family

(i) **Common Residence** : THE members of a joint family generally live under a common roof. Under special circumstances (e.g. for education or job) one may leave the family to rejoin it later. Members, if the family size may become very large, may live in adjoining houses.

(ii) **Cooperative Economy** : ALL economic ventures of joint family have common basis. All earning members submit their income to the common pool maintained by the head of the family. Each member has an equal right to the family resources. Besides, the family work is also shared by all members collectively according to everyone's capacity. The joint family system is more popular with agriculturists compared to industrial setting because of the advantage provided by the joint family as a productive unit in agricultural pursuits.

THOUGH patrilineal joint family is found in almost whole of India, matrilineal joint family system is more popular in parts of Assam and Malabar hills.

#### Merits of Joint Family System

(i) **Protection from Fragmentation of Land** : BECAUSE a joint family comprises of more than one nuclear family and because the members retain the joint hold on property, the land is spared from frequent fragmentations. Large land-holdings can thus ensure better rewards for the family.

(ii) **Economy of Expenditure** : AS VARIOUS household items

## KINSHIP

IT IS now a well known fact that the Man, the *Homo* has evolved from the now extinct higher primates. Equally established is the fact that this evolution was made possible to an extent due to man's capacity to live in groups. For the longer period of human evolution, mankind lived in groups. Kinship refers to the groups of people related by blood. A person's health and security, his very life and his chances of immortality are in the hands of his kin. Till today, kinship plays a crucial role in all aspects of the life of the members in a group. The statement is more true for the groups still living in pre-industrial and pre-literate conditions.

IT IS thus not surprising that the study of kinship has remained the focal concern in the subject-matter of anthropology. The study of kinship as an aspect of social structure began with the lawyers and students of jurisprudence. The subject has now been developing for more than a hundred years. It all started with the publication of Sir Henry Maine's 'Ancient Law' in 1861 whereby the author has studied Indo-European institutions, particularly the patriarchal joint family - the main kinship of India. Later in 1865, McLennan's 'Primitive Marriage' traced the origin of kinship through the female line. Morgan too had given the evolutionary scheme for the origin and development of marriage and family.

GRADUALLY the social scientists realized the shortcomings in various evolutionary theories. Around this time, in the late nineteenth century, the wisdom of importance of fieldwork prevailed. Morgan studies the Iroquois tribes of New York state and began collecting kinship terminology and in 1871 published 'Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family'. But he too, by and large, framed his work in evolutionary framework and shared the errors of other evolutionists.

IN AMERICA Lowie and Boas did much to undermine the far fetched evolutionary schemes. But it was the work of Polish Malinowski that put fresh life into kinship studies. English scholar Redcliffe Brown brought the kinship studies in the new state by involving comparative method. Evans Pritchard through his study of the Nuer revealed its importance in political organization. Fortes through his 'Dynamics of Clanship among Tallensi of Ghana' discussed descent groups in detail. Murdock's 'Social Structure' and Levi Strauss' 'Elementary Structures of Kinship' are other classics in the kinship literature. Kinship as we understand today is the result of brilliant works of these and many other sociologists and anthropologists.

BY NOW the central role of kinship studies in ethnology requires no further reiteration. Instead we should briefly identify some of the major categories of kinship organization. First comes marriage and the formation of domestic groups, two universal institutions that vary tremendously in specifics of form. There is a great deal of literature in anthropology on marriage, particularly on marriage rules: on who can and cannot marry whom, and on the reasons why. Anthropologists understand less about the processes by which marriages are terminated, beyond stating the obvious by death, separation, or divorce.

ANALYSIS of domestic group composition also needs more work. Part of the problem of studying households is that they are never neat. So much of what happens within them spills over into economic, psychological, and other fields. Also, domestic groups are particularly fluid, constantly acquiring new members by birth and by marriage and losing others as they grow up and move off, grow old and die.

THE study of descent systems, of how people reckon their relationship, both consanguineously (by "blood") and affinally (by marriage), and of the ways each system structures the assignment of rights to property and to the assumption of economic, social, political, and religious positions, is a complex

field, methodologically so far ahead of others that the abstract analytic elegance with which some anthropologists render their findings occasionally makes it difficult to remember that their subject is people. How people behave in some of the most important relationships in their lives, usually following their culture's rules, but often bending them and sometimes necessarily breaking them, reflects an adaptive flexibility seemingly belied by the rigid precision of some scholars' kinship charts.

AS THE institution through which family groups are formed and extended, marriage is almost universal. Yet a cross-culturally accurate way of defining what marriage entails, identification of its universal attributes, has proved elusive. This is because the components of marriage - the culturally prescribed social, economic, emotional, and sexual role responsibilities of marriage partners - are greatly varied. In fact, they seem to be growing ever more so, through the advent of "open marriage" and the increasing establishment of alliances based on friendship, trust, and an announced willingness to share, to relate sexually, and to bear and raise children, without any of the traditionally parental, legal, or religious sanctions and with decreasing concern for conventional familial role playing.

CULTURALLY approved means of dissolving marriage are also undergoing rapid change. Divorce is increasing in some places, dropping off sharply elsewhere, and being ignored by many as an unnecessary or irrelevant procedure for ending alliances that do not provide the satisfaction necessary to keep them going.

BIRTH, mating and death, the three basic facts of life, man shares with other animals. In addition, his young ones at birth are immature and need a prolonged dependence and care by the mother resulting in a very strong mother-child bond. This phenomenon is also seen in some other great apes but apes lack in systematic and ordered social system; man by virtue of his much greater intelligence has developed a social system on his own. This whole structure of relationships (kinship structure) is based on blood ties. We know that although the basic facts of life are the same for all men, the social structure varies widely from one place to another. The credit for this variation goes to man's capability to choose from among different alternatives open to him. The study of what path man chooses and why is the primary concern of kinship.

KINSHIP thus arises out of biological ties. But at the same time it is the social interpreter of consanguinity and not mere consanguinity, for had kinship been a mere biological one, it would have been same in all societies whereas the fact is that kinship provides an area of widest differences in all cultures.

KINSHIP in its simplest definition can be called the relationship between persons on the basis of marriage and procreation. Different social scientists have defined kinship in various ways. For Levi Strauss kinship and its related notions are 'at the same time prior and exterior to biological relations to which we tend to reduce them'; and for Beattie, 'kinship is not a set of genealogical relationships; it is a set of social relationships'.

KINSHIP, thus, can not be kept totally in the category of either biological or social and cultural system. Kinship is truly socio-cultural (recognition) of physical relations. Then, kinship and marriage can be seen as a set of interrelated social usages which are based upon the recognition of certain biological relationships for social purposes. Here the word 'recognition' is very important because as long as a biological tie is not recognised, it will not come under the study of kinship and vice versa. There are societies which do not recognise father as a blood relative. We therefore use the terms pater (social father) and genitor (genetic father) to denote father.

ON THE basis of above discussion, we can say that kins are the persons related by real, putative or fictive consanguinity. In order for a person to be a kin he may or may not be a real consanguine but what is must is that he must be recognized as a consanguine. A consanguine is a person related by blood, a relative. Consanguines are different from affines, i.e. persons related by marital ties. Again, who will be consanguine or an affine differs from one society to another; e.g. some societies do not recognize the role of father in child birth. In these societies, father is seen as merely the husband. Thus in these societies, father will be treated as an affine and not a consanguine. KINS are classified into primary (those related to the ego directly) and secondary (Primary kin of ego's primary kin). Tertiary kins are the primary kins of ego's secondary kins or secondary kin of primary kins. The commonest use of kinship ties is in recruitment. Members to the social group are recruited on the basis of blood ties or affinal ties. The membership of kin groups can be obtained through kinship links.

TWO kinds of kinship groups can broadly be recognized; consanguine kin groups with a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of spouses; and residential groups with both consanguines and affines. Family is a residential kin-group where, around the nucleus of affines, there is a fringe of blood relatives.

THE family in which one is born is called the family of orientation. The family which one sets up after marriage is called family of procreation. The nuclear family comprising of husband, wife and their children is the most familiar kinship group and forms the smallest functional unit of the society as also the unit for the study of kinship. Many of us also treat it as the basic unit but it is incorrect to do so because it is the mother-child bond that is inevitable and universal whereas the conjugal tie (between husband and wife) is variable. A society may or may not attach much importance to conjugal ties but when the conjugal ties are recognized we get the unit of husband, wife and children properly called the nuclear family or conjugal family. A conjugal family tends to die off with the death of either of the spouse(s)/parents. Family consists of consanguines and affines. Family is an association as well as an institution. It comes into existence through marriage. Thus the type of family depends on the prevailing form of marriage. The composition of family largely depends on the rules of residence.

### RULES OF RESIDENCE

RULES of residence refer to the prevailing choice of residence by newly married couple, i.e. the socially approved residence where newly married couple establish their household. Murdock has given the most satisfactory classification of rules of residence which is as follows: **Patrilocal**: the couple establishing household with the parents of the husband/groom.

**Matrilocal**: the opposite of patrilocal whereby the new couple come to stay with the wife's/bride's parents. **Ambilocal**: newly married couple are free to stay either with husband's or with wife's relations.

**Neolocal**: the couple establish a separate house independent of the bride's or groom's relations.

**Matri-patrilocal**: after staying with wife's parents for some time the couple move to the husband's parent's house; and

**Aveculocal**: the couple stay with wife's mother's brother.

THESE rules of residence have profound effect upon many aspects of social organization and social life. It largely determines the people individuals interact with or the people they have to depend on. It also has important consequences for the status of various kins, e.g. in patrilocal societies the husband is bound to have a higher status while a wife will have the feeling of an outsider. Further, the father-son bond will be more strong and socially more important. In matrilocal societies however, the case will be different. Here the authority lies in the hands of mother's brother or some other male relatives.

It should however be noted that in matrilocal societies, it is not the mother who, in fact, enjoys authority but in most cases, it is the mother's brother to do so. According to POI Project of ASI, "The dominant rule of residence is patrilocal (4517 communities), with only 42 communities following matrilocal residence, followed by that of bilocal residence (19 communities)."

ANTHROPOLOGISTS have tried to find reason for these differences in rules of residence. It is generally seen that the residence tends to be patrilocal if males contribute significantly to the economy of the family and matrilocal if females' contribution to the economy is greater. Again, external warfare promotes matrilocal residence. On the other hand, a society in which internal funds exists, the residence is almost always patrilocal. Neolocal residence is somewhat related to money economy or commercial economy. Since money is non-perishable and can be stored for exchange at a later time, a money earning family can restore to its own savings during periods of hardship. This reduces the dependence on kin and hence neolocal residence is preferred. **Aveculocal** residence can be best understood in its relationship with matrilocal residence and matrilineal descent. Generally, the societies with matrilineal descent follow **aveculocal** residence.

SO FAR we have studied family and the rules of residence determining the structure of the family. Most societies make use of structured kinship groups other than families. Such non-familial groups exclude all affines and are therefore called consanguine groups or descent groups. The rules that allocate a person to a particular group are known as the rules of descent. The following details concern the descent groups, their types, functions and causes of variation in the rules of descent in different societies. Homburger has enlisted the factors responsible for residence as follows:

THE form of the extended family is highly sensitive to other elements in the cultural configuration. Primarily the influence of these is exerted through rules of residence. Changes in technology, trade, relationship to property, government, and religion can all alter the structural relationships of related individuals to one another, leading to modifications in residence, to extended family form, and to factors dependent on the extended family.

1. **Patrilocal Residence**: A shift to patrilocal residence in a community is favoured by any change in culture or the cultural field which enhances the normal importance of men. Such a change may come in technology, giving the men a subsistence contribution larger than women's. The introduction of cattle or the plow exerts pressure in the same direction. Among collectors, migration to an area containing abundant game, so that game usurps the place formerly held by plant collection as the chief subsistence technique, will exert a similar influence. The assumption is that collecting is usually women's work. Polygyny favours patrilocal residence; hence the introduction of Islam, which gives scriptural sanction to plural marriage, could press toward patrilocal residence. Large amounts of any form of movable wealth, such as can be accumulated in quantity by men, warfare, slavery, and complex forms of government all operate in favour of men and therefore are associated with patrilocal residence, and, in turn, with patrilocal extended families.

2. **Matrilocal Residence**: When women make a large substance contribution—for example, in agriculture—residence is often matrilocal. It is also found where women own certain types of wealth or other rights that enhance their importance. Other variables congenial to matrilocal residence include little warfare and a relatively simple political system without kinds or powerful chiefs.

3. **Matri-Patrilocal Residence**: This form of residence is conditioned by the same factors that favour patrilocal residence when, in addition, elements exist in the culture which continue to press toward matrilocality. For example,



the custom of bride-service may obtain. That is, the husband is expected to spend a period of time after, or shortly before, marriage working for his wife's family. Should this custom be present together with matrilocal residence at a time when conditions are created which enhance the normal importance of men, a compromise between the matrilocal and patrilocal forms may be devised—namely, matri-patrilocal residence. Matri-patrilocal residence is also favored in cases where bridewealth-goods given to a bride's parents in recognition of marriage is paid in installments. Matrilocal residence may then endure until the full wealth has been turned over.

4. **Bilocal Residence** : Encouraging bilocal residence is the migratory life of food gatherers living in unstable bands. The instability and migratoriness means that sometimes a nuclear family pitches camp near the husband's parents and sometimes near the wife's. The family may even shift from one band to another if the spouses' parents belong to different units. The approximate equalization of men and women in things like ownership of wealth or rights to inheritance also favors residence with either of the spouse possessing the greater wealth. Bilocal residence is compatible with customs like primogeniture or ultimogeniture that favour certain children regardless of sex. If wealth is inherited by the first-born child, whether male or female, or if higher rank is ascribed to the first-born child than to subsequent children, then each sex has a chance of falling into the favorable status and so remaining at home upon marriage. In brief, the rule of bilocal residence depends on a number of factors where the newly married couple shall live. This is seen in a modern Netherlands village where, if there are several grown sons, the family will be glad if a daughter can live with her husband's people, because there is neither need nor room for a son-in-law. On the other hand, a son-in-law may be welcomed as a help where there are only one or two daughters, and may even be looked upon as the future head of the family.
5. **Avunculocal Residence** : Residence with mother's brother generally represents replacement of a pattern of matrilocality. The conditions pressing for such a change include the identical factors favoring patrilocal residence, except that these occur in association with a previously matrilocal rule and perhaps, with the avunculate. Avunculocal residence constitutes a kind of a compromise between matrilocal and patrilocal forms. "Every advantage which males can achieve under patrilocal residence—polygyny, slaves, wealth, political power, military prestige—they can acquire equally well under avunculocal residence". The two systems, then, are functionally equivalent although different in form.

### Dependent Functions of Residence

RESIDENCE that endures creates extended families which help to give rise to certain consanguineal, nonresidential kin groups that remain to be examined. Primarily they do so by assembling in one locality a specific aggregation of genealogically related persons. These people may be men and their children, or women and children, or with avunculocal residence, men related through women. From such alignments lineages, sibs, and clans come into being as well as rules which specify whether membership in these groups will be inherited through the father or mother.

PATRILOCAL residence, whereby the bride leaves her home to join another residential kin group, is generally accompanied by some form of consideration. This takes the form of wealth ("bridewealth") offered to the woman's parents. Cattle provide a common type of bride wealth, although in many places money has come to play an increasing part in such exchanges. In lieu of consideration a sister or other female relative is sometimes

offered in exchange for the bride, or the husband may spend some period working for the bride's family. Rarely, if ever, does the payments of bridewealth signify that people secure a bride as they would a chattel.

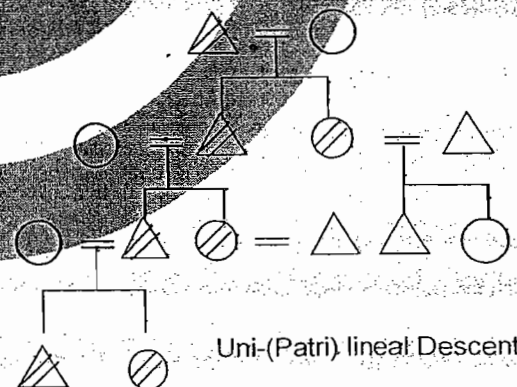
## RULES OF DESCENT

KINSHIP is important in most societies but one is not always and for all matters associated with all of his relations. All societies have norms that direct the transfer and acceptance of rights and obligations through generations. These norms affiliating individuals with a definite set of kin are called the rules of descent. Almost all known societies of the world exhibit one or more of the following kinds of descent based on the rules of descent each society has recognized.

(i) **Unilineal Descent** : UNILINEAL descent is the most common rule of descent whereby individuals are affiliated through one line of parentage, either through father's (patrilineal descent) or through mother's (matrilineal descent). It however does not mean that in patrilineal descent groups, matrilineal kin are not recognised but that inheritance of name and property pass through the male line. Often close matrilineal kin are entrusted with important responsibilities during the rites-de-passage. Unilineal descent groups are discrete units where each individual belongs to only one line whereby conflicts as also the ambiguity are minimized. Unilineal descent is much more common than any other type of descent because of the obvious advantages conferred by it.

### Patrilineal Descent

THE unit of patrilineal descent is called a patrilineage. A patrilineage consists of a man (founder of the lineage), his sons and daughters, his sons' sons and daughters, and so on. Though respective daughters are included in a patrilineage, they can not pass on their rights and obligations through the lineage to their offsprings. Patrilineages are patriarchal and patrilocal too. Also a patrilineage is exogamous whereby the daughters are married out in other lineages and women are brought (through marriage) as wives from other lineages. The head of the lineage is responsible for maintaining social, economic, political and ritual unity within the lineage as also to interact with other such lineages in matters of dispute and co-operation. Conflict within the lineage is taken seriously as it can result in the fission of the lineage into two or more units. Kapauku Papuans of central highlands of western New Guinea, Yoruba of western Nigeria and the Nuer of southern Sudan are the commonly cited examples of patrilineal descent. Kapauku as also the Nuer are divided into phratries, clans and lineage.



### Matrilineal Descent

TRACING of ancestry through female line is called matrilineal descent. Unlike the patriline, rights and obligations in matrilineages are traced through the female founder of the line-

AUTHORITY relations are real problem within matriline ages because here the crucial relationships are between Mother son, Brother-Sister and Mother's brother-sister's son whereby sons and uncles both want to enjoy supreme authority resulting in conflict... There is little need for or role of father or husband and these roles may be taken casually. The ideal examples of different kinds of matrilineages are the Nayars, Navaho and the Trobrianders.

MATRILINY survives among the Khasi and Garo in north-east India. There is a passage from matriliney to patriliney among the Rabha, Lalung, Hajong etc. Matriliney also survives among many of the Tulu speaking communities in the south. One of the strongest citadels of matriliney remains in Lakshadweep where it has adjusted to Islam. The matrilineal household, *tarawad*, survives in the islands and parts of Kerala. Matrilocal residence has been reported from 42 communities out of who almost half are the tribals. The principle of female equigeniture is reported from 25 communities, most of them ST. Succession goes to the eldest daughter in 49 communities, 11 of them ST and to the youngest daughter in 5 communities. (POI)

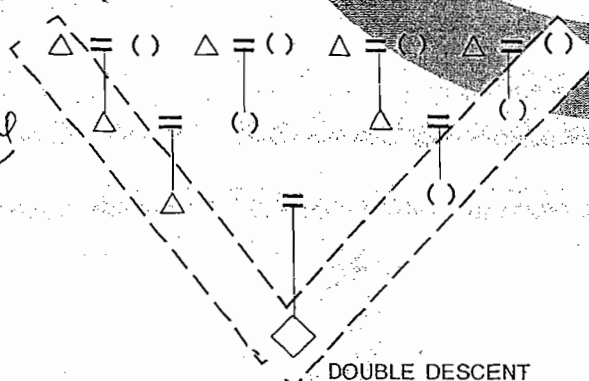
IN DOUBLE descent, the descent is traced through both patriline and matriline with specific rights and obligations from each of them. Ashanti of West Africa are a matrilineal and patrilineal society where property and authority are inherited through the female line but 'spirits' through the male line. Also the daughters are married out and replaced by wives. Similarly, among Herero, a southern Bantu society of Africa, material property is inherited through female line but rituals and other sacred knowledge is the prerogative of male line.

## Ambilineal and Parallel Descent

~~SAM. DAN~~



SOCIETIES with ambilineal descent groups are far less numerous than unilineal societies. However, ambilineal societies resemble unilineal ones in many ways. For instance, the members of an ambilineal descent group believe that they are descended from a common ancestor, though frequently they cannot specify all of the genealogical links. The descent group is commonly named and may have an identifying emblem or even totem; and other productive resources may be owned by the descent group; and myths and religious practices are often associated with the group. Marriage is often regulated by group membership, just as in unilineal systems, though kingroup exogamy is not nearly so common in ambilineal as in unilineal system. Moreover ambilineal societies resemble unilineal ones in having various levels or types of descent



groups. They may have lineages and higher order of a descent groups, distinguished (as in unilineal systems) by whether or not all the genealogical links to the supposed common ancestor are specified.

ALSO, unilineal descent groups are transformed to, ambilineal ones under special conditions—particularly in the presence of depopulation. Depopulation may transform a previously unilocal society into a bilocal society. If that previously unilocal society also had unilineal descent groups, the descent groups may become transformed into ambilineal groups. If a society used to be patrilocal and patrilineal, for example, but some couples begin to live matrilocally, then their children may be associated with a previously patrilineal descent group (on whose land they may be living) through their mother. Once this happens regularly, the unilineal principle may become transformed into an ambilineal principle.

### Cognatic Descent

IN COGNATIC descent, the individual traces descent through all his ancestors, i.e. all the lineal relations including two parents, four grand-parents, eight great-grand-parents and so on. There is no discrimination on either side while tracing the descent. Many modern societies are a good example of this kind of descent though generally upto two or three generations only.

### Descent systems and complementary filiation

AS A jural concept, descent refers firstly to the rules by which kinship groups are composed. If a person takes his or her membership in a descent unit from the father in the first instance, and thereafter traces descent relationships only through men, the rule of descent is 'agnatic' or patrilineal. If, on the other hand, group membership is acquired from the mother, and descent links are traced through the mother's female kin, the rule of descent is 'matrilineal'. There are also some relatively rare societies where an individual belongs simultaneously to both a patrilineage and a matrilineage. Such societies, found in parts of Nigeria and the Sudan in Africa, and on some Pacific islands like Yap, are called 'double descent' systems.

IN ADDITION to defining the rules by which individuals are ascribed to kin groups, 'descent' also defines the ascriptive rules by which these two issues by which property is inherited and people succeed to political office. Concerning these two issues, there is a wide range of different practices in patrilineal systems. The rules of inheritance range from conserving the property by leaving it to a single, normally male, heir (often the first-born son, in systems of 'primogeniture', but occasionally the last-born, in 'ultimogeniture'), through partition among all sons; to Islamic systems in which all daughters also receive half-shares in their father's property. The rules of succession to office are often simpler than those governing the inheritance of property because, unlike property, political office cannot be fragmented.

CONCERNING these issues of inheritance and succession, there is a very large difference between the range of patrilineal rules described above and matrilineal rules and practices. A child does not belong to its father's descent group in matrilineal systems. Therefore it has no claims to his property. Instead, the claim to lineage property goes through the mother, to her male kin. As in patrilineal societies, there is a wide range of rules of inheritance and succession. In the most common matrilineal rule, a man inherits property from and succeeds to political office through his maternal uncle, his mother's brother. However, inheritance rules can also link brothers, and men and their mother's mother's brother. Where women have rights to property (their rights to political office are much rarer), these rights are normally shared with all of their full siblings (of the same parents), or at least with all of their uterine siblings, with

whom they share a common mother while having different fathers.

SO FAR we have examined the ways in which descent rules ascribe relationships in society. However, there is also a relationship between a child and the parent from whom he or she does not trace descent, known as 'complementary filiation'. In societies based on cognatic or bilateral descent, where all kin relationships count equally and lineages are rare, the concept of complementary filiation is irrelevant. In lineage-based societies, however, complementary filiation provides an important residual security or insurance against the breakdown (for whatever reason) of descent relationships.

IN PATRILINEAL societies, for example, when bridewealth was not fully paid and rights in a woman's children were not transferred to her husband's lineage, their relationship to their mother provided the children with usufructuary access to the resources of her lineage, though they generally could not inherit such property. If a person was banished from his or her lineage as a result of witchcraft, matrilineal kin offered a refuge. When a polygamist's property was divided after his death, the matrilineal 'houses' (based on different mothers) divided his property. The Swazi still say 'a ruler is ruler by his mother'. Although property and power were held by and transmitted among men, the rank of his mother within a polygamous marriage determined finally who among the many potential heirs would actually inherit.

Conversely, in matrilineal systems, the father represented an important source of income and property for his sons, as we have already seen among Ghanaian and Tolai cocoa farmers. Indeed, long before complementary filiation was conceptualised as such, Malinowski (1922) was the first to see that there is a deep conflict in matrilineal societies between a father's emotional attachment to his own children, and rules of inheritance which debar his children from inheriting his property. Among Trobriand aristocrats involved in the Kula, this conflict was often reflected in the fathers' gift to his son of a kula valuable. Sponsoring his entry into the ceremonial exchange circuit at that point in the young man's life when he was supposed to leave his father and go to live avunculocally with his mother's brother to whom he was heir and successor, was the father's way of reinforcing material, ideological and emotional bonds with his son, notwithstanding their membership of different descent groups.

### UNILINEAL DESCENT GROUPS

RULES of descent prevalent in a society are the function of its culture. Lineage is the simplest form of unilineal descent group. A lineage is a set of kin whose members trace descent from a common ancestor through known links. All those descended from a common ancestor are called cognates. Cognates can be agnates or uterines, also called patri-lineages or matrilineages respectively. Lineages are often designated by the name of a common ancestor or ancestress. In some societies, people belong to a hierarchy of lineages i.e. they first trace descent through a minor lineage then to a major lineage and then to more exclusive maximal lineage and so on.

### TYPES OF CONSANGUINEAL KIN GROUPS

BASICALLY rules of descent are unilinear or bilateral. Unilinear descent rules help to produce unilinear kin groups like the lineage, sib, moiety, and phratry. Bilateral descent underlines only one con-sanguineal group, the kindred. Each of these groups will be described briefly.

#### Lineage

THE lineage represents a consanguineal kin group that includes only those persons who can trace their common relationship through a specific series of genealogical links to a known ancestor. They trace their descent according to whatever primary rule of descent operates in the community. A patrilineage includes the relatives who trace descent

*Bilateral descent*

*ambilineal descent*  
*lineage*  
*cognates*



patrilineally, whereas members of the matrilineage are affiliated through matrilineal descent. Usually the smallest corporate segment of a lineage consists of unilinearly related persons of the same sex forming the core of an extended family. However, the lineage also includes married siblings of opposite sex who reside elsewhere.

AMONG the Kurds of Southwest Asia, the maximal lineage, or *tira*, goes back 9 or 12 generation. It is divided into a number of smaller lineage segments. The maximal lineage owns agricultural land and grazing territory. This grouping is organized in total when external attack threatened any segment.

TRUK, a Micronesian atel, offers a good illustration of how matrilineages are organized and operate. The lineage includes those people who can trace descent matrilineally from a remembered ancestor together with a few adopted members. Genealogies which contain the names of known ancestor in the lineage descent line form an important kind of knowledge which is best developed in old people but is taught to the young. A lineage averages 30 or 40 members. These people form a corporate group which owns its own territory in the form of named tracts. A lineage also corporately owns an earth oven and a common men's house where unmarried boys above the age of puberty formerly slept. Formerly a sequestration hut into which women retired during menstruation or childbirth also constituted lineage property. A lineage used to live together in a hamlet (at one time even in a common house partitioned off into apartments). Since the Japanese occupation of Truk, houses of the same lineage have tended to form a cluster within a village. The hamlet formerly contained, and the village ward today consists of, a corps of women and girls together with their unmarried sons. The head of the lineage, however, is the most senior male. He administers the corporate property, calls meetings of the lineage members, and has other rights and duties. The office normally is inherited by a younger brother and then an elder sister's eldest son. Fellow members of the lineage regard one another as siblings. Males of the matrilineage are organized into one loose group and their sisters and mother into another. In the latter subgroup the oldest woman directs joint activities. In each subgroup thus constituted, individuals are ranked by relative age or, better, by birth order. Responsibility and power follow this ranking so that youngest adult is at the back and call of all other members of the group. Lineages are also ranked. The political system Truk rests on lineage rank in the following manner. Truk is divided into small districts. In such a district land might be owned by several lineages, some possessing more than others (depending on age). The highest ranking group, which is usually also the largest landholding body, provides the district chief who is himself a lineage head. He collects tribute from other lineages, sets the dates of ceremonies, and formerly acted as war leader. The district is endogamous, the men being linked bilaterally through kinship. Such bilateral ties, however, are insignificant compared to the strength of the lineage ties.

LINEAGES may be weak or strong. A strong lineage is a corporate group with recognized administrators, the members of which carry out many activities in common. Among the most important of such activities, at least from the standpoint of strengthening the solidarity of the corporate body, are ancestor ceremonies.

### Sib

IN THE sib is found a group of consanguineal kinsmen who affirm a bond of kinship which is traced in either the paternal or maternal line. But all these people cannot trace actual genealogical connection with one another. It is as though all persons calling themselves Smith affirmed their common descent. Some could demonstrate genealogical links to one another but most could not. In a patrisib membership is traced through males (i.e., is inherited from the father), while a matrisib includes only people related through females. In place of the

known ancestor of a lineage, the sib often postulates an ancestor, perhaps a species of animal or plant. Living representative of the species may be treated with special respect, being avoided as food and figuring prominently in rituals. Totemism, as this complex of customs is called, helps to give identity to a sib. Normally sibs include several lineages but such segments may not be structured as clear-cut groups.

MATRILINEAL sibs were numerous among the Indians of the Creek Confederation in the southeastern United States. Totemic, the groups bore names like these: Alligator, Arrow, Bear, Beaver, Bird, Bison, Cané, Corn, Deer, and about 30 more, including Red Paint, Spanish Moss, and Wind. All the Creek sibs were divided into two divisions, called whites and People of Different Speech (the latter symbolized the color red).

ON THE Micronesian island of Yap an exogamous matrisib is organized by a belief in a common place of origin and through a sacred place where rituals may be executed. Such sibs are scattered over the island. They operate by regulating marriage through the rule of exogamy, providing sanctuary to members in time of war and hospitality in time of peace, and, finally, constituting a widespread group of last resort, one in which wealth can be borrowed or various kinds of favours secured. An individual's sib membership is treated as a secret matter, a subject discussed only between mother and child and not to be brought up with a stranger. The function of secrecy probably is to enhance the importance of sib membership in general. It bolsters the significance of belonging to such a group.

### Phratry and Moiety

WHEN two or more sibs affirm a unilinear bond of kinship, they constitute a consanguineal unilinear kin group called a phratry. However, if only two phratres exist, every person belonging to one or the other, they are called moieties. Should the community possess only two sibs, each also is referred to as a moiety. Patrilineal descent in a moiety gives rise to patrimoieties while matrimoieties are the result of matrilineal descent.

THE bonds uniting the phratry or moiety are usually weaker than the solidarity existing in a sib. The former groups also are not as frequently exogamous. Among the Kaska Indians of northern British Columbia two matrimoieties, Wolf and Crow, are founded on the belief that the members in each are somehow related in much the same way that brothers and sisters are related. By virtue of such affirmed common descent, the moieties are exogamous. Occasionally the members of one group extend a feast (i.e. potlatch) to the other division. People without moiety affiliation marrying into the Kaska tribe eventually are informally classified with one side or the other for example, at a potlatch when it is decided whether they will be hosts or guests. True moieties are distinguished from the pseudomoieties that appear when a village is divided in half without thought of kinship or genealogical descent. Such dual divisions, as these groups may be called, are less likely than true moieties to be exogamous. "Political Moieties" are also in this category.

### Kindred

NOT all communities with consanguineal kin groups follow a rule of unilinear descent. In modern America, for example, bilateral descent affiliates a newborn child with both the mother's and father's sides of the family. When some of these relatives interact as a group for example, exchanging invitations to family reunions and weddings or visiting each other, a kindred is operating.

STUDY of 200 young, upper-middle-class Vassar College students from the northeast United States reveals that the kindred in this part of the country includes not more than 25 persons, at least that is the number of living relatives whom they could readily identify. Kindreds rarely are reported in the ethnographic literature, largely because their theoretical significance as a bilateral kin group has not been appreciated until

recently. Anthropological thinking has been dominated by unilinear kin groups.

KINDERDS especially are frequent with bilocal residence and occur when husband and wife reside neolocally after marriage. One kindred always overlaps another. For example, a nuclear family may customarily invite the mother's sister and her husband to Christmas dinner. But very probably the mother's sister's husband also is somebody's brother. In that status he is in another kindred and receives similar invitations. Kindreds do not form distinct groups in a community like lineage or sibs. Nor are they continuous in time. They cannot very well be corporate, owning property or possessing a well-defined system of administration. The kindred usually lacks a name. The individual who belongs to two sets of relatives, maternal and paternal, often becomes involved in conflicting obligations to each set. When relatives from both branches of the family quarrel, a person is pressed to align himself with one side or the other. Such antagonisms weaken a kindred. In community with unilinear kin groups the individual knows with greater certainty where he stands. In case of a dispute between two members of his own kin group, he is expected to remain neutral. If neither is a member, the affair is none of his business. If one is member but the other is not, he is expected to support his submate regardless of the rights in the matter. In short, most conflict situations are simply and automatically resolved.

### THE CLAN

THE CLAN by definition must meet three major specifications

- (1) It is characterized by a unilinear rule of descent which forms the binding force of membership. But this does not distinguish clans from lineages, sibs, or moieties. Something more is necessary.
- (2) The clan is characterized by residential unity, the rule of residence agreeing with the rule of descent. But we may object, how can a unilinear descent group have residential unity? Do not some siblings move away after marriage? The existence of a rule of residence indicates that some members certainly do leave upon marriage. Then why does not the clan become nonlocalized like the lineage and sib? The reason lies in another factor.
- (3) Siblings who leave the clan upon marriage lose their identification with the group. In this way clans differ from kin groups like sibs and moieties. The out-marrying siblings come to be recognized as integral members of the clan into which they marry. A clan therefore includes in-marrying spouses but not out-marrying siblings. In this sense clans exist in 87 out of a sample of 250 communities but are absent in 13. Information is insufficient for the remaining 32 communities. Patrilineal clans far outnumber any other type, being present in 72 out of 87 communities. There are 11 cases of matrilineal clans and 4 of avuncular clans.

CLANS may arise quite simply through operation of a unilocal rule of residence. This rule assembles in one locality a number of unilineally related adults of one sex plus spouses and children. When an explicit rule of descent is added, and the localized aggregate including spouses begins to act as a group—for example, executing common rituals or recognizing a single leader—then a clan is formed. Extended families founded through unilocal (but not bilocal) residence and exogamous demes already possess the requisite patterns of organization. They need only the appropriate descent rule in order to become matrilineal or patrilineal. When the rule of descent later is extended to include even out-marrying siblings, the clan becomes a lineage or sib. According to Peoples of India Project Phratry is found among about 151 communities belonging to mostly the ST, including the Gond tribe of central India. The second largest area of concentration of phratry is in the north-east, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Meghalaya. Moiety is found in about 64 communities, most of which are tribes.

Arunachal Pradesh reports the highest incidence of moiety followed by Nagaland. Band organization is reported from sixteen hunting and food gathering communities.

### KIN TERMS

THE moment a person is born, he automatically gets involved with a kinship system. He has to deal with all the relatives in one or the other sphere of life. Thus all people everywhere classify kinsmen into various categories and give these categories names which are called 'Kin Terms'. Thus kinship terms are the terms used to designate kin of various types. These terms are so much a part of our everyday culture that they seem natural to us. But when it comes to translating, kinship terms are among the most difficult to translate. It is so because these verbal elements characterize the reciprocal behaviour between kinsmen. Each such term carries with itself, the connotations of the roles associated and many cultural attitudes. MORGAN was the first to make a scientific study of kinship terms. He was the first one to see that terminology was a method of classification and by studying terms we can find out how various people classify kin. Morgan divided the system of kinship terms into two broad categories of classificatory system and descriptive system. The division is widely accepted till date.

UNDER a classificatory system several people, lineal and collateral and even affines, are all referred by the same term of designation. In descriptive system, on the other hand, there is a separate term for every kin whereby each such term describes the exact relation of ego with the kin in question. FOR a system of kinship terminology to be called classificatory, Kroeber gave eight principles of differences in generation, age, level within the same generation, sex of the relative, sex of the speaker, life conditions of relatives, differences between consanguines and affines, differences between lineal and collateral relatives.

DIFFERENT authorities on the topic have approached the problem of kinship terminology from different perspectives. For Redcliffe-Brown, People who are called by the same term are those to whom ego has similar obligations. Thus, in unilinear system, the ego distinguishes men of his lineage from that of the lineage of his other parent whereas in bilateral system men of both lineages are lumped together. But this is not the complete truth. In practical situations often there is seen a rough correlation between rights and terms but it is not adequate enough to account for the total distributions.

ALMOST all pre-industrial societies of the world tend to follow the classificatory system of terminology, the same is true for modern Europeans. In modern European kinship terminology, all kin beyond the nuclear family are called through the classificatory terms (e.g. uncle, cousin etc.). This speaks of a formal relation with all the kin beyond the nuclear family. Thus, there are almost no social obligations or similar ones towards father's brother or a distant relation both called by the term 'uncle'. In simple societies however, the classification tends to be more towards absolute whereby all males in the age-group of father or atleast relations in one line may be called by the term used for either of the parents. (This is a very general statement, all kinds of possible combinations in kinship terms are possible).

KINSHIP terms reflect geneological relations but they are, as advocated by Schneider, more of a system of symbols. His argument and examples beyond the kin (e.g. sister for the hospital nurse or uncle for a friend's father) have compelled the need for the reappraisal of pre-existing theories on kinship terminology.

#### Significance of Kin Terms

KIN terms designate statuses in a social structure. A status, it will recalled, is bound up with rights and duties which show up in role playing. It follows that different behaviour is expected of people who occupy different kinship positions and is also due

to occupants of different kinship statuses. Generally speaking, "Persons to whom ego behaves in the same manner he will call by the same term;... persons to whom ego behaves in a different manner he will call by different terms".

THIS broad-generalization must be modified. Differences in behaviour between kinsmen covered by the same kin term follow when the degree of intimacy between them also differs. On Yap a father's sister is referred to as a "mother". But she is treated with special respect, different from the respect accorded to the emotionally closer, biological mother. The latter woman alone is addressed by the term "mother"; the father's sister being called by a distinct kinship term. Among the Kaska Indians, where the mother's sister is also classified with the mother, everybody can distinguish his biological mother and behaves toward her in a special manner that is derived from the intimacy bound up with her since infancy. A Kaska Indian also calls his parallel cousins "brother" or "sister". But he clearly is aware of a distinction between biological and classificatory siblings and behaves to parallel cousins with somewhat attenuated warmth, especially if the classificatory sibling is the child of a father's brother. Children of a mother's sister are likely to be known far more intimately owing to common residence.

TERMINOLOGICAL distinction may exist in the absence of manifest role differences- for example, in a community which has abandoned asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage the two cross-cousins no longer represent different possibilities as marriage partners. To this extent their roles have become similar. Yet the custom of distinguishing between them by special terms may be retained.

IT HAS been suggested that kin terms used as terms of address impose on a relationship a kind of sanction, or expectation which helps too maintain behaviour close to the ideal structural definition of the relationship. That is to say when an individual calls another individual "father" or "brother" he is not only symbolizing a status verbally but declaring the existence of a specific relationship governed by certain norms. Where personal names are employed, structure is played down and the sanctioning element is absent. It is significant that Americans tend not to employ kin terms as forms of address between husband and wife, uncle to nephew, father to son, and between siblings. These relationships are also loosely defined. Even in the relationship of son to father, a tendency to equality may be noted in the use of informal words like "dad" or "pop" in place of "father". When, as on the island of Yap, kinship terms are not customarily used as terms of address, the actors have wide latitude in how they manage kinship relationships. Considerations of a personal nature play a large part in the interpersonal behaviour of Yap kinsmen. However, there as elsewhere kinship positions are recognized by terms of reference, and an

awareness of certain expectations, rights, and duties continues to be attached to those statuses.

## KINSHIP BEHAVIOUR

KINSHIP usage or kinship behaviour refers to definite and comparatively permanent patterns of behaviour between different members of a society. The typical but common kinship usages are being discussed here.

(i) **Avoidance** : ALL societies observe avoidance in one form or the other between the relations brought through affinity. Mutual avoidance between son-in-law or daughter-in-law and their one or both parents-in-law is a common phenomenon. Avoidance may include the one for physical contact and/or familiarity. The son-in-law and mother-in-law avoidance is most common in matrilineal societies of Africa. An explanation among the Nyoro is that the son-in-law must clearly express his sense of gratitude and indebtedness towards the lineage members of his bride by being submissive before them. Nyoro feel that the matter of affinal relations is sensitive one and should be handled carefully.

**Joking Relationship** : JUST opposite of avoidance is joking relationship where the relations are free to exchange even the abuses. Termed 'mutual disrespect' by Redcliffe-Brown and prevalent in many parts of North America, East Africa and Asia, partly to the relationship (e.g. Jija-Sali, Devar-Bhabhi in Indian context) the acts, verbal exchanges or gestures cross the ordinarily permitted limits of acceptance. One involved in this kind of relationship has to bear all kinds of insults and has the right to counter-attack in equal and mutually reciprocal manner.

**Teknonymy** : WHEN two relations do not address each other directly but through a third person or a symbol, the usage is known as teknonymy. The practice is very common in India where women generally do not utter the names of their husbands or the elderly relations.

**Avunculuate** : THE usage is peculiar to matrilineal societies where mother's brother has a permanent place in the family. Thus maternal uncle-nephew relationship forms an important unit of family. In some parts of south Africa every brother is paired with a particular sister and here avunculuate becomes more definite and precise. Among Tsonga of Portuguese East Africa and Nyoro all non-sense activities of sister's son are ignored or borne with utmost patience. The patrilineal version of avunculuate is called amitate whereby father's sister plays a pre-eminent role in the family.

**Couvade** : IMITATION by a husband of the behaviour of his wife during pregnancy, delivery and parturition found only in some societies of Africa and Maler, Khasi and Toda of India, is termed couvade. The usage is symbolic of the strong bond between husband and wife.

KINSHIP usages help in defining kinship and the associated roles.





# ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS

ECONOMIC anthropology/sociology deals with the values, institutions, roles and groupings that are the part of production and distribution of goods and services, an area that has been referred to as substantive economics as against the 'formal economics of price and theory. Every economic system contains an area of production of goods and services, a network of distribution and patterns of consumption. Holding the entire economy together and integrating labour and resources is a system of exchange whereby materials are brought into the process of production and eventually end by satisfying consumer needs. All the facts and factors associated with the economies of the simple societies form the realm of economic anthropology.

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND ECONOMICS

THE prime question of economic anthropology is not one of fact but of rights. And this question of rights is concerned with the real role and relative importance of economic relations in the deep logic of the operation of evolution in human societies. THREE points are at the center of the concerns of economic anthropologists :

1. What does one mean by economic reality? What does one have in mind when one wishes to analyze the economics of a society?
2. What are the limits of anthropology? What kind of societies do anthropologists study and are there theoretical reasons to justify this content and these limits?
3. What causes economic structures, and their effect on the organization and evolution of the societies studied by anthropologists?

## The Definition of Economics

THREE distinct approaches to the definition of economics have been offered by anthropologists, a situation not really differing from that which has reigned among economists since the beginning of the century. For Herskovits, LeClair-Burling, Salisbury, Schneider, and all those who label themselves 'formalists' the subject matter of the science of economics is the study of human behaviour with respect to the relation between ends and scarce means having alternative uses (Robbins 1947). This definition is that of marginalism, held by the majority of Western, non-Marxist economists.

KARL Polanyi (1957), George Dalton (1971) and other are declared partisans for the "substantive" and nonformal definition of economy as "the forms and social structures of production, distribution and circulation of material goods which characterize this society at a determined moment of its existence." One recognizes here the "classical" definition of Adam Smith and Ricardo which has been revived in this day by economists such as Pieiro Sraffa (1970), who do not agree with marginalism.

FINALLY, other anthropologists, such as Marshall Sahlins, Jonathan Friedman, Maurice Godelier, and Emmanuel Terray reject, as the substantivists do, the formalist definition of economics but they also think that the "substantive" definition is fundamentally inadequate, if not false. They propose to analyze and explain the forms and structures of societies material processes with the aid of concepts developed by Marx—"mode of production" and "economic and social formation" (Godelier 1971). By mode of production (in its restricted sense), they mean the combination of productive forces and social relationships specific to production which is capable of reproducing itself and which determines the structure and form of the production process and circulation of material goods at the heart of an historically pre-determined society. They

assume that diverse, pre-determined forms of political, ideological, and other relationships correspond to a certain *mode of production* (in a restricted sense) with which they are structurally compatible and causally connected. The whole of these economic and social relationships in their specific articulation are labelled *mode of production* (taken this time in the broader sense), as when one speaks of the slave-holding modes of production of ancient Greek or Roman cities, or the feudal modes of production in medieval France and England. Moreover, since it frequently happens that a society is organized in terms of several modes of production which are articulated in a certain manner, but under the domination of one of them, one resorts to designating such articulated assemblages of modes of production as "economic and social formations". Thus, in France in the nineteenth century there existed in agriculture, among artisans, and among the commercial class, some precapitalist production relationships based on small plots of private property that existed alongside feudal type relations of production and community relations. This capitalist mode of production gradually took over all industrial production, as well as part of the agricultural production, and dominated the national economy.

WHY sociologists/anthropologists study economy (even though of simple societies) when the services of professionally trained economists can be readily made available? Anthropologists have their own logic. Firstly economics of the simple societies can not be fully justified by the modern economics' knowledge. Many economic activities of tribals are not really economic and some of them may well be termed anti-economic, these serve very important purpose in binding of economy. All such activities find no justification in modern economics. Otherwise the economic activities of the simple societies are too simple and can be understood by everyone interested in doing so. Yet most economic ventures have social basis. Anthropologists are called the scientists of the tribals because of their utmost anxiety for the tribals and they have a special eye to understand the social institutions. Consequently simple economies can be well interpreted by the anthropologists only. Here one must add that anthropologists do not claim specialization in modern economics and generally do not involve themselves in modern economic studies or research.

SO FAR in economic anthropology, system of distribution and exchange have received most of the attention. The equally basic issue of production organization has been slighted. Here the central question is who controls (and how) the raw materials (land, wildlife, water), the capital equipment (digging sticks, spear throwers, power plants) and the labour that must be combined to produce goods and services. It is a question that has not yet been well enough answered.

A REALITY-based theory in economic anthropology must be derived from a sound cross-cultural sampling of the varying ways people organize materials and labour to meet both universal human needs and those that are the result of a particular pattern of cultural conditioning. Part of the reason we have not progressed faster is because of our pre-occupation with the market. We tend to assume that it is always within the market that almost anything—land, labour even love can be acquired for a price. Of course, that is not actually how it works, even for us. Most really big deals seem to be made outside the market, at least these days. And the market plays little, if any, part in the organization of basic production in many of the non-industrialized societies most economic anthropologists have studied.

OUR own concepts of ownership, both private and public, have

repeatedly proved inadequate to analyze the ways in which others allocate rights of access to productive goods. Probably the most fundamentally troublesome misunderstanding, one that helps explain the long, sordid history of the expropriation of native peoples' lands (example: the Dutch "purchase" of Manhattan island for twenty-four dollars), derives from the special ideas about ownership of the means of production that set us apart from most non-industrialized people. Among them, almost universally, the allocation of productive goods is structured on the basis of relationships in which ties of kinship and community are foremost.

## PRODUCTION

EXPLOITATION of natural resources may well be termed production. Production is must for survival of all humans. Production in the subsistence economies can be broadly classified into (i) hunting, food gathering and fishing, (ii) cultivation and (iii) pastoral herding. Hunter-food gatherer-fishermen groups live at the most primitive economic levels on the natural resources as such. This category of production depends on the movement of the group as a whole. As the group, most of the time, has to be on the move, this mobility restricts the size of the group. Further, the limit to exploitation also puts a check on the size of the group, some Australian aborigines as also the Eskimos live in small bands of six to ten families. Unlike the prevailing notions, hunting etc. mode of production provide for enough leisure time and most hunter-gatherer-fishermen groups studied exhibit very high caloric value for their food. FOR more than 90 percent of our history the ancestors of all of us were hunters and gatherers of wild foods. Today those who still follow this most ancient means of making a living have been pushed off into the more inaccessible and/or technologically less readily exploitable parts of the world, deep into tropical forests where heavy rains would carry off the topsoil if the land were cleared for farming, into and around deserts where no outsiders have yet found anything worth drilling or digging for, along a few barren seacoasts where not even the fishing is very good, and, of course, into the more remote parts of the Arctic.

IN SUCH regions hunter-gatherers live on. Anthropologists are interested in these now mostly tiny remnant groups for two main reasons:

- (1) Although such peoples cannot quite be described as still living in the Palaeolithic, their contemporary cultures do suggest in a general sense what life was once like for all of us. Incidentally, it apparently was not all bad. Having been killed off or pushed out by now from most of the more comfortable parts of the world, these days the hunter-gatherers' habitats are often rough and life is hard. But even in the undeniably harsh settings in which most are now forced to live, anthropologists who have been working among them report that their lives, though often short, are by no means either nasty or brutish. There is much that is rewarding in their close interdependence and deep feeling of communal responsibility. And where they have enough to get along, they have frequently been observed to be intelligently disinterested in 'getting ahead', preferring instead to lie around and enjoy themselves. (This bit of ethnographic evidence has implications for the work ethic that we might well stop to ponder, but we do not have the time!)
- (2) We find that the study of hunter-gatherers is also valuable because the comparative simplicity of their technology allows us to perceive, in unusually sharp relief, important casual interrelations between technology and the other aspects of culture. For technological primitivism seems to limit people's options. Their forms of economic, social, and political organization are everywhere strikingly similar.

GROUPS that survive on the reared cattle and their products

are called pastoral herders. These groups too are on the move in look out for the new pastures for their cattle. As pastures are available only on limited tracts, Masai and Nandi cover many miles to settle again. A pastoral herder economy can support a larger number, yet keeps restrictions on the size of group. The movements of such groups are generally cyclic or pendulous. The later category call semi-nomadism or transhumant mode of life is prevalent in many highland populations who have to move downwards during winters because their summer houses (and the area as a whole) become inhabitable due to the large cover of snow.

CULTIVATION differs from the other two categories in the sense that it requires modifications of nature not desired previously. The primitive kind of agriculture involving hand tools such as digging-stick and hoe, and undertaken at a smaller scale is called horticulture. People who practice agriculture have to work much harder than the hunter-gatherers or pastoral herders but this mode of production yields higher dividends too. Now, a much larger population can be sustained on comparably less amount of land.

CULTIVATION requires (and leads to) somewhat sedentary mode of life but most societies practising cultivation lack in adequate technology to keep the soil fertile. Consequently new fields have to be created after every few years and the type of cultivation has been named 'shifting cultivation'.

THE kind of production activity prevalent in a society is the function of its culture (i.e. the rules of cooperation and cultural needs of the population). That is why despite sincere efforts by administrations in different parts of the world to impress upon the nomads regarding sedentary way of life, we still find many societies adhering to the primitive modes of production. Production is very important for survival of all societies and lack of it resulting in hunger can lead to chaos. The Ik, a tribe of nomadic hunters and gatherers of Kenya, because of their lack of production activity have lost the whole social fabric. Even the parent-child bonds, characteristic of all societies, have been shattered and the tribe is surviving in a hopeless condition.

MODERN economies with various scientific techniques have a much broader scope for activities that can be termed production. Agriculture, domestication and mining are the most common production activities at primary level. At secondary level food processing industries have developed into a network. It is only because of the surplus in production that modern economies could become modern because only then they could support the vast majority involved in activities other than production.

## Division of Labour

ALL economies exhibit division of labour based on age and sex. Other bases of division of labour are kinship, caste, creed and class. This division however does not cast any shadow on the contribution of each unit. In hunter-gatherer economies, men hunt while women gather forest produce. In most such societies more than three-fourth of the nutritional needs are fulfilled by the women's labour. Very young and quite old people in Vietnam substantially contribute to the economy of the family. Thus though the primary division of labour has biological basis (whereby women are specialist in child-bearing and rearing) it receives its strength from cultural needs.

IN NON-INDUSTRIAL economies kinship forms an important basis for the division of labour. Among Lapauku of western New Guinea males themselves form a kinship group and together build trenches, fences, etc. Among the !Kung a woman shares her part of non-vegetarian food with her kin only and not with her husband or children. Pastoral herders, if they tend to live settled have kinship basis of all settlement pattern. Cooperation is the basis of all kinds of division of labour and direct cooperation assumes much greater role in pre-industrial, preliterate societies. Among civilized societies the division of labour between sexes tends to confuse except for the biologically

Lapauku  
of  
Western  
New Guinea

determined needs to do so.

THOUGH division of labour is found universally, specialization is not. Lower the level of technological advancement, lesser is the specialization in work. A hunter, for example is required to have adequate knowledge of making his own traps and weapons as also their use. In simple societies a person can be canoebuilder, weaver, priest, artist, potter etc. without confusion of his own identity. Horticulturist and agriculturist societies have specialists for each of the tasks mentioned above.

NOT all labour in all societies is voluntary; forced labour and slavery as also the bonded labour too are found in one form or the other, especially in stratified societies where people work to avoid punishment and not to gain anything for themselves. Bonded labour is generally found where natural resources for exploitation are in plenty but labour is in short supply.

## EXCHANGE

DIVISION of labour leads to exchanges. If a persons can perform all functions (himself) required for his survival, there will consequently be no division of labour and hence no exchanges. But since all societies exhibit some kind of division of labour, exchanges are a rule; more so in societies with greater specialization in work. All the goods (and services) can be grouped into ritual (ceremonial) items and economic items that can be exchanged only in three ways:

- (i) RITUAL items for the ritual ones form typical ritual exchange. Exchange of white and red shell items in Kula is a point in this case. All forms of greetings form part of this type of exchange. In simple societies ritual exchanges (based on reciprocity) form the basis for economic exchanges but not necessarily in modern societies.
- (ii) RITUAL things for economic things. Even this kind of exchange is commonly found in simple societies. Economic thing e.g. food, blankets, pigs etc. may be exchanged for round stones or items of display. In our society students pay fee but get a degree which is only a ritual unless it is automatically connected to job guarantee.
- (iii) ECONOMIC things for economic ones or pure economic exchanges, characteristic of modern industrial society.

### The Kula

THE network of ritual or ceremonial exchanges can well be understood through Kula (an exchange between permanent contractual partners of items with literally no economic value) of the Trobriand and other island people of western pacific. In Kula a person sets out on a voyage to other islands explicitly to meet his friends on different islands and offer them the gifts assuring continuity of friendship. The exchange of red shell necklaces with white shell armbands (carried over time) is the fundamental aspect of Kula economic transactions being only secondary. Malinowski has shown that Kula is an important mechanism of communication and social organization as well as quasi-economic institution. Kula emphasizes that social relations, economic exchanges, travel magic and social integration can not be looked upon as isolated but highly interwoven units of social organization.

CEREMONIAL exchanges are an important aspect of social organization as also of economic exchanges. Economic exchanges may also be termed 'trade' exchanges. Earliest kind of economic exchange known till date and still practised by many subsistence level economies is 'barter'. Three characteristics of barter as outlined by Johnson are: (i) Goods or services are exchanged without the use of money (ii) There are always two parties or groups of individuals involved and (iii) In each transaction, parties are explicitly concerned with the problem of just equivalence. In some simple societies, money in the form of precious metal or stone or a weight may be involved but it is just to facilitate the transaction. Economic exchanges in simple societies are formal where the status and identity of the buyer are equally important. There the main consideration is not bargain or great economies have shunned all

social considerations. The modern economic benefits but the social aspects and are purely commercial where the value of goods is much more important than the identity of buyer or supplier.

## OWNERSHIP

THOUGH the concept of ownership is present in all societies; simple societies generally lack individual ownership. Everything in such societies belongs to the group as a whole along with its ancestors and gods. Even the implements and household goods or utensils are not owned by one person in many band organization. Modern industrial societies however, have a well developed concept of personal ownership (except for the socialistic societies) and property is its best expression.

PROPERTY, according to Ander and Parker 'consists of goods and services that society gives an individual or a group of individuals the exclusive rights to possess, use and dispose of'. Property thus consists of tangible and intangible items. For Davis, however, "Property consists of the rights and duties of one person or group as against all other persons and groups with respect to some scarce goods".

PROPERTY is the universal feature of all human societies, the perception of the term however may vary. According to Hoebel and Frost "Human beings tend to bring within the scope of property whatever they rely upon for the maintenance of life or value for other reasons. So property is... a part of the basic fabric of the society. Property may be movable or immovable, discrete things or abstract forms or even ideas.

## MODES OF EXCHANGE

ONCE produced, there has to be a system for distributing goods and services. The requirement is universal; the organization of such systems varies. For separation and analysis three distinctive ways of organizing distribution can be identified. First is reciprocity in which goods of approximately equivalent value are exchanged between individuals and groups of roughly equal status, and in which assurance that each participant will meet his part of the bargain to reciprocate is principally controlled by social pressure and the fear of losing valued trading partners. For example, in our society gift exchange is usually reciprocal; if not it rarely continues. Second, there is redistribution, in which goods and services move towards an allocative center and out again. (Taxes collected in money and returned in services provide a familiar example). However, with redistribution, all participants in the exchange relationship are not necessarily of equal status, and coercion is often involved. Because of this an equivalent return is less assured. Third is market exchange.

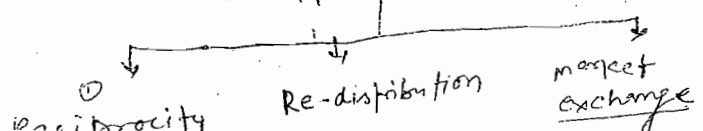
IN MANY societies all three processes operate, as they do in our own. But usually one provides the dominant mode, the main means by which most goods and services are moved. For us the market has been the principal place and money purchase the major process of exchange. But redistribution is coming up fast. Reciprocity in every form from campaign contributions to wedding presents is in well distant place of third importance.

THESE exchange models are idealized. They are used here simply to provide a coherent set of organizational categories to check, for descriptive accuracy and analytical usefulness, against the ethnographic evidence.

THE economic historian Karl Polanyi has distinguished three basic modes of exchange namely reciprocity, redistribution and market exchanges. He did not say whether there could be more, but he isolated these three. Even these three kinds of exchanges are not mutually exclusive categories, for reciprocity is involved in other two kinds of exchanges at least among the non-commercial economies. Further, reciprocity may be more of a social obligation with economic guise. Most societies of the world today have more than one, at times all the three modes of exchange prevailing simultaneously but the economy of a society is characterised by the predominant mode of exchange.

Mode of exchange in any

Society -





## Reciprocity

RECIPROCITY involves exchanges without the use of money between two or more parties, directly or indirectly. (Sahlin) has pointed out three forms of reciprocity: balanced, generalized and negative.

ALL types of more or less one way movement of goods and/or services (e.g. help, sharing or hospitality) without the explicit expectations of return are the forms of generalized reciprocity. The best example of generalized reciprocity are the !Kung Bushmen where most of the good things even of daily use are presented to others and nobody can keep even a sharp knife lest he become the object of envy.

### Generalised Reciprocity

GENERALIZED reciprocity is found in all societies. Parents groom their children without any expectations of returns. These children, when they become adults and have their children, their role is reversed. The obligations to previous generation are fulfilled in

A → B → C →  
next generation. In generalized reciprocity there is no consideration for the quantity of return. Though the returns are indirect, failure to reciprocate does not stop the one-way process.

### Balanced Reciprocity

IN BALANCED reciprocity exchanges involve two persons or groups and two or more things to be exchanged immediately or within stipulated time. Here the consideration of value of goods in exchange is equally important. Balanced reciprocal exchanges tend to be impersonal and are motivated by the desire or need for certain things. Buying, selling, payment for anything as also the trade

A ↔ B  
fall in this category. Through balanced reciprocity one can get the things in shortage with the things in abundance. Many societies have developed this mode of exchange without the use of money. Economic exchanges involved in Kula ceremony among trobrianders conform to balanced reciprocity.

### Negative Reciprocity

NEGATIVE reciprocity involves attempts to get more, for less, or all for nothing, through intimidation, theft or gambling etc. Here the flow of goods or services may only be in one

A → B  
direction or exchange graph highly skewed in favour of the dominant individual or group.

A NUMBER of factors are responsible for reciprocity. Kinship is of course, the most important one, others being the wealth and rank or prestige. One always prefers to share the things with his kin because they are with him through all ups and downs. Rank difference between people in interaction leads to generalized reciprocity. A Tikopia chief is literally the poorest man in the society because he gives away everything (he has) to the commoners but in turn he is reciprocated with high status and prestige.

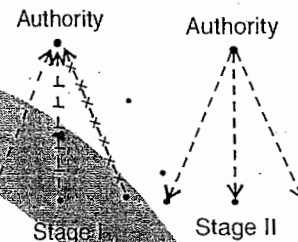
IN SOCIETIES where economic exchanges are based solely on the principle of reciprocity, reciprocity inhibits social conflict. Many such societies, in fact, never have much surplus for the reciprocity to be economic exchange, yet among them it serves a number of other important functions including (as outlined by Sahlin) formal friendship or kinship, group alliances, peace making and marriage transactions. Therefore, though reciprocity does not entail binding of economy by itself, yet where there are no markets, money or taxing authority, reciprocity is the only rule of economic exchanges. Reciprocity is the simplest and the earliest kind of exchange. The mutual give and take obligation between those who have some kind of social bond (to strengthen this bond) forms the basis of this system. Reciprocal exchanges may be economic in nature but these are also symbolic of relationship between the two parties involved. In already established relationship of inequality the ab-

sence of parity in gift giving is not surprising.

## Redistribution

REDISTRIBUTION, as defined by Polanyi is the systematic movement of goods towards an administrative center and their re-allotment by the authorities at the center. Obviously redistribution requires a central authority. Though redistribution is present in one form or the other, in all societies; it is the characteristic of societies with chief or other hierarchically specialized officials and agencies. In most Malanesian societies reciprocity in exchanges is a rule while redistribution serves only one aspect of political order. Murphy contends that "societies in which principle mode of exchange is reciprocity tend to be egalitarian, but redistributive societies are always hierarchical.

This refers to a kind of exchange in which goods flow in from producers to some central authority or person and are then reallocated for certain purposes throughout the society". The Inca empire of Peru has been known to be the most efficient in collection of taxes and methods of control. In modern welfare states, redistribution plays a very important role in the activities of the government.



### Redistribution

THE major function of redistribution (though not always) is to bring equality to most members of the society and different societies have evolved various means in achieving this end. The best example of its kind is the Potlatch of Kwakiutl. A Tikopia chief may retain nothing what he gets as gifts and redistribute everything to the members of the society depending on their needs. Contrarily among the Bunyoro of western Uganda the redistribution of precious items is limited to higher ranks in the society whereas commoners get only a token form of what they give to the chief. Among the Buin of Melanesia the chief gives almost similar appearance as other members do. Though he owns most of the pigs, everyone almost equally shares in the consumption of wealth.

### POTLACH

POTLACH (meaning to give) is the characteristic of four Amerindian cultures namely Kwakiutl, Tlingit, Haida and Isimshian and explained by Rohner & Rohner as "the most important public ceremony for announcement of significant events and claiming of hierarchical names, hereditary rights and privileges. Such announcements or claims are always accompanied by the giving of gifts from a host to all the guests. The guests are invited to witness and later on validate a host's claims and each receives gifts of varying worth according to his rank. The ceremony, from the economists' point of view is a total waste of resources which is accompanied not only by extravagant display but also large-scale destruction of food grains, precious metals, blankets and (in ancient times) slaves into the fire. But the anthropologists, time and again, have justified the ceremony from the point of view of the people themselves; for abolition of Potlatch would mean total disruption of communication between different segments of the society and complete loss of social life for the people (potlaching groups).

## Market Exchange

IN THE anthropological discussion of this concept we must first distinguish clearly the market as 'market place' or physical

setting for the exchange of goods, from the principle of market exchange, which is that of the exchange of goods at prices determined by forces of supply and demand. Thus market principle is not the dominant or exclusive mode of exchange, and similarly market exchange may take place without being localized in a specific market-place. Markets may exist in societies where the predominant mode of exchange is reciprocity or redistribution, but in these cases their functioning and socio-economic context is different from that which we may observe in societies where the market principle is dominant.

THE predominance of market exchange in the ceremony is related to growing specialization of occupational and productive roles, to an increase in food surpluses produced by the agricultural sector of the population, and to the correlated development of money. In certain tribal economies money-like valuables are present, such as brass rods among the Tiv or shell money in parts of Melanesia. These are termed 'special purpose' money because their use is more limited and specific than the general purpose money of a market-dominated economy. Thus as Dalton points out, the tambu shell valuables of the Tolai of Papua New Guinea could be said to resemble money in the sense that they were used in a wide range of transactions, could be used for the purchase or sale of all forms of property, and were interchangeable in standard denominations. On the other hand, their central significance as ceremonial valuables and the peripheral function of the traditional market with relation to the economy as a whole means that we cannot fully equate them with modern general purpose money.

IN THE peripheral markets of non-industrial societies market participation is limited to certain specific goals and is not central to the organisation of production in the economy as a whole. Market prices have only a limited influence on the organization of labour and the movement of subsistence goods. Not all goods produced enter into the market—subsistence goods may never be marketed or only a small surplus portion may ever reach the market. At the same time, the 'non-market' functions of the market (ritual social, political and ceremonial) are often of central importance, perhaps of more importance than the economic exchange itself.

MARKETS in peasant societies share some of the characteristics of traditional tribal market, but at the same time display great integration into the regional and national market economy. The peasant market, like peasant society as a whole, displays a double and sometimes contradictory orientation towards subsistence needs within family and community and the need or desire to participate in the wider market system. In peasant as in tribal society, not all goods produced enter into the marketplace, much of what is produced being reserved for family use and for the discharge of obligations of reciprocity with kinsmen and neighbours. In peasant markets too social and ceremonial functions may similarly be very important. Thus in the Andes and in Mesoamerica markets are an important mechanism for regional integration linking local communities which are often ecologically distinct, geographically separated, and specialized according to their technological or craft activities. The market system links these communities to one another and also to regional and urban centres. A swell as serving the needs of the local communities, peasant markets also link these communities by means of the actions and operations of brokers, patrons and middlemen to the regional and national market economy.

THE disadvantageous conditions under which the peasant produces participates in market, due to the small scale of his or her production, the lack of access to credit and other factors related to the marginalization of the peasantry, means that his economy is necessarily on unequal terms. The low prices paid to the producer, together with a series of mechanism of indebtedness invariably associated with the patron-client relationship, maintain the peasant producer in a dependent rela-

tionship and generally unable to produce or market enough to ensure the acquisition of the basic goods which he or she requires from the wider market system. However, this is not to say that peasant producers or those who participate as craftsmen in peasant markets may not under certain circumstances accumulate considerable wealth, and it has been suggested that the economic stability and well being of certain peasant communities tends to be disguised by the fact that in these communities the conspicuous display of wealth is discouraged. AS SAHLINS points out, the integration of tribal hinterlands, like that of peasant communities, into a wider market dominated economy leads to a contradiction between reciprocity and redistribution within the community, and market exchange outside it. Thus he says: "The engagement with the market makes a key minimal demand: that internal community relations permit household accumulation, else the amounts required for external exchange will never be forthcoming. This stipulation must prevail in the face of limited and uncertain production. The fortunate households cannot be responsible for the unfortunate; if internal levelling is encouraged then the external trade relations are simply not sustained. A topic of anthropological enquiry which has received less attention than peasant participation in market systems is the study of the integration of tribal peoples into wider regional and national market systems, under conditions of socio-economic change and development.

ANOTHER characteristic of market systems in pre-industrial economies is the relative autonomy of local marketplaces, lacking an overall regional or national mechanism of co-ordination or fixing of prices from one locality to another. Prices thus depend either upon the vicissitudes of local supply and demand, which itinerant merchants may take advantage of in their travels from market to market, or else upon bureaucratic administration of prices by local authorities.

THE modern market system within capitalism possesses certain distinctive characteristics which set it apart from earlier market systems. One of the most important is its relative independence from other spheres: the market in capitalism functions in relative independence from ceremonial, political or social considerations, since it is a self-regulating mechanism which coordinates commodities (including labour) on a regional, national and worldwide basis. Thus the market in capitalism is much broader than the physical marketplace, embracing all aspects of economic activity. Price fixing in the capitalist market system is likewise more systematic and sensitive to the forces of supply and demand on a large scale. As Sahlins shows, supply and demand mechanisms do affect prices in pre-capitalist and tribal economies, but in more indirect and unsystematic fashion. The ideal type market system within capitalism is one in which there exists perfect competition, so that supply and demand alone account for price variations. However, the system of perfect competition does not occur in reality, though it is an important element of the ideological justification of the free market system. In fact the concentration of productive and distributive activities into the hands of relatively few firms leads to monopolistic tendencies which restrict competition and increase profit. At the same time, all modern governments intervene to some extent in market whether in the fixing of prices or wages (the price of labour), in redistribution of income and wealth by means of taxation, in the control of monopolies, or in provision of goods and services regarded as essential or socially beneficial.

THE discussion on economic institutions remains incomplete without knowing what happens to simple societies when they come in contact with technologically advanced ones? The comments of Lienhardt, in this regard, are very relevant, "When the simple societies enter the modern economic world, their own, forms of wealth are often devalued. They become poor in much of the new world. The impact of a western economy on simpler societies has been accompanied by the beginning of a more wide spread change in the traditional codes and values,

And among the most striking and sometimes painful effects of these changes are those in domestic life, in the central institutions of any society, marriage and family.

### SIMPLE SOCIETIES

EARLY man of old stone age survived by hunting animals and food gathering, by covering his body in animal skin and by taking shelter near the source of water or in cave shelters. It was only in the New stone Age (hardly 10,000 years ago) that man learnt cultivation and for the first time there was surplus of food available that led to the discovery of the uses of pottery. Invention of wheel (potter's wheel first) resulted in man's rapid strides towards civilization.

ALL these developments took place in pre and proto-historic period. During this period man became a settled agriculturist from the early hunter-gatherer. The scene remained virtually unchanged till middle of eighteenth century i.e. till the time man was unaware of the power of steam. Later, large-scale industrialization reduced the man-force in agriculture and brought phenomenon of labour system. Development of communication channel, brought distant communities closer and the concept of modern international trade and cooperation took birth.

DESPITE all these developments in Man's life, many populations even today live through hunting-gathering or shifting cultivation. Such pre-industrial societies, untouched by the modern technological advancement as also the modern system of formal education (in this regard they are pre-literate) are also called simple societies.

### GROWTH OF ECONOMY

AS SAID earlier, agriculture created the problem of storage that was amicably solved by the invention of pottery. Development of cottage industries followed suit. Up to this time the pressure on land because of slow population growth, was negligible and land was not considered valuable or property. The development of cities into trade zones in medieval times gave rise to labour class that got its real connotation only after the industrial revolution of nineteenth century. The twentieth century has witnessed enormous speed of the spread of modern industries (displacing the traditional industries), mechanization, hitech strengthening of labour class, population explosion and unemployment etc. The present century has also seen the development of socialistic economy. The role of middle-man category has become more important than the production or consumption. Capitalism gave rise to economic competition now being countered by the governmental control in economy.

#### Capitalism

PRIMITIVE man, without the concept of real money carried out his economic pursuit of exchange through barter. With increase in exchange, a necessity for some standard was felt and thus precious metals became an important source of money. According to Simmel, 'institution of money had radically changed our whole philosophy of life. It has made us pecuniary in our attitudes, so that everything is evaluated in terms of money, and social contacts have become superficial and cold.'

ON THE advent of industrial revolution Adam Smith propounded four principles namely, Laissez fair policy (implying that individuals pursuing their own interest without any restrictions shall get the best dividends from their efforts), the doctrine of self interest, the theory of competition and the profit motive. Accordingly, a new system of production and property ownership developed leading to capitalism. Capitalism dethroned the traditional economies and evolved the concepts of manufacturing specialization (or greater division of labour) and greater exchanges.

THE modern capitalistic economy is characterized by large scale production, private property, competition and price-control, banking institutions, stocks and shares etc. Evidently, the competition in the production sector can help in keeping a check on price-

rise as also on quality of objects being manufactured. It also increases the range of choice for the consumer. Capitalism has played a significant role in material progress of the world today ensuring greater economic progress and high standard of living. Today social and ritual differences are side-tracked for economic reasons resulting in the end to social stigma attached with socially or ritually poor. Evidently, economic progress is creating class-consciousness subsiding the social differences. But, capitalism is often cursed. It is because capitalism has resulted in widening the gap between the affluent and the workers. It has, through the propagation of materialism, degraded the ethical sense and human values. It breeds greed for wealth, artificial tastes, false prestige etc. Obviously capitalistic economy is not the ideal form of economy.

#### Socialism

AS AN alternative to feudalism of medieval times and the recent capitalism, socialism has become quite popular. In socialistic economy, a concept given by Marx and Engels, each member of socialist society works according to his capacity and gets the returns according to his needs. The scheme is ideal at least on paper but it is not feasible. The human nature as it is, demands at least just share of one's contribution.

EVENTUALLY because of lack of incentive to work more, economy suffers heavily. Obviously the best way out possible is the mixed economy where the private sector has the right to flourish alongside the socialistic base. India is the best example of economy whereby many core-sector industries have been set up by the state without any imminent threat to the private industries.

### PRIMITIVE V/S MODERN ECONOMY

THE primitive and the modern systems of economy differ with respect to production, distribution and the market channels. Primitive economies subsist at primary level (i.e. based on direct exploitation of nature without much modification to the produce). Agriculture here is rather at the level of horticulture. Secondary production activities as also the mining, quite common and important for the development of modern economies, are virtually absent in primitive economy. Primitive economy lacking in true money, has reciprocity as the most popular mode of exchange with redistribution playing the second fiddle. The exchanges are informal and based on face to face interaction or on social values. Markets are the back-bone of modern economy whereby formal transactions through the use of money are carried out whereas these are only peripheral in primitive economy. As seen earlier, markets in the primitive economy serve more important functions other than the economic which is not true for modern economy. Again barter is the only known trade activity in primitive economies unlike modern economy where several specialized agencies exist to carry out this job. In simple societies, social ends are more important than the economic bargains; the same is not true for the modern economies.

### FUNCTIONS OF ECONOMY

PRODUCTION and distribution of goods and services is, of course, the prime function of economy. Besides, economy serves many important social and political functions. Role of peripheral markets in simple societies has already been discussed. In this light the role of economy in social and political sphere can also be understood. Almost everywhere, economy of economic status (not always measure through or associated with the possession of wealth) lends credentials to social status too. Economy is an important factor in making, maintenance and breaking of social relationships. Economy, at least the modern economy, directs the changes in value system, attitudes and other cultural aspects. Besides, economy is also an important tool for political power and vice-versa. In today's world surviving on the exchanges among different societies, economic sanctions (like withdrawal of trade relations, refusing loans etc.)



can be used as an important sanction at least by the powerful lobbies of the world today.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF TRIBAL ECONOMIES

AS DISCUSSED earlier, the activities which help securing a man his physical survival are the economic. The basic function of an economic system is to maximize satisfaction of the unlimited needs through the limited resources. Some general characteristic of the Indian tribal economic system are as follows:

### 1. Subsistence level

THE method of exploitation of nature is crude. It is done without any efficient aid of the modern technology with the result, the bare minimum necessities are met with considerable amount of difficulty and wastage. The question of surplus does not arise except in some cases (Naga, Khasi, Mizo).

### 2. Role of money and concept of property

MONEY as a medium of exchange, store and measurement of value does not play an important role in the tribal economy. Naturally, the concept of property and higher economic status among them is different than those of the non-tribals. In a tribal society the notion of property is closely related to the display and expenditure of wealth rather than to accumulation. Among the Naga, the importance of giving feast of merit is supreme in the acquisition of the prestige role in the chieftainship. Land, personal effects and certain intangible rights are, however, owned as property. Inter and intra-tribal relations are generally based on barter and exchange, e.g., among most of the tribal communities the surplus produce is exchanged with the other day-to-day necessities of life. In mixed villages, where the non-tribals belonging to different occupational caste groups live with the tribals, barter and exchange play more important roles, e.g., in a mixed village of Chhotanagpur, the Oraon, Munda and Ho who are settled agriculturists, exchange their paddy with those non-tribal co-villagers who produce earthen pots, baskets, ironware etc.

BUT with the impact of modern forces, like industrialisation, westernisation, urbanisation and many others including the flow of the modern goods through the tribal market, money economy has gradually started replacing the barter one to the extent that they have understood the benefits of and using in some cases, the institutions like banking and credit connected with money.

### 3. Profit

IN ECONOMIC dealings, the profit motive has been found to be absent. On the other hand, there is a sense of mutual obligation, extension of free or cost help and labour and sharing of each others problem which also are undergoing transformation.

### 4. Production-consumption Pattern

BY AND large, the economic activities of the tribal people are directed towards the manufacture of consumers' goods rather than the Producers' ones and the same are consumed rather than deposited or hoarded or exchanged in trades. Food, clothing and articles required for constructing their shelter are their primary consumers' goods. The modern goods, like, the cosmetic, torch, bicycle, radio, transistor, crockery, etc. are gradually being accepted by them as the necessities of life for which most of them aspire although the rate of innovation, internal or external or induced, is very low and very few have opted for a quick progress. Stability and uniformity result also from the simplicity and uniformity of the techniques used.

### 5. Role of weekly market

IN PLACE of a regular market one comes across weekly or bi-weekly markets Haats even in a remotest tribal area which play important roles in satisfying not only their economic needs but also in the satisfaction of social, cultural, religious and political needs of the people. So far as its economic aspect is concerned, a market provides a tribal with an opportunity to sell or barter his produce, either collected from the forest or grown in the field or his handicrafts and buy or barter his other necessities, like, kerosene oil, chillies, salt, spices, clothes and many other modern goods brought by the non-tribal shopkeepers. As stated above, a visit to a weekly market may not necessarily mean sale or purchase by an individual. While some may satisfy economic needs alone, others may tag it with many other types of needs (socio-political, etc.). Generally speaking, a sense of competition and monopoly, is absent from these weekly tribal markets.

### 6. Co-operation in economic activities

GENERALLY, the Indian tribal communities are co-operative. Co-operation, at various levels and on various occasions is reflected differently in different tribes. Here, we shall confine ourselves to the discussion of co-operation with regard to their economic pursuits.

A DISCUSSION on division of labour has revealed that all the members of a tribal family co-operate with the head of the family with regard to the satisfaction of various economic needs. It goes without saying that a wife is an important economic asset who is always ready to co-operate with her husband in every economic activity.

ABOVE the family level, we notice co-operation at the kin level amongst many of the Indian tribes, e.g., the Munda, Santal, Ho, Oraon, Maler, Poroja and many others. Among these tribes even after a clear separation with regard to immovable property, a man, generally co-operates with his brothers and other secondary and tertiary kins in economic pursuits, e.g., construction of a house, and major agricultural operations.

ABOVE the kin level one notices co-operation at the clan level, e.g., among the Naga all the members belonging to a particular clan co-operate with each other in the major economic activities. This statement is further strengthened when one comes across a cooperative farming organised by the members of Luthui clan in a Tangkhul Naga (Manipur) village. The profit made from this cooperative farming is spent over the higher education of the children belonging to this clan.

AT THE village level, irrespective of kin or clan considerations, a group cooperates with needy person in the village in the construction of his house or other major agricultural operations. This type of cooperation is very active in those villages where the institution of youth dormitory is existing which has been discussed in the issues detailing tribal India.

ON THE conclusion of the work, the man who receives help (locally known as Maddat among the Oraon) has to, as per traditional custom, give a feast which includes the rice-beer as

a major item. This is locally known as Pacha among the Oraon.

IN CERTAIN cases, economic cooperation is also observed at the inter-tribal level. The limited exchange of goods among the Toda, Kota and Badaga of southern India is the befitting example of this type of cooperation. The Toda producing milk, exchange their surplus with the Badaga and Kota from whom they get grain and ironware respectively. Likewise, the Badaga receive ironware from the Kota in lieu of food grain.

### Tribal Arts and Crafts

AN ART is one of the primary social institutions attempting to answer symbolically the riddles of life, as religion does spiritu-

ally. This quest man pursues constantly in the desire to alleviate his over-present fear of death. The sociological importance of art and crafts lies in their evidence of a collective mind, which unites the creating artist through the artwork with the receptive audience. An art by means of conscious irrationalization effects the eternalization of a given culture.

AN ART is a skill, technique, manipulation, organized, communicable and culturally transmitted. Practical or applied arts are distinguished from the fine arts (dance, drama, poetry, architecture, painting, sculpture, and music) which have, in common, the extension of human experience through the sharing of imagination and of feeling. An art is distinct from ritual in that the latter undertakes changing the course of 'nature' directly by magic or indirectly by influencing supernatural persons supposed to be in control of the relevant phenomena. Again, an art is distinguished from games in virtue of its objectives of aesthetic communication and its conventions.

THUS, an art is the name of beautiful expressions of external circumstances after being its reaction within. This beautiful expression may be in prose, poetry, music, dance, etc. But when the expression takes some form, plastic or graphic art emerges. While a plastic art is a three dimensional object like, toy, clay-

modelling, sculpture (stone, bone and metal), basket, ornament, etc., a graphic art has two dimensions, length and breadth, and includes painting, tattooing, etc.

THERE are various theories with regard to the origin of an art. To some it is for art's sake while to others it is the work of children, still to others, it is an evolution from realism to symbolism and yet to others, it is the strong feeling to give vent to the emotional expression in some form.

TRIBAL people of India are not exceptions to the above propositions. With varying intensity, they have their own art in some form or the other. Although it may not be compared with that of 'Mona Lisa' of Leonardo de Vinci, it has a definite impact of their geographical, ecological and cultural milieu. Man is the product of his environment, and so is the art. Tribal art also finds a better expression through their crafts, which are their workmanship or aesthetic-oriented self-expression. These are mainly in the form of plastic and graphic arts which one can see in the wooden and clay sculpture and toys, engraved doors, basketry and a number of implements and instruments which they prepare. Moreover, their art is also reflected in a number of weaving patterns on their clothes.



## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

MOST human beings have the tendency to behave differently from the commonly accepted ways. This may be fun-sake, out of frustration or to get easy recognition. Some of this deviant behaviour may be incompatible with the common good and may result in conflict or clash that may ultimately lead to chaos and doom for the society. Each society, therefore to sustain itself, has certain established sets of behavioural rules (which differ from society to society) to be adhered to by all of its members. The social order is thus maintained.

MANY societies have an elaborate system of officials to enforce the established rules for behaviour but there are others who lack such paraphernalia. Yet it is unwise to assume that they are totally anarchical societies. In them, some kind of stability at the tribal level or national level is maintained through some kind of formally or informally constituted political authority that assures some kind of conformity to the accepted norms of those societies.

ACCORDING to Beattie, "when we speak of political organisation, we are thinking of, in particular, the maintenance of ordered relations between different categories and groups of people, over a social field wider than that which is implied by each of the component categories or groups taken separately. This wider social field may be what we call a society or (following Emmet) 'a social aggregate' or it may entail relations between societies, whether these are tribal groups, nations or states. Thus the internal social relations of any group which is being studied also fall within the sphere which it is useful to call 'political'.

AT THIS juncture it is important to differentiate between two units of social control, namely political organization and law. Political organization usually refers to certain kinds of social relations within a particular area, and this territorial reference is generally taken to be an important part of the definition of a political unit. When, on the other hand, we speak of law and social sanctions we are thinking primarily of the behaviour of individual people and of the relationship between them and of the social factors which, by and large, ensure their conformity to the accepted rules of the society. So the difference between the two fields is mainly of emphasis: Political institutions must have a legal or sanctional aspect, just as some roles of interpersonal behaviour and some social norms have political implications."

THE above lengthy statement is only somewhat true when we talk of our own society, the statement is a fact but territorial reference of political organization is not a must and many societies even today lack a defined territory. Similarly, as we shall see later, simple societies lack any reference to law and there social order is maintained through informal or somewhat formal social sanctions.

A STRAIGHT forward, working definition of the term 'political' one which may be applied to all societies, is therefore not easy to frame, for the differences among forms of political organization are great. In general, we can say that the term 'political' refers to customary behaviours and to beliefs and attitudes which pertains to policy-making and its execution (creating and maintaining social order) and to conflict resolution (minimizing social disorder). These customs are initiated by or on behalf of, distinct territorial or social groups that may range from neighborhoods and hamlets to villages, towns, cities, regions, nations, and even groups of nations; to lineages, clans, phratries, moieties or even groups of tribes.

EVERY political organisation can be analytically separated into two basic components: a system for maintaining internal order

and means of regulating external relations. In very small-scale societies both of these functions are taken care of within the context of the kinship system. Authority based on seniority within the kin group and recognition of a particular member's special leadership ability (in hunting, in finding the right words to sum up both sides' positions in a dispute and to develop consensus on its proper settlement) are often all there is to allocating decision-making authority. And most of the time the exercise of even such limited leadership as this may not be necessary. Cultural homogeneity, custom, continuous face-to-face interaction, pressure for conformity, fear of ridicule, avoidance of the dangerously divisive effect of conflict, and the threat of supernatural punishment all combine to assure that day-to-day life can go on without calling upon any of the local "leaders" for direction required to organize a group hunt, to intervene in a quarrel, to lead a raid, or to mobilize the group for defense, is inevitably transitory. Because their authority is not continually necessary, there is no way such intermittent leaders can ever consolidate and perpetuate their temporary power.

USUALLY the considerable increases in population size and in socio-economic complexity that come with the higher level of productivity made possible by farming or herding are the conditions necessary to foster the emergence of political organization as structurally separate system, increasingly independent of kinship. With technological growth and greater diversification of economic and social roles, more trade, the possibility of differential accumulation of wealth, the proliferation of special interest groups (landlords and peasants, artisan and tradesmen, the poor and the rich), the political picture changes radically. The administration of society by legislation, coercive law enforcement, diplomacy, and organized warfare becomes the full-time tasks of leaders who collectively comprise a system that is no longer based on kinship and has become a government.

THE development of political anthropology has been influenced by political science in much the same way that economic anthropology has been affected by economics. Translation of the method and theory of political science into anthropologically usable terms requires that the culture-bound perspectives of scholars mostly familiar with Euro-American political structures be replaced with a model that takes into account the far wider range of variation observable both among contemporary non-Western peoples and from a look at the evolutionary development of the political system from the prototype of the semi-autonomous family band to such multinational entities as the United Nations.

AS WELL as being culture-bound, political science has also been nonscientifically normative: too ready to apply ethnocentric judgments about good and bad political forms to the systems of all peoples, including many whose cultural goals are entirely different from our own. As a result, for many the first step in political anthropology entails unlearning, letting go of the notion that those familiar political forms we have been conditioned to regard as superior are not necessarily "good" for everyone; in fact, they may often be seriously maladaptive.

DIFFERENT societies the world over have different kinds of political organization; but for simplification of the groupings of diverse kinds of political organizations of various societies the world over, anthropologists have devised the centralized and uncentralized scheme of classification. Uncentralized societies are the ones which lack a single person as the supreme authority and which generally have adhered to the tradition of social sanctions because of the lack of specialized personnel with



authority to impose norms. Centralized societies, as the name implies, have centralized authority who governs, rules or dictates. Modern state is the extreme (and not yet so) ideal form of centralization.

## UNCENTRALIZED (STATELESS) SOCIETIES

ANTHROPOLOGISTS recognize two broad categories of uncentralized societies, those organized into bands and others organized at the tribal level. The latter may again be subdivided on the basis of their respective specialized features, as dealt later.

### Band Organization

SOCIETIES with band organization (e.g. Bushmen of Africa and Australian aborigines) live at the lowest level of subsistence economy of hunter-food gatherer-fishermen type. Here each society is divided into small groups (bands) of six to ten families each. Each band comprises of individuals closely related through kinship bonds. In seasons of favourable conditions a band is in full strength but in condition of scarce food supply, the band breaks up to be reunited in future. The bands are very loosely bound to each other with practically no interaction with or interference from such other bands.

THE band in such societies is the largest group that acts as a political unit.

SOCIETIES with band organization have a number of features. First and foremost, such societies are generally at the hunter-gatherer (or collecting) level of food-getting technology. This means that they have to "find" food by prodding it out of the earth, taking it out of the water, or hunting it down, wherever nature has placed it. Consequently, bands are always nomadic. BANDS are typically small in size and societies with bands typically have a low population density. Julian Steward has estimated that population density in band societies ranges from a maximum of about 1 person per 5 square miles to a minimum of 1 person per 50 or so square miles. The primary factor determining the exact size of a band is probably its relative productivity and the sort of food-collecting technology it employs.

SOCIETIES with band organization are generally egalitarian; all individuals of a particular age-sex category have equal access to prestige and resources. Typically, the concept of private property is alien to band society. Thus, among hunting and gathering peoples, sharing of virtually all resources is the rule. Lack of fixed authority is characteristic of political organization at the band level.

IN A BAND, whatever authority exists rests in the hands of leader—a person with proven wisdom and ability for hunting or food-gathering. The leader or headman is more of a symbolic rather than real leadership. The decisions are generally taken by consensus among the elder members of a band. If the dispute between two members is apparent and the defaulter known, the latter is brought to book and the matter is considered settled. In intricate cases without solution in sight, some alternate arrangements are made. Eskimo tradition of 'song duel' and the 'ritual spear throwing' of Australian aborigines have served their purpose in maintaining order within the band.

IN CASE of inter-band disputes, as the matter is more serious, serious efforts are warranted in checking them. Generally the defaulter is punished by his own group. If a murder is committed among Australian aborigines, the defaulter is subjected to spear-throwing by the murdered man's kin till the time the defaulter gets injured. Though in physical sense, the revenge is not equal, the dispute is considered settled. All decisions in bands have to be unanimous and not majority ones. Here the qualities of the leader in convincing his band members matter a lot war among the band societies is unknown because it may lead to the danger to the existence of the society itself.

MANY native Americans who first came into contact and conflict with the colonialist invaders of their territories were organized

at the simplest of these three levels of political organization: into bands. As a system the band works well so long as neighboring peoples are similarly organized. But because of its smallness, limited coercive powers of its leaders, and the consequent difficulty of mobilizing and maintaining a large fighting force as a type of political organization the band renders its members particularly vulnerable to conquest by enemies whose more centralized authority systems enable them to muster the winning military strength and to administer their conquests in a way that band organization does not allow.

## TRIBAL ORGANIZATION

SOCIETIES WITH tribal organization are similar to those with band organization in their egalitarian nature, lack of political hierarchies and classes, and informal leadership patterns. However, societies with tribal organization generally are food producers. Population density of tribal societies is generally higher, local groups are generally larger, and the way of life is more sedentary than in the hunter-gatherer band.

WHAT distinguishes tribal from band political organization is the presence of some pan-tribal associations (such as clans and age-sets) which can potentially integrate a number of local groups into a larger whole. Such multilocal political integration, however, is not permanent, and it is informal in the sense that it is not headed by political officials. Frequently, the integration is called into play only when an external threat arises; when the threat disappears, the local groups revert to self-sufficiency. In other words, a tribal society lacks a permanent multilocal political authority.

THE tribal organization can be of three kinds village based, based on age sets or on unilineal descent. Ibo and Yako are the examples of village community type. Here, the whole society is divided into separate village communities who, for the most part are economically independent of each other. Each village or a group of villages has some kind of elected (formally or informally) councils that govern them. In these societies as also among the band societies, it becomes at times futile to speak of society as such because it never has functions applicable to all groupings within the society. The situations for band communities are applicable to the village communities with certain variations.

MASAI and Nandi and other pastoral herders form the other category where the tribal organization is based on age-set categorization. Societies with age-set systems initiate their members either at birth or about the age of puberty. Anyone who refuses to become a member of an age set will remain "disfranchised" and be excluded from all significant political decisions. The most common age-set divisions are childhood, junior warriorhood, senior warriorhood, junior elderhood and senior elderhood. Four major functions of the age-set system are

- (a) providing a means of establishing corporate groups, whose members while they are in warrior grade, may form a powerful standing army
- (b) providing for formal transition of individuals from one clearly marked social status into another
- (c) providing a means of establishing social contact, even some sense of tribal unity and cohesion, over a wider range than would otherwise be possible
- (d) providing for the organized exercise of at least some political authority. It can well be understood that this kind of age set categorization among the societies or groups always on the move in search of new pastures that provides for a quick standing army, is the innate need of these societies. Frequently, pan-tribal associations are based upon kinship ties. Clans are the most common pan-tribal kinship groups. In some societies, clan elders have the right to try to settle disputes between clansmen or to attempt to punish wrongs committed against clansmen by members of different clans.

THE segmentary lineage system is another type of pan-tribal integration based upon kinship, although societies with segmentary lineage systems are less common than societies with clans. The whole society (tribe) is composed of segments or parts, each similar to the others in structure and function. Every local segment belongs to a hierarchy of lineages, each one stretching farther and farther back genealogically. The hierarchy of lineages, then, unites the many segments into larger and larger genealogical groups. The closer two groups are genealogically, the greater their general closeness. In the event of a dispute between members of different segments, people more closely related to one contestant than to another take the side of their nearest kinsmen. The Tiv of northern Nigeria offer a classic example of a segmentary lineage system.

NUER and Bedouin are other classic example of tribal organization where the society is divided into various unilineal kingroups. Such groups are antagonistic towards each other and harmonious relationships between them are maintained through the matrilineal relations of one group in others. Here each lineage is centralized unit but society as a whole has no centralized head (centralization is therefore a matter of degree). AMONG such societies is prevalent an institution, popularly known among anthropological circles as 'blood feud' that requires a strong sense of solidarity. This institution, Beattie remarks, "is not only effective as a social sanction (for fear of incurring it may be a powerful incentive to good behaviour), but also it may have considerable importance as the means through which intergroup hostility is expressed and the essential values of group awareness and identity reinforced. When these values, cease to be permanent, the blood feud decrease in importance and ultimately disappears altogether. There are many formerly lineage-based societies, which through conquest or through the emergence into dominance of one of its constituent lineages, have changed into more or less centralized ones. When this happens as the central authority increases its strength, the blood feud may come to be at first permissible (i.e. it may only be carried out with the ruler's permission), and then proscribed altogether." Among such societies inter-personal and intergroup relationships are conceived in terms of one's lineage and lineage loyalties provide a framework for the territorial relations also.

### CENTRALIZED (STATE) SOCIETIES

THE change from uncentralized to centralized is not a dramatic one; larger size of the group is an important gradient of such kind of stratification. The centralized societies differ from the uncentralized ones on two accounts. Firstly, the whole society is divided into at least two classes, the privileged and the under privileged, and secondly, the authority has cornered all or almost all use of physical force.

THE gradual evolution of political organization is a function of socio-economic processes. Large size and the problem of storage in horticulturist and agriculturist societies results in great need for the use of physical force. At times, ambitious small groups too, because of their hunger for power and authority, may overpower structurally similar groups resulting in centralization. The change-over in the socio-economic and political organization, if evolutionary, takes a long span of time.

AS SAID earlier, centralization is only a matter of degree, where the centralized authority may or may not be political in nature (e.g. there may be a powerful ritual head performing, if at all, various functions that can be termed political). Secondly, the range and scope of such authority may or may not be limited. A third point is regarding the mode of transfer of authority (ascribed or achieved), grounds of its acceptance and the restraints on it, if any.

VARIOUS kinds of authority (political, ritual and secular) have the tendency of adopting additional roles. Secondly, the head can not be always omnipotent (though he may have all the reigns of power) as he, even in the simplest of the societies,

has to delegate some or many of his powers to his subordinates (who in turn, may further delegate them to their respective subordinates). Thirdly, 'ascribed' and 'achieved' transfer of authority may not be as simple as it seems. Often in places where there is the tradition of ascribed transfer from father to son(s), the eldest son may not be considered worthy of the place. In such cases in such societies, the opinion of commoners (who are to be governed) can alter matters considerably. In societies where transfer of authority is an achieved status, loyalty to the authority and/or efficiency form important criteria.

THE power of the rulers are restricted, as Beattie argues, 'not only by the fact that he has to delegate some of it, but also there are always important social institutions which tend to prevent him from using such powers as he retains for himself... Many rulers undergo ceremonies of oath taking and admonition when they are appointed, and one effect of these is to publicly impress on them what is required of them'.

### PRIMITIVE STATE

CHIEFDOM (or primitive state) organization differs from tribal organization in several important ways. Whereas tribes have associations that can informally integrate more than one community, chiefdoms have some formal authority structure integrating multicomunity political units. Chiefdom societies generally are more densely populated, and their communities are more permanent, partly as a consequence of their generally higher economic productivity. Societies with chiefdoms may or may not be politically unified under one chief. Most chiefdom societies are composed of more than one multi-community political unit, each headed by a chief or, less commonly, by a council.

### STATE

THE state is a typical feature of the centralized societies of today. Modern state is only a recent phenomenon. Previously, most societies were more or less uncentralized or at the most governed or ruled by feudal authorities. Still at this juncture, the remarks of Murdock are very relevant to quote. In his words, "Ninety-nine percent of... (the period) that man has inhabited this earth, he lived, thrived and developed without any true government, whatever, and that as late as 100 years ago half the people of the world not the half population, but half the tribes of nations still ordered their lives exclusively through informal controls without benefit of political institutions. We should also recognize that political control has one fundamental weakness which man has tried for hundred centuries to master or correct with only partial success. This weakness is the fact that the possession of power inevitably engenders a tendency to employ it for selfish ends, for exploitation rather than service". While Murdock, in his statement, speaks of the limitations in State, in a way he has also commented on the gradual evolution of societies from uncentralized to gradual centralization leading to the formation of the state. Though state highlights the nature of man with respect to the power he has, social scientists in general trace its development in terms of social evolution.

STATE finds its expression in the government which is the ultimate authority in matters relating to social control. State is thus an agency for the benefit for the community. It is always endowed with the coercive authority and use of physical force for achieving its aims. A state, therefore, has a chain of officers in hierarchical order with government at the top.

A STATE is neither a community nor a society. It is the social organization of a society, and differs from it structurally and functionally. Whenever there is a conflict between the two, society has an upper hand. In case of some serious conflict between political organization and social norms or cultural values, the people may overthrow the government or change the nature of State (e.g. from feudalism to capitalism or to socialism), which is, by its nature, incapable of changing cultural

values and public sentiments.

THE four essential elements of state are: territory, population, government and sovereignty. Much has already been said regarding the territorial nature of state. Population is, of course an important element of state but its strength lies in quality and not in quantity. Uncontrolled increase in population can and does create some serious problems for the state. Government is the functional unit of state responsible for maintenance of social order, welfare measures and other important functions. The State is the ultimate authority (sovereign) and no appeals can be admitted against it. The State is a special organ of a community or society created by the latter for its own benefits. Here, one must hasten to add that State is an association, a part of the society and not the society itself. It is however an association with a difference because it is sovereign and because its membership is compulsory.

THE government is the functional or operational unit of a state. Aristotle has classified the government into Monarchy, i.e. rule of one person the king or the chief; Aristocracy, i.e. the rule of a few privileged; and the Polity or the rule of many. These three forms of government may give rise to three perverted forms of Tyranny, Oligarchy and Democracy respectively whereby democracy is the spoiled form of polity. Today, however, two broad categories of government generally accepted are the totalitarianism (with classic example of many communist states) and democracy. In former, the state is controlled by a few while in latter the real power resides in the hands of people in general.

THE bureaucracy is the situation where power resides in the hands of officials. According to Weber, "It is a system of administration characterized by expertness, impartiality and the absence of humanity". Obviously, bureaucracy may be termed as the administration with strict, mechanical functioning on the basis of rules and regulations. In a bureaucracy is found the set of (or many sets of) hierarchically arranged officials with specific or overlapping responsibilities. Recent industrialization has given philip to bureaucratization of the world. The good word bureaucracy as suggested by Weber has today become a dirty word because it has not only resulted in the loss of human values in administration but it also has resulted in red-tapism, inflexibility of attitude and creation of a new white-collar class.

THE classification of types of political organization into band, tribe, chiefdom (or primitive state) and state implies an evolutionary trend from simpler to more complex forms and from small-scale local autonomy to large-scale regional unification. It also implies a trend from a few temporary and informal political leaders to large numbers of permanent, specialized political officials and from the absence of political power to a monopoly of public force by a central authority. It has been suggested that this evolutionary trend in political institutions may be associated with similar trends in other social realms. These are

1. **TECHNOLOGY** : from food collection (hunting and gathering) to intensive food production (agriculture and animal husbandry).
2. **POPULATION** : from small, local groups to large communities, and from low to greater population density.
3. **SOCIAL STATUS** : from egalitarian society to rank society and finally to class-differentiated society.
4. **ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION** : from major emphasis on reciprocity in the distribution of goods and services to redistribution, and finally to market or commercial exchange, using money as the principal medium of exchange.

THESE suggested associations seem to be confirmed by the available cross-cultural evidence. With regard to the relation between the level of subsistence technology and political complexity, a cross-cultural study employing a small random sample of societies found that the greater the importance of agriculture in a society, the larger the population which is politically unified and the greater the number and types of political officials. A massive cross-cultural survey reports a similar trend;

the more intensive the agriculture, the greater the likelihood of state organization; and conversely, societies with no more than local political institutions are likely to depend upon hunting, gathering, and fishing. With regard to community size, M. Ember's study also suggests that the larger the leading community, the wider the range of political officials in the society. Textor presents a similar finding. He notes that societies with state organization tend to have cities and towns, whereas those with only local political organizations are more likely to have communities with an average population of less than 200 persons. Cross-cultural research also tends to confirm that societies with higher levels of political integration are more likely to exhibit social differentiation, especially in the form of class distinctions.

CLEARLY, the data indicate that several factors are associated with political development, but exactly why changes in political organization occur is not yet satisfactorily understood.

THE state and the stateless societies can be differentiated on the basis of territory, social organization (composition), locus (loci) of control as also the nature of control. State societies have a fixed and well marked territory whereas in stateless societies the territory is loosely defined and may be changing. State societies consist of many heterogeneous groups, communities, classes and regions but stateless societies comprise of fewer homogeneous groups. Unlike the state societies, all members of a stateless society work for themselves and specialization in work is the minimum. State societies are centralized with elaborate system of subordinate officials forming bureaucracy. Stateless societies, governed by elders and/or chiefs comprise of autonomous communities or associations. In stateless societies leadership is temporary (mainly timely) and/or rotatory but a state is governed by full-time officials controlled by a single king or president. All state societies have a written or codified law and the authority to use coercive force lies in the hands of the state. In stateless societies, on the other hand, the social order is maintained through the influence of leader/elders, customs and informal sanctions. Stateless societies more often have a ritual head and main function is maintenance of social order. Besides the maintenance of social order, welfare measures and redistribution are the other very important functions of a state.

## LAW AND JUSTICE IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

UNTIL now we were dealing with the structural aspects of social order and its maintenance. Hereafter, we shall discuss the more pragmatic aspect of it. As said earlier, there are many societies who lack the specialized agencies to enforce norms. In true sense, therefore, law does not exist in such societies and the social order is maintained through what we call social sanctions. A social sanction is an institution which takes care that the persons occupying certain roles conform to the norms and expectations associated with these roles. Sanctions can be viewed from two angles, firstly, as the members of the society themselves see them, as a system of ideas which are effective in preventing people from breaking the rules. People, according to Beattie, "generally tend to avoid behaviour which they believe will entail painful consequences for themselves". Secondly, what actually happens when a norm is breached; because as remarked by Hlewelyn and Hoebel, "it is the case of trouble which makes, breaks, twists or flatly establishes a rule, an institution, an authority".

## RECIPROCITY AS A SANCTION

MALINOWSKI, through his study of Trobriand Islanders (in his book named crime and custom in savage society shows that "a Trobriander conforms to the rules which govern social relationships because he knows that if he obliges others, they are more likely to oblige him. Putting it negatively, if you do not what is expected of you in regard to other people, you are likely to find that others will not do as you expect and wish them to do in



regard to you". In other words, the threat of withdrawal of reciprocity acts as a strong negative sanction. But it is only one of a number of sanctions. Here one must not forget that all aspects of life in simple societies are governed by the reciprocity as a rule; and the term reciprocity includes such relations in the social, economic, political and the ritual spheres.

### Social Sanctions

REDCLIFFE BROWN defines a social sanction as 'a reaction on the part of a society or considerable number of its members to a mode of behaviour which is thereby approved or disapproved'. If the mode of behaviour is approved then the sanction is positive; if it is disapproved, it is negative. Prizes, titles, fame, decoration for public service and the good opinion of one's neighbours are all well known examples of positive sanctions that emphasize the behaviour worth imitation. Negative sanctions, on the other hand, underline what one must not do for doing the undesired may almost always bring in some kind of penalty for the doer. People behave in the desired way not because of the lure of positive sanctions but because of the fear of negative sanctions looming larger over everybody's head. In other words, it is the negative sanctions that ensure conformity to the accepted ways of behaviour and when we talk of sanctions we are generally referring to the negative sanctions. REDCLIFFE BROWN further classified negative sanctions into the categories of organized and diffused. Organized sanctions are definite, regulated and recognised procedures directed against persons whose behaviour is socially disapproved; diffuse sanctions are spontaneous and unorganized; usually expressing the general disapproval of the community or of a significant part of it. Legal sanctions (or law) are the organized negative sanctions backed by a constituted authority with power to enforce its decisions and the most important negative sanctions are those comprising criminal law. Clubs, professional groups, churches etc. also have organized ways of dealing with unwarranted behaviour through organized negative sanctions. Informal societies, at times, have informal courts without the backing of physical force and yet they are effective in maintenance of social order with enough success. Their decisions are generally backed by the diffuse sanctions from a major part of the society; sometimes, they exist along with the formal courts. Among Bunyoro, for example, the disputes between fellow villagers are often settled by informal groups of neighbours with traditional rights to impose a penalty on the party judged to be in wrong. The penalty is invariably in the form of payment of beer and meat that must be brought to the successful litigant's house on the specified day.

DIFFUSE sanctions, though small scale, generally represent the community sentiment as a whole. It is therefore difficult to differentiate them from the organized ones and the intermediates between the two are also not uncommon. The Kamba of Kenya had a custom called *king'ole* whereby, with the approval of elders, a thief or a sorcerer might be put to death by a group of fellow villagers assembled on the occasion. In an old Spanish custom, the culprits were penalized with the choicest abuses late in the night. Such sanctions (called *stingal* sanctions by Redcliffe-Brown) through the fear of being laughed at or public mockery are very powerful among the societies where honour and shame are the important values.

WITCHCRAFT and sorcery beliefs too act as a powerful diffuse negative sanctions. Only the persons authorized by the society can practise them. A high-headed person can however be charged with being a sorcerer or a witch and hence got rid of. Among the Nyakyuse of Tanzania the practitioner of witchcraft and sorcery, generally the headman, can cause a person (whose behaviour is disapproved) to become ill.

RITUAL sanctions are the diffuse negative sanctions which come into play as a reaction, not of the members of the society but of the supernatural powers, i.e. the ghosts, spirits and other non-human forces and powers. According to Beattie, "ritual

sanctions include many forms of religious belief, whether these imply reference to a god or gods with power to punish, either in this life or after it, or to the power of ancestral or other ghosts which may visit injury on living persons who act in disapproved ways. Among many African people the ghosts of the dead lineage members are believed to attach high importance to the maintenance of good relations among the living members of lineage. In such societies a disease is often diagnosed as being due to failure of brothers to live near one another as they ought, or to lineage members neglecting to assemble at appropriate for sacrifice to the ancestors.

BEYOND the organized-diffuse dichotomy, Redcliffe-Brown has classified social sanctions into primary and secondary sanctions. Primary sanctions involve action by the whole community (whether the action is organized or not) or by its authorized representatives. The sanctions contained in criminal law are the primary ones. Secondary sanctions, on the other hand, involve action by a particular person or group against a person or group within the society. Yet, here the action is initiated by a group against the other without the regard to higher authority. The blood feud is a characteristic secondary sanction. The danger that a man may involve his kin in unwanted hostilities may serve to distract him from homicide. Blood feud is based on the principle of like for the like, so much so that among the Barbers of North Africa, the requirement of exact equivalence demands that the person killed in revenge must be of exact standing as the original victim. It is evident that what is sought in blood feud is not to punish the guilty but to restore a disrupted balance.

FROM the foregoing it becomes clear that in societies where legitimate authority is not backed by the use of force, there are alternate mechanisms to deal with the crime and each society does its best not to encourage the undesired ways of behaviour.

### CIVIL LAWS IN SIMPLE SOCIETIES

THERE could be no coherent social life unless the social relationships, which bind people together were atleast to some degree orderly, institutionalized, predictable. To maintain an orderly system of social relationships people have to be subjected to some degree of compulsion. In every society therefore, some rules, some kinds of constraints on people's behaviour are acknowledged and on the whole adhered to.

THESE sets of principles which permit the use of force to maintain political and social organization within a territory are termed as 'law'. Law is therefore seen as 'social control through systematic application of the force of politically organized society'. Here one is thinking of law as rule by a superior authority. In this context, one must say that some (simple) societies lack laws because they lack rulers on the western pattern but it would be a mistake to assume that their members live in a state of anarchy; often there are no judges or courts comparable to western pattern but it does not imply a state of lawlessness.

WE SHOULD therefore have a broader definition of law as the above mentioned one fails to account for the maintenance of social order without the use or possibility of use of physical force. This was what Evans Pritchard had in mind when he wrote that the Nuer had 'law'. He defined law in terms of an institution, in terms of the procedures of compensation and reconciliation. A social norms is thus, according to Hoebel, considered legal if its neglect or infraction is regularly met, in threat or in fact, by the application of physical force by an individual or a group possessing the socially recognized privilege of doing so. In this sense, all societies reveal the prevalence of law.

THE distinction between civil and criminal law in simple societies had lead to much confusion. This can however be avoided by making distinction (as advocated by Redcliffe-Brown) between 'private and public delicts'. A deed is a public delict if its occurrence often leads to an organized and regular procedure by the

whole community or by the constituted representatives of social authority, to inflict some hurt or punishment upon the responsible persons. Penal sanction in its basic form therefore, is a reaction by the whole community against the action of one of its members, which offends some sentiment (thus producing a condition of social dysphoria).

IN THE procedure of law of private delicts, on the other hand, a person or a body of persons that has suffered some loss or damage by infringement of recognized rights appeal to a constituted judicial authority who declares some of other person or body of persons within the community to be responsible and rules that the defendant shall give satisfaction to the plaintiff. Such satisfaction may take any form from payment to counter-murder. A private delict is thus an action which is subject mainly to what may be called restrictive sanction. The law of private delicts in simple societies corresponds to civil law of modern times. There are however important differences.

IN PRELITERATE societies, private delicts for the most part are killing, wounding, theft, adultery and failure to clear debts. However, this is not a uniform observation. Societies differ greatly in respect of the emphasis they give to the private and public aspects of delicts. Sometimes, within a community, the same deed may be treated as public delict and sometimes private. For instance, when the social authority rests in chiefs, and offence which would be a private delict if committed against commoner, may be treated as public if committed against a chief.

### SANCTION BEHIND PRIMITIVE CIVIL LAW

ALL simple societies deal with private delicts by creating certain institutionalized norms and set procedures. The purpose of these institutionalized ways is to give satisfaction to the injured person and inflict punishment upon the person responsible for injury. These are frequently supported by social sanctions. The sanctions concerned with private delicts are secondary sanctions as against primary ones which involve action by whole community or by its authority authorized representatives. Secondary sanctions involve only the action of a particular person or group of people in regard to another person or group of people within the society. Though this action is private since it is primarily the concern of the persons or groups involved, it is nevertheless carried out with the general approval and concurrence of the community as a whole. For everyone recognized that the action is appropriate and correct in the circumstances. So, these sanctions, no less than the primary ones, involve the moral approval of the community but only in a secondary sense, for they are primarily the concern of individuals or groups who may initiate action without regard to higher authority. The civil law, as it is understood in western countries, is a secondary sanction for, a civil case is not usually initiated by the community or its official representatives (the state), primary action is taken by the injured party.

MODERN criminal and civil law are derived from the laws of public and private delicts respectively. However, acts which are now regarded as characteristically public delicts such as murder and theft in modern societies may not be treated so in many simple societies of today. Thus we conclude that civil laws exist in simple societies though in a different form.

### ANOMIE

ANOMIE (literally meaning normlessness) as a term was revived by Durkheim and popularized by Merton (in his book named Social Structure and Anomie). All cases of deviance or deviant behaviour can be studied under the head of Anomie.

THE term of Anomie has been generally applied to the state of mind of individuals regardless of the state of the society. Norms are present in all societies and individuals with deviant behaviour are well aware of these norms.

MERTON has identified two sources of deviance, the first one being the role conflict or more generally conflict of norms. The conflict between cultural values and legal values can easily

bring in anomie. The second cause as defined by Merton is the gap between culturally directed aspirations and the legitimate means to fulfil them, resulting in crime and juvenile delinquency. But various individuals in a social system have different access to illegitimate means and a certain reaction (deviance is 'retreatism'-a kind of passive rejection of the goals of success. Cloward however opines that retreatistic adaptation may arise with considerable frequency among those who are failure in both worlds, conventional and illegitimate alike.

### THE TRADITIONAL POLITICAL SYSTEM

THE VILLAGE HEADMAN : BY AND large, in every tribal village there is a village headman who is either a secular or both secular and sacred head of the village. He, either with the help of the elected, or selected village elders, is responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the village. He sees that those violating customary laws are punished. He has both executive and judiciary powers. He is locally known by different names among the different tribes. The tribes, who are divided into a number of totemic clans, get their disputes adjudicated at the clan level (with the help of clan elders) first. In case of dissatisfaction with the decision made by the clan elders, the case is brought to the village headman.

### The Regional Headman

OVER a number of village headmen, there is a regional headman whose court (in some cases) is the highest court of appeal. When a party is aggrieved with the decision of the village headman, he appeals to the regional headman for better justice. Similarly, whenever there is a dispute between the two or amongst a number of villages and the concerned village headmen fail to adjudicate between or amongst (as the case may be) themselves, the case is heard and disposed off by the regional headman assisted by his councillors.

### THE SUPREME AUTHORITY AT THE TRIBAL LEVEL OR TRIBAL CHIEFS

IN SOME of the tribal communities we find an authority at the tribal level who does not only look after and fight for the cause of his community but is also a supreme judicial authority so far as the political structure of his community is concerned. His decisions in any case are final and sacrosanct. The political structure of some of the Indian tribal communities is explained in the table overleaf.

LIKE the above, in almost all the tribes of India we find village and regional authorities who have the authority and power of decision-making and who maintain law and justice in their respective jurisdiction. Let us now examine the procedure with regard to administration of justice generally followed in tribal societies. The anthropologist who sets out to study law in its entirety is not merely interested in the comparative few instances in which the law is broken; he must also consider the vast majority of cases in which it is kept. He studies all the forces of social conformity including those primitive inducements which ensure that generally speaking, honesty is the best policy. But he must not ignore the fact that cases of breach do occur and that in such instances, legal mechanisms are brought into play. Law cannot be considered apart from other forces of social conformity but its existence as a specific element in culture must also be recognised. The study of primitive law and custom has two aspects; the forces which induce people to conform in vast majority of cases and the procedure adopted in cases of evasions and breaches of normative standards. Law consists of a set of principles which permit the use of force to maintain political and social organization within a territory. Where there are no legal sanctions, are matters of customs and conventions and not of law. The growth of law is a slow and gradual process of customs being given the sanction of time and force. There is absence of legislation.

## NATURE OF PRIMITIVE LAW

1. It is based on kinship bond and therefore, clan elders are found playing important roles in the decision-making in many of our contemporary tribal societies.
2. It is backed by public opinion and morality which are based on common sentiments shared by all and the community's conception of 'good' and 'bad'.
3. It does not distinguish between the crime and torts, i.e., private and public wrongs. A private wrong may bring calamity for the entire community. Thus, collective responsibility plays important role in primitive law.
4. Breach of public opinion (which originates from oral and ethical notions) and moral laws amounts to sin, the sinner has also to face supernatural punishment. It is, therefore, that we find strong public opinion against incest, adultery; etc.
5. There is limited civil law and more criminal law because of the less pressure on land. The customs are clear with regard to the inheritance of property.
6. Intention has no importance in primitive law because of the concept of sin and the fear of supernatural punishment which may come as a visitation on the whole group. Even provocation is accepted as a partial excuse for the commission of a crime.

### ADJUDICATION OF DISPUTES

**EVIDENCE :** IN THE administration of justice importance is attached to the establishment of guilt. In the primitive law it is mainly established in two ways oath and ordeal, administered when the accused denies a particular charge against him and cannot establish his innocence through concrete evidence.

**OATH AND ORDEAL :** OATH is administered in the presence of the village headman and his council. The sacred head or specialist is also present on such an occasion. The culprit is asked to take an oath in the name of god and then say whether he is guilty or not. Among the Maler, the accused while taking oath touches the sacred axe and utters "I will die if I tell a lie" and among the Santal the accused utters "Dharam Dharm". The result of perjury is greatly feared since it is considered to be a supernatural wrath.

IF BY the statement of an oath, the village headman and other members of his council are not satisfied, the accused among the Santal is asked to take cow-dung in his hand and speak

out the truth again. It is believed that even after doing so if an accused conceals the truth, he is bound to meet supernatural anger. But among the Maler it is also believed that a person's sin may invite calamity on the entire village including the sinner and hence they have a system of ordeal to establish the guilt of an accused. The accused accompanied by five village authorities (sacred and secular) go near the sacred stream where the sacred axe is made red-hot and the accused is asked to lick with his tongue thrice. If he comes out without an injury he is held not guilty, otherwise he is held guilty and doubly punished. This is locally known as the process of undergoing 'Saveli'. In some Maler villages, in place of under going Saveli, the accused undergoes 'Kriya' process in which he is asked to take salt besmeared with cock's blood. It is believed that if an accused person has actually committed an offence and is trying to hide it to avoid punishment, he is bound to incur divine anger which would result in physical ailment and other family troubles.

### PUNISHMENT

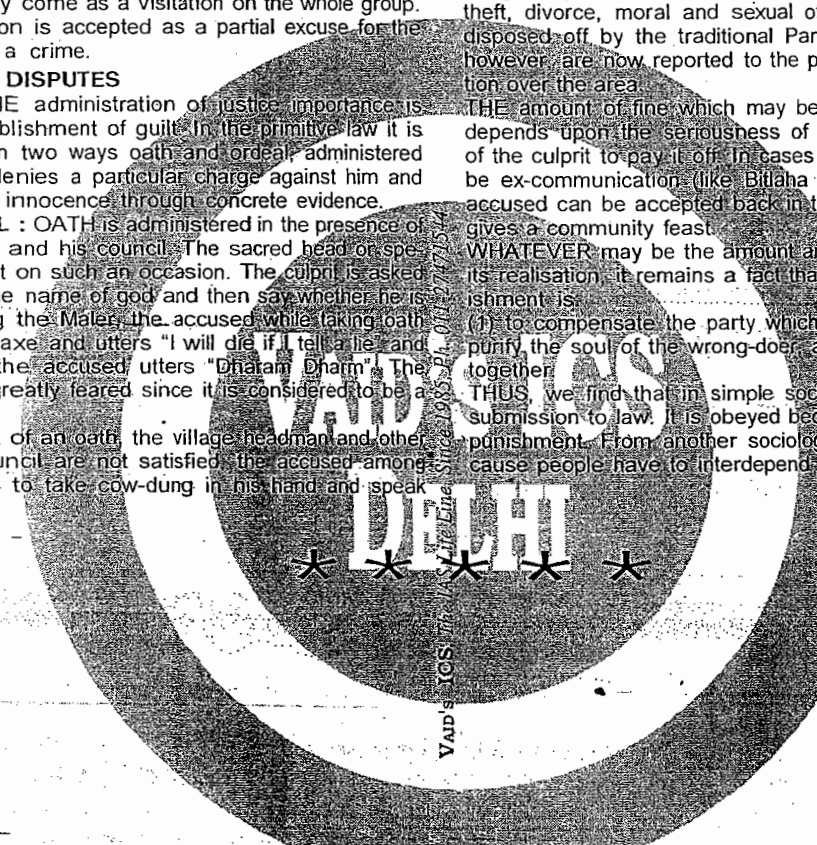
A STUDY of the customary laws among a number of tribes of India indicates that cases relating to Inter and Intrafamily and village disputes, assault, disputes over immovable properties, theft, divorce, moral and sexual offences, etc., are tried and disposed off by the traditional Panchayats. Cases of murder, however, are now reported to the police station having jurisdiction over the area.

THE amount of fine which may be in cash or in kind or both depends upon the seriousness of the crime and the capacity of the culprit to pay it off. In cases relating to incest there may be ex-communication (like Bitaha among the Santal) and the accused can be accepted back in the community only when he gives a community feast.

WHATEVER may be the amount and kind of fine and nature of its realisation, it remains a fact that the concept behind a punishment is:

(1) to compensate the party which has incurred a loss. (2) to purify the soul of the wrong-doer and (3) to bring the enemies together.

THUS, we find that in simple societies there is an automatic submission to law. It is obeyed because of the fear from divine punishment. From another sociological angle, it is obeyed because people have to interdepend and mutually oblige.





## RELIGION

ALL societies have certain belief systems that are all a part of ritual aspect of human life and yet it has been literally impossible to define religion. A working definition given by Sapiro that religion is "an institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman (super-natural) beings" should serve our purpose. Religion is the basic need of most of us. It serves a number of social and psychological functions. It is a binding tag of all societies practising religion in one form or the other. Religion is so embedded in the minds of most of us that they can't bear disrespect even to this word. Religion has been a part of man since several millennia and yet it has not been possible to give a satisfactory theory about the origin of religion.

BEFORE embarking on various attempts to explain the origin of religion, it is imperative to understand what is the need for religion. Different scholars have studied the functions of religion and their observations are being summarized below:

(a) **Emotional Integration** : MANY psychologists including Carl Jung and his followers have argued that religion provides a symbolic system through which a person can actively participate in his or her emotional development, and which a person can also use for therapeutic purposes when emotional problems erupt.

(b) **Cultural Revitalization** : IN THE event of introduction of new cultural values many cultures recall the 'good old values' of the previously uncorrupted tradition. At times people may also accept new values and assimilate into their own.

(c) **Maintenance of Social Order** : RELIGION through its negative sanctions, does more than what is possible through the social sanctions. The concept of sin in most societies despite the concept of crime is much stronger than the latter.

(d) **Psychological Function** : UNDER circumstances of stress and strain religion provides an outlet for the frustrations. Certain natural happenings and mishappenings can also be explained through ritual beliefs and myths.

(e) **Social Integration** : DURKHEIM, through his studies, has explained the relevance of religion in social integration. The patterns of unity and cooperation, in most societies, have religious basis.

ALL theories given by different scholars have related the origin of religion to one or the other of its functions. Some important theories pertaining to the origin of religion are being discussed briefly.

IN HIS remarkable study Tylor (1871) examined many manifestations of animism among primitives but he was interested in more than just describing its forms. Tylor was essentially an evolutionist. For him the ultimate question was "How and why did human beings create the concept of spirit beings"? Somewhere along the line in prehistoric times the human mind peopled the universe with spirits. What led it to do so?

TYLOR saw one origin of animism in the phenomena of dreams, of life and of death. Dreams are a form of hallucination, and illusory experience. But that individual's dream is an empirical fact. In dreams we transcend reality. We soar to great heights of attainment and pleasure; we experience horrible happenings; we relive the past and anticipate the future; we visit places once visited and those where our feet have never yet been; we commune with the dead and with the living who are far distant. Time, space, and limitations of the body do not hinder us in our dreams.

YET, in sleep or in coma, the body does not leave its resting place. We wake where we lie down to rest except in the case of the unfortunate somnambulist. The body has not performed

the miracles dreamed, but it is hard, even for the sophisticated not to take dream experience as real. To primitive and, indeed, to many civilized human beings, the dream experience is reality.

### THE SOUL CONCEPT

PRIMITIVE human beings reflected and concluded that there were two parts to a person : the bodily self of mortal flesh and the spiritual alter ego, the soul. The soul concept is the root of animism. It is a universal concept.

THE soul, is, in itself quite intangible. In the language of many peoples, the word "soul" is synonymous with "shadow" or "shade". Intangible though it is, it is often times perceptible in the image of the body it normally inhabits.

THE soul is the vital force. Its presence animates the body; its departure stills it. It is in the stillness of sleep that the soul goes wandering. Humanity's restlessness is of the spirit, not the body.

THE long sleep that is death comes when the so-journing soul does not return. The body that is the vessel for the soul has no further function once its soul has abandoned it. Disintegration follows. Illness is due to intrusive corruption of the soul or to soul loss.

THIS, according to Tylor, is the logic of the soul concept in part. Soul after death may become ghost or free spirit wholly disembodied. They live on in the world of human beings, within their very community or in a special realm, which the spirits of the living may on occasion visit or from which souls may come to visit the living.

WHETHER or not the concept of free spirits could arise only from the soul concept, as Tylor thought, or whether early human beings were imaginatively capable of creating the spirit concept out of mere nothingness, we shall never know. It is enough that pure spirits inhabit the believing minds of people in all societies and that these imaginary beings are thought to be beyond the laws of nature. They and souls are living elements in all religions.

### ANIMATISM

SUPERNATURALISM does not find its only expression in beliefs in spirit beings; there are also beliefs in the existence of supernatural forces that do not emanate from any kind of being. Such forces are expressed as special attributes of things much as the force of gravity is related to objects that have mass. Following the suggestion of another early student of primitive religion R.R. Marett (1866-1943), anthropologists call it mana a word derived from the languages of Melanesia where the concept of mana is strong and clear in native life.

MANA is a force, but not a vitalistic force. It exists as a supernatural attribute of persons and things. Above all it is the exceptional power to do things that are unusual. Mana is therefore manifest in the unusual, when the unusual is not the work of spirits.

EXTRAORDINARY aptitudes of individuals are explained in terms of mana. The master craftsman in Polynesia excels in his skill because he possesses mana. Then learned pundit excels in lore and knowledge because he possesses mana. The mighty warrior excels in the killing of men because he possesses mana. The outstanding healer, the expert canoe man, and any others who stand above their fellow men do so because of personal possession or control of mana. Mana, though it is an impersonal force, can be manifest in and through person, as well as in stock and stone. The queerly shaped or unusually marked stone may be believed to pos-

sess miracle-working power. This is its mana. The canoe that can outdistance all others, the song that heals, the war club that smashes more than a normal quota of skulls, the talisman that in itself brings good luck—all these have power that is mana.

THE power that is extraordinary is not mundane force. It does not follow the regular laws of ordinary technologies or skills. Like the power of spirits it transcends the natural. Mana is supernatural.

## TOTEMISM

MAIN attributes of religion i.e. the power and the sense of awe, well pointed out by Marett exist not only in animatism but in animistic objects too. These two attributes helped Durkheim in formulating his theory of religion. He was the first one to categorize religion into 'sacred' and 'profane'. Utmost care, diplomacy and formality are required to deal with sacred objects of religion whereas the profane ones can be handled in matter-of-fact and pragmatic way. Though classification of religious objects into sacred and profane is highly arbitrary (as such objects mean differently in different cultures), religious meanings do make sense relative to the rest of culture. Durkheim, basing his thought on the practices among Australian aborigines, contended that religious sentiments are born of group life and it follows that beliefs and rites will, at least in part, reflect the systems of groups and roles of social units. He saw religion as a social life written in symbolic language, a metaphorical system of ideas and activities. He believed that the sentiments of awe, excitement and exaltation are the result of group participation and religion is basically social and not personal that provides for group solidarity. Thus, though religion emerges from the society, it serves to perpetuate it. Totemism among the Australian aborigines was a set of beliefs but it was also a system of social classification. Their totemic religion was a guide to the system of localities and kin groups. The totemic clan is more than a large family, it is a communion of believers. The centralization of deity and omnipotence of the high god bolster and rationalize the centrality.

DURKHEIM used Australian totemism to illustrate his theory known as Totemism. He argued that since the Australians had one of the most elementary social organisation that we know of, their's must have been the most elementary religion.

A GENERAL definition of totemism would see it as a belief in relationship substituting between a clan or tribe and a species of animal or plant (i.e. totem) supported by regulations and rituals setting out the belief.

A TOTEM is simply a species of animal or plant which in the simplest terms is conceived to be in some sort of social-like relationship with the membership of a kinship group (The relationship is often one of descent). The word totem comes from the language of Ojibwa tribe of N. American Indians meaning 'brother-sister-kin'.

THE totem is the focus of the (religious) rituals of the clan and thus becomes symbolic both of the clan and clanspirits. In Durkheim's metaphor, it is the flag of clan and the reason why real natural objects are chosen is that unlike the concepts and values they stand for, they can be easily apprehended and represented.

AUSTRALIAN totemism can be briefly described as the belief that descent groups are linked with animal/plant species in such a way that the members of one species protect the members of the one descent group and they in return by refraining from killing or eating animals of the species. (in certain cases ceremonial killing of totem is practiced).

GIVING a psychological slant to the meaning of religion, Malinowski saw it as man's principal means of coping with anxiety. Murphy adds "Experiences so traumatic or socially unacceptable as to warrant repression do not simply lie latent, undisturbed and undisturbing in subconscious, for they break through in dreams, slips of the tongue, behavioural aberrations,

fears displaced on to other objects, and generalized anxiety. Our memories, both conscious and unconscious dispose us to anxieties which are added to and compounded by the knowledge we have of disasters beyond our immediate experience. Religion, then, is not simply a way of coping with one danger or another but a way of facing a dangerous existence".

## RELIGION Vs MAGIC

ABOUT a century ago Sir James Frazer found it advisable to divide all phenomena involving supernatural into two categories of religion and magic. This dichotomy in the field of ritual has since been retained and four attributes are most commonly cited in favour of this dichotomy. These are :

1. MAGIC compels the world of supernatural to do its bidding. It fails to get result only if errors of procedure or text have been made or if stronger counter magic has been brought to bear. Religion, on the other hand, say the supporters of Frazer's dichotomy, never guarantees results. Its use is limited to supplication and its practitioners never resort to manipulation or coercion.
2. MAGIC according to Durkheim and his supporters, has no 'church' that is to say, magical rites may be public or private but unlike those that are religious they don't have a large body of celebrants; they do not need to be held in public before a congregation of worshippers; and they may have no social or communal aspect whatsoever.
3. MAGICAL utterances have a tendency to degenerate into spell or formulae, some of which have little or no meaning even to those who utter them. It is implied that religious pronouncements are usually meaningful in terms of a society's customary language.
4. PRACTITIONERS of magic, even in primitive societies are often set apart in one fashion or another from the socially recognized priests. With occasional exceptions it is only the acknowledged priests who go through a period of formal training and who then qualify to perform communal or publicly sanctioned religious exercises, living shamans and others to deal in magic.

ALTHOUGH most writers on the subject have continued to accept Frazer's distinction, somewhat apathetically, it must be confessed others have held the criteria to be unsatisfactory because they can not be precisely determined and because they so frequently overlap. The latter argue that the religion and magic are not two exclusive entities and must be grouped together as magic-religious phenomena.

## TABOO

LIKE totem, tabu or taboo is not an English word. It has been derived from the polynesian Tabu meaning 'to forbid' and 'forbidden'. It is used to designate all prohibitions or restrictions which are communicated through the oral don't dos; and is generally associated with ritual behaviour. In simple societies Taboo is the unwritten law and failure to comply with the don'ts may bring in social or ritual sanctions. A tabu may be a magical sanction as well.

TABOO thus, may be considered as a certain specific type of prohibition that generally results in an automatic penalty. It helps in the maintenance of social order.

ACCORDING to Majumdar Taboo has three fold purpose

- (1) Productive, associated with the process of procurement of food and other basic necessities;
- (2) Protective; keeping women, children and at times, men away from dangerous places and/or situations, actions or objects;
- (3) Prohibitive; as among the Melanesians one must not touch the body of the chief without permission. Similar prohibition can be there with regard to the body of a priest, a magician, a menstruating woman etc. etc.

TABOOS connected with acceptance or consumptions of food

reflect upon the social structure of a society. In a caste system as prevails in India, for example, there are set norms for an individual to accept Kuchcha and/or pucca food from the members of other castes. Taboos also may help in limiting the rights of an individual during certain specific situations. Among the Bantu, for example, a man is not allowed to sleep with his wife till she is nourishing her child through her milk. Taboos also protect the privileges of certain influential or sacred persons within a society. Some examples of Taboo in different Indian tribes are as follows.

AMONG the Maler and the Oraon a woman is not allowed to touch the plough. Kharia and Ho women, after marriage, face severe restrictions regarding their entrance in certain parts of the house of their parents. A Toda woman is not allowed to cook the food, preparation of which requires the use of milk. A Tharu man can not complain against his wife in the female dominated society. In many societies intercourse during menstrual cycle is prohibited. Many castes and tribes do not use beef as food.

MANY anthropologists and sociologists have tried to reason out the cause of existence of Taboos but in vain. The only thing we know about Taboos is that they form a part of the oldest unwritten law and quite useful in the maintenance of social order.

## SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION

MAN is a cultural being, which essentially means that he is a symbol-using animal. Leslie White says that *man is a symbolising animal*. Indeed because of this capacity to symboise he has been set apart from other animals. Language is an important kind of symbolisation but it is not the only one. Man uses various other symbols to communicate his ideas.

EDMUND Leach makes a distinction between *sign* and *symbol*. According to him an intrinsic prior relationship exists between two phenomena - (a) and (b) because they belong to (b) and there is no intrinsic prior relationship between them; that is to say (a) and (b) belong to different cultural contexts. Many foster says that a symbol is one that represents an idea. Symbols are often arbitrary and their meaning depends upon the context.

IT HAS been said that religion may be viewed as a vast symbolic system. Rites and myths are of course the most obvious of religious symbols. We may think of an inner system of sacred beliefs and values. When combined with a collective ritual it symbolically expresses the feelings and beliefs portrayed in the myth. It has been said that whatever is important in social life (especially in simple societies) becomes the object of symbolic expression and receive ritual attention.

ONE of the well known analyses of religion as a symbolic system is Lloyd Warner's analysis of Yankee city cemeteries. They represent many of communities beliefs and values. The social boundaries of the world of the dead and the living beings is set apart and joined materially by these cemeteries. The separate realm of sacred and profane is created by symbolic methods. Living and dead are spiritually joined and divided by ceremonies for dead.

CEMETERY is separate and distinct from the living yet it is a material part of the cities' cultural equipment. It bridges to time - ephemeral and eternal - and symbolises ending of the one and beginning of another cemetery as a collective representation in both a city and garden of the dead. Two symbols fuse and emerge in the collective thinking of people. Garden is both a symbol of life and death.

WARNER analyses the meaning of the act of inserting the body in the grave. Open grave is symbolising the uterine. The sacred problem of graveyard is to provide suitable symbols to refer to and express man's hope of immortality through the sacred beliefs and ritual of Christianity. The cemetery is an enduring physical emblem, a substantial and visible symbol of this agreement among men that they will not let each other die.

CLIFFORD Geertz interprets religion as a symbolic system. Man is always confronted with the constant infingement upon him of certain chaotic forces that give him a sense of analytic, emotional and moral impotence. The first involves ignorance. Man is baffled because he has limited analytic ability to explain various anomalous events. The second involves pain; the question is of making suffering sufferable even when he can no longer endure. And, the third involves injustice. Here man tries to cope with a sense of ethical paradox when he reaches the limits of his moral insight. The affirmation of these forces, as well as the denial that they are characteristic of the world in general, is made in terms of religious symbolism.

GEERTZ writes : *sacred symbols function to synthesise a people's ethos*. For him a symbol is any object, act, event, quality, or relation that serves as a vehicle for concept. This conception is the meaning of the symbol. Cultures are symbolic systems, and religion is its part. Geert's aim is to bafflement, pain and moral paradox by synthesising a people's ethos and their worldview. He defines religion as (i) A system of symbols that acts (ii) to establish powerful, pervasive and long lasting moods and motivations in men by (iii) formulating conceptions of a general order of a system (iv) and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (v) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.

A TREATMENT of religion as a symbolic system can be traced to the work of Durkheim, who treated sacred entities purely as symbols. Erhold Van Geneep furthered this analysis in his study of rituals. However, a break through in this analysis was because of Clifford Geertz. Today symbolic analysis of religion is very important, leech analysed symbolic representation of time. Turney studied rituals amongst the *Ndembu* of Africa, an proposed that the meaning of ritual must be understood from the perspective of people.

## Myth and Ritual

Myth and ritual, being exotic and easily recorded in far corners of the tribal world, have long fascinated anthropologists. Moreover, the esoterica of the tribal world early stirred a sense of connection between the dark rites and bizarre beliefs of the primitive and the ancient heritage of early Europe—as witness the continued popularity of Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

### Myths

Myths are accounts about how the world came to be the way it is, about a superordinary realm of events before (or behind) the experienced natural world; these are accounts believed to be true and in some sense sacred. Religious rituals are tightly structured performances of prescribed actions accorded sacred or religious meaning.

Since rituals very often dramatize and act out the stories told in myth, and since the myths correspondingly explain and rationalize ritual performances, anthropologists were led into a long and fruitless debate about which was a reflection of which.

More constructively, modern social anthropologists have sought to trace the relationships between ritual, myth, and social structure. In the realm of myth, the way was opened by Malinowski's (1925) sociological interpretation of Trobriand myths. He insisted that Trobriand myths made sense not as disembodied texts for the psychoanalyst or Frazerian anti-quarian. Rather, they were living social events, intelligible only in the context of real humans in real places involved in continuing political relations.

In seeing myth as account of the past that serves as charter for the present, though we can easily distort Trobriand conceptualizations of a world where past, present, and future are connected; where the ancient past is *lived* in the present; where next year's children are long-dead-spirits, returning in new form. Similarly, the "dream time" of native Australians is both another time long ago and another plane of reality that coexists with the one human's experience directly. It is dangerously easy to translate the terms of another people's cosmology.



ogy into the terms of or our—which we take to be "reality"—and then seek to analyze the constructions that result.

Another influential approach to myth has come from the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss is seeking to explicate the universal workings of the human mind by looking at varied cultural forms as its artifacts. The realm of myth is crucial in this enterprise because here human thought has its widest freedom. Not every imaginable form of marriage, house style, or residence pattern is actually found; there are too many constraints, too many possibilities that are unworkable for ecological, technological, or purely physical reasons. But humans can *think* all of these possibilities, and in myth their thoughts have freest reign.

Lévi-Strauss (1969, 1971) argues that peoples all over the world are plagued intellectually by the contradictions of existence—by death; by man's dual character, as part of nature yet transformed by culture; by dichotomies of spirit and body; by the contradictions of descent from a first man (where did a non-incestuous first mate come from?); and so on. The realm of myth is used above all to tinker endlessly with these contradictions, by transposing them symbolically. Thus the gulf between life and death can be symbolically mediated by rephrasing the contrast the contrast mythically as between an antelope (herbivore) and a lion (carnivore). By introducing a hyena which eats animals it does not kill, one then in effect denies the contradiction.

LEVI-STRAUSS' original insistence that a myth such as the story of Oedipus or of Asdiwal in Northwest Coast mythology (Lévi-Strauss 1967) could be understood by itself has been modified considerably in his monumental four-volume *Mythologiques*. In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1969), the first volume, he examines a whole complex of myths among Indian tribes of central Brazil and draws heavily on cultural evidence in his interpretation. His exceedingly complicated and involuted decipherment of their "myth-o-logic" is an analytical tour de force. Subsequent volumes (1971-1974) trace out ever-widening webs of myths through the Americas—for myth and mythic themes and symbols, unlike kinship systems, refuse to stay inside societal boundaries. Lévi-Strauss ends with a sweeping vision of cultures, the mind, and the human condition. BUT is he right? Lévi-Strauss is solving puzzles and often doing it with few clues along the way and little evidence at the end that the puzzle has been pieced together correctly. Lévi-Strauss' often daring assumptions about the cognitive worlds of other people, as understood from the ethnographic page in a Paris study, have raised many an anthropological doubt. One of the grave problems in this whole mode of analysis is to introduce more controls on a method that can discover or create structure in any cultural material. Whether Lévi-Strauss' interpretations endure, there is little doubt that myths have a logic, structure, and richness we had not suspected and that

most of the work of deciphering them still lies ahead.

#### Ritual

Anthropological study of ritual has also undergone major transformations in recent years. Rites had been viewed by Durkheim (1912) and Radcliffe-Brown (1922) as reinforcing collective sentiment and social integration. The content of rites—whether the priest zigged or zagged, held a stick in his left hand or a leaf in his right—was a secondary and seldom manageable problem. As the content of cultural systems has been shown to be increasingly systematic, with the bits and pieces seemingly less and less arbitrary in relation to one another, such questions now seem crucial. Anthropologists are now beginning to ask them effectively. The nature of ritual symbols has been revealed dramatically in the work of Victor Turner. Exploring the rituals of the East African Ndembu, Turner (1967) has mapped an extraordinarily rich structure of symbolism.

Here, then are the beginnings of a theory of symbolism that transcends the Freudian and the crudely sociological: the royal scepter is neither simply a phallic symbol nor a symbol of the power of the state—it is both, and that is why it "works". Individual concerns are systematically related to public concerns; collectively enacted dramas have private and unconscious meanings.

IN RITUAL, as in myth, humans reveal a fascination with the gulf that divides them, as creatures of culture, from animals and other phenomena of the world of nature. Ardener (1942, 1975) and Ortner (1974) have suggested a pervasive symbolic association of women with nature, in contrast to the male world of culture. Ortner argues that the generative powers of women's sexuality are never controlled by men, always marginal and peripheral to the tight world of cultural control where power rests in men's hands. Women are both cultural and natural beings; and that position of ambiguity, "betwixt and between" clearly defined conceptual domains, is reflected cosmologically (in symbolic associations between women, nature, darkness, blood, the moon, the left hand, and so on) and in the characteristic exclusion of women from the center of a society's public stage.

THE evidence of anthropology shows how rich and complex are the structures of cultural meaning through which peoples construe their worlds and their lives. This is nowhere more clear than in religion, where humans act in relation to the unseen beings and powers that lie behind the realm of directly experienced reality. To understand their lives, we must interpret deeply these structures of cultural meaning. A crude Marxism that sees religions as superstructures, as ideologies that disguise and deceive, would dismiss these culturally constructed worlds too quickly without understanding them. The challenge is to understand these cultural meanings, but to step outside them as well—not to dismiss them as "only" ideological mystifications, but to situate them in relation to historical processes and earthly politics and economic relationships.

## APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY

### EVOLUTIONISM

IN THE early years of anthropology, the prevailing view was that culture generally develops (or evolves) in a uniform and progressive manner. It was thought that most societies pass through the same series of stages, to arrive ultimately at a common end. This school of thought is called *Evolutionary School of thought* in general and *classical or 19th century cultural evolutionism* in particular. This school of thought, in fact, came into being at a time when *Charles Darwin's* theory of Organic Evolution with the publication of his famous book '*Origin of Species*' (1859) was attaining renowned popularity. THIS coincidence created confusion among the scholars regarding the question of influence of Darwinism on cultural evolutionism, though there is no unanimity among the scholars on this point of view. Taggart has strongly opposed this view and suggested that, *Darwin's book Origin of Species*, which appeared in 1859, was too late to cast any influence upon the evolutionary schemes of cultural evolutionism. The major writings of pioneers of 19th century cultural evolutionists like Tylor, Morgan, etc. were published in the period between 1861 to 1865. It suggests that the scheme of cultural evolutionism was being planned and formulated in the same time when Darwin was carrying out his researches and organising and writing down his conclusions.

#### What is Evolution

- Evolution may be defined as a process in which different forms are produced or developed orderly in a system. It is concerned with the continuous progress in a system that brings complexity in simplicity, heterogeneity in homogeneity and certainty in uncertainty.
- Evolutionists have used evolution as a methodology to reconstruct the history of mankind.
- Evolution may be perceived from two dimensions in the case of human beings, biological or organic evolution & cultural evolution.

#### Organic Evolution

- The animal world with all its diversities ranging from comparatively simple Protozoa to the highly complex Mammalia is interpreted by biologists as a gradual but continuous process called *organic evolution* or the evolution of living organisms which has produced all the present-day-existing forms by gradual changes from the pre-existing forms so that the more complex forms have been derived from the simpler ones.
- The doctrine of organic evolution states that the present-day organisms are modified but linear descendents of species that lived in former geological times, and that the more complex and highly differentiated forms have evolved from the simpler ones by gradual modification.
- The Organic Evolution, which is still in operation, is a descent with modifications, it is an unfolding of changing continuity, it is a creative dynamic process producing inheritable changes in lives of successive generations.

#### Cultural Evolution

- Cultural Evolution is a process by which different successive forms in socio-cultural institutions or culture of mankind as a whole are developed and accumulated to constitute the growth of culture over different periods

of time, but in a continuity.

- Cultural Evolutionists used it as a methodology to reconstruct the history of mankind (culture) through the ages by establishing stages of development in sequence.
- Cultural Evolution may be termed as a quest for cultural similarities or cultural parallels or cultural regularities.

#### Difference between Biological & Cultural Evolution

1. All mankind draws its genes from a common gene pool. Thus all mankind constitute a single species, the species *Homo sapiens* whose members manifest diverse types of cultural patterns.
2. Biological Evolution relates to the changes in the frequencies of genetically determined characteristics (traits), while 'Cultural Evolution' relates to the changes in the culturally determined characteristics.
3. Though the biological and cultural traits are adaptive to the ecology, yet the biological adaptation to the environment depends on genetic modifications, while the cultural adaptation depends on behavioural adjustment. That is why the term adaptation is a biological concept while adjustment is a cultural or behavioural concept.
4. Biological traits are involuntarily acquired and are hereditary. On the other hand, cultural traits are man made, learnt and shared by the members of each societies.
5. Reproduction is the media to transmit biological traits from one generation to another while Enculturation plays an important role in the transmission of cultural traits of a society to the successive generations.
6. In Biological Evolution, variation is born due to genetic modifications as per demand of environment, while variation in cultural behaviour depends on invention and adoption as well as difference in process of socialization from society to society and to great extent to meet the demands of environment.
7. Cultural Evolution can be judged through two dimensions: material and non-material. Hence, the rate of evolution may differ in these two dimensions of a society while it is not the case in biological evolution (only rate of growth of organs may differ).

#### Evolutionary School of Anthropological Thought

THIS school of thought may be divided into two groups on the basis of old and new doctrines of Cultural Evolution proposed by them—

- **Classical Evolutionary School**—This school may be divided into three sub-schools—
  - **British Evolutionary School**—Pioneers of this school are: E.B. Tylor, H.J.S. Maine, J.F. Melelland, S.J.G. Frazer.
  - **American Evolutionary School**—Pioneer of this school is: L.H. Morgan.
  - **German Evolutionary School**—Pioneers of this school are: J.J. Bachofen, A. Bastian.
- **Neo-Evolutionary School**—This school may be divided, on the basis of nationality, into two sub-categories:
  - **British School**: V.G. Childe
  - **American School**: Leslie A. White, Julian H. Stewart

### Classical Evolutionary School : (19th Century evolutionists)

#### Basic Assumptions

- **Unilinear Cultural Evolution** : In this evolutionary scheme it is postulated that culture or cultures of world pass through different successive developmental stages in unilinear fashion.
- The direction of evolution is always from simple to complex, similarity to dissimilarity and indefinite to definite.
- It postulates that genuine cultural parallels or cultural similarities developed independently in all cultures in historical sequences.
- For cultural parallels it has been assumed that it is due to man's ability to invent new things and ideas as well as *Psychic Unity of Mankind*.

#### —Psychic Unity of Mankind

EVOLUTIONISTS were very much puzzled while dealing with the evolutionary schemes related to question of similarities found in culture traits, culture complex and culture patterns among the people of different parts of the world, without known historical connections, for example—the invention of agriculture took place simultaneously in South-East Asia, South-West Asia and America; the use of zero was invented at the same time in India, Babylonia and Maya etc. Hence the question was to find out convincing explanations for these similarities. There may be two possible explanations for these similarities—Independent Invention and Diffusion. Since, the theory of diffusion could not seem convincing to them, so according to them independent parallel invention or discoveries were the possible reasons for these similarities. The ideologies of evolutionists revealed the formation of *Cultural Parallels*, termed as *Cultural Parallelism*, which is synonym to *cultural similarity*. FURTHER, evolutionists postulated that cultural parallels were born due to *Psychic Unity of mankind*. *Psychic Unity of mankind* refers to similar mental state of human beings that react similarly in a like environmental situation at a particular period of time. According to them, it was because of *Psychic Unity of mankind* that human beings of different parts of the world passed through the similar stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization. Above noted examples of cultural parallels bear testimony that human beings possess *Psychic*

Unity.

- Thus classical evolutionists postulated that in the beginning all cultures possessed similar and simple culture traits, but they gradually developed into complex forms due to cultural developments.

#### Salient Features of Classical Evolutionism

1. Human culture as a whole or socio-cultural institutions evolves in unilinear manner—stage after stage.
2. The direction of cultural evolution is from simple to complex, homogeneity to heterogeneity and from indefinite to definite.
3. Different stages of cultural development were based on historical explanations (museumology, and comparative method).
4. Similarities in cultural traits or complexes were due to parallel inventions and *Psychic Unity of Mankind*.
5. Survivals, in both material & non-material aspects of culture, remain proof of earlier condition.—concept of survivals—Survivals are processes, customs and opinions that persist by force of habit, even when they lose their utility.

#### General Contribution of Classical Evolutionists

1. Classical Evolutionists applied evolutionary schemes as a methodology to reconstruct the culture growth of mankind as a whole, establishing unilinear developmental sequences—or generalize the phenomena.
  - They also attempted to establish developmental sequences of cultural institutions such as marriage, family etc.
2. For this purpose they applied comparative method. They attempted to compare the early stage of primitive people with civilized ones and concluded that formers were the reflection of early stage of the latter. They also attempted to compare survivals to establish sequence of development, because according to them survivals were the indicators of conditions of culture of mankind in earlier period. This method—comparing worldwide cultures or cultural institutions—is known as comparative method of cultural evolutionists.

#### Contribution of Classical Evolutionists

- Classical Evolutionists applied evolutionary schemes to reconstruct the developmental stages of culture of

TYLOR		MORGAN	
		ETHNIC PERIOD	TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT
Civilization	Civilization		Phonetic alphabet, writing.
Barbarism	Barbarism		Upper Barbarism [Rome, Italian Tribe etc.] : Iron-Smelting and Iron Tools Middle Barbarism : Domestication of animals in the old world, cultivation of maize by irrigation, abode & stone brick buildings in new world. Lower Barbarism : Pottery; American Indians, tribes of Europe and Asia.
Savagery	Savagery		Upper Savagery : Bow & Arrow (American Indians of the Western Sub arctic). Middle Savagery [Australian & Polynesians] : Fish subsistence and the use of fire Low Savagery : Invention of speech, subsistence on fruits and nuts.